

# Colossians 3:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;  
fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil  
concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

## Analysis

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**Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.** "Therefore" (oun, οὖν) draws practical implication from resurrection union with Christ (vv. 1-4). "Mortify" (nekrōsate, νεκρώσατε, "put to death") uses violent imagery—not gradual suppression but decisive execution of sinful practices. Aorist imperative suggests definitive action, not continuous process (though application requires ongoing vigilance).

"Your members which are upon the earth" uses bodily metaphor for sinful practices: "fornication" (porneian, πορνείαν, sexual immorality), "uncleanness" (akatharsian, ἀκαθαρσίαν, moral impurity), "inordinate affection" (pathos, πάθος, lustful passion), "evil concupiscence" (epithymian kakēn, ἐπιθυμίαν κακήν, evil desire), "covetousness" (pleonexian, πλεονεξίαν, greed). The climactic identification: covetousness "is idolatry" (hētis estin eidōlolatria, ἥτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία)—desiring created things above Creator worship.

## Historical Context

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Greco-Roman culture normalized sexual immorality, temple prostitution, and materialistic greed. Paul's ethical demands were countercultural and radical, requiring complete break from pagan lifestyle. Identifying covetousness as idolatry exposed how possessions replace God as ultimate concern. Early Christian moral

purity distinguished believers from pagan neighbors, testifying to transforming gospel power and attracting seekers dissatisfied with empty hedonism.

## Related Passages

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**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. Which sins on Paul's list still require mortification in your life through radical decisive action?
2. How do you recognize covetousness functioning as idolatry—what desires compete with God for ultimate allegiance?
3. What does 'putting to death' sin look like practically versus merely managing or minimizing it?

## Interlinear Text

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Νεκρώσατε	οὖν	τὴν	μέλη	ὑμῶν	τὴν	ἐπὶ	τὴν
<b>Mortify</b>	<b>therefore</b>	<b>which</b>	<b>members</b>	<b>your</b>	<b>which</b>	<b>are upon</b>	<b>which</b>
G3499	G3767	G3588	G3196	G5216	G3588	G1909	G3588
γῆς	πορνείαν	ἀκαθαρσίαν		πάθος		ἐπιθυμίαν	
<b>the earth</b>	<b>fornication</b>	<b>uncleanness</b>		<b>inordinate affection</b>		<b>concupiscence</b>	
G1093	G4202	G167		G3806		G1939	
κακὴν	καὶ	τὴν	πλεονεξίαν	ἣτις	ἐστὶν	εἰδωλολατρεία,	
<b>evil</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>which</b>	<b>covetousness</b>	<b>which</b>	<b>is</b>	<b>idolatry</b>	
G2556	G2532	G3588	G4124	G3748	G2076	G1495	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Romans 8:13** (Parallel theme): For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

**Galatians 5:24** (Parallel theme): And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

**Romans 6:13** (Parallel theme): Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

**1 Peter 2:11** (Parallel theme): Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

**1 Corinthians 6:18** (Parallel theme): Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

**Ephesians 4:19** (Parallel theme): Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

**2 Corinthians 12:21** (Parallel theme): And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

**Revelation 21:8** (Parallel theme): But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

**Romans 7:23** (Parallel theme): But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

**Matthew 15:19** (Evil): For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: