

How To Obtain Victory Over Sin

(Romans 6:1-14)

Intro: Paul has argued that all men need God's righteousness because we stand condemned before God (1:18–3:20), and shown how God has graciously provided justification—*declared us right with Himself*—as a free gift of His grace through faith in the redemption Christ accomplished on the cross (3:21–5:21). Beginning in chapter 6, Paul explains how God's righteousness provides salvation from the present power of sin in the redeemed sinner's daily experience. This process of growth in spiritual maturity is called *progressive sanctification*, and is the subject of chapters 6–8.

As the name implies, *progressive sanctification*, refers to the life-long process of transforming a believer into the likeness of Christ. It involves spiritual growth and requires the believer to cooperate with God's Holy Spirit to *produce holiness* in the believer's daily life. Paul stated in Romans 5:5 that God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He gave to us at the moment we trusted in Christ as Savior. The Holy Spirit supplies every believer with the ability to grow in holiness. This new quality of life, in which the Holy Spirit produces the very righteousness and holiness of God in our lives, is called *progressive sanctification*.

Tom Constable, my professor in Romans, explains: “God leads the believer and provides the enablement for him or her to follow, but the believer must choose to follow and make use of the resources for sanctification that God provides. This progressive sanctification will end at death or the Rapture, which ever occurs first. Then the believer will experience glorification. Then his experiential condition will finally conform to his legal standing before God. He or she will then be completely righteous as well as having been declared righteous. God will remove our sinful nature and will conform our lives fully to His will (8:29)” (Tom Constable, *Notes on Romans*, 61). **chart**

In chapters 6–8 Paul explains how sinners justified by God's grace can become more holy (godly, righteous) in daily living before our glorification. He explains how we can live victorious Christian lives (chap. 6), apart from the Law (chap. 7), because we are empowered by the Holy Spirit (8).

The theme of Romans 6 is that believers in Jesus Christ are no longer slaves to sin. Just as our identification in Adam resulted in sin and

condemnation (Rom. 5), so now, our identification with Jesus Christ results in victory over bondage to sin (Rom. 6:1-14) and the Law (Rom. 6:15-23).

The truth of both Scripture and experience is that, although the believer in Jesus Christ has died to sin, sin has not died to the believer. Sin still resides within the believer and seeks to express itself in his attitudes and actions. Victory over the indwelling power of sin is found in submission to God and the controlling power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. This is an extremely practical section in Paul's development of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. As Doug Moo suggests, "Subduing the power of sin is the topic of Romans 6." In order to experience victory over sin in our daily lives we need to **know** certain facts (vv. 1-10), **reckon** those facts to be true (v. 11), and then **yield** ourselves to God's indwelling Holy Spirit (vv. 12-14). These three action on the believer's part, *to know*, *to reckon*, and *to yield*, provide the outline of this section. **See the Outline on the back of your handout.**

IV. Righteousness Imparted: Process Of Sanctification (6:1–8:39)

A. No longer slaves to sin (6:1-23)

1. Dead to sin, alive in Christ (6:1-14)

a. Know you are free in Christ (vv. 1-10)

1-2—What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? **2** May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

As was his custom, Paul anticipates the response of his imaginary opponents to what he just said about the super-abundant nature of God's grace in Romans 5:20: that when sin increases, God's grace abounds all the more. The question was bound to arise: "What shall we say then? Why not continue in sin that God's grace might abound to His greater glory?"

Antinomians, those who reject the law and advocate total freedom, would promote this view. Antinomians perverted the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in order to provide an excuse to pursue a sinful lifestyle. Equally possible is the question could be raised by *conscientious Jews*, who felt the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone would encourage moral irresponsibility. They contended that believers would feel free to sin so they could experience more of God's grace.

These objections prove that some of Paul's readers did not understand the precious value of God's grace. They were going to extremes, promoting *license* on one hand and *legalism* on the other. Paul wants them to know the true meaning of God's grace, and what it has and will accomplish in their lives.

v. 2—Paul's answer to his own rhetorical question is a resounding "Absolutely not!" (*me genoito*). May it never be!

v. 2—May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

There is absolutely no way that God's grace is designed to promote sin. This is an illogical and absurd conclusion. How can those who have died in relation to sin continue to live in sin. Paul personified sin and described it as have a ruling power. **We died to sin's ruling power** the moment we received Jesus Christ as our Savior, i.e., at the time of our conversion.

The repetition of the word "know" in verses 3-10 indicates that Paul wanted his readers to understand a basic doctrine. That is, victorious Christian living depends on vital Christian learning. Duty is always founded on doctrine = *biblical teaching*. The focus of Paul's discussion in this section is on the believer's ability to obtain victory over sin because of our new spiritual union with Christ. Just as our identification with Adam resulted in sin and condemnation (Rom. 5), so now, our identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection results in victory over bondage to sin (6:1-14).

Jesus Christ not only died for our sins, He also died to break the ruling power of sin in our lives. Look at vv. 3-5,

3 Or do you not **know** that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

Paul wants Christians *to know* that their baptism into Jesus Christ resulted in death to the reigning power of sin in their lives. It appears that Paul had both literal and figurative baptism in mind in this paragraph. He used his

readers' experience of water baptism to remind them of their identification with Jesus Christ through the spiritual baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). Water baptism by immersion provides a beautiful picture of the believer's having been united to Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism by the Holy Spirit joins the believer to Jesus Christ, separating him/her from the old life and associating him/her with the new life in Christ. They are no longer in Adam, but are now in Christ. Baptism by the Holy Spirit takes place at the moment of conversion, as the Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into Christ's death (1 Cor. 12:13), so that Christ's death *for sin* becomes our death *to sin*.

Not only are believers baptized into Christ's death and burial, according to **verse 4** Believer have been raised from the dead with Christ through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. Just as God the Father raised His Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead as a manifestation of His glorious power, so too we have been raised to an entirely new way of living. The Holy Spirit separates believers from the ruling power of sin and gives them the ability to live for God's glory. Sin is no longer master over believers. Paul said in Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me." Paul lived his life to please his Lord, and not himself.

Paul continues in verse 5 by stating that since we have become united with Christ in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Paul seems to be referring to the certainty of the believer's future hope of physical resurrection, rather than to a new quality of life. Since we have been spiritually united to Christ's death, we shall also share in His resurrection.

The next thing **Paul wants us to know is that our old man was crucified with Christ**, so that we should no longer live as slaves to sin, vv. 6-7

6 knowing this, that our old self/old man was crucified with Christ, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; **7** for he who has died is freed from sin.

The term "old man" refers to the unregenerate life, all we were in Adam before coming to faith in Christ. The term "new man" represents the new

life in Christ, being made a new man or woman in Christ. Our old man was crucified with Christ, so that our body of sin might be done away with.

The old man is not, as many insist, referring to our sin nature, but to our former life as a descendant of Adam. The old nature refers to the sinful human nature that every human being possesses as long as he or she lives. Even though our old man has been crucified with Christ, the old nature lives on wagging war in our members.

The great truth here is that when we come to faith in Jesus Christ, God's Spirit gives us a new quality of life. The life dominated by the Holy Spirit provides us victory over the old man, the Adam-dominated life controlled by sin. v. 7 for he who has died is freed from sin. **Death ends all claims.**

Illustration of believer's union and identification with Christ:

The importance of the believer's union and identification with Christ cannot be overstated. L. E. Maxwell illustrates the believer's identification with Christ in this way:

During the Civil War a man by the name of **George Wyatt** was drawn by lot to go to the front. He had a wife and six children. A good friend of his named **Richard Pratt** offered to go in his stead. He was accepted and joined the ranks, bearing the name and number of George Wyatt. Before long Pratt was killed in action. The authorities later sought again to draft George Wyatt into service. He protested, entering the plea that he had died in the person of Pratt. He demanded that the authorities consult their own records as to the fact of his having died in the person of Pratt, his substitute. Wyatt was thereby exempted as beyond the claims of law and further service. He had died in the person of his representative. There we have the truth of identification in a nut-shell. God's way of deliverance is through death—through identification with our Substitute in His death and resurrection.¹

The third thing Paul wants believers to know is recorded in vv. 8-10. As he typically does, Paul repeats the same truth taught in verses 5-7.

Rom. 6:8 Now, since we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall

¹L. E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified* (Chicago: Moody, 1945), 15.

also live with Him, **9 knowing** that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. **10** For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

Those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ are identified with Him, and as such, they have died with Christ through Spirit baptism. In the same way, *believers know*, they keep on placing their faith in the fact that they will also live with Christ. Our future resurrection to life begins at the moment of our regeneration, but will continue forever because of our spiritual union with Christ.

Jesus died to sin once for all, and was raised from the dead never to die again, death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. In the same way, believers are to live Spirit-dominated lives. Lives free of the dominating influence of sin. We will sin on occasion, but sin should no longer be master over us.

Now that *we know* what God has done for us in Christ (vv. 3, 6, 9), we are *to reckon* ourselves as dead to sin, but alive in Christ, v. 11

b. Reckon yourself dead to sin, but alive in Christ (v. 11)

11 Even so reckon/consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Since God has united us with Christ we are to “reckon,” “consider,” or “count,” ourselves as those who are not under the dominating influence of sin any longer. The verb is *a present imperative in Greek* indicating that *we are to continually view ourselves as dead to the reigning power of sin in our lives*. We must begin to appropriate our life in Christ, and realize that we are free to live a life that is dominated by the Spirit.

John Stott provided the following observation on Romans 6:11:

Now “reckoning” is not make-believe. It is not screwing up our faith to believe something we do not believe. We are not to pretend that our old nature has died when we know perfectly well that it has not. We are rather to realize that our old self—that is our former self, all we were in Adam—

did die, thus paying the penalty of its sins and putting an end to its career. So Paul says “reckon yourselves” (AV), or better “consider yourselves” (RSV), as being what in fact you are—dead to sin and alive to God.²

Once we have come to *know* that we have been united to Christ, in His death, burial, and resurrection (vv. 1-10), and *reckoned* ourselves as dead to sin and alive to God (v. 11), all that remains is for us to *yield or present* ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness, vv. 12-14

c. Yield/present yourself to God (vv. 12-14)

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, **13a** and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; **13b** Present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. **14** For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

The word “Therefore” draws to a conclusion all that Paul has been saying in this passage (Rom. 6:1-11). Since believers *know* that we are no longer subject to sin’s controlling influence, and since we *reckon* this to be true, we must *stop yielding* the members of our body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness.

The word *instruments* is a military term meaning weapons. The members of our bodies, our eyes, our ears, our tongues, our hands, our feet, are to be used as weapons in the promotion of God’s righteousness. Paul exhorts us to stop presenting or yielding the members of our bodies to sin’s controlling influences. Stop using your tongue to slander others, and to spread gossip. Instead, use your tongue to praise and bless God and one another. Let your feet and hands be quick to render service in the church and to one another.

The Christian life requires decisive action. We need to stop yielding the members of our bodies to sin as instruments/weapons of unrighteousness, and start presenting ourselves to God as those alive from the dead because of our faith in Jesus Christ. If we do this, sin will no longer be master over us. We need to begin living for God’s glory, and present ourselves to God

²John R. W. Stott, *Men Made New* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1974), 49.

in a once for all decisive act of self-dedication.

Griffith Thomas concludes that as believers “We are to occupy ourselves with Christ, to allow the Holy Spirit to reign supreme in our hearts, and thus by His divine counteractive power we shall have perpetual victory over the evil nature within.... Such is the tendency of the evil nature that if it is allowed to predominate we become powerless against sin.”

Conclusion: The truth of both Scripture and experience is that, although the believer in Jesus Christ has died to sin (Rom 6:1–11), sin has not died to the believer. Sin still resides within the believer and seeks to express itself in his attitudes and actions. Victory over the indwelling power of sin is found in yielding or presenting ourselves to God and the controlling power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Applications: The Christian life is one of spiritual growth. Spiritual maturity is a process. We begin as new-born babes, and as we long for the pure milk of God’s Word, we begin to grow.

1. Do you long for the pure milk of God’s Word?
2. Have you moved on to enjoy more solid food?
3. Do you still surrender to sin’s dominating influence in your daily life?
4. Have you surrendered your life to God to be used as an instrument of His glory?

Prayer

Closing song You Deliver Me!

Outline of Romans

- I. Salutation And Statement Of Theme (1:1-17)
- II. Righteousness Needed Because Of Sin And Condemnation (1:18–3:20)
- III. Righteousness of God Imputed Through Justification (3:21–5:21)
- IV. Righteousness Imparted: Process Of Sanctification (6:1–8:39)**
 - A. No longer slaves to sin (6:1-23)**
 - 1. Dead to sin, alive in Christ (6:1-14)
 - a. Know you are free in Christ (vv. 1-10)
 - b. Reckon yourself dead to sin, but alive in Christ (v. 11)
 - c. Yield/present yourself to God (vv. 12-14)
 - 1) Stop yielding to sin (v. 12-13b)
 - 2) Present yourself to God (vv. 13b-14)
 - 2. Free from Law, enslaved to God (6:15-23)
 - B. No longer slaves to the Law (7:1-25)**
 - C. Living in the Spirit (8:1-39)**
- V. Righteousness Vindicated: Dispensation Of Grace (9:1–11:36)
- VI. Righteousness Practiced: Service To God And Others (12:1–15:13)
- VII. Conclusion (15:14–16:27).