

Romans 6:1-14
March 1, 2015

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: How many of you have set personal goals for 2015?

Q: For those who do, which goals are designed to strengthen you or a relationship? [They can be marriage conferences, strengthen the body in the gym, strengthen the heart with cardio, etc]

Q: How many of you have goals to strengthen your walk or relationship with the Lord?

Q: If you don't have specific goals for strengthening your relationship to the Lord, what do you think the goals would look like? [Bible reading plans, devotionals, volunteering in a ministry...]

I'm in your boat too. I do set personal goals around fitness, finances for my Living Giving plan, ways to grow as a bible study teacher, and ways to improve relationships:

- Financially, continue to fund Roths for my young cousins as they earn income
- Financially, continue to fund 529s for my baby cousins and fund a permanent life insurance policy for each.
- Relational goal: Give everyone the benefit of the doubt
- Fitness: Ride my stationery bike for 30"/day for six days and make sure RPMs are 80+; workout on my Total Gym 3 days/week for strength and toning.
- Spiritually: Finish the 2-yr bible reading plan; read daily devotional "Jesus Calling," and go through a seminar to improve my skills as a bible study teacher and continue to watch Andy Stanley and Dr. Haney's communication skillsets. I learn from both of them. Feed spiritual encouragement by posting blogs twice a month.

It's the beginning of March and I am still on track with all of these goals. But I'm sure I'll run into some resistance at some point, because everyone has those times when it gets hard and you have to find your "why" behind the goal!

Transition: If you're listening to this opening and saying to yourself, "I have no idea how I can strengthen my relationship to the Lord on top of what I'm already doing," stay tuned. Paul is going to give us some TRUTHS that we need to revisit. If you've been a Christian a long time, the truths may not be new to you, but it may be time to hit the "refresh" button and spend some time reflecting on them today. If you will take the time to really pray through what you learn today, I don't know how you WON'T be strengthened in your walk with the Lord! There are two words that recur throughout Romans that we need pay attention to: Sin and Slaves. If we digest this passage well, it is my belief that every believer CAN strengthen their walk with the Lord BY acting on some basic TRUTHS that are revealed in this passage.

BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Romans 6:1-14]

V.1:

- What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

V.2:

- By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

V.3:

- Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
- V.4:
- We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.
- V.5:
- If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.
- V.6:
- For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—
- V.7:
- because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.
- V.8:
- Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.
- V.9:
- For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.
- V.10:
- The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God.
[Jesus gave us this basic template/model to follow]
- V.11:
- In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
- V.12:
- Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.
- V.13:
- Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.
- V.14:
- For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Process Observations/Questions:

- Q v.1, 2: Paul begins this chapter by using Romans 5 as his springboard. He emphasized justification that brings life to all men. Now he opens up Chapter 6 with three questions. What are they? [#1- What shall we say, then? #2- Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? #3- We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?]
- Q: Do you have these same questions? What tensions do you feel as you read these questions? [If we're born again, why do we continue to sin?! Life would be so much better if our sin condition were cured once we professed Christ as our Lord.]
- Q: Do you think that the idea that "we can keep on sinning because grace abounds all the more" is still prevalent today, even among Christians? [It was in Paul's day! Paul opposed this prevalent idea. That is, since God saves people by grace (5:21), it does not matter how people live. Paul found this idea abhorrent. It was completely inconsistent with salvation's purpose, which is to produce holy lives. The result of entering into Christ

should be victory over sin—ultimately, but also presently. This mandates every effort to counter sin’s effects in a believer’s life.]

- Q v.3-7: Paul answers his own questions using baptism as his illustration. What picture does he draw for those who professed Jesus as their Savior? [Upon our profession of faith, we were not just baptized into Christ Jesus, but we started with our old self being “buried with Christ into death,” but raised to life as a new creation in Christ and live with Him for eternity!]
- X-REF: Galatians 2:20 “I have been crucified *with* Christ and I (the old self) no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” [That is a great picture of what happened when we said “yes” to Jesus!]
- Q: Why is going through baptism so important to our walk with the Lord? [It’s a public profession. We are identifying with a local body of Christ and the church universal. We are also following the command of Jesus to “be baptized” as an act of obedience.]
- Q: Would anyone like to share your baptism and why it was meaningful to you? Did you invite family and friends? [Let people share who feel led to do so.]
- Rhetorical Q: Think about what it means to be “born again.” It really hit me hard as I was preparing this lesson that I have really minimized or discounted the important reality that I had to DIE first. My OLD SELF had to be “crucified with Jesus” before I could be born “again.” He didn’t just “improve upon the old me.” He’s not putting on a new coat of paint on my old self to help me “look” brand new. He didn’t whitewash my sins. He had to put to death the “old me” in order for me to become a “new creation” in Christ Jesus. So my first birth was Nov 3rd, but my second birth spiritually happened when I became a new creation in Christ Jesus between November and December of 1970. I followed that decision with baptism on January 31, 1971, at Highland Park Baptist Church.
- Emphasize: Our baptism is supposed to follow our profession of faith in Christ as soon after as we can.
- Q: Is there anyone in this room who has not been baptized and would like help following through on it? [Let people respond.]
- Q v.6: What were we set free from as soon as we were crucified *with* Christ? [from being slaves to sin]
- Q v.8-10: Now that we are freed from being enslaved to sin, what else does Paul emphasize that he doesn’t want us to forget? [We haven’t just crucified the old self, but we will also get to live with Him for eternity! He’s saying don’t forget that Jesus conquered death that has no mastery over Him. We can be confident that we will continue to live for eternity because Jesus was resurrected from the dead.]
- Q v.11: Paul has just gone to great lengths to illustrate our inward spiritual experience through the picture of baptism. Now what does he want his reader to take to the bank? [Just as Christ died to sin once for all and now lives to God, YOU are dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. He’s saying “Count on it. Take it to the bank. This is fact!]
- Q v.12-14: Here’s an important “therefore.” We always ask, “What is it ‘there for?’” What does Paul instruct us to do as believers? [#1- Don’t let sin reign in our bodies so that we want to obey its evil desires. #2- Don’t offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer our bodies to God. #3- Offer our bodies to Christ as instruments of righteousness.]

- Observation: Notice that it is in our control to *choose* whether we allow sin to be our master that would lead us to obey evil desires, or to choose using our bodies as a living sacrifice to God as instruments of righteousness. We see another principle in these verses: Surrender/completely yield ourselves to Christ.
- Q: Let's get back to our focal topic for today: "What TRUTHS do you see in these first 14 verses that will help you strengthen your walk or relationship with the Lord? [See v.6, 8, 10, 12. If they get stuck, share the inward reality of the Holy Spirit who resides in our heart.]
 - X-Ref: Rev 3:20, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears..."
 - Hypothetical Q: If Jesus knocked on your door wanting to live with you in your home permanently, would you let him in? How would you feel having Jesus in your home?! He's not just our guest! He's not a new roommate! I am now a part of His family, i.e. the precious child of the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Prince of Peace.
 - Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, so when we made our profession of faith in Christ, we opened the door so that the Holy Spirit could reside in our hearts. Because Jesus is our Lord, we allow Him to be our spiritual leader through His Holy Spirit.
 - Q: How does this relationship look in your home of your heart? Do we close the door to some rooms of our house to communicate "you're not welcome in this part of the home?" Does the Spirit of God have free reign so that He can lead us in all areas of our life? If not, we are not completely surrendered to Jesus and His Lordship.

LOOK:

Some of you may be thinking, "I thought today's lesson was about hitting the "refresh" button on truths we already know." Yet you may be overwhelmed all over again about what your walk with Christ should look like once you professed your faith in Christ and was sealed by the Holy Spirit. First, I always believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in each of us. He knows what we each need, so our takeaways for today's lesson is not necessarily a "one size fits all." I do believe that the way the Spirit speaks to us is by pointing our thoughts and mind to particular passages or ideas. So with that preamble, would someone like to share where the Spirit has taken your focus based on today's lesson?

It is my prayer that you don't walk out the door, get in your car, start checking texts and emails, etc. Let's enter our cars in a spirit of prayer and ask the Lord to reveal to us any areas of your life that may not be completely surrendered to Him. Ask Him to lay on your heart what steps you can take to strengthen your relationship with Him. I promise you that He has a vested interest in answering your prayer!

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 530–534). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

During a court session, an attorney will often rise to his feet and say, “Your Honor, I object!” Some of the Roman Christians must have felt like objecting as they heard Paul’s letter being read, and Paul seemed to anticipate their thinking. In Romans 6–8 Paul defended his doctrine of justification by faith. He anticipated three objections: (1) “If God’s grace abounds when we sin, then let’s continue sinning so we might experience more grace” (Rom. 6:1–14); (2) “If we are no longer under the Law, then we are free to live as we please” (Rom. 6:15–7:6); and (3) “You have made God’s Law sinful” (Rom. 7:7–25).

These objections prove that the readers did not understand either Law or grace. They were going to extremes: legalism on the one hand and license on the other. So as Paul defended justification he also explained sanctification. He told how we can live lives of *victory* (Rom. 6), *liberty* (Rom. 7), and *security* (Rom. 8). He explained our relationship to the flesh, the Law, and the Holy Spirit. In Romans 6, Paul gave three instructions for attaining victory over sin.

Know (Rom. 6:1–10)

The repetition of the word “know” in Romans 6:1, 6, and 9 indicates that Paul wanted us to understand a basic doctrine. Christian living depends on Christian learning; duty is always founded on doctrine. If Satan can keep a Christian ignorant, he can keep him impotent.

The basic truth Paul was teaching is the believer’s identification with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. Just as we are identified with Adam in sin and condemnation, so we are now identified with Christ in righteousness and justification. At Romans 5:12, Paul made a transition from discussing “sins” to discussing “sin”—from the actions to the principle, from the fruit to the root. Jesus Christ not only died for our sins, but He also died unto sin, and we died with Him. Perhaps a chart will explain the contrasts better.

Romans 3:21–5:21

Romans 6–8

substitution: He died for me

Identification: I died with Him

He died *for* my sins

He died *unto* sin

He paid sin’s penalty

He broke sin’s power

Justification: righteousness

Sanctification: righteousness

imputed (put to my account)

imparted (made a part of my life)

Saved by His death

Saved by His life

In other words, justification by faith is not simply a legal matter between me and God; it is a living relationship. It is “a justification which brings life” (Rom. 5:18, literal translation). I am in Christ and identified with Him. Therefore, whatever happened to Christ has happened to me. When He died, I died. When He arose, I arose in Him. I am now seated with Him in the

heavenlies! (see Eph. 2:1–10; Col. 3:1–3) Because of this living union with Christ, the believer has a totally new relationship to sin.

He is dead to sin (vv. 2–5). Paul’s illustration is baptism. The Greek word has two basic meanings: (1) a literal meaning—to dip or immerse; and (2) a figurative meaning—to be identified with. An example of the latter would be 1 Corinthians 10:2: “And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” The nation of Israel was identified with Moses as their leader when they crossed the Red Sea.

It appears that Paul had both the literal and the figurative in mind in this paragraph, for he used the readers’ experience of water baptism to remind them of their identification with Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To be “baptized into Jesus Christ” (Rom. 6:3) is the same as “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13). There is a difference between water baptism and the baptism of the Spirit (John 1:33). When a sinner trusts Christ, he is immediately born into the family of God and receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. A good illustration of this is the household of Cornelius when they heard Peter preach (Acts 10:34–48). When these people believed on Christ, they immediately received the Holy Spirit. After that, they were baptized. Peter’s words, “Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins” gave to them the promise that they needed. They believed—and they were saved!

Historians agree that the mode of baptism in the early church was immersion. The believer was “buried” in the water and brought up again as a picture of death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism by immersion (which is the illustration Paul is using in Rom. 6) pictures the believer’s identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. It is an outward symbol of an inward experience. Paul is not saying that their immersion in water put them “into Jesus Christ,” for that was accomplished by the Spirit when they believed. Their immersion was a picture of what the Spirit did: the Holy Spirit identified them with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

This means that the believer has a new relationship to sin. He is “dead to sin.” “I am crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20). If a drunk dies, he can no longer be tempted by alcohol because his body is dead to all physical senses. He cannot see the alcohol, smell it, taste it, or desire it. In Jesus Christ we have died to sin so that we no longer want to “continue in sin.” But we are not only dead to sin; we are also alive in Christ. We have been raised from the dead and now walk in the power of His resurrection. We walk in “newness of life” because we share His life. “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live” (Gal. 2:20).

This tremendous spiritual truth is illustrated in the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11). When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb four days; so there was no question about his death. By the power of His word (“Lazarus, come forth!”) Jesus raised His friend from the dead. But when Lazarus appeared at the door of the tomb, he was wrapped in graveclothes. So Jesus commanded, “Loose him, and let him go!” He had been raised to walk “in newness of life.” In John 12, Lazarus was seated with Christ at the table, in fellowship with Him. Dead—raised from the dead—set free to walk in newness of life—seated with Christ: all of these facts illustrate the spiritual truths of our identification with Christ as given in Ephesians 2:1–10.

Too many Christians are “betweeners”: they live between Egypt and Canaan, saved but never satisfied; or they live between Good Friday and Easter, believing in the Cross but not entering into the power and glory of the Resurrection. Romans 6:5 indicates that our union with Christ assures our future resurrection should we die. But Romans 6:4 teaches that we share His resurrection power *today*. “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above . . . For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:1, 3, NIV).

It is clear, then, that the believer cannot deliberately live in sin since he has a new relationship to sin because of his identification with Christ. The believer has died to the old life; he has been raised to enjoy a new life. The believer does not want to go back into sin any more than Lazarus wanted to go back into the tomb dressed again in his graveclothes! Then Paul introduced a second fact:

He should not serve sin (vv. 6–10). Sin is a terrible master, and it finds a willing servant in the human body. The body is not sinful; the body is neutral. It can be controlled either by sin or by God. But man's fallen nature, which is not changed at conversion, gives sin a beachhead from which it can attack and then control. Paul expressed the problem: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom. 7:18).

A tremendous fact is introduced here: the old man (the old ego, self) was crucified with Christ so that the body need not be controlled by sin. The word "destroyed" in Romans 6:6 does not mean annihilated; it means "rendered inactive, made of no effect." The same Greek word is translated "loosed" in Romans 7:2. If a woman's husband dies, she is "loosed" from the law of her husband and is free to marry again. There is a change in relationship. The law is still there, but it has no authority over the woman because her husband is dead.

Sin wants to be our master. It finds a foothold in the old nature, and through the old nature seeks to control the members of the body. But in Jesus Christ, we died to sin; and the old nature was crucified so that the old life is rendered inoperative. Paul was not describing an experience; he was stating a fact. The practical experience was to come later. It is a fact of history that Jesus Christ died on the cross. It is also a fact of history that the believer died with Him; and "he that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:7). Not "free to sin" as Paul's accusers falsely stated; but "freed from sin."

Sin and death have no dominion over Christ. We are "in Christ"; therefore, sin and death have no dominion over us. Jesus Christ not only died "for sin," but He also died "unto sin." That is, He not only paid the penalty for sin, but He broke the power of sin. This idea of dominion takes us back to Romans 5:12–21 where Paul dealt with the "reigns" of sin, death, and grace. Through Christ we "reign in life" (Rom. 5:17) so that sin no longer controls our lives.

The big question now is, "I believe the facts of history; but how do I make this work in daily experience?" This leads to Paul's second instruction.

Reckon (Rom. 6:11)

In some parts of the United States, "to reckon" means "to think" or "to guess." "I reckon" is also the equivalent of "I suppose." But none of these popular meanings can apply to this verse. The word *reckon* is a translation of a Greek word that is used forty-one times in the New Testament—nineteen times in Romans alone. It appears in Romans 4 where it is translated as "count, reckon, impute." It means "to take into account, to calculate, to estimate." The word *impute*—"to put to one's account"—is perhaps the best translation.

To reckon means "to put to one's account." It simply means to believe that what God says in His Word is really true in your life.

Paul didn't tell his readers to *feel* as if they were dead to sin, or even to *understand* it fully, but to act on God's Word and claim it for themselves. Reckoning is a matter of faith that issues in action. It is like endorsing a check: if we really believe that the money is in the checking account, we will sign our name and collect the money. Reckoning is not claiming a promise, but acting on a fact. God does not command us to become dead to sin. He tells us that we *are* dead to

sin and alive unto God, and then commands us to act on it. Even if we do not act on it, the facts are still true.

Paul's first instruction ("know") centered in the *mind*, and this second instruction ("reckon") focuses on the *heart*. His third instruction touches the *will*.

Yield (Rom. 6:12–23)

The word *yield* is found five times in this section (Rom. 6:13, 16, and 19), and means "to place at one's disposal, to present, to offer as a sacrifice." According to Romans 12:1, the believer's body should be presented to the Lord as "a living sacrifice" for His glory. The Old Testament sacrifices were dead sacrifices. The Lord may ask some of us to die for Him, but He asks all of us to *live* for Him.

How we are to yield (vv. 12–13). This is an act of the will based on the knowledge we have of what Christ has done for us. It is an intelligent act—not the impulsive decision of the moment based on some emotional stirring. It is important to notice the tenses of the verbs in these verses. A literal translation is: "Do not constantly allow sin to reign in your mortal body so that you are constantly obeying its lusts. Neither constantly yield your members of your body as weapons [or tools] of unrighteousness to sin; but once and for all yield yourselves to God." That once-and-for-all surrender is described in Romans 12:1.

There must be in the believer's life that final and complete surrender of the body to Jesus Christ. This does not mean there will be no further steps of surrender, because there will be. The longer we walk with Christ, the deeper the fellowship must become. But there can be no subsequent steps without that first step. The tense of the verb in Romans 12:1 corresponds with that in Romans 6:13—a once-and-for-all yielding to the Lord. To be sure, we daily surrender afresh to Him; but even that is based on a final and complete surrender.

Why does the Lord want your body? To begin with, the believer's body is God's temple, and He wants to use it for His glory (1 Cor. 6:19–20; Phil. 1:20–21). But Paul wrote that the body is also God's tool and God's weapon (Rom. 6:13). God wants to use the members of the body as tools for building His kingdom and weapons for fighting His enemies.

The Bible tells of people who permitted God to take and use their bodies for the fulfilling of His purposes. God used the rod in Moses' hand and conquered Egypt. He used the sling in David's hand to defeat the Philistines. He used the mouths and tongues of the prophets. Paul's dedicated feet carried him from city to city as he proclaimed the Gospel. The Apostle John's eyes saw visions of the future, his ears heard God's message, and his fingers wrote it all down in a book that we can read.

But you can also read in the Bible accounts of the members of the body being used for sinful purposes. David's eyes looked on his neighbor's wife; his mind plotted a wicked scheme; his hand signed a cowardly order for the woman's husband to be killed. As you read Psalm 51, you see that his whole body was affected by sin: his eyes (Ps. 51:3), mind (Ps. 51:6), ears (Ps. 51:8), heart (Ps. 51:10), and lips and mouth (Ps. 51:14–15). No wonder he prayed for a *thorough* cleansing! (Ps. 51:2)

Witmer, J. A. (1985). Romans. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 461–465). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

A. *Ground of sanctification (6:1–4).*

6:1–2. The questions that open this section demand reflection. A review of God’s provision by grace through Jesus Christ should elicit praise to God. But the teaching on God’s justification of sinful people (3:21–5:21) and the statement of 5:20 in particular might lead some to suggest what Paul expressed: **Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?** Some may have reasoned that since grace increases “all the more” when sin abounds, then believers ought to sin more so they could experience more grace! The apostle voiced this idea only to reject it vehemently: **By no means!** (*mē genoito*; cf. comments on 3:4) In no way is the abundance of God’s grace designed to encourage sin.

Then Paul explained why such a thought cannot be entertained. The fact is, Christians **died to sin** (cf. 6:7, 11). The Greek aorist (past) tense for “died” suggests a specific point when the action occurred, at salvation. Death, whether physical or spiritual, means separation, not extinction (cf. vv. 6–7, 14). Death to sin is separation from sin’s power, not the extinction of sin. Being dead to sin means being “set free from sin” (vv. 18, 22). That being true, Paul asked, **How can they live in it any longer?** Obviously believers cannot *live* in sin if they *died* to it.

6:3–4. Paul explained in more detail the spiritual basis for his abrupt declaration, “We died to sin” (v. 2). Whether the Roman Christians knew it or not, the fact is **that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death.** The question here is whether Paul had in mind Spirit baptism (1 Cor. 12:13) or water baptism. Some object to taking Romans 6:3 as Spirit baptism because that verse speaks of being “baptized into Christ” whereas 1 Corinthians 12:13 speaks of Spirit baptism placing the believer into Christ’s *body*. Of course, both are true: the believer is “baptized” (placed into) Christ and also into the body of Christ, and both are done by the Holy Spirit.

Others take Romans 6:3 to refer to water baptism, but the problem with that is that it seems to suggest that baptism saves. However, the New Testament consistently denies baptismal regeneration, presenting water baptism as a public attestation to an accomplished spiritual work (cf., e.g., Acts 10:44–48; 16:29–33). The spiritual reality Paul spoke of is that by faith believers are “baptized (placed) into Christ” and thereby are united and identified with Him. This spiritual reality is then graphically witnessed to and pictured by believers’ baptism in water. The one baptism (by water) is the visible picture of the spiritual truth of the other baptism (identification with Christ; cf. Gal. 3:27, “baptized into Christ . . . clothed with Christ”).

This is supported by the statement, **We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death.** Christ’s burial shows that He actually died (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3–4). Christians’ “burial” with Christ shows that they in fact died with Him to their former sinful ways of living. The purpose of their identification with Christ in His death and burial is **that just as Christ was raised from the dead** (lit., “out from dead ones”; cf. Rom. 4:24; 8:11) **through the glory** (a synonym for God’s power; cf. Eph. 1:19; Col. 2:12) **of the Father, we too may live a new life** (lit., “so also in newness of life we should walk about”). The Greek word “newness” (*kainotēti*) speaks of life that has a new or fresh quality. The resurrection of Jesus was not just a resuscitation; it was a new form of life. In the same way the spiritual lives of believers in Jesus have a new, fresh quality. Also, a believer’s identification with Jesus Christ in His resurrection, besides being the start of new spiritual life now, is also the guarantee of physical resurrection.

This work of God at salvation in identifying a believer with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection—thus separating him from sin’s power and giving him a new quality of life—is the basis of the Holy Spirit’s continuing work in sanctification.

B. Attitudes for sanctification (6:5–23)

Sanctification begins with regeneration, the implanting of spiritual life in a believer. From that starting point sanctification is God’s progressively separating a believer from sin to Himself and transforming his total life experience toward holiness and purity. The process of sanctification for a believer never ends while he is on earth in his mortal body. It is consummated in glorification when that believer through death and resurrection or through the Rapture stands in the presence of God “conformed to the likeness of His Son” (8:29). A believer’s identification with Jesus Christ by faith is both the ground and the goal of sanctification. The process of translating that identification into the daily experience of progressive sanctification, however, demands three attitudes of mind and action on a believer’s part. These Paul discussed in 6:5–23.

1. RECKON (6:5–11)

The first attitude for sanctification demanded of believers is to “count” (pres. imper., “keep on counting”) themselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (v. 11). Being able to reckon something as true, however, depends on knowing and believing certain things. These things to know and believe are stated in verses 5–10.

6:5–7. The first clause should be translated, “Since (not **if**) **we have** become **united** in the likeness of **His death**,” because the statement is assumed to be true and is true. It affirms the certainty of the second clause of the sentence, which promises that believers are **united with Christ in** the likeness of **His resurrection**. As a result **we know** (*ginōskontes* suggests experimental or reflective knowing, not intuitive knowledge as in *eidotes* in v. 9) **that our old self was crucified with Him**. Literally, the last portion of this sentence is, “our old man was crucified together,” obviously with Christ. A believer’s “old man” is the person as he was spiritually before he trusted Christ, when he was still under sin (3:9), powerless and ungodly (5:6), a sinner (5:8), and an enemy of God (5:10). (“Old self” or “old man” does not refer to the sin nature as such. The Bible does not teach that the sin nature was eradicated at salvation or is ever eradicated in this life.)

The “old man” was “crucified” with Christ (cf. “baptized into His death,” 6:3; and “united with Him in His death,” v. 5) **so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless**. The phrase “the body of sin” does not mean that a human body is sinful in itself. It means that one’s physical body is controlled or ruled by sin (cf. comments on “body of death” in 7:24). This was the condition of each believer before his conversion. But now at salvation the power of controlling sin is broken; it is “rendered powerless” or ineffective (*katargēthē*; trans. “nullify” in 1 Cor. 1:28).

The next clause (Rom. 6:6b–7) in effect explains the first clause (v. 6a). In his unregenerate state a believer was enslaved **to sin**. But his “old man” was crucified (identified) with Christ, and that is the basis for deliverance from enslavement to sin. **Anyone who has died has been freed from sin**. The words “has been freed” are a loose rendering of *dedikaiōtai*, literally, “has been justified or declared righteous.” The perfect tense of this verb describes a past action with a continuing effect or force. Sin no longer has the legal right to force its mastery and control on a believer, for he has died with Christ.

6:8–11. These verses state much the same truth as verses 5–7 and in the same format, beginning with **if** (“since”). Those who by faith receive Jesus Christ and are identified with Him have **died with Christ** (cf. vv. 3, 5). Because this is true, **we believe** (pres. tense, “we keep on believing”) **that we will also live with Him**. The sharing of the resurrection life of Christ begins

at the moment of regeneration, but it will continue as a believer shares eternity with the Lord. Again as a result **we know** (*eidotes*, “intuitive knowledge,” perceiving a self-evident truth [cf. v. 15], not *ginōskontes*, “experimental or reflective knowledge” as in v. 6) that Christ’s resurrection was a removal from the sphere of physical death to an unending spiritual form of life. Having experienced physical death once and having been removed from its realm by resurrection life, Jesus **cannot die again** (lit., “dies no more”). In resurrection Jesus Christ was victorious over death (Acts 2:24) and **death no longer has mastery** (*kyrieuei*, “rules as lord”; cf. Rom. 6:14) **over Him** as it does over all other human beings (John 10:17–18).

Paul summarized this discussion by stating that Jesus in His physical **death ... died to sin** (i.e., in reference to sin) **once for all** (*ephapax*; cf. Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10). This stands in opposition to the doctrine and practice of the so-called perpetual sacrifice of Christ in the Roman Catholic Mass. Contrariwise, **the life He lives, He lives** (pres. tense, “keeps on living”) **to God**. Resurrection life is eternal in quality and everlasting in duration. Furthermore, God is its Source and also its Goal. What is true of Jesus Christ in reality and experience, believers who are identified with Him by faith are commanded to reckon true for themselves. They are to **count themselves dead to** (in reference to) **sin but alive to God**. Since they are dead to its power (Rom. 6:2), they ought to recognize that fact and not continue in sin. Instead they are to realize they have new life **in Christ**; they share His resurrection life (cf. Eph. 2:5–6; Col. 2:12–13).

2. YIELD (6:12–14).

6:12. The attitude of mind that a believer has died to sin must be translated into action in his experience. Paul commanded, **Therefore do not let sin reign** (pres. imper., “do not let sin continue to reign”) as it did before salvation. The present imperative negative can also be translated, “Stop letting sin reign.” When sin reigns in people’s lives and bodies, they **obey its evil desires**. Sin enslaves (v. 6), making a person subject to his own desires. *Epithymia* refers to “longings” or “desires,” which may be either good or evil, depending on how the word is used. Here, in the case of sin, the desires are evil. **In your mortal body** means that sin manifests itself through one’s physical actions in this body. The Greek here stresses that the body is mortal or dying. Perhaps this suggests the foolishness of giving in to the desires of a body that is transitory and decaying. To give in to a dying master is strange indeed.

6:13. Actually this verse repeats the command of verse 12 in more specific terms. **Do not offer** (lit., “do not continue to present,” or “stop presenting”) **the parts of your body** (lit., “your members”; cf. v. 19) **to sin, as instruments** (*hopla*, frequently in military context, “weapons” or “armor”; cf. 13:12; 2 Cor. 6:7; 10:4) **of wickedness** (*adikias*, “unrighteousness” in contrasting parallelism with righteousness, later in Rom. 6:13). On the contrary, in sharp contrast, Paul commanded, **offer** (aorist imper., “present once and for all”; also used in v. 19) **yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life** (lit., “as if being alive out from dead ones”; cf. John 5:24) **and offer the parts of your body** (lit., “and your members”) **to Him as instruments** (*hopla*) **of righteousness** (*dikaiosynēs*). A related passage is Paul’s exhortation, “Offer your bodies as living sacrifices ... to God” (Rom. 12:1). Because they were once dead in sin (cf. Eph. 2:1) but have been given new life (Rom. 6:11) believers ought to live for God. Their bodies should be used not for sin (v. 12) or unrighteousness (v. 13) but for promoting righteousness (cf. “bodies” and “body”; 7:5, 23; 1 Cor. 6:15).

6:14. God’s design is that **sin shall not be your master** (*kyrieusei*; “shall not rule as lord”; cf. v. 9). The reason this should not happen is that **you are not under Law, but under grace**. Paul had already explained that “the Law was added so that the trespass might increase” (5:20),

and elsewhere he declared, “The power of sin is the Law” (1 Cor. 15:56). If believers were still under the Law, it would be impossible to keep sin from exercising mastery. But since believers are “under grace,” this can be done by following Paul’s instructions.

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (pp. 1688 – 1689). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

6:1 Paul opposed the prevalent idea (which some espouse even today) of antinomianism. That is, since God saves people by grace (5:21), it does not matter how people live. Paul found this idea abhorrent—completely inconsistent with salvation’s purpose, which is to produce holy lives. The result of entering into Christ should be victory over sin—ultimately but also presently. This mandates every effort to counter sin’s effects in a believer’s life.