In Christ: The Life of Victory
An Expository Development of Romans 6:1-14

Vincent S Sawyer

Paul in Romans six sets forth a proper basis for victorious Christian living. Although various opinions exist in regard to the means of gaining victory over sin, a contextual examination of Romans 6:1-14 reveals that victory is only possible as the believer knows what he is in Christ, reckons that knowledge to be true (by faith), and yields himself to God.

The Evaluation of an Objector's Question (v 1-2)

The Question Asked

The Grace of God is often misunderstood today just as it was in the days of the Apostle Paul. Many sincere people who are ignorant of the true motive for godly living would claim as people did in Paul's time that salvation by grace alone is actually a "green light" for promiscuous living.

The Apostle Paul, having just penned the words contrasting man's plight of sin "in Adam" with God's provision of gracious eternal life "in Christ" (5:12-21), stated triumphantly that "where sin abounded (being pointed out undeniably by the Law) grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 5:20-21). Paul said that where sin increased and ruled, grace superceded it and took the throne.

Having said this, the apostle anticipated the reply he would receive from his critics. He knew that they would rationalize and say to themselves,"If the rising level of sin means that God's gracious power has to be extended all the more in order to counter and overwhelm that sin, then sin is good for God and for the Gospel."[1] Therefore, Paul responds by asking the critics' question for them, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (6:1).

Paul anticipated the same logic that prompted his diatribe style of questioning and answering as demonstrated in Romans 3:3-7. The use of this question points to Paul's training in the rabbinical schools, where questions were propounded and the students were encouraged to debate, as objections were suddenly interposed and answered.[2]

The question of persisting or continuing in sin for the purpose that God's grace would grow in abundance is asked in such a way that the objector appears as if he is really concerned that God's demonstration of grace would increase, when in actuality he is seeking a basis to justify his own desire to sin. Paul knew of people who would tarnish "the metal of grace by confusing the justification of the sinner with justification for sinning."[3] This appears to be the case in the Corinthian church, where members were "puffed up" over the sexual immorality of a man in their congregation (I Cor 5).

> When Peter states that some of Paul's teachings were being distorted (II Peter 3:16), he may well have been thinking of this particular attempt to twist the meaning of the words used by his "dear brother," the apostle to the Gentiles. We know, at least, that what made Jude change his mind about the contents of a letter he had planned to write was the fact that certain individuals had turned (the doctrine of) the grace of God into a license for immoral living (Jude 4).4).

The Question Answered

The Apostle Paul abruptly responds to the question of "continuing in sin" by declaring "God forbid!" or more literally, "May it never be!" Paul vehemently rejects even the thought of such action. Truth cannot lead to unholiness, and any doctrine that would encourage sin would be false.

Paul demonstrates that it is not only impermissible but also impossible for a believer to continue a lifestyle of sin by rhetorically asking, "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" (v 2). This response is interesting, as "Paul does not initially command the Roman Christians to put off sin. Rather he avers that there is something fundamentally inconsistent about a person who has died to sin living in it any longer." If Paul were to ask, "Can a dead man sin?" the obvious answer would be, "No, he cannot." Death and life cannot co-exist; a person cannot be dead and living with respect to the same thing at the same time.

It is important to note that Paul does not say that believers are (present tense) dying to sin; rather, he is pointing back to a specific act in history whereby the believer once-for-all died (aorist indicative tense) with respect to sin. Many contemporary believers, though earnest and sincere, talk about "dying to self" or "dying to sin," but this is not what Paul is teaching. He said that believers have died to sin.

Is Paul saying a Christian is no longer able to sin? The answer to this question would have to be "No" because if these believers were no longer able to sin, Paul would not have said on the one hand that they "died to sin" (v 2) and then on the other hand have to command them not to let sin reign in their mortal bodies (v 12-13). The questions then raised are: In what sense has a believer died to sin, and when did this occur? Paul now proceeds to answer these questions.

The Realization of a Spiritual Union (v 3-7)

The Merging of Believers with Christ

The Apostle Paul in Romans 6:3 asks a question in such a way as to indicate that the Roman believers should have known when and how they died to sin. He says, "Knew ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" By asking "Know ye not" or "Don't you know" Paul on the one hand is pointing out an inexcusable lack of understanding, and on the other hand he is providing an opportunity to supply the needed doctrinal teaching that he was about to give.

In verses three through five the apostle is calling on his readers to have a realization of a union that took place in the past. By stating that believers are "baptized" (immersed) into Christ's death (v 3), burial (v 4), and resurrection (v 4b-5), Paul is demonstrating a unity by which Christ's completed work is imputed to the believer.

Paul in the beginning of chapter six is continuing his courtroom, judicial or forensic pattern of proving and then pointing out what a believer has in Christ. Having developed the fact that God has declared a person justified (Rom 3:24) by an imputation (or crediting) of Christ's righteousness (Rom 5:19), Paul now adds information about the spiritual reality of that imputation. Paul sheds light on the doctrine of imputation by stating that God plunged or immersed all believers into such a union with Christ that all Christ did has been imputed to all people who believe the Gospel.

Is is as if with respect to one's spiritual status a new entity has come into being. It is as if Christ and the believer have been married or merged to form a new corporation. What Christ accomplished by His death, burial and resurrection has (in God's mind) been transferred to the believer in such a way that God views Christ and the believer as holding all things in common. When a sinner comes by faith to Christ for salvation, he is justified or declared righteous. Simultaneously, Christ and the believer are brought into such a unity that Christ's spiritual assets, as it were, are credited to the believer, and the believer's liabilities are erased.

When God looks at the justified believer, He sees Christ and the believer together. What Christ has belongs to the believer. They are considered joint heirs (Rom 8:16-17). What Paul is building towards is that both salvation (Rom 3-5) and sanctification (Rom 6-8) have their source in the union of Christ and the believer. The Bible describes this union as being a mystery (Eph 5:32; Col 1:26-27), judicial in nature (Rom 6:3-5), spiritual in reality (I Cor 12:13), and living in function (John 15:4). This union is not pantheistic; it does not obliterate one's own personality (Gal 2:20; John 14:12); it is not merely a friendship union (John 14:23); and it is not caused sacramentally by water baptism.

The Meaning of "Baptism"

Many theologians of the past and well-meaning students of the Bible at present view Paul's reference to "baptism" in Romans 6:3-5 as being water baptism. However, as will be demonstrated, this is not possible. There are three views as to the meaning of Paul's reference to baptism in Romans 6:3-5: 1) The Roman Catholic baptismal regeneration position which views water baptism (sprinkling) as an efficacious sacrament that imparts salvation to the one who is baptized; 2) The water baptism (by immersion) position which claims that Paul is referring to the act of immersion after salvation to symbolize or illustrate the believer's union with Christ; and, 3) The baptism (immersion) of a believer by the Holy Spirit into a union with Jesus Christ, which occurs at the moment of salvation.

Baptismal Regeneration View. The baptismal regeneration position as stated by a Roman Catholic theologian maintains that:

> The apostle (in Romans 6:3-5) is not merely suggesting there is only an analogy between the experience of the one who is baptized and the redemptive work of the Lord; instead he indicated that through water baptism (sprinkling) one actually shares in Christ's death, burial and resurrection. When Christ died, the believer died with him; when Christ was buried, the baptized believer was buried with him; when Christ was raised, the baptized believer was raised with him.

By wrongly viewing Paul's reference as water baptism, the Roman Catholic writer makes baptism a sacrament and thus a means of grace (salvation). No Scripture in the Bible supports the assumption that a sinner appropriate or shares the benefits of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ by water baptism. This view, which makes baptism a sacramental work, runs contrary to Paul's teaching of justification by faith (Rom 3-4) in this very book of Romans, as well as Paul's theology as revealed in his other epistles (cp Eph 2:8-9; II Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5).

Water Baptist View. The second position--which claims that Paul in Romans 6:3-5 is using baptism or immersion in water to symbolize or illustrate the believer's union with Christ--is (in this particular context) also incorrect. This is not to say that the believer's immersion in water does not symbolize Christ's finished work and the believer's identification with it. Indeed it does. This theological fact does find support in this passage by Paul's very usage of the word "baptism." However, Paul's language is stronger than an analogy or symbol; he is speaking about a reality, not a picture or illustration. If Paul is referring to water baptism, he is destroying the argument that he is building in this chapter, as will be more fully demonstrated later.

While the ordinance of water immersion does signify, profess, and declare a believer's union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, in this context Paul is dealing with a spiritual reality. This reality had taken place in the lives of believers at Rome. Paul is not merely giving the picture behind the reality but the reality itself. Paul is directing the reader to a specific time when the believer died to sin (v 2), was crucified with Christ (v 6), and died with Christ (v 8). Paul in all three references uses aorist tense verbs indicating a past completed action.

It is also important to note that the word "crucified" is passive, which indicates an action that did not involve any activity on the part of the believer. A believer's death to sin, crucifixion with Christ and death with Christ are realities that actually occur in the courts of heaven the instant a sinner believes the gospel, not when he is immersed in water. For this reason Paul must be using the term "baptism" in a metaphorical sense describing the believer's immersion (baptism) by the Holy Spirit, which occurred at the instant of salvation (cp I Cor 12:13).

Spirit Baptism View. This third view which states that believers are immersed by the Holy Spirit into a vital union with Jesus Christ, is one that is non-experiential (in the physical realm), but one that is nonetheless a reality (in the spiritual realm). When a sinner believes the Gospel, he is immersed into Christ Himself. He becomes part of the Body of Christ (I Cor 12:13). By water immersion the believer pictures the spiritual immersion that really did take place. The immersion of the believer in water is a picture of his immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ, so as to show how completely he is identified with Christ in His death and resurrection. Through the once-for-all act of water baptism it is publically demonstrated that the believer has already assumed once-for-all position in the grace of God as dead toward sin and alive in Christ.

A second indication that Paul did not refer to water baptism but to Spirit baptism is the fact that he said believers were "baptized into Jesus Christ." He did not say "in the name of Jesus Christ," which was the formula used when referring to water immersion (cp Matt 28:19; Acts 2:38; 8:16; I Cor 1:13-17). The apostle when writing to the Galatian believers again stated: "For as many as you have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27).

A third indication that Paul did not refer to water baptism but to an immersion into the Spirit and thus "into Christ" is demonstrated by that into which a believer is immersed. Paul states that believers were "baptized into His death." Only by a union with Christ can a believer be "baptized into His death." The fact that Paul used the word "baptize" to describe the union, however, gives strong support to the teaching that water immersion after salvation does picture union with Christ's death and subsequent resurrection. Water immersion is a God-desired, concise expression of an inner spiritual immersion which united the believer to Christ and all that He did. However, it is only the spiritual immersion of a believer "into Christ" that subsequently merges him "into Christ's death."

A question that now must be answered is, "Why did Paul use the word 'baptism' in a metaphorical sense?" To answer this question, the word "metaphor" must be defined. A metaphor is a figure of speech that uses a word or expression in a different sense from that which properly belongs to it for the purpose of giving life or emphasis to an idea. The Bible frequently uses metaphors. For example, the word "sleep" is used to signify the peaceful death of the godly (I Thess 4:13-14). The word "shadow" is used to signify great perils and calamities (Ps 23:4; Luke 1:79). The word "river" is used to denote plenty of good and desirable things (Ps 36:8; 46:4; Isa 66:12). Lastly, the word "harvest" is used in reference to multitudes of people (Ps 126:4, 5, 6; Matt 9:37; Jer 51:33; Joel 3:13).

Paul's reference to baptism in a metaphorical sense was by no means unique to him. It was a well-known fact that Jesus would one day baptist with the Holy Spirit, as was heralded by John the Baptist (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). John the Baptist also used the term "baptism" in a metaphorical sense for judgment as he prophesied that Jesus would one day immerse unbelievers into literal fire (Matt 3:11; Luke 3:16). John was declaring that Spirit and fire were the elements into which men would be plunged. Jesus Himself spoke of "baptism" in a metaphorical sense in reference to His own death (Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:49-50) and to His promise of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:5. Peter recognized the fulfillment of this promise on the Gentile believers in Acts 11:16. Paul made his most obvious reference to Spirit baptism in I Corinthians 12:13 and gave the metaphor a new dimension: he speaks not only of baptism by Spirit, but of being baptized by one Spirit, into one body, that is, into Christ (I Cor 12:12). Here in Romans Paul further defines the metaphor as a baptism not merely into Christ, but also into Christ's death (Rom 6:3).

A very interesting use of the word "baptism" occurs in I Corinthians 10:2 when Paul states that the Israelite nation had been "all baptized unto Moses"; that is, they were united to Moses as their leader. Just as the Israelite nation was fully identified with their leader--Moses--and shared in "the same spiritual food . . . spiritual drink . . . and spiritual rock" (v 3-4), so the Christian in the present dispensation is fully identified with his Savior--Jesus Christ--and spiritually shares in the benefits of His death, burial and resurrection.

The Apostle Paul clearly uses the word "baptism" metaphorically in six instances: Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5; and I Corinthians 10:2. Paul in Colossians 2:11-12 addresses Spirit baptism as being that which renounces the old nature by the spiritual "circumcision of Christ." In Galatians 3:27 he refers to Spirit baptism as that which brings believers into a living union with Christ ("For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ"). In I Corinthians 12:12 Paul describes the local church body with its various members as forming one body as in Christ's body. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (v 13). The Apostle Paul in a context of spiritual realities demonstrated unity in Christ's Body by stating that "there is one body . . . one spirit . . . one hope . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, (and) one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in you all" (Eph 4:4-6).

The Romans believers would have had no difficulty in recalling the very vivid, profoundly transforming, initiating experience of receiving the Holy Spirit at salvation, as recorded in Romans 5:5: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Paul's twenty-seven references to the Holy Spirit in the book of Romans give a strong basis for his reference to Spirit baptism in 6:3-5. Because of the Spirit baptism which took place in the lives of believers at Rome, Paul could say that the Spirit was dwelling (8:9, 11), living (8:10), quickening (8:11), mortifying (8:13), leading (8:14), bearing witness (8:16), helping infirmities (8:26), interceding (8:26), sanctifying (15:16), and giving joy (14:27) and power (15:13) in their lives.

It is clear that Paul in Romans 6:3-5 does not discuss water baptism. However, by Paul's usage of the term "baptism" he intimates that water baptism serves as a symbol of the reality (Spirit baptism) which he is speaking about.

The Mutual Union into Christ's Death

The Apostle Paul in verse three declares that there is a fact which all believers must know. He states that the Roman believers should have known that when they were immersed into the Body of Christ at their salvation experience they were also immersed into His death. In chapter five Paul demonstrated that all men "in Adam" were dead in sin (5:12: cp Eph 2:1). Now Paul states that in Christ all men died to sin (v 2) when they were immersed into Christ's death. Paul asks, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were (at the same time) baptized into his death?"

The grammar in the original Greek clearly show that the immersion into Christ and the immersion into His death occurred at the same time and by the same person (God). Paul reveals this by using the same tense (aorist) and the same voice (passive) both times the word "baptized" is mentioned in verse three. Believers are so united to Christ that, in the mind of God, what Christ did, believers did; what Christ sowed, believers reap. Christ died a representative death for sinful man, as Paul said to the Corinthians: "we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." While it was Christ who died, it is believers who benefit and share in what His death provided, being considered (by God) as actually having died themselves.

Union into Christ's Death is Union into His Burial. Paul in verse four sheds more light on verse three by begining the verse with the conjunction "therefore" (oun) which means "consequently." To show how fully believers are identified with Christ's death, Paul expands the thought and says: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death" (v 4a). The word "buried" is used to show the end of the event of death; it marks the finality of death. Paul placed the definite article "the" before the word "death" in the original Greek to indicate that it was not some general death which believers were united into, but it was a specific death--the death of Christ. It was the burial of Jesus that gave proof of the reality of His death and it is His burial that gives meaning to His resurrection.

By mentioning Christ's burial, Paul authenticates the validity of His resurrection and reassures the believer of his own resurrection. The believer's resurrection is so certain that Paul in Colossians 2:12 speaks of it as an accomplished event: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." In God's mind, the resurrection of the believer is as good as accomplished. Because believers are in Christ they are declared (forensically) as co-resurrected with Him.

However, the main purpose for Paul's reference to the believer's burial with Christ (Rom 6:4) is to demonstrate the new life that comes as a result of being raised from that burial. While the believer's physical resurrection is clearly future (v 5b), Paul in verse four speaks of present resurrection effects that are expected in the believer's life. The believer has been buried with Christ by means of baptism (Spirit immersion) into His death in order that "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (v 4b). Note that Paul does not "complete the thought of the last clause of verse four in the most obvious and balanced way (which would be): 'in order that we might also be raised with him in newness of life.'" By not completing the thought this way, Paul is indicating a transition in thought from the spiritual reality to the practical walk of the believer.

Paul sees the reality of the risen Christ as being a source of power which enables believers to sustain a different motivation, orientation and lifestyle (cp 5:10, 21; 7:6; I Cor 15:45; II Cor 3:6). Paul mentions the believer's immersion into the burial of Christ for the express purpose of comparing Christ's resurrection with the corresponding expected new "walk" or lifestyle of the believer. Therefore, in some way Christ's resurrection has a purpose of influencing conduct in this lifetime.

Paul's reasoning is that: 1) Every believer has been immersed in Christ (v 3) therefore also in His death (v 3), burial (v 4), and resurrection (v 4b and 5); 2) Because the believer has been immersed in Christ, God has imputed (credited) Christ's finished work to him, so it as as if the believer died, was buried and rose again (indeed, from God's perspective, he has); therefore, 3) If the believer has (in God's mind) risen from the dead, he ought presently to live as though he indeed has risen.

God views one who is "in Christ" as if he has already been glorified. Paul teaches this in Colossians 3:1: "If ye then be risen with Christ (aorist passive indicative), seek (present imperative) those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Again Paul in Ephesians 2:5 declares that "God . . . hath quickened (aorist active indicative) us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised (aorist active indicative) us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

It is the certainty of a future resurrection that supplies the basis for present moral purity. Without faith in the future, one will not live by faith in the present. The reason why a saved individual will live differently from an unsaved person is because of an awareness of what he is in Christ and what the future holds in Christ.

When Paul states that the Christian should walk in newness of life (v 4), he is speaking of a walking about, which implies habitual conduct (cp I John 1:16; II John 4). "In the New Testament the word 'newness' (kainos) is particularly associated with the eschatological hope (Mark 14:25; II Pet 3:13; Rev 2:17; 3:12; 21:1, 5) . . . The newness of life of which Paul speaks here is a foretaste of the final renewal."

Union into Christ's Death is Union into His Resurrection. The Apostle now in verse five adds an explanation which is linked with the first part of verse four, to reassure the believer that participation in the death and burial of Christ (v 4a) of necessity involves also a participation in His resurrection. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (v 5). Paul by using the word "if" mentions a condition that must exist in order for one to be in the likeness of Christ's resurrection: he first must be planted together (united) in the likeness of Christ's death. This union occurs only at salvation, when the believer is immersed into Christ.

Paul in revealing that believers have been planted together (in Christ's death) describes a fusing or uniting that is both intimate and progressive. His use of the perfect tense does not merely denote "a once-for-all event of the past, but an event of the past resulting in a state which lasts through the present." Paul's use of the words "planted together" demonstrates an inseparable union between the believer and Christ's death, and forms the basis for the certainty of the believer's resurrection, which is mentioned in the next clause. It is this resurrection that is the end or goal of the state of being united together with Christ in the likeness of His death. Although Paul on the one hand taught that saints are presently in a resurrected state (positionally) (Col 2:12; 3:1; Eph 2:5), he now

points to a future literal resurrection (cp v 5, 8). He told Timothy that the resurrection had not already occurred (literally) as some had been claiming (II Tim 2:18-19).

Union into Christ's Death is Union into His Crucifixion. Just as the Apostle Paul in verse five explained that death with Christ (v 4a) resulted in the certainty of the bodily resurrection of the believer, he now in verses six and seven explains that the purpose of death with Christ is that the body of sin might be destroyed. By beginning verse six with the present participle "knowing this," Paul again shows a connection with verse four and continues his thought of the means by which an immersion into the burial and death of Christ could have the result of a walk in newness of life.

If someone were to ask Paul why and how a believer might walk in newness of life, he would respond: "We . . . should walk in newness of life (v 4b) . . . knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin" (v 6-7). It is knowing the real position that a believer has in Christ that will lead him presently to walk differently (godly). This knowing is faith.

Paul in using "knowing" in the present tense is indicating a comprehension or understanding that is to be a continuous process in the mind of a believer. The believer is to be knowing that his old man has been crucified with Christ. This old man or old self is a reference to the sin nature inherited from Adam (cp Rom 5:12). This sin nature, "which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph 4:22), refers to all that a person is before salvation. This old nature is made old by reason of the presence of the new life in Christ (I Cor 5:17). In the sight of God the believer stands as though this old sin nature had been eradicated. Being in Christ would necessitate the absence of this old man forensically.

Is this to say that one who has experienced salvation and has been immersed into Christ presently has no sin nature? No. If this were so, Paul would not have commanded believers not to let sin reign in their mortal bodies (v 12), and when writing to the Ephesian believers he would not have exhorted them to put off the old man and put on the new man (Eph 4:22, 24). Again Paul reveals a dualism between what believers are positionally in Christ and what they are practically in this present world, with this mortal body (cp Rom 7:15-25).

When Paul revealed that our old man is crucified with Him, he used an aorist passive verb which describes a crucifixion that occurred in that past, and was performed by someone other than the ones who were crucified. Christians have been declared by God to be in Christ (6:3); therefore, when Christ was crucified as a substitute for sinners (I Cor 5:21; I Pet 2:24), God reckoned the believer's old man to be nailed to the cross with Christ (Gal 3:13; 2:20).

> The old man has been crucified, if you are a Christian. It stirs up our pride for us to try to do something by 'crucifying the flesh of the old man.' But Christ has already gotten the victory! The 'old man' means the old self; what we are in Adam. That 'old man' was crucified with Christ at the cross, and the task is finished in the mind of God.

Although the believer's co-crucifixion with Christ occurred in the past when Christ died, Paul reveals in Galatians 2:20 and 6:14 that that crucifixion also has continuing results. Paul declared: "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" (Gal 2:20 NASV). Paul in using the perfect tense indicates that he was crucified and still is. That specific, completed event which marks the believer's identification with Christ has had and still does have an effect on his life. Paul again uses the perfect tense in 6:14 as he exclaims, "But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." In the cross of Christ, Paul reveals, he was judicially declared to be crucified in relationship to the world, and continues in that relationship.

Now Paul moves on to describe the specific purpose for the believer's co-crucifixion with Christ, which is "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (v 6b). Paul wanted the Roman Christians to know that the result of being in Christ and more specifically in His crucifixion would be a nullification of the body of sin. This "body of sin" is a reference to the physical, mortal body through which the sin nature expresses itself (v 12). Paul in speaking of sin that dwelled in his members said, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom 7:24). Paul in this context, however, is saying that the old man (old nature) was crucified so that the body which was ruled by sin might be rendered inoperative or inactive in relationship to sin.

Paul in this verse as well as in the entire context (chapters 6-8) personifies sin and views it (him) as a power or ruling force that demands submission from its subjects. Although the believer is still in the flesh (that is, in a physical body--Rom 7:18), he does not have to give in to the master (sin) which once gave him orders because "in Christ" he is dead in relation to that old master (v 2). While the believer's body (quite obviously) has not been destroyed and replaced, God promises that one day it will be (I Cor 15:51-55). It is the knowledge of what one is and has "in Christ" that will be the motivating factor in not giving in to the old slave driver, sin. Paul's point is: If the sin nature (old man) died with Christ, then the "body" that housed that sin nature also died; therefore (spiritually speaking) it is impossible to offer his body as a servant or slave to sin. For the believer, this is a reality positionally and will one day be fully and practicaly realized in Heaven.

Paul concludes this thought of the impossibility for a dead man to serve sin by saying: "For he that is dead is freed from sin" (v 7). Paul in speaking of a believer's declared state of death, says: "The one who died, has been declared a free or justified man in relationship to sin." The word translated "freed" in the KJV is the perfect passive form of dikaioo in the Greek, which is most often translated "justified."

If a believer would recognize and meditate on his new relationship to Christ (his new Master), he would also realize that he no longer has an obligation to the old relationship to sin (his old master). Since all believers should have at least a basic concept of this new relationship, their lifestyle (though not perfect--I John 1:8) will evidence a craving for godliness and an abhorrence of evil. There is a vast difference between committing a sin and constantly living and delighting in sin (Matt 6:12; Rom 7:24-25). When a person no longer feels at home in sin he can be sure that he has been freed from the penalty and guilt of sin, and that even the power which sin has been wielding over him will one day be totally removed. Paul proceeds in verse eight to describe when this will occur.

The Expectation of a Future Life (v 8-10)

Expectation is Based on Union into Christ's Death

The Apostle Paul, having revealed what believers were to know (v 3-7) now moves in transition to what Christians are to believe (v 8-10). Whereas Paul in verses three through seven caused the child of God to take a look back at his death in Christ (and that death's relationship to sin), he now in verses eight through ten causes the believer to look ahead at his life in Christ (and the relationship of that life to God).

Paul states: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (v 8). The word "now" in verse eight is Paul's indication of a transition in thought. Paul begins with a conditional sentence which refers back to the Christian's position or relationship in Christ. It is only the ones who are dead with Christ who can have the belief which Paul is about to describe. Only those who have been saved by the grace of God (5:21) are said to be baptized into Christ Himself (v 3) and subsequently into his death (v 3-4). Therefore, only those who have been judicially reckoned as dead with Christ can have the certainty (belief) that they will also live (eternally) with Christ in Heaven.

Paul uses a present active indicative verb to emphasize the fact that the Christian is in a continuous state of believing. He is saying, "We are believing that we will also live with Him." It is obvious that if the believer has been declared by God as being dead together (v 3), buried together (v 4), planted together (v 5), and crucified together (v 6), he will most certainly be resurrected together to live with Christ. As Paul has built this solid argument in reference to the believer's position regarding what forensically occurred in the past (v 3-7), he can now speak boldly of the belief that the believer should have for the future. His usage of the phrase "we are believing" points to a dogmatic confidence rather than a hope-so belief.

Expectation is Based on Union into Christ's Never-Ending Life

The Apostle Paul in verse nine supplies more support for the questionless, absolute assurance that the believer has a future life with Christ. Christians have a confidence of this future life (v 8) "knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him" (v 9). Paul begins verse nine with a perfect active participle to indicate that Christ's resurrection and never-ending life are facts that believers have known and still do know. This knowing results in a continual, confident knowledge. Paul declares this knowing or knowledge to be the grounds or basis for the believing of verse eight. Paul is saying that the belief in eternal life with Christ (in verse eight) is based upon the believer's knowledge of the never-dying Christ (in verse nine). Belief is founded upon knowledge. The foundation of belief is always knowledge of the truth (the Bible) and never emotion or feelings. This viewpoint of knowledge over feelings espoused in the entire Bible is contrary to a prevalent opinion of contemporary society.

Paul's argument is: "Since believers are 'in Christ,' and Christ will never die again, believers also have the security of life and not death." Because Christ dies no more, and believers are in Him, they of necessity die no more. This verse connected with verse eight (as well as Paul's entire argument in this context) clearly demonstrates eternal security, because all believers are in Christ and Christ will never die again. Peter when preaching on the day of Pentecost said that "God raised Him

(Christ) up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power" (Acts 2:24 NASV). Paul again emphasizes this fact in the last half of verse nine by stating: "Death hath no more dominion over him." While in eternity past death never did have dominion over Christ, yet because He voluntarily died as a substitute for those under its dominion, at that moment in history death had assailed Him.

In saying that "death hath no more dominion over Him," Paul personifies death as a master or lord that no longer has any control over Christ. Since a believer's debt to both sin and death has been fully paid, he too can have the confidence that death will not have dominion over him either (I Cor 15:54-57). The believer has the victory in the person of Jesus Christ. "When the debt (sin's penalty) is paid in full, the creditor (death) has no more power over the debtor (sinners). We are in Him (the One who paid the debt), therefore death hath no more dominion over us."

The Apostle Paul in verse ten then declares that the debt or wages of sin, which is death (cp v 23) has been fully paid once for all by Jesus Christ. Paul triumphantly exclaims that "death hath no more dominion over him, for in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (v 10). Paul deliberately contrasts "then" (the time of Christ's humiliation) and "now" (after His humiliation). Christ, having died once for all to pay sin's penalty, will never more have any dealings or relationship to sin. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Peter 3:18). The writer of Hebrews develops the finality of Christ's sacrificial work in the following words: "by his own blood he entered in once the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb 9:12). "For such an high priest (Christ) became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's, for this he did once, when he offered up himself" (Heb 7:27).

Paul in contrasting Christ's death to sin with His living to God, states that Christ's relationship to (man's) sin has been completed at his death; however, His exalted relationship to God (His Father) is continuing with His life. Paul contrasts the finality of Christ's death (by using an aorist active indicative verb), with the perpetuity of Christ's life (by using a present active indicative verb). In a sense verse ten is a concise summary of verses three through nine, as Christ's death to sin relates to the believer's one-time death with Christ (which occurred at salvation) (v 3-7) and Christ's life to God relates to the believer's continual assurance of eternal life (which began at salvation) (v 8-9). Paul's pointing to a sacrificial accomplishment in the past and then to a victorious continuation in the present was for the purpose that he might now demonstrate how these realities can be applied to every Christian.

Consideration of the Practical Result (v 11-13)

Mental Reckoning

Verse eleven is the key to understanding Paul's goal in the entire passage of Romans six. At this point, doctrine makes way for exhortation. Believers, having been baptized into Jesus Christ (v 3) and consequently into His death (v 3) burial (v 4) and resurrection (v 5), are now motivated to apply their position (v 2-10) to their practice (v 11-14). "If in point of fact believers are partakers of the death and the life of Christ; if they died with Him, and live with Him, then they should so regard themselves."

Reckoning is the Key to Victory. Since the Lord Jesus Christ (who represents every saint) died in relation to sin once and is living in relation to God perpetually (v 10), Paul now commands believers everywhere to "likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v 11). By using the word "likewise" Paul is drawing a comparison between what Christ has done and is doing, and what believers are to keep in mind that they have become in Christ (dead to sin) and are doing in Christ (living to God). Paul does not command the believer to die as Christ died or to live as Christ lived. Death has already occurred and life is already being lived. Paul makes an appeal to translate that judicial relationship (which Christians already have in Christ) into daily reality, and he does so by using the word "reckon."

The word translated "reckon" comes from the Greek verb logizomai which (in contexts like this one) means "to consider, evaluate, estimate, calculate, account, regard, judge or think." Paul uses this same word in saying "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ" (I Cor 4:1). Paul again uses it in a context discussing those who misrepresented him, by saying "I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh" (II Cor 10:2 NASV).

The Apostle Paul in verse eleven uses the imperative or command-giving form. Even though this form of the word shares the same ending as does a present, middle, or passive indicative verb, the context supports its translation as an imperative. If it were an indicative it would have to be in the first person plural like all the other plurals using "we" in this paragraph. The emphatic "you" befits only an imperative. Also, the fact that in the following two verses (v 12-13) Paul applies verses one through ten with imperatives further supports Paul's usage of an imperative in verse eleven.

Paul's purpose in using the word "reckon" is that believers might "calculate," by adding up the facts presented in verses one through ten, and then act accordingly. Another reason the apostle commands believers to reckon themselves as being dead to sin but alive to God is because in this mortal life Christians are not yet physically dead in relation to sin nor are they perpetually living solely unto God. However, positionally in Christ believers are spotless in relation to sin's corruption and are forevermore living exclusively to God. The fact that Paul is dealing with positional purity is further proved in the end of verse eleven as he adds the words "through Jesus Christ," or more literally "in (en) Jesus Christ."

Paul is revealing the secret to sanctified living. He is commanding believers to "look upon themselves in their true light (as forensically declared dead to sin), freed from sin's penalty and dominion." Although a believer is presently free from the condemnation of sin (Rom 8:1), Paul also reveals the victory over a lifestyle controlled by sin. This is accomplished by regarding what one is in Christ to be true and then acting in accordance with that recognition.

Paul in commanding the Christian to have a reckoning uses a present middle imperative, whereby he indicates that believers are continually to consider themselves as being dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God. This reckoning or considering is to be a constant self-reminding by the Christian of who he really is in Christ. This reminding is necessary because, although a believer has experienced the forensic or judicial death to sin and resurrection with Christ, severing him from his servitude to sin, he still awaits the day when his body will experience the transformation from corruptible to incorruption and from mortal to immortality (I Cor 15:53-54).

This present continual reckoning of a believer's own death to sin and life to God must always be understood with two aspects in mind: 1) what one is presently in Christ (the "already") and 2) what one will be in Christ (the "not yet").

> Any concentration on the "already" to the exclusion of the "not yet" (what some would call "over-realized" eschatology) falls prey to some sort of perfectionism or "entire sanctification" which implicitly ignores our need for a final transformation to fit us for heavenly life. On the other hand, a concentration on the "not yet" to the exclusion of the "already" leads quickly to a moralism in which what we do rather than what God has done, becomes pre-eminent.

The Apostle Paul in Romans six balances perfectly the "already" (what believers are in Christ v 2-7) with the "not yet" (what believers confidently expect in Christ v 8-10). Paul in verse eleven ties both aspects together in such a way as to say to a Christian: "Your past death in Christ (v 3-7) is to be the basis for your reckoning yourself as being presently dead to sin; and your future life in Christ (v 8-10) is to be the basis for your reckoning yourself as being presently alive to God. It is the reckoning of these realities that is to be the motivating factor for your practical every-day victory over sin."

When a Christian exercises his faith in mentally reckoning himself as dead to sin but alive to Christ, he is then able to live the life that he already possesses (judicially) in Christ. Many believers either do not know their position (v 3), forget it, or fail continually to meditate on it, and therefore fall into sin. This is one reason Paul had to say: "so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom 7:25).

<u>Reckoning Personal Death to Sin</u>. The Apostle Paul in exhorting believers continually to consider themselves as being dead indeed unto sin (11a) focuses the believers' attention with respect to the past. Paul in this context is declaring that: "The death of the believer is a thing that is in the past (when he was immersed into Christ at the moment of salvation). It is a transaction that is complete, and what God wants us to do is to believe it and not try to do again something that has already been done." In God's mind the believer is already dead to sin in Christ; however, practically speaking he is not. It is for this reason that Paul commands the believer to "reckon himself as dead to sin" (cp v 13). The following illustration will clarify:

> Whenever a yong man who is a member of an orthodox Jewish family becomes a Christian, the father says, "This son is to me dead." He turns him out of his house. He never speaks to him again. If friends come and ask about his son, he says, "My son is dead." He is not actually dead, but the father considers that boy as dead. In the same sense, even though the old self is still alive, God says,"Reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin.

Reckoning Personal Life in Christ. In the last half of verse eleven Paul exhorts believers continually to consider themselves as being alive unto God and focuses the believer's attention with respect to the future. He positively commands them to live as though they had already entered the resurrection life in Heaven. This new life in Christ would out of necessity validate itself in the believer's obedience to the will of God (Rom 12:2) through the Word of God. Living exclusively for God will be motivated by the sole purpose of glorifying God.

As Paul links verse eleven with verse ten, he demonstrates that believers are to imitate presently what they know Christ to be doing in Heaven. Now that He is raised from the dead and elevated to His throne, He lives only to advance the glory of His Father (cp John 8:49-50). For a believer to reckon himself alive to God requires a life of faith--faith which one has in Christ (cp Gal 2:20). "We are to know this truth and then hour after hour, day after day, we are to reckon it to be so . . . this is the secret of a holy life. God declares it so, now reckon it to be so."

Physical Surrendering (Yielding)

Denying Personal Servitude to Sin (the Enemy). When a believer knows what he is and has in Christ (v 3-10) and then reckons that knowledge to be true (v 11), he is able to yield himself physically to the control of the Spirit of God and allow the life he already possesses to be lived out by God's power (v 12-14). Paul in Romans 6:14 is actually giving a three-step process toward victory over the dominion of sin: 1) knowing the facts, 2) reckoning with faith, and 3) yielding in actions.

Stop the rulership. In verses twelve and thirteen the Apostle Paul personifies sin as an alien, enslaving power as he does throughout the book of Romans. Paul personifies sin as "he" who came into the world (5:12) and made the world his domain (5:21). All persons were subjected to sin, serving as his subjects (3:9; 6:6; 17:20), and this evil ruler, who dwelled in everyone, aroused self-serving desires and provoked wickedness (6:12, 19; 7:8, 17; 8:3). In the end all sin paid was death (5:12; 6:23; 7:11; 8:10). However, in Romans chapter six Paul revealed the secret to freedom from this master's claim. Having commanded believers mentally to reckon themselves as being dead to this tyrant and living unto their wonderful God and Savior, Paul now commands those same believers physically to put an end to the rulership of sin in their lives. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (v 12). By using a present active imperative, Paul exhorts the Christian to stop letting sin rule in his mortal body. This ruler who sat as king in his life must be dethroned.

Paul's use of the word "therefore" in verse twelve refers back to the believer's death to sin and life to God which these Roman believers were by faith to reckon to be a true positional reality. This is the basis for Paul's command to stop letting sin reign in their lives. That ugly old nature personified as "sin" still clamors for recognition within the believer's mortal body. His presence is undeniable (Rom 7). When sin demands that one of God's children recognize him as his true lord, though, the Christian is to deny his claim in an act of faith and hope. Though the believer, as described elsewhere in this chapter, at one time was a servant of sin (6:17, 19), he has been made free from sin (v 18, 22), and is a servant of righteousness (v 18) to God (v 22).

Paul exhorts the Christian not to let sin reign in his body so that he not obey sin's commands to fulfill the evil lusts, appetites, or passions that are resident in the believer's mortal body. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (v 12). Paul in the last half of this verse pictures sin as a dictator who demands obedience to military service and provides the soldiers with rations to satisfy their lustful appetites. The desires or appetites that a believer has in his mortal body are not necessarily sinful in and of themselves; they become sin when satisfied outside of the desire or will of God. When a Christian chooses not to obey God (his new Master) but rather to satisfy any appetite outside of the boundaries set by the Bible, he then sins, and not only that, but has chosen to subject himself to the old master--sin (cp v 16).

Paul in verse twelve has added more light to answering the question of how a believer might not obey sin: the believer must put a stop to sin's rulership. The Christian is by faith to deny sin's right to reign over him, realizing that he died to sin (v 11) when he died with Christ (v 3-8).

Stop the membership. Because a Christian is to deny the rulership of sin in his mortal body (v 12), he is obviously to deny the old ruler the opportunity to use his members (body parts) for wicked purposes (v 13). Verse thirteen continues Paul's prohibition from verse twelve as he says: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin" (v 13a). The apostle, again using a present active imperative, says that the believer is to stop yielding or presenting his members as unrighteous instruments given to the purpose of performing sin. The word "yield" or "present" is the same word Paul uses in Romans 12:1 when he exhorts believers to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. The believer's members are his bodily limbs or organs which are not to be given to the disposal of sin.

Whereas Paul made reference to the believer's physical body as a whole in verse twelve, he now in verse thirteen specifically refers to the believer's body parts in particular. The word translated "instruments" is a military term which would be better translated "weapons." It comes from the Greek word hopla which is used in all other instances in the New Testament to mean weapons or armor (John 18:3; Rom 13:12; II Cor 6:7; 10:4). Whereas the "mortal body" referred to the soldier (v 12), Paul now describes his body parts (members) as being weapons (v 13). In this context dealing with a spiritual battle, Paul is saying, "Don't take your weapons and give them to the enemy." Just as this would be traitorous in man-to-man combat, this is foolishness, disloyalty, and indeed treason in the spiritual warfare that the believer is engaged in.

Yielding Personal Servitude to God (the Ally). Paul after negatively prohibiting the believer's tolerance of his membership under sin's rulership (v 12-13a) now contrasts that old death-like servitude to sin with a living servitude to God. He does this with a positive command for the believer to yield himself (as a soldier) and his body parts (as weapons) to God (v 13b).

Start the rulership. Paul begins by exhorting the Christian to present himself under the rulership of God. He states: "But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." Although some Bible interpreters view this yielding as a one-time act, Paul is paralleling this positive command with the prohibition of verse twelve, which would indicate a continuous yielding. While the previous present imperative called for the discontinuation of wrong acivity (v 12, 13a), Paul now employs an aorist imperative verb which calls for an immediate beginning of a decisive new activity. Paul is commanding every child of God to begin yielding or presenting himself to God, who is the true Ruler over the life of a Christian.

This "yielding" is not a working on the part of the believer; rather it is allowing God to work on behalf of the believer. God greatly desires to work on behalf of every Christian. He does not merely give believers the power to live a victorious life--He is the active power that lives it for the believer as he yields to Him. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil 2:13). The believer, "knowing" his position in Christ and then "reckoning" it to be true, can now yield himself to his new Master as one who is dead in relationship to the old but alive to the new. He is to yield his life as a soldier to God "as those that are alive from the dead."

Start the membership. Not only is the believer to yield himself as a whole person, but also he is to yield his body parts as instruments of righteousness unto God (v 13b). Just as before salvation the old sin nature expressed itself through the believer's body parts, this new expression will only be accomplished as one yields or presents those physical body limbs in daily dedication to God's usage. One must desire to "please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (II Tim 2:4). Paul contrasts the old way in which a sinner continually offered his physical limbs for the pursuit of selfish gratification, with the new way that a Christian begins a life of offering his physical limbs for the pursuit of selfless glorification. The Christian, as one who is alive from the dead, is to dedicate his weapons to the usage of God Almighty in fighting the spiritual battle against the old emeny--sin.

Conclusion (v 14)

The Apostle Paul concludes one unit of thought and begins another in verse fourteen as he triumphantly explains, "For sin shall not (future tense) have dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under grace." Paul again uses a positive, motivating statement to encourage believers in the fact that one day in Heaven sin will not be ruling or lording itself over them. It is this confidence that supplies one who is in Christ with spiritual fortitude to reckon himself as dead to that oppressor, and as having no need to yield to him.

Paul's support for the fact that sin and its consequences will one day never have any dominion over a believer is found in the assuring words: "for ye are not under the Law, but under grace" (v 14b). The Law that looked to the future wrath as a result of sin is not to be the motive for purity in living; rather grace that looks back at Christ's substitutionary death is to be the motive. "Law is able to do many things: it commands, demands, rebukes, condemns, restrains, and even points away from itself to Another." There are, however, two things that Law can never do: 1) It canot save (Gal 2:16; 3:10-14); and 2) It cannot give victory over sin (Rom 8:3-4)> Paul sets Law and grace in sharp antithesis in his concluding statement to emphasize that the Law in itself does not provide an answer to the power of sin (actually it provides the occasion for sin, Rom 7:8). It is only faith in the grace of God that provides the power. The Law demanded obedience, but grace supplies the power to obey. It is grace that has broken the mastery of sin; the Law did not (cp Rom 7:4). All sin has been buried in the grave with Christ, and he "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal 3:13).

Every believer is dead to the things Jesus Christ died to: sin, death, and the curse of the Law. Only as a believer lives in the consciousness that he belongs to the One who has died completely to this world and only as he identifies himself with that death can he hope to show the effect of Christ's death and resurrection in this present life. What is required of every Christian is that he keep his perspective clear, and his relationships and attractions to the world determined in the light of his union in Christ's death. The believer must know what God has done for him in Christ, reckon it to be true, and then yield himself to God if he is to experience the life of victory.

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