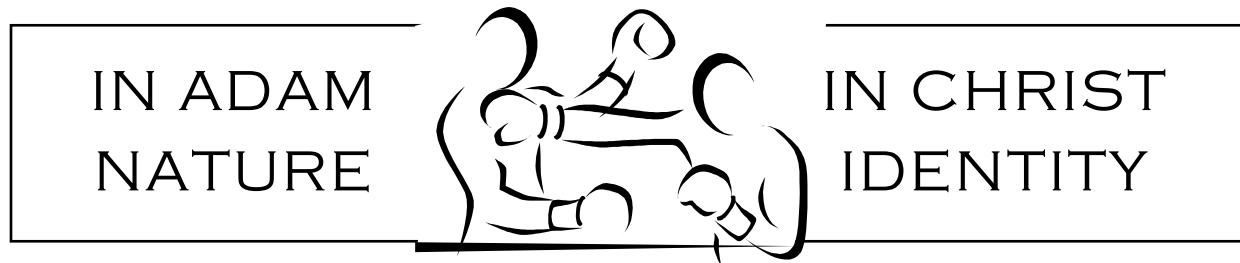


Chapter 12

Reigning Grace and Personal Sin

¹ “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (1 John 2:1, 2).



THE Story

The cross conquered sin. The woman's seed crushed the serpent's head. The people of God have been delivered from the penalty, power and presence of sin. Victory is ours and the end is glorious. This study seeks to show and celebrate the believer's relationship to sin.



AN INITIAL COMMENT

In 1 John 2:1-2, John addresses sin in the life of the believer with this statement of fact:

¹ “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (1 John 2:1, 2).

God’s declared will is that we do not sin. Yet despite this clear statement, our experience shows us to be contrary. We do sin. What is to be a biblical response to known sin in the believer’s life? I mark it as known, because if the sin is unknown or we are ignorant of it, then there can be no real response to it.

I am personally convinced the Christian life is NOT to be one of frustration, but victory. This does not mean life will be easy or that everything will now work to our immediate comfort or circumstantial happiness. However, it does mean that in the midst of our greatest defeat we can still have the confidence of God’s unconditional acceptance and efficacious empowerment as conquerors. Throughout John’s writings, he notes how our Lord’s intent is that we have joy (John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; 1 John 1:4).

“These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that our joy may be made full” (John 15:11).

“Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full” (John 16:24).

“But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves” (John 17:13).

“These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.” (1 John 1:4).

Our Lord speaks to this idea when He extends to the weary and heavy-laden a rest and peace passing all human achievement and understanding.

²⁸ "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30)

As those who are now living in Christ and thus “under grace,” what does such a relationship look like in the life of the believer on a moment-by-moment basis? Should grace impact the way I currently live the Christian life? Does grace matter?

I. What place does sin have in the life of the believer under grace?

A. The reality of sin in us

1. Sin is always present in this body of flesh

Because of our old nature sin is always with us. There is a side of us that is always acting carnal, natural, and unregenerate. Such a thought is clearly presented in such passages as Romans 7, 1 Corinthians 3 and Galatians 5.

It is necessary to define what is meant by, “this body of flesh.” The body is morally neutral. It is the vehicle used by the immaterial part of man to express itself. It is in this way we are using it in the expression, “the body of flesh.” Yet the Scripture also speaks of the flesh being sinful and antithetical to all that is spiritual. This is man’s fallen nature or what the Scripture refers to as, “the old man.”

“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” (Rom. 6:6).

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph. 4:22).

“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds” (Col. 3:9).

Romans 6:6 tells us that our “old man” has been crucified with Christ. This is an aorist passive indicative. Here the aorist is punctiliar in action. It speaks of a completed past action. The passive voice identifies the object as being the recipient of the action. This completed past action now makes it possible for “the body of sin” to be destroyed. This is an aorist passive subjunctive; speaking of its potentiality. To have something judicially true does not mean it will be experientially true. For one to *enjoy* the “old man’s” destruction there must be the knowing, reckoning, and presenting process of Romans 6. It is vital we see the one as being certain and the other being inevitable though not automatic.

The second aorist middle infinitive of Ephesians 4:22 is functioning as an imperative. The demand to put off the old is because it is always corrupt (present passive participle). There is no hope for its “salvation.” Colossians 3:9 continues this thought by stating “the putting off” as being something done in time but has abiding results.

No matter how long we have been a Christian or how godly we may appear to be, we still have residing within us our “old man.” There is always a tension within us or what some have called, “the war within.” It is for this reason one will often hear of an older Christian who has fallen prey to their “old man.” Such events are sad and sorrow filled, but they are not surprising. Every Christian is always capable of committing the most grievous actions and

heinous events. The Scripture is clear that such acts should not characterize the life of God's people. No believer should be living in a pattern of sin (1 John 3:9). Yet sin in the life of the believer still happens.

The potential for such events is always there but as one matures in their knowledge of Jesus Christ and the embracing of Him the actuality of such things happening should be greatly reduced. It is possible to have daily victory over "the flesh" by learning to practice the reality of one's position. Such a truth will be examined later in the study.

2. Sin is a temporal foe in this body of flesh

While in this body, the flesh and the Spirit will always have contention. Neither one can exist in harmony with the other (Gal. 5:17). Yet the flesh is only temporary. The demise of the "old man" is certain because of Calvary. The final blow experientially in the losing of the old man will happen in the unfolding of either death or the rapture and the Bema seat judgment. It is at the Bema seat judgment that we will have the "official" eradication of sin's presence in the believer. Thus in the midst of our current struggle with our "old man" we should never lose sight that it is not eternal and will be finally lost at the Bema seat judgment.

B. The relationship of sin to us

1. Sin is a defeated foe (the penalty of sin)

The death of Christ has defeated the foe of sin. Sin's defeat is viewed as a past fact.

"Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Rom. 4:7).

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13).

"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (1 John 2:12).

Romans 4:7 tells us our sins have been forgiven us (aorist passive indicative). In Ephesians 4:32 God Himself has done the action of having forgiven us (aorist middle indicative). Colossians 2:13 the action of forgiveness is an aorist participle. Such an action is a past fact with ongoing present results. We are standing in a forgiven state. This same truth is emphatically stated in 1 John 2:12 with the perfect passive indicative. God's forgiveness to us is a one sided agreement. *We sin and He brings His forgiveness.*

The sentence against sin has been pronounced and the execution of the sentence is certain. In the death of Christ sin has been defeated. The weight of sin against us has been abolished. God will no longer credit it to our account (Rom. 4:8).

2. Sin is judicially dead (the power of sin)

A believer has his old self crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6). The purpose of this co-crucifixion was “in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.” Our co-crucifixion is a historical fact. There was a point in time when our old self was crucified with Christ. At the cross, Jesus Christ did something to our old self.

In Galatians 2:20, “I am crucified with Christ,” we have an event that happened at a point in time but its consequences continue to this day. Again, like Romans 6:6, we are the recipient of the action. “I was and continue to be crucified with Christ.”

In Colossians 2:20, “You are dead with Christ,” also speaks of a completed and finished action. Thus, there is an element within us that had died and is dead in Christ.

It is because of our identification with Christ that the flesh has been “crucified with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24). Such

truth becomes apparent when reading Galatians 2:20 and Colossians 3:1-4 and 1 John 4:17.

As noted earlier, I believe our co-crucifixion with Christ was a “judicial” action whereby I am declared dead, though my old self is still very much alive. Its full or complete death will come at the Bema Seat where what is **real judicially** will be **actual experientially**. Although we have perhaps made much of real versus actual, John Murray brings out this idea in the following statement.

The freedom from the dominion of sin of which Paul speaks is the *actual* possession of every one who is united to Christ. It is not merely *positional* victory which every believer has secured (cf. pp. 84ff.). When Paul says in Romans 6:14, ‘Sin shall not have dominion over you’, he is making an affirmation of certainty with respect to every person who is under the reigning power of grace and therefore with respect to every one who is united to Christ. This victory is received by faith in Christ and in effectual calling. It is not achieved by process or by prolonged effort directed to that end. It is the once-for-all gift of God’s grace in uniting us to Christ in the virtue of his death and resurrection. **But it is not simply positional; far less is it potential; it is actual.** And because it is actual it is experimental. To speak of freedom from the dominion of sin in terms other than the actual as, if we will, experimental is to indulge in an abstraction which has no relevance to the question at issue. It is true that there are differing degrees in which the implications of this freedom from the dominion of sin are realized in experience. In other words, there are differing degrees in which the ‘reckoning’ to

which Paul exhorts in Romans 6 is applied and brought to expression in the life and experience of believers. But the victory over sin is not secured by the ‘reckoning’; it is secured by virtue of union with Christ in that initial faith comprised in effectual calling and is therefore the possession of every believer, however tardy may be his advance in the path of progressive sanctification.¹

The full reality of His finished work will not be “felt” experientially until our death or His coming/our resurrection (1 John 3:2).

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. **We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is**” (1 John 3:2).

The Bema Seat is a confirmation of God’s faithfulness in keeping His Word to complete that which He began (1 Thess. 5:24; Phil. 1:6).

²³ “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Faithful is He who calls you, and **He also will bring it to pass**” (1 Thess. 5:23, 24).

“For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it** until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).

The Bema Seat is a time of tremendous celebration. There will be no regret or inward man-centered focus. All attention will be on Him in that blessed and glorious day.

Sin and its allies will no longer have dominion over us (Rom. 6:9, 14; 7:1-5). We are no longer a subject within a kingdom over which sin rules. We no longer have to obey its dictates. It no longer has control over us. We may choose to sin and thus to place ourselves under its authority, but such does not have to be the case.

Yet in light of its reality within our life we understand though sinning is not automatic for the believer it is in a certain sense inevitable. John tells us what he has written he wrote in order that we might not sin (1 John 2:1). However, he adds, “but if any man sin” showing the potential inevitability of sin in the life of the believer.

All of the necessary requirements for us to have victory over the power of sin in this life have been provided.

3. Sin will be permanently removed (the presence of sin)

The joy of this truth has already been noted. As believers who live lives of constant struggle and longing, it is essential we realize that victory has already been secured and we are now only waiting for its full implementation.

C. The rule of sin over us

1. We are dead to sin

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Because of our standing in Christ we are dead to sin. This is the truth claim of Scripture. What does it mean, “To be dead to sin?” We are no longer legally obligated to obey sin’s dictates. No longer does sin hold sway over us. We now have the right and power to say no to its sinful demands.

2. It no longer has dominion over us

Sin has no legal right to tell us what to do. Sin has no authority to make demands on our life. Because we are dead to sin and alive in Christ it no longer has reign over us. We are the subject of a new master.

D. The implications of Calvary for us

1. We are in Christ

Often we fail to understand what it means to be “in Christ.” Such a truth communicates a new position and identity. Because we are “in Christ” we have a new life (Rom. 6:5), a new hope, and a new master. By being “in Christ” all that is His is now ours. We are joint-heirs with Jesus. The Father has imputed to our account the very righteousness of Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:6). Because of being “in Christ” we now have immediate and direct access before the Father (Rom. 5:1). Whereas there was once animosity and wrath there is

only peace and satisfaction (Rom. 3:24, 25; 5:1). By being in Christ we are beloved children in whom He is well pleased (Eph. 1:4-14).

2. We are the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit

It will often stagger the mind when one considers that God the Holy Spirit has chosen to reside within these jars of clay (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 4:7). Such condescending on His part is an act of indescribable grace. How the infinite has chosen to reside in the finite, the creator within the created, is truly an expression of the inexhaustible riches of grace. Yet we have within us all that God is in the totality of His being. What a shocking truth. We have gone from Emmanuel, "God with us" (Isa. 9:6; John 1:18) to God in us.

3. We are the sure work of the Father

This is the hope we now live with. God is going to complete the work He alone has begun. The work of God in us and through us will not fail (Phil. 1:6; 2:12, 13; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24). **What we could not merit nor maintain God Himself in grace will finish.** The consistent message of Scripture is the work of God in us will not be disappointed. The Bema seat is a universal declaration of God's success and faithfulness in bringing to pass that which He had begun.

4. We are heaven dwellers

The life we currently experience is not our reality. We have been deceived by the tangible-ness of the temporal and the appeal of our senses into believing that what we currently are in this world is our reality. Yet the Scripture tells us what Christ was we currently are in this world (1 John 4:17). The Scripture tells us we have been crucified with Christ nevertheless we are alive in Him (Gal. 2:20). The Scripture tells us we are currently seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Col. 3:1-4). *Jesus Christ is our life.* We do not deny what we are in this world but such must be seen through the grid of the Christ reality. We have been deceived into drawing too sharp of a distinction between what we are in Christ and what we are in this world. The truth is that what we are in Christ is what we are in this world. This world does not dictate the reality of our condition. Such a statement has already been established in Christ. This world is the platform or stage for the reality of our position in Him to be played out and seen. Moreover, at the end of the performance He will receive all of the accolades and glory.

5. We are overcomers

John consistently describes the Christian as an overcomer. Such a truth is not a future hope but is to be a present reality. We are overcomers. It is not something we hope to enjoy. It is something we are enjoying. We can be called overcomers because of our

position in Christ. How tragic many have allowed the devil to rob them of this joy. In so doing we have chosen to live lives of defeat. We cannot be robbed of what is ours in Christ. We can fail to enjoy it, but it cannot be taken from us. We are to enjoy all that God has provided for us as His child. We must never let anything rob us of this satisfaction.

II. What does our sin do to us?

This question is always intriguing. When I hear someone say, “What happens when I sin?” My immediate response is to ask, “What does not happen when you sin?” In answering that question, the rest has a tendency to answer itself.

- A. There is a providential judgment against it which is corrective.

God has chosen to establish natural laws against sin’s expression. There are natural laws established by God that determine the reaping of what is sown (Gal. 6:7, 8). There is an inherent demerit to all sin. The Scripture tells us, “that the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) and that “the soul that sins shall die” (Ezek. 33). No one can sin and get away with it. Everyone shall pay the consequences for sin whether in this life (for the believer and unbeliever) or in the life which is to come (for the unbeliever).

- B. There is a sense of disappointment for failed responsibility.

With reference to the believer, there is a sorrow that happens in the failure to meet divine expectations and in the committing of any sin. In the believer, sin always brings remorse. All believers recognize the innate inability to perform the good (Rom. 7:18). For those who see the cross and Christ clearly there is a daily reckoning of human inability either to perform well or abstain from evil. The reality of human inability causes those who see Jesus to offer themselves up to Christ's work and that of the Holy Spirit to empower them for obedience on a daily basis. No one who knows their flesh ever puts any confidence in it to live the Christian life. What hope the Christian has lies solely in Christ and His grace dealings with them.

- C. There is an initial straining and potential severing of human relationships from expressions of sin.

There is always a straining of relationships between believers when one has sinned against another. Such offenses need to be dealt with immediately. Each is to act toward the other in a gracious manner. Never should such a condition exist long term. The offending party needs to make sure that any necessary restitution has been made. Whether it is as simple as saying we are sorry or where physical harm has been committed then restoration needs to be offered; with

the offended party immediate and unconditional forgiving and forgetting needs to take place (Eph. 4:32). To act toward another in this fashion is to treat him in grace and to depend on God to meet the necessary needs (1 Cor. 6).

D. There is the potential for unnecessary bondage to a pattern of sin.

Christians are not to live in sin (1 John 3:9-11). Such is completely incompatible with their position in Christ. Yet some out of weakness to the flesh or because of Scriptural ignorance have fallen prey to a pattern of sin (Gal. 6:1). We say such bondage is unnecessary. No Christian need live in bondage to sin. **Sin will always take us further than we want to go, cost us more than we wish to pay, and keep us longer than we wish to stay.** No believer “living in sin” wishes to be there. Victory is not only possible; it is our right. How to gain victory over daily sin will be discussed later.

III. What does our sin do to God?

A. God hates sin regardless as to its source or kind.

God hates sin. Such a simple statement can cause us to overlook the gravity of such a statement, but nonetheless God hates sin. Our sin is serious enough for the Father to send His only begotten Son to be the Savior of the world. Regardless as to where it is found

God always hates sin. In the unbeliever he is the object of God's present wrath and is simply waiting His future wrath. In both the unbeliever and the believer there is a providential price tag to all sin. Though the believer will never experience the wrath of God against sin it does not mean it is any less serious.

The omniscience of God demands His knowledge of all sin. Yet because of the believer's standing in Christ God the Father will never credited to his account sin and thus cannot deal with him in any other way than that of one who is as righteous as His only begotten Son.

God no longer 'sees' either our deliberate disobedience or our marred performances. Instead He 'sees' the righteousness of Christ, which He has already imputed to us.²

Nothing you ever do will cause Him to love you any more or any less. He loves you strictly by His grace given to you through Jesus.³

B. There is a rebuking that comes through the Word by the Holy Spirit.

As a believer is exposed to the Word of God the Holy Spirit will take that Word and rebuke him for the lack of conformity to the revealed Word (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 4:2). Such a rebuking is intrinsic to the Word. God is not imputing such sin to the believer but the Holy Spirit through the medium of the Word is working in the believer to

put off the old man and put on the new through the renewing of his mind (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23).

IV. What should we do with our sin?

- A. Acknowledge our sin by agreeing with God concerning it (1 John 1:9).⁴

Through the instrumentation of the Word the Holy Spirit is working in the believer for the acknowledgment of sin. Such an acknowledgment is an agreement with God concerning sin in the believer's life. No believer can avoid such an acknowledgment of sin. The confession of sin is to be seen as any other fruit of the Spirit. This is the working of the Holy Spirit in the life of all true believers. There are several erroneous views concerning confession. First, there is a casual or flippant mouthing of or verbal assent to sin in general. This confession does not recognize the gravity of it. Confession needs to be daily only if sinning (premeditative and quantifiable) is daily. To make confession a part of every prayer session is to pray like a Gentile (Matt. 6:7). Second, there is a morbid introspection that belabors the point of seeking to be exhaustive in the listing of any known, unknown, potential, or otherwise expressions of sin within the human heart. Third, there is seeing the confessional act as somehow necessary to securing the forgiveness and good favor of God. Such a view sees such an act as man-centered and self-motivated.

- B. Repent of it and thus put off its presence and pattern (Eph. 4:22).

Though crucified we are still called upon to lay aside the old self (Eph. 4:22).

“That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, **which is being corrupted** in accordance with the lusts of deceit” (Eph. 4:22).

Though the old self is crucified and has been laid aside (Col. 3:9), it is still in a process of perpetual corruption (Eph. 4:22), thus the necessity to lay it aside.

“Do not lie to one another, **since you laid aside the old self** with its evil practices” (Col. 3:9).

We can understand the verse (Eph. 4:22) in the larger context of truth that would allow us to say, “Put off the old man, because you have put off the old man,” or as we are prone to say, “Practice your position.” It is the same idea as found in 1 Corinthians 5:7, “Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, **just as you are in fact unleavened.**”

The laying aside of the old self by the believer is an “already / not-yet” truth. Although it has been crucified (and is dead), and has

thus been laid aside (Col. 3:9) it is still being corrupted (Eph. 4:22). In Colossians 3:9, the language suggests the action of dying is **judicial** meaning the sentence against it has been pronounced or declared. The judicial pronouncement is real. It is now a matter of executing the sentence against it. Pastor John Piper refers to this as “decisive and irrevocable, Yes! But final and perfect, No!”⁵ This leads us to our seventh aspect concerning our old self.

The validity and veracity of acknowledged sin is the turning from it and the putting off the old man. The integrity behind the confession of sin is seen in what follows. Confession is a fruit of the Spirit but also produces a fruit. True confession is intricately wrapped up in repentance. No one has truly confessed who is not also genuinely repenting.

- C. Make no provision for its future manifestation (Rom. 13:14) by mortifying its deeds (Col. 3:5).

Our body of flesh is a vehicle of expression for our fallen nature. Thus we must control what our body of flesh does in the expression of our innate depravity (Rom. 6:19) by yielding to what we know is true.

The fleshly body is a garment (2 Cor. 5:1-7; Jude 23). It is for this reason we are not to yield to our sinful nature, but rather to present our bodies to God and to mortify the members of our body

(Rom. 6:19; 12:2; Col. 3:5). It is in and through the power of the Holy Spirit that we are to be putting to death the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13). We are to make no provisions for the flesh in the expression of its rebellion through our physical body (Rom. 13:14).

For the believer, sin is still present in them. It reveals itself as “we present the members of our body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness” (Rom. 6:13).

- It is for this reason the believer is exhorted to present their bodies as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1) and in so doing they yield their members as instruments of righteousness to God (Rom. 6:13).

In Romans 12:1, “To present your bodies,” is an aorist active infinitive. Here (similar to Ephesians 4:22) it carries a commanding force. The same word, “Present/Yield,” is found in Romans 6 and 12. In the action of offering ourselves up as a living sacrifice, the believer is yielding the members of their body as instruments of righteousness to God.

- It is for this reason the believer is to “consider the members of their earthly body as dead” (Col. 3:5).

The strength of Colossians 3:5 (an aorist active imperative) is built on the foundation of 3:1-4. Whatever we once were, we no longer

are. The most natural action for those who have died with Christ (2:20) and have been raised with Christ (3:1) and whose lives are hidden with Christ in God (3:3) is to consider the members of their bodies as being dead to sin (3:5).

- It is for this reason the believer is “not to provide for the flesh in regard to its lusts” (Rom. 13:14).

There is an accumulation of imperatives throughout chapters 12 and 13 with 13:14 giving a summation of the whole process, “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh.” Verse 14 parallels verse 12. The language can change but the meaning is the same.

Another area where the Spirit’s work is seen is in the absence of premeditated sin. All true believers are persistently doing battle with their fallen nature. Everyone needs to realize that the flesh will take every possible advantage provided in order to regain mastery over its host body. Though it is impossible to be sinless, it is equally impossible not to be sinning less.

- D. Seek to live in newness of life (Rom. 6:5) by knowing, reckoning, and yielding.

Victory can only be experienced as one is practicing the reality of Romans 6. This is the classic passage on implementing one’s position into one’s practice. How do we walk in newness of life?

How do we live the Christ life? There appears to be three “steps.”

1. We should know the biblical truth of our union with Christ (v. 6).

It is a present active participle. Do we have the fact of our union with Christ squarely planted in our mind? Do we understand sin no longer has power over us because we are dead? This is information oriented. We are gathering facts.

2. We should reckon ourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ (v. 11).

Both the exhortation (reckon) and the prohibition (let not sin reign) are present active imperatives. Secondly, we must reckon or consider ourselves to be dead to sin, but very much alive to God in Christ. This is the truth of Galatians 2:20 and Colossians 3:1-3. Consider the information we know to be true, to be true! If we have died with Christ, then we are dead to sin. If we have been raised with Christ, then we can walk in newness of life. However, there is one more “step” we must take.

3. We should yield our body as an instrument of righteousness (v. 13).

It is a present active imperative. Finally, we must yield or present

our body to God as a living sacrifice. We must place ourselves at His disposal. We must trust Him for everything. Just as we came to Him for salvation, now we must come to Him for sanctification. We cannot yield ourselves to sin, to feed its appetites and desires (Rom. 13:14). We must abstain from fleshly lusts (2 Pet. 2:11).

Consider the progression of thought in sitting down in a chair. We see the chair (know), we see someone sit in the chair (consider) and now we sit (yield). This is what we must do daily. Paul gives one final reason as to why we must not live in sin.

Making the idea of yielding or walking as conditions to be met is like telling someone to go to sleep. We can understand what sleeping is, but it is not necessary to sleeping. We can command someone to sleep, but commanding them will not put them to sleep. We can only go to sleep when we simply relax. Once we relax, we go to sleep. We go to sleep without trying to go to sleep. Therefore, it is with yielding, walking, or being led. When we try, we make it something that it is not. It is only when we rest in Him it takes place.

- E. Since we are living in the Spirit, now seek to be led by Him (Gal. 5).

It is unfortunate many feel as if they must resign themselves to the power of the flesh. We have made the flesh our reality when it

should be the Spirit. We are called upon to live our lives in this earthen body according to our position in Christ. Such a call has validity because of the present impact of positional truth into this current realm. As Christians, victory is indigenous to walking in newness of life.

Two statements summarize our relationship before God as it relates to our identity in Christ. First, we cannot undo by our actions what He has done. Second, what we merit by grace, we cannot maintain by works. Think about what this is implying.

- He declared us right in justification.
- He restored relational hostility through reconciliation.
- He removed all wraths through propitiation.
- Every action He has done made it possible for us to have fellowship with Him.

This is not an exhaustive listing, but it does begin to show us how far we have fallen in practicing our position as it relates to the renewing of our minds. All that we have before the Father is merited by grace. All that He has done through the incarnation and substitutionary sacrifice, we cannot undo through our actions. If these things are true, which we have no reason to believe otherwise, then how does this work in the area of our sinning?



CONCLUSION

Recognizing that it is His working in us and through us, we choose to stand in His Son; we choose to live in the fullness of His forgiveness; we choose to live in His limitless love; we choose to accept a more than abundant grace. We desire to live the Christ life.

We are free from condemnation because Jesus through His death condemned sin. If we face His wrath then the death He died was insufficient. The law is powerless to condemn sin in the flesh. It is powerless to liberate the sinner from the power of the flesh. The incarnation enabled Jesus to condemn sin in the flesh.

The sacrificial death of the Son of God, therefore, was the means by which sin was condemned. He took upon himself the punishment that those who violated God's law deserved.⁶ The work of Christ on the cross freed believers from both the penalty and the power of sin.⁷

He sees me in Christ risen, forever beyond the reach of condemnation. And though we are often slow to hear, and our spiritual vision is most defective, the blessed fact remains that God has pronounced the believer free from condemnation whether he fully rises to the glorious fact or not.⁸

In spite of the fact that the Christian is in a continuing struggle with the law of sin in his members, there is no verdict of condemnation

against him. There is no charge, no indictment, no judgment, and no penalty - because he is 'in Christ Jesus.' As Robertson comments, 'This is Paul's Gospel.' This freedom from condemnation means freedom from past sins and pardon for future sins.⁹

If this pardon from condemnation does not reach into our current practice, then we do not understand what it does mean.

Consider the life described and prescribed above. It is a life that is marked by Christ. This is attractive. In addition, this is the kind of life that pulls the unsaved to the person of Christ. Until we see the shallowness of life lived apart from Christ, we will never see the sufficiency and satisfaction of life lived in Christ. May we hunger after all that God has already secured for us in Christ.

¹ "Studies in Theology, Reviews," in *Collected Writings of John Murray*, 4 vols. (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), 4:284.

² Jerry Bridges, *Transforming Grace*, (NavPress:Colorado Springs, 1991), 39.

³ Bridges, *Transforming Grace*, 73.

⁴ First John 1:9 is somewhat problematic. Although I look at it as a verse for believers the larger context (1 John 1:5-2:2) is probably speaking to unbelievers.

⁵ John Piper, "Already: Decisively and Irrevocably Free; Not Yet: Finally and Perfectly Free" (Bethlehem Baptist Church, August 28, 2001).

<http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/taste-see-articles/already-decisively-and-irrevocably-free-not-yet-finally-and-perfectly-free>

⁶ Schreiner, *Romans*, 403.

⁷ Schreiner, *Romans*, 404.

⁸ H. A. Ironside, *Romans* (Neptune NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1979), 95,96.

⁹ Clifton J. Allen, *The Gospel According to Paul: A Study of the Letter to the Romans* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1956), 86.