

## **Romans 6:1-14 - Dying To Live: Overcoming Habitual Sin - Part 3**

### **Memory Verse**

Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

### **Overview of Romans 1 to 8**

“Romans 1 through 5 tells us we are dead in sin. Chapters 6 through 8 tell us we are dead to sin. Chapters 1 through 5 tell us we are free from the penalty of sin. Chapters 6 through 8 tell us we are free from the power of sin.” (Jon Courson)

### **Romans 6:1-14 NKJV**

**What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? <sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

**<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. <sup>7</sup> For he who has died has been freed from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, <sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. <sup>10</sup> For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup> Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**<sup>12</sup> Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. <sup>13</sup> And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. <sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

### **Applying Romans 6:1-14—Overcoming Habitual sin (a lifestyle characterised by sin)**

Paul asked the question in Romans 6:1, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in [habitual] sin that grace may abound?” He gave his answer in Romans 6:2, “Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” Paul then explains the glorious truth that the believer is no longer dead *in* sin, but is now dead *to* sin—our old man was crucified with Christ (see v 6). This means that every believer is completely and eternally free from the power of sin, and so *just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious [power] of the Father, so we too might [habitually] live and behave in newness of life* (Romans 6:4b AMP).

Simply put, the passions, appetites and desires of my body are no longer controlled by or under the authority of my *old man*, and so they have lost their power over me—I am no longer a slave to do what my bodily appetites (my flesh or sinful nature) wants me to do. Instead, I am under new management and have received a new nature which only wants to love and obey God: God lives in me has given me the power to live according to the new nature that He gave me (see Ephesians 2:21-22, Peter 1:3-5).

### Overcoming habitual sin is all about learning to trust God

*To reckon myself dead to sin and alive to Christ simply means to trust that: If it's true that Jesus died and rose again, then it's also true that my old man also died and now I live a new life by the power of God.*

All that I have to do overcome habitual sin is, by faith, reckon or consider it to be true that the old man to be dead, and so, by faith, live the new life of victory over sin. The world, the devil, and my sinful nature (fleshly bodily desires and appetites), will try to deceive me by trying to make me think that they still control and have power over me, that I am obligated or must do what they want me to do—they will make me *feel* like I have no choice. But all I have to do is come back to the facts, to walk by faith, to believe that when Christ died, then so did my old man (and therefore my old nature or identity no longer has any power over me), and so now I am free to live for Christ and not for sin. I must live by faith (facts), and not by sight (emotions and feelings)—see 2 Corinthians 5:7.

### Romans 8:11-13 NLT

The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life [make alive to God] to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation [you don't have to obey it, you are not forced] to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. <sup>13</sup> For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live.

There is a beautiful example in Deuteronomy 32:11 of how God teaches us how to live according to our new nature. An eaglet may not feel like it can fly as its mother pushes him out of the nest located at the top of a high cliff, but as he starts to fall, and starts to naturally flap his wings, he will suddenly begin to soar. *All he had to do was learn to use his wings, to discover that he already had the ability to fly.* If he doesn't learn the first time, then mother catches him and takes him up on her wings and drops him again, and again, and again, until he learns to fly. This is what God does with us. He has already given us the power and desire to overcome temptation, but we must learn to trust that it is true. The Christian life starts the same for every new believer—we all must first learn to trust that what God says is true—this is why the root of all sin is unbelief (see Hebrews 3:18-4:3). Galatians 2:20 is a succinct and beautiful summary of Romans 6:1-14:

### Galatians 2:20 AMP

[My old man has] been crucified with Christ [in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ (the Messiah) lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I **live by faith in (by adherence to and reliance on and complete trust in) the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me.**

### Philippians 2:12b-13 NLT

Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. <sup>13</sup> For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

## Reasons why we must “certainly not” continue living a life of habitual sin

“In light of these remarkable changes, it is utterly incompatible for a new creation in Jesus to be comfortable in habitual sin. A state of sin can only be temporary for the Christian. As Spurgeon is credited with saying: **“The grace that does not change my life will not save my soul.”**”

Once dead to sin, it is unthinkable to continue our former practice of sin. Once the caterpillar has been made a butterfly, the butterfly has no business crawling around on trees and leaves like a caterpillar again.” (David Guzik)

“God has so changed your nature by his grace that when you sin you shall be like a fish on dry land, you shall be out of your element, and long to get into a right state again. You cannot sin, for you love God. The sinner may drink sin down as the ox drinketh down water, but to you it shall be as the brine of the sea. You may become so foolish as to try the pleasures of the world, but they shall be no pleasures to you.” (Spurgeon)

The apostle John says the same thing in a different way: *Whoever abides in Him does not [habitually] sin. Whoever [habitually] sins has neither seen Him nor known Him ... Whoever has been born of God does not [habitually] sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot [habitually] sin, because he has been born of God* (1 John 3:6 and 3:9 NKJV).

In saying this, it’s also important to understand that our practical sanctification, the process of changing the way we think (see Romans 12:1-2), is a process which will take our whole lives.

“The changes may not come all at one time, and they may not come to each area of one’s life at the same time, but they will be there and they will be real and they will be increasing as time goes on.” (David Guzik)

However, by choosing to continue to make provision for or creating opportunities to satisfy the desires of the sinful nature, we will remain in, or fall back into, habitual sin—this is very undesirable state of affairs. We dishonour Christ and hurt those around us, especially those in the body of Christ. Listen to and apply this exhortation:

Romans 13:11-14 AMP

Besides this you know what [a critical] hour this is, how it is high time now for you to wake up out of your sleep (rouse to reality). For salvation (final deliverance) is nearer to us now than when we first believed (adhered to, trusted in, and relied on Christ, the Messiah).

<sup>12</sup> The night is far gone and the day is almost here. Let us then drop (fling away) the works and deeds of darkness and put on the [full] armour of light.

<sup>13</sup> Let us live and conduct ourselves honourably and becomingly as in the [open light of] day, not in revealing (carousing) and drunkenness, not in immorality and debauchery (sensuality and licentiousness), not in quarrelling and jealousy.

<sup>14</sup> But clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah), **and make no provision for [indulging] the flesh [put a stop to thinking about the evil cravings of your physical nature] to [gratify its] desires (lusts).**

## Getting to the root cause of sin: the desires of the flesh or sinful nature

Romans 13:14 shows us that defeating sin is really about overcoming the desires that motivate us to sin—*Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires* (NLT). Therefore, it's important that we understand what the desires of our flesh or sinful nature are. How do we overcome a sin if we are not sure of what the desire is that is motivating us to commit that sin. Remember that our behaviour is really only a symptom of what is going on in our hearts—it's our desires that drive us to do what we do.

“All human activity is prompted by desire. There is a wholly fallacious theory advanced by some earnest moralists to the effect that it is possible to resist desire in the interests of duty and moral principle [in the bible this is called legalism]. I say this is fallacious, not because no man ever acts from a sense of duty, but because duty has no hold on him unless he desires to be dutiful. If you wish to know what men will do, you must know not only, or principally, their material circumstances, but rather the whole system of their desires with their relative strengths.” (Bertrand Russell—atheist and philosopher)

The main physical and emotional desires and fears of our flesh or sinful nature that must be crucified or denied are:

- the desire to be comfortable (fear of pain and discomfort)
- the desire to be liked, loved, and accepted (fear of being rejected)
- the insatiable desire to have more (fear of going without)
- the desire to be praised (fear of being put down)
- the desire for pleasure, self-indulgence, and to be entertained (fear of boredom)
- the desire to be in control (fear of being helpless and at the mercy of others)
- the desire for self-preservation (fear of dying)

So, for example, once I realise that the desire that is driving me to continue in the sin of lust is the desire for pleasure, then I understand that I won't be able to give up the sin, until I have first crucified my desire for pleasure that is driving me to sin.

If I only focus on stopping the sin, but not deal with the desire that is driving me to sin, I will not be successful in overcoming the sin.

An illustration: I know of someone who was driving a Volvo, and somehow the brake and accelerator pedals somehow got stuck together. Thus, when she applied the brake, she also applied the accelerator. She was driving towards a high, vertical cliff. Now, because the brake and accelerator pedals were stuck together, the more this lady tried to apply the brake, the faster the car went. Why? Because she was applying the brake, she was also applying the accelerator, and the stopping power of the brakes was no match for the power of the engine pushing the car forward. Therefore, she ended up accelerating and crashing into the cliff. Thankfully she survived.

If she had been thinking clearly, then she would have understood that if she had first turned off the engine, then she could have easily stopped the car. Why? Because pressing on the accelerator would then have had no effect: because the engine had been turned off, it had lost its power. Pressing on the brakes with the engine turned off would easily and quickly stop the car.

In the same way, the believer has a new heart with new desires to love and obey God—this new nature is like the brake in the car—it wants to avoid sin, to avoid smashing into the cliff. However, the believer still has their fleshly or sinful nature desires and appetites, which, if left unchecked, will overpower the desires of the new nature and end up controlling me, smashing me into the cliff wall—these sinful nature or fleshly desires are like engine of the car. And because of the way the law works, the more I try in my own strength to overcome my fleshly desires, the more I will want to do them, the more they will control me—*But then Law came in, [only] to expand and increase the trespass [making it more apparent and exciting opposition]* (Romans 5:20a AMP). The more I try on my own strength to stop sinning, the more I will “accelerate” into sin—the desire to sin will only increase.

Thus, the only way to deal with the sin of lust is to first *crucify the desire for pleasure—the engine must be turned off*. It’s impossible to try to stop doing something that I have a strong desire to do. If I don’t deal with the desire first, then the desire to lust will still be there, and I will very likely relapse, or just find some other way of fulfilling my desire for pleasure. This is why the Scriptures teach us that we must deal with our sin at the desire level.

Galatians 5:24 NLT

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there.

Galatians 5:24 AMP

And those who belong to Christ Jesus (the Messiah) have crucified the flesh (the godless human nature) with its passions and appetites and desires.

Galatians 5:24 NKJV

And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

v 24 **“Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh:** This speaks of something that the *believer does*, being directed and empowered by the Spirit of God. It was not and is not the sovereign, “unilateral” work of God.” (David Guzik)

“The *old man*, the self inherited from Adam, is crucified with Jesus as the sovereign work of God when we are born again. Romans 6:6 says, *Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him*. We are simply told to *reckon*, or account, the old man as dead (Romans 6:11), we are not told to put him to death. But the flesh is another matter. We are called to choose to work with God to do to the flesh exactly what God did all by Himself to the old man: crucify the flesh.” (David Guzik)

“Please notice that the ‘crucifixion’ of the flesh described here is something that is done not *to us* but *by us* ... Galatians 5:24 does not teach the same truth as Galatians 2:20 or Romans 6:6. In those verses we are told that by faith-union with Christ ‘we have been crucified with him’. But here it is we who have taken action.” (Stott)

Boice on **have crucified**: “The verb is in the active voice and points rather to what the believer has himself done and must continue to regard as being done.”

**“With its passions and desires:** In Jesus Christ, you can live above the **passions and desires** of your flesh. The resources are there in Jesus. Look to Him. See your life in Him. If you are one of **those who are Christ’s**, then you belong to Him—not to this world, not to yourself, and not to your **passions and desires**.” (David Guzik)

The question is now how does anyone crucify his sinful desires? Jesus tells us how—he must **deny himself**, and be willing to suffer for and follow Jesus instead:

Matthew 16:24 AMP

Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to be My disciple, **let him deny himself [disregard, lose sight of, and forget himself and his own interests]** and take up his cross and follow Me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying, also].

So overcoming sin is really about denying ourselves. We can choose to, by the power of the Holy Spirit, crucify or put to death those sinful desires that seek to control us and destroy us by driving us into the cliff. Jesus is the greatest example of someone denying himself, of giving up their rights, and submitting their will to God's.

Remember that for the Christian, denying themselves (saying no to what they want) is saying yes to what God wants. We submit our sinful human desires to God so that they won't rule over or control us, and ask God to replace those desires with His desires—we are now motivated to do what God wants, and not what we want.

### Jesus' example in crucifying and submitting His human desires to the Father

Jesus was fully man, and so He had the same basic desires as we did. Yes, He was perfect, but He still had a human nature, with the same basic desires that we all have.

Hebrews 4:15 NLT

This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings [temptations] we do, yet he did not sin.

How was Jesus always able to overcome temptation? By always submitting his will and His human desires to the Father. Jesus didn't come to do what He wanted to do, but rather what the Father wanted Him to do.

Hebrews 10:9 NKJV

Then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.

Jesus was still tempted to sin, but just because He was perfect and never sinned, it doesn't mean that it was easy for Him to resist sin for His whole life.

Hebrews 12:1-4 NLT

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. <sup>2</sup> *We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting [set before] Him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame.* Now He is seated in the place of honour beside God's throne. <sup>3</sup> Think of all the hostility He endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. <sup>4</sup> **After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.**

Jesus' agony in the garden of Gethsemane is the ultimate example of just how hard it is to deny ourselves and submit our will to God's will. Jesus was denying or crucifying his natural human desires. These would have included the desires for: self-preservation, to be free from pain and discomfort, to be in control, and to be accepted and loved.

The battle was won for Jesus only after He willingly denied or crucified His own human desires, by willingly submitting His will to the Father. Only then did the desires and will of the Father become His. Only then was Jesus able to endure the shame and agony of the cross with joy—because the only desire that Jesus was left with was the desire to please the Father, the cross became something that Jesus wanted to do. And because it the cross because something that Jesus wanted to endure, it wasn't a burden at all for Him—Because of the joy awaiting [set before] Him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Also see 1 John 5:2-3.

Let's look at how difficult it was for Jesus to die to self, to deny himself, to submit his will to the Father.

Matthew 26:38-42 NLT

He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

<sup>39</sup> He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

<sup>40</sup> Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? <sup>41</sup> Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!"

<sup>42</sup> Then Jesus left them a second time and prayed, "My Father! If this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done."

As we learned previously, there will be no joyous resurrection until there has been a painful death. The death that we all must die is the death to our sinful human desires. Jesus prayer of "Not My will but Yours be done", must become ours. We must, by the power of the Holy Spirit, crucify the desire to do what we want, and ask God to make His will and desires ours.

### **Summary and conclusion to Romans 6:1-14—Know, Reckon, Yield**

Here is a practical summary of Romans 6:1-14:

1. **Know** the power of sin is broken (the focus is on the mind—understanding),
2. **Reckon** this to be true (the focus is on the heart—believing)
3. **Yield** our bodies to God's service (the focus is on the will—obeying)

#### **1. Know the power of sin is broken**

**Romans 6:6 NKJV**

**Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.**

Warren Wiersbe helps us to understand this: "Sin is a terrible master, and it finds a willing servant in the human body. The body is not sinful; the body is neutral. It can be controlled either by sin or by God. But man's fallen nature, which is not changed at conversion, gives sin a beachhead from which it can attack and then control. Paul expressed the problem: "And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't." (Rom. 7:18).

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

In the same way, our sinful nature has been paralysed or rendered inactive, it no longer has any authority or power over the believer—I am free to not sin.

## **2. Reckon this to be true**

### **Romans 6:11 NKJV**

**Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Jon Courson helps us to understand this: “The word “reckon” as used here in verse 11 is an accounting term. It means “add up the figures and come to an irrefutable conclusion.” The figures add up to this: If indeed it’s true that your sin nature was crucified with Christ on the Cross, then you no longer are in bondage to it. “Come to a conclusion based upon this fact,” said Paul.

An illustration: If you were hungry, I might tell you to go to McDonalds. But if you had no money, you’d say, “I can’t. I’m bankrupt.”

Then I might say, “Yes, you can. I put money in your account. Here is the deposit slip, signed by the teller and stamped with the bank seal.

But if you said, “I don’t believe that,” your failure to reckon it to be so, to add it up, and to appropriate what I did on your behalf would keep you poor and hungry. But the reason for your poverty and hunger would not be due to my failure to provide for you. It would be due to your failure to believe what I did for you.

Summary: Jesus paid the entire penalty for our sin and paralysed our sin nature. The question is not whether His provision is sufficient. The question is whether or not we reckon it to be true.”

## **3. Yield our bodies to God’s service**

### **Romans 6:12-13 NKJV**

**Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. <sup>13</sup> And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**

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



*How we are to yield (vv. 12–13).* This is an act of the will based on the knowledge we have of what Christ has done for us. It is an intelligent act—not the impulsive decision of the moment based on some emotional stirring. It is important to notice the tenses of the verbs in these verses. A literal translation is: “Do not constantly allow sin to reign in your mortal body so that you are constantly obeying its lusts. Neither constantly yield your members of your body as weapons [or tools] of unrighteousness to sin; but once and for all yield yourselves to God.” That once-and-for-all surrender is described in Romans 12:1. There must be in the believer’s life that final and complete surrender of the body to Jesus Christ. This does not mean there will be no further steps of surrender, because there will be. The longer we walk with Christ, the deeper the fellowship must become. But there can be no subsequent steps without that first step. The tense of the verb in Romans 12:1 corresponds with that in Romans 6:13—a once-and-for-all yielding to the Lord. To be sure, we daily surrender afresh to Him; but even that is based on a final and complete surrender.

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

*So we see that to overcome habitual sin, there must be an initial dying to sin, a total surrender of ourselves to God. This is the initial crucifying of our sinful nature desires. Simply put, they will not stop controlling us until they are put to death. The ongoing process is then to keep those desires nailed to the cross, but they must first be put there before they can be kept there.*

### **Conclusion: Avoiding legalism—It’s not no, no, no, but know, know, know**

We are tempted to say “no, no, no” to sin, to overcome sin by sheer will power or imposing rules and laws on ourselves and others; it’s the legalistic, humanistic, self-effort way of doing things that leaves God out of the picture. However, God says “know, know, know”—it’s all about learning, understanding, and applying the truth. We don’t overcome by human effort, but rather by understanding and trusting in the fact that God has already destroyed the power sin once had over us *once and for all*.

Here are the three things that every believer needs to know to overcome habitual sin:

1. The power of sin was broken once and for all at the cross (v 6),
2. Every believer must reckon this to be true (v 11), and
3. Every believer must apply this by yielding their body to the Lord (vs 12-13).”