

Problem-Solving Chapters of the Bible

SIN PROBLEMS: Romans 6

Many people struggle to overcome some kind of habitual sin. The Bible teaches that, through Jesus Christ, any sin can be overcome! We are saved by the grace of God, and therefore cannot be lost again after trusting Christ for salvation. However, this truth does not mean saved people should just go on and live wickedly. The sixth chapter of Romans puts it this way.

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”
(verses 1 and 2)

The Gospel of God’s grace produces *righteous* living! The preaching of free salvation is called in II Corinthians 3:9, *“the ministration of righteousness.”* Some argue that the doctrine of *eternal* salvation by the *grace* of God will give believers a license to sin. However, the opposite is true. God’s salvation gives us the power to overcome sin! See the promise in Romans 6:14.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

Salvation by grace liberates men from the bondage to sin that the Law imposed on us. I Corinthians 15:56 tells us that *“the strength of sin is the law.”* Because we had broken God’s Law, we were *already condemned* (John 3:18, Galatians 3:10) and were unable by obedience to the Law to remove its condemnation. We were stuck! Then, by faith in Christ we came into the grace of God where the power of God releases a sinner from his enslavement to sin (Romans 5:1-2, 6:16-18). Let us now learn how to apply these doctrines to our own sin problems. Find in Romans 6 three steps to getting victory over sin. Remember that when you overcome a sinful habit by following *God’s plan* after having failed to overcome it through your own efforts, God gets the glory!

I. Call It Sin.

Read all of chapter six, and notice that it is about being *“dead to sin”* and *“free from sin.”* It is *sin* that we can defeat through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is no promise here or in any other chapter of the Bible that God will give us victory over a bad habit, a little weakness, a shortcoming, or a fault. It’s all about overcoming *sin*. Jesus died for our *sins*! You cannot get help from Romans 6 until you call your problem *sin*. Ask yourself, is it a sin? Until you see that it is, you cannot count on divine help in beating it. Many things are sins that Christians call human foibles or nasty habits. Look up these verses, and see that these things are sins: any addiction (I Corinthians 6:12; envy, drinking (Galatians 5:19-21); selfish anger, bad language, lying (Colossians 3:8-10); laziness (II Thessalonians 3:10-15); discontent (I Timothy 6:1-10). Don’t be upset when you find out that your problem is a sin. This fact means that you can overcome it! Christ got the victory over *sin* on the cross and at the empty tomb. Call your problem *a sin*. Study the Bible to be convinced that it is.

II. Start in the Mind.

The word *“reckon”* in verse 11 speaks of a decision in your mind. The Greek word used there is a term of mental activity, and so is the English word in our Bible. Verses 3 through 10 tell us about the wonderful truth that was pictured in our baptism. We have died with Christ and been *“raised up”* to *“walk in newness of life.”* Knowing this truth, we should *“reckon”* that we are *“dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* To overcome sin, you must say to yourself, *“I am dead to sin.”* In other words,

“I don’t do that anymore. I’m a Christian.”

What you reckon yourself (in your mind) to be dead concerning, you are not likely to do. Do you think that our Pastor is sorely tempted to hold up the teller when he goes to the bank? Do you think that a happy Christian who has never tasted alcohol is tempted when he walks by a tavern to go in and get drunk? The answer to both of these questions is *“No,”* but why is that

the answer? The reason is that these folks don't *think* that they could do the wrong these situations give them a chance to do. Pastor is *dead* to robbing banks in his mind and the happy Christian is *dead* to getting drunk. They can't picture themselves doing these things. The things we *think* we might do are the things we are most tempted to do. Memorize Romans 6:11, and apply it in your life day by day, hour by hour.

Notice that we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin, not just to the particular sin we are trying to overcome. The Devil is smart, and when you are concentrating on defeating one vice, he will tempt you to fall into another. Then while you are out of fellowship with God because of a sin you have yet to confess, he tempts you in your weakness to get back into your habitual sin. So don't just say, "I don't smoke anymore." Say, "I don't disobey God. I'm a Christian."

Will you become sinless if you start thinking this way? No. Sadly, our sinful human nature will win out sometimes (Romans 7:15). But the truth is that we never *have to lose* to sin. Christ has won the victory for us. We must *claim* that victory by faith, and this claiming of victory begins in the *mind*!

III. Win By Yielding.

Now let's look closely at verses 12 and 13.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

The "*members*" mentioned in verse 13 are the parts of your body (See I Corinthians 12:18-23). Victory over sin begins in the mind and is accomplished in the body (Look at Romans 12:1-2). What shall we do with our body? The verse says to "*yield*" it. We must take a conscious decision to surrender our bodies to God to accomplish His will.

"As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

(verse 19)

Notice the positive aspect of this yielding. In the mind we reckon ourselves dead to sin (that's negative) and alive to God (that's positive). With our bodies we yield ourselves to do God's work (positive) and not sinful work (negative). The best defense is a good offense. Get busy for God, Romans 6 is saying! Serve God and not sin (Read again verses 16 through 22). Victory comes when we spend our time doing what God wants us to do. You should yield yourself to God for service *right now*. Don't think that you need to wait until you are sure you have beaten your sin problem. Start working for God immediately. Of course, some areas of church work will not be open to you until you have lived without certain bad activities for a while, but you can serve God in many ways other than as an official church worker on Sundays. Witness for Christ. Help people in need. Volunteer to do physical work around the church. The truth is the busier you get doing good, the less likely you will be to fall back into bad behavior. It is a fact that you cannot do two things, be two places, or be involved in two activities at the exact same time. You cannot curse with the same breath used to pray. You cannot be in a bar at the same moment you are at church. You cannot throw a punch at the same time as you lend a hand. Of course, the same person can do two opposite things on the same day, but he cannot physically do more than one thing at a time. So the busier you are doing right, the less you can do wrong. A great man suggested,

"Do so fast that you won't have time to don't!"

"Yield yourselves unto God" (v. 13) this very day.