

VICTORY OVER SIN – Romans 6:5-10 (Part-three of a sixteen-part study)

In our last segment we encountered the most profound truth in the New Testament as it pertains to the Christian life. As a result of our union with Christ, in His death, burial and resurrection on our behalf, we can experience victory over sin. First, our bondage to sin has been broken. Second, we have received a new nature from God, so that we can walk in newness of life with our Savior. The latter is implied in Romans 6 but clearly confirmed in passages such as Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:9-11. But the *“potential”* for misunderstanding this spiritual transformation is great. If the sin nature has been “done away with,” is sinless perfection in this life possible? If we have a new nature, why is it necessary to “walk by the Spirit?” If all of this has taken place on our behalf, why do we still struggle with sin? These are questions which have been asked by sincere Christians throughout Church history. We will do our best to answer them in these next segments.

When Paul speaks of the sin nature being “done away with,” he is not referring to sin within being eradicated out of existence, so that we become like Adam and Eve before their fall. My best understanding of that expression in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament, centers around the concept of authority. In an unregenerate person, the sin nature has the authority to hold an individual in bondage to sin. Jesus tells us in John 8:34 – “. . . **Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.**” But upon our conversion to Christ, that authority of the sin nature to hold us in bondage to sin is broken, rendered null and void. It still exists within each of us, but it cannot control our behavior in the manner that it did prior to our decision for Christ. When we are guilty of sin as a Christian, it is due to our own willful allowance of the sin nature to take back control of our behavior, even though it has no authority to do so.

Think of it as being analogous to an elected government official possessing a certain measure of authority in the office which he or she occupies. If they fail to win re-election, they must vacate that office and thereby lose the ability to exercise the authority which goes with it. That government official, once out of office, doesn’t cease to exist, but can no longer wield the authority they once had. However, if that official is a “sore loser,” and challenges the election result beyond the normal legal means, even falsely claiming that the election was stolen from him or her, a great deal of trouble and turmoil can be caused by such conduct, even though they no longer possess the governing authority they once did. So, if you don’t know this already, know it now. The sin nature within you is a SORE LOSER. It has been defeated by Jesus Christ at the Cross and His victory over sin became your victory over sin when you placed your trust in Him as Savior and Lord. And your sin nature doesn’t like it. Even though you have experienced salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and a spiritual transformation from within, that defeated, yet troublesome sin nature within you will do everything it can to wreak havoc with your new found life in Christ.

Yet for the first time in your life, you truly have free-will. “Free-will” is a term that is bandied about by many, most of whom know not of what they speak. Free-will, defined Biblically, is the ability to respond positively or negatively to God. Adam and Eve, prior to their fall, had such free-will. Ever since, none of their descendants possess that capacity. In our natural and unregenerate condition, we can’t respond positively to God. We can only respond negatively, as Romans 8:6-8 makes clear. We are utterly unwilling and totally incapable of a positive response. This does not mean that unsaved individuals are robots, but that they are slaves, in bondage to sin. Yet, at the moment of our conversion to Christ, that fallen condition within each of us changes. We become truly free to respond to God in a positive manner, by saying “yes” to Christ and “no” to sin. The specific dynamics of why this is true and how it can be an everyday reality in your life, is next.