

VICTORY OVER SIN – Romans 6:11 (Part-six of a sixteen-part study)

Romans 6:11 marks an important turning point in Paul's letter to the believers in Rome. From Romans 1:1 through 6:10, the apostle does not issue a single command for obedience. But in v11, we have his exhortation to them rendered in the present imperative. This strongly indicates that what he is requiring of them and all of us, must be ongoing and continuous. The verb is "logizimai" and is translated as either "count" or "reckon." In ancient Greek, the term was used both in economics as well as philosophy; in keeping track of commercial transactions, and in reference to the reasoning powers of a human being, from which we derive the word "logic." Paul uses it eleven times in Romans 4 in order to confirm our justification before God. But now, his desire is to move us from the justification which delivers us from the penalty of sin, into a sanctification process which progressively and continuously sets us free from the power of sin.

Thus far, in Romans 6:1-10, we have discovered what is true of every Christian: that faith in Christ has resulted in a union with our Savior, in His death, burial and resurrection, on our behalf. This union, although supernatural, is nevertheless real. It carries with it the "potential" for a Christian life where we can experience victory over sin. But in order for that potential to be realized in our everyday lives, we must count it or reckon it to be so. It is our responsibility as Christians to acknowledge what God has accomplished spiritually in each of us. How do we fulfill such a responsibility and make such a reckoning? BY FAITH. This is confirmed from what Paul encourages the Colossians to do in Colossians 2:6 – **"Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him . . ."** We receive our salvation by faith in Christ and His redemptive work on our behalf. This frees us from the penalty of sin. So now that we have been justified by faith in Christ, we must also exercise faith in Christ and our union with Him in His redemptive work, so that we can experience freedom from the power of sin. *It isn't any more complicated than that.*

This is not optional. Or as Paul states it in his letter to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 4:3a, **"For this is the will of God, your sanctification. . ."** If we are to experience the genuine spiritual growth that God desires for each of us, fulfilling our responsibility to Romans 6:11 on a daily basis is non-negotiable. The present imperative of "logizimai" discourages us from thinking that we can fulfill this reckoning once and never think about it again. Fulfilling Romans 6:11 once, does not place us on some sort of supernatural automatic pilot. The very opposite is true. No Christian in their right mind would ever think that Bible study and prayer only needs to occur one day every year. Both of those spiritual disciplines must be ongoing and continuous, occurring daily, if we are to remain in a spiritually healthy condition. The same is true of Romans 6:11.

How Paul follows up on Romans 6:11 in vv12-15, only confirms the daily need for this reckoning by faith. To think otherwise, reveals a misconception about what we expect our victory over sin will look like. It will not give us an immunity from being tempted. It will not mean that we can arrive in a state of sinless perfection during our earthly lives. Perhaps most importantly, it does not mean that we will experience victory over sin immediately and comprehensively. There is a reason why it's called "progressive" sanctification. This is why and how I begin every day, fulfilling my Romans 6:11 responsibility. After I wake up and before I get up, I pray the following prayer:

"Dear Heavenly Father, I do reckon myself to be dead to sin and alive to You through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, my Lord. I ask that You would take this reckoning I am making by faith, and make it real and living in my experience this day, through the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells me. I ask it in Jesus' name, amen."