

VICTORY OVER SIN – Romans 6:12-14 (Part-seven of a sixteen-part study)

God's provision for the Christian's daily victory over sin does not include the element of a supernatural automatic pilot. We must employ the foundational principle of Romans 6:11 every day! And if you think that Romans 6:11 can be used just once for the rest of your life, you are in for a rude awakening. In Romans 6:12-14, the apostle Paul seeks to prevent such a massive error in judgment in each of us. Notice what he says in those verses –

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

As we have learned in previous segments, upon our conversion to Christ, one's bondage to sin is broken. The new believer is set free from the authority of the sin nature over him. Nevertheless, that sin nature in each of us continues its existence, opposing everything that God seeks to accomplish in and through our lives. This is clearly confirmed by Paul, in Galatians 5:16-17 –

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”

Any objective reading of the above statement in Galatians eliminates the notion that the sin nature has been eradicated or made permanently dormant. A proper understanding of Galatians 5:16-17, in relation to Romans 6:1-14, is that the sin nature has been defeated by the death of Christ on the Cross. And that we can live in victory over sin due to the new nature that has been created in us, as a result of our union with Christ, in both His death and resurrection. But we must never forget that the sin nature is a “sore loser” which is always seeking to do whatever it can to bring us back under its authority and into a condition of being defeated and dominated by sin. It functions in the role of an insurrectionist, attempting to usurp the victory that is ours in Christ.

This is why we must claim that victory with our Savior on a daily basis, embracing Romans 6:11 as our own personal reality in Christ; while steadfastly refusing to succumb to the temptations of the sin nature. How else can we make sense of the admonitions by Paul in Romans 6:12-13? It is our responsibility to not let sin reign in our mortal bodies. It is our obligation to STOP presenting the members of our body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness. In turn, we must START the process of presenting ourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness to God. Our union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection on our behalf, makes a victorious Christian life possible. But as Romans 6:11 in conjunction with vv12-14 makes clear, that possibility carries with it a responsibility which we must fulfill, so that victory over sin becomes a consistent reality in our everyday life.

This is what it means to live under God's grace (Romans 6:15), as we experience God's supernatural empowerment, resulting in our progressive sanctification (Romans 6:22). Just as we were once slaves to sin in the spiritual deadness of our unbelief, so now, we are spiritually alive and free in Christ, to live a life of obedience to Him. Nevertheless, the beautiful simplicity of Romans chapter six must now be correlated with the controversial complexity of Romans chapter seven. We will seek to do our best in unravelling that interpretive ball of confusion, next.