



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

Do you know what I discovered last Sunday? It saddens me to have seen this, but I discovered that you do not love me. Not one of you loves me or cares for me at all. Do you know why I know this is true? Because if you really loved me, if you had even an ounce of mercy for me, you would have stopped me before I gave the benediction and made a fool of myself. ;-)

If you weren't here last Sunday, before the final song, Doug announced that they were going to do two closing songs. Since I was distracted looking up my benediction verse, I did not hear him say that. So after what I thought was the last song, I gave the benediction only to turn around and realize what was happening.

John Mickelsen stopped me after the service and was really happy to see that the Holy Spirit confirmed that I truly was fallible. I don't know if I even needed the Holy Spirit to tell me that nor would I be inclined to blame the Holy Spirit for my mistakes, but if that incident was the Holy Spirit, then he certainly did confirm that I am indeed fallible!

The fun did not stop there as several of you poked fun at me during the week in regard to my "newly discovered" fallibility. Virginia Goeke told me she was going to have to leave the church now that she knows I am fallible. I would hope that there was more than you took away from that message other than my fallibility!

Of course the whole fallibility thing started with the discussion about fighting sin. A few years ago I had taught you that we have been saved from the power of sin and I have now changed it to that we have been saved from the dominion of sin, just as Paul wrote in verse 14. **14** *For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. We*

need to keep working out this passage, not just for theological reasons, but for the practical reason of being more victorious in our fight against sin.

I like what, what A. J. Gordon, a 19th century pastor said on this subject. Although he rejected sinless perfection, he did not advocate the opposite extreme. He wrote, "If we regard the doctrine of sinless perfection as a heresy, we regard contentment with sinful imperfection as a greater heresy."<sup>1</sup> So even if we cannot attain sinless perfection in this life, in essence, this should be our aim.

Before we move forward, let me answer a question that was posed to me this past week. Since I concluded that we were not saved from the power of sin, did that mean that we can never have final victory over sin. For example, someone who struggles with pornography, can they ever be truly free or will they always sin, even if it is a lot less? Let me say this clearly. Even though we have not be set free completely from the power of sin--and that is all that I meant--we are progressively free form sin's power. It's just what the doctrine of sanctification teaches--*I am being set free form the power of sin*. By the grace of God, sin will have less and less power over us. So I firmly believe that addictions can be conquered; that besetting sins can be vanquished; that temptations can be defeated. If I did not believe this, there would be absolutely no use for me to stand here and deliver any message, let alone a message about fighting sin.

Remember that we are on point number three in our 3 part outline.

1. An enslaved person has to recognize their slavery and seek to be freed.
2. Free people have to know that they are free.
3. Free people have to live as if they are free.

*5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be **enslaved** to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set **free** from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has **dominion** over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

*12 Let not sin therefore **reign** in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as **instruments** for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as **instruments** for righteousness. 14 For sin will have no **dominion** over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

### **3. Free people have to live as if they are free.**

Under this third point there are four steps from this passage for fighting sin.

1. Consider yourself dead to sin and alive to Christ.

I want to start by pointing out that there is much more to this first word, consider, than meets the eye. You will probably recall this famous verse from chapter four. *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."* (Romans 4:2-3) Do you remember what the word "credited" means? It is an accounting term. When we place our faith in the finished work of Christ, God "credits" his righteousness to our account. Wouldn't it be nice if I credited \$1000 to each of your bank accounts? If I did, would it be your money? Of course it would. In the same way, the righteousness of Christ is credited to our account. And what is that called? That is justification.

So the word consider is the same word as credit. Just as the righteousness of Christ was credited to our account, so the fact that we are dead to sin and alive to Christ is credited to our account. Can you see the righteousness of Jesus Christ that was credited to you? Have you ever actually felt this righteousness? Then how do you know you have it? I know I have it because God has clearly said so. In the same way I am to consider that I am dead to sin and alive to Christ. Paul spent the first ten verses convincing us that we have died to sin. Therefore, in verse 11 he can so matter of factly state: *So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.* It is done, so believe it. Christ did it, so we can trust it.

It's important that we first consider and believe that this is true. Because we all live out what we believe, whether or not we are aware of it. For example, notice what the [people in this church believe](#). Not only do they handle snakes but they believe that it is sinful to seek medical attention when you are bit, that you should trust the Lord to heal you. Pastor Jamie Coots died on Saturday the 15th 2 hours after being bitten by a rattlesnake. He certainly was consistent in his beliefs, was he not? He totally lived out what he believed, but unfortunately, he believed several lies.

We all live out what we believe. And what is the best way to know what any one person believes? Not by what they confess or say they believe, but by the way it is lived out in their life. If you believe that people need Christ alone for salvation but you never tell anyone about this gift of eternal life, do you really believe it? You believe it for yourself but you aren't very convinced that it applies to everyone else. Because if you did, you would tell others. I am not suggesting that we need to be knocking on doors every night of the week of preaching the gospel in 100% of our facebook posts, but if you rarely or never tell anyone about Christ, your life proves what you believe, or perhaps in this case, don't believe.

So if we watched you for a solid month--the way you spend your money, the way you spend your time, what you read, what you watch, what you surf on the web, the way you parent, how you treat your spouse, how much time you spend in Bible reading and prayer, your service to the Lord, the way you conduct yourself at work, including your work ethic, how you treat your co-workers, your attitude, etc. If we could watch you for a month and gather all of the data together, we could tell you almost exactly what you believe. How do you think you would measure up? Would your stated beliefs match your actions?

What we believe directly affects how we live. Which is why this first step of considering ourselves as dead to sin and alive to Christ is so important. The next steps require more action on our part, but if we do not fully believe and own this truth, then whatever happens going forward will not be effective. If we don't believe it, if we don't consider it, if we do not credit it to our account, then we are defeated before we even start.

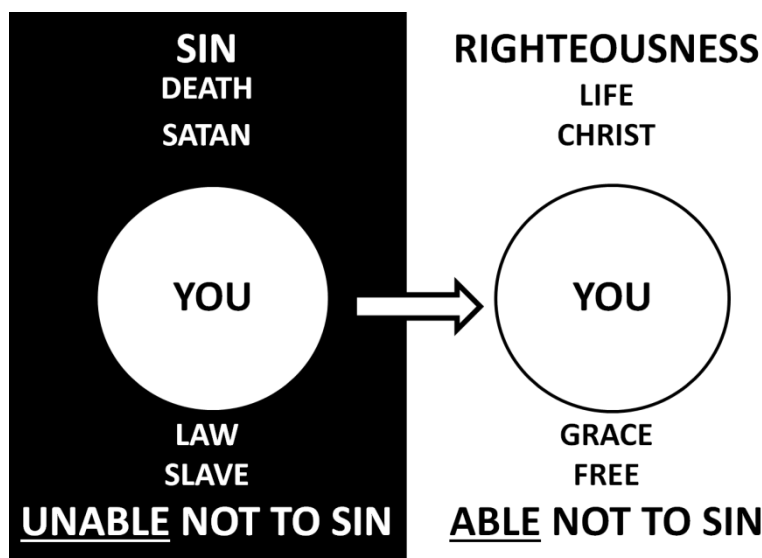
Consider the promise in verse 14. *For sin will have no dominion over you.* What could you not do with such a promise? This promise is the power which enables the commands that will follow in the next few verses. As believers, we are no longer under sin's domain. This is the engine which drives everything else. So let's see what comes next.

**2. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.**

If you recall, this is kingdom language. Do not let sin reign. Picture yourself as the king of a vast domain reaching from one shore to the other. You live at peace. You once were enslaved to your enemies but now you are free. Your enemies are largely defeated with limited power but most importantly, your borders are closed. All of your borders have impenetrable walls and several gates. You control whether or not those gates are ever opened.

Obviously, Jesus is your king yet you have been given stewardship over this kingdom. You control if you allow your enemies in or not. You are not under the dominion of your enemy. Because all of this is true, we are given a command that we can and must obey. If we were still under the dominion of sin, we could never obey this command. I like how one commentator put it. "One may as well tell a drowning person simply to swim to shore as tell a person who is under sin's mastery not to let sin reign."<sup>2</sup> But if you believe that you are dead to sin and alive to Christ-- point #1, then you can obey point #2- Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

As we said before, an unbeliever is unable not to sin. He or she has no choice. But you and I do. Look at this diagram from last week. Remember this is kingdom language that Paul is using here.



There are two kingdoms--death and life. Once we have been transferred to the kingdom of life, we cannot go back. There are two kings. Once Jesus is your king, Satan will never again be your master. We cannot go back into the kingdom of death. We cannot lose Christ as our king. But we can willingly place ourselves under the law and we can willingly live as a slave. We are able *not* to sin but we are still able to sin. Which is why we are given a third command.

### **3. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness.**

Recall the fifth part of the differences between the two kingdoms. There are two uses for weapons. Either you can use your weapons for unrighteousness or for righteousness.

<b>2 KINGDOMS</b>	Death	Life
<b>2 KINGS</b>	Satan	Christ
<b>2 MASTERS</b>	Law	Grace
<b>2 WAYS TO LIVE</b>	Slave	Free
<b>2 USES FOR WEAPONS</b>	Unrighteousness	Righteousness

But why do we call them weapons? That's what the word "instruments" means. The word means a tool or a weapon. If you are a carpenter, your instruments are your hammers and saws. If you are a welder, your instruments are your welding equipment, helmet and protective garb. If you are a pilot, your instrument is your plane. If you are a police officer, you have stun guns, billy clubs and handguns at your disposal. If you are a preacher, you have a big fat Bible.

We all have instruments at our disposal, weapons to be used either for the kingdom of God or for the kingdom of unrighteousness. Why would you use your "instruments" for the enemy? Think about this--regardless of your political leanings, would you volunteer your time for the opposing political campaign? I hope you are all prolife, so would you donate hard earned money to Planned Parenthood? Would you place an ad in the newspaper offering to give your handgun collection to a thief? If you possessed this ability, would you give nuclear weapons to terrorists?

We would never do any of these things because they are all clearly foolish decisions. Why would we use a weapon or a resource given to us to benefit our sworn enemy? But that is what sin does. We are able not to sin but we are still able to sin. When we do, it is like offering the resources and weapons that God has given us to the opposing side. Think about what what terrorists and the mafia does. They are arms dealers. They will either purchase or steal guns, grenades and rocket launchers and sell them to the highest bidder. They don't care which side has the weapons as long as they make a boatload of money. But when we sin, it is even worse than this, because we did not purchase or steal our resources and "weapons." God gave them to us. And God gave them to us in order to serve Him.

Let's say that your daughter is in a serious relationship. Her boyfriend comes to you one day and asks for her hand in marriage. You've known this guy for several years and you really do like him, so you give your blessing. It just so happens that your grandmother died ten years ago and you were given her wedding ring as a keepsake. You think to yourself, "What better way to keep grandma's ring in the family than to have it become my daughter's wedding ring." You know that would make your grandma happy if she could see it and you know that your daughter loves the ring. When she was a little girl, she would hold her grandmother's withered hand in her tiny hand and she would stare at that ring. She would dream about wearing a ring just like it when she grew up and got married. Now that your grandma has passed, your daughter often takes it out of the jewelry box and spends several minutes at a time, staring at its beauty and fondly remembering her great grandmother.

But you want this to be a surprise. So you ask the young man out to lunch on a Saturday afternoon. You show him the ring. You explain how your grandpa bought the ring in 1926. When they went through the Great Depression, they lost their farm and the only thing they had of any value was that ring. In desperation, they sold it to a local pawn shop so they could get on their feet and start farming again. Three years later, your grandma and grandpa were able to save up enough money to finally buy back the ring. Your grandpa placed that ring on his wife's finger and it never left her hand until the day she died. Finally, you explain your plan to the young man. You would like to give him your grandma's ring so he can present it to your daughter as her engagement ring. The young man is so touched by your story and your generosity, you can tell he is a little choked up. He gratefully accepts the gift and gives you a hug.

Three weeks later your daughter calls you in hysterics. Through her tears you learn that this nice young man has just given your grandmother's wedding ring to a different girl and plans to marry her instead.

This only begins to scratch the surface of betrayal of our sin against God. He has given us an abundance of gifts to use in serving him. But instead, we use his precious gifts in the service of God's enemy. And what are these gifts; these weapons; these instruments? Paul wrote, *Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness*. Your members are the members of your body. Your eyes. Your hands and feet. Your mind. In the second half of verse 13, Paul gave us the positive direction of this command.

#### **4. Present...your members to God as instruments for righteousness.**

How do you obey the command to not let sin reign in your mortal body? By practicing #3 and #4. From head to toe, every member of your body is presented every day as instruments of unrighteousness or as instruments of righteousness. It's important that the commands here are not just in the negative. Don't do this and don't do that. We do need prohibitions to certain behaviors because we like to push the boundaries. We like to ask, "What's wrong with doing this? Does the Bible say we can't do \_\_\_\_\_?" We need the ten commandments to tell us not to commit murder or steal from others but we also need the positive commandment to love another. So Paul didn't just say *Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness*. But he also said, *present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness*.

Here is the practical application of this passage. When we talk about being engaged in the fight against sin, this command is filled with endless, specific application. Take your eyes, for example. You can commit this week to use your eyes as an instrument of righteousness. Our eyes do get us into all kinds of trouble, wouldn't you agree? We lust with our eyes, we covet with our eyes. Through the window of our souls we take in all manner of unrighteousness. What if you covenanted to offer your eyes to the Lord this week--moment by moment--as instruments of righteousness? What if everyone in this room committed not to use our eyes for the benefit of our enemy?

What if we all prayed this prayer? "Lord, for the next seven days my eyes are for you alone. You have given these eyes to me. They are gifts--your gifts. I do everything with my eyes. I can't imagine being without my eyes and the gift of sight. Lord, forgive me for using these gifts for the

sake of your enemy. Forgive me for presenting them as an instrument of unrighteousness. For the next seven days, I commit to only using them as a weapon for righteousness. But why only for 7 days? Because we all need to take baby steps. I may not be able to make a firm commitment for 7 months but I can do it for 7 days.

Putting it all together

Consider yourself as dead to sin and alive to Christ.

Don't let sin reign in your mortal body.

Do NOT present the members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness.

Do present the members of your body as instruments of righteousness

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<sup>1</sup> Adoniram Judson Gordon, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, F. H. Revell, 1894, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, © 1996 p.381.