



Dethroning Sin

Keeping our old sin nature under control

February 10, 2002

Romans 6:8-12

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Consider:

2 Cor 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Since we are a new creature in Christ per 2 Cor 5:17, what is our old nature and what happened to it?

We still have our old sin nature within us while we are on this side of our resurrection.

What is the result of having two natures?

This old Adamic sin nature is at war with our newly born-again spirit.

Gal 5:17 - For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Paul described his struggle with this in Rom 7:15-18...

15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.

16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.

17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

Paul also said in Rom 7:23, *"I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."*

So are we better off with two natures or one?

It depends on which one. When we are resurrected we will not have the old sin nature...

1 Cor 15:52-53 - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Having two natures means we have the opportunity to choose between them. With only our old sin nature this is the only way we know. Christians continually have a choice between the way of the old nature and the way of the new nature which is Christ's way.

What is the problem Christians have with their old sin nature?

This old sin nature is what keeps us from doing only those things we know that please God.

So how should we treat our old sin nature?

While sin exists in our mortal bodies, it doesn't have to rule us if we have made Christ Lord of our lives...

Romans 6:12 - Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Therefore, chose to follow Christ instead.

What does it mean to let sin reign in our lives?

Reign means to rule, control, or be king over. We allow sinful thoughts and activities to control us. We yield to sin rather than God. Effectively sin is the authority in our lives.

Why is the word "mortal" is used as a modifier when referring to not letting sin to reign in our bodies?

Because we need to recognize that our old sin nature and our current bodies are both temporary. They are both destined to die. Once we are resurrected, we no longer will have to struggle with bodies that wear out, grow, old, get sick, and die. Likewise, we will not have the internal struggle we currently have with our old sin nature because it will not be there.

Rom 6:5-7 - For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.

How about those who have not received the Savior into their lives, will they spend eternity with a sin nature?

Certainly the unsaved masses will be resurrected into an eternal existence...

Acts 24:15 - I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.

Jesus said that those who chose to hold on to their rebellion against God will spend eternity separated from Him...

John 8:24 – “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”

Sin is separation from God. If you chose to remain separate from Him, God will honor your choice and give you what you have decided. God is a gentleman and will not force anyone into a relationship they do not want.

- This is why there must be a hell, there must be a place for people who have chosen to remain separate from God.

What does Romans 6:12 say that we are obeying when we let sin reign over us?

That we are obeying sin in its lusts.

What are lusts?

Lusts are desires for what is forbidden.

Why do we have a special attraction to what is forbidden?

- As Adam and Eve were attracted to the forbidden fruit, we are attracted to what we know is wrong. It is our nature to rebel against God by engaging in activities that He has forbidden.
- It is like our three cats. If you put a box or a bag on the floor, they can't help themselves. Eventually all three will log time inside, their curiosity always gets the better of them.
- This attraction to forbidden fruit is so pervasive it has given rise to the cliché “child” or “reverse” psychology. This is really a convoluted idea that if you want a child to do something, tell him to do the opposite and he'll do what you want out of rebellion.

Back to Romans 6:12... What is the “therefore” there for? Why shouldn't we let sin reign in our mortal bodies? Is this part of being saved?

Let's answer the last part first... (this is actually a trick question depending on how you look at it)... Scripture makes it clear that there is nothing we do that has any value toward our obtaining eternal life. We can not earn eternal life through anything we do, this would make God have to respond to us which is backwards, it is we who must respond to God.

Eph 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Being saved is more than salvation future. Certainly God has called us to participate with Him in working out our salvation present...

Phil 2:12-13 - Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; or it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

What are we dead to in Romans 6:11?

The therefore in verse 12 points back to the previous verse which encourages us to consider ourselves dead to sin.

What are we alive to in Romans 6:11?

The therefore in verse 12 points back to the previous verse which encourages us to consider ourselves alive to a personal relationship with our Creator because of what Jesus did.

What does it mean to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin?

If we have been saved, we should start acting like it and there should be a steady improvement in overcoming sinful habits.

What is our reckoning ourselves dead to sin similar to?

Jesus dying once for all...

- As Jesus one time paid the price for all sin (verse 10), we should consider that our sinful condition is no longer who we are.
- As Jesus dies no more (verse 9), we too should not fear spiritual death.
- As Jesus was resurrected from physical death (verse 9), so will we.

What does it mean that Jesus lives to God (verse 10)?

- As Jesus lives to glorify God, so should we.

How do we keep our old sin nature from controlling our lives?

Recognize the conflict that exists between our old and new natures and make a conscious effort to take the path God inspires (WWJD? Or better yet: WWJHMD? – What Would Jesus Have Me Do?).

Eph 4:22-24 says that we should, "put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."

We become more like Christ when we replace our old worldly thoughts with things of God...

Rom 12:2 - And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

As a Christian, we now have the ability to keep our focus on Christ and not allow the distractions of the world to cloud our thoughts.

Col 3:1-2 - If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

How do we set our minds on things above?

Meditate on Scripture, pray, seek God's perspective in the matter, etc.

How do we replace worldly thoughts with thoughts about spiritual matters?

We chose to as an act of the will. As a Christian we not only have the ability to set our mind on spiritual matters, we have the propensity to do this. If our minds are more on matters of the flesh than on matters of the spirit, we should question our salvation...

Rom 8:5-9 - For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Why can't people who are not yet saved set their minds on spiritual matters?

Unbelievers can not set their minds on spiritual matters because they do not have the ability to understand them.

1 Cor 2:14 - the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Unbelievers neither have the presence of the Holy Spirit who helps us to understand spiritual things nor a born again human spirit which is receptive to things of the Spirit...

John 14:26 - But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Can people change from their old sin nature on their own?

- Humanists believe that changing behavior is simply a matter of giving people a proper education, that if they

consider the logic and the facts that they will make right decisions. But this idea presupposes that people are basically good which they are not, it is the other way around.

- Our old sin nature is beyond reformation. While we're in our mortal bodies, we just need to learn how to live with our old sin nature without allowing it to control us as it once did.

How are people pressured into doing wrong by others?

friends want you to be like them

People who are not friends give you a hard time about stuff

Why do you think people pressure their friends to do wrong?

- People think different things are wrong
- They want support for their bad deed
- Sometimes just to be mean

What are some ways to resist pressure to sin?

- Talk to the Lord
- Quote Scripture to yourself
- Consider the consequences
- Stay away from bad situations

Why don't people consider the consequences for bad decisions?

Some people don't think

Some don't care about the consequences

Hedonism - the pursuit of pleasure... If it looks fun, they do it

1 Cor 15:32 - If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

How may we keep our old sin nature under control?

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