

Galatians Chapter 2

Apostolic Approval - Galatians 2:1-10

Paul continues the defense of his apostleship by recounting his trip to the Jerusalem council. This trip was necessitated by legalistic Jews who had come to Antioch after Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13-14) in order to tell everyone that circumcision in addition to faith was necessary for salvation (Acts 15:1-2). This caused such an uproar in the Antioch church, that the church sent Paul, Barnabas, and some other men down to Jerusalem in order to see what the Apostles had to say regarding the matter. The entire account of this trip is seen in Acts 15.

Paul's Journey to the Jerusalem Council - Galatians 2:1-2

Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

The Galatian version of this trip is found here in Galatians 2. Paul states that fourteen years after his first trip to Jerusalem, he made another trip to deal with this issue of legalism. There is significant evidence as to why the trip we see here in Galatians 2 and the trip in Acts 15 are the same.¹

The reason Paul brings this trip up is to show the Galatian believers that he had already been ministering for over seventeen years (three years in Galatians 1:18 plus fourteen years here), before he made a trip to the Apostles in Jerusalem in order to give them a report of his ministry. This is necessary because it is most likely that the false teachers who were disturbing the Galatian churches told them that Paul was a maverick, and in fact preached a gospel that was not approved of by the other Apostles. If they can destroy Paul's credibility, then they can preach their version of the gospel without hindrance.

Paul further states that this trip was by revelation. In other words, it was a trip that God had revealed to him to take. When he did show up in Jerusalem, he went straight to those who "were of reputation." This is no doubt a reference to the main apostles. The reason for this is stated in verse two, Paul wanted to communicate to them the gospel he preached in order to insure that they knew exactly what that message was. He also wanted to do this in a forum that would allow himself to be corrected, if necessary, but even though he presented it humbly, he was assured that he was right.

The Reason for the Visit - Galatians 2:3-5

But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

¹ William Hendricksen, *Galatians*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), pp. 69-78.

When Paul went to Jerusalem, he took along some object lessons. One of these in particular was Titus. We know from the book of Titus that Titus was one of Paul's "true sons in the faith," the other being Timothy. From a thorough study of the Pastoral Epistles (1&2 Timothy, Titus), we arrive at the conclusion that Titus and Timothy were Paul's replacements, that is, they were the men that would fill Paul's shoes when he passed off the New Testament scene.

We find out here that Titus was a Greek, that is, a Gentile. Because of this, he was uncircumcised and considered to be fuel for hell by the legalistic Judaizers who wanted to mix law and grace into a non-redemptive gospel. We also find out here that there is a hint that some of these legalistic Jews were not true brethren at all (the word used is *pseudadelphoi*), but were spies sent in to infiltrate the church and bring it into bondage to the law. Paul's treatment of them was firm and concise, he gave them no place at all.

One of the things that is hard for us to understand living almost two millennia later is the importance and seriousness of this issue. If this issue had not been resolved, or had been resolved to the negative, then the very heart of the gospel would have been compromised. Once a little legalism seeps in, it is hard to get it out, and more often than not it grows. Today it is circumcision, tomorrow it is sacrifices and ceremonies. Before long, one is hopelessly entangled in a set of rules and regulations that are impossible to keep.

Paul's severe and harsh treatment of these legalizers, then, was justified. Had he allowed Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile, to be circumcised, then he would be guilty of acquiescing to the demands of the Judaizers and compromising the Gospel. It is worthy to note that later on in his ministry he had Timothy circumcised, but that was because Timothy was half-Gentile, half-Jew. For someone who was half-Jew to be uncircumcised was a social affront to the people Paul and Timothy were trying to reach.

Paul's Commission by the Apostles - Galatians 2:6-10

But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me: But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

Instead of siding with the legalistic Jews, the Apostles sided with Paul, adding nothing to the message of grace preached by Paul. After Paul's presentation of the message he preached, the chief Apostles and leaders of the Jerusalem church gave Paul the "right hand of fellowship," thus signifying their wholehearted support and blessing of Paul's ministry.

We find in verse seven that the main difference between the ministries of Paul and Peter was not theological in nature, contrary to what many liberal scholars assert, but was in fact the audience. Peter's commission was to the Jew, Paul's commission was to the Gentiles. The content of the message of the Gospel remained the same. Furthermore, we read in verse eight that the same power that energized Peter's ministry to the Jew was the same power that energized Paul's ministry to the Gentile. Therefore, there was no difference between the office of Apostleship occupied by Peter and that occupied by Paul.

Faith Alone - Galatians 2:11-21

Having just confirmed his message, Paul now turns to an illustration of his equality with the other Apostles. If Paul was inferior to the other Apostles, then his message could be subjected to criticism. If, on the other hand, he could prove that he was a peer with the other Apostles, then the message he preached would have added support.

Peter's Compromise - Galatians 2:11-13

The illustration Paul uses is Peter's compromise. Although the Jerusalem council had just affirmed the gospel of Grace, Peter did not act in accordance with that but allowed himself to be intimidated by some legalistic Jews.

The Confrontation - Galatians 2:11

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

Evidently, Peter made a trip to Antioch shortly after the Jerusalem council. We are not sure when this trip took place exactly, but it must have been prior to Paul's second missionary journey and after the Jerusalem council. When Peter does show up, Paul wastes no time beating around the bush, but confronts Peter directly regarding some inappropriate behavior.

The Cause - Galatians 2:12

For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

It appears that what Peter had done was to be hypocritical regarding the message of Grace. In fact, the word "dissimulation" in verse thirteen is *hupocriteis*. Because of the equality of Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ, the customary Jewish practice of avoiding contact with all Gentiles went out the door. Under Judaism a Jew was prohibited from eating with a Gentile or taking part in any other social event. In Christ, however, the walls between Jew and Gentile have been destroyed. What was before forbidden is now commanded (see Acts 10 regarding Peter and Cornelius to illustrate this.)

The offense of Peter was simple. While he was visiting Antioch by himself he ate with Gentiles. After a delegation from James (probably James the elder of the Jerusalem church), Peter withdrew himself from the Gentiles and did not want to have any part with them. In other words, although he knew there was nothing wrong with eating with Gentiles, he allowed himself to be intimidated by some legalistic-minded Jews to do that which was wrong.

The Consequences - Galatians 2:13

And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

The results of Peter's conduct was disastrous. Here was one of the main Apostles, one of the pillars of the Jerusalem church, acting like a legalistic Jew. His actions resulted in the fact that many other Jews went along with him, and even Barnabas himself was carried away in this. All that had been affirmed by the Jerusalem council regarding the equality of Jew and Gentile was about to be abandoned because Peter believed one way and acted another. This was

a very serious problem, and required a very serious and severe response. To have allowed this to go unchallenged would have resulted in a split between Jew and Gentile that would have ruined the testimony of the church and resulted in a compromise of the gospel of Grace. Paul, being the fighter that he was, did not sit still on this one.

Paul's Defense of Justification - Galatians 2:14-21

Paul's Rebuke of Peter - Galatians 2:14

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Paul's rebuke of Peter was not founded on some personal disagreement or personality clash, rather it was based on the issue of the Gospel. Too often our disagreements are over peripheral issues which have no direct bearing on substantial truth. Our fights are over minor points of doctrine, which although they may be important, are not critical components of the Gospel itself. We must be careful to pick our fights over important issues, not issues of secondary importance.

Not only was Paul's confrontation of Peter over a critical aspect of the Gospel, namely that a person is justified by grace and not law, but it was a public rebuke. The reason for this is simple. Peter's offense was a public offense, so public in fact that it carried away a lot of people. The rebuke and correction of Peter must also be public, so that those who were carried away with the disagreement over eating with Gentiles would see publicly that they were wrong. When a leader or someone else sins publicly, their rebuke and repentance needs to be public as well. Only then will others see the error and change themselves.

Paul points out very clearly and directly the offense of Peter. Before the Jews from James showed up he ate with the Gentiles, after they showed up he withdrew. As a result, he was not living straightforward about the truth. The word for straightforward is *orthopodeo*, which means "to walk straight." Peter's outward walk did not match the inward talk, and as such he was hypocritical.

Justification Defined - Galatians 2:15-16

We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Paul's public rebuke of Peter results on one of the most concise definitions of justification and its appropriation found in the New Testament. He starts out by reminding Peter that "we Jews" know what it is like to try and keep the law, and that it cannot save. He reminds Peter that Peter, Paul, and every other Jewish believer was justified the same way, by faith alone and not by the law. If the Jew, therefore, is justified by faith, how can the Gentile be justified by the law?

Paul states very forcefully that a man is not justified by keeping the law, for the law can only condemn. Rather, he is justified by faith alone. Instead of there being a happy coexistence of works and faith in the salvific process, there is a sharp division. In Romans 11:4 Paul writes, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." Here he is talking about the "election of grace" which results in justification and glorification (Romans 8:29-30). The point

is simple, whenever law is mixed with grace, grace ceases to exist. Wherever grace mixes with law, law ceases to exist. Far from being compatible with one another, they are totally incompatible and unmixable.

The Curse Of The Law

1. **The law demands that we do things contrary to our nature.**
2. **The law demands that we do impossible things that we cannot do.**
3. **The law requires perfect performance.**
4. **The law refuses to accept good intentions or effort.**
5. **The law has no payback plan to erase past sins.**
6. **The law is an unrelenting taskmaster. It never allows one to take a “day off.”**
7. **The law shatters happiness.**
8. **The law always requires the ultimate penalty, hell with no parole.**
9. **The law only demands, it never helps.**
10. **The law has no plan of salvation.**
11. **The law isn't interested in one's repentance.**
12. **The law offers no forgiveness.**
13. **The law offers no hope.**
14. **The law stirs up sin.**
15. **The law curses because it reveals one's sin.**

Justification Defended - Galatians 2:17-21

But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Paul gives Peter the one-two punch in these section by exposing his hypocrisy for what it really is. The “we” of verse seventeen refers to the Jewish believers, of whom Paul was one. Paul is saying, “If we as Jewish believers are justified by law plus grace, then we are sinners if we eat with Gentiles which then makes Christ an accomplice to our sin.” In other words, Christ is make partaker of our sin because before Peter showed up we were all (Jewish believers), eating, drinking, and fellowshiping with Gentile believers. Since by Peter's actions he is in essence

supporting the notion that salvation is obtained by keeping the law and by faith, then all of the Jewish believers in Antioch were sinners by eating with Gentiles.

The second blow dealt by Paul is in verse eighteen. Paul states that if he is again building up that which he destroyed, then he is a sinner. What he is referring to here is the system of legalism which he tore down. He also points back to Peter's experience in Acts 10 prior to his going to Cornelius when God showed Peter that in the New Covenant all things are clean, specifically, it is all right for Jews to associate with Gentiles. This was apparently a hard lesson for Peter to learn, and here in Galatians we read that he was in danger of slipping back into old patterns of behavior.

Therefore, Paul's rebuke of Peter in these verses has a two-fold argument. First of all, if Peter is right, then Paul and all the other Jewish Christians in Antioch were sinning when they freely associated with Gentiles. This, by extension, makes Christ an accomplice in their sin. Secondly, Peter, and the other legalistic Jews (of which Paul makes himself one for the sake of argument), are sinners because they had tore down the system of legalism between Jew and Gentile and are now in the process of building in up again. In other words, it should have never been torn down in the first place, and to do so puts Paul, Peter, and the other Jewish Christians in the place of sin.

Verse nineteen is a statement which is expanded on a great deal more in Romans 6:1-14. We have already stated that Romans is essentially a commentary on Galatians, and here we find Romans 6-7 the expanded explanation of Galatians 2:19-21. In fact, verse nineteen is expanded upon in Romans 7:1-6 and verses twenty and twenty-one is expanded upon in Romans 6:1-14. Since this issues, that of justification, is so important, I have included the notes on Romans at this point as the expanded commentary on these three verses.

Justification Implies We Are Dead To The Law - Galatians 1:19 cf. Romans 7:1-7

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Paul continues his discussion in Romans 7 of the foundations of the doctrine of sanctification by showing that we are dead to the law. In Romans chapter 6 he has already shown that sanctification begins with a realization that we are dead to the sin principle (verses 1-14) and as a direct result we have been freed from the bondage of sin to serve a new master, Christ (verses 15-23). He now continues by showing that we are also dead to the requirements and penalty of the law.

1. The Axiom - Romans 7:1

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

Paul is very good at strengthening his arguments with axiomatic truths. He does this in Romans 6:16 and again in Romans 7:1. Briefly stated, the axiom in Romans 7:1 is this, "the law holds power over a man only as long as a man is alive." If you are witness to a shoot-out where the assailant is killed by the police, you do not see them reading the man his rights. Nor is he handcuffed and driven away in a paddy-wagon. The reason is that the law has no power over a dead criminal however heinous his crimes might be. Adolf Hitler was never tried in the Nuremberg war trials since he was dead. God's law is no different, it has power over a man only as long as the man is alive.

Before we can analyze the rest of this chapter, we need to define what Paul means when he speaks of the law. Basically, the law has three major components: 1) the ceremonial law, 2)

the judicial law, and 3) the moral law. The ceremonial and judicial law was given to Moses on Sinai to define the various sacrifices required to cover sin and the legal code that was to be used to govern the nation of Israel. These two components of the law are no longer valid since the ceremonial law was rendered inoperative by Christ's once-for-all death on the cross (see Hebrews 9-10), and the judicial law was rendered inoperative by the cessation of the Jewish state in A.D. 70. The third component, however, remains since it is not based in the need for pictures or in the existence of a nation, but in the unchanging character of God. It is this component of the law that is best understood as being meant by Paul in this passage. For Paul to be referring to the ceremonial or judicial law would be incomprehensible, especially when his audience is made up of a majority of Gentiles and the fact that the ceremonial and judicial law have been superseded in the church.

2. The Analogy - Romans 7:2-3

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Paul now supports the axiom by presenting a real-life situation, that of marriage. He states that a woman is bound in marriage to her husband only as long as he lives. Once he is dead, she is freed from that union, which enables her to marry again without being called an adulteress. This application of the law was evident to all. The Sadducees themselves tried to corner Christ in Matthew 22 by showing the seeming absurdity of a resurrection in which a woman could wind up with seven different husbands. Although their understanding of the resurrection was in error, they did correctly understand that the death of a partner in a marriage dissolves the marriage bond and thus freed the surviving partner to marry again.

Contrary to what many teach, this passage is not dealing with divorce and remarriage. Many would have us think that Paul is teaching that death is the only way out of a marriage bond. What we must be careful to see is that Paul's main theme in this passage is not marriage, it is the law. By asserting that Paul is teaching against divorce in this passage is to miss the point of the entire passage. We must never make the mistake of making obtuse interpretations of passages that contradict the rest of the Scripture where the same idea is taught more clearly.

3. The Application - Romans 7:4-5

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

Paul now takes his analogy in verses 2-3 and applies them to the lives of believers by showing that we have become dead to the law. In making this analogy, Paul reiterates the concept of Romans 6:2-4, that being our identification with Christ. Because in God's sight we have been crucified with Christ, we have been freed from the demands of the law since the law only has power over the living. The word translated "are become dead" is the Greek word *ethanatouthate* which carries the idea of being violently put to death by an outside force. In other words, our identification with Christ "violently killed" our former self of sin. Additionally, the law demanded death for sin. Since we have been identified in Christ's death, we have paid the penalty for sin thus satisfying the requirements of the law.

Note further that it is we who have become dead to the law, not the law which has become dead to us. In other words, Paul could have accomplished the same argument by stating that the law was “put to death.” He does not do this, however, because the law is not dead, to us or to anyone else. It is we who have become dead to the demands and penalty of the law. Remember that “death” carries the idea of separation. We have been separated from the legal demands and hence legal penalties of the law through our death with Christ.

This death has two results. One, we have been released from the demands of the law to be married to Christ. This mirrors closely the analogy in the last part of Romans chapter 6 where we find that we have been freed from slavery to sin to become free to serve Christ. Secondly, because of our freedom from the law, we are able to bring forth fruit unto God. We must understand that it is only because of our new life in Christ that we have the capacity to truly bear eternal fruit. The reason for this is simple, the fruit of the Spirit is internal attitudes which were unattainable while we were in sin.

Paul continues in verse 5, by stating that while we were in sin, the passions within us brought forth fruit unto death. This is precisely where many people get fouled up in their thinking. They think that they can please God apart from Christ. The truth of the matter is nothing they do can merit one brownie point with God. They lack the capacity to bear any kind of true fruit. Even the good that they do is not done from Godly attitudes produced by the Spirit, but from selfish motives. It is only under the power of the Spirit that eternal fruit can be produced.

4. The Affirmation - Romans 7:6

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Because of our identification with Christ, we are delivered from the law. Note that we are not delivered from the law in the sense we are under no obligation to obey it, but we are delivered from the penalties and bondage of trying to keep the law to merit the favor of God. The word translated “delivered” is the Greek word *katargathamen* which comes from the root word *katargeo*. This word carries the idea of annulment, voidance, release from the requirements of. It is the same word used in Romans 3:31 and translated “make void.” We have been discharged from the penalty and bondage of the law.

Not only have we been released from the law, but we are dead to our former bondage. We are dead to the sin principle which ruled us in our former life.

Why have we been released? It is to serve God in the newness of spirit, not in the oldness of the letter. It is imperative that we understand that God is not interested in purely external righteousness. He is, and always has been, interested in the internal attitudes of the heart. A cursory reading of the Psalms will reveal that David was a man who longed for the inward attitudes of righteousness. It is on this issue the Pharisees missed the whole point of the Old Testament. Paul asserts that it is our death to the law that frees us for the first time to truly serve God the way He wants us to, from a heart of love. The people of Isaiah's time served God with their mouths and honored him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him. God longs for us to serve him out of love, not bondage, out of a heart of gratitude, not obligation.

Identification Through Justification - Galatians 2:20 cf. Romans 6:1-14

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

1. The Question - Romans 6:1

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

As we have already noted previously, Paul often pretends to spar with an imaginary antagonist to make his point. This is exactly what we find in Romans 6:1 and 6:15.

The logical conclusion for the reader of Romans at this point is “If we are justified by faith, then we have no deterrent to sin.” In other words, if we cannot save ourselves by the law, and we are justified by the mere act of believing God, then there is no inhibiting factor for sin in our lives. The law cannot save us, therefore it cannot condemn us once we are justified. The word translated “continue” in verse one is the Greek word *epimena* which means “to abide in.” The question then is “Shall we continually abide in a state of sin so God's grace can be manifest?”

This question is at the heart of a great theological debate that is being raged at this very moment. There are some who would say that once a person confesses Christ as their Savior, their subsequent behavior cannot do anything to condemn them, and is in fact not even an indication of whether they really believed or not. In other words, they would say that a person can be a believer but have no change in their life.

Unfortunately, this viewpoint runs counter to Scripture. The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”** As Dr. Vance Havner says, “Christ is not a new page in your old book, He makes you a new book altogether.” A person who says that they believe in Christ and yet lives a life that is totally characterized by the flesh with no appetite for spiritual things has deluded themselves. It is not possible for God to make us a new creation without there being some change in our lives.

2. The Answer - Romans 6:2

God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Immediately after asking the question, Paul blurts out the answer in no uncertain terms. The Greek construct rendered “God forbid” is the strongest negative in the Greek language, *me genoito*. We may understand it as “no way Jose”, “not a chance”, or “heaven forbid.” Paul wants his readers to not be uncertain in the least regarding the answer to the question.

An answer without a reason is no answer at all so Paul goes on to state the reason we should not continue to abide in sin. The reason is simply that we are dead to sin. But we immediately say “wait a minute, if we are dead to sin then why do we continue to commit acts of sin in our lives.” The answer to this question is to understand that Paul is not referring to individual acts of sin but to the sin principle in our lives. The word translated “dead” is *apothnesko* which refers to a single act at a particular point in time where we died. In other words, we are not dying to sin, we are dead to sin.

This is an essential and important point that will be developed in the remainder of this chapter and the next. We have been crucified to the sin nature within us, it is dead. However, we are still incarcerated in a body of flesh, where no good thing dwells. It is this flesh that causes us to sin when we submit to its desires and lusts. We are not a “spiritual schizophrenic” with an old and new nature battling for supremacy, but we are a new creation in a body of flesh. It is in this flesh that the real battle takes place.

3. Proving the Validity of the Answer - Romans 6:3-14

Paul now proves the validity of the answer he gave in verse 2. He does this by discussing 1) our identification with Christ, 2) our freedom from the sin principle through death, 3) our position in Christ, 4) our reckoning of sin, and 5) our submission to God.

a. *Our Identification With Christ - Romans 6:3-5*

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

The first thing to understand in considering our death to the sin principle is to consider our identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection. The word translated “baptized” and “baptism” is the Greek word *baptizo*. This word carries the idea of total immersion in water and came to refer to complete identification with something. For example, the baptism of the Holy Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:13 refers to the Holy Spirit placing us into the body of Christ and identifying us with Christ by doing so. In 1 Corinthians 10:2 Paul speaks of the Children of Israel being baptized into Moses. What he actually means is that the Children of Israel were fully identified with Moses as they wandered through the desert. When we are baptized in Jesus Christ, we are identified with his death.

To be identified with only Christ's death means little unless it is coupled with identification with Christ in his resurrection. We need to understand that it is resurrection that ultimately gives us victory over sin. In 1 Corinthians 15:55-57 Paul writes, **“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”** These three verses come after the most comprehensive treatment of the resurrection of the believer in the New Testament. Paul very explicitly states that we have victory over death, and hence sin, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The same concept is found in Romans 6:3-5. By understanding that we have been identified with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection, we understand that we are dead to the sin principle in our lives. The required payment for sin is death, a death we paid vicariously in Christ. Because of this fact, that is, our identification with Christ in his death and resurrection, we have paid the penalty for sin even though we did not die the death ourselves. Sin only needs to be paid for once. Christ suffered our death so we do not have to suffer death as well.

Note that it is because of this identification that we are to walk in newness of life. The word “new” is translated from the Greek word *kainos* which does not mean new in the sense of time, but new in the sense of quality or essence. We have a new life brought by a new covenant into a new and living way. We are dead to the old life and are become a new creation in Christ. For us to continue in our old lifestyle is a contradiction.

Not only have we been identified with Christ in his death, but we have been identified with Christ in his resurrection. This is the hope of every believer, that someday our mortal flesh will put on immortality. The redemption of man does not stop with his soul and spirit, it extends to his body as well. However, the body we will have in glory is not at all like the body we have now. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 that **“flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”** We do not know exactly the kind of body we will have in eternity, but it will

be a body perfectly fit for the realm we will live in. God does not redeem our current body, he gives us a completely new one.

b. *Our Freedom From the Sin Principle - Romans 6:6-7*

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

The second great truth in this passage is that we are freed from the sin principle by the death of Christ. When Christ died on the cross, our old man was crucified with him. This crucifixion has the intended result that our body of sin might be destroyed. The word “destroyed” comes from the Greek word *katargeo* which means to “make useless” or “make void.” It is the same word used in Romans 3:3 when Paul writes “**shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect**” and in Romans 3:31 where he writes “**Do we then make void the law.**” Paul is saying that because of our identification with Christ in His death, and the subsequent freedom from the sin principle that death provides, our body of sin is nullified, it has no more power over us.

This is an important concept to understand, namely, that those who are lost are in bondage to their bodies. They may consider themselves to be free, but they are not. Paul will analyze this in great detail later on in this chapter. Suffice it to say at this point, that Christ's death has freed us from bondage to the sin principle in our bodies. This is stated very concisely in verse 7 where Paul states that the one who is dead is free from sin. In other words, the sin principle that lives in our bodies dies when the body dies. Because we have been crucified with Christ, we are dead and therefore we are freed from the sin principle that reigns in our bodies.

c. *Our Position in Christ - Romans 6:8-10*

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

The third great truth of this passage of Scripture is that of our position in Christ. Because we have been identified in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, which results in the voiding of the sin principle in our bodies, we find ourselves in a new position; alive in Christ.

This new position is founded in the fact that the penalty for sin, death, needs only to be paid for once. If a man commits a murder and is electrocuted for it, and happens to come back to life 30 minutes after being pronounced dead, the law has no more dominion over him. The law requires the death penalty to be paid, which was when the man died. It is the law's tough luck that he came back to life.

This is exactly what happened to us. We died in Christ when He paid the penalty for our sins on the cross resulting in the satisfaction of the law. However, it does not stop there since we are raised from the dead with Christ thus gaining complete victory over sin. Christ died for sin once and we died with Him. Now that He lives unto God, we live with Him also.

d. *Our Reckoning Regarding Sin - Romans 6:11*

6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Because of our identification with Christ and our new position in Him, we need to make our relationship to sin match our position. This particular verse is one of the most definitive verses in the New Testament regarding our standing and our state. Our standing is the new position we

have in Christ, that of perfection and death to the sin principle. We need to understand very clearly that our standing before God is in the righteousness of Christ. We do not stand before God as sinners, we stand before God as righteous. In fact, if it were not for the imputed righteousness of Christ, we would suffer the wrath of God for our sin as any other sinner.

Our state, on the other hand, refers to the condition of our daily walk. Although our standing is in perfection, our state is not. Paul's cry in this verse is that we need to make our state match our standing. The word "reckoned" is the same word which occurs in chapter 4, *logizomai*. It is used to refer to the crediting of payment to one's account as well as a carefully considered reckoning of known truth. Paul says that we are to consider our position in Christ and as a result of that, understand that we are dead to the sin principle in our bodies.

The other great truth in this verse is that we are not only dead to the sin principle in our bodies, but we are made alive to God. Paul states in Ephesians 2:1 that "**And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin.**" Death is separation. When we were unredeemed, we were dead, that is, separated from God. Because of our justification, we have been made alive, that is, quickened to God. Many people today think that they are alive when in reality they are dead. True life is life to God and death to sin. Those who do not die to sin will find themselves eternally dead in the sense that they will be eternally separated from God. This is in great contrast to our position which is "**alive unto God.**"

e. *Our Submission to God - Romans 6:12-14*

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Having just shown that we are to make our state match our standing, Paul gives us an indication of just how we are to do that. The truths in these three verses are profound.

1). *Let Not Sin Reign - Romans 6:12*

The first great truth is that we are not to let sin reign in our bodies. The word translated "reign" is the Greek word *basileuo* which is related to the word *basileo* or kingdom. The idea Paul is trying to get across is that we no longer belong to the kingdom of sin, but to the kingdom of righteousness. Paul states this same idea in Colossians 1:13 where he writes, "**Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.**" The point is simple, we belong to a new kingdom.

Our basic problem in dealing with sin in our lives is that we continue to listen to the commands of the wrong king. Our new king is Christ. He has broken the power of the old king, sin, and has made us a citizen of His kingdom. Paul goes on to say that our submission to the wrong king results in us obeying the lusts of our body. It is at this point that we need to come to terms with the fundamental truth of our new life, that of obedience to our Lord. This is the starting point of spiritual maturity. When we start obeying what God tells us without question, we have embarked on the only real path to maturity available. On the other hand, when we disobey, we stifle the power of God in our lives and quench the Holy Spirit.

2.) *Neither Yield Your Members As Instruments of Unrighteousness - Romans 6:13a*

The second way we reckon ourselves to be dead to sin is not to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness. The word translated "instrument" is the Greek word *hopla* which means

“weapon.” One of the main reasons many Christians are victimized by sin is that they do not heed this command. When Christians constantly place themselves in areas of temptation it is not a question of “will they sin”, it is a question of “when will they sin.” When a Christian pumps the garbage of this world into their mind, garbage will come out. Any Christian who is serious about overcoming sin needs to make the vital step of guarding their minds from the areas of temptation they have trouble with. If a man has a problem with drinking, stay away from the bars. If a man has trouble with lust, stay away from pornographic materials. Never place yourself in a spot where you will be subjected to temptation. To do so is foolish and is presuming on God.

3.) *Yield Your Members to God - Romans 6:13b*

This is the flip side of the previous truth. It is not enough to stop yielding ourselves to sin if we do not yield ourselves to God. We need to saturate our minds with the truth of the Scriptures and the things of God. We need to get busy in the kingdom of God so that we will not have time to dwell in the kingdom of Satan.

Note that these two commands take a conscious effort on our part. We cannot sit around and expect God to miraculously protect us from Satan if we have not taken the first step by changing the input to our minds. It is fools who expect God to protect them when they expose themselves to needless temptation. Remember the story of Peter in Matthew 26? He told Jesus that he would never deny him although all of the other disciples would. Unfortunately, he exposed himself to temptation apart from the protection of God and fell. We can overcome temptation, but only in the power of God. By exposing ourselves to temptation we remove ourselves from the sphere of divine protection and set ourselves up for sin.

4.) *Sin Shall Not Have Dominion Over You - Romans 6:14*

Lastly, we reckon ourselves dead to sin by understanding that sin has no more dominion over us. The word “dominion” comes from the Greek word *kurio* which means “to rule.” Our new lord is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, not sin.

Why does sin have no more dominion over us? It is because we are under grace and not law. Remember that in verse 20 of chapter 5, law entered to proliferate sin. This truth cannot be underemphasized! All the law does is to bring out the sin in man. Under the Old Testament economy, the law had dominion over a man by showing that man just how far short he fell of God's standards. In other words, there was no way a man, on his own, could ever keep the law of God. However, because of the salvation God grants man based in the death of Christ, the power of the law is broken thus releasing man from the dominion of the law. This same idea can be understood by realizing that the law was a constant reminder that man was under the rule of sin because all man could do was sin. With the power of sin broken, the law has accomplished its purpose and no longer serves as a condemning factor in the life of a believer.