

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

LESSON XIII : SANCTIFICATION: SHOULD WE SIN TO GAIN MORE GRACE? — CHAP 6 VERSES 1-14

“Some of the Roman Christians must have felt like objecting as they heard Paul’s letter being read, and Paul seemed to anticipate their thinking. In Romans 6-8 Paul defended his doctrine of justification by faith. He anticipated three objections: (1) ‘If God’s grace abounds when we sin, then let’s continue sinning so we might experience more grace’ (Rom 6:1-14); (2) ‘If we are no longer under the Law, then we are free to live as we please’ (Rom 6:15-23); and (3) ‘You have made God’s Law sinful’ (Rom 7:7-25). These objections prove that the readers did not understand either Law or grace. They were going to extremes: legalism on the one hand and license on the other. So as Paul defended justification he also explained sanctification. He told how we can live lives of victory (Rom 6), liberty (Rom 7), and security (Rom 8). He explained our relationship to the flesh, the Law, and the Holy Spirit.” [Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol 1 pg 530]

POSSIBLE DIVISIONS — There is one basic theme throughout this chapter. At two points however there is a ‘break’ in the argument. The first occurs at v. 12 where the indicative mood (statements) of vv. 1-11 become imperatives (commands). Some therefore divide the chapter into two parts, vv. 1-11 and vv. 12-23 (see, e.g., Hodge, Murray). Others believe vv. 12ff should be attached to vv. 1-11 and see a more obvious break at v. 15 which begins, ‘*what then?*’ They therefore divide the chapter into two parts, vv. 1-14 and vv. 15-23 (see, e.g., William G. T. Shedd, Godet, W. H. Griffith Thomas, William Hendriksen, Douglas Moo, F. F. Bruce). So while we understand the chapter is a whole, we will make our division with the bulk of commentators after v. 14.

THE “REALM” OF BEING “IN CHRIST” — “In 5:12-21, Paul has sketched in broad and impersonal language two ‘realms’: that of sin and death, founded by Adam; and that of righteousness and life, founded by Christ. All people belong in one of these realms or the other; and they are now in the one or the other because God has viewed them as participating in the founding acts of these realms: the sin of Adam and the ‘obedience’ of Christ (cf. vv. 12, 18-19)... [H]e now ‘personalizes’ this ‘two-realm’ or ‘two-age’ conception by proclaiming that believers are ‘transferred’ from the one realm to the other and by showing how this transfer creates a new relationship to sin (chap. 6) and the law (chap. 7). We are using the word ‘realm’ because it captures well the emphasis in these chapters that *the transfer from Adam to Christ, from old age to new, involves particularly a change in masters*. Thus Paul presents the Christian as one who has moved from the ‘realm’ of sin and death to that of righteousness and life (5:21); from the servitude, or ‘lordship,’ of sin to that of righteous and God (6:6, 14, 17-22); from being ‘under the power of’ the law to being ‘under the power of’ grace (6:14, 15); from service ‘in oldness of letter’ to service ‘in newness of Spirit’ (7:6); from the ‘law,’ or ‘compelling power,’ of sin leading to death to that of the Spirit who brings life (8:2). *By using this imagery of a transfer of realms, or ‘dominions,’ with its associations of power and rulership, Paul makes clear that the new status enjoyed by the believer (justification) brings with it a new influence and power that both has led and must lead to a new way of life (sanctification).*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 351f]

IDENTIFIED WITH CHRIST — “*The basic truth Paul was teaching is the believer’s identification with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. Just as we are identified with Adam in sin and condemnation, so we are now identified with Christ in righteousness and justification.* At Romans 5:12, Paul made a transition from discussing ‘sins’ to discussing ‘sin’ — from the actions to the principle, from the fruit to the root. *Jesus Christ not only died for our sins, but He also died unto sin, and we died with Him.* Perhaps a chart will explain the contrasts better.

<i>Romans 3:21 – 5:21</i>	<i>Romans 6 – 8</i>
substitution: He died for me	identification: I died with Him
He died <i>for</i> my sins	He died <i>unto</i> sin
He paid sin’s penalty	He broke sin’s power
justification: righteousness imputed (put to my account)	sanctification: righteousness imparted (made a part of my life)
saved by His death	saved by His life

“In other words, justification by faith is not simply a legal matter between me and God; it is a living relationship. It is ‘a justification which brings life’ (Rom 5:18, literal translation). I am in Christ and identified with Him. Therefore, whatever happened to Christ has happened to me. When He died, I died. When He arose, I arose in Him. I am now seated with Him in the heavenlies! (see Eph 2:1-10; Col 3:1-3) Because of this living union with Christ, the believer has a totally new relationship to sin.” [Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol 1 pg 530f]

TODAY’S LESSON IN A NUTSHELL

“Paul uses the language of ‘realm transfer’ to show how inconceivable is the suggestion that a believer should ‘remain in sin’ in order to accentuate grace (vv. 1-2a). We Christians, Paul affirms, have ‘died to sin’ (v. 2b); we have been taken out from under its tyranny in a transfer so radical and decisive that the language of death and new life can be used of it. In vv. 3-4 Paul shows how

this transfer has taken place: we ‘died to sin’ in baptism (which Paul uses to summarize our conversion to Christ and our initiation into his body). For this ‘conversion-initiation,’ in joining us with Christ, joins us with Christ’s death — and, as Paul will show in vv. 9-10, Christ’s death was itself a ‘death to sin.’ So close is this association with Christ’s death that we may be said to have been ‘buried with him.’ Burial both sets the seal on death and prepares for that which is to follow: living a new life patterned after the resurrection of Christ. Many commentators view vv. 5-7 and 8-10 as two roughly parallel elaborations of this basic teaching. But it is better to connect v. 5 closely with v. 4, since it makes explicit the connection between our being with Christ in death and our being with him in life that is assumed in v. 4b. Verses 6-7 then resume and explain further the ‘death’ side of our union with Christ (vv. 4a and 5a), while vv. 8-10 focus on the ‘life’ side of that union (vv. 4b and 5b). Verse 11 is the hinge of the paragraph. It summons believers to regard themselves in the way that Paul has described in vv. 2-10: as dead to sin and alive to God. That this ‘regarding’ is no mere mental state is made clear in vv. 12-14. The declaration and promise of God that sin no longer is the Christian’s ‘lord’ (v. 14a) must be ‘activated’; we must not let sin rule us (v. 12), but give ourselves in service to God (v. 13).”

[Moo, *Romans*, pg 354f] We may summarize the basic logic of the paragraph as follows:

Christ died to sin; vv. 8-10

We died with Christ; vv. 3-7

Therefore: we died to sin; v. 2

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 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: 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. 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. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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. (Rom 6:1-14 KJV)

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. (Rom 6:1-14 NIV)

What, then, shall we say? shall we continue in the sin that the grace may abound? let it not be! we who died to the sin — how shall we still live in it? are ye ignorant that we, as many as were baptized to Christ Jesus, to his death were baptized? we were buried together, then, with him through the baptism to the death, that even as Christ was raised up out of the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we in newness of life might walk. For, if we have become planted together to the likeness of his death, [so] also we shall be of the rising again; this knowing, that our old man was crucified with [him], that the body of the sin may be made useless, for our no longer serving the sin; for he who hath died hath been set free from the sin. And if we died with Christ, we believe that we also shall live with him, knowing that Christ, having been raised up out of the dead, doth no more die, death over him hath no more lordship; for in that he died, to the sin he died once, and in that he liveth, he liveth to God; so also ye, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to the sin, and living to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not then the sin reign in your mortal body, to obey it in its desires; neither present ye your members instruments of unrighteousness to the sin, but present yourselves to God as living out of the dead, and your members instruments of righteousness to God; for sin over you shall not have lordship, for ye are not under law, but under grace. (Rom 6:1-14 Young's Literal Translation)

v 1 — Paul returns to his earlier style of question - answer (cf. 3:1-9, 27-31; 4:1-12). His first question stands independently, “*What, then, shall we say?*”, and is used to introduce his second question, “*Should we remain in sin in order that grace might increase?*” This is in response to his last statements of chapter 5: “*where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more.*” “*What shall we say then?* — ‘A debater’s phrase.’ Yes, and an echo of the rabbinical method of question and answer, but also an expression of exultant victory of grace versus sin. But Paul sees the possible perversion of this glorious grace.” [Robertson, *Word*

DO WE BOLDLY SIN TO RECEIVE MORE GRACE? — “This half-verse [verse 1] is a joyful proclamation of the triumph of God’s grace in salvation history; even in the era of the law, when sin was rendered more serious than ever before, God did not abandon his people or his purpose. *He showered blessings upon them, undeservedly, and persisted in his plan to bring redemption through the Messiah. But the statement of historical fact that grace increased in precisely the ‘place’ where sin was increasing is in the question of 6:1b turned into a statement of general principle, as if God is somehow bound to bestow more grace while we remain willfully in ‘the state of sin.’ It is as if the knowledge that their father had forgiven them in the past would lead children to do wrong with abandon precisely so as to enjoy more forgiveness. Only a foolish parent would tolerate such a situation, and God’s grace must not be interpreted in these terms.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 355f]

“‘Well,’ someone might say, ‘if God’s grace so abounded over sin, why should we not go on sinning so as to give his grace the opportunity of abounding all the more?’ This is not a completely hypothetical objection. In fact, there have always been people to insist that this is the logical corollary of Paul’s teaching about justification by faith; and unfortunately, in every generation, people claiming to be justified by faith have behaved in such a way as to lend colour to this charge. James Hogg’s *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) provides an outstanding literary example of such deliberate antinomianism; a notable historical instance may be seen in the Russian monk Gregory Rasputin, the evil genius of the Romanov family in its last years of power. Rasputin taught and exemplified the doctrine of salvation through repeated experiences of sin and repentance. He held that, as those who sin most require most forgiveness, a sinner who continues to sin with abandon enjoys, each time he repents, more of God’s forgiving grace than any ordinary sinner....

“Some of Paul’s own converts gave him much cause for concern on this very score. It was bad enough to have his theological opponents misrepresenting his gospel as being tantamount to ‘Why not do evil that good may come?’ (3:8); it was worse when his converts played into their hands by behaving as though the gospel gave them licence to do whatever they liked. Paul’s Corinthian correspondence shows how much trouble his converts gave him in this regard: it is plain that some of them imagined that sexual irregularities, for example, were matters of very small importance. From the terms in which he directs the church of Corinth to excommunicate a man who was living in an incestuous relation, it appears that some members of that church, far from expressing any disapproval of this scandalous state of affairs, thought it was rather a fine assertion of Christian liberty (1 Cor 5:1-13). *No wonder that other Christians maintained that the only way to inculcate the principles of sound morality in such people was to require them to keep the law of Moses — indeed, to impose that law on them as a condition of salvation, over and above the requirements of faith in Christ. But Paul’s own experience had taught him that all the law-keeping in the world could not bring the assurance of pardon and peace with God, whereas faith in Christ did so at once. He could never consider legalism as the remedy for libertinism; he knew a more excellent way. When men and women yielded their lives to the risen Christ and the power of his Spirit, their inward being was radically transformed: a new creation took place. They received a new nature which delighted to produce spontaneously the fruit of the Spirit, those graces which were manifested in perfection in the life of Christ himself. To many people this appeared (as to many it still does) impracticably optimistic. But Paul trusted the Spirit of Christ in his converts, and in the long run his trust was vindicated, though he had to endure many heart-breaking disappointments in his spiritual children until at last he could see Christ ‘formed’ in them (Gal 4:19).*” [Bruce, *Romans*, pg 126ff]

THE QUESTION ITSELF PROVES THE MEANING OF JUSTIFICATION — “*Before considering the Apostle’s treatment of this question it is essential to observe that the very fact of such a question being possible shows with unmistakable clearness the true meaning of the Apostle’s Doctrine of Justification. It must mean ‘to regard as righteous,’ and not ‘to make righteous’; or else the question now put would be utterly pointless.* If Justification means to make a person good, then no license to sin could have been inferred from it; but since God by His grace ‘justifies the ungodly’ (ch. iii. 24), the question is important and demands an answer; and the answer does not in the least modify the freeness of the Apostle’s teaching on Grace, but shows a profound depth of his teaching on Justification as involved in union with Christ.” [Griffith-Thomas, *Romans*, pg 165]

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION COMPARED — “Paul has shown how God’s gracious act in Christ, when appropriated by faith, puts people into a new relationship with God and assures them that they will be saved from wrath in the last day. What has this to do with life in this present age? Anything? Everything, Paul asserts in Rom 6. Christ’s death ‘on our behalf’ (cf. 5:6-8) frees us not only from the penalty of sin but from the power of sin also. Justification — acquittal from the guilt of sin — and sanctification — deliverance from ‘sinning’ — must never be confused, but neither can they be separated. *The Westminster Larger Catechism puts it like this: Question: ‘Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?’ Answer: ‘Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ, in that God in justification imputeth the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification his Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth to the exercise thereof; in the former, sin is pardoned; in the other, it is subdued.*’ Subduing the power of sin is the topic of Rom 6. Paul hints at this theme by using the word ‘sin’ in the singular throughout the chapter. As in 5:12-21 (and cf. 3:9), Paul pictures sin as a power or master that exercises unbreakable control over all who are ‘in Adam.’ Sin’s tyranny is broken, however, for the person who is ‘in Christ.’ Rom 6 is thus permeated with the imagery of slavery, mastery, and freedom: those crucified with Christ should no longer ‘serve’ sin (v. 6), should not let sin ‘rule’ them because they have been ‘set free’ from sin and been ‘enslaved’ to God, or to righteousness (vv. 17-22): sin no longer ‘rules over’ the believer (v. 14a).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 350]

OUR SANCTIFICATION IS BASED ON OUR JUSTIFICATION — “Paul stresses that we must actualize in daily experience the freedom from sin’s lordship (cf. v. 14a) that is ours ‘in Christ Jesus.’ State is to become reality; we are ‘to become what we are’ — or, with due recognition of the continuing work of God in our lives, we might say ‘become what you are becoming.’ Balance on this point is essential. ‘Indicative’ [statements of fact; i.e., our justification] and ‘imperative’ [commands; i.e., our duties, our sanctification] must be neither divided nor confused. If divided, with ‘justification’ and ‘sanctification’ put into separate compartments, we can forget that true holiness of life comes only as the outworking and realization of the life of Christ in us. This leads to a ‘moralism’ or ‘legalism’ in which the believer ‘goes it on his own,’ thinking that holiness will be attained through sheer effort, or ever more elaborate programs, or ever-increasing numbers of rules. But if indicative and imperative are confused, with ‘justification’ and ‘sanctification’ collapsed together into one, we can neglect the fact that the outworking of the life of Christ in us is made our responsibility. This neglect leads to an unconcern with holiness of life, or to a ‘God-does-it-all’ attitude in which the believer thinks to become holy through a kind of spiritual osmosis. Paul makes it clear, by the sequence in this paragraph, that we can live a holy life only as we appropriate the benefits of our union with Christ. But he also makes it clear, because there is a sequence, that living the holy life is distinct from (but not separate from) what we have attained by our union with Christ and that holiness of life can be stifled if we fail continually to appropriate and put to work the new life God has given us. Jeremiah Bourroughs, a seventeenth-century Puritan, put it like this: ‘... from him [Christ] as from a fountain, sanctification flows into the soul of the Saints: their sanctification comes not so much from their struggling and endeavors, and vows, and resolutions, as it comes flowing to them from their union with him.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 390f] “The real connection between justification and Christian holiness, as conceived by St. Paul, appears to us to be this: justification by faith is the means, and sanctification the end. The more precisely we distinguish these two divine gifts, the better we apprehend the real bond which unites them. God is the only good; the creature, therefore, cannot do good except in Him. Consequently, to put man into a condition to sanctify himself, it is necessary to begin by reconciling him to God, and replacing him in Him. For this purpose, the wall which separates him from God, the divine condemnation which is due to him as a sinner, must be broken down. This obstacle once removed by justification, and reconciliation accomplished, the heart of man opens without reserve to the divine favor which is restored to him; and, on the other hand, the communication of it from above, interrupted by the state of condemnation, resumes its course. The Holy Spirit, whom God could not bestow on a being at war with him, comes to seal on his heart the new relation established on justification, and to do the work of a real and free inward sanctification. Such was the end which God had in view from the first; for holiness is salvation in its very essence. Justification is to be regarded as the strait gate, through which we enter on the narrow way of sanctification, which leads to glory.” [Godet, *Romans*, pg 233f]

INSTANT SANCTIFICATION IS NOT POSSIBLE — “The practical application of the apostle’s doctrine regarding this mysterious death, which is at the foundation of Christian sanctification, seems to me to be this: The Christian’s breaking with sin is undoubtedly gradual in its realization, but absolute and conclusive in its principle.” [Godet, *Romans*, pg 238]

Shall we continue in sin? — “The practice of sin as a habit (present tense) is here raised.” [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 361] “The verb means primarily to remain or abide at or with, as 1 Corinthians 16:8; Philippians 1:24; and secondarily, *to persevere*, as Romans 11:23; Colossians 1:23. So better here, *persist*.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*, vol 3 pg 65f]

That grace may abound — i.e., be more conspicuously displayed. “[T]o set free the superfluity of grace alluded to like putting money in circulation. Horrible thought (*mē genoito*) and yet Paul faced it. There are occasionally so-called pietists who actually think that God’s pardon gives them liberty to sin without penalty (cf. the sale of indulgences that stirred Martin Luther).” [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 361]

v 2 — Paul responds to his question with his familiar “by no means.” “*God forbid* — μή γένοιτο (*mē genoito*), Let it not be; by no means; far from it; let not such a thing be mentioned! — Any of these is the meaning of the Greek phrase, which is a strong expression of surprise and disapprobation.” [Adam Clarke, *Romans*] “Just as a dead man does not revive and resume his former occupations, as little can the believer return to his old life of sin; for in his case also there has been a *death*. — The phrase μή γένοιτο (*mē genoito*), *let it not be so!* expresses the revolting character of the rejected assertion, as well as a conviction of its falsehood.” [Godet, *Romans*, pg 236]

WHAT IS ‘DEATH TO SIN’? — (see v. 2, “*died to sin*”; v. 6, “*crucified with Christ*”; v. 8, “*died with Christ*”; v. 11, “*dead to sin*”) “Paul emphatically denies that the Christian should sin in order to secure more grace, and explains himself in a rhetorical question: ‘We who have died to sin, how can we yet live in it?’ The Christian’s death ‘to sin’ is the main point of Rom 6. But what does this death ‘to sin’ mean? ... The idea is of a decisive separation from sin. This separation could be a separation from the penalty due because of sin (see, e.g., Haldane), but the context demonstrates that Paul is talking not about the penalty, but about the power, of sin (cf. v. 6b: ‘*that we should no longer serve sin*’; v. 14a: ‘*sin shall no longer have lordship over you*’). It is better, then, to view the separation as *a separation from the ‘rule’ or ‘realm’ of sin, sin being personified, as throughout this chapter, as a power that rules over the person outside of Christ.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 357]

“TO DIE TO SIN” IS NOT MERELY RENOUNCING INDIVIDUAL SINS — “Death to sin is regarded by most commentators as expressing figuratively the act of will by which the believer undertakes for himself, and promises to God, on the blood of reconciliation, henceforth to renounce evil. This would make it an inward resolution, a voluntary engagement, a consecration of the heart. But St. Paul seems to speak of something more profound and stable, ‘which not only ought to be, but

which is.' This appears clearly from the passive form: ye have been put to death, vii. 4; this expression proves that Paul is thinking above all of a divine act which has passed on us in the person of another (by the body of Christ), but which has its counterpart within us from the moment we appropriate it by faith. It is not, then, an act merely which is in question, but a state of will determined by a fact performed without us, a state from which our will cannot withdraw itself from the time that our being is swayed by the power of faith in the death of Christ for us." [Godet, *Romans*, pg 237]

WHEN DID THIS 'DEATH TO SIN' TAKE PLACE? — This is an extremely complicated question, one which should not be answered simplistically. One answer which is popular among our type of churches is this 'death' took place at the Golgotha when Christ historically died on the cross. But as Moo argues, vv. 3 and 4 connects death to sin with baptism (which is not to say baptism saves; see last week's lesson). Moo also states the second part of v. 2 suggests "the believer's death to sin transfers him or her from a condition that has been consciously experienced;" meaning this is not something merely which occurred in the mind of God but is actually part of the Christian experience. Therefore it seems to me to involve a mystery, with the answer being different according to our perspective. ***From the perspective of the Lord, perhaps the answer would be "upon Calvary," so that in the mind of God, Christ's death became ours, his resurrection became ours, etc. From our perspective however, this took place at a real time in our lives, not in the historical past. From our experience, this "death to sin" took place at our conversion, pictured here by our baptism.*** Douglas Moo, quoting from Beasley-Murray's book *Baptism*, speaks of the believer's (*conversion-*) *baptism* — again, see last week's lesson.

*Please note: the differences between the two are important: **Something which takes place in the mind of God is real from the eternal perspective; but that does not erase events which occur in our current space-time continuum.*** We must allow ourselves to be content with the mysterious aspects of this and other teachings, confessing our inability to understand the deep eternal things of God. There are those who would enter error by looking at things only through the eternal eyes of God while eliminating the human perspective on those events. That would be unbalanced and an incorrect manner by which we are to think of things. ***The Lord gave us these eternal truths to give peace and comfort to our current situation, but it is erroneous to so think "eternally" that we forget our present reality.*** If one denies the logic behind these statements, allow me to go a step further. In the mind of God, all those who belong to him are already in heaven, seated in heavenly places with Christ (Eph 2:6), already glorified (Rom 8:30). But does that mean we are not really alive? Is this existence a mirage? No, we must differentiate between the Lord's perspective and our present reality. Both perspectives are real and true, even if our limited rational minds cannot always bring the two perspectives together. We must remain balance and see the truth in each perspective.

LIVING IN SIN — Although this is even debated, I agree whole-heartedly with Douglas Moo: ***"Living in sin' is best taken as describing a 'lifestyle' of sin — a habitual practice of sin, such that one's life could be said to be characterized by that sin rather than by the righteousness God requires. Such habitual sin, 'remaining in sin' (v. 1), 'living in sin' (v. 2), is not possible, as a constant situation, for the one who has truly experienced the transfer out from under the domain, or tyranny, of sin. Sin's power is broken for the believer, and this must be evident in practice (see also Jas. 2:14-26; and perhaps 1 John 3:6, 9). Yet the nature of Christian existence is such that the believer can, at times, live in a way that is inconsistent with the reality of what God has made him in Christ. It is not sin, but the believer, who has 'died,' and therefore sin, as Wesley puts it, 'remains' even though it does not 'reign.' Therefore, while 'living in sin' is incompatible with Christian existence and impossible for the Christian as a constant condition, it remains a real threat. It is this threat that Paul warns us about in v. 2."*** [Moo, *Romans*, pg 358] I believe Moo does his best to strike a balance between the Christian life in theory and the Christian life in practice. I would like to add this comment alongside Moo: ***while not trying to provide an excuse, the fact of Christian growth must be taken into account in the above equation.*** What I mean by that is a new believer, coming out of a background of American paganism, will not have the same God-knowledge as one brought up in a Christian home. Therefore what some might consider *"inconsistent lifestyles"* (in reality, that may be an adequate description) might be a matter of ignorance in the new believer and something which will become a matter of conviction as the Lord reveals His word to that believer. This is even substantiated by scripture: in the James passage quoted by Moo, James gives two historical examples of those whose lives were examples of being justified by faith and that faith producing works. Those two examples were Abraham, the father of the faithful, and Rahab, a pagan harlot. As we consider those two side-by-side, we might go away in awe of Abraham while getting the impression that Rahab may not have even been a true believer. But James held her up as an example of faithfulness. Why? In her own ignorant and pagan way, she showed by her actions, as meager as they might have been, that she had true saving faith (which is James' point: true saving faith will show itself by works). We might have choked over Rahab's lifestyle but from that meager beginning, her life undoubtedly continued to change. If we could have seen her decades later, I am sure the hand of God would have been much more evident in her life. No, she was not an Abraham nor could she have ever gone through such a trial as Abraham experienced with Isaac. But she had true saving faith and it showed itself to be genuine. And James holds her up as an example for us all. ***So while we think of the impossibility of a true believer living in habitual sin, we must keep in mind that growth is involved in even know what is sin in our lives.***

The act which in its nature was a dying to sin, was our accepting of Christ as our Savior. That act involves in it not only a separation from sin, but a deadness to it. ***No man can apply to Christ to be delivered from sin, in order that he may live in it. Deliverance from sin, as offered by Christ, and as accepted by the believer, is not mere deliverance from its penalty, but from its power. We turn from sin to God when we receive Christ as a Savior.*** It is, therefore, as the apostle argues, a contradiction in terms, to say that gratuitous justification is a license to sin, as much as to say that death is life, or that dying to a thing is living in

it. [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 192]

v 3, 4 — “Death to sin, Paul argues in v. 3, is part and parcel of becoming a Christian. For baptism involves us with the death of Christ, a death that itself is a death to sin (as Paul will argue in vv. 8-10).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 359]

DO YOU NOT KNOW? — As we try and interpret what Paul is saying in this chapter, we must remember that whatever Paul is saying concerning baptism and the Christian experience is something of which the Christians in Rome were already aware. “It is difficult, and perhaps unnecessary, to determine precisely how much of what Paul says in vv. 3-6 the believers in Rome already knew. Probably Beasley-Murray is right: *while no single element of what Paul says would have been completely novel, the significance of each is ‘deepened’ in Paul’s teaching.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 359]

THE ROLE OF BAPTISM — “Paul’s reference is to the Roman Christians’ water baptism as their outward initiation into Christian existence. To be sure, a few scholars have denied any reference to water baptism here, arguing that ‘baptize’ means ‘immerse’ in a metaphorical sense, or that Paul refers to ‘baptism in the Spirit,’ or that he uses ‘baptize’ as a metaphor for incorporation into the body of Christ. But, without discounting the possibility of allusions to one or more of these ideas, a reference to water baptism is primary. By the date of *Romans*, ‘baptize’ had become almost a technical expression for the rite of Christian initiation by water, and this is surely the meaning the Roman Christians would have given the word... [Baptism] is not the place, or time, at which we are buried with Christ, but the instrument (*dia*) through which we are buried with him. It might, then, be an obvious conclusion that the ‘time’ of our burial with Christ was the time of his own burial: that, when Christ died, was buried, and resurrected, we were ‘in him’ and so participated in these events ‘with’ him. Support for this conception can be found in the aorist passive verbs used throughout this passage, the reference to Christ’s own form of death, crucifixion, as that which we participate (v. 6), and the simple logic that runs ‘if we died with Christ, and he died “once” (v. 10), on Calvary, then our dying “with” him must also have taken place on Calvary.’ Moreover, it is very natural to apply to our relationship with Christ the kind of ‘inclusive’ relationship that Paul has just indicated to be the case with Adam (5:12-21).

“Each of these points have merit. But before concluding that A.D. 30 was the ‘time’ of our burial with Christ, we must consider some other factors. First, vv. 2, 14, and 17-22 suggest that the transition from the old life to the new has taken place in the conscious experience of the believer. Second, the reference to baptism likewise draws attention to the lifetime of the believer (see, e.g., Murray). Third, many of Paul’s ‘with Christ’ statements include reference to the life experience of the individual. Since, then, the text does not allow us to focus on the cross *or* our own experience as the ‘time’ of our being buried with Christ, we are forced to the conclusion that we are dealing with a category that transcends time. Our dying, being buried, and being resurrected with Christ are experiences that transfer us from the old age to the new. But the transition from old age to new, while applied to individuals at their conversion, has been accomplished through the redemptive work of Christ on Good Friday and Easter. Paul’s *syn* [Greek preposition ‘with,’ attached to the verb ‘to bury’ in v. 4] refers to a ‘redemptive-historical’ ‘witness’ whose locus is *both* the cross and resurrection and Christ — where the ‘shift’ in ages took place historically — *and* the conversion of every believer — when this ‘shift’ in ages becomes applicable to the individual.

“On the view we have adopted, Paul alludes to our burial with Christ because it was included in the basic kerygma [message, preaching] that recited the key salvific events — ‘Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, he was buried, he was raised on the third day in accordance to the Scriptures’ (1 Cor 15:3-4). But burial was probably included in this simple summary because burial confirmed the reality of death, and the purpose for mentioning the believer’s participation in it both here and in Col 2:12 is the same: our death with Christ to the old age of sin is final and definitive. More than this, the mention of burial makes for a fitting antithesis to the ‘newness of life’ which is the sequel to our burial with Christ...

“[A]s we have seen, a reference to water baptism cannot be eliminated in v. 3, and the same is true in v. 4. How, then, can we preserve the cruciality of faith at the same time as we do justice to the mediatorial role of baptism in this text? Here the suggestion of J. Dunn is helpful [Romans, Word Biblical Commentary]. He points out that the early church conceived of faith, the gift of the Spirit, and water baptism as components of one unified experience, which he called ‘conversion-initiation.’ Just as faith is always assumed to lead to baptism, so baptism always assumes faith for its validity. In vv. 3-4, then, we can assume that baptism stands for the whole conversion–initiation experience, presupposing faith and the gift of the Spirit. What, we might ask, of the Christian who has not been baptized? While Paul never dealt with this question — and his first reaction would undoubtedly have been ‘Why hasn’t he been baptized?’ — we must assume from the fact that faith is emblazoned in every chapter of Romans while baptism is mentioned in only two verses that genuine faith, even if it has not been ‘sealed’ in baptism, is sufficient for salvation.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 359, 363ff]

“Paul does not design to teach that the sacrament of baptism, from any inherent virtue in the rite, or from any supernatural power in him who administers it, or from any uniformly attending Divine influence, always secures the regeneration of the soul. This is contrary both to Scripture and experience. No fact is more obvious than that thousands of the baptized are unregenerate. It cannot be, therefore, that the apostle intends to say, that all who are baptized are thereby savingly united to Christ. It is not of the efficacy of baptism as an external rite, that he assumes his readers are well informed: it is of the import and design of that sacrament, and the nature of the union with Christ, of which baptism is the sign and the seal. It is the constant usage of Scripture to address professors as believers, to predicate of them as professors what is true of them only as believers. This is also the usage of common life. We address a company of professing Christians as true Christians; we call them brethren in Christ; we speak of them as

beloved of the Lord, partakers of the heavenly calling, and heirs of eternal life. ***Baptism was the appointed mode of professing faith in Christ, of avowing allegiance to him as the Son of God, and acquiescence in his gospel. Those, therefore, who were baptized, are assumed to believe what they professed, and to be what they declared themselves to be.*** They are consequently addressed as believers, as having embraced the gospel, as having put on Christ, and as being, in virtue of their baptism as an act of faith, the children of God. When a man was baptized unto Christ, he was baptized unto his death; he professed to regard himself as being united to Christ, as dying when he died, as bearing in him the penalty of sin, in order that he might be reconciled to God, and live unto holiness. How could a man who was sincere in receiving baptism, such being its design and import, live in sin? The thing is impossible. The act of faith implied and expressed in baptism, is receiving Christ as our sanctification as well as our righteousness.... The very act of faith by which we receive Christ as the propitiation for sin, is spiritually a death to sin. It is in its very nature a renunciation of every thing which it was the design of Christ's death to destroy. Every believer, therefore, is a saint. He renounces sin in accepting Christ." [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 193f]

BURIED WITH HIM THROUGH BAPTISM — "St. Paul means: 'Ye know not that ye are dead ...? Well, then, ye are ignorant that as many of you as there are, are men interred (baptized)! People do not bury the living.' ... But if baptism is in his view the external proof of death, as burial is the proof of decease, he can take up again the course of his argument and say: 'In consequence of this death to sin undergone in Christ, we have therefore been buried with Him ... in order also to rise with him,' which signifies: 'buried with Him, not with the aim of remaining in the tomb or of issuing from it to return to the past life, but to penetrate into a new life, whence a return to the old is definitely precluded.' ... ***Burial is the act which consummates the breaking of the last tie between man and his earthly life. This was likewise the meaning of our Lord's entombment. Similarly by baptism there is publically consummated the believer's breaking with the life of the present world, and with his own natural life.***" [Godet, *Romans*, pg 238ff]

PAUL'S REAL POINT OF EMPHASIS: NEW LIFE IN CHRIST — It is easy to get caught up in controversies and miss the real point Paul was attempting to make. Paul was not stirring up division. While his comments might cause questions today, all Paul was doing was using a simple illustration to make a practical application regarding the Christian and sin. "The main point of v. 4 is not, however, our being with Christ, or baptism, but the new life to which these events are to lead. It is the purpose of our burial with Christ that 'we might walk in newness of life.' 'Newness of life' is a life empowered by the realities of the new age — including especially God's Spirit (Rom 7:6) — and a life that should reflect the values of that new age. This connection between the 'indicative' [statements of fact] of our incorporation into Christ and the 'imperatives' [commands] of Christian living is the heart of Rom 6. But Paul does more than announce that this living in the new age is the purpose of our identification with Christ in baptism; he also compares it to the resurrection of Christ: 'just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so, too' (this comparison reminds us of the logic that dominates Rom 5:12-21) But the context suggests that more than comparison is intended. While Paul in this paragraph does not, as in Col 2:12 and Eph 2:6, plainly speak of the Christian's participation in the resurrection of Christ as already 'realized,' he nevertheless makes it clear that the believer is, in this life, already benefitting from the power and influence of that resurrection; see especially 6:11, where believers are called to consider themselves 'alive to God' in a fashion parallel to Christ's resurrection (vv. 8-10), and 6:12, where believers are called those who are 'alive from the dead.' ***In light of these considerations, 'just as ... so also' probably here has a causal flavor: 'because Christ has been raised, we can and should walk in newness of life.'*** Paul, in other words, grounds the believer's present participation in life in the spiritual power of Christ's resurrection. Christians, then, are both empowered and summoned to live a new kind of life by virtue of their participation in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 366f]

"Too many Christians are 'betweeners': they live between Egypt and Canaan, saved but never satisfied; or they live between Good Friday and Easter, believing in the Cross but not entering into the power and glory of the Resurrection. Romans 6:5 indicates that our union with Christ assures our future resurrection should we die. But Romans 6:4 teaches that we share His resurrection power today." [Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol 1 pg 531]

"The apostle reminds his readers, that the very design of Christianity was to deliver men from sin; that every one who embraced it, embraced it for that object; and, therefore, it was a contradiction in terms to suppose that any should come to Christ to be delivered from sin, in order that they might live in it. And, besides this, it is clearly intimated that such is not only the design of the gospel, and the object for which it is embraced by all who cordially receive it, but also that the result or necessary effect of union with Christ is a participation in the benefits of his death.... For a professing Christian to live in sin, is not only to give positive evidence that he is not a real Christian, but it is to misrepresent and slander the gospel of the grace of God, to the dishonor of religion, and the injury of the souls of men." [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 193, 202]

Through the glory of the Father — "Paul says Christ rose, *by the glory of the Father*. *Glory* is the excellence of God, the sum of all his perfections, or any one perfection specially manifested. The exhibition, therefore, of God's holiness, or of his mercy, or of his power, is equally an exhibition of his glory. Here the reference is to his omnipotence, which was gloriously displayed in the resurrection of Christ." [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 195]

v 5 — This verse affirms what was implied in v. 4: the participation of the believer in the resurrection of Christ. The protasis (the 'if' clause) states what is already known: the believer's connection with Christ's death. This forms the basis for the conclusion found in the apodosis (the 'then' clause): this connection with Christ's death assures the participation in his resurrection.

on-to-log-i-cal (ōn-tə-lōj-ī-kəl) —
adj: of or relating to essence or the
nature of being

IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS DEATH — This could have a reference to baptism, the word ‘likeness’ (ὁμοίωμα, *homoiōma*) having the meaning of ‘likeness, copy, image.’ It is used about 40 times in the LXX in the sense of something that looks like but is not identical to, something else. Two most common usages is that of idols (copies of gods) and to the ‘figures’ in Ezekiel’s visions. This could also have reference to the Christian’s death to sin as being a ‘copy’ of Christ’s death to sin; cf. v. 10. Finally, it could also

mean ‘form’ in the sense of the outer appearance or shape of the reality itself. This in itself does not need to be a shallow reference; e.g., in both Rom 8:3 and Phil 2:7 it is used of a deeper identity between the two items involved. In Phil 2:7 it is said Jesus appeared in the ‘form’ of a man. This means more than he appeared ‘not just like’ a human being but that he truly was a human being. Similarly in Rom 8:3 Jesus was not merely ‘appearing like’ sinful flesh but actually took on ‘sinful flesh’ when he died for our sins. Therefore, while in each of these verses there is a difference, it also might refer to a deep identity between two items. Taken in that light then, the ‘likeness of death’ could refer merely to the death of Christ itself. Moo takes this last concept and clarifies: “[T]he believer’s death and burial ‘with Christ’ is a redemptive–historical association that cannot be precisely defined in terms of time or nature. *Homoiōma*, while not differentiating the death to which we are joined from Christ’s, nevertheless qualifies it in its particular redemptive–historical ‘form.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 370] Others believe the reference is to our baptism however: as we are immersed we are picturing the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. “Lit. ‘planted together in the likeness of his death’ (cf. the ‘sowing’ figure of 1 Cor 15:36-4, although there it is the believer’s personal death that is meant, not, as here, death with Christ).” [Bruce, *Romans*, pg 130]

UNITED WITH HIM IN HIS RESURRECTION — Paul states the fact of our being united with Christ in his death. Here Paul also unites us with Christ’s resurrection. The question arises however why Paul makes this resurrection in the future: “*we will be united with Christ.*” Some take this to refer to our spiritual resurrection in the present. However, Paul probably meant the actual future when believers will be physically resurrected “*with Christ*” and our mortal bodies will be changed. In agreement with this is v. 8, “*Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*” This is not to deny our “*spiritual resurrection*” at the moment of conversion, nor is this to deny the power of the resurrection in our present life.

v 6 — Verses 6 and 7 restate and elaborates the meaning of v. 5. The “*crucified with*” coincides with the “*dying with Christ*” in the previous verses. “*Paul’s language throughout is forensic, or positional; by God’s act, we have been placed in a new position. This position is real, for what exists in God’s sight is surely (ultimately) real, and it carries definite consequences for day-to-day living. But it is status, or power structure, that Paul is talking about here. Just as Christ’s crucifixion meant his release from the realm of sin (6:10), the law (Gal 4:4) and death (v. 9; Phil 2:7-8), so our crucifixion with Christ means our release from the realm of sin (this verse), the law (6:14; 7:4), and death (8:1-11).*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 373]

OLD MAN VS. NEW MAN: OUR POSITION IN EITHER ADAM OR CHRIST — “Many popular discussions of Paul’s doctrine of the Christian life argue, or assume, that Paul distinguishes with these phrases between two parts or ‘natures’ of a person. With this interpretation as a premise, it is then debated whether the ‘old nature’ is replaced with the ‘new nature’ at conversion, or whether the ‘new nature’ is added to the ‘old nature.’ But *the assumption that ‘old man’ and ‘new man’ refer to parts, or natures, of a person is incorrect.* Rather, they designate the person as a whole, considered in relation to the corporate structure to which he or she belongs. ‘Old man’ and ‘new man’ are not, then, ontological, but relational or positional in orientation. *They do not, at least in the first place, speak of a change in nature, but of a change in relationship. ‘Our old man’ is not our Adamic, or sin ‘nature’ that is judged and dethroned on the cross, and to which is added in the believer another ‘nature,’ ‘the new man.’ Rather, the ‘old man’ is what we were ‘in Adam — the ‘man’ of the old age, who lives under the tyranny of sin and death. As J. R. W. Stott puts it, ‘what was crucified with Christ was not a part of me called my old nature, but the whole of me as I was before I was converted.’* Behind the contrast between ‘old man’ and ‘new man’ is the contrast between Adam and Christ, the ‘first man’ and the ‘last’ (1 Cor 15:45; cf. Rom 5:15, ‘the one man Jesus Christ’). Those, then, who are ‘in Adam’ belong to and exist as ‘the old man’; those who are ‘in Christ’ belong to and exist as ‘the new man.’ In other words, these phrases denote the solidarity of people with the ‘heads’ of the two contrasting ages of salvation history. It is only by interpreting ‘old man’ and ‘new man’ in this manner that we are able to integrate two apparently conflicting viewpoints in Paul. On the one hand, this verse and Col 3:9-11 make clear that the believer has ceased to be ‘old man’ and has become ‘new man.’ On the other hand, Paul in Eph 4:22-24 commands Christians to ‘put off the old man’ and ‘put on the new man.’ ... [If] these phrases look at the person as one who belongs to the old age or the new, respectively, then this conflict is easily resolved. For *Paul makes it clear that the believer has been transferred from the old age of sin and death to the new age of righteousness and life (Rom 6:6 and Col 3:9-11) just as he indicates that the ‘powers’ of that old age continue to influence the believer and must be continually resisted — hence the imperatives [commands] of Eph 4:22-24.... What we were ‘in Adam’ is no more; but, until heaven, the temptation to live in Adam always remains.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 373ff]

“A tremendous fact is introduced here: the old man (the old ego, self) was crucified with Christ so that the body need not be controlled by sin. The word ‘destroyed’ in Romans 6:6 does not mean annihilated; it means ‘rendered inactive, made of no effect.’ The same Greek word is translated ‘loose’ in Romans 7:2. If a woman’s husband dies, she is ‘loosed’ from the law of her husband and is free to marry again. There is a change in relationship. The law is still there, but it has no authority over the woman because her husband is dead. Sin wants to be our master. It finds a foothold in the old nature, and through the old nature seeks to control the members of the body. But in Jesus Christ, we died to sin; and the old nature was crucified so that the old life is

rendered inoperative. Paul was not describing an experience; he was stating a fact. The practical experience was to come later. It is a fact of history that Jesus Christ died on the cross. It is also a fact of history that the believer died with Him; and 'he that is dead is freed from sin' (Rom 6:7). Not 'free to sin' as Paul's accusers falsely stated; but 'freed from sin.' [Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol 1 pg 532]

“Our old man — This is our old selves, as we were in and from Adam. It is contrasted with the new man (Col 3:9,10) — which is what we are and have in Christ. The word *our* indicates that what is said, is said of and to all those who are in Christ. The expression ‘our old man,’ of course is a federal one, as also is ‘the new man.’” [Newell, *Romans*, pg 210]

“The matter of which we are told to take note here is the great federal fact that our old man was crucified with Christ. Perhaps no more difficult task, no task requiring such constant vigilant attention, is assigned by God to the believer. It is a stupendous thing, this matter of taking note of and keeping in mind what goes so completely against consciousness, — that our old man was crucified. These words are addressed to faith, to faith only. Emotions, feelings, deny them. To reason, they are foolishness. But ah, what stormy seas has faith walked over! What mountains has faith cast into the sea! How many impossible things has faith done! Let us never forget, that this crucifixion was a thing definitely done by God at the cross, just as really as our sins were there laid upon Christ. It is addressed to faith as a revelation from God.” [Newell, *Romans*, pg 212]

THE BODY OF SIN — This could be a reference to our physical bodies. If so, we must be careful to understand in what sense Paul speaks of “the body of sin.” He does not mean that our bodies are inherently sinful; that is a teaching of early Greek Gnosticism and is rejected in the scriptures. If Paul is here speaking of our physical bodies then the reference is to the fact that our bodies are susceptible and easily dominated by sin. But “*body*” or “*flesh*” often is used to refer to our whole being. This seems to fit the immediate context the best. *“What must be ‘rendered impotent’ if I am to be freed from sin (v. 6c) is not just my physical body but myself in all my sin-prone faculties.”* [Moo, *Romans*, pg 375] “‘The body of sin’ is only another name for ‘the old man,’ or rather for its concrete form. The design of our crucifixion with Christ is the destruction of the old man, or the body of sin; and the design of the destruction of the inward power or principle of evil, is our spiritual freedom.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 197] “‘For the destruction of the sinful self’ (NEB), lit. ‘the body of sin’ — i.e. so that the ‘flesh’, the unregenerate nature with its downward tendency, in which sin found a ready accomplice, might be rendered inoperative. The ‘sinful body’ is more than an individual affair; it is ‘the sin-dominated nature that was ours in Adam’, the old solidarity of death which has been broken by the death of Christ, with a view to the creation of the new solidarity of life which believers are made part ‘in Christ’.” [Bruce, *Romans*, pg 131]

v 7 — The main point of v. 6 was that since we have been crucified with Christ, we no longer serve sin. Paul now supports that with general knowledge. *“[Most likely] Paul is citing a general maxim, to the effect that ‘death severs the hold of sin on a person.’ Paul’s readers may have been familiar with similar sayings, known to us from the rabbinic writings. His purpose, then, is not to prove v. 6 but to illustrate his theological point by reference to a general truth.”* [Moo, *Romans*, pg 377]

“He who has died is freed from sin (lit. ‘has been justified from sin’). The point of this is paraphrased by NEB: *‘a dead man is no longer answerable for his sin.’* Death pays all debts, so those who have died with Christ have the slate wiped clean, and are ready to begin their new life with Christ freed from the entail of the past.” [Bruce, *Romans*, pg 131]

v 8 — Paul had stated believers are assured of being partakers in the future resurrection (v. 5). He now repeats that point as he leads into a discussion as to how that effects us now in our present life. “But this future life of resurrection casts its shadow into the believer’s present experience, and it is clear from the sequel that Paul wants us to see the present implications of this promise of future resurrection life.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 377] “These verses contain the application of the truth taught in the preceding passage: ‘If we are dead with Christ, we shall share in his life. If he lives, we shall live also. As his life is perpetual, it secures the continued supplies of life to all his members. Death has no more any dominion over him. Having died unto, or on account of, sin once, he now ever lives to, and with God. His people, therefore, must be conformed to him; dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.’ This passage does not contain a mere comparison between the literal death and resurrection of Christ, and the spiritual death and resurrection of believers, but it exhibits the connection between the death and life of the Redeemer and the sanctification of his people.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 199]

v 9 — CHRIST’S RESURRECTION UNIQUE — Others rose from the dead; in fact, several were raised from the dead by Jesus himself. Yet in each of these other cases, everyone who rose from the dead, died a later death. But Jesus rose to never face death again! “The faith that we will share Christ’s resurrection is grounded in what we know: ‘Christ, having been raised from the dead, will no longer die; death no longer has lordship over him.’ Unlike Lazarus’s ‘resurrection’ (better, ‘revivification’), which did not spare him from another physical death, Christ’s resurrection meant a decisive and final break with death and all its power. For his resurrection was the anticipation of the general resurrection — he is the ‘first fruits’ of those that rise (1 Cor 15:23). As such, his resurrection spelled the beginning of the new age of redemption, in which sin and death are being vanquished (cf. 1:4).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 378]

THE EFFECTS OF CHRIST’S RESURRECTION ON HIMSELF — “But Paul’s focus in this verse is on the significance of Christ’s resurrection for Christ himself. *Christ’s resurrection means that he ‘no longer’ dies; ‘death no longer has lordship over him.’* This language shows again that Paul is viewing matters from the perspective of the two ages of salvation history. *Christ, in*

coming to earth incarnate, came under the influence of the powers of the old age: sin (cf. v. 10), the law (cf. Gal 4:4), and death. Because of this Paul can say that Christ is no longer under the lordship of death. Just as the general resurrection will bring 'death' to an end (Rev 20:11-15), so Christ's resurrection ends the power of death over himself, as well as anticipating the defeat of death in all those who belong to him. So, as those who are identified with Christ, we can be confident of sharing in that defeat of death when we 'live with him' (v. 8b)." [Moo, *Romans*, pg 378]

"And, because believers were united with Him in His death, they too died to sin in and with Him. And their relationship to sin is now exactly His relationship: they are dead to it. They are also 'alive unto God' in Christ Jesus. This is not a matter of 'experience,' but of fact. The truth about believers is, that they are dead to sin and alive to God, being in Christ! And they hear it said by God, and are asked to reckon it so! Their path of faith is plain: 'Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus.' John Wesley truly counselled:

*'Frames and feelings fluctuate:
These can ne'er thy savior be!
Learn thyself in Christ to see:
Then, be feelings what they will,
Jesus is thy Saviour still!'*" [Newell, *Romans*, pg 222f]

GOD DOES NOT RE-MAKE ADAM BUT KILLS IT — "Now God's way was, not to 'change' the old man, but to send it to the cross unto death, and release us from it. No one who remains in Adam's race will be saved!" [Newell, *Romans*, pg 221]

v 10 — Paul here further supports his statement of v. 9 – 'death no longer has lordship over Christ.' But in so doing, Paul provides another link in his chain of reasoning which connects Christ's death on Calvary to the Christian experience.

the believer "dies to sin" (v. 2) when we die "with Christ" (v. 3-6)
the death Christ died is final (v. 10) and allows him to live as unto God (v. 10)
THEREFORE ... (we will see in the next verse how this relates to the believer's experience)

CHRIST DIED TO SIN IN FINALITY — "*What is striking about this verse is that Paul uses the same language to describe Christ's relationship to sin as he has done to describe the Christian's: dying 'to sin.'*" ... [While] it is true that Christ did not need to be freed from sin's power in the same way that we need to be, a close parallel between the situation of Christ and of the Christian can be maintained if we remember that Paul is continuing to speak of sin as a 'ruling power.' Just as death once had 'authority' over Christ because of his full identification with sinful people in the 'old age,' so that other ruling power of the old age, sin, could be said to have had 'authority' over Christ. As a 'man of the old age,' he was subject to the power of sin — with the critical difference that he never succumbed to its power actually sinned. When these salvation-historical perspectives are given their due place, we are able to give 'die to sin' the same meaning here as it had in v. 2: a separation or freedom from the rule of sin. And this transfer into a new state was for Christ final and definitive: 'one for all.' The finality of Christ's separation from the power of sin shows why death can no longer rule over him — for is not death the product of sin (Rom 6:23, etc.)?" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 379]

"*This adverb (ephapax) is used repeatedly in Hebrews to emphasize the finality of the sacrifice of Christ. In his death he dealt effectively and conclusively with sin, winning a victory 'that needs no second fight, and leaves no second foe.'*" [Bruce, *Romans*, pg 132] **Dieth no more** — "Christ's particular death occurs but once' (Shedd). See Hebrews 10:10. A complete refutation of the 'sacrificial' character of the 'mass.' ... *Once (ephapax)*. Once and once only (Hebrews 9:26f.), not *pote* (once upon a time)." [Robertson, *Word Pictures*, vol 4 pg 363] "*Once* — More literally, as Rev., in margin, *once for all*. Compare Hebrews 7:27; 9:12; 10:10." [Vincent, *Word Studies*, vol 3 pg 70] "He can never die again, *for* in dying he died once for all. By the one offering of himself, he has for ever perfected them that are sanctified. The apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, while arguing to show the necessity of the death of Christ as a sacrifice for sin, argues also to show that such was the efficacy of that sacrifice, it need not, and cannot be repeated. Hebrews 7:27, 9:12, 10:10; 1 Peter 3:18." [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 200]

CHRIST THEREFORE LIVES TO GOD — Having gone through the crucifixion and resurrection, Christ now lives for the glory of God. This is not to imply Jesus did not do so in his human capacity. Paul uses the language he does to set up the comparison between Christ and the Christian that he will draw in v. 11. "*In that he liveth, he liveth unto God*. This is said in contrast to what precedes. He died unto sin, he lives unto God. So must the believer. Death must be followed by life; the one is in order to the other. It is of course not implied that our Lord's life on earth was not a living unto God, i.e., a living having God for its end and object. The antithetical expression is used simply to indicate the analogy between Christ and his people. They must be freed from sin, and be devoted to God, because their Lord and Savior, in whose death and life they share, died unto sin, and lives unto God." [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 201]

v 11 — IN THE SAME WAY — These words introduces two things Paul is doing: (1) a comparison between what he just said concerning Christ and the believer; and (2) a summation derived from that comparison. "As the death Christ died was a death 'to sin' (v. 10), so Christians who have died with Christ (vv. 4a, 5a, 6, 8a) must now regard themselves as being those who are 'dead to sin.' And as Christ's 'once-for-all' death led on to resurrection and new life 'in God's service' (vv. 4b, 9-10), so Christians who participate in that resurrection life (vv. 4b, 5b, 8b) must regard themselves as those who are 'alive to God.'" [Moo, *Romans*, pg 380]

CONTINUED ACTION — Those commentators who are strong in the Greek makes the point here that this is supposed to be a command for repeated action on the part of the Christian. *“Paul uses a present imperative, urging us constantly to view ourselves in this light.”* [Moo, *Romans*, pg 380]

THE COMMAND: CONTINUE TO RECKON YOURSELVES DEAD — “As Thielicke puts it (H. Thielicke, *Theological Ethics*, vol 1), *‘The imperative does not refer to the dying. Over this we have no control, since Jesus Christ has died for us and we only receive the gift of his dying and are drawn into it. The object of the imperative is that we should take this death into account, take it seriously, and thus make the gift become a gift in which we participate.’*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 380]

“This is no game of ‘let’s pretend’; believers should consider themselves to be what God in fact has made them. It is no vain exercise but one which is morally fruitful: the Spirit has come to make effective in them what Christ has done for them, and to enable them to become in daily experience, as far as may be in the present conditions of morality, what they already are ‘in Christ Jesus’ and what they will be fully in the resurrection life.” [Bruce, *Romans*, pg 132]

“In some parts of the United States, ‘to reckon’ means ‘to think’ or ‘to guess.’ ‘I reckon’ is also the equivalent of ‘I suppose.’ But none of these popular meanings can apply to this verse. The word reckon is a translation of a Greek word that is used forty-one times in the New Testament — nineteen times in Romans alone. It appears in Romans 4 where it is translated as ‘count, reckon, impute.’ It means ‘to take into account, to calculate, to estimate.’ The word impute — ‘to put to one’s account’ — is perhaps the best translation. *To reckon means ‘to put to one’s account.’ It simply means to believe that what God says in His Word is really true in your life. Paul didn’t tell his readers to feel as if they were dead to sin, or even to understand it fully, but to act on God’s Word and claim it for themselves. Reckoning is a matter of faith that issues in action.... Reckoning is not claiming a promise, but acting on a fact. God does not command us to become dead to sin. He tells us that we are dead to sin and alive unto God, and then commands us to act on it. Even if we do not act on it, the facts are still true.”* [Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol 1 pg 532]

RECKON BY FAITH, NOT FEELINGS — “[S]o we are not told to die to sin: because we are in Christ who did die to it; and therefore we also are dead to it, in His death; and reckon it so. This should make the believer’s task simplicity itself. The only difficulty lies in believing these astounding revelations! That we should be dead to sin, and now alive unto God as risen ones, sharing that newness of life (verse 4) which our Lord began as ‘the First-born from among the dead,’ is at first too wonderful for us. *We see in ourselves the old self-life, the flesh — and straightway we forget God’s way of faith, and turn back to our ‘feelings.’ We say, Alas, if I could escape from this body, I would be free. But that is not at present God’s plan for you and me. We wait for the redemption of our body. This body is yet unredeemed. Nevertheless, we are to reckon ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God. Not dead to sin, notice, through prayers and strugglings, nor dead to sin in our feelings or consciousness; but in that death unto sin which Christ went through on the cross, and which we shared, and in that life which He now lives in glory!* ... It has pleased God to call for our faith, both in connection with salvation and with deliverance. Therefore, if we would obey and please God, let us follow His method! Let us learn to reckon ourselves dead, — that Christ’s death to sin was our death; and is the present relation of us who are in Christ, unto sin. The path of faith is always against appearances, — or, if you will, against human consciousness. God says certain things; and we, obeying the ‘law of faith,’ say the same things; like Abraham, not regarding our own body, which says the contrary thing. Facts are facts: and these are what God reveals to us. Appearances, or ‘feelings,’ are a wholly different thing from facts! God says, ‘You died to sin: reckon yourself dead!’ Obedient souls do so, and enter the path of deliverance in experience. Doubting souls fall back on their ‘feelings,’ and turn back to prayers and struggles, avoiding faith.... *Of course, this will test your faith: you will not feel dead to sin. Your old man will seem anything but crucified. But the path of true faith is always one of obedience; and God has commanded you to reckon yourself dead unto sin, and alive unto Him (as a risen one) in Christ.... A solemn question: To those who refuse or neglect to reckon themselves dead to sin as God commands, we press the question, How are you able to believe that Christ really bare the guilt of your sins and that you will not meet them at the judgment day? It is only God’s Word that tells you Christ bare your sins in His own body on the tree. And it is that same Word that tells you that you, as connected with Adam, died with Christ, that your old man was crucified, that since you are in Christ, you shared His death unto sin, and are thus to reckon your present relation to sin in Christ — as one who is dead to it, and alive unto God. If we claim that this is too difficult, because we feel the consciousness of sin dwelling in us, then reflect that it is only by faith that we know that our sin’s guilt was borne by Christ. And it is by faith alone that we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin.”* [Newell, *Romans*, pg 223ff]

IN CHRIST JESUS — “Being ‘dead to sin’ and ‘alive to God’ is a state achieved only in union with Christ, who himself died to sin and is alive to God. In this context, ‘in Christ’ must be seen in light of the persistent ‘with Christ’ language of vv. 4-10. Both phrases connote that the believer has experienced what has taken place with our representative, Christ. While the ‘with’ language is more suitable to actions (dying, being buried, being raised), the ‘in’ language better the continuing relationship of ‘deadness’ to sin and ‘aliveness’ to God of which this verse speaks. Only ‘in relation to,’ ‘as joined to,’ Christ — by faith — can the new life of victory over sin become a reality.... It is Paul’s conception of ‘salvation history’ that best explains the general meaning of his ‘in Christ’ language. The ‘informing’ theology is Paul’s understanding of Christ as the representative head of the new age, or realm, who incorporates within himself all who belong to that new age. For us to be ‘in Christ’ means, then, to belong to Christ as our representative, so that the decisions applied to him apply also to us. Cf. 1 Cor 15:22, especially: ‘as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (note also 2 Cor 5:14-17).” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 380f]

v 12 — THE COMMAND WITH A PROMISE OF POWER — “Moving from thought to action, Paul now spells out just what it will mean for the believer to ‘consider’ him – or herself to be ‘dead to sin and alive to God’ (v. 11). He uses two prohibitions (vv. 12 and 13a) and one command (v. 13b) to make his point. *The first prohibition — ‘do not let sin reign’ — is matched by the promise at the end of this small unit of verses that ‘sin will not have lordship over you’ (v. 14a). Without this promise, which recapitulates a main emphasis of vv. 1-11, the imperative would be futile. 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.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 381]

DO NOT LET SIN REIGN — Several commentators take this to have the sense of “*stop letting sin reign.*” But Moo argues against that grammatical emphasis, saying, “But the grammatical basis for this interpretation is not strong, and I question whether Paul would want to imply that the Roman Christians are now letting sin reign over them (cf. 15:14,15). I consider it more likely that Paul is issuing here a general prohibition. *Having urged Christians (on the basis of vv. 1-10) ‘constantly to consider’ themselves as dead to sin (v. 11), he now commands them to make it their practice never to let sin hold sway over them.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 382]

OUR MORTAL BODY — This could either be taken as a reference to our physical body or to our person as a whole. While good men hold both sides of the issue, one must remember part of the reasoning for taking this as a reference to our physical bodies has its foundation in ancient Gnosticism. The Gnostics understood all physical matter to be evil; therefore, Christ himself could not have been a real physical human being because that would have entailed the holy God of the universe corrupting himself with evil physical matter. That is part of the Apostle John’s argument in his first epistle where he states, “*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life*” (1 John 1:1 KJV) John’s emphasis here is that those who knew Jesus in the flesh actually walked with a real human being, a physical person, one having flesh and bones as the Apostles. John states Jesus was a man John had reached out and touched. John was arguing against Jesus being a specter or an immaterial object. This Gnostic teaching has come down to us through the centuries by some who teach our sinfulness is based in our physical flesh.

Others (of which I would count myself among this group) consider the sinfulness to be tied to the entirety of our beings, just not to our physical bodies. Typical of this teaching is Moo’s comments: “‘Body’ may be the physical body; but it is probably, as in 6:6, the whole person, viewed in terms of the person’s interaction with the world. As Nygren puts it, *‘the arena of battle is in the world.’ The battle is a spiritual one, but it is fought, and won or lost, in the daily decisions the believer makes about how to use his body.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 383] “Paul does not teach that the body is the source of sin, nor its exclusive or principal seat; but it is the organ of its manifestation. It is that through which the dominion of sin is outwardly revealed. The body is under the power of sin, and that power the apostle would have us resist; and on the other hand, the sensual appetites of the body tend to enslave the soul. Body and soul are so united in a common life, that to say, ‘Let not sin reign in your mortal body,’ and to say, ‘Let not sin reign in you,’ amount to the same thing. When we speak of sin as dwelling in the soul, we do not deny its relation to the body; so neither does the apostle, when he speaks of sin dwelling in the body, mean to deny its relation to the soul.” [Hodge, *Romans*, pg 204]

LUSTS — literally ‘passions;’ sometimes used positively and other times negatively. “Paul can use ‘passions’ with a neutral meaning (cf. Phil 1:23; 1 Thes 2:17), but here the word refers to desires that are in conflict with the will of God. If ‘body’ has the general meaning we have suggested, these *‘passions’ would include not only the physical lusts and appetites but also those desires that reside in the mind and will: the desire to have our own way, the desire to possess what other people have (cf. 7:7-8), the desire for dominance over others.*” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 383]

v 13 — Paul here moves from a more general command of v. 12 to more specific examples of not allowing sin to reign.

A LIFETIME OF OBEDIENCE — “The prohibition ‘do not present’ is, like ‘do not let sin reign’ in v. 12, in the present tense; and, as in v. 12, Paul is probably suggesting that *this prohibition is one that remains in force throughout the Christian life. Now that we understand ourselves to be ‘dead to sin, alive to God’ (v. 11), we must constantly avoid using our abilities and resources in the service of sin.* The words Paul chooses here fit well with his focus throughout this passage on the concepts of rulership and domination. Our natural capacities are ‘weapons’ that we are not to ‘offer in service’ to the tyrant sin. Since sin is no longer our ‘ruler’ (v. 14a), we must stop letting it ‘reign’ over us (v. 12), and stop serving it as if it were our rightful sovereign (v. 13a). Those natural capacities and abilities that God has given us are weapons that must no longer be put in the service of the master from whom we have been freed.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 384f]

WE EITHER SERVE SIN OR GOD — “As Paul will make clear in vv. 16ff, *there can be no ‘neutral’ position between service of God and service of sin.* By characterizing those whom he commands ‘as those alive from the dead,’ Paul reminds us that this presenting of ourselves to God can take place only because of the new state we find ourselves in as a result of our union with Christ in his death and resurrection (see v. 11). Since ‘being alive’ is obviously the state of the believer in this life, the reference must be to the rescue from the state of death that takes place when the believer becomes united with Christ. The bodily resurrection lies ahead, but there has already taken place a ‘spiritual’ resurrection (cf. Col 2:12; Eph 2:6) that introduces the believer into a new life, a life ‘in God’s service.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 385f]

Instruments — “The word is used from the earliest times of tools or instruments generally. In Homer of a ship’s tackle, smith’s

tools, implements of war, and in the last sense more especially in later Greek. In the New Testament distinctly of instruments of war (John 18:3; 2 Corinthians 6:7; 10:4). Here probably with the same meaning, the conception being that of sin and righteousness as respectively rulers of opposing sovereignties (compare *reign*, ver. 12, and *have dominion*, ver. 14), and enlisting men in their armies. Hence the exhortation is, do not offer your members as weapons with which the rule of unrighteousness may be maintained, but offer them to God in the service of righteousness.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*, vol 3 pg 70]

v 14 — “After the imperatives [commands] of vv. 11-13, this short paragraph concludes with a return to the indicative [statements of fact].... [T]hese words are to be understood as a promise that is valid for every believer at the present time: ‘sin shall certainly not be your Lord — now or ever!’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 387]

THE PROMISE OF NEW LIFE — “To put a stop to the reign of sin — to stop engaging in those sins that have too often become so habitual that we cannot imagine not doing them — is a daunting responsibility. We feel that we must fail. But Paul then reminds us of just what we have become in Jesus Christ: ‘dead to sin, alive to God.’ There has already taken place in the life of the believer a ‘change of lordship’ (Paul could hardly use the verb *kyrieuō* without thinking of the real *kyrios* of the Christian), and it is in the assurance of the continuance of this new state that the believer can go forth boldly and confidently to wage war against sin.” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 387]

NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE — “This promise is confirmed by the assurance that ‘you are not under law but under grace.’ ... Several bits of evidence suggest that Paul is thinking of ‘law’ and ‘grace’ as contrasting salvation–historical ‘powers.’ (1) The contrast between being ‘under the law’ and ‘under grace’ fits naturally into the ‘transfer of realm’ language that so characterizes Rom 5:12 – 8:39. (2) Paul has used ‘under’ (sin) in 3:9 to characterize the situation of people ‘under the power of’ sin, and the prominence of slavery imagery in Rom 6 suggests that the preposition has the same connotation here. ‘Law’ and ‘grace’ are viewed as ‘realms’ or ‘powers.’ (3) Paul’s other uses of the phrase ‘under the law’ all denote the objective situation of ‘subject to the rule of the Mosaic law.’ As in John 1:17, then, ‘law’ and ‘grace’ contrast the old age of bondage and ‘tutelage’ (cf. Gal 3:25) with the new age of freedom and ‘sonship’ (cf. Gal 4:1-7; Rom 8:14-17). ***‘Under law,’ then, is another way of characterizing ‘the old realm.’ This explains why Paul can make release from the law a reason for the Christian’s freedom from the power of sin: as he has repeatedly stated, the Mosaic law has had a definite sin-producing and sin-intensifying function: it has brought ‘knowledge of sin’ (3:20), ‘wrath’ (4:15), ‘transgression’ (5:13-14), and an increase in the severity of sin (5:20). The law, as Paul puts it in 1 Cor 15:56, is ‘the power of sin.’ This means, however, that there can be no final liberation from the power of sin without a corresponding liberation from the power and lordship of the law. To be ‘under the law’ is to be subject to the constraining and sin-strengthening regime of the old age; to be ‘under grace’ is to be subject to the new age in which freedom from the power of sin is available.*** The contrast of ‘grace’ and ‘law’ here picks up their juxtaposition in the last passage where they were both mentioned together: 5:20-21. Since this text stimulates Paul’s teaching in 6:1-14, it is not at all surprising that he returns to this issue at its end. ***The paragraph that began with the question ‘Should we remain in sin in order that grace may increase?’ ends with the glad tidings that we are under grace in order that sin may be overcome.***

“Three caveats are, however, necessary.

“(1) ***The nature of Paul’s salvation–historical scheme is such that, as we have seen, a neat transfer into straightforward temporal categories is impossible.*** People before the coming of Christ, while still ‘bound’ to the law, could nevertheless escape its condemning power (e.g., Abraham, David — chap 4). Moreover, people after the coming of Christ can still be subject to its rule. While, then, it is fair to speak of all of Israel between Moses and Christ as being ‘under the law’ (cf. especially Gal 3-4) — insofar as it was the ‘ruling’ authority of that ‘dispensation’ — we must at the same time recognize that people during that time could escape the condemnatory ‘rule’ of that law by faith in the God who had made promises to Abraham.

“(2) ***We must be careful to distinguish the Mosaic law from the other ‘powers’ of the old age in one vital respect; unlike sin, the flesh, and death, the law is not an intrinsically negative force,*** as Paul will explain at length in chap. 7.

“(3) Finally, we must respect the degree to which Paul is here thinking of the Mosaic law as a *system* or *body*. Therefore, while there is no doubt that release from the commanding force of the Mosaic law is included in not being ‘under law’ — for this is Paul’s usual focus with *nomos* [law]; and cf. 1 Cor 9:20 — we must be careful about drawing conclusions from this that would be too sweeping. We are justified in considering the Christian to be free from the commandments of the Mosaic law insofar as they are part of that system, and perhaps in the sense that whatever commandments are applicable to us come with a new empowering through the ‘indicative’ of God’s grace in Christ. ***But we cannot conclude from this verse that the believer has no obligation to any of the individual commandments of that law — insofar, we may say, as they may be isolated from the ‘system.’ Still less does this verse allow the conclusion that Christians are no longer subject to ‘law’ or ‘commandments’ at all — for nomos here means Mosaic law, not ‘law’ as such.***” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 387, 389f]

“In the second epistle to Timothy, first chapter, and ninth verse, are these words — ‘Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.’ Now, here is a touchstone by which we may try our calling. It is ‘an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.’ This calling forbids all trust in our own doings, and conducts us to Christ alone for

salvation, but it afterwards purges us from dead works to serve the living and true God. As He that hath called you is holy, so must you be holy. If you are living in sin, you are not called, but if you are truly Christ's, you can say, 'Nothing pains me so much as sin; I desire to be rid of it; Lord, help me to be holy.' Is this the panting of thy heart? Is this the tenor of thy life towards God, and His divine will? Again, in Philippians, 3:13, 14, we are told of 'The high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Is then your calling a high calling? Has it ennobled your heart, and set it upon heavenly things? Has it elevated your hopes, your tastes, your desires? Has it upraised the constant tenor of your life, so that you spend it with God and for God? Another test we find in Hebrews 3:1 — 'Partakers of the heavenly calling.' Heavenly calling means a call from heaven. If man alone call thee, thou art uncalled. Is thy calling of God? Is it a call to heaven as well as from heaven? Unless thou art a stranger here, and heaven thy home, thou hast not been called with a heavenly calling; for those who have been so called, declare that they look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and they themselves are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. Is thy calling thus holy, high, heavenly? Then, beloved, thou hast been called of God, for such is the calling wherewith God doth call His people." [Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*, pg 571]

The LORD's Free Men

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" — Romans 6:14

Sin will reign if it can: it cannot be satisfied with any place below the throne of the heart. We sometimes fear that it will conquer us, and then we cry unto the LORD, "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me." This is His comforting answer: "Sin shall not have dominion over you." It may assail you and even wound you, but it shall never establish sovereignty over you.

If we were under the law, our sin would gather strength and hold us under its power; for it is the punishment of sin that a man comes under the power of sin. As we are under the covenant of grace, we are secured against departing from the living God by the sure declaration of the covenant. Grace is promised to us by which we are restored from our wanderings, cleansed from our impurities, and set free from the chains of habit.

We must lie down in despair and be "content to serve the Egyptians" if we were still as slaves working for eternal life; but since we are the LORD's free men, we take courage to fight with [our] temptations, being assured that sin shall never bring us under its sway again. God Himself giveth us the victory through our LORD Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.
[Spurgeon, *Faith's Checkbook*]