

## “The Rise of the Living Dead” (Romans 6:1–14)

There is an old story of a rabbi in a Russian city. Disappointed by a lack of direction and purpose, he wandered out into a chilly evening. With his hands thrust deep into his pockets, he aimlessly walked through the empty streets questioning his faith in God, the Scriptures, and his calling to ministry. The only thing colder than the Russian winter air was the chill within his soul. He was so enshrouded by his own despair that he mistakenly wandered into a Russian compound, off limits to any civilian.

As he did, the silence of the evening chill was shattered by the bark of a Russian soldier. “Who are you and what are you doing here?” he yelled. “Excuse me?” replied the rabbi. I said, “Who are you and what are you doing here?” After a brief moment, the rabbi, in a gracious tone so as to not provoke any further anger from the soldier, said, “How much do you get paid every day?” “What does that have to do with you?” the soldier retorted. The rabbi replied with a tone of discovery, “I will pay the equal sum if you will ask me those same two questions every day: ‘Who are you?’ and, ‘what are you doing here?’”<sup>1</sup>

Let me be that Russian soldier to you as I ask you those same two questions: “Who are you?” and, “What are you doing here?” In other words, how do you view yourself? Do you see yourself primarily as a sinner or a saint? Are you a victim of the world, the flesh, and the devil, or are you victorious through Christ? What is your purpose in this life? Are you here to make a living or to experience true life? The answers to these questions and more are found in Rom 6:1–14. Paul will argue that *right thinking and right responding result in right living*. These fourteen verses primarily focus on *why* we should obey Christ.<sup>2</sup> If this passage is understood and applied, it has the potential to transform our lives as we discover new confidence, purpose, and power. Paul shares two tips that will lead to transformed living from the inside out.

**1. Know your identity in Christ (6:1–10).**<sup>3</sup> Paul emphasizes the importance of knowing certain truths. The implication is: Only the believer who knows, grows. Here the solution to sin and disobedience is to “know” that we have died with Christ (6:3, 6, 9). Paul begins 6:1 by saying, “**What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?**” Paul anticipates a misunderstanding. He expects an objector might say, “Let’s sin more so that God can display more grace and get more glory” (cf. 5:20).<sup>5</sup> The assumption is the more I sin the more grace I will receive. We could call this preposterous mentality, “Grace Gone Wild!”<sup>6</sup> Yet significantly, Paul does not retract his emphasis on grace. He does not deny what he has been teaching. He does not correct, modify, or soften what he said in Romans 1–5. He simply proceeds to demonstrate the absurdity of the objection.<sup>7</sup>

In 6:2 Paul responds with: “**May it never be! How shall we who died<sup>9</sup> to sin<sup>10</sup> still live in it?**”<sup>11</sup> Paul is aghast! He exclaims, “May it never be!” or “God forbid!” “Away with the notion!” “Perish the thought!”<sup>12</sup> The answer is as obvious as whether or not one should kick a sleeping baby.<sup>13</sup> Of course not! This notion was absolutely unimaginable to Paul and should be to us as well.<sup>14</sup> After all, we have “died” to sin. Note the tense: We *died* to sin. That’s a past tense. It refers to something that has already happened, not to something that needs to happen. Paul could have penned a present or future tense verb. He also could have made use of an imperative or an exhortation. Instead, he chose a simple past tense—“died to sin.” It is a past event, an accomplished fact. Paul is making the point that what happened to Jesus happened to us! So, I ask you, “Who are you?” You are a man or woman who has died to sin! The moment you believed in Christ, you died to sin. But please notice, Paul does not say that sin is dead to you; he only says that you died to sin. This does not mean that Christians *cannot* continue in sin. It means that Christians *should not* continue in sin. It is not impossible to continue in sin; it is unthinkable to continue in sin.<sup>15</sup> If you’ve received the free gift of eternal life, your aim ought to be to express gratitude to God for the sacrifice of His Son. *Right thinking and right responding result in right living*. People with a defective view of grace assume that those who have experienced God’s forgiveness would

still prefer to live in sin rather than live in obedience to God.<sup>16</sup> While it's true that we are free to live in sin, why would we want to? For you and me to choose to sin makes about as much sense as choosing to crawl into a grave while we are still alive. For us to get wrapped up in immorality, greed, gossip, and bitterness is about as logical as Lazarus (Jesus' friend in John 11) choosing to clothe himself again with those foul-smelling grave clothes. We can do it, but why would we ever want to?<sup>17</sup> Anyone who says, "Now that I'm saved, I'm free to sin" has totally misunderstood his or her new identity in Christ.<sup>18</sup> As my former professor, David Needham, used to say, "When a Christian sins he or she is temporarily insane!"

Before moving on, it is worth noting that a typical response to a clear presentation of the gospel is the objection of 6:1.<sup>19</sup> Let's face it: Grace is risky business. If you present the free gift of God's grace clearly and simply, some people will assume that one can take advantage of salvation. Of course, we know this to be true. However, what we may not recognize is if the gospel that we share isn't capable of this misunderstanding—we're not preaching the gospel of the New Testament. When you share the good news, please make sure it is good news that appears too good to be true.

In 6:3–5, Paul expounds on the significance of the death motif. He writes: **"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk<sup>20</sup> in newness of life. For if we have become<sup>21</sup> united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection."**<sup>22</sup> Paul begins this subsection with the phrase "do you not know" (6:3a). He assumes that his readers should be familiar with what he is about to say about baptism (6:3–4). So, is Paul referring to Spirit baptism or water baptism?<sup>23</sup> The answer is, "Yes!" He is referring to both.<sup>24</sup> At the moment of conversion, the Holy Spirit baptizes the believer into Christ.<sup>25</sup> In other words, when Jesus died, you died. When Jesus was buried, you were buried. And when Jesus rose from the dead, you rose from the dead. God took what happened to Christ 2000 years ago, brought it forward, and applied it to your experience when you got saved. This is the principle of identification or "baptism."

I don't typically drink my coffee black. I guess I'm not a manly man. I like to add some fufu creamer. Perhaps you add cream and sugar. In either case, you no doubt understand that once you add sugar and cream to coffee, the individual parts can't be separated.<sup>26</sup> You've identified your coffee with these elements. Similarly, when you placed your faith in Christ, you were inseparably identified with Him. This is one of the greatest arguments for eternal security. In a moment of time, when you believed in Christ, you received your R.I.B.S. You were Regenerated, Indwelt, Baptized, and Sealed by the Holy Spirit. Christ's work in conversion ensures that a true believer can't lose salvation.

While Spirit baptism is in view, there is also great relevance to water baptism in these verses. In Paul's day baptism was part and parcel of being a Christian. There was no thought of an unbaptized Christian. A believer was expected to be water baptized. Consequently, in some sense whenever "baptism" was mentioned in the New Testament, water baptism was either in the foreground or background. That is, when baptism was mentioned in the first century, the original readers would naturally think of water baptism. Baptism was one's introduction or initiation into the Christian church (see Acts 2:40–41). Like Spirit baptism, water baptism serves to symbolize and illustrate the believer's identification with Christ. One is internal, the other is external. Here, in Rom 6:3–4, Paul provides the best explanation of believer's baptism via the mode of immersion in the entire New Testament.<sup>27</sup> These words visibly detail what happened invisibly when we were converted. If you have been Spirit baptized but you haven't been water baptized, will you publicly identify with Christ today? Don't postpone this incredibly important decision. It is the first act of discipleship (Matt 29:19). Believe in Christ and then be baptized.

In 6:4 Paul also states that we have been buried and resurrected with Christ. The purpose of our identification with Christ is “so we too might walk in newness of life.” The word translated “newness” (*kainotes*) means “extraordinary, astonishing, that which is supernatural.”<sup>28</sup> Sadly, most Christians live subpar lives. There is often nothing that we do that cannot be attributed to our efforts. This will not do! When people observe you at home, school, work, or church, they should say, “Wow, now there’s an incredible man or woman!” Is there anything in your life that would indicate that you are living a supernatural life? If not, why not? Paul says, “Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” So, what’s holding you back? What is keeping you from supernatural living? As a Christian, you’re not called to be ordinary; you’re called to be extraordinary because of who your God is!

Paul continues his argument in 6:5. Since we have been “united” with Christ in His death, Paul insists that we shall be like Him in His resurrection. This is the only place in the New Testament where this word “united” (*sumphutos*) is used. It means “to grow together.”<sup>29</sup> The Christian is “grown or fused together” with the likeness of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Scholars argue whether this is a reference to a present spiritual resurrection or our future bodily resurrection. It is not either/or; it is both.<sup>30</sup> Our resurrection life in the present ought to anticipate our future bodily resurrection.<sup>31</sup> It is a linear progression. You must know who you are in Christ and let His power enable you to live a resurrected life in the here and now and then and there. *Right thinking and right responding result in right living.*

Now in 6:6–7, Paul further develops the significance of dying with Christ. He puts it like this: **“knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with,<sup>32</sup> so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;<sup>33</sup> for he who has died is freed from sin.”** Paul tells us that we must “know” that our “old self” was crucified with Christ.<sup>34</sup> Please note this is not an imperative but an indicative. It is nothing we are to do, but rather is a fact to be believed. In 6:6, Paul alludes to two phrases that explain our sinful status. (1) The “old self” refers to everything that I was in Adam. The “old self” was crucified with Christ. Hence, every morning you ought to hold a private funeral service. When you get up you should look in the mirror and declare, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20a). Remember, *right thinking and right responding result in right living.* (2) The “body of sin” is the physical, unredeemed body (i.e., “the flesh”). Paul is not saying that the body is sinful. Rather, he is speaking of the sin principle<sup>35</sup> that expresses itself through the body. This body of sin was not crucified; it was made of no effect.<sup>36</sup>

But maybe you are saying, “I don’t know what Paul is talking about; my body of sin is far from powerless. If my old self was nailed to the cross and my body of sin is made of no effect, how come it seems he is still alive and kicking?” Our family likes milk so we go through one-gallon milk jugs regularly. I am usually the one responsible for rinsing these milk jugs out. Yet, regardless of how well I attempt to rinse them, they still stink a bit. Even when I think I have gotten rid of the stench, I can still smell the old milk! We are like this. Even though our “old self” has been emptied (“crucified”) and we have been made clean through the work of Christ, we still have a sinful residue (“the body of sin”/“flesh”) that will not leave us until we receive a glorified body.

Think of it this way. Your old self was so contaminated by sin that it still pervades your body so much that it reacts almost like a reflex. Even though your old self was crucified, it still reacts to sin as though it is alive. Any mortician will tell you that cadavers can do very interesting things. For example, a dead person’s hair and nails continue to grow for a period of time. Cadavers can also quiver on the table. There have even been accounts of cadavers catapulting off the table due to a muscular nerve reaction. (If I was in the room, there would be two dead people!) But these occasions never bother morticians because they realize that even when the cadaver acts alive, it is dead!<sup>37</sup>

Paul explains what he has said in 6:6b. This verse serves as a parenthetical statement (see NET). We are no longer enslaved to sin, **“for he who has died is freed from sin.”** The word translated “freed” (*dikaioo*) here is the same word translated “justified” throughout Romans. In this context, though, the word means even more than “freed.” It is a legal word that could be literally translated “righteously released.”<sup>38</sup> You no longer have to sin. Once you were shackled to sin, but now you’ve been set free! Jesus said it best: “So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). You can live a radically new life. *Right thinking and right responding result in right living.*

In 6:8–10 Paul moves from his emphasis on dying with Christ (6:3–4a, 6–7) to living with Christ. **“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.”** In this section Paul is saying that our death in Christ has resulted in life in Christ. Although Paul uses the future tense in 6:8 (“we shall also live with Him”), he is not primarily referring to our future bodily resurrection. The context of this passage is living a resurrected life in the present. Hence, he exhorts us to “believe” and “know” that our death took place in Christ. Despite our feelings, regardless of how discouraged or defeated we may feel, we are to place our confidence in God’s Word and accept it as true. As we do, we can live a resurrected life and look forward with anticipation to our future resurrection.

[The first tip to transformed living is: Know your identity in Christ. The second tip is . . .]

**2. Apply your identity in Christ (6:11–14).** Paul now explains how to put action to our knowledge. He basically says “become what you are in the process of becoming.”<sup>39</sup> In 6:11 Paul writes, **“Even so [you<sup>40</sup>] consider<sup>41</sup> yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”**<sup>42</sup> Here in 6:11 Paul issues his first command in Romans 6. The word translated “consider” (*logizomai*) is an accounting term that means to carefully add up figures and then act on that knowledge.<sup>43</sup> This imperative is in the present tense, which means it’s a command you need to obey again and again, throughout your life, sometimes several times a day.<sup>44</sup> What, specifically, are you commanded to do? Consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God. Like a good battery, the object of “consider” has a positive as well as a negative pole: besides being dead, we are alive.<sup>45</sup> Embrace this truth. Remind yourself of who you are in Christ. It is one thing to know something factually or academically. It is quite another thing to “consider,” “count,” or “reckon” it to be true. So you need to “know” that we are identified totally with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. And you need to go the second step and “consider” or “count” it to be true. All of this is a matter of faith, because I can tell you right now, there will be times when the devil whispers to you that you are still in bondage. This is when you must know that you are a new creature in Christ and count it to be true. *Right thinking and right responding result in right living.*

Several years ago a man had his finger completely cut off. He took the severed finger, held it back in place on his hand, and started his mind working. He concentrated his thoughts and energy toward that finger, thinking positively about his injury. On his way to the hospital that finger began to heal. Usually when someone cuts a finger, not to mention cutting it off, he spews out a streak of profanity and then chides himself or whoever else was involved for being so stupid. His thinking is negative; he is convinced he is going to lose his finger. But this man thought positively and his finger began to heal. When the doctor examined the man’s hand, he could not believe the finger had been completely cut off. God created our minds with incredible potential for change, but we have to think rightly. Am I advocating positive thinking or self-esteem? No! I believe in biblical thinking and Christ-esteem.<sup>46</sup> This is the only way to implement lasting change. Always remember, *right thinking and right responding result in right living.*

In 6:12, Paul shares another command: **“Therefore<sup>47</sup> do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts.”** Although you died to sin, sin has not died and wants to reign in your body. Your

purpose for living is to live a godly life that glorifies Christ. The moment you believed in Christ, you were given everything you need to become godly and mature, but you must labor and strive to realize this goal. In this context, this means that you must put your flesh to death. You must strangle your flesh. You must starve it. You must smother it. Don't give it room to breathe. Cut off its lines of supply. Let it die from neglect. You are here to wage war on sin and grow to look more like Jesus everyday.

Ask yourself this question: Where is Satan most likely to trip me up and get me acting like the old me? Do you struggle with anger? Try to limit your time behind the wheel. Don't commute a long distance to work, if you can avoid it. You are just asking for road rage! Are you a compulsive person? Don't spend significant time at shopping malls. Limit your online shopping, or you will overspend and find yourself in debt. Do you struggle with sexual morality? Don't use a private laptop or have an iPhone with Internet access. If you do, when you're lonely and vulnerable you'll succumb to porn. Are you an overly competitive adult? Don't coach your kid's sports team. Don't try to play city league basketball or church league softball, either. You aren't sanctified enough! I don't know what your particular sin struggle is, but God doesn't want it to reign in you. He wants King Jesus to reign!

Once you know, and have considered who you are, you are ready to take the third step: present yourself to Christ. In 6:13, Paul states that if you are going to live victoriously, you need to **“present<sup>48</sup> yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”<sup>49</sup>** This presentation is not a one-time decision to give everything that we are and ever hope to be to the Lord (i.e., mind, body, plans, and goals). It is a daily decision to put the agenda of Jesus Christ above everything else in life. If (when) we violate our decision for any reason, we confess our sin and continue to pursue Christ with a sense of urgency and fervency. The word “instruments” (*hopla*) is a word used of a soldier's weapons.<sup>50</sup> You are to be a weapon that fights God's enemies. Yes, your body is God's weapon! Give it to Him today. If the only thing you can say is, “Lord, I am willing to be made willing,” then start there. Then give Him everything! Lord, I am giving you my eyes. I am not going to look at things that are inappropriate. Lord, I give you my tongue. I am not going to say things that grieve You. Lord, I give you my feet. I am not going to walk anywhere You would disapprove of. Lord, I give you my home, my salary, my future, my spouse and my career. *Right thinking and right responding result in right living.*

You can “present” yourself to God because 6:14 says, **“For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”** Surprisingly, this final verse is not an imperative: “Don't let sin be your master.” Rather, it is a statement of fact—a divine promise: “Sin shall not be master over you.” Thus, 6:14a provides the necessary encouragement and incentive to fulfill the commands of 6:11–13. Paul then goes on to say “for you are not under law but under grace” (6:14b). I was expecting Paul to write “you are not under sin,” or “you are not under death.” But he brings up the law once again because he knows our tendency to revert to legalistic obedience to please God. We generally think that if we try to keep God's law we will earn His favor. However, the truth is that we can't please God through the law. The Ten Commandments themselves make up less than 1% of the Old Testament Law. There are too many laws to keep. To try would cause our head to swim. Moreover, if we attempt to obey the law we will experience nothing but condemnation and defeat. Fortunately, Paul says that we are “under grace.” What a relief—what a breath of fresh air! Paul recognizes that grace gives us a sure position. Grace motivates and supplies power to live the Christian life like nothing else can. When we begin to think biblically, we will realize that sin shall not be master because we have been crucified with Christ and resurrected to new life. The three step process is: (1) Know, (2) Consider, and (3) Present. *Right thinking and right responding result in right living.*

Earlier this month I was teaching Romans at Moody Bible Institute—Spokane. The school was kind enough to let me use a vehicle. One day after class, I briskly walked to the car and began pressing the keyless entry. It was snowing hard and the snow found an opening in my jacket and began to fall down

my neck and back! I was anxious to get into the vehicle. But nothing worked! I was so perplexed. I assumed the battery on the remote had died. All of a sudden a friend of mine from Olympia appeared and tried to help me. He checked all of the doors and noticed that rear driver's side door was opened. So I was able to get in the car. But, lo and behold, the seat was pulled up too far. I blurted out that a Moody employee must have needed to use the car while I was in class. I then tried to start the car but it wouldn't start. I jumped out of the car praying and totally perplexed. I did not know what else to do. When I walked around the backend of the car, I noticed that the snow-covered license plate didn't say Illinois like it was supposed to; it said Washington! I then realized that I had the wrong car. It was a case of mistaken identity. This was humiliating!

Immediately, the Lord reminded me that I often live my spiritual life under the delusion of mistaken identity. I don't consciously recognize my identity in Christ, nor do I apply these truths to my life. I suspect the same is true for you. God wants you and me to know our identity in Christ and then apply our knowledge. *Right thinking and right responding result in right living.*

### **Scripture References**

Romans 6:1–14

Romans 8:12–13.

Colossians 2:11–12

Colossians 3:1–4

Titus 2:11–15

Matthew 16:24–27

John 15:1–11

### **Study Questions**

1. Is my sharing of the gospel ever misunderstood because I emphasize the freeness of God's grace (Rom 6:1–2)? Why or why not? How can I more effectively articulate grace in my sharing of the gospel? How can I avoid bringing works to bear on salvation? What is the basic reason we should abandon sin (6:2)?
2. Why do I struggle to live in obedience to Christ (Rom 6:3–5)? When have I experienced the power of sin in my life? When have I been victorious over sin? What does Jesus' resurrection mean to me (6:4, 5, 8)? How have I experienced the power of Christ's resurrection?
3. How can Paul write that we are "free from sin" (Rom 6:7)? Do I currently experience this freedom that Paul refers to? What simple action will enable and empower me to experience this reality (6:3, 6, 9)? What is the primary purpose and earthly benefit of our identification in Christ's death (6:6b)?
4. How can I implement Paul's three-pronged strategy: know, consider, and present (Rom 6:11–14) in a particular target area of my life? In what area of my life am I prone to let sin reign (6:12)? How can I ensure that the battle in this area can be won?
5. What bodily "members" should we offer to God (Rom 6:13)? How can we practically do this, both as individuals and as a church? In what sense is sin no longer my master (6:14) even though I continue to succumb to it? How can I allow grace to motivate me to godliness?

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Cordeiro, *Doing Church as a Team* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2005), 30–31.

<sup>2</sup> Moo writes, “Romans 6 is the classic biblical text on the importance of relating the ‘indicative’ of what God has done for us with the ‘imperative’ of what we are to do. 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.’” Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*. New International Commentary of the New Testament Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 390–91.

<sup>3</sup> Schreiner suggests a breakdown similar to the one I adopt: “The structure of Paul’s response in verses 2–14 should be broken into four parts: (1) verse 2, (2) verses 3–5, (3) verses 6–10, and (4) verses 11–14.” Thomas Schreiner, *Romans*. Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 298.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase, “What shall we say then?” introduces a potential false conclusion from what Paul has been saying (see also Rom 3:5; 4:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14).

<sup>5</sup> Paul rejects this very same thinking in Rom 3:8.

<sup>6</sup> See the book by this title: Robert Jeffress, *Grace Gone Wild! Getting a Grip on God’s Amazing Gift* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Sam Storms, Romans 6:1–23”: [www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article/61-23/](http://www.enjoyinggodministries.com/article/61-23/).

<sup>8</sup> This is Paul’s fourth use of the *me genoito* (“may it never be”) formula in Romans (cf. 3:4, 6, 31). He will use it again in 6:15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11.

<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, Paul uses the verb *apothnesko* (“to die”) in the very same tense when talking about Jesus’ death (see Rom 5:6, 8; 8:34; 14:9, 15). In each of these verses the same simple past tense is used. The idea is that there was a definite past action when Jesus died and when we died with Him.

<sup>10</sup> The singular “sin” (*hamartia*) is often used throughout this chapter. It seems to refer to our “sin principle” inherited from Adam (cf. Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:21–22).

<sup>11</sup> Lopez writes, “Paul suggests that to deliberately continue sinning is abhorrent and unimaginable. It is inconceivable to think grace encourages sin. Sin is never an authentic Christian experience. The fact that one can abuse grace is real (or else why pen chaps 6–8) but repugnant to Paul. Christians *should not* and *must not* sin as a pattern! This view gives the only logical reason why Paul warns against abusing grace (in 6:1) and why he commands (in 6:12) that Christians must not sin. Why say this if Christians could not repeatedly practice old habits?” René A. Lopez, *Romans Unlocked: Power to Deliver* (Springfield, MO: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Press, 2005), 125.

<sup>12</sup> Everett F. Harrison and Donald A. Hagner, “Romans” in the *Revised Expositors Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 104.

<sup>13</sup> Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 174.

<sup>14</sup> In each of Paul’s thirteen letters, we are commanded to live a radically godly life because this is the only appropriate response to the gospel (e.g., Phil 3:8–16; Col 1:28–29; 1 Tim 4:7–8; 6:11).

<sup>15</sup> John Hart, “The Letter to the Romans,” unpublished class notes (2010 ed.), Moody Bible Institute, PP slides.

<sup>16</sup> God’s grace teaches just the opposite (see Titus 2:11–12).

<sup>17</sup> Jeffress, *Grace Gone Wild!*, 36–37.

<sup>18</sup> Bruce writes: “The baptism of Christians constituted the frontier between their old unregenerate existence and their new life in Christ: it marked their death to the old order, so that for a baptized Christian to go on in sin was as preposterous as it would be for an emancipated slave to remain in bondage to his former owner (cf. Rom. 6:1–4, 15–23) or for a widow to remain subject to ‘the law of her husband.’” F. F. Bruce in *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 281–82.

<sup>19</sup> Stott rightly sees the logical implication of Paul’s gospel: “Incidentally, it is highly significant both that Paul’s critics lodged the charge of antinomianism against him, and that he took time, trouble and space to answer them, without withdrawing or even modifying his message. For this shows conclusively that he did preach the gospel of grace without works. Otherwise, if he did not teach this, the objection would never have been raised. It is the same today. If we are proclaiming Paul’s gospel, with its emphasis on the freeness of grace and the impossibility of self-salvation, we are sure to provoke the charge of antinomianism. If we do not arouse this criticism, the likelihood is that we are not preaching Paul’s gospel.” John R. W. Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News for the World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 167.

<sup>20</sup> See Paul’s other uses of *peripateo* (“to walk”) in Romans (8:4; 13:13; 14:15).

<sup>21</sup> The perfect indicative paints the picture of an event completed in the past with results that spill into the present.

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<sup>22</sup> Lopez, *Romans Unlocked*, 128–29 asserts: “The future verb tense *esometha* should not be understood as a strict-future but a logical-future (cf. 5:9–10). Paul does not refer to the eschatological resurrection of believers at Christ’s second coming. That is foreign to the context. His idea is this: Since believers, by faith in Christ, share in Christ’s death, so they also, by faith, share logically in *His resurrection*. This refers to the power believers presently possess in order to overcome the power of sin in their lives (vv 6, 11, 13).”

<sup>23</sup> While this is an important issue, Dunn notes “that baptism is not the subject of the passage.” James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1988), 308.

<sup>24</sup> The water baptism interpretation is assumed by most commentators. The following arguments support the spiritual baptism view: (1) The Holy Spirit is soon to be discussed as a significant truth for victory over sin (Rom 8). The gift of the Spirit was mentioned in 5:5. (“And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”) (2) Col 2:11–12 is a parallel to Rom 6. There the baptism is implied to be “not done with human hands.” (3) Since there is no physical death and no physical resurrection, physical baptism is not under discussion (see Hart, “The Letter to the Romans”; Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* [Peabody: MA, 1994], 861–63). Lopez, *Romans Unlocked*, 127 provides three more arguments in favor of the Spirit baptism view: “First, the context suggests not a mere ritual of water baptism or metaphorical death for believers, but a judicial participation when all were buried with Him through (*dia*) baptism into death (cf. Gal 2:20). Second, the instrumental use of *dia* (=through) makes Spirit baptism the vehicle by which believers participate in Christ’s death. Further, *baptized into Christ* finds a close parallel in 1 Cor 12:13 that speaks of being baptized by the Spirit into Christ’s body, both of which are done by the Spirit simultaneously at the point of faith in Christ (cf. Col 2:11–12). The Spirit appears in the larger context (chap 8) furnishing the practical solution acquired by a believer’s positional status at regeneration (8:9).”

<sup>25</sup> The verbs are passive in Rom 6:3–4. The expected result of salvation is sanctification. In the present context believers are baptized into Christ Jesus, or in other words, believers are identified with Christ. Water baptism is an outward symbol of our identification or union with Christ.

<sup>26</sup> Hart, “The Letter to the Romans,” 63.

<sup>27</sup> Baptizing babies for parents to dedicate them to God didn’t start until about one hundred years after the NT was written. Paul is assuming what is called “believer’s baptism,” that the only people who are baptized are those who are already believers in Jesus.

<sup>28</sup> BDAG s.v. *kainotes*: “newness,” connoting something extraordinary (citing Ignatius).

<sup>29</sup> BDAG s.v. *sumphutos*: “identified with.”

<sup>30</sup> The best explanation in support of the present resurrection view is given by Herrick: “Others argue that while Paul uses the future tense, he is describing present realities. This view has much more to commend it. First, the theme of the paragraph as announced in vv. 1-2 concerns questions about living in sin *in the present*. Second, it is noted that in v. 2, where Paul is clearly referring to our present existence, that the future “will live” is used. Third, the focus in vv. 3-4 is on the *present* reality of our walk in light of our baptism into Christ’s death. Thus it parallels v. 8. Fourth, the verb “will live with him” in v. 8 seems to parallel “has been freed” in v. 7. If the former (v.7) is a present reality, why not the latter? Fifth, Christ’s resurrection life is a present reality for Paul (vv. 4, 5, 9, 10). Since, then, we are said to “live with him” (note the *sun* [“with”] prefix on *suzesomen*), the living must take place in our *present* experience as Christians. Sixth, we have been “buried *with* Christ,” we have been “united *with* Christ,” and our old man has been “crucified *with* Christ.” It is likely, since these refer to past events with present implications, that when Paul uses another *sun* verb, namely, *suzesomen*, that he is referring to a past event with present implications, i.e., our enjoyment of resurrection life from the moment of conversion. Seventh, the imperatives of vv. 12-14, especially presenting ourselves to God *alive*, imply current participation with Christ in his resurrection (cf. the “so you too” in v. 11). This is further confirmed by the “in Christ” language of v. 11. Eighth, Paul clearly taught elsewhere present union with the Lord in his resurrection life (cf. Eph 2:5–6). See Greg Herrick, “Study and Exposition of Romans 6:1-14: [www.bible.org/seriespage/study-and-exposition-romans-61-14](http://www.bible.org/seriespage/study-and-exposition-romans-61-14).”

<sup>31</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*. The IVP NT Commentary series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 153.

<sup>32</sup> Stott, *Romans*, 176 explains: “The verb *katargeō* has a wide range of meanings from ‘nullify’ to ‘abolish’. Since it is used in this verse of our sinful nature, and in Hebrews 2:14 of the devil, and since both are alive and active, it cannot here mean ‘eliminate’ or ‘eradicate’. It must mean rather that our selfish nature has been defeated, disabled and deprived of power.”

<sup>33</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 375 puts it well: “What we *were* “in Adam” is no more; but, until heaven, the temptation to *live* in Adam always remains.”

<sup>34</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 298 suggests that Rom 6:6 opens a new section and reverts back to the theme of 6:2 by

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emphasizing the death of the old person.

<sup>35</sup> I prefer to use the expression “sin principle” rather than “sin nature,” “sinful nature,” or “old nature.” See Henry Holloman, *The Forgotten Blessing* (Nashville: Word, 1999), 44.

<sup>36</sup> The body of flesh was not “done away with.” *Contra* NASB, NIV, NKJV.

<sup>37</sup> Evans, *Returning to Your First Love*, 192.

<sup>38</sup> BDAG s.v. *dikaioo* 3: “. . . to cause someone to be released from personal or institutional claims that are no longer to be considered pertinent or valid.”

<sup>39</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 380; Schreiner, *Romans*, 321; Osborne, *Romans*, 155.

<sup>40</sup> The Greek pronoun *humeis* (“you”) is emphatic. E.g., “So you [*humeis*] too consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (NET). All the major English versions translate this verse similarly, but the NASB doesn’t note the emphatic use of *humeis*.

<sup>41</sup> Most English versions translate as “consider” (e.g., NASB, NET, ESV, HCSB, NRSV, NLT). However, the NIV opts for “count” and the KJV/NKJV prefers “reckon.”

<sup>42</sup> Schreiner, *Romans*, 299 points out that some scholars have separated Rom 6:11 from 6:12–14, presumably because of the conjunction *oun* (“therefore”) in 6:12. But *houtos* in 6:11 does not merely have a comparative sense (“just as”) but in this context is also inferential (“therefore”).

<sup>43</sup> *Logizomai* is one of the most important words in Romans. If one does not know what it means he or she will not understand Romans. Paul’s nineteen uses of *logizomai* in Romans are worthy of careful study (2:26; 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24; 6:11; 8:18, 36; 9:8; 14:14). Schreiner, *Romans*, 321 argues that *logizomai* is equivalent to the verb *krinein* (“judge”) in some contexts as suggested by its usage elsewhere (e.g., Rom 2:3; 14:14; 1 Cor 4:1).

<sup>44</sup> Stott, *Romans*, 180 puts it like this: “We are to recall, to ponder, to grasp, to register these truths until they are so integral to our mindset that a return to the old life is unthinkable.”

<sup>45</sup> Earl D. Radmacher, *Salvation* (Nashville: Word, 2000), 68–69.

<sup>46</sup> See Don Matzat, *Christ Esteem: Where the Search for Self-Esteem Ends* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1990).

<sup>47</sup> Paul now transitions to the practical application of the theological truths taught Rom 6:1–11. Lopez, *Romans Unlocked*, 133–34 highlights the chiasmic structure of the commands in these verses: “Having established in v 11 that Christians undergo a death to life transference upon believing, Paul exhorts believers in vv 12–14 to live resurrection-lives by working. Verses 12–14 form a chiasmic structure *a-b-c-b-a*. The imperative phrase of v 12 (*a*) ‘do not let sin reign’ matches the indicative phrase of v 14 (*a*) ‘sin shall not have dominion.’ Also the imperative phrase in v 13 (*b*) ‘do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin,’ is balanced by the implied imperatival phrase of v 13 (*b*) ‘[present] your members as instruments of righteousness to God.’ But Paul’s central thought is developed by the imperatival phrase in v 13 (*c*) ‘present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead.’”

<sup>48</sup> Paul also uses *paristemi* (“to present”) in Romans 6:16, 19 [twice]; 12:1; 14:10; 16:2.

<sup>49</sup> Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 387 applies this truth: “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 *kyrieos* 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.”

<sup>50</sup> Elsewhere in Paul *hopla* has the narrower sense of weaponry and this may well be the nuance here as well. If so, he would be signifying spiritual conflict (see Rom 13:12; 2 Co 6:7; 10:4; cf. John 18:3). Yet, BDAG s.v. *hopla* still defines the term in Rom 6:13 as “any instrument one uses to prepare or make ready, *tool*.”