

Soteriology
Lesson 20
Sanctification Part Two

By
Dr. David Hocking

Brought to you by
[The Blue Letter Bible Institute](http://www.blbi.org)
<http://www.blbi.org>

A ministry of
The Blue Letter Bible
<http://www.blueletterbible.org>

All of the ideas and principles conveyed by the instructor in this course
are not necessarily held by the Blue Letter Bible ministry

Sanctification shows up in three ways: past, present, and future. In the past, it is sanctification or separation from what?—the penalty of sin. Present sanctification is separation from the power of sin, and future sanctification from the presence of sin.

1) Past Sanctification: separation from the penalty of sin

2) Present Sanctification: separation from the power of sin

3) Future Sanctification: separation from the presence of sin

Does the Bible teach that sanctification can occur apart from the work of Jesus Christ on the cross? Some might even call it a tricky question. There certainly is past sanctification that's rooted in the cross. The question is, is present and future sanctification rooted in the cross? And the answer to that is, yes, it is.

Part of the frustration of trying to experience holiness or a measure of purity and walking with God in this life is that we sometimes use the wrong means or method by which we do that. And as a result we get frustrated in the attempt, and we're going to talk about that.

The second question was: Does the Bible teach that believers can become holy or sanctified by human performance or merit? Here again, kind of a tricky question in that 2 Corinthians 7:1 says we can “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.” But the question is—how? And it really will drift you back into question number one again.

Is sanctification ever described as a process? The answer is, yes, it is. Most of the verses however, that people use are describing past sanctification. So there is some confusion there and that results in confusion in our personal life as to how we walk with God.

Well, why should we be holy? Because God is holy! 1 Peter 1:15-16, “Be ye holy for I am holy.” It is our ability to fellowship with God, to certainly obey Him and acknowledge who He is in light of who we are.

Well, how does one become cleansed from sinful attitudes and actions? That's what we're going to talk about today. And if we are forgiven, are we also holy or sanctified? Of course we are, at least at that point.

What do holiness, sanctification, and purity mean in terms of our walk with the Lord, as believers? And that's what we're going to talk about today also.

Take your Bibles, Romans chapter six. Now as we argued in our discussion about justification or righteousness, the theme of Romans is justification by faith. First of all, the word righteous and the word faith are the most frequent words in terms of main words that are used in the Book of Romans. Probably the theme is stated for us in the book of Romans 1:17 that "the just shall live by faith," quoting from Habakkuk 2:4.

In Romans, as we explained to you previously, there are some natural breaks, some obvious ones. The end of chapter 3:20 moving into 3:21, there's a break there from talking about why we were condemned to how we can become righteous. And many believe that there is a break immediately after chapter 5:21, as you go into chapter six. Starting with chapter six, you have a form of teaching that is very Jewish, very rabbinical. A teacher who is teaching students would say, after discussing something for a little bit, he would say, "What do you say to those things I've just said?" And the students would be giving an answer that would represent that they understood what the teacher said. If you notice in Romans 6:1, it starts out, "What shall we say then." That's a catechism type, rabbinical type teaching. What shall you say then? To what—to the fact that all men are condemned and all men have been declared righteous before God. Now what do you say to that? But, it's more than that. It's a specific.

Look at the end of Romans 5:20. It says,

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, [that's where it leads by its control of your life], even so might grace reign [meaning controlling your life] through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Well, what shall we say then? To understand what he's referring to, you've got to read the next question. And remember that Jews asked question after question, as we explained to you, they just keep asking questions. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Now you know that the specific context that brought forth this question was Romans 5:20, when he said, "Where sin abounds [where you've got a lot of it], grace will much more abound." I mean, no sin can put you outside the realm of God's wonderful grace. No failure, no bombing out, no bad habits, nothing that is the opposite of what God wants in your life (sanctification) is beyond the ability of God's grace to solve. The devil loves to defeat you by your mistakes and your sins and your attitudes and the fantasies of your mind and the things you are involved with that you think nobody else knows. The devil loves to take that and work on you, that you couldn't possibly be what you say you are on the basis of all this.

So, there's a struggle in all of us between our faith in Christ that gives us eternal life and forgiveness, justified, sanctified—there's a conflict, a struggle between that and the way we are. Most of us at one time or another realize that what I want to do for the Lord I don't wind up doing. And what I'm really trying to avoid and not do, I wind up doing. What a frustration! And Paul's going to speak about that here. So many of us believe that the issue of sanctification as it relates to not only being free from the penalty of sin, but being free from the power of sin is exactly what is being discussed in chapters six and seven of Romans.

It is interesting in chapter six, the key word in that chapter is sin. If you just went through the text and underline sin and then compare it with chapters seven and eight, you notice that it's overwhelming. Sin is the theme of chapter six.

When you come to chapter seven, it's obvious the key word is a personal pronoun, I or my or mine in its many forms. First person personal pronoun dominates chapter seven. You could just underline all of those.

When you come to chapter eight, you do not see the prevalence of either one of those, but the key word now is the word spirit, which dominates chapter eight. And almost in that simple observation you have some answers coming to your mind and heart. Sin, self, spirit. There's your little outline of chapters six, seven and eight. Sin needs to be dealt with, understood why it's controlling you, why you can't seem to get victory over it. Self is the major problem as to why you can't get victory over sin, and spirit as the only real answer to the problem that you and I have, the struggle in our lives. So it's kind of a simple but powerful way of looking at these three chapters.

Now in Romans 6:1-2 we certainly know that we shouldn't go out and sin up a storm just so God could show how much grace He has. We're not trying to test the forgiveness of the Lord and that's why he answers, "God forbid!" or "Certainly not!" That's not the point. But notice another question comes, this is very Jewish through here. "What shall we say? Shall we continue in sin? Well, how can we that are dead to sin live any longer?" Another question: Don't you know that...and da, da, da, da, da? It's a typical Jewish conversation going on here.

Now let's take a look at the question in Romans 6:2 it says, "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Interesting, the first part of that is past sanctification. The penalty of sin has been paid for therefore you are dead to sin. But present sanctification is a part of the second half of the question. How can we who are dead to sin—if you've had past sanctification, how can you live any longer therein? Why do you continue to sin? It's a very fundamental question.

By the way, the writer is assuming that all of us do continue to sin. John wrote in 1 John 1:8, "If you say you have no sin, you deceive yourself because the word is not in you." In 1 John 1:10 he says, "If you say you have not sinned." One is the nature of sin. The other is the act of it.

One is dealing with your depravity, your flesh and the other one dealing with what you do. And he said, “If you say you have not sinned, you make Him a liar.”

So obviously, we all sin. I don't think we need to spend any time here convincing you of it. Although there're a lot of people who grow up in religious systems who believe they really don't sin very much. Things like this, “He's a good person.” Well, doctrinally he's not a good person, but you don't say that. “He's such a good person.” Well, actually he's not. Maybe he, by his own flesh has had the ability to control outwardly the manifestation (of sin) and so in your presence he is a “good person.” He sends cards. He gives gifts. He's very nice person. And you don't know the rottenness that is in his heart.

See, man is not innately good. He's innately evil, but takes provocation to bring it out. Provoking it, a situation, a crisis that he can't handle. It's like a guy who seems so controlled and all of a sudden somebody tells you, “Boy that guy's got a temper.” And you think, “What? I have never seen that in my life!” But see he only blows up in private. He has the ability to control it in public. We all know this. There are people who can sit in public and lie and people actually believe they are telling the truth. In the current morality of the legal profession they actually believe that a lawyer is to argue his case in behalf of the client regardless of whether they are guilty or not. That's law! And if you don't perform that function, you can be disbarred. That's how bad it is. Even though you know they may be guilty, if they've asked you to defend them, then it's your job to get them off the hook.

Isn't it a crazy world? It's not justice as many people have well said. It's not justice that we receive. This is law. And God never wanted law and justice to be separated. But it has been in our society. So you can go to law and have nothing to do with justice. The ultimate issue is who's paying for what—especially lawyer fees.

So this is a part of the problem we're in. So then, relating that to the Bible we get a little confused sometimes. Should we continue in sin? Well, of course not! I mean, how can you if

you're dead to sin, sin's penalty cannot be exercised against you, then how in the world could you live any longer in sin? That's a good question.

Now the truth is you can. And we're going to see that. So it doesn't do any good to act like you don't have sin. The text is assuming that every one of us has a sin problem. What is the number one meaning of sanctification? It means to set apart—to set apart from what primarily?—from sin to God. Okay. An item can be set apart to God for Him to use, but the item might be amoral. It's not sinful. In relation to sanctification in our life, we're talking about set apart from sin unto God. You turn to God (cf. 1Thessalonians 1:9) from idols to serve the living and true God. So that whole issue is brought out many, many different ways in the Bible. So we're talking about sin here.

Now, if we do sin then how are we separated from sin? That's why a lot of Christians just say what it means is when you accept Christ, it's basically (referring to) the penalty. You know, you won't go to hell because you accepted Jesus, but you still are going to have a very severe sin problem. Many churches enter that scene and say, "Well we need to help people. So we're going to develop the *more syndrome*." And so we will hear our preacher say, "If you really prayed more you could lick (overcome) this problem. If you really read the Bible a lot more, you wouldn't have this sin problem. If you witness a lot more, if you attended church a lot more instead of hanging out where you are, you would lick this problem." Then people attend church, read their Bibles more, pray more, witness more, do everything the church asked them to do and wind up still sinning.

Here's another one. "Well, if you confess your sins He'll forgive you." I don't know about you, but I have found out by confessing my sins, (which I readily do) I know I'm saved because I readily admit it. You know if you ask me, "Are you a sinner?" Absolutely! So am I now sanctified? It is frustrating, isn't it? You know, and then there're the people who come along who say, "You need a second work of God's grace." I just want to clear something up for you folks. You need a lot more than two works. I need third, fourth, ten thousand, twenty thousand. I need

lots of them. Do you understand? People aren't really transparent about this issue. So let's begin by admitting the fact, we sin. As a matter of fact, it's our natural tendency. We sin easier than not sin. You say, "Oh no. I've been really good all day." Wait a minute, all it takes is a little provocation. You know, I mean, it's like you can lose in a minute of time.

So what do we do about it? On your notes somewhere I want you to write four words:

1) **Know** 2) **Reckon** 3) **Submit** 4) **Obey**

Now we're going to describe them all. But there are four words that are essential to understanding present sanctification. The first word is the word *know*, K-N-O-W. Knowledge. First word is *know*. Number two, the second word is *reckon* or count or calculate, if you like that. Third word is *yield*. Yield or submit however you want to write that down. And number four is *obey*.

Now let's back up and take a look at this in the context of Romans. If you're not careful, if you make up your own endings to all those four words, you may miss what he's saying. Important thing is what does he mean by submit? What does he mean by obey? What does he mean by count? What does he mean by know?

According to the Bible there are three things that we are to know. You can see them in your Bible easily. Look at Romans 6:3. What's the first word? Know. Look at verse six. What's the first word?—knowing this. Look at verse nine, *knowing*. All right now what are these three things that we're to know? Verse three, verse six, and verse nine?

First of all, he said, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His [what?] death." You know, I really like water baptisms. There're a lot about them that I like. I like doing them down at the ocean like we do...a lot of neat things happen. Many times you wind up leading people to Christ. I asked this one guy he was in line, he came out and I said, "Well, why are you here?" He said, "Well my girlfriend told me to do this." He didn't know the Lord at all and he didn't want to. So I didn't baptize him. Three months later he got saved and I did baptize him. And he stood in line waiting for me. I said, "Why are you coming out here now? He said, "I've been born again, washed in the blood of Jesus, I've confessed

Jesus as my Savior.” That’s good enough for me. But you know, a lot of people haven’t been told much about baptism.

There are denominations that really emphasize this, especially those who believe you need to be baptized in order to be saved. And a lot of us recoil against that, but at the same time ask yourself what we really know about baptism. And here, according to Paul is something we need to know. Baptism certainly is illustrating a spiritual baptism.

Now one that might immediately come to your mind, of course, is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But the baptism of the Holy Spirit really has two phases to it. We were baptized into the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:13, which is illustrated by water baptism. But there is also the baptism *upon* us, speaking of the Holy Spirit’s power that may be at a later time. You’re not baptized in water at that point. You’re baptized in water to illustrate that you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. He’s by His divine life made us all one.

When we’re baptized, what is being pictured? That’s an interesting thing. What does the water represent? What do we represent? Turn to 1Peter 3:18-19 it says,

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened [made alive] by the Spirit:

19 By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20 Which sometime these spirits were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.

Apparently these deal with that whole first civilization. It could have been billions of people, at least millions, that in 1,676 years of bearing sons and daughters we have a multiplication that is unheard of in the history of the world. But they all perished except for eight people. “They were disobedient when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.”

From the context, it was presumably 120 years at least. “While the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by or through water.” Now, were those eight people saved by getting into the water? No. What did they get in to? The ark. But the ark was in the water. The end of 1 Peter 3:20, the word water has to be the flood water. Now what happened to everything in the flood water? It died. So the flood water is a picture of death. Were they baptized? Yes, they were, into death by the flood water.

Look at the next one, 1 Peter 3:21. “The like figure”...the Greek word, I’m just going to say it in English, it’s the word antitype. A-N-T-I-T-Y-P-E. Now let’s stop and think of that for a minute. Two words, anti sometimes means against in English today if you’re anti something. But in the Greek means 'in the stead of'; now here we have in the stead of a type. Would the floodwater be a type of the waters of baptism? Yes it would be, but it’s called an antitype, instead of the type. There’s another meaning. Now, I don’t make this up, it’s just the grammar. It’s the word that’s used. There’s something else here besides the fact that everything dies in the floodwater. Waters of baptism also a picture of death, which it is, but there’s something else. So let’s keep reading, “The antitype whereunto even baptism [like this floodwater] doth also now save us.”

If baptism of water saves us like the floodwater saved us, do you understand we have a problem because everything in the floodwater died! The waters of baptism do not save you to everlasting life. They save you like the floodwater did because what you are in that baptismal water is what they were in that ark, in that floodwater. In other words, the ark probably is a better picture or symbol of the Lord Jesus Himself. You are in Christ, while you are in the baptismal water. Otherwise don’t get baptized, it’s only for believers. And while you’re going down into the water it is a picture of death but you are in Christ, praise the Lord, so it isn’t over for you. He says, to make it clear in parentheses, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh).

So the water of baptism doesn’t remove sin out of your life. Well, what is it for? It’s the answer, that’s the Greek word from which we get our word apologetic. It’s an apologetic. It’s a defense, “an answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Now I

learn that the actual means by which I am saved is the resurrection. What I'm symbolizing is death to my old life and my old man—of what the Christian life is all about until we go home to glory. Here it is, “Walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Now you know this fact because of the death and resurrection of Christ you're brand new. Your old man, what's really wrong with you was buried in those baptismal waters. “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death”—and we were—this is the gospel: Christ died and was buried.

Why do Christians, the majority of them in the world, baptize by taking a person backwards? That's an interesting question. First of all, a lot of the archaeological discovery about baptism doesn't have people going backwards at all. It has them going forward. A lot of us don't know that many times Jews, when they buried in the dirt, they'd have the person face down. Exactly the opposite of what we do today. But we do know that they did lay some of them flat like in the tombs where they're dug out of the sides. They laid the bodies flat. Like the catacombs and others.

So what we're picturing is somebody who is buried, dead and buried. And it says, “If you've been planted in the likeness of His death, then we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection” (Romans 6:5). The word resurrection literally means to stand up. And it is a beautiful thing being pictured. Now he says, this is what I want you to know, fact number two that you need to know. Romans 6:6, “Knowing this that our old man...” Now the old man is the same word as the word flesh when it refers to our depravity. The old man we're told in Ephesians (4:22) and Colossians (3:9) is corrupt according to deceitful lusts. What's really wrong with us is that we have a depravity within us that we're born with. We got it from Adam.

You can't put that into a test tube and look at it because it's not a corporeal substance. That's the problem with it. Our old man is crucified with *Him*. Him is in italics but it is intended by the word *with*. “That the body of sin...” Whatever this principle or force of sin is, whatever it is in the eyes of God, uses the word ‘body’ to represent the principle of it, the fact of it, the presence of it—whatever you want to call it. “The body of sin might be [what does it say?]”

destroyed.” Why? “That henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:6). There is present sanctification.

I don’t want to be a slave to sin. He says, “Well then you’ve got to know something, that when Jesus died, that when you believed in Him, you were baptized into Christ. You pictured what He has actually done for you. Your depravity has been crucified with Him. If you like this better, it was nailed to the cross. Isn’t that interesting?”

Let’s bring out your old fleshly putrid thing and hang it up here a little bit. Take a look at the stinking, smelly stench of your wickedness. And just take a nail and pound that up on the cross and leave it there. That’s what he said happened to you. Your old man was crucified with Him. Why? So that the body of sin, whatever that is, might be destroyed.

The word destroyed does not mean annihilated. And that’s where some Christians get mixed up. They think sin has been eradicated. No, it hasn’t. It’s very much alive. You see our old man was nailed to the cross, but sin is very much alive. You need to keep that in mind for what we’re going to see in a moment. What he’s saying is that we don’t have to serve sin because the issue of our depravity, which automatically sins, has already been crucified, been dealt with. What’s wrong with it has already been dealt with at the cross. So you don’t have to serve sin. You have a new freedom as a Christian that an unbeliever does not have. That’s why it is so disastrous to believe the devil’s lie that somehow you have to be constantly controlled by sin in your life. That’s the devil’s lie. You don’t have to be. The Bible tells you, you don’t have to. Sin does not have to reign in your mortal body. It doesn’t have to do that at all.

Now when he used the word destroyed, that’s the Greek word *kartageō*, which means to render inoperative. It does not mean annihilated. So listen carefully, the principle of sin that is its ability to control you, was rendered ineffective because Jesus died for the depravity problem. You see the only thing sin can appeal to... I’ll put it another way. The only thing Satan can bait you with in terms of sin...he can’t have much power over you if you don’t have a depravity that listens to him. If you don’t have a depravity that responds to it, if you don’t have an old sin nature

that welcomes it, then he hasn't got any power over you. That is hopeful, don't you think? Even if you are not handling it well, that is pretty good news, wouldn't you say? You don't have to be defeated by sin in your life, at all as a Christian. Now he tells us to know that.

Look at Romans 6:7, "He that is dead [dead to sin obviously and its power to control you] is freed from sin." Interestingly, the word 'freed' in the Greek text, is the word justified. The one he's been discussing for three chapters. "He who is dead to sin has been justified from sin." Boy, is that the truth! You can't go out and kill sin yourself. You can't kill yourself and its responses to sin. But if you've been justified through Christ you are already declared, because of the work of the cross, to be dead to sin's power to control you."

"Now if we be dead with Christ [and we are] we believe we shall also live with Him" (Romans 6:8). Amen? And everybody projects that into heaven. Watch carefully. Is that what he meant? He said, "If we be dead with Christ, [and we are] then we believe we shall also live with Him." Is he talking about, "Well, you're going to be miserable, excuse me, in between. I didn't really mean that you could live with Him now and enjoy your life. I mean, you're going to be stuck with this depravity until the Second Coming. But once you die, then it's glory. But you can't have any sense of glory now." He's not saying that. But the way some people talk, you'd think that were true. He's not saying that at all.

I'm not what I'm going to be. But I thank God I'm not what I was. I'm not everything He wants me to be. But I have the ability to please Him now.

You see a lot of us are trapped by the devil's strategies to defeat us. He keeps reminding us by our sinning: "Oh you don't believe that guy up there; that your old sin nature was nailed to the cross? Well, if it was then you wouldn't be sinning!" And you're going to go around totally defeated, especially if you've got a questioning mind, if you've got any brains to you.

God's not against knowledge. He's just against the fact that sometimes we don't do anything with the knowledge we receive. We don't ever apply it. So we do have to know some things. And we've got a third one coming. Romans 6:9, "Knowing that [here's the third thing]

Christ being raised from the dead [Oh is this ever important.!] dieth no more.” Now let me ask you, do you believe on the basis of what we’ve read so far, that when you came to know Jesus Christ you were spiritually resurrected, you have a new life in Christ? Do you believe that? I mean, let’s don’t argue how much you see it right now. Let’s just say, do you believe on the basis of what he’s (Paul) said? Now, do you believe that if you’ve been raised from the dead spiritually that you’re going to drop dead spiritually somewhere along the line here? No. That’s the point he is making.

If you’ve been resurrected to new life, then you’re not going to die again—are you? Don’t you know that “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more.” So death hath no more dominion over him. “For he in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God” (Romans 6:10). Do you know what he’s trying to tell you here? It is stop frustrating yourself thinking that you’re killing sin every five minutes. No, he’s not going to do it anymore. He already did it once.

If you don’t believe any of this it doesn’t change one thing; these are just facts to know that have already taken place. So I learned something. Defeat in the Christian life lies at the door of not knowing what God has done. Let me repeat that again. I learned something in these three things. That defeat in the Christian life lies at the door of not knowing what God has done. It’s so easy to just think you know. Run right by this. Do nothing about it.

Listen, you get defeated when you don’t know what God has done. You say, “I don’t understand. How did this happen? If depravity is invisible, how did it. . . .?” Hey, the whole thing is invisible; so is sin. We see the results of it, but we can’t see sin any more than we can see the wind or a radio wave. But they exist. We see the consequences of it.

Now we’re ready for number two. Romans 6:11. First, know; second, reckon or count or calculate. It’s a mathematical term that comes from the accountants and the work that they do—debit, credit columns. You are putting it to the account. The reason why this is quite interesting is that remember back in the discussion of justification in Romans, he talked about righteousness

was ‘imputed’ to your account, put to your account. You are declared righteous. You are not made righteous. Remember the test we took on righteousness, whether you are Catholic or Protestant. Catholics believe it comes inside of you. Protestants believe it’s the declared position with God based on what Christ has done, not on anything you do.

So this makes this all the more fascinating. I haven’t asked you to do a thing yet, but now I’m going to ask you to do something. “Likewise…” likewise knowing all of this that in the same manner, now that you know it, just count it to be so. Amen?

I’m going to count one to three. And I want you to believe it. One, two, three. Believe! Now you and I both know that just because I said it doesn’t make it happen, does it? So how does one believe it? “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Remember defeat lies at the door of not knowing what God has done. Now knowing what God has done, “he who comes to God must believe that He is and He’s a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). So you understand the relationship here is powerful. Faith means: “I know the Bible teaches this, and you know what, I’m going to apply it right now.” Now while I’m talking, in your heart, you can actually experience this. You can experience victory over sin today, though no one knows what’s happening to you inside. Now right now you can experience it by thinking this. That it is really true.

Count it to be so, reckon it. And look what he says, “Reckon yourself to be dead indeed unto sin” (Romans 6:11). Did he say count sin to be dead? No. But that’s where a lot of people make the mistake. They think it means count sin to be dead. “Oh, sin is dead, man. It has no effect on me.” Are you kidding? It’s waiting like an ugly snake to snap you at the slightest provocation. No, you are dead to sin in some sense. In what sense? It’s power to control you, so it doesn’t have to reign in your mortal body.

Verse 21 of Romans chapter five says, “As sin hath reigned unto death, so grace can reign through righteousness.” You don’t have to let sin reign in your body. If you’re dead to it how can you live any longer therein? What’s he talking about? Our old sin nature that was nailed to the

cross is dead to sin's ability to control us. You don't have to be a slave to sin and you can, by faith, count that to be true right now. It is true whether you count it to be true or not, so I would definitely recommend believing it.

I read Romans 6:11 sometimes and I want to shout *Hallelujah!* That is the best news, as a Christian, that I can hear. Number one news is how to be saved. Number two news is how to be sanctified in my life over sinful habits and thoughts. Isn't that good news? Number three: yield. Now, he again repeats in verse twelve "not to let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield..." Put your finger here and stop and go to Romans 12:1. I think you'll find something interesting here. "I beseech you therefore brother by the mercies of God that you..." What? It's the exact same word, translated 'yield' in 6:13. "Yield your body as a living sacrifice, holy..." There it is, sanctified.

You see, sometimes we don't connect things in Romans. We might divide it up because we hear the preaching that way, you know, half a chapter a day, a few verses, next Sunday another one. It's hard sometimes. You need to sit down with Romans and up to chapter 12 you've got to read straight through to understand what he's saying.

Well, he's telling us that we can yield, submit, present, "the members of our body [verse 13] as instruments or weapons of unrighteousness unto sin." But we're not supposed to do that! Instead we're to "yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead" because we are. He's already told us to know that. "And members of your body, [my hands, my feet, my eyes—your members] as instruments, [or weapons, tools] of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you." That was already conquered at the cross.

You're not under the law. The law condemns. The law shows you that you need a Savior. You're not under that demand anymore. You're under grace. Grace gives you what you don't deserve. What don't you deserve? You don't deserve to be free from the control of sin in your life. By the way you act and how you've been, you deserve to be controlled by sin the rest of your life. In fact, you deserve to go to hell. You don't deserve any of this!

Now, what does it mean to yield? The Greek word is to stand alongside of. I want to make this as practical as I can. This is sin (drawing on a whiteboard). This is God. This is temptation. And this is me. Now the first mistake we make is standing alongside of temptation to see if we can lick (overcome) it. What does God tell you to do about your lust? Flee. You're not talking about the bug that scratches you. He's talking about running away, right? You need to flee temptation. "Flee these things, O man of God" (1 Timothy 6:11). There're a lot of things that God tells you to flee. Now suppose that you conquer it. You didn't yield (to the temptation). Here's another dumb thing. "Well, I handled it man. It's not a problem. So I'm going to hang around some more just to show how strong I am." What do you think is going to happen? He's going to go crashing down. And temptation always takes him to sin.

I have never in my life been tempted by the devil to love God. The devil doesn't come around and say, "I've got a tricky thing to get you obedient to the Lord." No, he isn't doing that. The devil has one goal: for me to get dominated by sin again.

Whatever you yield yourself to, this is a temptation that always is to sin. Whatever you yield (stand yourself alongside of), now let's suppose you actually sinned, eventually you will become a slave of it. Why? It's simpler than we make it. Don't struggle with it one bit, it's real simple. All I have to do is ask you a question: When you sin, does it get easier the next time? If you do it on a regular basis does it sometimes lead to not even recognizing it as sin and keeping on with it? Oh yeah! It gets easier.

Do you understand that if you're going to do this, if you're going to stand yourself alongside that temptation and you in fact are going to yield to that sin, you're going to eventually become a slave to it, which is our fourth word. Whatever you yield to that's who you will obey. So if you want to obey God, you want a life of sanctification, a life of obedience to God, well right here is where you've got the battle—what you stand yourself alongside of. Now if you stand yourself alongside of God, guess what? It will get easier. But don't think you've conquered

everything because just like this one temptation here, whoops here comes another one, a brand new one. Something you haven't faced before. You see they go on all the time.

Another interesting thing that just as there is sin and God, and Romans 7:22-23 will tell us there are two more laws. There's a law called the law of my members, which represents my flesh. And you know what it always does? It always submits to the law of sin. Every time!

There's another law called the law of my mind. And you know what? It has a desire because I'm a Christian now, my mind has been redeemed by the blood of Christ; I really want to submit to the law of God! And this war goes along. The law of the flesh wars with the law of my mind all the time. And guess what? The law of sin and the law of God, they war against each other all the time. They're absolutely antithetical to each other.

Now with the law of the mind, I serve the law of God. With the law of flesh I serve the law of sin. The law of my members always serves the law of sin. There's never a time it doesn't. That's called depravity, old man, flesh. The law of my members, it always serves sin. The law of my mind always serves God and it produces an enormous frustration and dilemma in me. And so he (Paul) writes at the end of chapter seven, "Who's going to deliver me from the body of this death? O wretched man that I am?"

And Romans 8:1, knowing how we feel, knowing how often we are wiped out by our sinful fantasies and our bad attitudes and our anger and our sinful actions, it comes right out and says, wait a minute! "There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ." Is that a sweet thing to say to us in the midst of this discussion, or what? In the midst of all this frustration, God says, "Oh by the way, there isn't any condemnation anymore. Once you came to know the Lord. I'm just trying to help you live for Me, that's all." And He tells us that if we walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh, we will solve the problem.

You see, it's a brand new law. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). See, what happened was that the law of my flesh was nailed to the cross. What happened was sin was paid for completely. It's done. You

now have the ability, through the Lord and the work of the Holy Spirit in your life, to walk in newness of life the rest of your life. You can live victoriously.

So the question might be: Where is the battle won and lost? I think Romans gives us the answer Romans 6:16. “Know ye not that to whom you yield,” this is your responsibility— whoever you submit to. “To whom you yield yourself a servant to obey, his servant ye are to whom you obey; whether it’s sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness.” But look at the hope.

Romans 6:17-23,

17 But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.

18 Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.

[Right?]

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: [the weakness and vulnerability and boy do we know that.] for as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and iniquity; [and this is what you did] now yield your members as servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20 For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness.

[Obviously, you’re in sin now.]

21 What fruit have you then of those things wherein you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. [Death to everything. Death to your plans. Death to your hopes. Death to your dreams and eternal death.]

22 But now being made free from sin, [which the cross has provided for you] and you have become servants to God, [which happened when you got saved] you have fruit unto holiness, [you can have a product coming out of your life— sanctification] and the end, everlasting life.

23 For as the wages of sin is [what it does for you, it brings nothing but] death;
but the gift of God is eternal life.

So brethren, don't you know that I'm trying to help you? Are you following now?

Please turn back to chapter three of Romans for a minute, in chapter 3:10-18.

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none
that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison
of asps is under their lips:

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Guilty?

Now, turn over to Romans chapter seven. The reason why you and I have difficulty submitting the members of our body to God as instruments, the reason why we have difficulty obeying God, rather than obeying sin, again lies at the doorstep of not knowing what God has done. It is a continual struggle to get people, who say they love the Lord, to believe what the Lord has done. Has the Lord made it clear, that He crucified your old man? Sure! Has the Lord made it clear that you don't have to have sin controlling you? Yeah, He's made it very clear. Then, what's our problem?

I don't want to make this more difficult emotionally than it is, but sometimes by not taking it apart piece by piece, we don't see ourselves. There is something in me that questions everything that God says. There is something in me that believes everything I read in God's Word. And sometimes those two war; they fight.

What I'm going to share with you now is intended to help, not hinder, but to help. I answer questions all the time. For all you who want to go in the ministry, that's what you're going to be doing also. And you know that sometimes when people ask me questions, it's the same question that I have. My responsibility, I know quite well before God, is to give them an answer and that answer sometimes is not adequate. Neither is it adequate for my own mind. I do know His ways are past finding out (Romans 11:33). And I do know that He told me not to lean on my own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). But there is something in me that questions almost everything that I've already told you today. I have the mind that is going to interrogate it and investigate it all the days of my life. And I sometimes wonder about people who never do that.

It seems to me that God isn't asking us to play robot; but at the same time, He's going to make us frustrated in the pursuit. He's going to show us that all of our ingenuity and reasoning will never bring the answer we're looking for. Instead, we have to do what He says even though it doesn't make sense. I wish I could take out my old sin nature, just pull it right out of my body and just look at it for a while, but it's invisible. I guess there's that unbelief in all of us that says, "Maybe it isn't there! Maybe this is a Christian way of handling problems."

Can you for a moment be gracious enough to identify with me? And say that maybe you've had a thought like that or two? Maybe in the quietness of your own mind, that you don't want to tell anybody, but you question a lot of this. I question it! I wonder about it. I know what the Bible is saying, it's just so hard to understand it. And part of the reason why I said that defeat lies at the door of not really understanding or believing what God has done, it's true! God forces me to believe something that I can't reason. I can't quite get it. And in some peculiar fashion, that honors God.

It's like, I'm not God. I never will be God. I'll never understand what God understands. I'll never know what He knows. There's no one like Him. Nothing's to be compared with Him. I know the Bible says all of that. And yet I was made in His image, after His likeness! And sometimes I talk to Him, like I'm talking to you. And I just say, "I don't understand. I don't get it. I know what you said." And I can hear that still small voice, many times like you. It's almost like there's a smile on God's face saying, "You're never going to get it. I want you to trust Me, believe what I told you, and act on it, even though you don't understand it."

In many ways I call this the mystery of the Christian life. The mystery is to believe God when I don't understand. You know, Hebrews 11:3 says, "Through faith we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God." I get amused at that. I have to tell you intellectually I'm amused by the statement by God. It's absolutely the word of God. Don't misunderstand what I'm saying. But He said, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by simply the word of God." Do you understand that? I don't understand that. I know the Bible teaches it. I don't understand a thing about it; yet he says that's how you understand, by believing that that's what He did. Does anybody here see the philosophical impossibility of this? Wait a minute! How can I understand that which no one can understand? You said, You just said it and it all came to be.

I know that the whole issue of my salvation is the same. You mean to tell me, all I have to do is believe that the Bible says Jesus died on a cross for my sins and rose again from the dead. And if I believe that, then I'm going to live forever with God. I'm saved. And that tendency in my heart coming from, I'm sure my depravity that I don't understand, questions it. It doesn't surprise me that religions want to add to this. That's human reasoning. Human reasoning says, "Wait a minute. You've got to do something to show that this is real." Human reasoning says, "We would rather you ran around the church thirty-six times, follow our list of twelve rules, and then maybe you can walk with God." You know, that makes sense to me. I understand. Boy that I can handle. Show me your list of twelve and I'll do them.

And God says, “No. No, I’ve already handled this problem, David. I handled it at the cross. I just want you to believe it.”

“But I wasn’t there.”

“Well, that doesn’t make any difference.”

I don’t know about you, but I find this is not easy. But I know it is the only way to be victorious. I’ve got to believe God. Just like I asked Jesus to come into my heart, I’ve got to believe that my old sin nature was crucified with Christ and that I’m dead to sin’s ability to control me. And I don’t need to keep walking in the flesh. I can walk in the Spirit. He wouldn’t tell me to do something I could not do.

I’m famous for the remark, “Don’t check your brains off at the door.” But also there’s a sense in which you have to set aside your human understand and do what He said. You have to believe it is so. And it is absolutely stupid for me to get close to temptation or sin and try to see if I can handle it. It’s like, God’s telling me, “Don’t do that, David! Don’t yield the members... Don’t yield those feet. Don’t get them walking over there by sin. Don’t do that, David. You’re asking for trouble. You’ll get over there and then you’re going to cry out to me for help. You already got yourself into the problem when you went over there.”

In other words, all of this is true. But it doesn’t become true for you until you do what God says. That’s the interesting problem here. And you can’t understand how it works. Do you have to be a slave to sin? No. Well, you’ve also got to use your brain. If God told you, “Don’t submit or yield the members of your body...” that includes your feet—where you go. That includes your hands. That definitely includes your eyes and what you look at. And Job said, “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look at a virgin” (Job 31:1).

And I look at this and I say, “Wait a minute. God, you said I was already, because of the cross, delivered from the power of sin to control me. So if that’s true, I ought to hang around it and not feel a problem.” Wrong. No, because it is true we aren’t even going to give it a chance.

See an unbeliever has a nature tendency to sin just like you do. But he doesn't have the power of the Holy Spirit helping him.

Okay, my flesh always wants to obey sin. My mind wants to obey God. I'm having this war. I don't know the answer. The answer is the Spirit of God. Now comes the big question. Well, "Exactly what does He do and what do I do?"

First of all, in this big struggle, I know from the Bible I know enough about it, I can grieve the Holy Spirit. I don't want to, but I know I do. If I get mad at you and there's nothing righteous about it. I mean, I'm just mad. I have just grieved the Holy Spirit., just like you're hurt because I got mad, because we're made in His image after His likeness. Do you understand? It's a little more practical than we want to admit. So I grieve Him.

I also quench Him because He's like a fire. I just throw water. "Excuse me, Holy Spirit—Shoom! I'm going to go here and see if I can handle this. Okay sin, here I am." No. That is wrong. Wrong as wrong can be. But do you understand we're grieving, quenching the Holy Spirit all the time by these decisions.

What is our part? God tells us our part. "Walk by the Holy Spirit; walk by means of the Spirit, you won't carry out the lust of the flesh" (cf. Galatians 5:16). Well, isn't there now a very important question? What does it mean to walk in the Spirit? Can't we be a little fuzzy there too? What's the normal thing that comes to your mind when you think of walking? What? Tell me. Yeah, you're going somewhere. You're going from one place to another. What else? Not falling. You're walking. That's good. What else? It's a step at a time. That's certainly what walking is. If you don't take a step at a time, you're not walking. You're just standing still.

Why do people struggle with the fact that to walk in the Spirit means a step by step obedience to what God says in His Word? That's what it is. Why do they struggle with that? Because they want the Holy Spirit to do something extra for them, so they don't have to go through that. You see, the Holy Spirit's power to control us is released in direct proportion (if I'm reading this passage right) to my obedience, my step by step obedience. Whatever I yield to that's

the one I become a servant to obey. If I yield to God and His Word and do what He says, I'll wind up being a slave to God in that matter rather than a slave to sin.

If we walk in the Spirit we will not carry out the lust of the flesh. That's what God said. The problem is we aren't walking in the Spirit. We're trying to handle things ourselves. We don't turn to the Lord. God even told you how to handle the thoughts. But we don't do that. "Well, I only have devotions at five in the morning from five to five fifteen. I'm not going to just read my Bible all day." Well, maybe you need to. God told you that "Whatever things were lovely, good report, just, good, virtuous, think on these things, and the God of peace will be with you" (cf. Philippians 4:8). Jesus said, "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation; for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is totally helpless, without strength" (cf. Matthew 26:41).

You say, "What do I do man when I get lustful thoughts in my mind?" Do what God told you to do. First of all, stop looking at that which stimulates it. Secondly, don't go near any place where that creates itself for you. Those things you can do! Start thinking about renewing your mind on the Word of God! Call unto the Lord and do what He said and pray and ask for His help.

In other words, a lot of us are trying to have some sort of extra special sensory something or other from the Holy Spirit without doing what the Bible tells us. We're to walk step by step in obedience to the Holy Spirit, what He said in His word. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). And folks, we can have victory over sin because I don't have to be a slave to it. And every time I decide to say no to sin's advances, guess what? The Holy Spirit's power is released. I'm encouraged by becoming stronger the next time in that matter. And so eventually you wind up as a slave to God rather than sin. But you don't want to get proud because there'll be other issues to face.

There's victory, people, because the power of sin to control you was also nailed to the cross. You see, the cross is the key all the way through. Free from the penalty of sin the day I got saved. Free from the power of sin continually, as I walk in obedience to the Holy Spirit. And one day, thank God, I'll be free from the presence of sin forever. Amen? I think we need to pray.

Father in heaven, we're trying awful hard, sometimes, to lick the problems of sinful thoughts and habits instead of trusting You. Lord, we just frustrate Your grace constantly. We make excuses when we do sin. We get trapped by it and we get all defeated and depressed. The enemy has us right where he wants us. Lord, I pray that You would break the shackles of this, that we might come into the joy and brightness of Your love and Your grace in our life. You want us to walk in newness of life. Thank You, Lord for Your wonderful Holy Spirit. Thank You that You won't let us go. So Lord, we're asking for deliverance. You are the Deliverer. You are the One who can purify and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Set us free to live in the joy of the Lord with confidence in who You are and what You can do. And thank You Lord, in Jesus' wonderful name we pray, amen.