

Session 10 Victory over Sin: Overcoming Lust (Rom. 6:12-14)

I. REVIEW: OVERVIEW OF ROMANS 6: THE TRANSFORMED LIFE

- A. Romans 6 is the main chapter in the Scripture that teaches us about personal transformation. It tells us how to practically access, or experience, the power, favor, and blessings of God, which are freely available to us because of what Jesus did on the cross for us.

I have spent a number of sessions on Romans 6. This is the most important chapter in the New Testament on personal transformation. It is completely focused on that. In this chapter Paul tells us, as believers, how we can access the power of God, how we can experience it in our everyday life. I am going to focus particularly on overcoming lust in our battle against sin.

Now when you think of lust, most people think automatically of immorality. That is obviously a part of lust, but I think the most prevalent lust that is in the human race is actually anger, bitterness, and slander. That lust is actually more common than even immorality, but let's put them altogether. Just don't define it as one particular issue.

- B. Romans 6:1-10: Our ***legal position*** speaks of how God sees us and relates to us in Christ and the benefits that we freely and fully received at our new birth because of what Jesus did on the cross.

Paul describes our legal position in Christ. In other words, what we have received by being in Christ—the benefits that are ours. I have spent the last couple sessions focusing in on that, so if you are here for the first time and interested in more, we have the notes and videos on the website.

- C. Romans 6:11-14: We ***cooperate with grace*** by fully embracing three primary principles—they are to *know truth* (v. 11), *resist darkness* (v. 12-13a), and *pursue loving God and people* (v. 13b). Paul urged us not to receive grace in vain by neglecting to lay hold of it (2 Cor. 6:1).

The part we are going to focus in on today is how to cooperate with the grace of God that is described as available to us in verse 1-10. It is not enough that the grace of God is available; we want to experience it. We want to experience it in our everyday life, and we want to be empowered by it.

Paul outlines three particular principles, very specific ones. These are the primary principles that are necessary for us to access the power of God, so that our mind and emotions can walk free from the dominion of sinful emotions and sinful thinking. We cannot choose one of these three principles above the others. We need to embrace all three of them and do them consistently.

Now having said that, even in consistency, our doing of these principles is flawed and weak. We do them in our humanity. The Lord understands that, and that is enough. In our weak and broken way we embrace these three principles. Then what happens is described in the final part of Romans 6:15-23. It describes our living condition.

- D. Romans 6:15-23: Our ***living condition*** speaks of how we live in our daily life—how much grace we experience in our mind and emotions as they are renewed by interacting with the Spirit.

When we are changed on the inside, then our behavior on the outside follows suit. So verse 15-23 describes what happens in our mind and our emotions. Let's begin to look at the passage now, verse 11-14. We are going to focus more on verse 12 than the other two, one of the three principles.

II. WE ARE NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE (ROM. 6:11-14)

- A. Paul assures that any who engage in the three principles set forth in verses 11-13 will experience victory over sin—sin shall not have dominion over their mind and emotions (v. 14a). We will have victory in a substantial way in this age and in an absolute way in the age to come.

¹¹ ...reckon [see] yourselves to...be alive to God in Christ...¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body...¹³ And do not present your members...to sin, but present yourselves to God...¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Rom. 6:11-14)

Paul assures us that any believer who engages consistently in these three principles will experience victory over the dominion of sin in their mind and their emotions and, therefore, in their character and outward behavior. Paul promises in verse 14 that sin shall not have dominion over us. In this context particularly, he is talking about sin not having dominion over our mind and our emotions.

As believers, our mind and emotions still have the taint of sin in them. Paul said that you have the resources in the grace of God to actually walk in a way where this taint of sin in your mind, emotions, and body will not have dominion over you (Rom. 6:11-14, paraphrased). It will not control you. Yes, we will fight against it. We will resist it, but we will have the upper hand instead of the negative emotions and feelings having the upper hand in our lives. Paul promises us this victory—that sin shall not have dominion over us. Now the victory that he promises is a substantial victory in this age. It is not perfect, but it is substantial, with an absolute complete victory in the age to come.

The problem is that many believers have experienced so much defeat. They love the Lord. Many of them have been walking with the Lord for decades, and they are giving up on the idea that they are really going to have freedom from the dominion of negative feelings and thought patterns. So Paul is wanting to convince them through Romans 6 that righteousness is not only attractive in the liberty and the fruitfulness of righteousness, but it is doable. It is within the reach of every single believer, no matter how broken you have been in your past. He is saying that the power of God and the grace of God are actually stronger than the negative sinful patterns we have had in days past.

Principle number one: In verse 11, Paul says, “Reckon yourself to be dead to sin, but alive to God.” To reckon ourselves is to see ourselves in the way that God sees us in Christ. We have to know certain things, and it takes time to cultivate that knowledge. Paul said that we are transformed by renewing our mind—by knowing the things we must know. I have spent the last two sessions in this series on that point, so I am not going to spend too much more time on that today.

*Principle number two: It is not enough to **know** things. We have to **resist** things—negative things, sinful urges, temptations, and situations. It says in Rom. 6:12, “Do not let sin reign in your body.” He goes on and adds to it, “Do not present yourself to sin; do not let it reign and do not put yourself in a position that sin is stirred up in your life” (Rom. 6:12-13, paraphrased). So we have to know some things, and we have to resist some things.*

He goes on in the end of verse 13 to say, “Present yourself to God.” We have to present ourselves; we have to pursue things. We have to pursue God. We have to pursue the activities that obey the will of God and kingdom activities as well.

Paul gives the promise in verse 14 (paraphrased). “If you will do these three,” he says, “I want to promise you sin will not have dominion over your mind and emotions. Yes, the taint of sin will be there, but it will not rule you. It will not be the primary dominant force in your life.”

He says, “You will have ability to overcome it. You will have ability to live in substantial freedom on the inside and on the outside if you will do these three principles consistently, sincerely” (Rom. 6:14, paraphrased). Again, lest you say that you are never going to be able to do that—when we do them, we do them flawed. We do these principles in weakness; that is the only option we have. So that is still workable. It still works if people like you and me engage in these principles in a sincere and a consistent way, though in a flawed and imperfect way.

He continues in verse 14, and here is a very key phrase or truth. He said that the reason sin will not dominate your mind and emotions is because of this truth: you are not under law, but you are under grace. Now this phrase, **you are not under law but you are under grace**, is a very, very powerful phrase that has many implications. I will say as well that this is a phrase that is often misquoted, misunderstood, and misapplied.

In the context here Paul is talking about how you have the power to resist sin. He is imparting vision to walk in righteousness. He is saying that righteousness is attractive and doable because you are **under grace**. Some people understand the grace of God as the exact opposite. They believe that, because they are under grace, it does not matter if they walk in righteousness. Paul has the exact different approach. In other words, he is saying, “Because you are under grace, righteousness is doable in your everyday lifestyle. It is your destiny. It is your inheritance to walk free from the dominion of this negative influence on the inside.”

- B. The three principles are—to **know** who we are in Christ (v. 11), to **resist** darkness (v. 12-13a), and to **pursue** loving God and people (v. 13b). There is no substitute for any of these principles.

These three principles are the context for experiencing victory.

- C. Paul used “for” twice in verse 14. In the first “for” Paul promised victory to all (v. 12). In the second “for” he gives *the basis* for this victory—because we are not under law, but under grace. In other words, because of our new acceptance, position, power, and destiny in Christ (v. 1-11).
- D. ***We are not under law***: We are no longer under the condemnation or powerlessness of the law. Being under the law means to attempt to earn salvation by our deeds and to seek to live godly by the power of our flesh. Being under law means to relate to God based on how well we are doing.

We are not under law. There are many implications of what it means that we are not under the law. I am only going to mention a couple of them here. Not being under the law means we are not under the condemnation of the law. We are not under condemnation before God. This means that God enjoys us, God delights in us, and God enjoys our relationship with Him.

The enemy comes and tells us just the opposite—that God is at the very end of His patience; just one more mess up and that is it! Paul says, “No, you are not at all under the condemnation that you were under when you were under the law before you were in Christ” (Rom. 6:14; Romans 8:1-2, paraphrased). Everybody, before they are born again, is under the law in their relationship before God.

It is not only that they are free from condemnation, but they are also no longer powerless—meaning by virtue of the Holy Spirit living in their born-again spirit, they actually have a resource to challenge negative emotions if they interact with that resource. And that resource is a person called the Holy Spirit.

Being under law also means it is the attempt to earn one's salvation by good deeds. Everybody outside of Christ—they are trying and hoping they will be saved or everything will go well based on how they live. That is what it means to be under the law—to relate to God based on what we do, that our confidence before God is based on what we do, not based on what Jesus did and how God feels towards us. Being under the law means

more than seeking to earn our salvation. It also means seeking to live rightly by the power of our own flesh. What I mean is by our own human resource, by our own human power, seeking to live godly.

Now that we are born again, we know the only way to live godly is by interacting with the life of God that dwells in us; His name is the Holy Spirit. While we were under the law, we lived disconnected from God on the inside, simply because He did not live on the inside of us. We were living disconnected; the only power we had was our human ability. In effect, Paul says, “You are not limited to your human ability anymore. You are not under the law anymore. You do not have to live disconnected from God on the inside because He lives in you, now that you are born again. You are under grace—you have power on the inside.”

*Practically speaking, many, many believers, though they are under grace, live disconnected from God on the inside. They do not interact with the Holy Spirit on the inside of them, so basically they are living **as though** they are still under the law. They are living disconnected from God on the inside, and that is an implication of being under the law as well.*

- E. ***We are under grace:*** To be under grace includes being enjoyed by God and empowered by the indwelling Spirit. We relate to God on the basis of what Jesus accomplished for us in His death and resurrection. It includes being under Jesus’ generous and merciful leadership.

We are under grace. Paul says it is just the opposite of being under the law. Now that you are born again, you are under grace. Again, being under grace has many implications.

Being under grace means that God enjoys the relationship; He actually enjoys us. I mean, can you imagine that God actually enjoys His relationship with you? We have this idea, when the enemy comes and lies to us, that God is on the verge of being finished with us. I tell you, it is not even close! He is not at all on the verge of being finished with you. That is an absolute lie, He actually enjoys the relationship, even though there are things that we do that grieve Him in the relationship, but He is committed to the relationship itself. He values it. He enjoys the interaction. We are His beloved children.

Being under grace also means that we are empowered by the indwelling Spirit. We have a resource on the inside that, if we interact with that Person, that resource, it will affect our mind and emotions. The taint of sin that is still on our mind and emotions—we can overpower it by that source on the inside. Again, I have addressed this in the last two sessions, and I have the notes on the website if you are interested in looking at it and reviewing it again.

Being under grace also means we have a glorious new destiny. One of the great pains of life common in the human race is people feeling they have no real future. When they think of their future, they feel like a failure. They have no hope for anything good happening towards them, and they feel like a failure in their life. They are not doing anything that actually really matters to anybody; their life is not making a difference at all, not really. They are putting a lot of energy into life, but they cannot see anything that really matters, that makes a difference.

They do not see a good future. They know technically they go to heaven when they die, but they do not think much about it, so it mostly does not touch them. Paul says, “You are under grace. You want to live in the reality of what you are under. You do not want to live disconnected from God on the inside or disconnected from your destiny in the future. You really do not want to live disconnected from those” (Rom. 6:11-14, paraphrased).

Being under grace, we are under Jesus’ generous and merciful leadership. Being under grace is being under Him, His Lordship. It is gracious. It is generous. It is kind. It is so patient—His generous leadership; that is the One we are under.

When we are under grace, we have confidence that we are loved. When we know we are under grace, when we are connected to the truth that God enjoys the relationship, that He actually enjoys us, when we have confidence that we are forgiven, then we have a new beginning every day. Is that not amazing? I can do something today that grieves the Spirit, and if I genuinely repent, I have a brand new day tomorrow. Every day is a new day. Every day really is.

This lie that people have—I have gone too far, I am too messed up, I have sinned too often—it is over. Paul would say, “No, no, no, you are under grace! You have a new beginning every single day under His leadership. So do not live under this sense that it is hopeless, that it is too lost, that you failed too many times.” He would say that it is just not true.

We have the confidence that we can live differently. There are new possibilities. Internal righteousness and therefore external righteousness in our character is doable; it really is doable. Folks say, “Well, I have lived in so much lust for so many years as a believer, I do not really believe it is doable.”

Have you really embraced these three principles consistently in your life? Flawed and weak, but consistent? When you fail, do you sign back up to do them? “Well, technically no. I do not even know the three principles.” Well, there you have it. Paul says that you have hope, it is doable, and it is within reach even for you.

Another thing about being in the grace of God is that from God's point of view, from His perspective in the most primary sense of the word, we are successful. From the biblical point of view, because God loves us, and we responded and love Him, we are already successful in the primary sense. The primary success of our life is already established in past tense.

Now there is a secondary sense in which we want to be successful, and that is what we do outwardly, in the eyes of man. But in the primary sense, because God loves you and me, and we love Him—even though our love is weak and flawed, we love Him—we are successful. Beloved, He sees our love is genuine. He sees it as real.

God loves me; I love God—I am already successful in the primary sense. In the secondary sense we are still working in areas, but we can have that fundamental idea that we are not hopeless failures; we are not hopeless hypocrites; it is not all wasted. What we need to do is shift over to the grace paradigm of life and understand that we really are successful in God's sight already by virtue of the fact that He loves us and we are one of the minority of the human race who actually love Him. There are 10 or 20 percent of us—some say 10 percent, some say 20 percent of the human race—that are saying yes to the grace of God. I do not really know the number, but it is still the minority of the human race. You have said yes to the grace of God. Beloved, you are already successful!

I love to say that the thief on the cross, when he stepped over that line that day and entered paradise, he looked around and said, “Wow, if I had known I was a king, I never would have been a thief. I did not know. Wow, look at this.” Beloved, we do not have to wait until day to figure out the truth about who we are.

F. Being under grace includes being enjoyed by God, indwelt by the Spirit, and empowered to live, and commissioned with a relevant purpose. We have received a new position, power, nature, insights, and destiny in Christ.

1. Paul exhorted us to see ourselves as alive to God (v. 11); this means to live in the realm of God and grace. This includes cultivating a “grace paradigm” of our life. God sees our lives through the lens of grace, and therefore He sees it much differently than we do.

2. For example, all that we do in the will of God is rewarded because of grace or Jesus' generous evaluation of our lives—even our small deeds are remembered forever by God. (It is only because of grace that small acts such as giving someone a cup of water are rewarded).

We need to cultivate a grace paradigm in our life perspective or paradigm. We need to see our lives through the lens of grace because that is how God sees our life. Beloved, we feel really different about ourselves, and we feel very different about our future, we feel different about our labors, and we feel different about our success when we have a grace paradigm—when we see ourselves in the way God sees us in Christ.

Now, just being practical, here is one of the main reasons why sincere believers quit their diligent pursuit after Jesus. I mean, they are pursuing Him diligently four or five years. They are going hard; they have a high vision. I have watched this for forty years. I mean, they are going hard five years, some for ten years, some less, some more, and the reason so many sincere believers give up is that sense of hopelessness. "I am not going to succeed anyway. I feel I am on the verge of being rejected by God. He is always mad at me anyway, why should I try? It is not going to work. Why should I put so much effort into the relationship when I keep failing, I keep stumbling in lust and bitterness and immorality? It is not going to happen anyway."

Paul says, "Do not go there. Do not quit. You do not have to quit because the truth is you are under grace. God views your life in an entirely different way than you do by your natural thinking" (Rom. 6:14, paraphrased).

Many people feel unnoticed by anybody. Nobody notices them in a positive way. They feel unappreciated. Life is hard, they put a lot of energy in it, and nobody believes in them. Nobody believes what they are doing matters. Nobody believes what they are doing is important. Nobody believes what they are doing is going to succeed. I think we underestimate the power of somebody believing in us. It is a very, very powerful reality when somebody that you value and somebody that you care about believes in you.

Here is what I mean when I say that they believe in you—they believe you are genuine, they believe your efforts matter, they believe that what you do, though it is small, is important, they believe your future will succeed, and they believe that God is pleased with you. When somebody believes that about you, it is powerful, because in our own natural way we lose confidence in our own vision for our life. But when somebody we care about, who we value, speaks confidence over us, we go, "Wow!"

Beloved, I have got good news for you. The One you love the most, who you care most about—Jesus—believes more about you than anybody else. This is called, "You are under the grace of God." It is a whole paradigm of life.

- G. Jesus sees the genuineness of our weak love and desire to obey Him. He rejoices in our glorious future and destiny. He so values our small deeds and efforts. We are eternally fruitful. We are crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:7). We are successful in His eyes (all who love Jesus are already successful before God). Our life is no longer measured by what we achieve in man's eyes. We are His official ambassadors and are a part of the ruling class of the New Jerusalem.

- H. Paul addressed the common misinterpretation of the grace message (v. 15).

¹⁴For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

*¹⁵What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!
(Rom. 6:14-15)*

1. Grace empowers us to walk in a lifestyle of righteousness and wholehearted obedience. As we see that we have freely received so much, we are overwhelmed with gratitude and come to understand our new position in Christ.
2. Jesus redeemed us so that we would walk free from all sinful deeds (Titus 2:14). He loves righteousness and is the most righteous man who ever lived.
¹⁴...who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. (Titus 2:14)
3. Being under His generous and merciful leadership and living in deep relationship with Him will energize His people to wholehearted, obedient love.

Paul gives the promise, and then he addresses a common misinterpretation that is often associated with biblical grace teaching. He gives the promise in Romans 6:14. You do these three things, though weak and flawed. You embrace these three principles consistently, and Paul says, in effect, "I have got good news for you. Sin will not have dominion over your mind and emotions, your internal life. Therefore it will not have dominion over your external behavior. I promise you it will not in this age too, not just in the age to come."

Of course it will not in the age to come, but even in this age, sin will not have dominion over you. It is doable. It is within your reach. The man says, "Well, Paul, how could you say such a thing?"

Paul says, "Here is why. Here is how come. You are not under law. You are not under condemnation. You no longer have to live disconnected from God. You are not powerless when those negative emotions rise up in you. You have a resource to challenge them. You have a future. You have no reason to be hopeless. God sees you as successful in the primary way, so there is no sense in quitting in despair. He enjoys the relationship, so no reason to give up. You are under grace. That is why I am telling you that this is going to work if you stay with it" (Rom. 6:14, paraphrased).

4. Some completely misinterpret Paul's point in emphasizing that we are not under the law. He is not saying that it does not matter how we live. Being free from the law does not invalidate the biblical moral standards in the kingdom because that would contradict the Sermon on the Mount. Unrighteousness is opposed to all that Jesus died for.
5. Being free from the law is not a license for lawlessness. Being under grace does not give us freedom to sin, but it gives us freedom from the penalty of sin. Being under grace does not mean that we may continue in sin since we are not under sin's penalty.
6. Grace does not condone sin—it enables us to overcome sin. It is unthinkable to continue in willful sin for any who see their position as sons of God and as the Bride of Christ.

Rom. 6:15: this is a very, very common error through Church history. It started in Paul's day. Some guy comes along and says, "Well, since we are under grace, since we are not under law but under grace, shall we keep sinning? Is it okay to be casual about sin because, I mean, if we are forgiven, why not keep sinning?" They completely misunderstand what Paul is arguing for, what he is presenting—the glorious vision he is putting in front of them.

Paul says, "What?" He says, "No, no! You are forgiven to give you confidence to press in, to draw near, to enjoy the glory of this new partnership in righteousness with the heart of God. Grace is not given to you so that because sin can be casual in your life. It is to give you confidence that righteousness is doable, that you have a

new beginning everyday, that God is committed to you, that He enjoys the relationship. He believes in you” (Rom. 6:15, paraphrased). I am using that “quote, unquote.” I mean we believe in Him, but I am talking about in that sense I have just described as when somebody believes in you. What a glorious reality!

*Some people completely misinterpret what Paul is emphasizing here when he says that **we are not under the law**. They were doing it in Paul's day. It is no surprise that they have done it through Church history, and they are doing it today. Paul is the greatest grace preacher that ever walked the earth, and they did it to Paul. They rose up and they said, “Wow, Paul, thank you! Since we are under grace, we are not under law, so it does not matter what we do.”*

*Paul says, “No, I am empowering you to **be radical for righteousness**, not to be casual about righteousness. What I am giving you is the exact opposite argument” (Rom. 6:15, paraphrased). Paul is not saying it does not matter how we live. Being free from the law does not mean that the biblical standards, moral standards are now invalidated, that there is no purity, righteousness, truthfulness, humility in the kingdom. Paul is saying, “No, I am not invalidating the moral standards of God's kingdom. That would contradict the whole Sermon on the Mount” (Rom. 6:15, paraphrased). Paul is not contradicting Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Paul repeated all of those spiritual values and moral values over and over through his teaching, and he associated it with the grace of God.*

What Paul wants them to know is that unrighteousness is a total contradiction to grace. A casual attitude towards unrighteousness, and even a defeatist attitude that says, “I am never going to have victory anyway. It is not even doable,” is a contradiction to the teaching of grace. Being free from law is not a license for lawlessness.

Grace does not condone sin. Grace enables us to overcome sin by giving us confidence in a new being, a new power, and a new conversation on the inside—a new interaction with God Himself.

III. PRINCIPLE #1: KNOWING THE TRUTH (FAITH)

- A. ***Knowing Principle (Rom. 6:11):*** We must know who we are in Christ. To “reckon ourselves” alive to God is to see ourselves in the way that God sees us and to see what is true about our spirit because of being in Christ. Paul gives us details of our legal position (Rom. 6:1-10).

¹¹***Reckon [see] yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ... (Rom. 6:11)***

Let's look at the three principles. I am only going to mention two of them for just a minute and then spend a few more minutes on just one of the principles. We will look at the first one again, but the last two sessions in this series I focused on the knowing principle. So I am going to be ever so brief. I just want to mention it again to remind you.

Paul starts off, “Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God” (Rom. 6:11). When he says, “Reckon yourselves,” he is saying, “See yourself in the way God sees you in grace.” It is essential that we know what we are supposed to know in the grace of God. It is essential that we know who we are in God's eyes.

If we do not know how God sees us, we are never ever going to sustain our life in God. We are not going to sustain a life of victory or commitment against sin. We are going to just die in despair, emotionally I mean. We are going to cave, in despair. “It is not worth it anyway. It never works. God is mad. What is the use? It is all hopeless,” that is how many people believe. The answer to those despairing, negative thoughts that are very, very common for sincere believers, Paul gives in verse 11: Reckon yourself or see yourself through the lens of the grace of God.

- B. ***Reckon yourself dead to sin:*** We are to see ourselves as dead to the reign of sin and thus finished with condemnation and powerlessness to challenge sinful promptings in our emotions.
- C. ***Reckon yourself alive to God:*** We must see ourselves in the way that God sees us in Christ—as enjoyed, indwelt, empowered, and commissioned. To be alive to God is to live in the realm of God and of grace. When condemnation, shame, or lust rise up in us to challenge what God promised us, then we apply the promise of the Word by confessing the truth (Rom.10:8-10).

Paul says that you are alive to God. What being alive to God means is that you live in the realm in which God lives. You live in the same realm that Jesus in His humanity lives in before the Father; you live in that realm. That is what it means to be alive to God. You live in the realm of God. You live in the realm of grace, You are not under the reign of sin; now you are in the reign of grace.

Paul says that you have got to see it. Then, when negative emotions challenge the Word of God, you confess the Word, and you resist that negative mindset and those negative emotions.

IV. PRINCIPLE #2: RESISTING DARKNESS (SELF-DENIAL IN CHOOSING GODLINESS)

- A. ***Resisting Principle (Rom. 6:12-13a):*** We resist sin, Satan, and sin-provoking circumstances. We can refuse to let sin reign in us by engaging in the three principles set forth in verse 11-13.
¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin... (Rom. 6:12-13a)

The principles are very straightforward. They are not confusing. We just have to do them, and we have to do them consistently, even though we do them flawed and imperfectly. They still work if we do them consistently. They really, really do.

Principle number two: it is not enough that we know who we are in Christ. Biblical grace teaching involves more than knowing; it also involves resisting and pursuing. Some people present the teaching of grace only as knowing. Paul is talking here about being under grace, and he gives all three principles. We cannot separate these three principles from Paul's grace teaching. If somebody does, it is a distorted grace message.

- B. ***Therefore:*** Paul wrote “therefore,” pointing back to the truths of verses 1-11.
- C. ***Our members:*** This speaks of our physical and mental capacities—our time, desires, speech, mind, emotions, or money. They can be used for good or evil.

Our biblical view of grace and of holiness must incorporate verse 12-13. Paul said, “Therefore, do not let sin reign in your body that you should obey its lusts” (Rom. 6:12). He goes on and adds a little bit more to the same principle, “Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness. Do not present your members to sin” (Rom. 6:13).

*Paul uses this term, **members**, throughout Rom. 6. Now this idea of your members speaks of your physical and mental capacities and abilities. Your mental, your emotional, and your physical abilities and capacities are all incorporated as part of your members.*

*So Paul uses the term, **members**, and he says, “Do not present, do not put your members—your mind, your thinking, your body—at the disposal of sin. Do not put it in the pathway of something that will stir sin up in your*

life. Do not do that” (Rom. 6:13, paraphrased). That is what he is saying here. In verse 12, he says, “Do not let sin reign in your body.”

The taint of sinful lusts, the taint of sin, is still on our mind and emotions as born-again believers who are new creations in Christ. Our born-again spirit has no sin in it at all. If your born-again spirit had sin in it, God the Holy Spirit could not dwell in you. God and sin cannot dwell together. Your born-again spirit is where it is true of us to say that we are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Our spirit man is strong, fully alive, and has the fullness of grace. It is our soul—our mind and emotions—that still has the taint of sin in it.

Now Paul describes sin. He personifies sin. He describes sin like it is a king, like a person. He says, “Do not let King Sin make you obey because sin is going to try to get you to obey its lusts. I am telling you right now, you do not have to obey it. The lusts are still there. The taint is there, but you got a power within, and you have a new confidence because God enjoys the relationship. He has forgiven you. You feel good about your life, your destiny, your future because you are viewing your life through the lens of grace” (Rom. 6:12-14, paraphrased).

So look at what he says in verse 12. He says, “Therefore.” Now what is the therefore there for? Well it is referring to the verse before where he says, “See yourself alive to God,” (verse 11), and in light of being of alive to God, living in the realm of God, being under grace, **therefore** you have the courage, the resolve, the confidence to say no to sin. He says, “When sin, that King Sin—those tainted emotions and feelings and those tainted mind and thoughts—comes against you, you have the authority to say, ‘No, I am not going to yield to you’” (Rom. 6:12, paraphrased). Paul's declaration here in verse 12 is that we can say no to sin. As a matter of fact we have to! Verse 12 is a strong exhortation that we have to engage our will; we have to make daily decisions to say no.

Some people do not like that. They say, “Ah, that is the downside. I mean, I just want God to do it for me.”

Jesus says, “No, I made provision so that when you do it, it works. I already made provision for you, but I am not going to do your part of the relationship, and you cannot do My part of the relationship.”

So verse 12 is the biblical aspect. We must say no to sin. We must take a stand against sin, and we must deny it. Jesus will not deny sin for us in our daily life. Some people say, “Let the Lord do it.”

He says, “No, no, that is your part of the relationship. I have already made provision for you to have victory if you will do it.”

Others say, “Well, I am praying for a heavenly encounter, and if I get caught up in the third heavens, then I will not have deal with it.”

He says, “No, a heavenly encounter will not deal with it either.” Remember, Paul had heavenly encounters, and he still had to say no to sin when it rose up in his members.

Another guy says, “Well, let me go up front at the end of the meeting. Have them pray for me and cast it out.” You can cast a demon out, but you cannot cast the taint the sin out of someone's mind and emotions. The way that we get victory—we renew our mind, we resist what we resist, we pursue God in the way verse 13 describes, and our sin does not have dominion. It does not have the upper hand in our thinking and our emotions. Over time we will experience that new liberty on the inside. Though the taint will be there, it will not have the upper hand. It will not be the dominant force it was before.

- D. It is our responsibility in the grace of God to refuse to allow sin to reign in us and to give our loving allegiance to Jesus. Denying our lustful desires is the theater God chose for us to express our love to Him. We do not earn God's love by obedience, but we express our love to God.

¹⁵If you love Me, keep My commandments... (Jn. 14:15)

In the grace of God, it is our role in the relationship to choose not to allow sin to reign in us, but to give our loving allegiance to Jesus. One of the reasons why the Lord has made it a part the whole process of victory that we have to make this decision is that it is our way of expressing our love to Jesus. When we have negative emotions and a negative mindset, when they rise up in us, these negative feelings in our body, sinful feelings, and we say no to them because we love Him, He says, "I take that very personally. I know your "no" is weak, but I am moved by the fact that you love Me so much to say no."

Now we do not earn the love of God by saying no, but, beloved, we express our love to God by saying no. Jesus said it Himself, "When you keep My commandments, you were demonstrating that you love Me and it moves Me. Even though your obedience is weak, it still moves Me. I take it very personally" (Jn. 14:15, paraphrased).

- E. ***Do not let sin reign in your body***: Not allowing sin to reign in us requires that we resist lust with self-denial and grace-empowered discipline. Grace motivates and empowers us to say no to sin.

¹¹The grace of God...has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age. (Titus 2:11-12)

1. Jesus emphasized the need for self-denial (Mt. 16:24). The need for self-denial has been rejected or greatly minimized by many who promote a distorted grace message.

²⁴"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself..." (Mt. 16:24)

2. Paul needed to discipline his body by bringing it into subjection to Jesus (1 Cor. 9:27).

²⁷I discipline my body and bring it into subjection lest...I should become disqualified. (1 Cor. 9:27)

Do not let sin reign in your body (Rom. 6:12). Not allowing sin to reign requires self-denial. Look at Titus 2:11, "The grace of God teaches us that we have to deny lust." The biblical grace teaching teaches us to deny lust. When we understand grace, we are so motivated with gratitude. We see our new potential because of the power of God in us. We see our new future. We have a new feeling about ourselves when we see ourselves in the grace of God. When we are listening to the grace of God from the biblical point of view, it will motivate us and energize us to deny ourselves when worldly lusts present themselves to us.

Jesus emphasized denying self. He said, "Anyone who wants to follow Me—self-denial is a part of the relationship of loving Me" (Mt. 16:24).

In 1 Corinthians 9:27, Paul the apostle, the great grace teacher, the great teacher on the grace of God said, "I have to discipline my body."

"Well, Paul, do you not understand grace? You are under grace."

He says, "That is why I have the courage and the vision and the confidence to discipline myself. I know it is doable in the grace of God. I know who lives in me. I know who is looking at me. I know what my future is. I know how He evaluates me. I feel good about who I am in God, and, I tell you, I am motivated to discipline my

body. When those emotions rise up, those feelings, I bring my body in subjection to the Spirit lest I be disqualified.” Now, this does not mean lest he be disqualified from salvation. He is not talking about losing his salvation here. He is talking about, lest he be disqualified from walking in the fullness of his apostolic ministry. He says, “I have to keep my body in subjection to the Spirit if I am going to walk out my apostolic calling. I absolutely have to do that” (1 Cor. 9:27, paraphrased).

- F. ***Do not present your members to sin:*** People present themselves to sin in two stages—first in their mind, then with their body. We must refuse circumstances that inflame sinful desires. We do not go to places, buy items, look at, touch, or talk about that which stirs up sinful desires.
1. ***Presenting ourselves to sin mentally:*** Presenting our members to sin starts in our mind by rehearsing different situations—by daydreaming. Jesus taught how immorality operates. It is rooted first in the mind, being fueled by sight. The progression of adultery begins with the mind and eyes, and moves to circumstances leading to physical adultery.
²⁸***Whoever looks at a woman to lust...has already committed adultery...in his heart (Mt. 5:28)***
 2. ***Presenting ourselves to sin physically:*** We must refuse circumstances that inflame sinful desires. We do not go to places, buy items, look at, touch, or talk about that which stirs up sinful desires. There are many ways to present oneself to sin.

When the Bible tells us to not present our members to sin, this is very, very important. I am going to be ever so brief because we are at the end. Paul says “Do not present your members”—your thinking, your emotions, your body—“Do not present your members to sin”—do not do it (Rom. 6:13, paraphrased).

Now we present ourselves to sin when we fail in this. We present ourselves to sin in two stages. First, we present ourselves to sin in our mind through rehearsing scenes in our mind. Past scenes, future scenes, potential scenes, we rehearse it in our mind; we call that daydreaming. But when we do that, beloved, we are actually presenting our members to the powerful fire of sinful desire. Paul says, “Do not present your members to that” (Rom. 6:13, paraphrased). Jesus taught on this principle too.

So he is saying to avoid presenting your mind to sin. Do not present your physical person—do not go to the social event, do not look at things, do not buy things, do not have conversations, do not touch people in ways that stir you up. He is saying not to put yourself in a position where sin is inflamed in you.

V. PRINCIPLE #3: PURSUING GOD AND PEOPLE (LOVE)

- A. ***Pursuing Principle (Rom. 6:13b):*** We pursue relating to and serving God and people with love. We present ourselves to God and our bodies as His instruments that He may use to bless others. In other words, we are to pursue loving God and people (Mt. 22:37-40).

¹³***But present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members [your body, time, money, abilities, etc.] as instruments of righteousness to God. (Rom. 6:13b)***

Here is the third principle: pursuing God, pursuing people. It is a very simple principle. We know it well, so I am not going to mention here, although I will take some sessions later to develop this one.

- B. ***Present yourselves to God:*** This speaks of seeking to know, love, and please God in a personal and wholehearted way. We take time to cultivate intimacy with God. We present ourselves “as being alive from the dead” —or alive to God or with confidence in how God sees us in Christ and based on what Jesus did for us, not based on our spiritual attainments, good or bad. Presenting ourselves with sincerity is not enough; we must have confidence in Jesus’ work on the cross.
- C. ***Present your members as instruments of righteousness:*** We express love to people by offering ourselves to serve and bless others in God’s will. This includes making the effort to be equipped to minister to others and to build quality relationships that glorify God.
- D. We must ***know truth***, ***resist darkness***, and ***pursue God and people***. We pursue loving God and people as we resist sin, Satan, and sin-provoking circumstances in the context of knowing who we are in Christ. None of these principles can be omitted. Some people resist sin and pursue God without knowing who they are in Christ. Some pursue God at prayer meetings without pursuing people or resisting sin. Others pursue people (relationship or ministry) without pursuing God.

I want to highlight this: If we are going to walk in the victory that is promised to us, we must know truth of who we are in Christ. We must resist darkness—do not present your members to sin. And, we must pursue God. We have to know, we have to resist, and we have to pursue. We cannot do two out of the three and have the promise that sin will not have dominion in our mind and emotions.

We have to do all three and do all three consistently, even though we do it in a weak and flawed way. That is just one little journey on this thing called victory over sin. We have a little bit more to go on this, but I just want to lay this out to you and put it before you. Amen and amen.