

Refusing Sin & Romans 6

by Wayne Goff

God's grace bestowed on the saved is not a license to sin. *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"* — Romans 6:1-2.

But **living** a sinless life is not an easy thing. The Hebrew writer warned of *"the sin which so easily ensnares us"* (Heb. 12:1). Sin traps us sometimes because of our ignorance. We did not see temptation **as** temptation, nor did we prepare ourselves to overcome it. So we were ensnared. Hopefully, we repented and learned from our mistakes.

But Paul in Romans is dealing with sin in a different way. He is discussing the sin in which we are tempted to *continue*. We desire to **continue in sin** because we enjoy its temporary pleasures, because we do not see it as damaging and damnable as it is, and because those around us in the world are not alarmed. I once saw a religious cartoon whose caption read: "Well, I haven't actually **DIED** to sin, but I did feel faint once"! The apostle Paul says in Romans 6 that that is not good enough! We cannot just grow faint toward sin from time to time, but we must die to it!

The **contrast** between the new life and the old life is seen in the rest of the chapter. We arose from baptism to *"walk in newness of life"* (v. 4). *"...Our old man was crucified ... that the body of sin might be done away with..."* (v. 6). The *"old man"* is **old** because sin is destructive. Some people die young because of, as we say, the mileage, not the years! They spent their lives in reckless living, and paid the price of an early grave. Hopefully, the *"old man"* is also **old** because he is the *former* man!

"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v. 11). Sin includes **sexual violations** (adultery, fornication, homosexuality, uncleanness, lewdness), **religious violations** (idolatry, sorcery, heresies), **selfish indulgences** (envy, murder, drunkenness, revelries [dancing]), **mental violations** (hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions), **and the like** (Galatians 5:19-21). Dear Christian, have you **died** to these?! If you will study the list carefully, then you will identify your particular weakness and also come to realize that nothing good comes from that sin. *"And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"*(Gal. 5:24).

Actress Jennifer Lawrence said of the New Year's Eve party: **"I really hate it. I've never had a good one — everyone's chasing a good time and it's always a disappointment. I always end up drunk and disappointed."** Unwittingly, she has expressed the truth about sin in general. You cannot chase a good time with a sinful habit and expect good results. But mankind is loathe to learn the lesson. By the way, you can have a good time on New Year's Eve with good food, good friends and a few good games.

The **real key** to *dying to sin* is to be sure and replace the moral vacuum left by the absence of sin with something truly positive — **righteousness!** *"...Present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God"* (Rom. 6:13). Paul explained in verse 19 that a slave of sin only leads to uncleanness and more lawlessness! *"What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death"* (v. 21). However, note the contrast of right living: *"... You have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life"* (v. 22). May God bless your new year with **continued** right living as you *habitually* die to sin and *live* for that which is good. The fruit of the Spirit — right living — includes **love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control** (Galatians 5:22-23). Do you have any objection to these qualities? *"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit"* (Gal. 5:25).

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