

SPIRITUAL GROWTH – Lesson #3 – Living in victory over the sin nature within.

- *The born-again believer has two natures or dispositions within.* Before we were born again, we had only one nature – the sinful nature inherited from Adam. This nature urged us to sin and we felt helpless to successfully resist these urges, often yielding to them (Eph. 2:1-3). Thus, the Bible declares that we were “slaves of sin” (Rom. 6:20). When we were born again we became partakers of God’s divine nature in our human spirit (Jn. 3:6-8; Rom. 8:10; 2 Pet. 1:4). Now there are opposing forces within us. Our spirit with the life of God along with the resident Holy Spirit urges us to obey Him, but the old nature of our sinful life is still within us, urging us to do things that are wrong in God’s sight. This battle is seen in Gal. 5:16-23. How do we win this battle of the Spirit versus the “flesh” (our old life)?

- *The victory has already been won by Jesus Christ.* The Bible makes an astonishing statement: “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57). Jesus won the victory over sin at the cross and in resurrection. God now gives us this victory – makes it fully available to us. It only remains for us to enter into it by faith. The key passage about our sharing in this victory is Romans 6.

Romans 6: Our union with Christ in His death and His resurrection

- Rom. 6:2 declares that we have “died to sin.” How? It is true because “all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death” (Rom. 6:3). Baptism here is not water baptism but our spiritual immersion into Christ when we believed (Gal. 3:26-27). We were placed into Christ and also placed into His history of death on the cross, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-6; Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 2:11-13). Rom. 6:4 tells us that our union with Christ in His death and resurrection is so that we might walk in “newness of life,” that is, live out His life.

- “For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.” (Rom. 6:5). We are in union with Christ in a “death like His.” His death is defined in 6:10: “For the death He died, He died to sin once for all.” In His earthly life Jesus never knew sin (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15). But on the cross, in the eyes of God, Jesus became identified with sin. “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf” (2 Cor. 5:21). There God judged sin in the flesh of man (Rom. 8:3). Jesus bore the condemnation of sin itself at the cross, which condemnation resulted in death. Then, He died to sin – that is, through His death He broke all ties to sin; He separated from sin through death, dying to it “once for all” (for all time and forever). In the realm of the Spirit we were crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6), and when He died to sin, we also died to sin, breaking all ties with sinful race of Adam. We are to “**know**” the **spiritual fact** that our old man was crucified with Christ, so that our body would no longer be under the dominion of sin (6:6). We who died are now freed from the power of sin (6:7). We were buried with Christ, breaking our connection with the sinful race of Adam. Then, we were raised up with Christ to live a **new life in Christ** (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12-13). In His resurrection “the life that He lives He lives to God. (6:10). The sin principle is still present within us, but these spiritual truths tell us that we can live free from its dominion. We do not have to obey the old sin nature’s demands. We need to meditate these truths in Rom. 6 and go over them again and again until they become spiritually real to us.

- “So you also **must consider** yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 6:11). We must count these things (Rom. 6:2-10) as absolutely true and believe that we are now dead to sin and alive to God in our spiritual union with Christ Jesus. We must continually stand on these facts by faith, and then the experience follows. Faith never focuses on contrary evidence (such as the presence of sin, the lusts of our flesh or our past failures), but always focuses on God’s word (Rom. 4:19-20; 10:17). Also, we must be in agreement to be dead to sin. We cannot stand on these facts if our will secretly seeks to respond to sin’s appeals. We appropriate by faith our new identity in Christ. We must not believe that we are still the same old sinful person, but that we now have a new life in Christ. (See 2 Cor. 5:17; Col. 3:4)

- Finally, to have victory, we **must present** (dedicate) ourselves to God as those now alive from the dead and our members to do righteousness (6:13). This dedication is something we should practice daily.