

## 17. Learning Why We Are Free to Yield to God

In our last topic, we saw how to help our physical and spiritual children understand what happens to our old man at the time we come to Christ in repentance and faith. We saw that we are no longer slaves to sin. That means that we are either free to yield to sin or to yield to righteousness. In our topic today, we are also going to see how to help our children understand why we are free to yield to God. We will also see how to help them understand the blessing that comes from learning to yield to God so that He can give us the power to do what is right.

In Romans 6:11, we read, “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The word that is translated “reckon, impute, or count” means *to put something to your account or to act on something that has been put to your account*. In Romans 4, we saw that chapter used this word eleven times to point out the fact that God put righteousness to our account at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ. In this verse, we see that we are told to take action based on the fact that God put righteousness to our account.

In this verse, we see that we are to take two kinds of action. First, we are to begin to act as those who are indeed dead to sin. James 1:13-15 says, “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” We can choose to yield to sinful desires or we can choose to yield to God and He will give us His power to carry out those things that are pleasing to God. Our verse in Romans reminds us that we are now able to act on the fact that we are no longer a slave to sin. Instead, we are dead to the control of sin and do not have to obey its evil desires any longer.

Second, we see that we can act on the fact that we are alive to God because of the fact that we are in Christ Jesus our Lord. 1 John 1:5-7 says, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” God is light and because we are alive in Christ we are now able to walk in the light. Psalm 119:130 says, “The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” As we meditate on the Word of God and ask the Holy Spirit to give us His strength to obey the Word, we experience fellowship with the Lord and other Christians. We also know that the blood of Christ is continually cleansing us from sin.

Romans 6:12-14 goes on to say, “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” Since we are dead to the control of sin, we are not to let sin continue to rule in our physical body.

There are three lusts that will try to control our body even though we are dead to the control of those lusts. In 1 John 2:16, we read, “For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.” Adam and Eve were free to choose either right or wrong before they sinned. Satan used these three lusts to tempt them. Genesis 3:6 says, “So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” When we choose to yield to our physical desires, we will be tempted and we will yield to sin.

That is why Romans 6:13 warns us not to present the members of our body as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. The word that is translated “present” speaks about making a decision in our will. That is why James 1:14-15 says, “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” When we have a desire to commit a particular sin, we will be enticed by temptation. As soon as Eve had a desire to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, her will gave her permission to satisfy her sinful desire and she sinned. Adam had that same desire and he also sinned when Eve offered him the fruit. That is why we must yield our will to the Lord if we want to have victory over sin.

That is why the second part of Romans 6:13 tells us to present ourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead. Christ gave us the perfect example of presenting our will to God when He said in Matthew 26:39, “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’” Here, we see that Christ prayed and presented His will to the will of the Father. As we pray and ask the Father for the strength to carry out His will, we are presenting our lives as tools to God to carry out His will. The Holy Spirit will then give us the power to do the will of God.

That is why verse 14 tells us that sin will not have dominion and exercise the control over us when we present our will to the Father and ask for the strength to carry out His will. In verse nine, we saw that death no longer has dominion over us because of the fact that Christ rose from the dead. When we placed our faith in Christ, He gave us spiritual life. That meant that spiritual death no longer had dominion over us. Here, we see that also means sin no longer has dominion over us. We have been set free from the law and are no longer under the law because we are dead to the law. We are now under grace. Titus 2:11-12 says, “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.” Every time we choose to yield to God and refuse the sinful desires that the world offers, the Lord will give us victory because we are under grace. Satan will try to tempt us many times every day with sinful desires. As a result, we must choose to yield our will to the Father many times throughout the day if we want to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age.

That is why Romans 6:15-16 says, “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading*

to righteousness?” Paul asks the question; shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? We saw that Paul used a similar question in Romans 6:1 and answered that question the same way he does here. In Romans 6:2, we saw that Paul wanted to make it very clear that was certainly not the thing that he was teaching. Paul wanted to make sure that no false teachers would try to twist what he taught.

Since Christians are under grace and not under the law, Christians are able to choose to whom they are going to present themselves as slaves to obey. We can either choose to present ourselves to the sinful desires of our physical body or we can choose to present ourselves to God for obedience. Romans 12:1 says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.” Here, we see that Paul begs us to present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice. We want to encourage our physical and spiritual children to also present their bodies as living sacrifices. However, we must provide the example by our own lives if we want our children to present their bodies to God.

We also see the results of presenting our lives. As Christians, we can choose to present ourselves as slaves to sin or to God. Even though a Christian is dead to sin, if that Christian presents or yields his or her physical body to sin, we see that the result is death. This can be an emotional death because the person is controlled by fear, guilt and shame. Romans 7:24 says, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” A Christian can also experience physical sickness and death. 1 Corinthians 11:29-32 says, “For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.” Here, we see that presenting our physical bodies to sin can lead to the chastening of the Lord even though we will not be condemned with the world.

In contrast, as Christians, we can choose to present ourselves to God as a living sacrifice who desires to be obedient to God and do His will. As we make that choice, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to carry out the will of God. The result is that our lives demonstrate the righteousness of God. That does not mean that we are sinless but it does mean that we quickly confess our sins when we realize that we have sinned. That is what makes it possible for our lives to bear the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 where we read, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” We want to show our children by our example the blessing of presenting our lives to the Lord so that the Holy Spirit can bear that fruit in our lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to present their lives to God for obedience.