

Romans 6:12-14

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Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work " Jensen's Survey of the NT "				

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Romans 6:12-14

Romans 6:12-14 Our New Life in Christ Pt 3

by Dr. Wayne A. Barber

Romans 6:12 [Therefore](#) do not let [sin reign](#) in your [mortal body so](#) that you [obey](#) its [lusts](#), 13 and do not go on [presenting](#) the [members](#) of your body to [sin](#) as [instruments](#) of [unrighteousness](#); but [present yourselves](#) to [God](#) as those [alive](#) from the [dead](#), and your [members](#) as [instruments](#) of [righteousness](#) to [God](#). 14 For [sin](#) shall not be [master over](#) you, for you are not [under law](#) but [under grace](#).

Have you had any trouble with sin this week? "Oh, no," you say, "I'm dead in Christ, and I'm raised to walk in newness of life!" You are also a little arrogant because you know very well that you've had trouble with sin. As a matter of fact, if you say you haven't had trouble with sin, that is the very proof that you have had trouble with it. Every one of us has to deal with sin. John says if you say you are without sin, you make God a liar. What he is saying is that we still live in bodies that cause us problems.

Now let's just get real and honest. We are still earth-bound. Yes! Inwardly it has been cared for, but I've got some choices I've got to make. What Paul is going to do in verses 12-14 is show us how to apply those truths so that we can live in them. That's the key. It's one thing to know them, but quite another to live them.

If you don't know how to access what God has delivered to you by grace, then you can be a very miserable Christian. You've got to learn. Remember in 5:2 it says, "We access His grace by faith." That is what Paul is about to show you. It's not in personal, self-determined effort. You do not improve yourself. God did not come into your life to improve you. He came in to replace you! What happens is you start learning that the same way you got saved is the same way you are going to be sanctified down here on this

earth. It is totally by faith according to God's grace.

Now watch this. There are three steps. (I always put it in steps so I can understand it.) First of all, we have to make a conscious choice not to obey its lusts any more. We've got to make a conscious choice. Now I can't make that for you, and you can't make it for me. I've got to make it, and you've got to make it. He says in verse 12, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts."

There are several things in that little verse that will help you. First of all, we have got to recognize that sin still has potential in our lives. If you don't see that, then I am failing and Paul has failed miserably in Romans 6. He says, "Do not let sin reign." If it couldn't reign, then why would he tell us not to let it reign? Obviously, it still has power, not in the sense that God hasn't done anything in our lives, but resident within these bodies are the lusts of the flesh, and those lusts of the flesh are just waiting on us to yield to them. So, you've got to recognize that you still have the propensity (or tendency) to sin in your life.

The word "reign" is in the present active imperative tense. Now why is he using the present tense? I thought he was talking about victorious believers over in Rome. Present tense means, "Stop doing this and don't continue to do it any more!" That's interesting, isn't it?

Well, now in a habitual sense, in a sense of total lawlessness, you can't live that way. But remember this: "lusts" is in the plural, and your problem with lust may not be my problem with it, because it is a word that covers every area that effects us. So whatever area you are effected with, that's what we are dealing with. It's not as if you can just live lawlessly (John deals with that in I John) in a continual amount of sin, like Paul is addressing in his question in chapter 6.

The word "reign" there is the word used for a king to rule and to control. It's in the present active imperative mood. He says, "Make a choice. You take the initiative and make a choice. I'm not going to live that way any more because I came out of that and into Christ." What the Word says about me is what I want to be seen in me.

Then secondly, recognize the territory in which sin operates. Just like Satan can only work in darkness, sin can only operate in the flesh. That's what he says. He says, "**Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body!**" I love that translation. Whatever translation you have, if it doesn't have "**mortal**," I don't think it's a good translation. The word is **thneto**. It means "that part of us that can die." So where does sin operate? Sin operates in that part of me that is corruptible. So the culprit is my flesh.

Thirdly, we must recognize that since the old man is dead, and our bodies of sin have been rendered powerless, we really can say no to sin in our lives. You've got to see this! Sin is a **choice** to a believer! It's a **lifestyle** to an unbeliever. A Christian can make the conscious choice to say NO against sin! We are going to show you how to do that in a moment!

He says, "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal bodies that you should obey its lusts." The word "obey" is a key word because there are other words for "obey." This particular word is the word *hupakouo*. It's the word used of Jesus' obedience (in a good sense) to His Father. It's the word used of our obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. But in a negative sense, it means to bow down to the flesh. It means to get up under it and say, "Oh, flesh! What do you want to do today? I'm going to pamper you today all day long." If you start listening to it you will start obeying it. The word *akouo* means to hear, to listen. "Stop listening to what your flesh is trying to tell you," Paul is saying. "Start listening to what God is trying to tell you and base your life on the Word of God."

The word "**lusts**" itself is not a bad word, but when it is used in a sense of the flesh, that's when it becomes bad and inordinate. Let me explain the word "**lusts**." It is *epithumia*. *Epi* means to focus on something—intensely focus and concentrate on something. *Thumos* means a passionate desire, to passionately desire something that you are concentrated upon. Why is that a bad word? That's exactly what Jesus wants us to do to Him. It's exactly what we've been talking about. We need to focus everything we have. What did Jesus say to the man who asked, "What is the greatest commandment?" He said, "To love the Lord your God with all your heart, your mind, your body, your soul, your strength." Then He said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." He wants us to intensely lust after Him in a righteous way. It's not a bad word. Don't think of that word as being a bad word. It's a good word except in the context we are seeing it with the flesh.

Now the Lord Jesus Christ, in Luke 22:15, desired intensely to eat the Passover meal with His disciples. The verse there uses the word *epithumia*. Paul intensely desired to depart and be with Christ—Philippians 1:23. Paul intensely desired to be with the believers in Thessalonica—I Thessalonians 2:17. So it's not a bad word in itself, but when it is attached to this body of sin, that's when it becomes bad. It's an inordinate concentration and focus that drives us passionately to fulfill. That's what we've got to watch out for. We can say "NO" to that.

It's a compulsion, an obsession. It's a concentrated focus on something that's displeasing to God but has drawn you into its magnetic current and there's nothing you can do to stop it. That's what he's talking about. Paul says whatever that is in your life, you can say "No" to it.

"Oh," you say, "I've got a problem with lust, and I've been having trouble with it. It's in an immoral sense, and I just can't stop!" Yes, you can! Yes, you can! That's what Paul is saying! For a Christian to say he can't makes God a liar. What he is really saying is, "I won't. I don't want to pay attention to what this says." He may even be saying, "I'm not really saved. So don't bother me."

We must understand this because this is serious business when it comes to calling yourself a believer. We have come out of Adam and we are in Christ. Paul says it is absurd to think you can go back and live like you used to live. The Holy Spirit has come within you and has now rendered the body of sin powerless in your life. It wasn't that way before.

So first of all, you've got to make a choice, but secondly, you've got to do more than just make a choice. The choice in itself is not enough. You've got to understand something. Paul explains to you exactly what we're supposed to do in verse 13. The second thing is we learn to say "No" by saying "Yes" to Jesus. Our concentration has always been wrong. We start looking immediately at our problem. No! You look at the solution! You look at the One who is going to, by grace, transform you. You can't transform yourself. This is not some self-improvement program we are talking about. We are not under law. We are under grace. Grace is what transforms us. So you've got to learn to consciously say "Yes" to God.

Hebrews says to train your senses unto righteousness. That's exactly what he is talking about. Train them! Watch what he says here in verse 13: "and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Now you say, "Help me with that. I don't quite understand. I believe all this stuff, but I've made the choice a thousand times, and I've never changed. What's wrong with me?"

When we realize that in our fleshly bodies, which are dying, resides the inordinate flesh that seeks to influence us to sin, and we make a conscious choice not to allow that, then we have one more step. We have to learn not to present the members of our bodies. What is Paul talking about when he says, "the members of your body"? Here they are: hands, feet, eyes, whatever you want to call a member of your fleshly body. Paul calls it your body of sin. Don't yield it anymore as instruments of unrighteousness.

The body is the vehicle through which sin is accomplished, and so therefore, it depends on who is running me on the inside. Behind every man is a spirit, and behind every spirit is either God or the devil. We learned that in I John. Something is controlling me now. So, don't yield the members of your body any more.

One of the problems I had in early years (and still sometimes fall back into the trap of it) is I forget what the word "yield" means. It comes from two Greek words. One word means "alongside", and the other word means "to place yourself". What a picture he's drawing here. He says "Don't keep putting yourself alongside that which you are falling in." In other words, we've got to get sensible here at some point in time. If you have a lust problem in an immoral area, what in the world are you doing putting yourself in the position where you can be tempted and fall? Don't keep putting yourself in a position where you can be overpowered by the flesh. It's just waiting on you to choose to do that. Don't keep yielding yourself. Don't keep putting yourself up alongside that kind of thing.

For years I struggled with some of the things in my life, and I know you have, too. Finally it began to dawn on me—I'm my worst enemy! Do you know what we do? We come to church and we make great commitments and choices. We walk right out and feed the very thing that's knocking us down. We can't continue to yield ourselves to the very thing that's causing us the problem.

Well, Paul goes on. Instead of yielding ourselves to that, instead of accommodating the flesh, he says, secondly, we are to learn to make ourselves available to God by accommodating Him. You are going to accommodate one or the other. Why not accommodate God? That's what Paul is saying. Since these truths are there, learn to accommodate Him. He says, "but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

That term "present" is aorist active imperative. It's a command! The aorist tense means DO IT! Just do it! Make a choice! Do it! That is what he is saying. He puts it in the imperative mood. It's a command. In other words, not to do it now becomes sin in your life, and you will answer for that.

Now, I'll tell you what, this gets heavy. This is coming home now. "You know all these truths, now do something about it," Paul says. Since you know that, turn and consciously present the members of your body unto God as unto righteousness. Instead of presenting and putting yourself into the position where the flesh can rule over you, put yourself into the position where the Spirit who lives in you can go on and do what He wants to do. Accommodate Christ by yielding to Him.

Now remember, when you turn to Him, this is all grace. Please understand that. Romans 5:2 says the only way to access grace is by faith. You've got to trust that what God says is right. You've got to trust that God will do what He said He would do, and therefore, by putting your full weight upon Him, you're willing to make that turn. You access that transforming power by placing your faith into the Lord Jesus Christ.

First we make a choice not to obey the flesh, and then secondly, we learn the way to say "NO" is by saying "YES." For years I

focused on the wrong thing. If you wake up in the morning and say, "God, I'm not going to have a lustful thought all day today" you will probably last until you say "Amen" to your prayer. Lust is going to rise up and try to defeat you the rest of the day. Have you ever had trouble with that? The whole problem is that you've been focusing on NOT presenting yourself to unrighteousness. That's not the focus! The focus is presenting yourself to righteousness! If you'll look the other way, this will take care of itself. You can't present yourself to righteousness and still entertain the other. You can't do it! By doing one, you are nullifying the other! That's what he is trying to say!

Maybe your problem is a different kind of lust. Maybe your problem is in "things." What's the first thing you read in the morning? The Bible? The Wall Street Journal? What's your focus? Whatever it is that is so concentrated in your life that it's driving you, that's your problem. You had better not focus on that problem, or it will overcome you! You've got to learn to focus on Jesus. That is the greatest secret that finally was revealed in my heart. The victory is not **me** overcoming sin. I never could. My body is the body I lived in when I was lost. It hasn't changed! What's changed is the inside. The Spirit of God has come in. My body is just as deceitful as it used to be. I had better get used to it. I couldn't conquer it before and I can't conquer it now, but Jesus in me does!

The *victory* is not me overcoming sin. I never could...*Victory* is not a goal that you strive for. You've already got *victory* over that sin. Jesus is your *victory*.

Victory is not a goal that you strive for. You've already **got** victory over that sin. Jesus is your victory. Don't you understand that? I feel like Paul sometimes: "What? Know ye not?" You can't apply the same methods that you tried before. It doesn't work either time! God saved you by His grace, and God will sanctify you by His grace! Your human efforts won't sanctify you any more than your human efforts could save you! That's what Paul is trying to get at.

So first of all, you've got to make a choice. Secondly, you had better learn you cannot say "Yes" to Jesus by saying "No" to sin. You say "No" to sin by saying "Yes" to Jesus. You've got to turn that thing around, or you're not going to have victory.

You had better learn this: don't focus on the sin! Focus on the Savior who has conquered the sin! And learn! Train your senses to line up under Him. Accommodate yourself to Him. Put yourself where you can be influenced by the Spirit and not influenced by the flesh.

This is why it's so important to have a quiet time. Quiet times have been used and abused over the years. A quiet time is not to make you spiritual. It just helps you start your day by putting yourself in the right place. Then all day long you begin to fellowship with Him. That's all it is! It's just a discipline. It's not going to make you more spiritual at all.

What prayer is and what scriptures are and what praise is all about is the atmosphere we put ourselves in so that we can be drawn closer and so that the Spirit now can be accommodated instead of accommodating my flesh! I've learned now to accommodate my spirit. That's what we are trying to say. I'm learning, too. That is what Paul is saying in Romans 6.

All right, the third thing. Once you make a choice, and once you learn that you say "No" to the flesh by saying "Yes" to Jesus, then thirdly you must remember that having victory over the flesh cannot be done in your power; it must be done in His. It's got to be God's because the victory is in Him. It's not as if we "get it". Remember, we already have it! But the only way we access it is by faith, and it's Him doing it. It's in His power, not in ours.

Look at verse 14: "For sin shall not master over you, for you are not under law." Now think! "Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Is there a definite article there? Does he mean *the* law?" "No, there's not!" "Do you mean to tell me law is a set of rules which we must obey?" "That's right!" "You mean as spiritual beings, we are not under a set of rules any more?" "That's right. As earth-bound beings, we are under the law: I have to drive a certain speed limit, and when I don't I pay a ticket. I'm under law as an earth-bound being, but as far as my spirit is concerned, it is no longer under law. That is what he is saying." "You mean to tell me, when I put myself up under a set of rules, that's when sin is able to be master over me?" "You got it!"

We're coming into chapter 7 where we are going to see it! Look at 7:5: "For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were *aroused* by the Law were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death." What does it mean to be aroused by the law? The word means to be energized.

"I'm totally confused. Do you mean to tell me that when you say, 'Thou shalt not commit immorality' or whatever, you mean to tell me if I dwell on that commandment, I'm not doing it? That's going to arouse something in my flesh?"

Absolutely! Go on a diet tomorrow. You think food is not important to you today? Go on a diet tomorrow. The moment you go on that diet you're going to start wanting foods that you haven't even thought about for months. Why? Because you've put a law over yourself. What has it attracted? It's attracted the old flesh that has not yet changed! It's still just as evil as it ever was!

As a result of that, we arouse the passions of the flesh. You have to get your eyes on Jesus and off of food. A diet's not going to help you. Let the Holy Spirit now bring out the victory He's already given to you over it but you can't concentrate on the food! You've

got to concentrate on Him. That's the way it works. Put yourself under a law and you arouse the passions of the flesh.

He says in 7:8, "But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin *is* dead." When it's dead, it means it's inactive, right? I mean, if I'm dead, I doubt if I'll be doing much. It's inactive. It's dead.

But when does it become aroused? When you put a law over it. The word opportunity there is the word *apophorme*. It's the word that means the base of a military operation. He's saying the Law is the beachhead that sin works from. It energizes sin. The operations start when they put the Law over top of it. What am I saying? I'm telling you something that if you could see it, it'll set you free from now on! Since you're not under law, quit focusing on what it is you're not supposed to do. Quit trying in your own power, because your flesh will defeat you if you're trying to put yourself under it.

If I took just the first two verses, I could make the most legalistic sermon you've ever heard and make you feel like the most condemned person who ever walked. Why do you think it is that people who preach legalistic kind of stuff are the ones falling into immorality? Because the more you focus on it, the more you're arousing the passions in your own flesh. Focus on Christ! As you focus on Him, presenting yourself to Him, in His grace, you're going to watch the rest of it fall by the wayside.

What is your focus?

You can't do it in your own strength. You never could.

He can! He always said He would. Turn to Him.

You can't do it in your own strength. You never could. He can! He always said He would. Turn to Him. Don't worry about not presenting the members of your body to junk. Present them to Him, and you can't. You've already said "NO" to them by saying "YES" to Him. And remember: It's in His power. It's a work of grace. Grace sanctifies you. God in you sanctifies you. You can't sanctify yourself. That's what knocks legalism right between the eyes. We are no longer under Law; we are under grace. Thank the Lord. There's victory. We've already got it. Live in it!