

Romans 6... 7... 8

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

Romans 6:6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Romans 6:7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

You've seen NBC's *The More You Know* public service announcements. They began airing on the network in 1989 as an attempt to raise public awareness about important issues.

Romans six is Paul's 'the more you know' campaign. He keeps using the words **know** or **knowing**. The more we know about ourselves in Christ the better off we will be.

Knowing this (v6). It's an appeal to know something that is already true, already a spiritual fact. There's nothing to do, just something to realize.

We are to realize **that our old man was crucified with** [Jesus]. The word **old** isn't the normal word for chronological age. It's instead a word that refers to something being worn out and useless. It is used of something that has been destroyed.

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But who is this destroyed **old man**? And how did he get that way?

We need to stop and make a distinction between the **old man** and the flesh.

The **old man** has to do with our natural birth. It is what we are at birth. We are descended from Adam. We inherit what he passed on.

Adam sinned. When he sinned he died. He began to die physically; he died spiritually; he would have gone on to die eternally separated from God. The Lord stepped in and promised to come and save Adam and his descendants. They would need to be born-again to receive a new, living spirit. They would still die physically, but would be resurrected one day to live in glorified bodies forever in Heaven.

We are born with a dead spirit and a sin nature. Sin is imputed to me; I inherit it; I commit individual acts of sin. My natural state and standing as a human being is what is meant by the **old man**.

What is the flesh? It is a little hard to define and commentators are all over the map. The flesh is not my sin nature I was born with. I know that because Paul distinguishes between my sin nature and my flesh.

It is not the physical body itself. The physical body has its needs but they are neutral.

The flesh is something I find at work *within* my physical body. It is that tendency, that inclination, those impulses, to use my physical body in sinful ways.

The flesh has been expertly trained in sinful habits by two sources:

1. First, the world system, in its spirit of rebellion against God, trains the flesh.
2. Second, the devil tempts the flesh.

The **old man** gives in to the flesh. Some of us give in to a greater or lesser degree; but we all, as spiritually dead individuals with a sin nature, yield to the flesh.

There is something we need to know about the **old man**: He was **crucified**. *He is now dead!*

From God's perspective, I am identified with Jesus. When Jesus was crucified, I was crucified with Him. It's a spiritual fact that Paul applies to my **old man** and to my flesh.

Because my **old man was crucified with [Jesus]...** and is dead, **the body of sin might be done away**. The **body of sin** is the flesh. It is the principle I find at work on my physical body impelling me to sin.

Might doesn't mean maybe. It is stating a fact. You've been **crucified**, *therefore* the **body of sin** has been **done away**.

Done away is the key phrase. It means *to render inoperative*. It is a word used to describe making something ineffective by removing its power of control.

If my **old man** is dead, it need not respond to any impulses or inclinations from the flesh. When I **know** (realize) my **old man was crucified** with Jesus, it removes the power of control from the flesh. It is this knowledge that short-circuits my impulses and inclinations to yield to those things entrenched in my physical body.

Until my physical body is redeemed at the resurrection or the rapture I will struggle with the flesh. It remains within me. It is unchangeably evil. But my knowledge of the crucifixion of my old man cuts the power cord.

Thus **we should no longer be slaves of sin...** I need no longer yield my physical body over to the control of the flesh. It's not a matter of feelings, but of the fact I have been crucified with Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Paul introduces a second metaphor. He suggests that the flesh is a master that impels me to sin. Death freed a slave from his master's control. The master could bark all kinds of orders but the slave could no longer respond.

In the 1960 film *Spartacus*, Kirk Douglas played the escaped slave who led a brief but widespread slave rebellion in ancient Rome. At one point in the movie Spartacus says: "Death is the only freedom a slave knows. That's why he is not afraid of it."

We are set free from sin because the old man has died with Jesus on the cross. Now a new man, a free man, lives.

This is not to say that the Christian is perfect, but that sin has ceased to have dominion over him, as a master ceases to have power over a slave when he is dead.

Why do we still sin? We voluntarily yield ourselves back to the power of the flesh!

Look at verses twelve and thirteen for a moment:

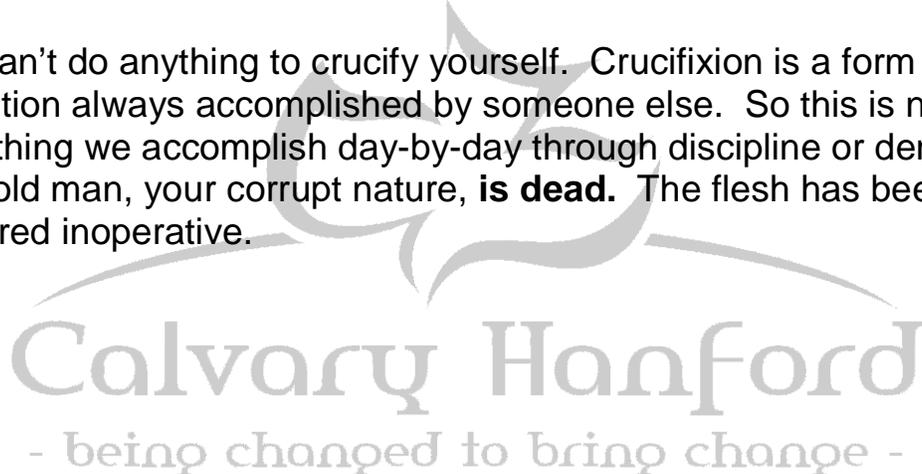
Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Romans 6:13 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.

When we allow the flesh to be continually influenced by the world, and the devil, the flesh will exert a powerful pull on our physical body toward sin. We'll talk more about this later.

Paul was not telling you to do anything. He wanted you to know something. He wanted you to know you'd been crucified with Jesus so you can apply the benefits of being dead.

You can't do anything to crucify yourself. Crucifixion is a form of execution always accomplished by someone else. So this is not something we accomplish day-by-day through discipline or denial. Your old man, your corrupt nature, **is dead**. The flesh has been rendered inoperative.



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