



When in Romans Do as the Righteous Do

"Shouldn't Listen to My Old Man"

Romans 6:3-7

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 the apostle's 'the more you know' campaign. He keeps using the words *know* or *knowing*.

- You see "know" used in verses three and sixteen.
- You see the word "knowing" in verses six and nine.

In fact there are three key words in this chapter, "know," "reckon," and "present."

- "Know" is used in the sense of to believe as true without doubting.
- "Reckon" is found in verse eleven. It means *to count, to compute, to take into account*. It is a banking term.
- "Present" is found in verse thirteen and means *yield*.

Paul was saying that when you take into account what you know to be true you find you can yield to God rather than to sin. You can cooperate with God in His work of sanctifying you day-by-day.

Let's see what it is we are to "know."

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

The idea behind the Greek word for baptized is either *to immerse* or *to overwhelm* something. The Bible uses this idea of being baptized into something in several different ways.

- When a person is baptized in water, they are quite literally immersed with water.
- When they are baptized with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11, Acts 1:5) they are spiritually immersed with the Holy Spirit. We speak of Him being poured-out upon them.
- When they are baptized with suffering (Mark 10:39), they are overwhelmed with suffering.

When Paul said we are “baptized into Christ,” he meant that we are *spiritually* immersed into Jesus when we are justified. Then he goes on to say that our water baptism is a public, outward, testimony of the Lord’s inward, spiritual work.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary puts it like this:

By faith believers are “baptized (placed) into Christ” and thereby are united and identified with Him. This spiritual reality is then graphically witnessed to and pictured by believers’ baptism in water. The one baptism (by water) is the visible picture of the spiritual truth of the other baptism (identification with Christ).

Water baptism does not save you. It does not complete your salvation. It is a public testimony you give that you are saved.

That is not to minimize it’s importance! It is a command. It’s been said by commentators that the idea of an unbaptized believer is foreign to the New Testament. And it would seem from both the Bible and early church history that folks were baptized immediately after receiving Christ.

What Paul wants you to know is that since you were baptized into Christ Jesus and therefore identified with Him, then you were baptized into His [Jesus’] death. It’s a spiritual fact; a spiritual reality.

Romans 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

As far as God is concerned, when Jesus died, you died with Him. When Jesus rose, you rose with Him. We might find it hard to get a handle on this but these are the facts.

Paul applied all this to our daily walk. “Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

It isn't just that raising Jesus brought “glory” to the Father. Jesus was raised, it reads, “by the glory of the Father.” His glory is the sum total of His wonderful attributes. In this case because God is both holy and love, His glory demanded that the sinless Son of God be raised in triumph over sin and death to be in a position to justify lost men and women.

Remember we are dealing in this section of Romans (chapters 6-8) with what happens next, after we are justified. Do we remain ungodly sinners? No, not at all! We are dead to sin and “should walk in newness of life.”

Paul describes that life in verse five:

Romans 6:5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

When Jesus died, we died with Him. Just so, when He rose from the dead, so did we.

A new illustration is introduced. The word used here for “united” does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means *sown or planted at the same time; what sprouts or springs up together*. It is applied to plants and trees that are planted at the same time and that sprout and grow together. The name would be given to a field of grain that was sown at the same time and where the grain sprung up and grew simultaneously.

But the picture is even more intense. In some instances two trees, for example, may touch and begin to overlap and begin to grow together. They become a single top growing from two separate trunks.

Or we may graft two plants or trees together so that they become one. It is reminiscent of Jesus telling us He is the vine and we are the branches.

Jesus and the believer are so united together they can be said to be one plant, one tree, one person.

This is true. It is a spiritual fact. The sooner we **know** it is true, the sooner we will begin to “reckon” it and walk in newness of life as we should.

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.

“Knowing this.” 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 is used of something that has been destroyed.

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

The “old man” has to do with our natural birth. It is what we are at birth. It is everything we inherited from Adam. It is who we are as human beings in Adam. Adam affected both my standing before God, and my state in the world.

My natural state and standing as a human being is what is meant by the old man. Now in chapters one through four we saw how my natural standing is changed by God. When I believe in Jesus Christ, I am no longer ‘in’ Adam but I am ‘in’ Jesus. I have a new standing, a new position.

Here in Romans six Paul seems to be focusing on my natural state or, as we sometimes say, my sin nature.

Because my old man was “crucified with [Jesus]... and is dead, the body of sin might be done away.” The “body of sin” is *not* the “old man.” It is something distinct from the old man. What is it?

The “body of sin” is what is elsewhere called “the flesh.” What is the “flesh?” It is a little hard to define and commentators are all over the map.

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 is a problem in my daily life because it has been expertly trained in sinful habits by three sources:

1. First, the old man trained and ‘imprinted’ himself on the flesh.
2. Second, the world system, in its spirit of rebellion against God, can have an continuing influence on the flesh.
3. Third, the devil seeks to tempt and influence the flesh towards sin.

The old man gives in to the flesh. *But what if our old man is dead?*

Well, if that’s the case, “the body of sin [the flesh] might be done away with.” In other words, with my old man dead, I just “might” be able to do away with the flesh!

“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. It means to disconnect.

Since my old man is dead, it need not respond to any impulses or inclinations from the flesh. When I know my old man was crucified with Jesus, it removes the power of control from the flesh. There is a disconnect between them.

Remember, we are talking about second-stage salvation, what the Bible calls sanctification. It is God working on me to make me righteous and me cooperating with His work.

David Guzik puts it like this:

God calls us, in participation with Him, to do actively day by day with the flesh just what He has already done with the old man - crucify it, make it dead to sin (Galatians 5:24). But when we allow the flesh to be continually influenced by the old man's habits of the past, the world, and the devil, the flesh will exert a powerful pull towards sin.

Until my physical body is redeemed at the resurrection or the rapture I will struggle with the flesh. It remains with me. **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 another metaphor. He suggests that the flesh be seen as a master that enslaves me to sin. In the Roman Empire 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 - i.e., from the sin nature - because the old man has died with Jesus on the cross. I am no longer his slave. Instead a new man, a free man, lives.

God is working in me everyday to make me holy. It is a work I cooperate with. I am to take into account what I know to be true - that my old man is

dead and I do not need to serve the flesh but can instead present myself to God to serve Him.