***Romans 6:6 is not about Experiential Sanctification
RO70-01***

**© Berean Memorial Church of Irving, Texas, Inc. (1977)**

**Romans 6:6**

We have come to a very tough verse in Romans 6:6. This is an area of great controversy, and an area which Satan has entered and caused a great deal of confusion and a great deal of injury to a lot of believers. This is going to be a section that we'll be grinding through for a few sessions. If you have not been with us regularly up to this point, you may be a little lost today, but we won't apologize for that. That's your fault. But we have a section of considerable depth. And you're going to have to follow it carefully. I'm going to do my best to make it clear. And we'll say it several times in several ways, because if Romans 6:6 is wrong in your understanding, you are going to get into a lot of self-deception in your Christian life. And you're going to miss some of the great things that God has for you. It is very important to get Romans 6:6 right.

I'm not talking about the fact that the Mormons have got it wrong, or the Catholics have got it wrong. I'm talking about the fact that sound, solid evangelical Bible teachers miss the boat on this verse. They say it teaches something that it does not, and this leads, consequently, to certain conclusions which you cannot draw from this verse – conclusions which are devastating to the personal individual Christian life. So, you've got to get this one straight.

**Newness of Life**

As you know, the church believer is united with Jesus Christ and His death on the cross and with His resurrection life. We have found this to be the result, Paul has taught us, of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which has joined us to the death and the resurrection of Christ. This union with Christ in His resurrection life is described by the apostle Paul as newness of life. This is in contrast to the oldness of life which we once had in Adam. This newness of life position of the believer finds expression in personal sanctification in holy living. That, of course, is the bottom line of the Christian life. We come from the point of being in Adam; devastatingly dead; hopelessly undone; and, headed for hell – to come from that position in Adam to a newness of life position in Christ, where you now have the capacity for holy and godly living.

**Holiness**

Holiness is the name of the game. The Bible iterates and reiterates that we are to be a holy people. God says again and again: "Be holy as I am holy." And holiness means "set apart to God's standards." It means being set apart to that standard in your experience – ultimately, in your day-by-day living. The individual personal Christian has become considerably degraded in his day-by-day living. And this puzzles him. A Christian of any sensitivity is concerned (is distressed) by the fact that he can do things that are just horrendous in his conduct, and are just plain evil, whether they're of the same kind or the human-good kind. And he finds himself in the kind of a swamp that he's struggling through, trying to get some orientation, and trying to get something firm under his feet relative to his living. And he gets hurt again and again, because as a Christian, you cannot violate the principles of holiness and living, and find prosperity; find personal satisfaction; or, find personal joy.

**Joy**

The joy factor is so absent from much of Christian living. In the Middle Ages, the attempts to find holiness devolved into the concept that the problem was that our bodies are bad. So, the holiness concept of the Middle Ages was to punish your body; destroy it; and, do everything you can. And some of these people, like Martin Luther, in their pursuit of godliness, just about killed themselves because of what they were doing to their bodies, because they viewed that as the problem that was keeping them from godliness and from the joy of walking with God, and knowing that you were under His approval and under His prosperous blessing.

After the era of the Reformation, the holiness concept devolved into a lot of the straight-laced concepts; taboos; and, grim-faced Christians. And there are Christians who follow that pattern today. It is that grimness – gritting your teeth; no smiling; and, no fun on Sundays. All that is considered sanctification in experience. That is not the case at all. It's a perverted kind. It's just as perverted as it was in the Middle Ages where they were destroying the body.

The problem is how in the world do you go from justification to sanctified living, so that you are not embarrassed just in your own soul, apart from anybody knowing what you do? You're just embarrassed in your own soul at what you discover yourself doing: the kind of lying you will do; the kind of cheating you will do; the kind of compromising with morality that you will do; the feelings that you will have; and, the mental attitudes that only you know that you have, and they're humiliating to you.

Well, what's the problem? The problem is going from a justified status that you hold to making your position of being set apart to Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and experiential reality. And that's what we're getting into in Romans. When you start approaching the concept of holiness, what you are talking about is creating a group of people (a local congregation) which becomes an awful, awesome instrument in the hand of God. These are people who have captured the practice of godly living. That is an awesome instrument in the hand of God, and it strikes terror into the soul of Satan.

**Romans 6:6 has Nothing to do with Daily Godly Living**

Well, Romans 6 is a key passage for a variety of views on experiential sanctification. How to live a godly life in your day-by-day living is based upon Romans 6:6 by some people, and that is wrong. I hope you have learned that already. Romans 6:6 has nothing to do with living a godly life in your day-by-day experience. It has nothing to do with experiential sanctification. Therefore, any views of experiential sanctification, and any theories about how to make real your position in Christ in your experience, that are based upon this verse, are wrong. Any teaching; any book you read; any explanation; or, any commentary you read that draws daily Christian living out of this verse is wrong. It's not there.

I'm not saying that what they teach in itself may be wrong. It may still be right, but it's based on Scripture elsewhere, later down the line in Romans. It is not based on this verse. And when you base it on this verse, I'm going to show you the great hazard that you run, because you draw certain conclusions from this verse. If you think that this verse is applying to your day-by-day Christian living, you can draw certain conclusions that will really foul you up. It will devastate you. And that's exactly what the devil wants you to do. That's why Satan is in the holiness-teaching business. He's trying to get you confused at a critical point. So, count yourself blessed and fortunate that, in spite of the bad weather, and the snow, and whatnot, and the ice, you made it out today.

**The Book of Romans**

All these views, even though taught by respected teachers of experiential sanctification based on Romans 6:6 are wrong. Now, to see this, let's review a little bit about the structure of Romans. To begin with, the first thing you have in Romans is the introduction. You have that in Romans 1:1-15. That's the way the book begins. Then you have a first major section which we can summarize with the word "doctrinal." This major section runs from Romans 1:16 through Romans 8:39, and you will see immediately that that is the section in which we are currently studying. We are in the doctrinal section of the book of Romans.

A second major section we may call "historical," and we have not yet come to that. That's ahead of us. That is in Romans 9:1 through Romans 11:36. That is historical. The doctrinal section tells us how the gospel saves the sinner. The historical section tells us how the gospel relates to the Jewish people, and how the gospel relates to Israel.

Then there is a third major section which we may simply call "practical," or a variety of some such words, but it runs from Romans 12:1 through Romans 15:13. This tells how the gospel affects our conduct. And when you get to the third section on the practical level, there's a lot of instruction about Christians to do this; Christian should not do this; this is how you should live; and, this is not how you should live. It has very practical conduct applications in a variety of ways. It touches your personal life; your social life; your moral life; your sexual life; the life of government; and, so on. It goes into a variety of practical applications.

**The Urgent Need for the Gospel**

Now let's take a look at the pattern of this doctrinal section in Romans 1:16 through Romans 8:39. That's the section that we're in. We're dealing with a doctrinal factor. The first thing that Paul shows in this section from Romans 1:16 through Romans 8:39 (through the end chapter 8) – the first thing that Paul deals with in this section is to show the urgent need for the gospel. And he did that in Romans 1:16 through Romans 3:20. We've been through that in thorough depth. Paul, in the first part of the doctrinal section, shows how great and urgent is the need for the gospel. What he does here is he shows that everyone is legally guilty before God because of the sins which he has committed, and that he is morally corrupt by nature. That's all. That's the big thing. In this section on the urgency of the need for the gospel, he tries to show that everybody is legally guilty because they've been guilty of sins (plural), and that they are morally corrupt by nature. They have a sin (singular) nature.

**Sins and Sin**

So, the basis of spiritual death and of separation from God are personal trespasses (sins) and inherited (sin nature) sin. These two words, "sins" and "sin" are the key features that he deals with in this first section. For sins committed, we are legally guilty before God the judge. So, we're under condemnation. And due to the inward sin nature, we are morally corrupted. Thus we are perishing. So, we have sins that make us legally guilty before God the judge; and, we have a sin nature that has morally corrupted us. So, we are doomed and perishing.

**How God Solves the Problem of Sins**

Then, secondly, the next thing Paul does is show how the gospel solves the problem of sins. And he does that in Romans 3:21 through Romans 5:11. We have gone extensively into that section. That was how God solves this problem of sins (acts of transgressions).

**How the Gospel Solves the Problem of Sin**

Then the third thing that Paul does is show how the gospel solves the sin problem for man. And he does that in Romans 5:12 through Romans 8:39. Notice that that is the section in which Romans 6:6 is to be found. The third thing that Paul does under this major doctrinal section is to show us how God uses the gospel to solve the sin nature problem.

First, he shows how the gospel is necessary and urgently needed by everyone, because everyone is guilty of sins and is corrupted morally in nature. Then he shows how God has solved the problem of those individual sins, and then he shows how God has solved the problem of our sin nature.

If you wanted to take the trouble to research, you would find that the word "sin" (singular) occurs only three times up to Romans 5:12. Only three times in this section does the word "sin" appear. But once you hit Romans 5:12, and all the way through Romans 8:39, the word "sin" crops up 39 times. Up to that time, the word "sin" (singular – the correct nature) is touched upon only three times, because he's not talking about that. But once he hits Romans 5:12, there's a great divide. There is a very dramatic divide between verses 11-12, and Paul now moves into the subject of how the gospel meets your "sin" problem. From Romans 5:12 on, the word "sin" starts cropping up 39 times. Before that, the word "sin" occurred only three times. It is very important to observe this line of demarcation. Previously, his argument was dealing with "sins." That's up through Romans 5:11. When he starts with Romans 5:12, he now ceases dealing with transgressions, and starts dealing with the sin nature (the corrupt nature).

Now, in both sections, Paul handles the explanation of how the gospel solves the problem. First, he tells you how it is solved by God judicially; and, secondly, how it is solved experientially. So, when he deals with "sins," as he does first, he tells you what God as judge has done to solve sins. Then he tells you what God has done to solve the problem of your daily sinning in your experience. When he gets to sin, which is what we're interested in now, he does exactly the same thing. First, he says, "Here's what God as judge has done to preserve His own integrity relative to your sin nature – "the fact I'm going to take into My heaven a person with a corrupt nature."

Now, if God is going to take a person with a corrupt nature into His heaven, He has to do something to preserve His integrity. And the first thing that Paul explains is relative to God's integrity. Then he tells what God does experientially, relative to man's daily living. Only after he has established what He does judicially does he then say, "Here is how I am acting to your daily godly living – how I'm solving the problem of the fact that you have a corrupt nature in your daily living.

Now, the judicial part is in Romans 5:12 through Romans 7:6. Now we have reduced it to a little closer segment. Where does Romans 6:6 come in? Under the segment where God is judicially dealing with the sin nature – where God is telling you how He preserves His integrity relative to your sin nature. He is not talking about your daily experience in Romans 6:6. The daily experience part begins at Romans 7:7 and goes through Romans 8:39. And until you get to Romans 7:7, you are not talking about day-by-day godly Christian living. But once you hit Romans 7:7, that's what the subject is all about. Now he's telling what God has done so that you are able to deal with that corrupt nature, and yet have the joy of holiness in your daily experience.

That's what God is after: holy people. But we've got a sin nature problem. So, God says, "First I'm going to tell you how I've solved it with Myself as judge. Then I'm going to tell you how I'm going to solve that with you in your experience.

So, for that reason, all theories we say of experiential sanctification that are based on Romans 6:6 are wrong, because Romans 6:6 (I hope you now see) does not deal with experience of daily living. It only deals with what God has done as the judge of the universe toward your sin nature – what God has done to preserve His own integrity, not to enable you to be a godly person.

Now let's take a look at the nature of Romans 6:6 – the implications of this text. Romans 6:6 then tells how God the judge dealt once-for-all with the sin nature problem to preserve His Holiness while saving man. He placed all those were in Adam representatively on the cross in Christ. Romans 6:6 therefore deals with something which is done, and completely done, once-for-all in the past, not with current living. That's the other factor to remember – that this section on the judicial dealing with the sin nature deals only with what was done in the past.

If all of the language in the Scripture is talking about something that happened in the past, how on earth are you going to take this Scripture and say, "What this passage is telling me is what I should do now (today) so that I can live a godly life?" It's not talking about present. It's only talking about something in the past – all the time in the past.

**The Aorist and Perfect Greek Tenses**

In Romans 6:1 through Romans 7:6, where the section on judicial dealing with our sin nature ends, all of the Greek tenses tell us something very important. This may be heavy, but you're going to have to have it. I'll apologize for the stiff medicine, but you have to understand this – these two Greek tenses. The aorist tense is a tense that talks about something that happened at a point in time in the past. Here you are now. You look back to something that happened in the past – a point action. The perfect tense: here you are now, and you look back to something that happened again in the past as a point action. In both cases, it's all completed, but in the perfect tense, it has a little more emphasis, and that is that what happened in the past has continued to the present, and is continuing on. The aorist tense simply says that it happened back there: period; completed; once-for-all; and, done with. The aorist tense says that. But the perfect tense says that it happened back there; completed; but, its effects have continued, and it adds a little different emphasis upon present results.

Now, if this section of Romans 6:1 through Romans 7:6 (in which Romans 6:6 is found) deals with experiential sanctification and holiness in daily living, then you would have expected to have found the present tense, which deals with a continuing situation right here where you are living now. You should find present after present after present tense, because God is talking to you about what you should do now in order to be a holy person. But that is not the case.

In the King James Version translation, the verses in this section from Romans 6:1 through Romans 7:6 are often misleading, because they use the English present tense to translate these aorist tenses and perfect tenses that you have in the Greek. And that is deceptive. Some of the versions try to correct that. But in the King James, if you're reading it there, of course, that's where this verse has been the springboard for a very radically wrong view of personal sanctification. We're going to look at that in a moment. But I just want to very briefly show you something that we see when we look at the verb tenses in the Greek. And I have to be technical because this settles the argument, and it is not something that you can see from the English. I'm going to show you that it is in the Greek, and the result is that you do not find present tenses in Romans 6:1 through Romans 7:6. Therefore, it's not continuous present. You only find aorist tenses and perfect tenses. But sometimes, as I say, it's deceptive in the King James because of the way it was translated. So, it sounds like a present tense.

Take a look at Romans 6:2. We'll run through this section: "God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer in it?" Well, this should not be translated as "are dead to sin." It should be translated as "died to sin." "Are dead" emphasizes the present condition. But what the Greek says is "died." It is an aorist tense.

Verse 3: "Don't you know that as many of us as we're baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" That translation is all right. "Were baptized" conveys the fact that it happened in the past. It's an aorist tense.

Notice verse 4. It is an aorist tense: "Therefore, we are buried." That is wrong. "Therefore, we *were* buried." "Are buried" emphasizes the present condition. But it is "We were buried." It's a past thing that happened once-and-for-all: "with Him by baptism unto death," and so on.

Look at verse 5. Here you have a perfect instead of an aorist: "For we have been planted together in the likeness of His death:" "Had been planted" or "have grown together." It is a completed act in the past. So, it stands to the present today. That translation is all right verse.

Look at verse 6: "Knowing this: that our old man is crucified with Him." How much grief; how much frustration; and, how much human agony that translation of a present tense idea has caused among believers, you wouldn't believe. What that says there is an aorist tense, and shat it says there is: "was crucified:" "Knowing this: that old man *was* crucified with Him." It's a past concluded action – "that the body of sin might be destroyed," and that, again, is a past concluded action. "That might be destroyed" is also aorist: "Our old man *was* crucified so that it *was* destroyed." This is a past action.

Notice verse 7: "For He who died (not 'is dead'):" "For He that is dead is free from sin." That is wrong. "Is dead" is aorist tense. It should have been translated as: "He who *died*." That is a path action to convey that it's done for.

Notice verse 8: "Now if we be dead with Christ." That's not "be dead." It's aorist: "If we *died* with Christ." A past action again is the emphasis that the text places verse.

Verse 10: "For in that He died, He died unto sin once." "He died" is aorist. Therefore, again, this is a completed past action. And the word "once" in the Greek means "once-for-all:" "He died in the past, once-for-all."

When you get to verse 11, it begins with this word "likewise." And that's referring back to verse 10, about a completed dying in the past: "Likewise, reckon you also yourself to be dead." When? Now. Oh, my, how many preachers have gotten up and quoted verse 11 to people, and said, "Now, folks, if you want to start a good godly Christian life (a clean-cut life) for the Lord of joy and power and service, take Romans 6:11 and claim it as your own, and reckon yourself dead to your sin nature. That's where you begin." That isn't what it says all. The "likewise" refers back to verse 10: "Likewise, as a once-for-all, He died, so, likewise you once-for-all recognize in the past that you died." It's an understanding of something. Just because you recognize the fact that something of your relationship to the old Adam is dead and done with is not going to make you a godly Christian.

That's the implication – that if you will begin by recognizing that you have experienced a death in the past with Christ, that now everything's going to start coming up roses. Baloney. It's going to keep coming up carnality and sin, no matter how much you recognize, and say to yourself: "I died with Christ. I died with Christ." What we have been taught here is a holiness by psyching ourselves. That is not how God works. You do not psyche yourself into holiness. There is a very powerful system incorporated in Scripture that transforms a justified person into a godly, holy, powerful, happy, successful person. And we're going to get to that. And please don't be frustrated when I say that we're going to get to that. We have to go step-by-step.

I had a doctor's wife call me from Dallas this week, and they just rang the buzzer up in the tape room. So, I answered the phone. She didn't know who was on the phone, and she explained who she was. She said, "We've been listening to Dr. Danish's tapes for three or four years now. We listened to several the other night, and we came across one where it was dealing with personal unhappiness and depression. And my husband has been going through some real trials on this, and we got to the end of the tape, and he said, "Now I'm going to give you the two words that are the two factors that describe the basis of all personal depression and happiness. And that's where the tape ended. And he said that he would go into that next time. And my husband was in such a frenzy, he said, 'Call immediately.' He said, 'You know how Dr. Danish is – how he talks, and how he does that.'"

So she said, "We need to get those next tapes right away." She wanted to know if we could just mail those to her immediately, because we had to end up there." And I told her that we'd be glad to do that. And after a while, she got listening to the voice, and she caught on. And she said, "Is this Dr. Danish?" I said, "Yes." And then she apologized for making those cracks about me. But anyhow, I wasn't going to let her know. But anyhow, we have to stop someplace, and you have to keep coming back to get the full story. This is the kind of serial we run.

So, we are going to get back to the significance of these later verses. But I just want to kind of clue you in the direction of thinking: you're not going to psyche yourself into holiness. That's the point. And that is what we often taught on the basis of verses like verse 11.

Look at verse 17. Here you have another aorist tense: "But God be thanked, that whereas you were the servants of sin, you have obeyed." And that's all right. That is a completed act in the past – a saving obedience: "You have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you:" "Delivered" is aorist – the teaching about salvation that you received in the past. It's not some teaching about how to live a godly Christian life that you're receiving now. This is something that you're operating on that was delivered to you in the past that has caused you to come into a judicial relationship to God relative to your old sin nature. That's all these verses are talking about.

Then notice Romans 6:18: "Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness." There again, you have the aorist tense: "being freed from sin" in the past. That is a completed act.

Notice verse 22: "But now, being made free from sin." It is in the past: "But being freed from sin." A completed action is the idea.

Romans 7:4: "Wherefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law:" "were made dead." It's an aorist completed act. It's a completed act in the past. "You were made dead to the law by the body of Christ that you should be married:" "should have become." That is aorist – in the past. It's not that "you should be married," but that "you should have become" – another past action.

Look at one more in verse 6. Here are examples of two aorist tenses: "But now we are delivered from the Law." It is not "are delivered," but "we were discharged from the Law." This is a past definite action: "That being dead." It is not "being dead," but it is "that having died to that in which we were held."

Do you see how all of these present tenses convey the idea that there's something right now currently that you're involved in? And in this whole section from Romans 6:1 through Romans 7:6, I've run down every verb with you, and every one of them is a strong aorist tense which talks about something that happened at a point in the past, or one of them was a perfect tense – a point in the past with the effects continuing.

So, the point to get straight, first of all, if you're going to interpret this verse, is that it's all in the past. Romans 6:6 does not speak about anything having to do with your experience now. It is only God's judicial actions. Not one of the references is that to believer's union with Christ that indicates a death to be died in the present by the believer.

All passages refer to a death in the past to which the believer has been joined. Romans 6:6 does not teach a death which the Christian is to seek to die now. That's the point. That's the self-crucifixion crowd. And I've had my share of that crowd around here. Usually it's a women's group of some kind – the self-crucifixion girls who go about trying to unite themselves to godly living, and to establish holiness, by somehow crucifying themselves with Christ now (a present condition). And that is exactly what this passage is trying to keep us from falling into. Paul is dealing with a completed judicial act of God, not with something that God does in your experience now.

So, Romans 6:11, that we looked at already, is not telling you to achieve experimental sanctification by psyching yourself into the death of Christ. Paul does not teach that God is going to make a sanctification real in your experience just because you make some kind of claim of an inward crucifixion with Christ.

**Experiential Sanctification**

Let's take a look at this issue of experiential sanctification – sanctification in your holy living. I should begin by reading to you Ephesians 1:4, which says, "According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Ephesians 1:4 says that before God ever put you on the list of those who elect to salvation, He had it as His purpose that you would be a holy and experientially sanctified person. So, there is no doubt that God calls upon us to be holy people. That's a biblical goal. It is the will of God that Christians should live godly lives. Holy living is living which is not in conflict with the integrity of God; which is based on Bible doctrine; and, is compatible to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Holy living was the first duty of believers in the New Testament. And one great example of that was the situation of Ananias and Sapphira, where their very lives were lost. For what reason? Because they violated the first principle of biblical New Testament Christianity holiness on the part of God's people. You're going to be part of God's family, and going to claim Christ as Savior, and going to claim to be in Christ, then you better get yourself straightened out to know that that means living a holy life.

God doesn't take lives generally today, but he takes a great toll out of believers who have not learned that any better than Ananias and Sapphira learned it. And you will pay for it if you do not learn it. God will take from you. He will keep you from being successful. He will deny you joy. He will deny you prosperity. He will deny you stability. He will deny all the things that your soul would seek simply because you have not learned how to be a holy godly person. So, you're violating His integrity in your dealings with Him.

Satan, of course, is highly opposed to holiness. Such a local church congregation is a weapon in the hands of God. This is a great terror to Satan. The question is, how do we achieve it? Satan's way of neutralizing a viable doctrine, such as this one on holiness, which so threatens his war with God, is to distort the doctrine, and then to promote the perversion. And has he ever done it with the holiness doctrine? Satan has grabbed this one; distorted it; and, then he has promoted the perversion to no end.

**John Wesley**

Now the doctrine of experiential sanctification has been perverted basically since the time of John Wesley in the middle of the 18th century. John Wesley, as you know, is the founder of the Methodist church. John Wesley was a very godly man. He brought a breath of fresh air into the stayed, and dull, and dreary, and carnal Church of England. The problem was that in his desire to do something for his converts, because he was going up and down the land, and I mean all the derelicts and the down-and-outers were being reached. It was a great movement of evangelism in England, and it flowed over here eventually to the Great Awakening that we had in colonial America as the result of the Methodist revivals in England. And indeed, a work of God was taking place.

However, John Wesley became concerned with what his converts were going to do further down the line. It was a great thing to come out of the slums and out of the degradation that these people lived in, and to find themselves in the newness of life in Christ Jesus. But Wesley said, "What about further down the line when all this initial thrill and joy is lost? Where will people go then? So, he wanted to put before them a further goal to seek.

Now he was on the right track. The Bible does exactly that. The Bible says, "Start building a spiritual maturity structure in your soul, and start building edification within yourself." You do that through the intake of the Word of God. And the whole system of the grace system of perceiving spiritual things and the personal development – that's what leads eventually to personal godly living. And that is the goal that excites us *after* we are born-again. But at this point, Satan came in and produced a monumental twist of doctrine that was devastating eventually to the Methodist movement.

**The Eradication of the Sin Nature**

That was because John Wesley fell into the trap of teaching the eradication of the sin nature. He began teaching his converts that someplace down the line, you will come to a point when you will find yourself perfectly sinless. You will find every inclination to sin withdrawn. You will find every evil thought taken out of your mind. Your soul (he summed it up in the words:) would be filled with perfect love.

Now this was very heady stuff. It was very exciting. And people flocked to seek the ultimate, complete sanctification of freedom from all innate inborn sin.

Well, the motivation was right, but the deception was a satanic. In time, Satan parlayed this initial error into a monumental deception, which now destroys millions of potential believers and productive Christians today. For, in time, the Wesley movement cooled off from this sanctification idea. And I'll tell you some of the reasons, because you can see the problems they immediately ran into with it. So, the Methodists tried to start stabilizing this, and a new group came up and said, "You're not true to our founder. You're revisionists, and we're not going to follow you."

**The Holiness Movement and Charles Finney**

So, the holiness movement, as it was called, evolved out of the early Methodist operation. And the holiness movement was given a great impetus by a fantastic evangelist named Charles Finney, who picked up John Wesley's concept of eradication of the old sin nature, and attributed that eradication to a thing that he called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now the baptism of the Holy Spirit was interjected with an error. And all these things, had they been sound students of Bible doctrine, they would not have made this error. But Charles Finney believed that man was so innately evil, and had such a lethargy upon him relative to his interest in the kingdom of God, which, of course, the Bible teaches us that no one seeks God. No, not one. It's a movement of the Spirit of God. But Finney thought he could override it by creating great emotional meetings. His meetings were such an emotion, that it was a frenzy like you wouldn't believe, because he believed that he had to thrust people into the kingdom of God by getting them into this high volume of emotion.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer used to tell us in evangelism classes, since he knew Finney so well, that when Finney came into town, and the word spread that Cindy had arrived, women would swoon and faint, and would go berserk because they knew that this guy was there, because they knew what kind of feelings they were going to have. They were driven by a great emotional zeal.

Of course, you can see how that is right down there in the Pentecostal charismatic movement today. Today, it's called "being slain the spirit," and the women will do the same thing in the men too. And pretty soon you've got a church full of people lying in the aisles, and over benches, and everything else, because they've get knocked out by the spirit in this exhilarating, emotional experience.

**Agnes Osman and the Pentecostal Movement**

Well, in the early 19th century, the holiness movement was off and running. And it got a new lease on life as it was beginning to ebb at the beginning of the twentieth century, when Agnes Ozman began babbling in tongues as a result of asking God to enable her to speak in tongues as the evidence that she had the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So, on New Year's Day, 1900, the Pentecostal movement was born through a woman. And the holiness movement had a new surge forward, still based upon John Wesley's original error of the eradication of the old sin nature. Where did John Wesley get that idea to begin with, incidentally? We should point that out to you.

Well, he went to Romans 6:6, and he read, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, and henceforth we should not serve sin." John Wesley says, "That is marvelous! Here is the way for daily experiential godly living." He didn't catch Paul's line of argument, and realize that Paul isn't even talking about experiential sanctification here. He's talking about how God the judge has dealt with this issue. But he looked at that and he said, "There's our old man. That's our sin nature which was crucified with Him. The body of sin (that sin nature) can be destroyed. Wonderful! That henceforth we should not serve sin. Marvelous!" He had all kinds of terms misinterpreted right there. The whole concept of eradication was based upon that verse. The result was a series down the line of confusions.

Well, the twist from the Pentecostal movement's speaking in tongues and the healing bit was carried to the new heights in the mid-1950s of our era when the Neo-Pentecostal movement was born (or as it is now called, the charismatic movement was born), when the holiness eradication concept spilled over into all the denominations. So, all the mainline denominations now were contaminated by the idea that began with John Wesley of the eradication of the old sin nature.

So, Christians today vainly pursue a holiness that is based upon a perversion of doctrine all the way down the line. Had anybody been paying attention to these leaders anywhere down the line, they would have caught Wesley's error, and they would have stopped the thing. Right down the line, if you want to follow this in greater detail, we have this on the Philippians tapes in the Epaphroditus series that follows this historically through in greater detail. And you'll see that at every point, the clear doctrine of Scripture would have stopped the thing. But Satan was pumping the error further and further up the line.

Now, the eradication theory itself, sometimes pursued vainly as a second blessing after salvation of entire sanctification, which removes completely the old sin nature, has had problems from the beginning. It has been a source of great agony. It has been the kind of religion that has driven people into insane asylums. It has been a great point of frustration, particularly for those who finally feel that they have arrived at something. They have finally achieved a moment of forward motion in the progress of their Christian lives. And not they have achieved the sinlessness that they had hoped for. So, they get up and make a big testimony about it. And they praise the Lord, and they're very excited, and they tell what God has done for them, and how He has removed all this, and now they've made this step forward, only to discover that the corrupt nature is still there. What this does to a person mentally, emotionally is traumatic.

Every now and then, somebody will stand up in these periods when we have times of testimony among ourselves, and they'll make some statement of that nature, of something that they have made in the forward progress of the Christian life. A man stood up one time, I recall, and said how he finally had conquered smoking, and how the Lord had really released him from that. And he really carried on about that. And I just said to myself, "I just wish you'd have waited a few months before you gave us that testimony." And sure enough, he was back on the weed in a short time – now so humiliated because he had stood up and made such a big issue of the fact that God had released this from him, only to discover that his old sin nature wasn't as overcome as he thought it was. Then pretty soon he just evaporated.

This business of the eradication of the sin nature is pursued by thousands and thousands of people. It is further claimed by thousands of Christians, and the results are just as devastating today as they were back in John Wesley's day. If you come back for the next session, you'll hear the rest of the story.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)