***Do not Give Control to the Sin Nature
RO74-01***

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Today we are taking up a new section in Romans 6:12-14. We're looking at the subject of "Living with a Deposed Nature."

Romans 6:11 summarizes Paul's explanation of what he has been saying in verses 1-10 of the consequences to a Christian of his position in Christ. Believers are told, therefore, in this verse, that they are to recognize certain things as being a fact of life. Certain things are true about Jesus Christ in verse 10, and which consequently, are also true about every individual believer.

For that reason, the first part of verse 11 says, "Likewise, reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto the sin nature;" that is, likewise, referring back to verse 10, as is true about Jesus Christ, as He is dead to all the demands of sin and the sin nature, and the sovereign authority of the sin nature, so we are to realize that it's a fact of life that we are dead to it.

Then the latter part of verse 11 gives the positive aspect. The first part of verse 11 gives the negative aspect. The second part gives the positive aspect. It declares that the likeness to Jesus Christ also is related to His being alive unto God now through Jesus Christ. As once Christ came under the sovereign authority of the sin nature, and of the guilt of sin, when He hung on the cross, so now He is under the sovereign authority of the living God. We share both of those.

Now in verses 12-14, that we begin today, Paul is in effect giving a direct answer to the attack by the legalists against grace which were made at the beginning of this chapter. In verses 1-2, this objector has argued that if Paul is right about salvation apart from all human doing, then a Christian should stimulate the grace of God by living under the sovereign rule of the sin nature. But Paul has shown that God, as the moral judge of the universe, and as the moral judge of mankind, has broken the sovereign rule of the sin nature over the Christian. This has been purely a judicial action on the part of God. This is a judicial solution for the sin nature, which we've all inherited from Adam, and which separates man from God. It is automatically applied to every believer who is in Christ as a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

So, what Paul has established is that each of us has been released from the sovereign authority and control of the sin nature. We are no longer slaves to having to do what is evil in terms of human good, as well as sins. We are released from the evil of human good.

What do you think is bringing down the great American republic today? The great American republic is being brought down because we have a government that is made up of men disoriented to divine viewpoint principles who are pursuing, with a vengeance, human good. And human good is evil, and human good produces evil in the sight of God, and the consequences are destructive of personal freedoms; personal liberties; personal well-being; and, of personal happiness. Our society is governed by men disoriented to God thinking.

Therefore, these very highly esteemed citizens who lead our country are evil people, and that is a shock. The average evangelical Christian would foam at the mouth if he heard you say such a thing – that these fine, esteemed leaders of our country are evil men. Well, they are good, in terms of human good, and in terms of human standards, but because they are pursuing what the sin nature directs them to do for the welfare of society under Satan's control and direction, they are pursuing a good which is evil in the sight of God.

So, God has broken even your evil in terms of your human good. There are none of us who did not need to be released from pursuing human good or sins. We needed that release from God, and that's exactly what we got.

Now, the objectors suggestion, therefore, is impossible to follow because God the judge has removed the sin nature from authority, and He has replaced it with a new authority – that of God the Holy Spirit.

So, here in verse 12-14, Paul concludes this rebuttal, which he has been engaged in, in all these verses since the first part of this chapter. He concludes it by forbidding the indulgence of the sin nature as if it's still held authority over us. Oh indeed, an individual Christian can let the sin nature run things in his life. You can do that, but you do not have to do that. Before you were saved, you had to do that. Now that you are a Christian, you don't have to do that. The grace of God, the judge of all, has made a judicial action as a judge, and He has released us from that enslavement.

So, beginning of verse 12, we read, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body." The word "sin" is the Greek word "hamartia." "Hamartia" is a familiar word to us for "sin." It refers in the singular generally to the sin nature. When it is in the plural, as "sins," then it is referring to individual acts of evil. Also by this context, he has been referring to the evil nature in us. So, when he again picks up this word "hamartia," it is in the same trend as he has been using it in terms of the sin nature, which produces two kinds of evil: human good; and, acts of individual violation of God's moral standards (the will of God) – these acts of sin.

**The Sin Nature**

The Greek has "*the* sin," because it is seeking to be very specific about the evil nature in terms of what we inherited from father Adam. This is therefore referring to the universal condition of sin as a nature, which is located in the genetic structure of the human body. This sin nature is never eradicated in the believer, so it is a fact of the Christian life that has to be dealt with. Any Christian is very foolish who does not understand that the sin nature is a fact of life with him, and he has to understand what his relationship to it is – what the condition is within himself relative to the sin nature, if he is to be able to find happiness, and if he is to be able to put himself in a position where he can produce divine good, which is the basis of rewards in eternity.

The basic factor in dealing with this issue of one's sin nature as a Christian is to realize the very simple fact that Paul has been stressing in the verses preceding. And that is that the pre-salvation sovereignty of the sin nature has been terminated completely. The pre-salvation sovereignty that the sin nature exercised over your life has been terminated forever. This does not mean that it is going to be terminated. This does not mean that you can do something to terminate it. The language in which this has been presented (and we've been stressing this to you), the Greek language indicates that it's done with once-for-all permanent forever.

This termination of the authority of the sin nature was accomplished by God through Jesus Christ without any contribution on the part of the believer whatsoever. All we did was accept the fact. God the judge has acted alone in our behalf to remove this barrier to our fellowship with Him. Yet, the legalists, who are opposing grace, suggest that we should permit this defeated monarch to rule in our lives.

This would be tantamount to going to the Shah of Iran, and telling him to continue ruling in his country – to send orders and directives to his people. You would say, "Well, that would be really stupid for you to tell the Shah of Iran to direct his people to do something, and to direct his government to do something." The Shah of Iran has been deposed. He is a monarch with certain prestige. That's true. But he has no authority anymore in Iran. He cannot tell the Ruhollah Khomeini what to do at all. He has been removed from authority. The Shah today is in a similar position that the sin nature is.

Now the Shah does have a great deal of power. He carries a great deal of clout indeed. And if the people of Iran were to permit him to exercise that clout, he could do some very impressive things. If the leadership of Iran were to permit him to exercise the power and the influence he has, he would be very influential. But unless they permit him, he is incapacitated.

That is the first thing that you must understand about that evil thing with which you were born, inherited from Adam – the sin nature. It has had its snarling teeth pulled once-and-for-all. And all it can do is gum you. It can no longer wound you. Any injury that you receive from it is one that you must very deliberately expose yourself to.

"Let not sin, therefore." We come to this next important word. The word "therefore" is the word "oun." The word "oun" is a little Greek particle, and it indicates here a consequence in view of what Paul has shown to be true in verses 1-11 about our union with Jesus Christ. This is a rather favorite word with him. He keeps throwing that word "oun" in. And when you see that in the Greek text, you know that now he is going to summarize it. Now he is going to bring it all together. Now he has it all sorted out, and he's going to make a statement of fact of what he has been talking about up to that point.

**Application of Doctrine**

So, when we find this word sitting here in verse 12, we know that Paul's logical mind is now going to lay out for us what we should have grasped from what he has said previously. He indicates here by this word that what he is going to say now is built upon what he has been saying in verses 1-11. It's an inference which must follow from the fact that, through Jesus Christ, God has broken the power of the sin nature, while He has, at the same time, preserved His divine integrity. And Paul's logical mind is indicating to us with this word that here he has a conclusion. He is very exact in explaining doctrine, but he is also very exact in applying it to experience.

We have some people who love to study doctrine, and that's as far as they go. And they know the doctrine, but they're very slow in applying it. We have other people who say, "Oh, I don't care about learning doctrine. It's just a matter of how we love one another." And what they are interested in is experience and application. Both of those are wrong. Paul says, "Now I've been very careful in explaining the doctrine to you. I've been very careful in explaining to you what is true about your sin nature. Now I'm going to explain to you what should be the consequent decision on your part, and the attitude of mind in view of these truths (in view of what I have taught you)." Applying doctrine in a personal way with your personal life enables you to be in compatibility with God's integrity, and consequently, to receive great blessing. You are not going to receive great blessing from God just because you learn doctrine. But you are going to receive great blessing from God because you have learned doctrine, and then applied it into your experience, because now you are compatible with the integrity of God, and then God can bless. God never blesses except from His integrity. If you ever forget that, you can just forget ever having any kind of significant personal life or any rewards in heaven.

Happiness is a result of living according to the doctrine that one has learned. Let me give you just one verse. John 13:17 stresses this principle – that happiness is the result of living according to the doctrine that one has learned. Jesus says, "If you know these things, you are happy if you do them." He doesn't say, "You are happy because you *know* these doctrines." He says, "You are happy if you do them."

Now, Paul is talking about something that is a negative here – something that should not be. So we have this word "not," and in the Greek language, it's the word "me," to negate what he is about to say, and it modifies the word "reign." The word "reign" is this word "basileuo." "Basileuo" is a word which means "to rule as king." This is a word that connotes an absolute monarch with unrestricted authority. The sin nature was once such a monarch. The sin nature once ruled in us under a "basileuo" authority; that is, it was an absolute monarch. It answered to no one, and it could not be denied any of its demands.

What Paul is saying is that the sin nature should not still be treated as if it were that kind of a monarch in your life, and as if you could follow the suggestion that was made in verses 1-2 about permitting the sin nature to exercise this kind of absolute authority in your life. It is in the present tense, and that's a tense that indicates that we are continually not to so treat the sin nature. Anytime the Greek uses present, that means a continual condition. It's active voice, which means that the Christian himself has to decide to hold this viewpoint. You have to get your own thinking straight relative to your old sin nature. And it's an imperative, which means that it's a command of God that we have this kind of a proper mental attitude toward the condition of the sin nature within us. Once it was an absolute monarchy. Now, it is a deposed monarch.

Paul tells us something about the condition that existed with the people in Rome to whom he was writing. It so happens that what he is doing here, in the grammar, is using a present imperative. The present imperative tells us something about the condition relative to this particular point of the people to whom he was writing. Anytime you have this present tense, and you use it with a command mood (this imperative mood), and it has a negative (present imperative, plus a negative), you are talking about a prohibition. But you're talking about a prohibition which is already in progress. This present tense tells us that that's a continual thing that's happening. Anytime you have that kind of a negative, the Greek says, "Uh-oh, you people are already doing this. You people are already guilty of doing this very thing."

So, what he is telling them is to stop doing something which is already in progress. He's forbidding the Roman Christians from acting as if the old sin nature was a dominant authority in their lives.

Just as an example of how this present imperative is used to illuminate Scripture, let me give you one text in Luke 23:28, where we read, "But Jesus, turning unto them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Now, if you knew that "Weep not for me" was president imperative with a negative, and you could remember what I just told you about how the Greek grammar works in this case, you would immediately say, "Hey, Jesus is not telling them not to start weeping for Him. These people were already weeping for Him." And immediately, we know, on the basis of what the grammar tells us, that Jesus is talking to a group of women who were in tears. And He was saying to them, "Stop it. Don't continue doing what you're doing. Don't continue weeping for Me."

There's another factor of a negative. Let me just throw this in so that you'll have the other side. We'll hit this someplace along the line. This is the aorist tense, which is always a point action, with a subjunctive, which is a possibility. When you have a negative with that, that tells you a different kind of prohibition. This forbids a thing before you start to do it.

We have an example of that in Luke 11:4, just to illustrate this: "And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." This expression "and lead us not into temptation" is a prohibition in the aorist subjunctive. So, immediately, you know that what this prayer is expressing is the idea of never, ever, under any condition, lead us into a system (into a situation) of temptation to do evil. Do not ever lead us into temptation. That is the idea. It is not that they are in the process of being led into temptation. It is a prayer request that they not ever be faced with a tempting situation. And the only way we know that is because the Greek grammar makes it very clear.

So, here something was happening in Rome. We have this present imperative with the negative, which means that you had this condition. They were already in it, and Paul says, "Stop it. Bring it to a halt. Don't continue doing what you're doing. The sin nature will usurp authority over the life of a Christian, particularly over the life of a Christian who is devoid of divine viewpoint intake into the soul through that grace system of perceiving spiritual things which God has provided from the local church, and the Scripture, and the pastor-teacher, and right on down the line, with all that's included: the living human spirit; and, the expository preaching of the Word of God – all that God has provided. Without that, the sin nature will usurp authority in your life as if it had the right to do so.

Please remember that one of the great things about the grace system of perception is that God provides all the pieces. God provides everything you need to be able to stay right on top of the sin nature. You do not have to provide anything. All you have to do is be present when the Word is taught.

You don't have to look very far around you to see how many Christians are guilty of that grievous sin. The Bible says that when the church doors are open, do not fail to be there. That's what it says in the book of Hebrews: "When the church doors (or the gym doors – the text goes either way) are open, do not fail to be there." That's what it says in just so many words – point blank: "Do not neglect the assembling of yourselves together, as is the manner of some." That's what the writer of Hebrews says. Just don't do it. When the saints gather to be taught in the Word of God, be there.

I guarantee you that all you have to do is observe other people, and you see these sometime Charlies that are in and out (no offense, Charlie): in church; and, out of church. They're here sometimes, and not sometimes. You can just be sure that they've got a problem with the sin nature. I guarantee you that they're always struggling to keep that vile thing from usurping its authority, and pretending that the Shah is again in commanding power, when in fact he is completely deposed. Without the intake of the Word of God, and the orientation to God's thinking, you cannot stay on top of the sin nature. It will whip you every time. But it is not simply a matter of your saying that you're going to reckon; you're going to believe; and, you're going to remember now that the sin nature is dead. That that isn't what it's going to take for you to be victorious. That's the starting point for you to recognize that the sin nature's capacity has been terminated. But it has not been removed. Its authority is terminated, but its power is still there. All it's doing is waiting for a chance to exercise itself on you.

**Carnal Christians**

That's why the Bible says that many Christians are simply carnal Christians. They're going to heaven. But that's what it means by a carnal Christian. A carnal Christian is one who has not been able to come to grips in experience with the fact that his sin nature no longer has sovereign, absolute authority over his life. So, the sin nature just plays havoc with him.

Since the Lord Jesus Christ died once-and-for-all to the ruling authority of sin, the Christian who is in Christ is also free from the sin nature's lordship.

It would be useless to tell some slave who has not been freed that he should not act as if he were a slave to his master. That would be dumb. If he's a slave, how else can he act? There's no point in telling a person who was a slave not to act as if he were a slave to his master, because that's exactly what he is. He is a slave to his master.

So, the very fact that the Bible here says, "Don't let sin reign supreme in your life anymore," and "Don't let sin reign as a as a supreme authority in your life anymore" shows us that we are no longer under its authority. Otherwise, God would not tell you to do that. He's not going to tell you not to act as a slave to your sin nature if indeed you are a slave to your sin nature. I guarantee you that nobody can read this verse to an unbeliever and have it make any sense at all, because there's nothing an unbeliever can do but be a slave to the sin nature.

So, this imperative mood (this command mood) tells us that something is a reality in our position in Christ, which we should recognize as being a reality. The sin nature master has been terminated. It's only because the sin nature does not reign in a Christian that the imperative could be used. God could not command us to do this – to have this mental attitude, if it were not true that the sin nature does not reign.

Now, he tells us specifically where this reigning authority is. He says, "To reign in." That's the great preposition "en," which gives us location. Where is this reign that he is particularly speaking of? And then he uses the word "your" which is the Greek word "su." This is a personal pronoun. It's the plural pronoun of the Greek word "ego." That's simply the word for "I." And this is the second person plural. And he puts this word in in order to stress the individual responsibility of each believer for something that he's going to mention in a moment. Before salvation, the sin nature possessed this thing. Now you have control of this thing.

**Your Mortal Body**

What is that thing that you have control of? And he throws this word in to stress that it is you; it is yours; and, it is your capacity to deal with this thing. He calls it "your mortal body" ("thnetos"). The word "thnetos" means "subject to death," or "capable of having life terminated," or "capable of becoming diseased, or old and dying." And the word is applied to the body. Now, mortality, the condition of "thnetos" is always the result of moral corruption. The reason you are suffering from the fact that you can die at any moment is because of the sin nature. It is the same nature that has caused this problem. And this particular mortality is in connection with your "soma," which is the Greek word for "body" here. This is your mortal body. This is your human physical body – the organism which houses your soul and spirit. Man's physical body is subject to death at any time, and then to decay.

This condition is the result of the inherent guilt from Adam which resides in us in the form of the sin nature. The sin nature manifests itself, however, through your human body. It is through the various parts of your body that the sin nature expresses itself. This is true in unsaved people, and it is true also in carnal Christians. But this is not to say that the human body is evil in itself. It's simply the fact that the human body has picked up a disease. The human body is not evil, but it has picked up an evil disease, the sin nature, which now resides within the human body in the form of the genetic structure. The Christian's body, however, is no longer under the reign of the sin nature, so it is not a helpless vehicle for sin anymore.

The apostle Paul recognized that a Christian has the freedom to refuse to permit his physical body to be a vehicle for evil (for the old sin nature). 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 puts it this way: "And every man that strives for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so I fight, not as one that beats the air, but I keep under my body (his human physical body), and I bring it into subjection lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Paul says. I don't want to get into heaven and be embarrassed by the fact that I was a preacher of the Word of God, and I was a teacher of doctrine, and I told people how they should live, and how they should not live, and what they should do, and what they should not do, and anything that I said along that line has to always be related to their "soma" (to their physical body). It is the parts of the body that express these various things of evil, or that avoid these various things of evil. And Paul says, "I can guarantee you that I exercised subjection upon my body. I stay on top of my body." Why? Because Paul knew that the sin nature expresses itself through the physical body.

So, just how much sin nature domination exists in your life? Well, just do some checking on what you're doing with the parts of your physical body. That will tell you a great deal about what the sin nature is doing in your life. And why you're thinking that over, please remember that one of the important parts of the physical body is the mind, which is housed in the brain. There are an awful lot of evangelical fundamental type of Christians who are very self-righteous of how good and holy they are, because they don't use some of the external parts of their body for evil purposes, but they are shot-through in their mentalities with evil. They're wreaking with it with their mental attitude sins. They are indeed expressing that in ways that they are just ignoring externally as well.

Your mortal body – Paul, recognizes that he can stay on top of his body, and we can too. The human body, as the vehicle for the sin nature's evil, also affects your soul, because your soul and your body are closely related. The soul is the "you." So, when your body is used for an evil purpose, you (the person – the soul) is vitally affected.

**Incorruptible**

There is a time coming indeed when our bodies will no longer be mortal, and when they will no longer be threatened by death. That will be when the moral guilt (the corruption factor) has been removed. 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 says, "Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, the trumpets shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'"

Also we may add to that Paul statement of Philippians 3:20, where he says, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our lowly body, that it may be fashioned like His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." So, one of the things we look forward to is the fact that Jesus Christ is going to come, and He's going to change the condition of these bodies so that they will no longer be bodies of corruption. The moral guilt will be gone.

Now specifically, Paul attaches the problem that we have with the sin nature dominating our bodies. He says that: "The sin nature should no longer rule as absolute monarch in your body destined for death, that you should obey it in its lusts." That indicates a result here. The word "should obey" is the word "hupakouo." "Hupakouo" means to listen to, in the sense of submitting – that you should listen to the parts of your body in submitting to their desires. This is present tense – continual submitting. It's active, which means you have the choice as a believer to submit. And it's infinitive, which here indicates a result. The word "that" is the preposition "eis." Then when you have an infinitive, and particularly when you have the word "the" in front of the infinitive, this is a Greek combination that usually tells us purpose, but it can also give us the result. Here it's telling us the result of something.

Something is going to result – that we should not act as if the sin nature was reigning absolute in our mortal bodies. The result is that we should be submitting to it in its lust. The word "lust" is "epithumia." This is a word that is not a bad word in itself. It means "intense desires." But because it is associated here with the sin nature desires, it does have the connotation of evil, and therefore it is translated quite properly as "lusts." These desires of the sin nature are evil, so they are lusts. The word "epithumia" in itself could be a desire for something good.

"That you should obey it." What are we talking about? To obey what? The sin nature, or your body? Here you have a problem reading in English. You can't figure out which it is: "that you should obey it in its lusts." Is this the sin nature, or your body? Well, the Greek is very clear. When you read this on the Greek page, you have an immediate clue that gives you the direction of what you're looking for. The word "body" is in the neuter gender, and sin is in the feminine gender, and the word "it" is in the neuter. Therefore, immediately from the Greek, we know the Greek beautifully lays it out for us. We know it's referring to "body," because a pronoun has to agree with the word that it's referring to. It has to agree in the gender. And here it does not agree with feminine "sin," but with neuter "body."

So, the translation is: "That you should obey the laws of it" (meaning the physical body). It refers to the desires of the body under the direction of the sin nature.

The sin nature is actually taking what are legitimate desires and legitimate functions of the physical body, and it is turning them into evil. It is perverting them into evil purposes. The body has a variety of desires. I need not list than for you. You can figure them out. You can run them through in your own mind. The body has a variety of functions. You know what those are. These desires (these functions) are all built-in there by divine design to serve certain legitimate purposes. The sin nature, when it is permitted to rule as absolute authority, grabs hold of these desires and functions of the body, and perverts them to evil use. That's what Paul is talking about.

**The Soul and the Body**

The soul determines the use of the human body. It is the person who lives in the body that determines the use of the body. The soul of the unbeliever is enslaved to the sovereign authority of the sin nature. So, what the soul of the unsaved believer does with the parts of his body is evil. The soul of the believer, however, has been redeemed, and has been released, from the tyranny of the sin nature, though not from its presence. So, the believer no longer has to let the parts of his body be subject to the sin nature, though he may choose to do so.

The body of the Christian is to be an expression of divine righteousness. Let's just jump ahead to Romans 6:18-22. Paul is going to stress again this particular point. We'll look ahead for a moment. He says, "Being then made free from sin (the sin nature), you became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because the infirmity of your flesh, for as you have yielded your members (your physical parts of your body) servants uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield the various parts of your human body servants to righteousness and to holiness. For when you were servants of sin (when you were subject to being in service to the sin nature), you were free from righteousness (that is, you didn't do what was right). But what fruit did you have then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death."

We look back upon those things that we permitted the physical body to be used for, and that we permitted our thinking (our brain) to be used for, in connection with the guidance of the sin nature. And those things are things of shame. These are not things that we want to get up and talk about.

Every now and then there's some fool idiot Christian who gets up, and he thinks that it's honoring to the Lord to describe in a testimony meeting how terrible he used to be, and what terrible things he once did. And he likes to describe them. And there are some other poor, poverty-struck Christians, who don't have too much entertainment in their lives, who enjoy listening to some character telling about his past sinful career. Well, God is not interested in hearing about your past sinful career, and you do not honor Him by displaying that. We all know what you were, and we all know that these are things to be ashamed of. And the things that are to be ashamed of are things not to be spoken of.

But now, he says, "Being made free from the sin nature, and to become servants of God, you have has fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life." Paul is there summarizing just what he's saying here previously up here in verse 12 – that you should not obey the intense desires of the body as they are stimulated by the sin nature. The sin nature is always egging you on to use parts of your body for evil purposes. It never gives up, and it is always there chipping, away at you, waiting for you to come to the position where you do not have the capacity to reject it.

The Christian should, and can, be responding to the desires of his physical body only as they originate with the new sovereign authority of the Holy Spirit. The sin nature can never again, of course, regain complete authority over your body, but it tries. The sin nature can never cause you to lose your salvation. The sin nature can cause you to lose great rewards in heaven. The sin nature can injure your human body by what it leads you to do with your body. And it can cause you to injure your relationships with other people by what it causes you to do with your body. But the sin nature itself can never again take charge. All it can do is stand there waiting for you to be foolish enough to pretend that it has rights.

Now, here is one thing (here is one factor) that does not have any rights whatsoever with you, and that is the sin nature. And what Paul is trying to do, when he uses this imperative in verse 12, is to say that this should be your mental attitude: "In view of all that is true (in view of what I have said in verse 11) on the negative side, that you should reckon and realize that it is a fact of life, that you are dead relative to the sin nature. Secondly, on the positive side, you are alive now to the authority of God the Holy Spirit. Now recognize that as being a fact of life. Since that is true, then I command you, in verse 11, and in answer to this guy up in verse 1, who is suggesting that you should live under the sovereign control of the sin nature, I, in verse 12, tell you, 'Don't do it.'"

You are not to permit that sin nature to live within you as if it had reigning authority, particularly in reference to the members of your physical body, and that you should act as a slave, so that all these things that your physical body desires, that the sin nature wants to be expressed in a perverted, unrighteous way, that you should say, "Yes, I'll do that."

Of course, this begins in a small way. The perversions of the physical structure and the perversions of the body always begin in a small way. Once you recognize that you are free from that authority, and you recognize that the sin nature is not going to roll over and play dead, then you know how to deal with it. That is a great piece of doctrine to have straight. The sin nature's tyranny is at an end. And not only is it an end, it can never again be reestablished. It is conceivable that things could change in Iran so the Shah of Iran could return to his place of authority, and he could again exercise his rule. That can never take place with the sin nature. Its tyranny is forever terminated.

However, its power has not been terminated. And it sits there waiting for opportunity to take some part of your human body, usually starting with your brain and your thinking, and to lead you in a direction that will cause you to start using your physical body in some way that's evil. The things that you use your eyes for may be evil. The things you use your ears for may be evil. The things that you use all the capacities that God has given you to express relationships between human beings may be used in an evil way. And if you do not realize that the sin nature wants to spoil your physical body, then you are a very foolish person. The sin nature, while not having authority, is determined to spoil your physical body. It just wants to throw something into your life that is a nice, big, fat scar that you can always look back on.

Oh, it heals over. And God has a way of re-weaving the tapestry of our lives, but it's never a first-rate anymore. It's never first-class. It's never best. It's never what could have been. It's only the result of the grace of God carrying you through the place where the sin nature was able to do what God said: "Don't you ever let it do that? Don't you ever let it act as if it's in charge? It is not. You are the victor. You are supreme. And as long as you act according to the principles of the Word of God, and under the power of the Spirit of God, that sin nature will become less and less evident and active in your life. May our attitude and understanding of the sin nature be compatible with God's thinking. That is the first step to real living; personal happiness; and, to storing treasures in heaven.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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