

Dead to Sin

Romans 6:1-2

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
God forbid. How shall we, that are **dead to sin**, live any longer therein?

REVIEW

“Shall we continue in sin?” In the great hall of foolish counsels and damnable lies, this query is right up there with the serpent's “Ye shall not surely die,” Job's wife's “Curse God and die,” Pharaoh's “Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?” and Peter's “May it never be, Lord.”

“God forbid” – This denial is similar in tone and rebuke with Jesus' “Get thee hence, Satan.”

“Dead to sin” – our focus today.

I. “Death” expressions are found repeatedly in the New Testament. Examples:

- A. “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.” (Gal. 2:19)
- B. “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:2-3)
- C. “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” (I Pet. 2:24)

II. This is likewise an expression we find in our culture today.

- A. We may say after offending someone, “I am as good as dead” or “I'm a dead man.”
- B. We may say of a person with whom fellowship is cut off, “He's dead to me.”
- C. We may say when justice occurs that a person was caught “dead to rights.”

III. So we are not dealing here with an unfamiliar concept.

- A. But surely it is an important concept to understand because:
 - 1. It is said to be the common lot of all Christians – Paul says we are dead to sin.
 - 2. To think or behave contrary to this truth is declared here to be contrary to logic and abhorrent to God.

IV. Let's begin with a definition.

- A. First, the literal sense: “Death” is the cessation of life, that state of a being in which the organs of motion and life have ceased for ever to perform their functions. The eyes don't see; the ears don't hear; there is no taste; there is no scent; there is no touch. The brain, the imagination, the heart ... all stop for ever.

B. Now for the Bible's secondary use of the word: To paraphrase Albert Barnes, to be dead to a thing spiritually means that it has **no influence** over us. In this sense, a "dead" man is **uninfluenced** and **unaffected** by the appeals of a dark world that would incite the flesh to desires and actions in opposition to the will of God, as much so as a corpse in a grave is uninfluenced and unaffected by the affairs 6 feet above.

V. One way to understand this concept of "death" more clearly is by noting the prepositions.

A. There is a death **for** sin, a death **in** sin, and a death **to** sin.

1. Death **for** sin – "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died **for** us." (Rom. 5:8)
2. Death **in** sin – "And you hath he quickened, who were dead **in** trespasses and sins." (Eph. 2:1)
"But she that liveth **in** pleasure is dead while she liveth." (I Tim 5:6)
3. Death **to** sin – "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead **to** sins, should live unto righteousness...." (I Pet. 2:24)

VI. Further clarification comes through the use of 4 adverbs.

A. Christians die to sin **legally** in justification; **professedly** in baptism; **personally** in sanctification; and **completely** in glorification.

1. **Legally** – In the view of the courts of heaven, a person who has claimed Christ's death as his own has fulfilled the demands of the law. He is now discharged from any further condemnation, for judicially he is considered dead.
2. **Professedly** – In baptism a Christian publicly shows in form the death to sin and its penalties which he has experienced in substance by faith.
3. **Personally** – In practice, an individual is to find more and more victory over the power of sin, as expressed in Col. 3:1-3 – "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."
4. **Completely** – Total death to sin will be realized when a saved person is glorified as Christ. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:2)

VII. Our principle focus today, in keeping with our text, is #3 – dying personally in sanctification.

A. Listen: Everyone who names the name of Christ is to understand that he is to be DEAD TO SIN.

1. Dead as a deer carcass along the road.
2. Dead as an old dog buried 20 years ago.
3. The practical point: dead things are **unresponsive**.

B. As Gill has put it, sanctified persons do not make sin their business; it is not their course of life; it is no longer a pleasure to them but is loathsome and abominable; it is looked upon, not as a friend, but an enemy; it is never to be allowed to reign.

1. To live in sin is to live after the dictates of corrupt nature.
2. Those who are dead to sin cannot live in it, though sin may live in them. They may fall into sin and lie in it some time, yet they cannot stay in it.
3. A change in attitude, in other words, occurs in a saint. He not only knows sin is wrong, but God has, as it were, put a *stink* on it, and a perfume on the will of God.
4. Indeed, a truly redeemed man comes to detest sin such that even if he could get away with it he would not indulge it, for it is terrible to him.

VIII. Some believers might say, "I agree with these assertions in principle, but in truth I find sin pleasurable and its power overwhelming."

A. Answer #1 – Death to sin *is* difficult. You may find nothing so hard as to die to sin. Earnest and protracted struggles are required to destroy sin in the soul.

B. Answer #2 – To break from sin usually requires a decisive and radical act.

1. A person who dies to sin must see that he is to be done with it *forever*. Remember Lot's wife.
2. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Gal. 5:24)
3. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14)

C. Answer #3 – To die to a thing is to have nothing to do with it, just as to live to a thing is to be wholly given over to it.

1. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:11)
2. An application: the world's music. I know of nothing that expresses more the soul of a culture than its art; and I know of no art more expressive, pervasive, or powerful than music. Nor do I know of any medium that so swiftly and effectively bypasses the mind, degrades the soul, corrupts the body, and streams demonic influence to the spirit than the world's music.
3. This truth certainly includes though is not limited to rock and roll, the very confessed design of which has historically been to incite sensuality and fan rebellion.
4. "O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth." (Ps. 96:1)

D. Answer #4 – See that the reference point for *how* dead we should be to sin is Christ Himself.

1. "Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." (Matt. 8:22)
2. Jesus is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." (Heb. 7:26)

IX. Well, why should we hate sin?

A. Sin is the reason that Christ had to suffer.

1. It's part of His becoming a sinless man among men: having a nature offensive to the world.
2. It's the judicial reality for one who takes on the guilt of sin.

B. Sin damages.

1. It causes pain and suffering for innocent parties.
2. It entices others to stumble.

C. Sin defiles.

1. "For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity....They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper." (Isa. 59:3,5)

D. Sin desensitizes.

1. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. 24:12)
2. "As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools." (Prov. 26:9)

E. Sin deceives.

1. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3:13)

F. Sin deteriorates a life.

1. "But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker." (II Tim. 2:16-17)

G. Sin disagrees with what I am to love.

1. I am to have the mind of Christ. I am to hate what God hates and love what He loves. Otherwise my profession toward Him is hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9).

DISCUSSION

Let's make practical applications. Imagine (or, as you have liberty, actually do this) that as you go through your day you are meditating on Col. 3:3, which says, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," and list all the ways that this truth affects your experience at:

1. Walmart
2. St. Patrick's Day parade
3. Workplace
4. Home
5. Church
6. Other