

5. Discuss the role Bible study plays in making us alive to God.

Notes for Lesson 3

Question 2 (“Dead to Sin and Alive to God in Christ” Romans 6:11-13)

So we pick up our study in Romans 6:11, “*Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*” In our last study in Romans, we touched on this verse. We saw that the Bible speaks of salvation in terms of being “born again,” “newness of life,” being “made new,” and, as our text states, “*alive to God in Christ Jesus.*”

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

Furthermore, we saw that verse 11 is the first time that the apostle urged his readers to take action in the first six chapters of Romans. This first exhortation and the ones to follow come only after five chapters of foundational doctrinal instruction. The significance of this being the first time that Paul has been exhortative cannot be overstated. Paul has carefully spelled out the depths of man's sin, the eternal consequences for sin, the substitutionary atonement of Christ on the cross, and the need for faith and repentance in response to the Gospel. He has further taught extensively on what it means to be immersed into Christ and the sanctification that follows.

I remind you of what we learn from Paul's method of building a sound biblical understanding of basic theology in the first part of Romans: namely, that directives, exhortations, and instructions for how to live as Christ desires for us to live must be based on knowledge of true doctrine. We can easily fall into the wrong practice of attempting to direct, exhort, and inspire believers concerning how to live the Christian life without first building a sound biblical understanding of basic theology that fuels a daily walk with the Lord.

Colossians 1:9-12 *For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual*

wisdom and understanding, 10so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

Walking in a manner worthy of the Lord is preceded by knowledge of God's will, spiritual wisdom, and understanding. There must be a firm relationship with the Lord based on sound biblical teaching before we can walk the Christian life. We are not just zapped with sanctification. This is not a "let go and let God" proposition.

Paul warned the church of being blown around by every wind of doctrine in Ephesians 4:14, *"As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming."*

In fact, Jesus spoke against the religious leaders of His day in Matthew 15:7-9 for replacing sound doctrine with the teachings of men. *"You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"*

As the church abandons sound doctrine, it becomes weak and anemic. We cannot walk in a manner worthy of Christ's calling apart from a growing interaction with God through His Word. So we see that Paul's mode, which we find in the first chapters of Romans, is helpful for us to understand the process of sanctification.

Paul was obviously interested in the spiritual growth of the Roman believers. But he knew that there was no use rushing to teach them about sanctification without first fully instructing them concerning what God had done for them in the person of Jesus Christ. What we have learned in Romans chapters 1 through 5 is vitally important to know before we can understand the process of sanctification.

Question 3 ("Presenting Ourselves to God" Romans 6:12-13)

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin. . . .

"Even so" can also be translated "in the same way" which takes us back to the preceding verse. In the same way that Christ has dealt with sin once and for all, never to go back, so you also reckon yourself as dead to sin.

Romans 6:10 *For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*

Even so (or in the same way)--- you too take into account that you are dead to sin but alive to God.

The word translated "*consider*" is the Greek word λογίζομαι. I myself would not use the word "consider" to translate λογίζομαι. I prefer "reckon" or "take into account." λογίζομαι is a word

that conveys that we are to reason in our minds what is true about us before God.

We have encountered this word before. It has two primary uses in classical Greek. The first usage was a bookkeeping term. We see it in our English language in terms like: “logistics” or to keep a “log.” A “log” refers to a record of some kind that keeps track of progress or decline. “Logistics” refers to dealing with numbers and movements of a given item. So, λογίζομαι referred to evaluating worth and keeping track of it.

In its second usage, λογίζομαι was also used in the sense of objective, non-emotional reasoning. We see this meaning in our English words “logic” and “logical.” So, λογίζομαι involves dealing with reality and with things as they truly are. There is nothing of wishful thinking or possibilities. It is an acknowledgement of, or acting upon, something that is already true or has already happened.

In bookkeeping, it means posting in a ledger an amount corresponding to what actually exists. If I am balancing my checkbook and record that I have made a \$100 deposit, I must truly have \$100 in the bank or I am just lying to myself and will have an overdraft. This usage of λογίζομαι as referring to a transaction has been used many times already in Paul's letter to the Romans.

Romans 4:3-4,6,9 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” 4Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. . . . 6Just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: . . . 9Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Our sins have been credited to Christ and punished there. That is a reality, not just an imaginary transaction. Christ's righteousness is credited to our accounts. In other passages, λογίζομαι is translated “take into account,” “reckon,” “regard,” and “reason in your mind.”

So Paul stated in verse 11 that as surely as righteousness has been credited, reckoned by faith, so too you as a believer must take into account and reckon that you are dead to sin on one hand and alive to God in Christ on the other. Your death to sin is a reality. The old self is dead and now there is a new self that is alive to God.

Paul has given us an easy to understand principle in verse 11 concerning the doctrine of sanctification. He teaches that you as a believer must take into account and reckon that you are dead to sin, on one hand, and alive to God in Christ on the other. Your death to sin is a reality. The old self is dead and now there is a new self that is alive to God.

Question 4 (“Presenting Ourselves to God” Romans 6:12-13)

Paul stated that there are two spiritual realities that you as a believer must take into account. I want to look at these two spiritual realities this morning so that we may live daily in a manner that is worthy of Christ and that pleases Him.

First, we are to reckon or take into account that we are *“dead to sin.”* We have already seen what all that entails. A believer cannot respond to sin like the old self did. The old self is dead. We are dead to the old life and cannot go back. It does not mean that we are immune to sin or temptation. It does not mean that we will not sin. It means that we cannot continually live in sin as we did before conversion. The believer is miserable in sin. He cannot enjoy sin the way he did as an unbeliever. There may be a passing pleasure, but the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the believer's conscience take away that pleasure.

If you can continually live in sin and enjoy it the way you did before your profession of faith in Christ, then you must realize that you have not yet been converted. That is Paul's whole point here. He clearly stated in Romans 6:12, *“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?”*

So the first time in Romans that Paul exhorted believers to do something was to take into account that the new man cannot go back and continue to live as the old man because the old man is dead. You must take into account and understand that you are dead to sin. You cannot go back and continually live in your old sinful way.

The second reality that Paul said we are to take into account and reason in our minds is that we are now *“alive to God in Christ Jesus.”* This corresponds to what we have considered previously, that we are raised to walk in newness of life because of Christ's resurrection. Verses 8-11 tell us that we *“live with Christ,” “we live to God,”* and we are *“alive to God in Christ Jesus.”* These beg the question: What does it mean that we are alive to God in Christ Jesus?

The emphasis is that the believer is alive to a Person: *“We are alive to God.”* We might have expected that Paul would write: *“Understand that you are dead to sin and alive to righteousness.”* After all, *“alive to righteousness”* is the opposite of *“dead to sin.”* But instead Paul stated that we are *“alive to God.”* We have the capacity to know God and relate to Him.

This new life towards God is THE issue in regards to sin, right? If we go back to the very beginning in the garden when sin first entered into the world, there was separation between man and God as a result of sin. Adam and Eve died towards God the day they ate of the fruit. Where there was fellowship with God, after sin entered into the world, there was immediate separation from Him.

This separation between God and sinful man is demonstrated by God's relationship with Israel, specifically in the construction of the tabernacle and the temple. No one could enter the Holy of Holies except for once a year and then only by the sacrificial blood of a lamb. But when Christ died, the curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the outside, the curtain that separated man from God, was torn in two from top to bottom; now man has direct access to Him. Before, we were dead in our trespasses and sins, but now we are alive to God.

Consider some ways that we are alive to God that were not true beforehand. First, there are a number of new relationships that we enter into with God as a result of salvation and being a new self: father/child, master/servant, king/subject, provider/beneficiary, shepherd/sheep, and bridegroom/bride, just to name a few. We could spend a few Sundays exploring the significance of these relationships. God has created us to have intimacy with Him. Sin has severed man's relationship to God except for the judge/criminal relationship. But now we are alive to God through Christ.

There is another new relationship we have with Christ that impacts our daily lives; namely, we are the branches and Christ is the rich vine in which we abide. Jesus said in John 15:5, *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."*

Question 5 ("Presenting Ourselves to God" Romans 6:12-13)

An additional way that we are alive to God in Christ is that we become alive to what God is saying to us in His Word. The Word of God becomes alive to the believer. I told you before that God desires to have a personal relationship with you through His Word. He establishes that relationship as you read His Word and as you communicate with Him in prayer. The Christian life is a two-way discussion. God speaks to us in His Word and we speak to Him in prayer. You cannot have this relationship with Him through someone else. You must be in the process of feeding yourself and speaking to Him yourself.

Sanctification is not accomplished apart from divine revelation. You cannot sanctify yourself. You cannot be separate from the world apart from a relationship with God through His Word. Holiness is through the instrument of the Word of God, and it is God who sanctifies by using His Word. Sanctification by God through His Word boils down to dependence. When you are dependent and desperate for God to work in your life and you make time to be with God in His Word and through prayer, then you will find sanctification, spiritual growth, and holiness are realities in your life.

1 Peter 2:2 *Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.*

Knowledge by itself will puff you up, but growing in knowledge within the context of knowing God will grow you up as a believer. I remind you of a statement of Howard Hendricks, "You can know and not grow, but you cannot grow without knowing."

We must be men and women of Scripture. In theory, we are; we say that we are. We acknowledge that this is our standard for living. But much of the time in practice, we must admit that we approach the Bible with this attitude: "If I find time to be with God I will, but if not, oh well." Instead, we must clear off our day and start with God speaking to us through His Word. It is not optional. It is your life.

John 8:31 *So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My Word, then you are truly disciples of Mine."*

John 14:23-24a *Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 24He who does not love Me does not keep My words."*

John 17:17 *Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth.*

Colossians 3:16 *Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with*

thankfulness in your hearts to God.

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of truth.

James 1:22 But prove yourselves doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

Hebrews 4:12 For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Part of being alive to God is that His Word becomes alive to us. This is a truth for all of the church, not just church leaders.