

VICTORY AND STEWARDSHIP OF THE BODY
Growing God's Healthy Church, 12.13
Romans 6:13

INTRODUCTION

We are called by God to a lifestyle of full surrender, stewardship. Stewardship involves us bringing to God the maximum return on His investment in us in the categories our bodies, our possessions, and our time.

If we are going to increase the health and size of God's church everywhere, and if we are going to grow in health at Harvest, stewardship is required. Today, we want to focus on how to maximize God's investment in our bodies.

Here's how we are going to go about that. First we will look at a text from Scripture that instructs us to be good stewards of our bodies. After we read the text, I'm going to explain what we are to do with our bodies. Then I am going to explain why we might not be able to do what the text tells us to do. Then I am going to explain how we can do what the text tells us to do. Then we are going to look again at what we are told to do!

Ready?

TEXT: Romans 6:13

13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

Observations about the text

1. **The word "members" is better translated parts.** The Greek word "melos" is the word you would use in modern English to say "body part." We use the word "member" differently. When we say "member," we normally refer to a person who is associated with a club or a group. This text is saying, "Do not present your body parts to sin."
2. **You are instructed to not do something and to do something.** Do NOT present your parts to sin, but DO present your parts to God.
3. **When you present your body parts, they become tools of the one you present them to.** The word "instruments" is the word for tool. So, when you present your body parts to sin, they become tools used to accomplish unrighteousness deeds. When you present your body parts to God, they become tools used to accomplish righteous deeds.
4. **Your body parts are neither evil nor good, but neutral.** The same tools that you could use to do unjust deeds, you can use to do just deeds. Think of a scalpel. When you place a scalpel in a surgeon's hand, he uses it to do good. But that scalpel in the hands of a killer becomes a tool of murder. The scalpel is neither good nor bad. It is a tool. In same way, your body is morally

neutral. If you use its parts to do good, then it becomes a toolbox for good deeds. If you use its parts to do evil, then it becomes a toolbox for evil deeds.

5. *When you present yourself to God, you are to do so as one who has moved from spiritual death to spiritual life.* The Bible reveals an amazing truth: All people who live in a body are spiritually dead before they come to know Jesus. But when they come to know Jesus as Savior, they are made alive within.

Putting it all Together

So then, let's put it all together and see what we are being told to do.

What we are being told is this: **as Christians –as those who are alive spiritually and not dead—by a decision in your mind, give your whole life to God, every day, by giving your body parts to doing good deeds. Do not present your body parts to be used as tools of evil deeds.**

This is the simple command. Being a follower of Jesus means body control. You are to determine what you will do with your body parts. Your body is neutral and could be used for either good or evil. Use it to do good deeds. Your body is your good deed doing toolbox. Use it like that!

Why We Might Not Be Able To Do This

Now, let me explain why some people cannot do this –why they are powerless to use their body parts as instruments of righteousness. **Many people cannot present their body parts as tools for righteousness because they do not have victory over the sin within them.**

This might be you today. If it is not, it once was you.

Let me say this plainly: You cannot avoid sin on your own. You must gain victory over the sin within you in order to present your body to do good consistently. Let me show you this from the Scripture. Pay close attention because this is an important truth that requires concentration to understand.

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. (Rom 7:18 ESV)

Every human being is a sinner. That means that within them, “nothing good dwells.” Paul is not speaking about his physical body when he says, “in my flesh.” He is pointing out that as a man, born of human parents, he has no goodness in him. Instead, he has sin within him. So even when he wants to do right, he cannot carry it out. By this he means that he finds himself wanting to do right, but not able because something inside him doesn't want to. He can't break bad habits. He can't stop losing his temper. He can't stop desiring sin. And even when he does a good thing, he fails right after. This is the normal condition of all humans.

People wrongly think that the way to please God is to try to do all the Commandments and all the good deeds He commands. God points out these good things to us so that we will see our problem: we have sin within us. We can't stop doing bad things. We can't keep doing

good things. In fact, telling us to do good things only makes it worse for us. In other words, if we are told, “don’t lie, don’t kill, don’t steal, don’t commit adultery, don’t commit sexual sins, don’t be gluttons, don’t be lazy, do good deeds, honor others, forgive others,” these commands empower the desire in us to rebel against God.

Let me show you this from the Bible:

5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. (Rom 7:5 ESV)

“Living in the flesh,” means before we came to trust in Jesus, our Lord. Our natural way was that our sinful passions, or our evil desires, were aroused by the law. “Aroused by the law.” The evil in you is aroused by the law. The Ten Commandments makes the sin within you come alive! If you do not know Jesus as Savior, if you do not have Jesus living within you, then if I preach to you all the commands of Scripture, they will only wake up the force within you that hates God –sin. Sin is aroused by the law.

To tell a human do be righteous as Jesus is by telling him the Ten Commandments is like telling a spider to stop eating flies by sending flies into her web. The flies cause her to hunger to eat them. It’s what she does. She eats flies. What sin does is hate God. And that sin is in you as a human being. When God’s good standards are put before us, sin wakes up and says, “no!”

“I know that no good thing dwells in me that is in my flesh.” By virtue of being born human, there is no goodness in me, only the passion to do sin. So, if I tell you that you must present your body parts as tools of good deeds and never as tools of evil deeds, and you do not have Jesus in you, you will not be able to do it.

We are helpless to do good and be pleasing to God on our own. Telling us to be good doesn’t enable goodness, but it causes us to be all the more sinful. Look carefully, a second time, at how the Bible summarizes this reality:

For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. (Rom 7:5 ESV)

Living in the flesh does not mean being alive on earth. It means living as humans apart from Jesus. In that state, the law of God did not help us. The law is good, but it does not help us. Instead, our sinful passions are aroused by the law.

So then, to say, “Do good with your body,” will not help you if you don’t have Jesus within. It is like saying to a spider, “don’t eat flies,” as they come into her web. The desire to rebel against the command will grow from the sin within us.

How we can do what the text says:

Okay, then how can we do what God requires of us in Romans 6:13, presenting the parts of our body to God as tools of good deeds? **The way we obey the command to present our body parts to God as tools for good, and not as tools for bad deeds, is that we gain victory over the sin within us through the death of Jesus and the life He gives us within.**

In other words, God tells us to do something and also empowers us to do it, if we have Jesus within. Before knowing Jesus as Savior, God told us to do something, but it only strengthened the sin within us. But after knowing Jesus as Savior, God tells us to do something and gives us the power to do it. Again, let me show you this from the Bible. Let us slowly and carefully read the following verses from Romans chapter 6:

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. (Romans 6:6)

Our old self is not our body. Rather, it is the old dead spiritual sinful self, the “flesh” as Paul calls it. Your old sinful nature was crucified with Jesus. That means that the obstacle you had to doing right has been destroyed. The obstacle was spiritual, and it has been destroyed, killed on Jesus. Why? So that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. The slavery to sin is gone. Now you can do right. You can consistently present your body to do justly.

You might ask, “Is this saying that I will never sin again?” No. It is saying you have the power to not sin. You are freed from the power of sin. In other words, before Jesus, you were hooked to your sinful nature and had no power to get away. Now you have the choice. You have the power to not sin. Next verse . . .

For one who has died has been set free from sin. (Romans 6:7)

You are the one who has died. Your sinful spiritual nature was put on that Cross. You are free from the power of sin. Now you are empowered to obey Jesus.

Look at it this way. **Your old nature could not be made righteous by the preaching of the Ten Commandments. In fact, because of sin, the Law only made you worse off. But what the Law could not do –it could not make you righteous and good—God did through His Son dying on a Cross. When Jesus died on a Cross, He killed your sin nature within.**

But you are not dead, because He has shared with you His own Spirit –His own vitality—His own life. You are alive, but it is the life of Jesus in you. And the life of the Spirit does not sin, does not want to sin, and loves the commandments of God. This is what the Bible refers to when it says that we are no longer under law, but under grace. The law kills us, but the free gift of God through Jesus gives us life.

You must think on these things until they begin to sink in. Because you live now with the power to not sin –but until Jesus returns, you will be tempted to run back to your sin nature.

The world will call you back to sin. The devil will call you back to sin. Your own old nature will still haunt you. But you have power over them all. When the Bible speaks of the battle between your flesh and the Spirit, it is not referring to a battle between your body and the Spirit. Rather, it is a battle between your old sinful nature, and the Spirit of God within you.

This battle takes place in your mind.

How to win the battle

So then, as Christians, how do we win this battle? We all know what it means to fail, to give into the old nature. How can we live in this victory that God has for us? The answer is to follow two simple steps: 1. Know and believe the truth. And 2. As an act of your will, live like you believe it.

Let me show you this in the Bible, back to Romans 6:

So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:11)

Consider yourselves dead to sin. Consider yourselves alive to God in Christ. "Consider yourselves dead," means to reckon yourself as existing dead. That old nature of sin? Instead of faithlessly crying out, "I can't, it's too hard!" believe the truth: That sin nature is dead. I'm dead to the sins I hear calling me. Dead people don't answer calls!

Consider yourselves alive to God in Christ. That means, reckon yourself to exist alive with the righteous Spirit of God's life.

This is to know the truth and believe. This is faith. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world! (1 John 5:4). If you don't believe, you have lost already. But if you have faith to believe in Jesus, you have all you need. Add to that trust for salvation the trust for sanctification (victory over sin).

Read on . . .

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. (Rom 6:12)

Do not let sin rule your body. Again, your body is neutral. Sin wants to rule it. Before you knew Jesus, sin had the power to rule your body. But now, you are to not let that happen. That means that since you know the truth, that sin has been slain on the Cross of Jesus, and that you now have power to do right and not sin, by an act of the will, choose to say, "No! Sin will not rule my body. I have power over that through faith in Jesus!"

Read on . . .

Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. (Romans 6:13)

Well, look at that! We are back where we started, with our main text! So you see, you can obey this command. And this command is about stewardship. Your body does not belong to you. It belongs to God. Do not use it for sexual sins. Do not use it for thieving, fighting, drug use, drunkenness, gluttony, laziness, or any other evil deed. Instead, use your body to do good deeds for other people, to love other people, to do acts of love to God and man, to go and preach this powerful Gospel to all.

Your body is not yours. It belongs to God. You were bought with a price. Use it for Him.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
(1Co 6:19-20 ESV)

However, if you have never turned away from sin and received Jesus Christ, the time has come to make your decision.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 6:23 ESV)

Receive the free gift today!