

How to Not Indulge the Flesh

Last week we looked at characteristics of a leader, and a few mentioned avoiding sin, or living a blameless life.

But how?

Colossians 2:20-23 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— ²¹ “**Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,**” ²² which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? ²³ **These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom** in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, **but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.**

- Essentially, legalism does not work
- It seems like it should. Just tell me what not to do and I won't do it.
- But it never works.

Great – so living under rules or in legalism won't really change anything. Now what?

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

- This passage gives us the contrast.
 - Law does not work, we are not under it
 - We are under grace.

Sin will not have dominion over us because we are under grace.

If we are to understand the power given to us to not sin (grace), then we need to understand grace.

- Grace – Charis – benefit, favor, gift. A divine influence.
- Essentially grace is God's free gift of His favor. Giving us something we did not earn.

Grace is not a concrete noun. I can't pick up a pile of grace. It might be an abstract noun, like an idea. We can contemplate grace. But I think it is what is called a modifying noun. It actually defines and clarifies another noun.

- When we talk about the Gospel of Grace, we don't receive grace.
- **Ephesians 2:8** For **by grace** you have **been saved** through faith, and that not of yourselves; **it is** the gift of God,
 - It is **by** grace we are saved. We receive **salvation by grace**.
 - By believing Him (through faith), we are made righteous, we are made complete, we are delivered (we have been saved) because of grace (God's undeserved favor).

So what is grace modifying when the Bible says we are not under sin, but under grace?

- **Romans 6:5-12** For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin.⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- **New Life** – Grace is modifying new life. We are receiving a New Life that we don't deserve by believing Him.
- **Our New Life means that we:**
 - Are Crucified with Him
 - We are no longer slaves of sin because we died (have been separated from) sin
 - Death has no control over us
 - When we died we died to sin
 - We were raised from the dead
 - We now live with Christ
 - We live to God in Christ

What we received is a New Life that sin does not have any control over, AND the life of Christ is given to us to be able to live unto God.

- That is why grace is a power to live a life free of sin.
- It is simply living the way you were created to live. In other words, you were Reborn for this.

A more concise passage is this:

- **Romans 6:6-7** knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin.

But if that is the case, why do we find ourselves drawn to sin?

- **In truth – we (who we really are) are not drawn to sin. When our soul gets its power from the flesh, it desires sin.**
- FLESH – If we have not learned to get our needs met from God we will do whatever it takes to get those needs met – or we will react out of living in a place where our needs are not met.
- **Living according to the flesh is the same as trying to live from the sin nature – which has died.**

So how then do we live as Alive to God?

Grace does 3 things (In regards to sin):

- 1. It removes our sin
- 2. It makes us righteous.
 - It is by Grace alone that you have been saved. Remember, part of being saved is dying, having your sin nature removed, then being united with Christ and receiving His righteousness.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:21** For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

But if that is all we ever get to with Grace, then Grace could become a license to sin, not a power to overcome sin.

- **Romans 6:1-2** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

I want to view grace as a power, and not as a license. Why?

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

- You can be completely forgiven and still be a slave. Who you really are can be righteous and yet you can still be in complete bondage to sin.

So where is the power?

It is in #3. Grace gives us a new life.

Romans 8:1-11 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ² For **the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.** ³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: **He condemned sin in the flesh,** ⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us **who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.** ⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but **those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.** ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But **you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.** Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. ¹⁰ **And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.** ¹¹ **But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**

How to live free from sin (according to this passage):

1. Recognize that you are not under condemnation. Don't start from a place of defeat.
2. Understand it is the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ that makes us free of sin. Not willpower. Not more studying. Christ.
3. Rejoice that Jesus condemned sin in the flesh. Jesus removed the power that sin has in our own flesh. Praise Him that sin has no power.
4. Walk and live according to the Spirit, not the flesh. The more we abide in Christ, the more victory we will have. The more we cling to the world and set our focus on the world, the less victory we will have.
5. Confess that the Spirit of God dwells in you. If you do not understand what it means to be united with Christ, ask for a revelation of that.
6. Lean into the power of God. He who raised up Christ from the dead will bring you life. His spirit is in you. Learn to live from His life and you will have victory.