

ROMANS: CHARTER OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH
"Part X: The Assurance Of Living Victorious Over Past Sin"
(Romans 6:1-14a; 8:3-4)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A belief exists that if one comes from a troubled background in a bad neighborhood, or arose out of an imperfect gene pool, he is not going to be able to overcome inherently bad behavior.

(1) A few years ago, a Christian woman who had come from a troubled background asked me in the presence of other believers this question: You have to understand that I came from a very troubled beginning, from a badly broken home. What chance can there be for me to live as victorious a Christian life as someone from a Christian home who was never abusively treated?!"

Well, is it true that an imperfect background dooms one unconditionally to a less-than-normal Christian life?

(2) Francis P. Clem of Bantam wrote a letter to the Waterbury Republican-American paper a few years ago relating how sociologists in the 1970s felt the solution to child abuse was abortion-on-demand. The assumption ran that since most abortions are done by mothers who do not want their children, and hence would abuse them if they were born, and since abused children were assumed generally to grow up to abuse their own children, to stamp out the evil of child abuse, we were to institute abortion-on-demand.

Well, is SOCIETY the cause of child abuse, or can one with an abused childhood grow up NOT abusing his own children?

(3) Linda Bowles, Guest Columnist in Jerry Falwell's National Liberty Journal (9/99, p. 6) wrote that many Americans, including elected politicians who write laws, now believe that homosexuality is a **genetic** predisposition. People cannot **help BUT** be gay in their orientations. Hence, it is unjust to call it "sin" and to make laws forbidding the free practice and toleration of homosexual and lesbian lifestyles in America.

Is someone with a gay "orientation" created by God to BE that way irrespective of the numerous statements in the Bible that homosexuality is "sin", cf. Jude 9. Can one with a lesbian or gay background EVER be GODLY as the BIBLE puts it?

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "I have heard that people who often do CRIMINAL acts are not as guilty of their evil as the HOMES or SOCIETY PRODUCING them! Does this mean that if I have a bad background or criminal record that I may never become fully GODLY in living? WHY?!"

- I. **Paul taught that Christian LIVING for EVERY believer must LOGICALLY be WITHOUT ANY acts of sin (as follows):**
 - A. Paul sought to answer Hebrew critics of his view that one is justified by God as a gift by faith and not by keeping the Law.
 - B. One major criticism is voiced by Paul himself in Romans 6:1: there he noted how some might oppose his gospel by saying: "Well, I suppose that since you, PAUL teach that God's grace **ABOUNDED** where **SIN** abounded (Romans 5:20), that Christians are to **CONTINUE** in **SIN** so that God's grace can keep **ABOUNDING**?!"
 - C. In very strong language, Paul completely **OPPOSED** the assertion that **any** Christian is to **continue** in a **state** of **sin**, Romans 6:1-2a.
 1. The KJV expression "God forbid" uses the subjunctive negative adverb with the rare optative verb, translated as "may it never be"! [cf. A. T. Robertson, A Gram. of the Greek N.T., p. 854]
 2. In other words, this negation is as strong a "NO" as is possible! [Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 461, 448]
 - D. His reason for this is based on the believer's spiritual identity with Christ in His death and resurrection, Romans 6:2b-14:
 1. The one who believes in Christ is **positionally** already dead to sin so that he cannot **logically live** in a state of sin any longer, 6:2b.
 2. This **position** arises from the believer's **logical identity** with Jesus Christ who died and rose in his place as his substitute before God:
 - a. When one believes in Christ and is pronounced righteous before God and by God, he is **spiritually** "baptized", or identified with Jesus Christ in His death for sin on the cross, Romans 6:3.
 - b. Likewise, the believer is viewed by God as having been buried with Jesus and also raised from the dead in Jesus, Rom. 6:4a,b.
 - c. Thus, as **Jesus** the **Substitute** for the believer on the cross now **lives**, the believer is viewed by God as needing to live as does that **Substitute** -- in **righteous, post-resurrection life**, 6:4c-7.
 - d. Also, since the believer is to live with Christ forever in resurrection life one day, and since Jesus died **once** only to **rise once** and live **forever** that way, the believer is thus logically expected by God to live **WITHOUT sinning**, Rom. 6:8-10.
- II. **Accordingly, Paul ADMONISHED us believers in Christ to do what GOD does -- to CONSIDER ourselves to have DIED with Christ and RISEN with Him so as to live RIGHTEOUSLY along with our Blessed Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 6:11.**

III. **In practical terms, this is all achieved by GOD'S power as follows:**

- A. First, we believers in Christ are to consider ourselves to be dead to a life of sin and alive unto God through Christ to live righteously, 6:11.
- B. Second, **based** on this consideration, we are to resist letting sin rule in our bodies and their actions, resisting the lusts of sin, Romans 6:12.
- C. Third, we are to yield our bodies not to sin's control, but to God's control as sin is not supposed to have any dominion over us, 6:13-14a.
- D. Fourth, the **power** for all of this comes not from trying to discipline ourselves, but by **leaning** on the indwelling **Holy Spirit** for living motivation and strength, Romans 8:3-4; Galatians 5:16:
 1. The "flesh," or sin nature in the believer, cannot be used as a vehicle to try to live a godly life, for it cannot do so, Rom. 8:3a.
 2. Christ thus died, positionally putting the believer's sin nature to death in the cross; that makes room for **God the Holy Spirit** living **IN** the believer to live a righteous life in him in place of the believer's futile efforts to do so in his sinful nature, Romans 8:3-4.
 3. Thus, when the believer relies upon God's indwelling Spirit, that Spirit lives Christ's righteousness in him, Galatians 5:16.

Application: *To overcome a troubled background, (1) we must believe on Christ to be justified by God and indwelt by the Holy Spirit to be EQUIPPED to gain spiritual victory. (2) Then, realizing we MUST live holy lives because God EXPECTS it of EVERY believer REGARDLESS of his PAST, and EQUIPS ALL of us by His Spirit to do so, (3) we are to CONSIDER ourselves dead to sin but alive to holy living in Christ, and rely on the Holy Spirit to live HIMSELF through us, Galatians 2:20.*

Lesson: *God's salvation provisions for believers in Jesus Christ are so GREAT, anyone with ANY kind of background or sinful record who BELIEVES in Christ as Savior is EXPECTED to live RIGHTEOUSLY by GOD. Thus, once one believes in Christ as His personal Savior from sin, he is to UTILIZE the position and resources he has IN Christ to live RIGHTEOUSLY regardless of his past!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

I have a tract in my file put out by "The Last Days Newsletter" about a man named Sy Rogers. There is a photo of him with his wife, Karen on the back page of the tract. He and his wife are smiling in the photo because of the change that Jesus Christ has wrought in him.

What a change it was! Sy came from a "disintegrating middle class" home. His mother was an alcoholic, and was not always able to care for Sy. When he was 5, she died in a car accident, so Sy went to live with relatives while his father tried to piece together a new beginning for himself. By age 8, Sy had intense longings to be gay.

Eventually, Sy arranged to have a sex change operation.

While waiting for his surgery that was to be performed at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Sy began to feel despondent. The Christian song "Jesus Loves Me" from his early childhood came to mind and bothered him deeply. He finally prayed, "God, please show me if You don't want me to pursue this sex change."

The next morning, Sy was awakened by the radio announcer who was saying Johns Hopkins Hospital was no longer going to perform sex change operations! Sy was shocked into reading a Bible.

That's how he came across Isaiah 1:18-20: "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool."

This passage brought Sy under intense conviction of his need for Christ, and he prayed for God to change him while receiving Christ as His Savior. He asked God, "Make me the man **You** want me to be!"

Overnight, Sy was set free from immorality and drug addiction. The bleeding sores in his esophagus healed quickly. He learned to live by the Holy Spirit's power and was a changed, victorious man! That's how he came to be a happily, heterosexually married man in the photo!