

### **Lesson 3 – A Change of Kingdoms (Chapter 5)**

Many Christians have a basic desire to live a holy life, but have come to believe that they simply cannot do it. While not necessarily living in gross sin, they have more or less given up ever attaining a life of holiness and have settled down to a life of moral mediocrity with which neither they or God are pleased. **Romans 6:6-7** seems to describe an impossible or, at best, difficult state – how can we truly be dead to sin and no longer a slave to it...at all? In reality, we desire and struggle for "victory", yet continue to experience defeat at the hands of our sinful nature. We wonder why we don't live in, or experience, the victory described in so many books on the Christian life.

To begin with, we need to realize that God has indeed made provision for us to live a holy life, and He has also given us responsibilities as well. **Romans 6:12** tells us, "Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its evil desires". It is clearly our responsibility to establish as part of our *will* to not let sin have control in our lives. But **Romans 6:1-11** gives us the reason why. In this preceding passage, Paul establishes the fact that since we have died to the sinful nature (through Christ), we are no longer a slave of it..."Therefore..." we have the responsibility and the ability to keep sin from reigning in our lives.

If we view sin as a realm or sphere or world then we, as believers, no longer live there. And so, what holds true here in the material world we live in, applies in this case as well. When we die here on earth, we are no longer subject to its laws, rules or influences. We are dead! We don't have to pay taxes, we cannot be arrested, there are no laws we must obey, we do not experience sickness or pain, hunger or thirst. We are beyond the influence of this world. As **verse 11** tells us, we must *reckon* (count, determine, decide) ourselves dead to the world of sin.

But, if we have been delivered from this realm of sin, why do we still sin? Because, although God has delivered us from the *reign* of sin in our lives, the sinful nature still resides within us. Even though the dominion (power, rule) of the kingdom of sin has been overthrown, it now resorts to guerilla warfare. Thus, we experience the struggle that Paul describes in **Galatians 5:17**. Though we have been delivered from the kingdom of sin and its rule, we have not been delivered from its attacks.

So, even though Romans 6 clearly lays out God's provision for us to be free from sin's reign in our nature, if left unchecked it can reign in our mortal bodies. It will turn the natural instincts of our bodies into lust; it will turn our natural appetites into indulgence; our need for clothing and shelter into materialism and our natural sexual interests into immorality. But we now have a choice. We can stand up to sin and say "no" to it (**Titus 2:11-14**). Before, we did not have a choice. The bottom line is this – when we sin as Christians, we do not sin as slaves to it, but as redeemed individuals with the freedom of choice. We sin...because we choose to.

God has given us the *potential, power and provision* for resisting sin. But the *responsibility* for resisting is ours. We will next examine the battle that rages within us as we strive to live a life of holiness.