

# “Winning the War with Sin”

Romans 6:11-14

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# connect groups

## PATH

There is not a person I know who doesn't struggle with sin. Evil thoughts, bad habits, immoral impulses, and recurring temptations all rear their ugly heads, leaving us exhausted and disappointed in ourselves and wondering if any deliverance is possible. This struggle is real. The war can be fierce. How can we believers (who still have our old natures) win in these battles? Consider this four-step strategy:

I. We Reason (vv. 3, 6, 9)

II. We Reckon (v. 11)

III. We Resist (vv. 12-13a)

IV. We Replace (vv. 13b-14)

## POINTS

### We Reason

- People often make false assumptions about old temptations.
- Paul described the battle with sin in Galatians 5:17. Our old nature loves to do evil.
- The struggle between our two natures is familiar to every believer; it's a struggle that doesn't stop until heaven.
- The Bible teaches that Christians have three enemies: the devil, the flesh (our old nature and habits), and the world (systems, values, and lifestyles opposed to God). When all three enemies work together, they create the perfect storm.
- Reason is the first strategy for battling sin. If you want to grow, you first must know. Doctrine precedes doing.
- If Satan can keep you ignorant, you'll be impotent. We study God's Word to know and grow.
- We should know for certain:
  - Our old life is past; this is demonstrated in baptism.
  - Our old lifestyle is rendered powerless.
  - New life comes with new power. Jesus' resurrection is the power source for victory over sin.

### We Reckon

- The word Paul used for “reckon” is an accounting term meaning “to calculate, to estimate, to be true.” Paul was saying, “I believe what God says to be true.”
- Note the difference between knowledge and conviction—conviction

is a deeper experience based on what we know is true.

- Our theology must become be-ology, turning knowledge into conviction.
- Although we know sin is bad, we must be convinced it is bad. We must reckon it for what it is.
- Sanctification does not mean we don't sin, it means that we don't have to give in to sin.
- When we are attacked, we can proclaim, “I don't have to be a slave to sin.” We reckon that what we know about Christ's victory over sin is enough to help us fight against sin.

### We Resist

- Paul showed that there is an element of control involved in not sinning. People can resist sin.
- Besetting sins, habits, and addictive behavior needs support from the outside, first from the Lord, then from fellow Christians (groups, counselors, pastors, etc.).
- We should not let sinful impulses call the shots (see James 4:1-10).
- Once we are plugged into God as the power source, we can stop being servants of sin.
- Practical strategies include:
  - Maintain a safe proximity. Put distance between you and sin; stay far away from temptation.
  - Cut off opportunity. Even with distance, temptation can still present itself. So, close the door, turn off the device, and flee lust (see 2 Timothy 2:22).

- Foster accountability. Enlist someone to support you in the struggle (see Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

### We Replace

- Replacing sin with righteousness turns a defensive position into an offensive position. The best way to deprive the old nature is to cultivate a new one.
- Become so engaged in serving God that you lose interest in gratifying yourself.
- Notice the repeated use of “present” meaning “to place at disposal, to offer as a sacrifice” (see Romans 12:1-2).
- “Instruments” is a military term for weapons or supplies used during a war. Paul was saying, “Don't give weapons to the enemy. Don't let the devil use your tongue, hands, mind, or feet.” Instead, present to God the use of your body.
- Top-down practical strategies include:
  - Mind: Don't let your mind be an instrument of wickedness; take every thought captive (see 2 Corinthians 10:5).
  - Eyes: Don't look at unholy or impure things (movies, internet, etc.)
  - Mouth: Let your speech be edifying and pleasing to others and speak truth.
  - Ears: Listen to God, to His Word, and to others' needs.
  - Body: Make yourself a living sacrifice by using your body for God's glory.
- God aims for the transformation of a life.

## PRACTICE

**Connect Up:** One theme Pastor Skip touched on is holiness. Holiness is a moral attribute of God; God is holy (see Psalm 99). Following His example, we are called to holiness as well (see 1 Peter 1:15-17). Consider these two Hebrew words as you discuss holiness:

- *Godesh*—apartness. Holiness means “set apart.” What are we to be set apart from?
- *Gadosh*—sacred. What are we to consider sacred and righteous? How should this help us live a holy life?

**Connect In:** Pastor Skip mentioned accountability with other Christians as support from the outside. Use these questions to discuss accountability:

- If you have an accountability partner, how has he or she helped you in your Christian walk?
- If you don't have an accountability partner, why?
- How can counselors, pastors, and Christian groups help you resist and replace bad habits with godly habits? If you've been helped by any of these, share your story.

**Connect Out:** An unbeliever must first become a Christian before he or she can truly reckon, resist, and replace sin (since they don't have the Spirit living inside them). How can you use God's holiness and humankind's sin as a springboard to discuss the good news of Jesus? Using the Romans Road to Salvation, look up these verses to discuss: Romans 3:23; 3:10-18; 5:8; 6:23, 8:38-39; 10:8-10; 10:13; 10:17.