

Romans (6:11-13)

Deceitful Desires

Part 21 - December 19, 2004

ALIVE TO GOD

In chapter six, Paul spends a lot of time talking about our new relationship to sin and how it affects the believer's life.

- Through Adam it destined us to separation from God.
- Through Jesus it has been conquered and vanquished.

We ended on verse ten (of chapter six):

The death [Jesus] died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. - Romans 6:10 NIV

Christ cut the ties (*died to*) to the power and penalty of sin, and is forever connected and joined to (*lives to*) the Father.

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. - Romans 6:11-13 NIV

- The word "count" (reckon, consider) is an accounting term.
- It means to hold an opinion or a view based on evaluation.

We must objectively evaluate our attachments to sin:

Q: Am I cutting the ties? Are those knots losing their grip, or am I *allowing* them to cinch up on me tighter and tighter?

It isn't that the one who is "alive to God in Christ Jesus" is sinless; but they "do not let sin reign (rule, govern)."



- Each of us bows to a throne (seat of authority).
- We can't sit on it because we're just too small.
- But we decide who does get to sit on the throne.

When we invite Christ into our heart, we ask Him to *reign* from this throne, and we promise to honor Him as King and Lord. Now, as long as we live, the enemy will *never* stop trying to recapture and reclaim that seat of authority in our lives.

Sin is a pretender to the throne. We must understand (and Paul points this out in verse 12) that: Sin is a power, and not just an act. It wants to *reign*. There are two powers and one throne. And you decide which power takes the place of authority in your life.

Paul says, "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body."



Your mortal body is the castle that houses the throne.

Christ has stormed the castle, and liberated each of us from the bondage to sin. The Devil *can't* make me do it!

If you're a believer, if you've asked Christ to sit on the throne, the enemy has been banished from your castle.

Now this is where it gets sinister! There are agents in the castle: the desires of the body.



Desires are not sin in and of themselves.

They are meant to be *protectors* of the castle. They cause us to eat and drink and rest; they help us find comfort and safety.

But, sin does battle against us by capturing and corrupting these servants and turning them into deceitful traitors.

- The desire for food becomes gluttony, bulimia, or anorexia.
- The desire for rest becomes laziness, and lack of interest.
- The desire for comfort becomes unrestrained sexual conduct.

These internal enemy agents are bent on destroying our castle from within by using their servant role to seduce us. And so, Paul cautions us not to "obey [the body's] *evil* desires."

There are good, healthy physiological desires that God created: food & drink, comfort, friendship, sexual expression, etc. But they can become corrupt and self-destructive.

Q: So how can we tell when we're being seduced by *evil* desires?

Q: When does a simple indulgence become sinful over-indulgence?

Q: Is it okay to take three trips around that Christmas buffet?

A: Our desires become deceptive whenever they want us to indulge without consequence or accountability or responsibility; because there is no such thing!

If I can only enjoy the indulgence by temporarily suspending my awareness of reality, it's an enemy agent seducing me with lies!

- "Let's party *like* there's no tomorrow!"

But there *is* a tomorrow ... and a tomorrow *after* tomorrow ... and another tomorrow after that! That's three tomorrows right there!

Evil desires promise satisfaction and happiness. But they deliver shallow, shameful, short-lived, stimulation that leaves us *less* content, *less* peaceful, *less* hopeful, and *more* guilt-ridden, *more* restless, *more* discouraged, and *more* enslaved!

Want to know something I hate? I HATE those Las Vegas ads on TV that end by saying, "What happens here, stays here." ENEMY AGENT! It follows you home and invades your castle!

This is how the enemy gets to the throne. He subverts our servant desires and then hopes that *we'll* join the conspiracy.

Q: How do we join the conspiracy against the true King?



We arm the enemy agents with weapons, weapons that are literally arms ... and hands and eyes and feet.

We offer parts of our own bodies to be used against us!

Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. - Romans 6:13 NIV

Give those desires enough ammunition and they'll betray the castle and reinstate their master on the throne. And we'll find ourselves back in bondage to sin.

Q: Which of your body parts is the deadliest-traitor/best-liar?

James says that the most deadly weapon of unrighteousness is the (can you guess?) *tongue*. Overtly visible sins may catch our eye, but the stealthy, incessant ones can be far more destructive.

Q: So what do we do?

A: We *offer* ourselves (and the parts of our body) to God.

- To "offer" ourselves is to yield or surrender or submit.

When we participate in the offering, we surrender a consistent portion of our income to advance God's Kingdom. But with ourselves, God wants the whole thing, 100%!

Q: Are you familiar with this verse in James?

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. – James 4:7 NIV

- Quoted this way, it's just not true.

Resisting the devil isn't just a matter of *willpower*. The devil isn't going to flee from you because he isn't afraid of you.

The statement actually begins one sentence back:

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. – James 4:7 NIV

When God is on the throne, and we remain not perfect, but loyal subjects, in spite of deceptive desires, the enemy will retreat.

The thing is, we *will* surrender and submit ourselves to an authority; and we *will* elect a King to sit on that throne.

Q: The only question is, will we offer ourselves to sin and death, or offer ourselves to God and life?

- It's not even a matter of willpower as much as *preference*.
- Choosing is finding one thing *preferable* to another thing.

Q: Do you see God as *preferable* to the fleeting pleasures of sin?

To be honest, there are moments when sin is preferable to God; but do you recognize the lie afterwards? Or, do you allow it to continue deceiving you?

Q: Do you repent and restore your relationship with the true King?

Because the battle isn't a surface battle, as if we could just say no to a list of unrighteous acts. The battle goes beneath acts to desires; and beneath desires to the *power* of sin. The issue isn't what acts you do or don't do, or which desires you give in to and which you don't. The real issue is this:

Q: Who sits on that throne and *reigns* in your life?

Q: Who are you *submitting* to, and who do you *resist*?