

Freedom From Sin Part 2

How do we die and become free from sin?

In Part 1, we looked at many verses which show that Jesus came to set us free from sin and, if we are to be freed from sin, then we must die to it. If we are dead to something then it no longer has an influence over us - we are free from its control. Being free from sin doesn't mean we are free from temptation; it means that we don't give in to temptation. In the same way that a man in the grave is no longer influenced by the world, a believer who is dead to sin is no longer controlled by sin.

On the other hand, to be alive to something is to be totally dedicated to it. The Lord wants us to be dead to this world of sin and alive to Him and that is why we are told, "*count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 6:11). So, how do we become dead to sin?

One thing is certain: we cannot keep from sin in our own strength. Rom. 8:7 makes this clear where it says, "*The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*" However, God wants us to live righteously so He empowers us as the following verses show -

2 Pet. 1:3-4 say, "*His divine power [the Holy Spirit] has given us everything we need for life and godliness ... so that ... you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*" So we can see that, through the Holy Spirit, we have Divine Power to live godly lives and escape the corruption of this sinful world. This is verified by Rom. 8:4 which tells us that through the Spirit we can fully meet God's righteous requirements.

Dying to sin and being free of its power does not happen automatically the moment we are saved. Neither is it a simple matter of quoting a couple of verses about being dead to sin. If I say, "*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me*" (Gal. 2:20), but in reality I'm still sinning then I'm only kidding myself. Crucifixion is a slow and extremely painful process and so is dying to sin. Gal. 5:16-17 tell us there is a war raging within us, between our sinful nature and the Holy Spirit, and to win that war we must live according to the Spirit.

Living according to the Spirit is responding to the Spirit's conviction by confessing and repenting of our sin. Php. 2:12-13 tell us, "*work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God [the Holy Spirit] who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*" Notice that the Holy Spirit does not force us to do anything but He works within us, convicting us, and willing us to act in a righteous manner. He works on our conscience to get us to turn away from sin. The following verses also show that we have our own part to play in dying to self -

1) Col. 3:5 says, "*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*"

2) Eph. 4:22-24 say, "*... put off your old self ... be made new in the attitude of your minds ... put on the new self ... created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*"

So, to be freed from sin, we must "*put to death*" our earthly nature, we must "*put on the new self*", and we must "*be made new*" in our minds and this can only be done through a determined effort to be obedient to the Holy Spirit. This process of dying to self is called sanctification and, as already shown, we can't do it alone and neither does the Holy Spirit automatically do it for us. It is through our persevering obedience that the Holy Spirit empowers us to resist temptation and in this way our sinful nature is crucified and we are freed from the power of sin.

Part 3 will be more on living according to the Spirit. Amen.

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