

## Life in the Spirit

by David Orton

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But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh

Galatians 5:16

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death

Romans 8:2

We know that our old self [*anthropos* - man] was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin

Romans 6:6

Life in the Spirit is fully explained in Paul's Epistles to the Romans (chs 6-8, 12:1-2) and to the Galatians (chs 3-5). A more accurate teaching on Christian sanctification requires dismantling some popular teachings (e.g. Keswick and Wesleyan theories) that have been grounded in faulty exegesis and an inaccurate translation of the key text, Romans 6:6.

Rather than Romans 6 teaching *experiential* deliverance from sin, it is teaching our *positional* deliverance, flowing from the previous passage (5:12-20), which explicates Adam and Christ as the representative heads of two humanities. *Experiential* victory over sin is grounded in the believer's *positional* transfer from Adam into Christ—from one corporate order into another. Unless this great fact is *reckoned* (*logizomai* - calculated, counted; Rom 6:11) upon we are consigned to failure. As with book-keeping we are to calculate based on *forensic facts* (i.e. legal facts) that now show our account to be in credit—it has nothing to do with my subjective experience. Paul doesn't address the believer's experiential victory over sin until chs. 7:7 - 8:17.

Consequently, rather than our old *self* being crucified (6:6), wrongly translated from *anthropos*, literally meaning *man*, Paul is referring to the *old man* (i.e. Adam) as the representative head of the old humanity (ch 5:12-20). The believer has been *legally* and *objectively* transferred from the old Adamic order of sin through Christ's death as the *last Adam* (1 Cor 15:45). Just as Christ's death was factual and historical, so too the believer's death "in Christ" to the Adamic order of sin and death. The believer does not still need to *be* crucified, he or she *was* crucified in Christ!—past tense, an historic fact (6:6).

Therefore, the *body of sin* (6:6) that is made of no effect is not the believer's physical body still needing to be crucified, rather, it is the corporate body of Adam—the whole Adamic order and community of sin that was done away with in Christ. Nor is it the believer's old *self* that was crucified as if he or she internally possesses an old self, along with the new self, the Holy Spirit, and then last of all themselves! What a schizophrenic concoction the believer has now become! This misconception has caused untold emotional and mental stress to the Christian striving to crucify their old *self* to gain victory over sin only to be routinely defeated. Let me say categorically, the believer does not possess an *old self* and a *new self*—they are 'themselves'! Through baptism they – 'themselves' – are now "in Christ" (6:1-5), that is, they are no longer "in Adam".

And now being "in Christ" they – *themselves* – are commanded to "put off the old man (*anthropos*)" — not *self* — that is, the behaviours of the *body of sin* (6:6), the old Adam community, and "put on the new man (*anthropos*)", the behaviours of the new Christ community that "*is being* renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col 3:9-10; also Eph 4:22-24). Having died in Christ to the Adamic order, the believer is now raised up to live – *vitality* and *experientially* – in newness of life (6:4; 8:1-2).

How is this achieved: (1) *Positionally* by reckoning (*logizomai* - counting, calculating) on the *legal* and *objective* fact of having died "in Christ" to the old Adamic order and being raised up into the new Christ order (6:11); and (2) *Experientially* by being "transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Rom 12:2; also Eph 4:23) as it is "set on the things of the Spirit", that is, the factuality of the believer's positional transfer from Adam into Christ:

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their *minds* on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their *minds* on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the *mind* on the flesh is death, but to set the *mind* on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the *mind* that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 ***You, however, are not in the flesh [i.e. Adam] but in the Spirit [i.e. Christ]***, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

Romans 8:5–9

The secret to life in the Spirit is to realise that "in Christ" you are already "in the Spirit"! The experiential only ever flows from the *positional*.

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