

"THE BEST LIFE NOW"

(Romans 6:1-14)

(Chuck Swindoll)

Because grace is so foreign to the depraved mind, it will not be easy for a newly restored mind to adjust. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit will be faithful to use every circumstance and all experiences to transform the new believer from within. Eventually, when this physical life gives way to eternal life, we believers will be like Christ (1 Jn. 3:2). Until then, we are works in progress.

While the Holy Spirit is able to do the work of transformation and will be faithful to complete the task (Phil. 1:6), we are invited to participate in that process. We have a genuine stake in determining the quality of life we enjoy here and now. Of course, the quality of life I'm referring to has little to do with our physical circumstances. I'm referring to authentic joy, intimacy with the Almighty, liberty from the compulsions of sin, and becoming like Christ. God will be faithful to accomplish in us what He wills, but the degree to which we participate either helps or hinders our progress.

Growing in grace begins with three specific changes in how we operate. This pattern will be repeated each time we encounter a new spiritual truth.

1. *Know the truth* (6:1-10). In this case, the truth of our new spiritual condition is that we are dead to sin. Before we believed in Christ, we were enslaved to evil. We did not possess the power to stop our own wrongdoing. Now, sin has only one weapon: deception. Satan wants you to think that compulsions to sin cannot be broken. But the truth stands. We are free!
2. *Consider the truth* (6:11). Once we encounter a new truth, we must discard our old manner of thinking and replace it with this new understanding. Often, that's not easy. We have been conditioned by the old pattern of thinking unconsciously to behave a certain way. Furthermore, we have become emotionally attached to our old manner of living—even when it's unpleasant. Habits are tough to break. Therefore, we must repeatedly and continually "consider" divine truth; that is, decide it is true.
3. *Present our bodies to truth* (6:12-14). Having decided something is true, we must change our behavior accordingly. Paul expressed this command in its most basic terms. Your mind controls your body, so take command and make your body operate in agreement with what you have accepted as true.

Imagine what it would be like if a billionaire were to inform you that for no other reason than kindness, he or she had deposited one hundred million dollars into your checking account. Completely free. No strings



attached. After taxes. I don't know how you would respond, but here's what I would do:

1. *Know the truth*—I would contact the president of my bank and verify that the funds are indeed credited to my account.
2. *Consider the truth*—I would take out my checkbook (yes, I still carry one!), make an entry in the register to reflect the deposit, and adjust my balance.
3. *Present my body to the truth*—After making a substantial donation to my church and several favorite ministries, I would start writing checks! I might struggle to accept the truth of my super-wealth, but I would make every effort to apply the necessary adjustments.

If you presently struggle with a particular repetitive or compulsive sin, you very likely suffer from the delusion that it will never loosen its grip on you. I won't insult you by saying that transformation will be easy. It won't. However, the truth is uncomplicated. If you are a believer, if you have accepted God's free gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, you have within you spiritual riches beyond your imagination. The power to overcome any evil lives within you. He is none other than God in the person of the Holy Spirit. Call on Him to help!

Knowing, considering, and presenting are not the entire solution to our problems, and I don't mean to oversimplify the process of spiritual growth. Deeply entrenched patterns of sin require much more attention than a simple accounting procedure. However, it is a necessary beginning.

So, don't wait. Begin now. It's never too late to start doing what is right.