

Chapter Two: Walk in Newness of Life

As we mature we start new stages of life, leaving the old stages behind. Babies go from crawling to walking. Communication starts with crying and develops into verbal expressions. With each new stage of life, the ways of the old stage are left behind so the ways of the new stage can be fully embraced. Once babies start walking they continue to do so, leaving the crawling behind as parents struggle to keep up. Eventually crying is also left behind as verbal skills continue to develop. Maturity requires us to constantly learn and grow, reaching new stages of life. True growth and maturity require our old ways and habits to be left behind as we move forward. The same is so with our spiritual lives. Study and knowledge are necessary for spiritual growth and maturity, thus leading to new stages of spiritual life. One of those stages is to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). Walk, *peripateō* (G: 4043), signifies “the whole round of the activities of the individual life” (Vine 664). Newness, *kainotēs* (G: 2538), indicates new “as to quality” (Vine 430-431). Thus, a newness of life is “a new condition or state of (moral) life” (Thayer 318). This new condition or manner of life is: 1) Achieved through baptism (Romans 6:1-16); 2) An inner change (Romans 6:17-23); and 3) An outer change (1 Peter 4:1-5).

Walking in newness of life is begun through baptism (Romans 6:1-16). Verse three states baptism is a connection to the death of Christ. Verses four and five follow with parallels between the two. “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” Likeness, *homoīōma* (G: 3667), means “resemblance” (Vine 372) and refers to “that which has been made after the likeness of something” (Thayer 4450). There is a resemblance between baptism and the death of Christ. Verse five uses the phrase “planted together,” which comes from the Greek word *symphytos* (G: 4854).

The word here used...does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It properly means, sown or planted at the same time...and is applied to plants and trees that are planted at the same time, and that sprout and grow together...Hence it means intimately connected, or joined together. And here it denotes that Christians and the Saviour have been united intimately in regard to death; as he died and was laid in the grave, so have they by profession died to sin. And it is therefore natural to expect, that, like grain sown at the same time, they should grow up in a similar manner, and resemble each other. (Barnes 591)

Just as Christ rose to life, so we also rise to a new life—a life “dead to sin” (verse 2).” To be *dead* to a thing is a strong expression denoting that it has no influence

over us...When it is said, therefore, that a Christian is *dead to sin*, the sense is, that it has lost its influence over him; he is not subject to it” (Barnes 590). This does not mean Christians can not or do not sin. The key to understanding the phrase “dead to sin” in verse two is found in verse six. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Serve, *douleuō* (G: 1398), means “to yield to, give one’s self up to” (Thayer 157). Christians do not yield to sin as the “body of sin” was destroyed in baptism. Destroyed, *katargeō* (G: 2673), means “to reduce to inactivity” (Vine 3). When we choose to obey Christ through baptism we make an active choice to no longer give ourselves over to sin. Prior to baptism, we served sin and lived in sin. Now that our “old man,” or old way of sinful life, has been crucified with Christ we rise from baptism to walk in a new way of life—a life dead to sin and alive unto God.

Romans 6:12-16 shows further what it means to be dead to sin. “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (verses 12-13). Reign, *basileuō* (G: 936), means “to exercise the highest influence, control” (Thayer 98). Allowing sin to reign refers to “the unchecked dominion of sin *within* us” (Jamieson 1154). Christians do not serve sin and do not allow sin to lead and control our lives. Christians do not obey, *hypakouō* (G: 5219), sin. We do not allow ourselves to be “captivated” or “governed” by sin (Thayer 638). “Though there are none that live without sin, yet, blessed be God, there are those that do not live in sin, do not live in it as their element, do not make a trade of it” (Henry *New* 7:238). Since we do not obey sin, neither do we yield ourselves to unrighteousness. Yield, *paristēmi* (G:3936), means “to present” (Vine 691). An instrument, *hoplon* (G:3696), is “a tool, instrument, weapon” (Vine 329). We are not to give our members up to or devote and employ our members to sin, thus becoming weapons of unrighteousness. Rather, we are to be “instruments of righteousness unto God.” We, as Christians, are God’s weapons and work for righteousness. We are to use our hands, feet, mouths, etc. in service to God. “The members of our bodies when withdrawn from the service of sin, are not to lie idle, but to be made use of in the service of God” (Henry *New* 7:240). When we become dead unto sin through baptism we must also become alive unto God as we walk in newness of life.

Our Christian walk must begin with the newness of life found only in baptism. We can not live a proper Christian life unless we are, in fact, Christians. It takes more than being a “good person” to be a Christian. Some may have Christian-like

characteristics or live by some of the same values, but only those who have been crucified with Christ through baptism can truly be called Christians. Baptism forms a special bond between Christ and the believer. It is there in the watery grave of baptism our sins are washed away and we become new creatures (Acts 22:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Therefore, we must begin our Christian walk with the death of the old man of sin and a resurrection to a newness of life—the Christian life which is dead to sin, alive in Christ and alive to God.

To walk in newness of life requires an inner change (Romans 6:17-23). Though the newness of life comes through baptism it does not begin with baptism. Those who do not serve sin, who have become dead to sin through baptism, have been freed from sin (verse 7, 18). Freed, *dikaioo* (G:1344), in verse seven means “to be freed...from its dominion” (Thayer 150). The word “signifies ‘to justify’...in the legal sense” (Vine 255) and is elsewhere in the New Testament translated “justified.” The Greek word for the phrase “made free” (verse 18) is *eleutheria* (G:1659). It means “to make free, set at liberty” and is used here in reference to liberation “from the dominion of sin” (Thayer 204). The correlation between “dead to sin” (verse 2) and “freed from sin” (verse 18) is that “death annuls all obligations” (Vine 255). Thereby, when we become dead to sin in baptism we are also freed from the servitude of sin. “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:17-18). Servants (verse 17) is the Greek noun *doulos* (G: 1401), which means “one who gives himself up wholly to another’s will...or dominion” (Thayer 158). It is “the most common and general word for ‘servant,’ frequently indicating subjection without the idea of bondage,” thus a voluntary subjection (Vine 562). Verse eighteen contains the verb form *douloō* (G: 1402) which carries the same meaning. Being dead to sin, the bond of service to sin is given up as we align ourselves with God and become his servants. Therefore, being free from sin is:

First, a freedom from the service of sin; it is the shaking off of that yoke, resolving to have no more to do with it. Secondly, a resignation of ourselves to the service of God and righteousness, to God as our master, to righteousness as our work...we cannot be made the servants of God till we are freed from the power and dominion of sin; we cannot serve two masters so directly opposite one another as God and sin are. (Henry *New* 7: 244-245)

“The case is one of emancipation from entire servitude to one Master to entire servitude to another...There is no middle state of personal independence” (Jamieson 1155). The only way to become the servants of righteousness is through obedience from the heart. Obeyed, *hypakouō* (G:5219), is the same Greek word used in verse twelve. The difference is the object obeyed. Rather than being

governed by sin (verse 12), Christians have “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (verse 17). Heart, *kardia* (G: 2588), refers to the “mind (seat of thought and emotion)” (Strong 1619). “The Gospel is a doctrine not only to be believed, but to be obeyed, and that from the heart, which denotes the sincerity and reality of that obedience; not in profession only, but in power—from the heart, the innermost part, the commanding part of us” (Henry *New* 7:244). The change we make in baptism is one that begins on the inside and works its way out. True growth and development, a true change, can only be based on sincerity and dedication to God. One who is baptized without an inner change has not crucified the body of sin and is therefore neither dead to sin nor freed from sin. Consequently, he does not rise to walk in newness of life as he is still a servant of sin. Walking in newness of life requires an inner change. We must obey from the heart. We must determine in our own minds to change our lives. Only then, with sincerity, can baptism truly free us from sin and make us servants of righteousness.

A sincere change from the heart will lead to an outer change—a change of life, thus we rise to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). As seen from our text in Romans, it is a life that is dead to and freed from sin. It is a life that no longer serves sin and unrighteousness, rather serving God and righteousness. First Peter 4:1-5 illustrates an outer change that is seen by those around us. “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (verses 1-2). Just as Christ suffered in the flesh so have those who have “ceased from sin.” Ceased, *pauō* (G: 3973), means “to stop...to make an end” (Vine 93). “To ‘suffer in the flesh’ is *to die*...’when a man is dead, he will sin no more’...So if a Christian becomes *dead* in a moral sense—dead to this world, dead by being crucified with Christ...he may be expected to cease from sin” (Barnes 1427). Again, this does not mean Christians do not and can not sin, but that Christians do not live in sin. Live, *bioō* (G: 980), literally means “to spend life...to pass the time” (Thayer 102). Those who have ceased from sin do not spend our existence “in the flesh to the lusts of men” (verse 2). We do not spend our lives in sin and unrighteousness. Rather, we spend our existence fulfilling the will of God and living in righteousness. The idea behind “live” is the same as “walk” in Romans 6:4. “True conversion makes a marvelous change in the heart and life of everyone who partakes of it. It brings a man off from all his old, fashionable, and delightful lusts, and from the common ways and vices of the world, to the will of God. It alters the mind, judgment, affections, way, and conversation of every one who has experienced it” (Henry *New* 10:1043). It is a conversion seen by our very actions. Verse three lists some of the sins our Christian brethren were guilty of

prior to their conversions. Notice Peter uses the phrase “we walked,” including himself in the sinful lifestyle he addresses. Whether guilty of these vices or others, we all at one point in our lives used to live in sin. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Peter’s point is the change of conduct stemming from our change of heart. Those who were a part of our lives of sin see a difference in our way of life after our conversion to Christ. They “think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you” (verse 4). The phrase “think it strange” is translated from *xenizō* (G:3579). It means “to be surprised, astonished at the novelty or strangeness of a thing...shocked” (Thayer 432). Run, *syntrecho* (G: 4936), means “to run together with...of ‘running’ a course of evil with others” (Vine 58). The phrase “excess of riot” comes from two Greek words: *anachysis* (G: 401) and *asōia* (G: 810). The idea is that “all the sources and forms of riot and disorder were *poured out together*. There was no withholding, no restraint” (Barnes 1428). Our new lives as servants of righteousness are in such contrast to our old lives of sin that our friends are surprised and wonder at the changes we made. They find it so strange they speak evil of us (verse 4). This term, *blasphēmeō* (G: 987), means “to blaspheme, insult, slander, curse” (Strong 1598). “Their surprise carries them to blasphemy,” speaking out against us, our new path, our religion, our faith and our God (HenryNew 10: 144). A change of heart must be accompanied by a change of action. Others should be able to see the changes we make to our lives when we walk in newness of life.

Paul tells us to “walk in newness of life.” To do that we must be buried with Christ in baptism, putting off the old man of sin and beginning our Christian walk as new creatures. To truly have a newness to our walk we must make a change that starts on the inside and works its way out. We must determine within our own minds to change our hearts and our actions. If we have truly converted to Christ, then others will be able to see the changes we make to our lives. If not, then perhaps we have not changed as much as we think we have. If no one has noticed a difference in our manner, our speech, our walk, it may be because our hearts have not been truly changed. We must change, however, if we are to walk in newness of life. We must “walk by new rules, towards new ends, from new principles. Make a new choice of the way. Choose new paths to walk in, new leaders to walk after, new companions to walk with” (Henry New 7:238).

Questions:

1. How do we begin our walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-16)?

a. How does baptism connect us to Christ?

b. What does it mean to be “dead to sin”?

c. What does it mean to be an instrument of righteousness?

2. How are we changed when we walk in newness of life?

a. What is the significance of being “freed from sin”?

b. What does it mean to obey from the heart?

3. What is the result of our inward change (1 Peter 4:1-5)?

a. How may others react to this change?

b. What could be the reason no one reacts in such a manner?

4. In your own words, explain what it means to walk in newness of life.