

# St. Paul's Use of Terms Implying His Entire Sanctification.

by Daniel Steele

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*St. Paul's use of terms implies entire sanctification, where one is dead to sin and alive to God through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Scripture:** Romans 6:2, Romans 6:6, Galatians 2:19-20, Colossians 3:1

**Topics:** "Sanctification", "Dying To Sin"

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## Description

Daniel Steele preaches on St. Paul's figurative expressions in Romans, emphasizing the concept of dying to sin as becoming indifferent and ceasing to be subject to it, signifying a complete sanctification. Steele explains that being dead to sin means abandoning all communion with it, as experienced through a moral change that puts an end to sin's influence. He clarifies that reckoning ourselves dead to sin involves treating sin as we would a dead person, making no provision for it and excluding it from our lives completely.

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## Transcript

St. Paul uses many figurative expressions which manifestly imply entire sanctification. One of these is found in Rom. 6:2, R. V., "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein." We note, in the first place, that the Pauline use of sin in the singular number designates rather a state than an act, or as Cremer says, "Sin is not merely the quality of an action, but a principle, manifesting itself in the conduct of the subject." Now, what is implied in dying or being dead to anything? "To become indifferent, to cease to be subject," says Webster, "as to die to pleasure or to sin." Chrysostom's note on this point is as truthful as it is terse, "To remain motionless as a corpse." To the same intent, yet more extended, is Alford's annotation, "Became as separate from and as apathetic towards sin as the dead corpse is separate from and apathetic towards the functions and stir of life." There can be no higher kind of sanctification on the earth. "The dying to sin," says Meyer, "is the abandonment of all life communion with it, experienced in himself by the convert. This moral change, which has taken place in him, has put an end to the determining influence of sin over him; in relation to it he has ceased to be still in life. This change," says Meyer "took place by baptism." To this we assent, if by baptism is meant not the bare symbol, but the thing signified thereby, the inward cleansing by the fullness of the Holy Ghost.

There has been a vain attempt to weaken Paul's declaration that he was dead to sin, by quoting his subsequent exhortation, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin;" as if this implied that sin was still living and active, but that we must, as the children say, "play that it is dead." This is paralleled by a new style of curing disease, "think that the leprosy is dead, and it will no longer disfigure your body." But genuine cures of leprosy under this treatment are as rare as cures of leprous souls by reckoning them freed from the terrible disease of sin before the Holy Spirit has entirely sanctified them.

What Paul means by reckoning ourselves dead to sin, is to treat ourselves, after the Holy Spirit has cleansed us from all sin by slaying the carnal nature, as we treat all dead persons; make no provision for them, give them no food, nor house-room in our homes, exclude them from our society as offensive, cutting them off forever from all bodily communion. We are to be really dead to sin, and to live and act accordingly. Colonel Hadley of New York City, who was converted in the evening of the day following that in which he had swallowed sixty-three dram-shop drinks, was so mightily converted that he became in a moment dead to alcohol, his burning appetite being instantaneously removed. Ever since July 26, 1886, he has reckoned himself dead to the bottle, by keeping away from the saloon and by frequenting the house of prayer; by giving diligent heed to make his own and others election to eternal life sure, instead of, as before his conversion, canvassing the ten thousand groggeries of the American metropolis for the election of some knavish politician to a place where he can plunder the public treasury.

God never commands us to reckon a falsehood as truth. If we are required to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, it is because such a death is a fact in our past history. Moreover, in the same verse we are exhorted to reckon ourselves alive unto God, not when we are dead in trespasses and sins, but when we have been made alive by the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life. We are to reckon a reality in both clauses of the injunction -- death unto sin, and life unto God. In Gal. 2:19, St. Paul tells how this death and life are related to the law of God, "For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God."

In what sense did Paul die unto the law, so that he could aver that he was not under the law? In the interest of clear thought, practical ethics, and sound theology we answer, that every evangelical believer died to the law, (1) as the ground of his acceptance with God. He ceased to rely on his conformity to the law through all his past history, confessed himself guilty, and entered a new plea in the court of divine justice, "Jesus Christ the Son of God died for me -- I receive him as both my Savior and Lord, and through his mediation I beg for pardon." Paul was not under the law, and was dead to the law as the ground of justification for past sins. (2) Paul was dead to the law as a motive impelling to service. Love to the Lawgiver shed abroad in his heart had taken the place of fear of the penalty of the law. In this change there is nothing strange or revolutionary, since the interior essence of the divine law is love.

(3) Paul died to the law as the instrument of sanctification. He had discovered that it could not cleanse the impurity which it revealed within. He had found in the gospel a personal purifier, procured through the atonement, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven in pentecostal power. He can do what neither "the blood of goats and calves," nor the most scrupulous conformity to the moral law, can do for a sin-stained soul.

(4) But Paul was not antinomian; he did not "make void the moral law through faith, but rather he established the law, for he was not dead to the law as THE RULE OF LIFE.

The iron rails can communicate no power to impel the train; but they are indispensable to direct whatever force may be applied, whether gravity, steam, or electricity. The absence of the rails at any given point of

the track is ruin. Thus it is with the law of God. It has no power to impel or to attract the soul God-ward; but its perpetual office is to guide the chariot wheels of the divine love, impelling souls upward along the heavenly way.

But Paul was not merely dead to sin constructively, as some teach, sin being under the sentence of death yet really alive. He was really dead because he was crucified. The cross was, a certain, if not a summary, way of inflicting death. (Gal. 2:20, R. V., Am. Committee), "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live." This is a distinct confession of the destruction of the sin principle in him. It is not the old man tortured on the cross through scores of years, as some teach, till physical death ends the wretched life. More explicitly is this announced in Rom. 6:6; "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." The Greek for destroy is never used by Paul in the sense of rendering inactive, as those assert who insist that the root of sin is not killed till it is plucked up by old Mortality himself. Says Cremer, who had no doctrinal partiality to warp his definition, "Elsewhere it signifies a putting out of activity, out of power, or effect; but with St. Paul it is to annihilate, to put an end to, to bring to naught." If any expression could be stronger than this, it is found in the reciprocal crucifixion found in Gal. 6:14, "By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." "This," says Bishop, Ellicott, "is a forcible mode of expressing the utter cessation of all communion between the apostle and the world." Paul and the world, the sum total of all that is opposed to the spiritual reign of Christ, regard each other as dead. There is a reciprocal crucifixion. The crucified world has no power to awaken crucified cupidity. Hence no surprise is awakened by Paul's declaration that he is made free from the law of (the uniform tendency to) sin and (spiritual) death (Rom. 8:2). The proclivity toward sin is not only removed, but an upward gravitation is substituted. As the cork set free at the bottom of the sea rapidly rises to the surface, so the soul that is "risen with Christ seeks those things which are above [the higher life], where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."-- Col 3:1. This is the way men dead to sin act; for Paul proceeds to say, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

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