

# Victory Over Indwelling

by Kenneth Wuest

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*Kenneth Wuest's sermon emphasizes the believer's victory over indwelling sin through God's grace and the power of the divine nature.*

**Duration:** 38:05

**Scripture:** John 3:3, Romans 5:20, Romans 6

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Sanctification"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of the Christian's relationship with the evil nature. He emphasizes that although God separates the Christian from the evil nature, it is still present within them. However, the speaker emphasizes that the evil nature has no power over the Christian unless they allow it to. The speaker encourages Christians to maintain their separation from the evil nature by being mindful of what they see, hear, and say. They also highlight the importance of dedicating oneself to God and living under His grace rather than under the law. The sermon references Romans 6, 7, and 8 to explain the dynamics of the Christian life and the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers.

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## Transcript

Our subject is victory over indwelling sin. The problem before us is this. Before salvation, the sinner is completely controlled by the indwelling sinful nature.

There's a vital connection between that person and that evil nature. When God saves that person, an answer to his faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, what relationship does the indwelling sinful nature have to the person? The same relationship as it sustained before salvation, namely that it had the person in his grip continually in the past and still has that person in his grip, or is there some difference in the relationship? That's the problem. And so we turn for an answer to Romans chapter 6. And if you have your Bibles there, will you turn with me to Romans? And I'm sure you'll be able to follow the message better if you have your Bibles open.

Romans chapter 6. And we're going into the Greek text for the answer to this problem of ours. Romans 6 was written by Paul to answer two questions. One, in verse 1, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? He answers that question in verses 2 to 14.

Two, verse 15, shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? And he answers that question in verses 16 to 23. The first question involves habitual sin. The second question involves

spasmodic, infrequent acts of sin.

We'll take one question at a time. Paul says in verse 1, what shall we say then? Say then to what? Well, we go back to the previous chapter in verse 20 to the words, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Or we could translate more fully, where sin abounded, their grace was in superabundance, and then some on top of that.

Paul was in the habit of preaching on that text. And frequently a person would come to him after his message and say, shall we continue in sin then that grace may abound? Paul, do you mean to tell me that God is willing to forgive sin as fast as a man commits it? Paul says, yes. And the man says, well then, shall we who profess to be Christians continue in sin that grace may abound in God forgiving sin and glorifying himself? That's the question.

Now we look at it. Shall we who profess to be saved continue in sin? And the word sin refers either to the sinful nature or the acts of sin. To which does it refer? The answer is found in the fact that in the Greek text we have the word the before sin.

In the sin. And a rule of Greek grammar tells us that this sin is referred to in the previous writing here and defined in verse 21 of chapter 5, where we read that as sin has reigned as king. Now acts of sin don't reign as king, but the sinful nature reigns as king.

That means that the word sin in Romans 6, where it is used in its noun form, always refers to the sinful nature and that is the key to the understanding of Romans 6. Romans 6, 7, and 8 form a trio. In Romans 6 we have the machinery of the Christian life, the mechanics of the spirit-filled life. In Romans 7 we have the dynamics of the spirit-filled life.

In Romans 7 we have the monkey wrench when thrown into the machinery stops the works. It's like going through a furniture factory. The guide takes us through the floors of whirring machinery where the furniture is being made.

That's machinery. That's Romans 6. Then we say to the guide, take us to the place where the power is developed that operates this machinery. And he takes us down to the basement where the steam turbines turn the dynamos that furnace the power.

That's Romans 8. The dynamics of the spirit-filled life, the ministry of the Holy Spirit that produces the power. Then we go through the floors of whirring machinery again and all at once the machinery stops with a crash and a bang. And we say to the guide, what's happened? And the guide says, a careless workman dropped the monkey wrench into the machinery and stopped the works.

And that is Romans chapter 7, mainly self-dependence that stops the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Now, in this message we are in Romans 6, the machinery of the spirit-filled life. Romans 6 doesn't tell us what kind of a Christian life we should live.

It tells us how to live that life. And so we go back to our question, shall we continue in the sinful nature that grace may abound? The Greek word translated continue in the Gospels is used with persons. When it's used with persons it refers to fellowship, friendship, cooperation, cordiality, friendliness.

It's used in other ways also in the Gospels, but it's used with persons in a relationship that is friendly. And so we could translate and interpret, shall we who profess to be Christians continue to sustain the same

friendly relationship with the sinful nature that we sustained before we were saved? What relationship was that? Namely, we willingly, gladly obeyed it. That's the question.

And so the question here primarily does not have to do with acts of sin in the Christian life. It has to do with the inward relationship of the sinful nature to the Christian, and the change that comes when God saves an individual. Paul answers the question in verse 2, first emotionally.

He says, God forbid, that is, may not such a thing ever occur. Then he answers it rationally. He says, how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? The Greek word for how is very, very strong.

How is it possible that such as we who died off to the sinful nature live any longer in its grip? Now, what is death? Death is separation. Physical death is separation of the person from his body. Spiritual death is separation of the person from God.

Here we have the separation of the person from the sinful nature. Let us translate and paraphrase and interpret it this way. How is it possible for such as we who have been separated by a one-fell stroke of God's surgical knife from the sinful nature to live any longer in its grip? That is, Paul is telling us here that the believing sinner at the moment of salvation has a surgical operation performed in his inner being in which God cuts him loose from the sinful nature, and that this operation is just as actual and practical as a physical operation where a doctor removes an appendix from the person, cuts him loose from it.

The only difference being that a doctor will take the appendix out while God leaves the indwelling sinful nature in. And let's be very careful to understand that the Bible teaches that the indwelling sinful nature is never eradicated in this life, but remains in the individual until he dies and until the rapture. But the point is, he, the believing sinner, is separated from it.

Let us use this illustration. Here is a floor lamp, and the cord is attached to a wall socket, and the wall socket there produces the power to make that lamp shine. Now I pull out the plug and cause a separation and the lamp stops shining, and it'll keep on stop shining until I put it back, the plug, into the wall socket.

That wall socket is like the evil nature, and let the lamp illustrate the unbeliever. And just as the wall socket produces the power to make the lamp shine, so the evil nature energizes the unsaved to sin. But when God separates the evil nature from the person, he stops sinning.

How long? As long as that believing sinner, the Christian, keeps himself separate from the evil nature. The evil nature has no more power over the Christian than the Christian allows it to have. The Christian is the master of the evil nature.

I have the same power over this evil nature in me as I have over my radio. Notice I did not say over my sinful nature. The Christian has two natures in him, but only one is his nature.

He doesn't have two natures. The evil nature is not his nature anymore. That has been slewed off.

He has the divine nature. Now I have just as much power over the evil nature as I have over my radio. Here I am listening to music and a program that is fit for Christian ears, and all at once the radio program changes to music that is unfit for Christian ears.

What am I to do? Who's master in that situation, the radio or am I? I jump out of my chair and I shut off the radio and I say, you cannot bring that much into my life. So the Christian has the power to say to the evil

nature, you cannot bring that sin into my life. Now there is one of the great truths that will bring victory over sin in the Christian life.

The realization that when God saves the Christian, he separates the Christian from the evil nature while allowing the evil nature to stay in him. But the evil nature has no more power over that individual than that individual allows it to have. And so we translate, how is it possible for such as we, who have been separated from the evil nature, to live any longer in its grip? Paul declares the impossibility of a Christian habitually living in the power of the evil nature.

Then in verse 3 he informs us as to how this operation took place. Know ye not that so many of us that were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Now the word baptized is the English spelling of the Greek word here, not the translation. Let us translate.

Know ye not that so many of us that were placed into Jesus Christ were placed into his death? When were we placed into Jesus Christ? Two thousand years ago when he died on the cross. What for? In order that when we put our faith in him, the power of the evil nature might be broken in us, that we might be separated from us. Thus the believer's identification with Christ in his Christ's death breaks the power of the evil nature in that person.

Then Paul goes on. He says, therefore we are buried with him by baptism in the dead. Or someone might say, there it is, buried in the waters of baptism.

But the Greek word for buried does not mean to bury in water, it means to bury in a tomb. And so all believers were buried with Jesus in the reckoning of God in Joseph's tomb when Jesus was buried in that tomb. Therefore we were buried entombed with him.

By this introduction into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also may order our behavior in the power of a new life imparted. And that new life is in the form of the divine nature. What has Paul told us now? In verses one to four, two outstanding things.

One, that through our identification with Christ in his death, the evil nature's power over us was broken. Indeed we were separated from it. And it has no more power over us than we allow it to have.

We're its master. Two, that our identification with Christ in his resurrection, we have been given divine life. Now there is victory over sin.

The realization that the power of sin has been broken, we do not have to obey the evil nature, we do not have to sin. And second, that we live our new life in the newness of divine life imparted. Now Paul is a master teacher.

In verses five to ten, he gives us the same truth that he gave us in verses one to four, but in different words. In order that we might be sure we understand this deep truth. He says, for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

That is, in view of the fact that we have become united with the Lord Jesus in the likeness of his death, the logical conclusion is that we were joined to him in the likeness of his resurrection back there in the first century. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, and henceforth we should not serve sin. Now there are three things we want to investigate in this verse six.

To what do the words old man refer? Second, the body of sin refers to what? And how are we to understand the word destroyed? Well, first now, the old man. There are two words in Greek meaning man. One is a word that refers to the male individual of the human race.

The other is a racial term referring to the individual. And this is the word that's used here. It refers to an individual person, man or woman, boy or girl.

Then there are two words in Greek meaning old. One meaning old in point of time, the other meaning old in point of use, and the second one is used here. And so we translate knowing this, that our old and equated outworn decrepit self, that person we were before we were saved, that's the old man.

The evil nature is not the old man. The old man is the unsaved person dominated by the evil nature. Then the words the body of sin.

Sin there, of course, is the sinful nature. And the word of is the translation of a Greek case showing possession. And we could translate the body, that is the physical body, possessed by the sinful nature.

And that refers to our physical body, which before salvation was dominated by the sinful nature. Then the word destroyed. The Greek word literally means to render inoperative.

And so let's translate the whole verse knowing this, that our old and equated outworn decrepit self, that person we were before we were saved, was crucified with him, that the physical body, which before salvation was dominated by the sinful nature, might be rendered inoperative in order that with the result that henceforth we are not living a life of habitual sin. Well, let's take it this way. With the result that we are not rendering an habitual slavery to the sinful nature.

Or we could put it this way. That with the result that we are not habitually obeying the evil nature as a slave. Now, what do we mean by rendering the body of the sinful nature inoperative? When I was a young man, I was sent to a manual training high school where we had a machine shop.

And there I operated a turning lathe. And that turning lathe, that machine ran by the power that was given it from a wheel in the ceiling and the wheel was connected with the machine by a belt. When I wanted to render that machine inoperative, that is, when I wanted to stop the machine, I shunned it off the belt connecting the machine with the wheel in the ceiling.

So, God, when he saves an individual, removes the belt that causes the Christian, the believer, the unbeliever, to sin. And that belt is connected with the evil nature. That wheel in the ceiling is like the evil nature.

And the machine is illustrative of the unsaved person. And when I shunned the belt off between the wheel and the machine, the machine stopped. And in salvation, God shuns the belt off that connects that person with the evil nature.

Now, I can put the belt back on and make the machine run again. And the Christian can put himself into the control of the evil nature again. He has a free will.

But he doesn't do that very long, for if he's properly taught, he doesn't want to do that. And in the second place, if he does do it, God makes that person so miserable under conviction of sin, and brings suffering and sorrow and hardship into the life that that person runs away from that sin and back to the Lord Jesus.

Then in verse 7, Paul has a tremendous statement.

For he that is dead is freed from sin. Let us translate it and expand the translation. For he who died off once for all, that is from the sinful nature, stands in a permanent relationship of freedom from the sinful nature.

Then as God says to you and to me as Christians, I have separated you from the evil nature. Now maintain that separation. And that's our duty.

Then Paul goes on. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live by means of him. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him.

For in that he died, he died unto sin once. But in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Paul in verse 10 tells us that Jesus Christ died with reference to the sinful nature.

He had none. He died with reference to our sinful nature. Now the death of Jesus Christ has two aspects.

He died with reference to our acts of sin. He paid the penalty. He died with reference to our sinful nature.

That is, God provided in Christ's death on the cross the breaking of the power of sin in our life. In the words of the song regarding the blood of Jesus Christ, the double pure, save from wrath and make me pure, save from wrath, that's justification. Romans 4 and 5. Make me pure, that's sanctification.

Romans 6. Now in verses 1 to 10, Paul is told of two things. One, the power of the sinful nature has been broken in the believer's life. He has been separated from that evil nature while that evil nature still remains in him.

And the evil nature has no more power over him except that power which the believer allows it to have. Two, the divine nature has been implanted. Now that is the spiritual machinery that God has installed in the believer.

Now that machinery always works, but it doesn't work at its highest efficiency unless it's taken care of. Just like an automobile. If the automobile engine is not serviced regularly, it does not work at its highest efficiency.

So in verses 11 to 13, Paul informs us as to the responsibility of the Christian with regard to that machinery. That that machinery should work at its highest efficiency. He says in verse 11, "...likewise reckon ye all through yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." That is, count upon the fact that you have been separated from the sinful nature and you don't have to obey it anymore, and count upon the fact that you have the divine nature and you can, in the divine nature's power, live your new life.

And as you do that, stop allowing the sinful nature in verse 12 to reign as king in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts or desires thereof. Now the question comes, does the word it refer back to the word body or to the word sin? Well, logic would lead us to conclude that it refers back to the sinful nature. Because the sinful nature said the reign is king and we shouldn't obey it.

But Greek grammar will not allow that. In Greek, we have the word sin in the feminine gender, the word body in the neuter gender, the word it, the pronoun, is in the neuter gender, and the rule of grammar is that the pronoun agrees with the antecedent in gender. Therefore, the word it goes back to the word body.

And you say, well now teacher, why this parade of Greek scholarship? Very practical, very practical. We cannot successfully fight an unseen enemy, but we can successfully fight a seen enemy. We can't see the sinful nature, but we can see our bodies.

We cannot stop evil thoughts coming from the evil nature and actions, but we can stop them at the surface of our bodies. We can watch what our eyes look at, and we can watch what our ears listen to, and we can watch what our tongue says. And that's why Paul says that we should not allow the mortal body to express the evil things in the evil nature.

Then he says, also neither yield ye yourselves, members as instruments of unrighteousness to the sinful nature, but yield yourselves once for all to God, as those that are alive from the dead, and you're members as instruments of unrighteousness under God. And there we have the truth of a once-for-all dedication of ourselves to God, and here to God the Holy Spirit. Then if we do that, Paul says in verse 14, sin, the sinful nature shall not lord it over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace.

The little poem that comes in here very nicely, do this and live the law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands. A better word the gospel brings, it bids me fly and gives me wings. That is, the law says do this, but gives neither the desire nor the power to obey.

Grace sweetly exhorts and gives both the desire and the power to obey. That's under grace. Paul has answered his first question now.

Shall we continue to sustain the same friendly relationship to the evil nature we did before we were saved? How does he answer it? He says the power of sin has been broken in your life, you don't have to obey the evil nature. The divine nature has been implanted, you don't want to obey the evil nature. And when a person doesn't have to do what he doesn't want to do, he doesn't do it.

Then the man comes back with another question, verse 15. What then? Shall we sin occasionally because we are not under the law but under grace? Arthur S. Wade, in his paraphrase of the Pauline Epistles, has it this way. Shall we sin because we are not under the uncompromising rule of law, but under the lenient scepter of grace? He read that man's mind.

Law is uncompromising, but grace, is grace lenient? The answer is no. Grace is far stricter than law ever was. Here's the boulevard with signs on it, speed limit 30 miles an hour.

But which do you think is a better deterrent to speeding? Those signs or a half a dozen motorcycle policemen with their motors tuned up? The Ten Commandments never made anybody obey them, but the Holy Spirit indwelling the Christian notices the slightest sin in the life. Then Paul says, knowing enough to whom you yield yourself servants to obey, his servants he are to whom you obey, whether of sin unto death, but are of obedience and righteousness. The word translated servants is the key to the understanding of this argument.

It's the Greek word for slaves. It refers, first of all, to a person born into slavery. When you and I were born into this world, we were born into the slavery of sin.

We had a nature that made us love sin. When the person puts his faith in Jesus Christ, he's born of God and has a nature that makes him hate sin and love God. Paul says how ridiculous to ask such a question.

Namely, shall we Christians live a life of planned occasional sin? The answer is no. Why? Because the power of sin has been broken in our life. The divine nature is implanted and we don't want to sin.

Then this word slave means also one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another. Before salvation, our wills were swallowed up in the will of the devil. After salvation, our wills are swallowed up in the sweet will of God.

Paul says how ridiculous to think that a person whose will is swallowed up in the sweet will of God would want to live a life of planned occasional sin. Then the Greek word means also one who serves another to the disregard of his own interests. Before salvation, we serve the devil to the disregard of our own interests.

We always were punished for it. After salvation, we Christians as we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit say nothing matters in our life as long as Jesus is glorified. Then the word means also one who is bound to another in bands so strong that only death can break them.

We were bound to the devil in bands which only death could break them. And it was our identification with Christ in his death that broke the bands of sin. Now we are bound to the Lord Jesus in bands so strong that only death can break them.

And since the Lord Jesus will never die and he is our life, we will never be separated from the Lord Jesus. Thus Paul says how ridiculous again is it to ask a question. Shall we Christians live a life of planned occasional sin? We can't go back under Satan's rule.

We're bound to Christ forever. And so Paul says but God be thanked that whereas that's the idea, ye were the slaves of the sinful nature, ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered, the best Greek texts have. That is in being saved we were handed over to a new form of doctrine.

Being then made free from the sinful nature, he became the servants the slaves of righteousness. He says I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as ye have yielded your members slaves to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants slaves to righteousness unto holiness.

For when you were the slaves of the sinful nature, you were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things wherever you now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from the sinful nature and become slaves to God, ye have your fruit resulting in holiness and the end eternal life.

For the pittance wage of the sinful nature is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. And so we have victory over indwelling sin in Romans 6 from three angles. One, the power of sin has been broken in our life.

We've been separated from the sinful nature that indwells us and we don't have to obey it. Two, the divine nature has been implanted that makes us hate sin. And three, we become loving bond slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ, having a nature that makes us love to obey gods.

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