



# HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

## Self-Awareness

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Romans 6:11-14

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*<sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. <sup>13</sup> Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

*(Pastor prays)*

In January of 1993 I became the pastor of Clear Branch Baptist Church in Lincoln County, Mississippi. I had been married just a few months. I was 23 years old and completely clueless. I didn't have a seminary degree, didn't know how to baptize or lead The Lord's supper and I could count on my hands how many times I had preached on a Sunday morning. I had a flat-top haircut, drove a 1971 pickup truck and had no idea how to pastor a church. I really didn't have a mentor, and every Sunday I had to stand in front of the church and preach. And since I didn't know what to do, I listened to other famous preachers on cassette tape and tried to find sermon outlines in preacher books. I can't imagine how often I plagiarized some famous preacher and even then, I never could actually make it work. I've thrown all those sermons away.

Honestly, it wasn't until I started trusting the sufficiency of the Bible and trusting my identity in Christ that I finally started feeling like who I am as a pastor. Who I am, who you are, that's really what this passage is about.

Here in verses 11-14, Paul has put his finger on Christian identity and who we are in Christ. And this is a problem in the hearts of many of you here. You've had lots of labels pasted on you over the years and the longer you live, the more labels you accrue. And those labels can confuse who you think you are so that you aren't sure how to act as a Christian. You fall off one side or the other. You might get so down on yourself about sin that you become self-defeating and useless or you get so down on others you become judgmental and useless. The best thing we can do is see what God says about us so that you can ...

### **Learn to Love Who God Says You Are**

How do we do that? I think this text tells us.

### **Take Inventory of Yourself**

I say inventory because of the first phrase in verse 11, so you also must consider yourselves. That word consider is the word *logizomai*. That's where we get the word "logic." Kent Hughes says this is one of the most important words in Romans. To understand Romans, you've got to understand this word. It's an accounting term that means "to tabulate myself, to count myself, to look at, consider, add up." Discern and think on this new reality. And what is that new three-pronged reality? Let's go back to the text.

So you must also consider yourselves dead to sin, alive to God, in Christ Jesus. As a Christian, these are the three primary traits of your identity. At the cross of Jesus, God made adequate and overwhelming provision for you as a sinner. At the cross, God dealt fully and forever with all aspects of your sin and, because of that, there are three traits of your identity you can forever count on.

**Dead to sin.** We must conclude to be true in us what God has declared to be true in us and it's plain at the cross. Jesus died and we were seen to have died with Him. We are to consider it so because it is so! We are to count ourselves dead to sin.

**Alive to God.** Dead to sin is a negative, alive to God is a positive. Being dead to sin removes the penalty of sin. Being alive to God gives us strength and power and endurance and where withdrawal and fortitude and longsuffering and patience and a reservoir of joy. Being alive to God removes fear and changes your attitude and strengthens your resolve. Being alive to God prepares you for whatever lies ahead. If you are a believer, you're not only forgiven, you're *able*. Because God says you are able. Dead to sin. Alive to God.

## **In Christ.**

So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin, alive to God, in Christ Jesus. Paul uses this phrase at least 13 times in Romans without ever really defining it for us. Being in Christ reminds us that God sees us not as we are in *ourselves* but as we are in *Christ*; to count yourself as in union with Christ based on His death and resurrection.

And the keyword in this verse is “consider.” And much of our trouble comes because we failed to reckon ourselves dead to sin, alive to God and in Christ.

I want to be clear right here. This is not self-affirmation. This is not you, standing in the mirror, affirming yourself and psyching yourself up. This is not you saying 10 times, “I'm beautiful.” This is not mind over matter. This is you *concluding* to be true what God has *declared* to be true. You learn to love what God says you are when you take inventory of yourself.

## **Take Charge of Your Life**

I say take charge because verse 12 is written as a command. Let's take a look at it and talk about it briefly. *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.* This command is challenging us to become what we are. Look at the language. Sin is personified as a usurper king, a despotic sovereign ruler. But because of what Christ has done on the cross, sin no longer has the power to rule. This is war language here and look at the battlefield. Let not sin therefore reign, where? in your mortal body. Sin's pleasures take place in your body. A mortal body that will soon die, and it's senseless to let that which will soon die have supreme positions. You see that word “passions” at the end of verse 12. That is lust and desires. That's a neutral word; natural desires are food, love, happiness, stability, provision. All of those are perverted by sin and the way verse 12 reads, sin thinks it's king in your life. But it's not king anymore, it's been dethroned by the crucified.

Sin is a spiritual bully that threatens and cajoles and lies and it operates in fear that's not rational and makes promises that won't be kept. And as long as you operate in fear, the bully wins. But verse 12 says, let not sin reign in your mortal body. How? When you face the bully, call on your elder brother Jesus. And in so doing we draw near to the throne of grace receiving mercy and finding the grace to help in our time of need. Sin doesn't reign in your heart. Jesus does. You need to learn to love what God says you are. Take inventory of yourself. Take charge of your life.

## Take Care of Your Lifestyle

Here in verse 13 you are going to see a moral and ethical dimension to being a Christian. In other words, it does matter how you live. Let's take a look at verse 13. It starts with a negative and ends with a positive. <sup>13</sup> *Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.* At the end of verse 13 we are described as those who have been brought from death to life. Saved. Purchased by the blood of Jesus on the cross. We are also described as people with bodies. Verse 13 says your *members*, that is body parts, hand, foot, nose, mouth. Do not present your members as instruments for unrighteousness. You see that word instruments? *Hopla*. Every other time Paul uses that word it's in the context of warfare and it means "weapon." I think it should be translated as "weapons" here. Do not present the members of your body as weapons for unrighteousness. And there are too many Christian people "weaponizing" their bodies on the side of unrighteousness.

But the command here is just the opposite. Let's finish out the verse. *but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.* You need to weaponize yourself for the spiritual war you are in, and every part of your body should be surrendered to Christ our commander for His glory. We live in mortal bodies that God has given us to honor Him with. Isn't that what Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20, <sup>19</sup> *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,* <sup>20</sup> *for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

It's not just your soul that has been redeemed, it's your body too. It's important that you learn to love who God says you are. Take inventory of yourself. Take charge of your life. Take care of your lifestyle.

## Take comfort in God's grace

Don't you love verse 14? It's not a command. It's really just a statement of fact. Sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law but under grace. And you can't really be liberated from sin until you are liberated from the law. This is not saying God's law isn't

important, it is important. God's law commands, demands, exposes, convicts, directs and restrains.

But there are two things the law cannot do. The law cannot do anything to *justify* a person who has violated it. The law cannot do anything to *break the bondage of sin* and set you free. For that, you're going to need grace, grace found only at the cross of Jesus.

And if you take verse 11 and verse 14 together, it's a statement about being a Christian. You are dead to sin, alive to God and in Christ. The law of God exposed your sin and the cross of Jesus destroyed it. And now you are not a slave to sin; you are a child of God by grace. God's grace. You are created in His image, separated from Him by sin, saved by the life, death and resurrection that is yours in repentance and faith.

*(Pastor prays)*