

Present Yourself to God

Romans 6:11-14

We come to Romans chapter 6 and we're going to be looking at verses 11-14 today. And now we get into a real practical section of Romans where Paul begins to give us some instructions. Up to this point, he's just been explaining the Gospel of grace and of God's righteousness to us. Now he's going to begin giving us some commands to teach us how we can live lives that reflect what we sang about. To live lives where the chains of sin are broken, where we're not just repeating sin habit after sin habit, sort of lost in our own spiritual weakness, but that he's given us a prescription for how we might break free of every sin that might seek to enslave us, capture us, and kill us.

¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

What a great, great truth that is!

When one of my sons was a little guy still small enough for me to carry on my shoulders, he accepted Jesus as His Savior. God's grace brought a very significant and visible change in his young soul from that moment forward. However, he continued to wrestle with sin. And there was one particular sin that he wrestled with. He would become frustrated with his brother and anger would pour out of his little heart when his brother did things which offended him. So he would speak angry, unloving words and often physically engage with his brother. After one of these outbursts, I led him up to his room. And his heart was really, really hard on that afternoon. He felt very, very justified in all of his words and his actions. After all, his brother had wronged him. We talked about the truth from James that "the anger of man does not produce (or accomplish) the righteousness of God." (James 1:20) I shared with him that God had given me as his dad to him, to help him learn how to walk with God and find his joy in Him. I told him that I loved him and that one way that God gave for me to help him was through the discipline of the rod. He was not happy about that, but he understood it. After administering this discipline, I hugged him and I prayed with him over his life and over his problem. And now I found his heart that was initially very, very hard, was now very, very soft. It was softened by God's Spirit.

We continued our conversation about this problem of anger. His little eyes just filled with tears of repentance. He looked at me as little drops fell from his cheeks and said, "Daddy, I don't want to be angry. I want to be patient, but I do not know how." What a profound confession! It was a confession of helplessness. It was a confession of godly desire. It's the kind of confession that every Christian must make before we can grow in godliness. The power of sin is much greater than the power of our own self-will or self-determination. We will never decide ourselves into a Godly life. Sin will beat us with a club every time, were we to confide in our own strength.

I thank God for Romans 6 this morning, because it answers my son's need. And it answers my need, as well. It answers yours too. Think with me of the answers I could have given my son that day in his desperate plea for knowing how to be patient and how to rid his life of anger. I could have said, "Son, just stop doing it. It's that simple. Write out 100 times on a sheet of paper, 'I will not get angry with my brother. I will not get angry with my brother. I will not get angry with my

brother.’ And then just don’t get angry when you are tempted.” But that would not have worked. Left to ourselves, we are slaves of sin. Our own resolve to do better or to be better leaves us as weak as wet tissues. We do not have it within us to change our own hearts, try as we might. Only God through the Gospel and its power can do that.

I could have said, “Son, just don’t worry about it. You are on a good path now and it’s all going to work out. I don’t want you feeling guilty. I want you to have a positive self-esteem. So the answer is not to let yourself dwell on your own guilt.” But guilt is a real thing. It’s not an imagined thing. It is a God-given response to our sin. Pushing guilt away from us will only harden our hearts and rob us of the joy of worship.

I could have said, “Son, just pray about it. God is good. He will hear your prayer and He will answer you.” That would have been true, but it also would have been incomplete. Our sanctification always includes prayer, but it requires more than prayer. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. In addition to prayer, we must understand and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the Gospel’s provisions in order to benefit from God’s sanctifying power. We must press ourselves into the Gospel, deeper into Jesus Christ and all that He has done for us through faith if we are to overcome sin habits and grow in godliness.

After leaving my son’s room that day, I sat in a chair and I wept before the Lord. My tears were those of hope and of joy. I thanked God for His grace in my son’s life. Because his confession revealed that God was doing a miracle of grace in his heart. First, God had given my son a conviction of the sinfulness of his own sin. That’s remarkable! Second, God had given my son a pleading heart for righteousness and for God Himself.

Such gifts are not self-manufactured. Left to ourselves we continue in sin. We rationalize our attitudes. We justify our own actions. We feel sorry for ourselves as victims of another’s evil deeds. Left to ourselves we do not desire God. We do not desire His righteousness. Oh, there’s a certain kind of righteousness that our flesh chases after, but it’s not the righteousness of God. That day I thanked God for His work of grace in my son’s life.

My tears were also shed that day for my own neediness. I recognized that my son’s cry was also mine. I too needed God’s Gospel to help me overcome my sin. And this is why I am so excited to talk with you about this passage in Romans 6:11-14. Here in this passage, God leads us deeper into His grace, deeper into understanding the question, “How can I overcome sin habits in my life? How do I become a person who responds in righteousness to the temptation that Satan throws in my path?”

So far the emphasis Paul has made in Romans 6 is upon our knowing the accomplishments of Christ that are ours through our union with Him. In this chapter, the word “know” is used on four different occasions. We are to know that we are dead to sin. We are to know that we have been baptized together with Christ. We are united with Him, joined with Him. We are to know that we now are to walk in newness of life. We are to know the hope of the future resurrection. We are to know that we have obtained this whole new identity in Christ. So far Paul has been telling us we need to know these things, remember these things.

Well, my wife Kimberly asked a question after we’d had some weeks in Romans 6. She asked, “But if I do know these things, I’m capturing them, I’m understanding them, why do I still sin?” That’s a great question! It’s a question that asks, “Does the Gospel really work?”

So now in these verses, God urges us to press our knowledge of Him and our knowledge of His Gospel into our lives through specific spiritual actions, through specific obedience to the grace of God, to the Gospel of God. Sound doctrine is the foundation for Christ-like living, but it's not the only necessary requirement for victory over sin. We must not rest upon our understanding, our clear and concise understanding of the Gospel, to rescue us. It's the beginning, but there's more to it. And that's what Paul is addressing here. The Gospel absolutely will free us from slavery to sin 100% of the time. That's its power. Whenever the Gospel meets our sin, the Gospel is victorious. It crushes sin! But we must know what the Gospel is. That's what we've been focusing on the past many weeks. And today, we also must then obey the Gospel's commands. And here, God sets in front of us five specific Gospel commands.

Last time we were together in this letter to the church in Rome, we observed that for five and a half chapters Paul has been making statement after statement after statement of the truth of the Gospel, of the truth of God's righteousness, the truth about God. So he's been making these doctrinal statements about God, about us and our sin, about His righteousness, about Jesus, His Son, about Jesus' accomplishments upon the cross. But up to this point, he has not told them one thing to do. He has not given them one command, up to this point. So he's writing the letter, five and a half chapters, not one command to obey. Paul understands that victory over sin does not rest in a command for us to obey, but in a work accomplished for us by Jesus. So Christianity is not a "pull yourself up by the boot straps and live for God" kind of faith. The Gospel is not a program that outlines what we can do to live right before the Lord. The Gospel, rather, is a lifeline that links the drowning sinner to the mighty Savior, Jesus. That's what the Gospel is. We're all drowning sinners and we need to be rescued, we need to be delivered.

So after explaining what God has done for us in Christ then, Paul unleashes a volley of five Gospel commands. He says, "Now that you know the Gospel, then live it out. And here's how you live it out." Here is what you must do with the Gospel in order to press the grace of God into your life to make it effective, in order to benefit from it. So these are Gospel commands. That is to say, they are only commands that can be obeyed after you have trusted in Jesus as your Savior. So, if you are here today and you haven't believed in Jesus as your Savior and Lord, these commands are not for you. They are only for those who have received the benefit of God's saving grace through Jesus Christ.

Gospel Command #1: Consider yourselves dead to sin.

We already considered this command together the last time we were together, but let's think about this briefly before we move on to the other four.

"So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."
(Romans 6:11 ESV)

Through our union with Jesus, we have already died to sin. That's what Romans 6:2 has already said.

"How can we who died to sin still live in it?" (Romans 6:2 ESV)

That's our reality as people who are connected or joined to Jesus through faith. We are a people who have died to sin. When he says that we have died to sin, he is communicating two primary truths. First, he's communicating to us that our sin will never condemn us before the Lord. Jesus has taken that away. He's taken our condemnation upon Himself. Second, sin does not have

enslaving power over us any more. We might be able to come underneath the enslaving power of sin, but it doesn't hold enslaving power of sin over us. That's what it means when God says that we who are in Christ have died to sin. We have a new Lord who is in charge. Sin is not our king; Jesus Himself is. This new Lord has removed from us our condemnation that our sin would rightly deserve, as well as the control that the power of sin would have over us.

Though in Jesus we are already "dead to sin," Paul now urges us not to be passive in that new reality. He commands us first of all, to consciously and specifically consider, that's the word he uses, what Jesus has accomplished for us. This is not a reality, our being dead to sin, that we are to enjoy and experience and consider once and then move on through the rest of our life. No, he is saying, "consider, consider, consider. Everyday, press this truth into your life. Embrace this reality." It is a call to conscious, active faith in Jesus.

This conscious faith is so vital because the power of sin will tempt us to believe that our sin still crushes us through condemnation and still controls us through its power. So whenever you as a Christian, a follower of Jesus who has received new life in Him, thinks to yourself, "Oh my, I have sinned. Perhaps God will now withdraw His love for me." God would call you to consider yourself to be dead to sin. Consider what already has happened. Or, perhaps you think as a Christian, "Oh no, I have failed again. I have no hope for victory over my sinful habits. What can I do?" The Gospel would have us then consider Jesus' accomplishments to be true for us. In other words, dwell on it. Dwell on Jesus. Run to Him. Dwell on what He has accomplished.

Gospel Command #2: Consider yourselves alive to God.

"So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."
(Romans 6:11 ESV)

You may recall that this word "consider" is an accounting term. In bookkeeping, it means to post an amount in the ledger that corresponds to what is true and accurate. So place this truth that God has accomplished for us in the ledger of your consciousness, in the ledger of your heart, in the ledger of your mind, so that you have it in front of you and you don't move off it. You say, "It doesn't matter how much I feel is in this ledger or not in this ledger. Here is what is true on the basis of God's Word, on the basis of God's promise.

This Greek word is a very rich one. It's translated with a number of English words in our English Bibles. So for instance, in the translation that we are using, the English Standard Version, when this Greek term appears in the Greek manuscripts, this word is translated "consider," as here. It's also translated "think," It's translated "regard," "count," "hold on to," "reason," "claim for yourself," "remind yourself," and "understand."

The idea is that the doctrines surrounding Jesus' accomplishment for us must not collect dust in some doctrinal statement on a church's webpage. We won't be able to grow in godliness if that's what happens. If we say, "What do you believe?" "Well, I believe what that doctrinal statement says." No, you're not going to be able to grow in godliness. You must consider, you must grab on to these statements about the Gospel that God has revealed to us, about Jesus and about His accomplishments and bring them into conscious consideration. Count upon them. Regard them. Reason over them. Remind yourself about these things.

Doctrine matters! This doctrine that we have been made alive to God in Jesus Christ must be understood and considered and claimed and counted upon and held dear by the believer each day

throughout the day, or we won't grow in godliness. This command to "consider" ourselves to be alive to God is given to us in the present tense. That implies that we are to do this over and over and over and over all through our life. This is part of the Christian life. It's consideration of our aliveness unto God.

Let me ask you a question: Are you alive to God? It's the first issue. We can't obey this command if we are not alive to God, and we won't be alive to God unless God has done a work of regeneration. He's caused us to be alive. He's made us alive through Jesus. Jesus Himself in John 3 would talk about this to Nicodemus, who was a very religious and moral man.

"Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" (John 3:3 ESV)

You have to be born again. You have to be made alive. This new birth is a work of God. It's not a work of man. We cannot decide ourselves into being born again, to have this life of God inside of us. But that's the offer of the Gospel. It is through Jesus. We who were dead in our sins can be made alive unto God through the Holy Spirit.

When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, we become someone who we were not prior to coming to faith in Jesus. Everything becomes new. Before, God was a sort of distant being or an idea. Now, we are people who commune with God as a friend communes with a friend. Before, God's Word was a book of stories that meant little to us. We read it and it was kind of interesting, or maybe not. But now, we are alive to God and God's Word becomes a living Book to us. We listen to God's voice speak to us and we understand it and we find joy in it. Before, our service to God was sort of religious duty. It was done out of obligation. But now we have become a people who want to worship the Lord with our whole heart. We want God to become part of every aspect of our life.

After we have been made alive to God, however, here's the problem. We can be lulled into a state of forgetfulness. We can forget about this new life and begin to live as though that new life did not exist. That's why Paul here says, "Consider it." Don't let that happen to you! Think about your spiritual new birth. Rejoice in this life. Ponder this new life and all of the implications that are surrounding it. Don't forget what God has done in your soul to make you alive to Him. Consider it deeply. Consider it daily. Drive the seeds of this Good News into your heart and minds moment by moment.

My wife asked another question. She asked, "What does it mean to press the Gospel deep into our hearts?" I've been using that phraseology. And I believe it means simply that we actively obey the commands to "consider" ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. It might be helpful to understand this word "consider" more clearly if we think of two faith distinctions. Let me make two distinctions about faith.

Distinction #1: There is a difference between explicit faith and implicit faith. Implicit faith believes what some authority says is true even though the person does not know what the authority teaches. That's implicit faith. So you say, "I believe the Bible." What does the Bible say? "I don't know, but I believe it." "I believe whatever Bethany Baptist Church teaches. I like the church. I enjoy the church." What does Bethany Baptist Church believe? "Well, I don't know, but I believe it." That's implicit faith. And it's not the kind of faith that is going to lead you to godliness.

Explicit faith is well-informed. A person with implicit faith would generally say, "I affirm what the Bible says is true. I believe God." But they're not able to give a clear answer to what the Bible teaches about God or about our soul, or about Jesus, or about His work. Biblical faith is explicit.

Distinction #2: There is a difference between conscious faith and unconscious faith. There is a great difference between these two, just as there is a great difference between explicit and implicit faith. Unconscious faith readily answers questions when asked, "Do you believe that Jesus died upon the cross for your sins?" Yes, I do. "Do you believe that you were united with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection?" Sure! Conscious faith doesn't have to be asked questions about what it holds true about the Gospel. Conscious faith actively keeps what is true in the Gospel at the front of our minds.

So again, many Christians are in this unconscious faith. They kind of have a knowledge and if you're asked a specific question you'll say, "Yeah! That's what I believe." And they're able to identify it. But if you ask them, "Well, tell me about the Gospel. Explain it to me." They blank stare. They don't have anything much to say because they can't bring it up from their own hearts and out through their own minds and through their own speech to explain what the Gospel says. And so it becomes explicit in that it has some things it has identified as what is true, but it's unconscious. In other words, it's not part of the active thoughts that a person can bring up even for themselves, let alone for others. Only explicit, conscious faith is able to bring us into the grace of God, so that we can grow in practical holiness. And that's what Paul means by saying "consider." Make your faith explicit and make it conscious.

Command #3: Do not let sin reign in your bodies.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions."
(Romans 6:12 ESV)

Again, this command can only be obeyed by believers who have been joined to Jesus. We have strength to overcome the rule and reign of sin in our mortal body only through the conquering work of Jesus. And yet here, it's possible for a believer who has already died to sin, to live in such a way that sin continues to rule and reign. We know that that's possible, because otherwise, the Apostle Paul would not have commanded us not to let that happen. He's talking to believers who have already died to sin. He says, "Please don't let it happen that you live your life below the standard, below the privilege that I have lifted you toward."

Paul teaches us here that sin's point of attack is through our physical bodies. And he's telling us to fight against this. Don't let sin take control of our life through the desires or appetites of our physical body. Let's think about that. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they gained a new knowledge. It was a new knowledge about good and about evil. But that knowledge was not merely informational. This new knowledge about sin was a corrupting knowledge. It was a controlling knowledge. While they were innocent, they weren't corrupted by that knowledge and they weren't controlled by the knowledge of sin. At man's fall, sin established a beachhead from which to operate in our lives, through our bodies.

Prior to the fall, Adam and Eve's body only craved good things. Think about that! It's hard to even imagine that that's true, but they only craved good things. So their body craved food, but only in a healthy way. That's hard for me to imagine! Adam and Eve didn't struggle with a gluttonous appetite. They ate food. They got satisfied. It's enough! Their body craved sex, but in a healthy way. They didn't struggle with sinful sexual appetites like fornication or adultery or

homosexuality or polygamy and the like. Their body craved communication with other people, but again, it was communication in a healthy way. Their tongue didn't struggle with lying or with gossip or slander or malicious speech or unloving words.

Now, our bodies are given to us by God. These bodies of ours are not evil. In fact, God is going to restore these bodies to His original, and even beyond His original plan and design through the resurrection. That's what is so awesome about the resurrection! God doesn't even leave our bodies corrupted by sin. He rescues even the corruption of our body from sin's effects. So our bodies are not evil, but at the fall of man in the Garden, our bodies fell into an appetite for sin. And this appetite now is part of our brokenness and will be part of our brokenness all the way until we see God face to face in heaven. Sin, as it seeks to gain entrance into our lives, does so through this mortal body, this body that is passing away, this body that is growing weak.

As people who have been united to Christ, we have a new life that is more powerful than the fleshly appetites of our body. We don't have to obey the lusts of our body. God's Spirit is alive in us to strengthen us so that we can overcome these fleshly appetites that wage war against us. So God created our body For His glory. He did not create our body for sin. But sin, taking advantage of the fall of man, seeks to destroy our life through our body. That's Paul's teaching. And Paul says, "Listen, don't let this happen to you." Which leads us to the fourth and fifth commands.

Command #4: Do not present yourselves to sin.

"Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness..."
(Romans 6:13a ESV)

Paul now elaborates upon his command not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies. He gives us a positive and a negative command to help us understand how we can win this battle for practical holiness. First, he says, "Do not present the members of your body over to sin as instruments for unrighteousness." The key word here is "present." Don't present the parts of your body to sin. Listen to the New International Version. I think it's a helpful translation. "Do not offer the parts of your body over to sin, as instruments of wickedness."

That word "present" or "offer" means "to place at one's disposal." Don't take the parts of your body and present them to sin's usefulness or service. It means "to surrender as a decisive act." Paul is calling us to make a conscious commitment regarding the way we think about the parts of our body. And when our body's appetites stir us up to say, "Hey, present this part of your body right now, over to this specific sin," you consciously say, "No, I'm not going to do that. By the power of God, by the work of Jesus and His grace, by the power of His Spirit working in me, I will not do that. I won't present that member as an instrument for unrighteousness."

This word "instrument" is a generic word for tools. I brought two tools with me. Actually, Brent gave me these from the church. At home, I have these labeled. One says "hammer," the other says "screwdriver." {Laughter!} I am not really a handy man. The other side says, "This end up." I know a little bit more, but not much more than that about these instruments.

These tools are morally neutral, are they not? They are designed by a designer for good, but they are morally neutral. They can be used to accomplish great good or great evil. I could use a hammer to pound nails into a new home to help a needy person have a place to dwell. Or, I could use this same hammer to break open a car window and take the cash that is sitting on the console. I could use this screwdriver to help fix some appliance for an elderly person in our community, or

I could use this screwdriver to attack and threaten a person. What do I do with the tool? It's morally neutral. So what do I do with it? It depends on what I'm going to present this instrument to do. Paul points out to us, now that we have had these members in our body redeemed, purchased, we're His now. We're God's now. We're not our own. He points out how foolish it is for us to take the members of our body, the instruments, the tools of our body, and we're going to talk through some of them, our mind, our eyes, our ears, our mouth, speech, our hands, our feet. How foolish it is then to present them back to this old enemy that was seeking to destroy us.

Let's think of an illustration of that. Imagine that you come home from church today and you find a person trying to break into your home to take all your valuables. And they're trying to break into your home, but they're having a hard time doing it. In fact, it's impossible. You've set up a good security system. You've set up strong doors, locks, etc. And they're trying to work their way in. And you realize, "Boy, that person is really having a hard time with this." And you come up to them and you say, "Hey, it might be a lot easier with this. Here's a key and here's my code, by the way, too, for the security system." "Oh, thank you." And they take the key and they open the door, and they set the code, and then they take your stuff and go. Would that be foolish? And yet that's what we do when we present our members over to sin. We're giving our members over to something that wants to destroy us and rob us of joy and life and peace. And yet, that's what we do. And Paul says, "Don't let that happen. Do not present your life and the members of your body over to sin to work unrighteousness." Sin cannot reign in our lives if we refuse to offer the parts of our body over to specific sins.

Do you seek how much conscious thought this takes? This is why our communion with God is so vital. Oftentimes we present the members of our body over to sin passively. We don't have a conscious thought, "Now, I'm going to take the hands that God has given me and I'm going to use them for sinful purposes." We don't think, "I'm going to take the eyes, isn't it remarkable to be able to see and have the gift of sight? I'm going to take my eyes and I'm going to peer into things that feed the appetites of my lusts. These eyes that God has redeemed. These eyes that are fit now to walk with God and to serve Him and to enjoy Him. I'm going to take them and I'm going to use them for purposes that tie me back to death and unrighteousness, and joylessness." This is foolish! Why would you do that? We're not conscious, and that's why we have to become more conscious by pressing this Gospel up against our life through our communion with God each day.

Command #5: Present yourselves to God.

"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." (Romans 6:13 ESV)

That word "present" is the same word in Romans 12 when he says, "Present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God." (Romans 12:1) Give your life to God, and every part. Paul urges us to think specifically about the specific members of our bodies and making specific consecration of those members unto the Lord.

Let's just take a brief inventory here. Let's move from the top to the bottom of the inventory of these parts. We're not going to look at them all, but let's look at a few of them.

1. Our Mind.

Our mind is the part of the body we use to think about life, about values, about worship, about meaning, about purpose. In our life, it drives so much of what we do. This is the reason why the Apostle Paul would say in Romans 12:2

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...”
(Romans 12:2a ESV)

He’s taking us back to Romans 6. He’s saying, “This is the way you present your mind to the Lord in a consecrated way.” The world seeks to squeeze our mind so that we think in a way that the world thinks. And it conforms us in so many ways. The world will use songs and movies and college professors and books and magazines and political movements and dynamic speakers and even the force of law to shape our minds in accordance with what it wants us to think and how it wants us to think. By way of observation, modern Christians have largely given their minds to think the same thoughts that unbelievers think. In other words, if you take the inside picture of the way a Christian thinks as he or she goes about their day, there’s not a lot of difference between if you could take an inside picture of the way an unbeliever thinks throughout their day. And we wonder why we’re not growing in godliness. Because we’ve not taken our minds and said, “My mind is consecrated for You and for Your service and for Your worship, God.”

So how do we do that? Practically, we feed our mind upon God and His truth and His revelation. We immerse our minds in the Bible and in Christian literature. We listen to Biblical sermons and apologetic lectures. We recognize how strong the messages are that tempt us to believe that which is simply not true. Those messages, they appeal to our flesh, the part of our body that has yet fallen. They appeal to those appetites. But we say, “No. I won’t yield my mind over to that way of thinking.” So we do that by rooting ourselves in the truth. We engage in serious minded conversation with other serious minded Christians about the big questions of life. We get together and we talk about the Scriptures. We listen to Christian thinkers. I love Al Mohler and I love Ravi Zacharias as they talk about current events, so that we can develop a way of thinking about politics and economics and morality and sports and the environment, from a Biblical worldview. That’s what it means to say, “I’m going to decide to think like a Christian. And I realize that’s going to be totally contrary to my appetites, to the way my mind wants to think, and is contrary to this world, but that’s what I’m going to do, because I want to live for God.”

2. Our eyes and ears.

If we offered our ears and eyes to the Lord each day, what radical changes we would experience? Imagine if you simply said, “Lord, my ears are Yours today. I want You to use these ears to worship You. You’ve given these ears. They are remarkable instruments. I refuse to use these ears to grieve Your Spirit. I’m not going to listen to gossip or slander or course jesting and talk. I’m not going to listen to speech that belittles or berates or depreciates. I won’t listen to any messages that are impure, immoral, or unbiblical, untrue according to Your Word. I’m going to use these ears to listen to You and to Your voice. I’m going to use these ears of mine to love on other people.” There are so many people in this world who don’t have a Christian who would listen to them and listen to their problems. And then in listening and finally understanding, be able to use their tongues to speak the Gospel and help them.

3. Our tongue.

James would talk about our tongue:

“So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire...It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.” (James 3:5, 8 ESV)

Presenting ourselves alive to God and the instruments of our bodies unto God for righteousness sake means we say, “God, I know some of the appetites this tongue has to just taste and linger over gossip and to be a tale-bearer. But I’m not going to do that. That’s not what we’re representing with this member. You created this member for Your glory, and I want to use it to bring praise to You, to give thanks to You, to share the Word of God with other people, the Gospel of God’s grace, to lift up and encourage other believers and unbelievers alike.”

4. Our feet and hands.

We go down again. Mind and eyes and ears and mouth. And now our feet and our hands.

“My son, do not walk in the way with them; hold back your foot from their paths, for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood.” (Proverbs 1:15-16 ESV)

That’s our hands. He says, “God, I’m not going to present myself in that way, over to sin. I want You to use these feet to transport me to the places where You want me to go, not to the places where my feet naturally want to go, to feast on the appetites of my flesh.” I’m not going to use my feet...what a gift it is to be able to walk, right? “And I’m not going to use that gift that You’ve given me, and I’m purchased with a price to You, to walk to some party where I’m going to drink and get drunk, and go along with the world. I’m not going to do that.” That’s what it means to present your bodies and the members of your bodies over to righteousness. That’s what Paul is talking about.

I challenge you this week to take inventory, just this week. Try it out for one week. Just this week, take inventory of the parts of your life. Consider you’re dead to sin. Consider you’re alive unto God. To not let sin reign in your mortal bodies. In other words, say, “I know it’s a fight. God tells me it’s going to be a fight. And I’m not going to let it happen where sin is going to reign over me.” And take just this one week and say, “I’m going to take an inventory from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet. And as I take that inventory, I’m going to say, “God, by the power of your Holy Spirit, I will not present this piece over to sin. Here’s the way this piece often is given over to sin. This is what I’m prone to. This is where my appetites lie. I’m not going to do that this week. Instead, here’s what I’m going to do by the power of Jesus working in me. I’m going to use this instrument in this way for Your glory,” and see what happens. See if there’s not some growth in sanctification, growth toward godliness.

I still remember my son’s young cry. It’s still a cry that reverberates through my heart as I think of my own life and I think of discipling my sons, and I think of discipling this church. “I want to be patient. I don’t want to say angry words, but I don’t know how.” Praise God for Romans 6! Because God and His Gospel tells us how. He tells us we have a great Savior who is a Champion for us. And if we just simply set our eyes upon Him and follow His Gospel commands, He will lead us by His power, not by our own, into a transformed life. What a joy that is!