

## GOD'S GAME PLAN FOR VICTORY!

(Romans 6:11-14)

### INTRODUCTION:

*Former pro basketball star Bill Bradley tells that at the age of 15 he attended a summer basketball camp that was run by Easy Ed Macauley, a former college and pro star. "Just remember that if you're not working at your game to the utmost of your ability," Macauley told his assembled campers, "there will be someone out there somewhere with equal ability who will be working to the utmost of his ability. And one day you'll play each other, and he'll have the advantage."*

Are you still working at your game to the utmost of your ability every day? If not, then your opponent will have the advantage when you meet and you will meet your opponent!

"What is my game?" you may ask. Your game is your battle with sin and its devastating consequences. Your game is to not let sin reign over you. As a Christian you still have a battle with sin and if you are not on your game, sin will win!

In Romans 6 Paul tells us how to stay on our game. I can summarize it in four words: Know, Reckon, Yield, Obey.

### KNOW

Last week's message was about the Know part. You are to know that grace changes your perspective on how to live. You are to know that you are dead to sin. You are to know that you are alive to God.

There are certain things you must know if you are to be on your game to do battle with sin.

*But some of us may be like the little boy who was playing T-ball. T-ball is where 5 and 6 year-olds play baseball, but the ball is put on a big T and the batter hits it from there.*

*A parent related one time a story about watching a T-ball game in North Carolina. This was the first game for their 5 year-old. He was just learning. He played short-stop. There were runners on first and second. Then this 6 year-old came up to bat and he looked like a big leaguer. Fully uniformed, a big chew of bubble gum in his mouth, and when he stepped up*

*to bat he knock the dirt from his cleats. He reared back and swung at the ball and sure enough he hit a good strong grounder to the short stop.*

*Their little short-stop ran up to the ball, put down his glove and closed his eyes. To his surprise the ball hopped right into the glove. He picked it up and stood there with a big grin of accomplishment on his face.*

*The runner began to run. The boy continued to stand there grinning. The pitcher realized the situation and yelled to the boy to throw the ball to third. But he just stood there grinning.*

*The team mates in the dugout began hollowing, "Throw it to third." Then the coach ran out to the side line with a red face and yelled, "Boy, throw the ball to third base."*

*By that time the crowd of about 300 was yelling, "Throw the ball to third." The boy look up into the bleachers and yelled out, "Mom, where's third?"*

The boy didn't know where third was! We get like that sometimes in our Christian life. Where's third? What are the rules of the game? What are we to know?

The first play in God's game plan against sin is to know that you are dead to sin and alive to God!

## **RECKON**

But there is more. The next play is to RECKON. This is the command of verse 11 of Romans 6:

**Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

We are to reckon something. What does it mean to reckon and how do we do it?

*Southerners use the word reckon in the sense of supposing something to be a fact. It is used to express a high probability of an event happening. Someone asks, "Will it rain today." And we reply, "I reckon so." Or someone asks, "Are you going to go somewhere or are you going to do a certain thing." We reply, "I reckon so." Meaning that the probability is good that it will happen, but that we are not 100% certain.*

This is not the reckoning we are to do in verse 11. We are not just to guess on the probability of being dead to sin and alive to God.

Well, does reckoning means the power of positive thinking or “name it, claim it” type of theology? If we think something is so, then that makes it so. Or if we name it as being true, that makes it true? No, Biblical reckoning is just the reverse. We reckon because it is true, not to make it true.

*It is like having \$1,000,000 dollars in the bank. If the money is there, then I can reckon on it. I can act on it, by writing a check and using the money. There is no amount of "reckoning" that will make it be true for you to have \$1,000,000 in the bank. It is only if it is true, you can reckon on it.*

Well, does reckoning have to do with feeling something to be true. If we don't feel that we are dead to sin, how can it be true. So to reckon is to work up an intense feeling about being dead to sin.

Feelings are an important gift of God to us and are important in our Christian walk. Feeling a need for the Lord is part of what motivates us to walk by faith. If we are so self-confident in ourselves that we do not feel a need for God's help, then our walk by faith will not be strong. God uses our feelings to help move us to faith in Him.

Feelings are part of our expression of our love for the Lord. When we love someone we most certainly want to have feelings towards that person. Can you imagine a husband or wife expressing love for the other but without any feeling? How would the other person interpret that expression of love? Our feelings for the Lord are an important part of our expression of love for the Lord. And our love for the Lord is an integral part of our walk by faith.

But looking for a feeling will get us into trouble in our reckoning. Our feelings are controlled by our thinking and if our thinking is listening to wrong messages, then our feelings will be wrong.

*For example if one day someone called me and said there has been an accident and my wife had been seriously hurt and was in the hospital, what would happen to me emotionally? My heart would race, my mind would begin thinking all kinds of wild things. Fear would grip me. I rush over to the hospital and find that it was a mistake. It wasn't my wife, but someone else who was hurt. My feelings were real, but they were based on wrong information.*

The same is true spiritually. If I am thinking about or believing wrong information, then my feelings will follow that thinking. If I act on my feelings, then I will not be walking by faith, but by feeling. God wants us to walk by faith.

Our faith is to be in His Word. We are to know what He says is the real situation about who we are and what our position is.

Reckoning is not making a probability guess. Reckoning is not a form of positive thinking or name it-claim activity. Reckoning is not feeling that something is true. Then what is Biblical reckoning?

The cultural background to the word translated 'reckon' will help. The word comes primarily from the business world. It has mainly to do with calculating numbers and keeping accounts. To reckon something is to count on it as being a reality. We are to reckon ourselves as in union with Christ, as dead to sin and alive to God. We are to count on it being true. If we count on it being true, then we will act in accordance with it. It is the acting on it that makes reckoning Biblical or authentic. It is just like the money in my checking account. If we truly count on it being true that I have \$1,000,000 in my account, then we will go start drawing it out. This is reckoning.

What kind of actions are related to reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God? The answer is in verses 12 through 14.

## **PRESENT**

In verses 12-14 Paul gives us 3 commands, two negative and one positive and then states the basis or promise of success.

**(Rom 6:12-13 NKJV) Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. {13} And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

First, let's look at verse 14 because it gives us the promise results of being dead to sin and alive to God. The promised result is **"sin shall NOT have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."**

Sin does not have dominion over us. Why because we are under God's grace. We are not under law but under grace. The law is good and holy, but it brings condemnation. We are not under the condemnation of the law because Christ has taken our condemnation. The law is good and holy but it is impossible to keep perfectly because of our sinful nature. But Christ has kept the law perfectly for us. We are under God's grace, not the law therefore sin's dominion has been broken and we can be successful in not letting it reign in our mortal body.

Now, let's look at the two actions which are the proof that we are reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God . One is negative - do not let sin r \_\_\_\_\_ in our mortal body and the next is a positive one - p \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves to God rather than sin.

The first is a negative command: **“Do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.”**

The key word is ‘reign or rule.’ The picture of sin ruling brings up two scenarios to my mind. The first one is from Genesis 4 in the story of Cain and Abel where sin is a wild animal. When God saw that Cain was mad at God and at Able what did God tell him. Let's read it in Gen 4:7

**(Gen 4:7 NKJV) "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."**

From the beginning sin has sought to rule over man and for the most part sin has won. But it has been God's purpose from the beginning that man should rule over sin. Here God tells Cain that he should rule over it. Sin is like a wild animal seeking to devour you. You must rule over it. How? It is not until Jesus came and open the way of victory that we can truly rule over sin in our lives. We rule over sin by knowing our relationship with Christ, reckoning on it and presenting our bodies to God for righteousness.

The other scenario I get from the word “reign or rule“ is the picture of a king. Sin wants to be king of your life, but you must resist and not allow it to rule. Sin is a hard taskmaster and seeks to kill, steal, and destroy what God wants for you. But do not let it. Stay on your game. Keep fit spiritually every day.

The second action is to present the members of our body to God, not sin.

**(Rom 6:13 NKJV) And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**

We are to present the members of our body as instruments to God for righteousness. The word for ‘instrument’ is weapon. It is a military term. It is the picture of reporting for duty to your drill sergeant or your commanding officer. I recall my days in the army. At 6 am reveille was played and everyone has to rush outside and stand in formation to present yourself to your commanding officer for the duties of the day. This is the picture here. You are not to report for duty to sin anymore, but you are to report to God for the duties of the day. Present yourself

## **to God as being alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**

You are to present your mind to the Lord each day. You are to present your heart to the Lord each day. You are to present your feet to the Lord each day to go where He wants you to go. You are to present your hands to the Lord each day to do what He wants you to do. You are to present your mouth to the Lord each day to say what He wants you to say. This is how you stay on your game. If you don't that your opponent will be better prepared to overcome you.

Someone has written:

*Unless a believer is seeking to actively surrender the control of His mind to righteousness it is inevitable that they will give in to the desires of the flesh.*

*A Christian is to resist sin by standing against it and fighting it with the word of truth. Jesus did this in Matthew 4. He used the word of God to fight the desires of the flesh along with the world and the devil. Ask the Lord to help you follow Paul and Christ's example in refusing to yield to sinful desires but choose to yield to your faculties to God.*

## **CONCLUSION**

God has given us His game plan to overcome sin in our lives. Know-Reckon-Present. But we must practice the parts of this play every day. We must be on our game because when sin rears up its ugly head to do battle with us it will see to rule over us and to destroy us.

**But sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**

Amen? Amen!