

Dead to Sin, Alive to God

Two true statements every Christian can say out loud, especially when temptation hits

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

ROMANS 6:11

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	Because of what Jesus did on the cross, two things are already true of every believer: <i>I am dead to sin</i> and <i>I am alive to God</i> . We grow by counting on those facts every day.
SCRIPTURE	Romans 6:1-14, 22 · Galatians 2:20
LENGTH	About 15 to 20 minutes
BEST FOR	Middle school and high school; great before a retreat or a week of camp
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles and an index card for every student

Not just positive thinking

You have probably seen posters or videos about "affirmations": saying nice things about yourself in the mirror until you believe them. "I am strong. I am enough. I am unstoppable." The problem is that saying something does not make it true.

Romans 6 gives us two affirmations that are completely different. They are not true because we say them. We say them because they are already true. God made them true when Jesus died and rose again, and Paul tells us to "reckon" on them.

BACKGROUND FOR THE LEADER

"Reckon" (NKJV) translates the Greek *logizomai*, a bookkeeping word. It means to count, calculate, or credit something to an account. Paul uses the same word in Romans 4 when he says Abraham's faith was "accounted" to him for righteousness. In Romans 6:11 Paul is not asking us to pretend. He is asking us to do the math: if we are united with Christ in His death and resurrection (6:3-5), then these two entries are already on our account.

1 "I am dead to sin. I am not a slave to sin."

"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." **ROMANS 6:6**

Before we knew Jesus, sin was our master. It told us what to do, and we did it. We didn't really have a choice. But when we trusted Christ, our "old man", the person we used to be, was crucified with Him. Sin's ownership papers were torn up.

That doesn't mean we never feel temptation anymore. It means temptation has lost its *authority*. Sin can still knock on the door and shout orders, but it is no longer the boss of you. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:14).

ILLUSTRATION: FREEDOM THAT CAME LATE

President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. But in Texas, many enslaved people kept working as slaves for two and a half more years. The news simply hadn't reached them, or it was kept from them. On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers arrived in Galveston and announced that all slaves were free. That day is remembered as Juneteenth.

They had been legally free for years, but they were still living as slaves because they didn't know it. Many Christians live the same way. Jesus has already set them free, but they keep obeying their old master. Romans 6 is the announcement: **you are free**. Start living like it.

2 "I am alive to God. I am God's servant."

"But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life." **ROMANS 6:22**

Being dead to sin is only half the story. Jesus didn't just stay in the grave; He rose. And because we are joined to Him, we have been raised to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). We are alive to God: able to hear Him, talk to Him, and please Him.

Notice that Paul says we have become "slaves of God." That might sound strange, but everyone serves somebody. The question is not *whether* you will serve, but *who*. Sin is a cruel master that pays its workers with death (6:23). God is a good Master who gives freedom, purpose, holiness, and everlasting life.

That's why Paul says, "present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God" (6:13). Your eyes, hands, mouth, phone, and free time can all be put to work for the One who loves you.

How to use these two affirmations

Paul gives three simple steps in Romans 6:

Know it

Know what happened to you when you trusted Christ (6:3, 6, 9). Your old life died with Him; your new life is joined to His.

Reckon it

Count it as true, especially when you don't feel it (6:11). Feelings change; facts don't.

Present yourself

Hand yourself over to God, one choice at a time (6:13). Say "no" to the old boss and "yes" to the new one.

Repeat

This isn't a one-time event. It is a daily habit, and it gets stronger with practice.

Here is a practical way to do it. The next time temptation shows up, whether it's a lie you want to tell, a website you shouldn't visit, a rumor you want to pass on, or a temper you want to lose, stop and say (out loud if you can):

"I am dead to sin. I am not a slave to sin. I am alive to God. I am God's servant." **BASED ON ROMANS 6:11**

Then do the next right thing. Say it as many times as you need to. You are not trying to talk yourself into something; you are reminding yourself of who you really are.

Paul put it this way about his own life: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). That is the secret of the Christian life. Not trying harder, but trusting the One who lives in you.

TALK IT OVER

1. What is the difference between a self-help affirmation and the two affirmations in Romans 6:11?
2. In your own words, what does it mean to be "dead to sin"? Does it mean we never feel tempted?
3. Why do you think many Christians keep living like slaves even after Jesus has set them free?
4. Paul says everyone serves somebody. What are some "masters" people your age serve?
5. Where are you most likely to need these two affirmations this week?

TAKE IT HOME

Write the two affirmations on an index card and put it somewhere you will see it every day: your mirror, your locker, or the lock screen of your phone. Memorize Romans 6:11 this week, and say the affirmations every time temptation knocks.

You are not who you used to be. Count on it.

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