



*No  
“Power of Sin;”  
only  
“Servitude to Sin”*

We are told there are two outcomes, two alternatives in living the Christian life—the “power of sin” resulting in disobedience or the “power of the Spirit” guaranteeing obedience. Consequently, most believers understand that sin’s inner power must be counteracted by the Spirit’s power.

**Power of the Spirit**

Much has been said and written concerning the promise of power for living the Christian life. At the heart of this issue is Acts 1:8: “You *will receive power* when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you *shall be My witnesses* both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (italics added). Nevertheless when we turn to Acts 1:4-8, the progressive development of these five verses gives a different perspective.

The two promises in this passage are first “you shall be baptized by the Spirit” (v 5) and then the second “you will receive power” (v 8). They are separated by time, whether by two different occasions when the disciples met with Jesus or by two separate discussions on the same occasion. The phrase “gathering them together” (v 4) is a different Greek word from that used in “when they had come together” (v 6). Either Luke was awkward in his communication skills or he was purposeful, indicating a change in the topic of discussion, if not timing as well. The intervening questioning about the kingdom’s restoration (vv 6-7) separates the promise of the Holy Spirit (v 5) from the promise of power (v 8) even if they occurred during the same extended event.

While the *first promise*, baptism of the Spirit, was for all believers in Christ, notice that the *second promise*, the promise of power, was directed toward a particular group, the Eleven, and for a particular task, to be Witnesses of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the issue of power in Acts 1:8 *does not concern power to live the Christian life but only power for service or ministry*. The promise of power was given to the Eleven as “eye witnesses” (Luke 24:48) of Christ (obviously Paul claimed to also be an “eye witness”) to accomplish their mission of taking the message of Christ to the world. Luke consistently used the term *witnesses* throughout Acts in reference to the Apostles as Christ’s “eye witnesses.”<sup>2</sup> The Spirit’s power was evidenced in “signs,” “wonders,” and “miracles,” which authenticated the Apostles and their message (2 Cor 12:12).<sup>3</sup> These signs and miracles were manifestations of God’s enablement for their particular ministry.

Nevertheless, while empowerment for service was not exclusively to the Eleven in the New Testament, empowerment is *never* for living the Christian life. Consequently, the biblical evidence points to the Spirit’s power being manifested through the gifts of believers only for ministry and service, not for Christian living. [Also see chapter 9 of *Escape and Articles: Insight to Acts 1:4-8* and *Insight to Ephesians 3:14-21*.]

## Power of Sin

If as explained from Acts 1:4-8 there is no power of the Spirit for Christian living, then there is no power of the Spirit to oppose the power of sin in the Christian's life. Are believers then no better off than non-believers? Is everyone destined to being overwhelmed by the power of sin and experience failure?

### Introduction (Rom 5:12-8:39)

In his book *The Future of Power*, Joseph Nye, an authority on international affairs, made a distinction in power. He set forth the case that power comes in two forms: *hard power* and *soft power*.<sup>4</sup> “Hard power is *push*; soft power is *pull*.”<sup>5</sup> The *former imposes*; the *latter influences*. In chapter 4 of *Escape*, we likewise distinguished power by (1) *personal power*, referring to a personal ability to cause or change behavior, and (2) *organizational power*, indicating an ability embodied within an organization, particularly relating to leadership to compel conformity to specific practices or standards. The former produces effects and actions, which is the usual way power in the Scripture is understood, while the latter only influences behavior. A distinction is made between a *personal-causational model* and an *organizational-influential model*.

When we come to the Scriptures, the *personal-causational model* was instrumental to the establishment of the church through the Apostles as found in Acts 1:8. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses” (italics added). Through signs and miracles authenticating their ministry, they established the early church. On the other hand, when we turn to the critical section of Romans regarding *how Christians are to live* (Rom 5:12–8:39) having already obtained righteousness by faith through Christ (3:21–5:11), most teach that the “power of sin” causes or produces sinful behavior in the lives of believers. In that case, the “power of sin” would then align with the *personal-causational viewpoint*. Nevertheless, this entire section in Romans never mentions the term *power*, except in Romans 8:38. That singular usage is found at the end of the “how-to-live” section and simply references demonic beings who are at work in the world in order to thwart God's purposes. With the lack of references to *power* in this important section on Christian living, support for a “power-of-sin” teaching typically comes from the understanding of the word *reign* in Romans 5–6. Let's consider if that view is right.

### Principle of Reigning (Rom 5:15-21)

A review of the twenty-one times the term *reign* occurs in the New Testament is necessary to establish the use of the word. It is important to notice that reigning occurs fifteen times outside of the book of Romans with the six remaining references found in Romans. Outside of Romans, the context is *always* associated with a ruler reigning over a physical, earthly kingdom. But in Romans (see below), Paul moves the concept of reigning from the physical to the spiritual realm (italics added):

5:14 Nevertheless *death reigned* from Adam until Moses

5:17 For if by the transgression of the one, *death reigned* through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness [“the *gracious gift of righteousness*”] shall *reign* in life through the One, Jesus Christ<sup>6</sup>

5:21 As *sin reigned* in death, even so *grace would reign* through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord

6:12 Therefore do not let *sin reign* in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts

The verb *to reign* is an encompassing, umbrella word inclusive of the following:

- Sovereign—king, monarch, or ruler with supreme authority
- Realm or Dominion—kingdom or territory subject to the control of a ruler
- Authority—ruler's right to exact obedience

- Servitude—subjects in bondage to a ruler
- Subjection—submission to the authority of a ruler

Reigning concerns a sovereign who has the right to rule over a kingdom, decreeing what is acceptable for those subject to his authority. Assuming an earthly ruler can create uniform behavior throughout his realm is an overstatement since in reality he cannot actually “produce” in others the behavior he desires. He may coerce, provide incentives, and even issue death threats, but his authority is limited in that he cannot actually make anyone obey. Compliance is a choice made by each person under authority.

Make no mistake. A king can only influence or persuade but his subjects must choose to either conform or resist. Obviously being under a tyrannical king with authority over your physical life incentivizes obedience.<sup>7</sup> A threat of death does have a way of motivating a person to shape up. On the other hand, a benevolent ruler wants the best for those under his authority, encouraging compliance by means of gracious influence.

While *non-believers* can do good things, nothing they do is pleasing or acceptable to God since they are spiritually dead, held under the bondage to sin. Being made spiritually alive the *believer* must continually choose between two masters and ways of living. Paul planted the seed of these two ruler-subject alternatives in Romans 5, indicating “sin reigns in death,” while “grace reigns in life” (v 21). Sin and grace are pictured as two conflicting spiritual rulers with authority over their subjects. As a result, there are two potential spheres of experience for Christians: life or death. *Life* should be understood in this context as here-and-now, a present enriched life, involving intimacy or fellowship with Christ.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, *death* is the loss of intimacy with Christ when the Christian chooses sinful behavior.<sup>9</sup>

Addressing this ruler-subject context in his commentary on Romans, Zane Hodges’ translation of Romans 5:15-18 captures the intent (see Chart 1), providing insight into a central idea within this passage (significant words indicated in red):

15 However, the free gift in fact stands in contrast to the offense. For if many died through the **offense** of the **one man**, much more the grace of God and the **gift** given through the grace of **one Man**, Jesus Christ, has abounded to many. 16 And the free gift is not like *what happened* through one *man* who sinned. For the judgment (*krima*) came for **one offense to produce servitude** (*katakrima*) **to sin**. But the **free gift** brings release from many offenses **to produce righteous action** (*dikaioma*). 17 For if by means of the offense of the one *man*, **death** has **reigned** through the one *man*, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness [**the gracious gift of righteousness** (*dikaioisune*)] shall **reign** in **life** through the one *Man*, Jesus Christ. 18 Therefore, as through one **offense** judgment came to all men **to produce servitude** (*katakrima*) **to sin**, so also through one **righteous action** (*dikaioma*) grace came for all men **to produce** justification [**righteous living**] (*dikaiosis*) sourced in [Christ’s] life.<sup>10</sup>

Before addressing the progressive flow of this passage, we should note the particular word selections by Hodges to properly explain the text. He made important distinctions between certain words, supported by recognized scholarly Greek resources (BDAG and Moulton & Milligan),<sup>11</sup> to explain Paul’s intended meaning. *First*, in verse 16 a distinction was made between *judgment* (*krima*) and *servitude* (*katakrima*). Note that *servitude* (*katakrima*) used only in 5:16, 18 and 8:1 is usually translated *condemnation* (e.g., NIV, NASB, NKJV), meaning God’s “pronouncement of guilt” on Adam’s sin. So used, *condemnation* has the identical meaning as *judgment* used earlier in verse 16,<sup>12</sup> resulting in a meaningless translation: “the judgment leads to judgment.”<sup>13</sup> Hodges took a different approach in agreement with BDAG and M&M, understanding that *katakrima* (“servitude to sin”) is the result of God’s judgment (*krima*),<sup>14</sup> being “the punishment following [a judicial] sentence.”<sup>15</sup> “The *judgment* passed on Adam lead to...a penalty, i.e., *servitude to sin*.”<sup>16</sup>

**1**

**SERVITUDE TO SIN**  
**Romans 5:15-18**

15	<p>However the <b>free gift</b> in fact stands in contrast to the <b>offense</b>.</p> <p>For . . . if many <b>died</b> through the <b>offense</b> of the <b>one man</b>, much more did the <b>grace</b> . . . has abound to many. of God and the <b>gift given</b> by the grace of <b>one Man</b>, Jesus Christ</p>	<p><i>Contrast</i> <i>Free Gift</i> vs <i>Offense</i></p>
16	<p>And the free gift is not like <i>what happened</i> through one <i>man</i> who sinned.</p> <p>For the <b>judgment</b> (<i>krima</i>) came to produce <b>servitude</b> (<i>katakrima</i>) <b>to sin</b> for one <i>offense</i>.</p> <p>But the <b>free gift</b> brings release from many offenses to produce <b>righteous action</b> (<i>dikaioma</i>).</p>	<p><i>Judgment</i> <i>led to</i> <i>Servitude</i> <i>to Sin</i></p> <p><i>Offense</i> <i>leads to</i> <i>Reigning</i> <i>in Death</i></p>
17	<p>For . . . if . . . . . death has <b>reigned</b> by means of the <b>offense</b> through one <i>man</i>, of the <b>one man</b>, much more those . . . . . shall <b>reign</b> who receive the <b>abundance</b> in <b>life</b> of grace through one <i>Man</i>, and Jesus Christ. <b>gift</b> of righteousness</p>	<p><i>Gift of</i> <i>Righteous-</i> <i>ness</i> <i>leads to</i> <i>Reigning</i> <i>in Life</i></p>
18	<p>Therefore, as through one <b>offense</b> <i>judgment came</i> to produce <b>servitude</b> (<i>katakrima</i>) <b>to sin</b> to all men, so also through one <b>righteous action</b> (<i>dikaioma</i>). grace came to produce <b>righteous living</b> (<i>dikaiosis</i>) <i>sourced in [Christ's] life.</i> for all men</p>	<p><i>Servitude</i> <i>to Sin</i> vs <i>Abundant</i> <i>Living</i></p>

Second, Hodges also concurred with the statement, “If *katakrima* [servitude] means the result of the *krima*, the ‘penal servitude’ from which *whose in Christ Jesus* are delivered (8:1), *dikaioma* [righteous action or conduct] represents the ‘restoration’ of the criminal, the fresh chance given to him.”<sup>17</sup> In both 5:16 and 18, Hodges properly understood *dikaioma* to refer to “righteous action or conduct” rather than “justification,” declaring or making righteous in the sight of God. Nevertheless, justification is the usual translation (e.g., vv 16 & 18—NIV, NASB, NKJV).

With the proper understanding of these particular words used within this text, Hodges’s alternative translation provides insight into the passage, a new perspective into the manner of living the Christian life. Lets now address the progressive flow of the passage from an

*organizational-influential* viewpoint in a ruler-subject environment, keeping in mind the term *reign* does not concern empowerment either by sin or by the Spirit.

In verse 15, Paul presents the contrast between the “free gift” through Christ and the “offense” by Adam. The judgment for Adam’s offense led to servitude to sin by all men, while the free gift can lead to righteous conduct (v 16). Jesus’ work on the cross not only provided for the free gift (gift of righteousness), establishing a right relationship with God for those who believe in Christ,<sup>18</sup> but also when received that gift liberates the believer from sin’s bondage (“servitude to sin”) in order to experience righteous living.<sup>19</sup>

In verse 17, the recipients of the free gift “will reign in life,” while verse 21 (see above) states the identical principle from a different perspective, indicating “grace would reign...to eternal life.” Notice the ruler that reigns with authority in this kingdom is both the recipient of grace and grace itself. Obviously as the believer, who has been given the free gift of salvation, embraces and relies on that reality of God’s gracious work, his secure position in Christ should motivate him to increased intimacy with Christ and righteous living. The “gracious gift of righteousness,” therefore, reigns as the Christian reigns,<sup>20</sup> allowing God to influence his choices. Otherwise the believer allows sin’s constant pull to influence him, leading to behavior contrary to God’s Word.

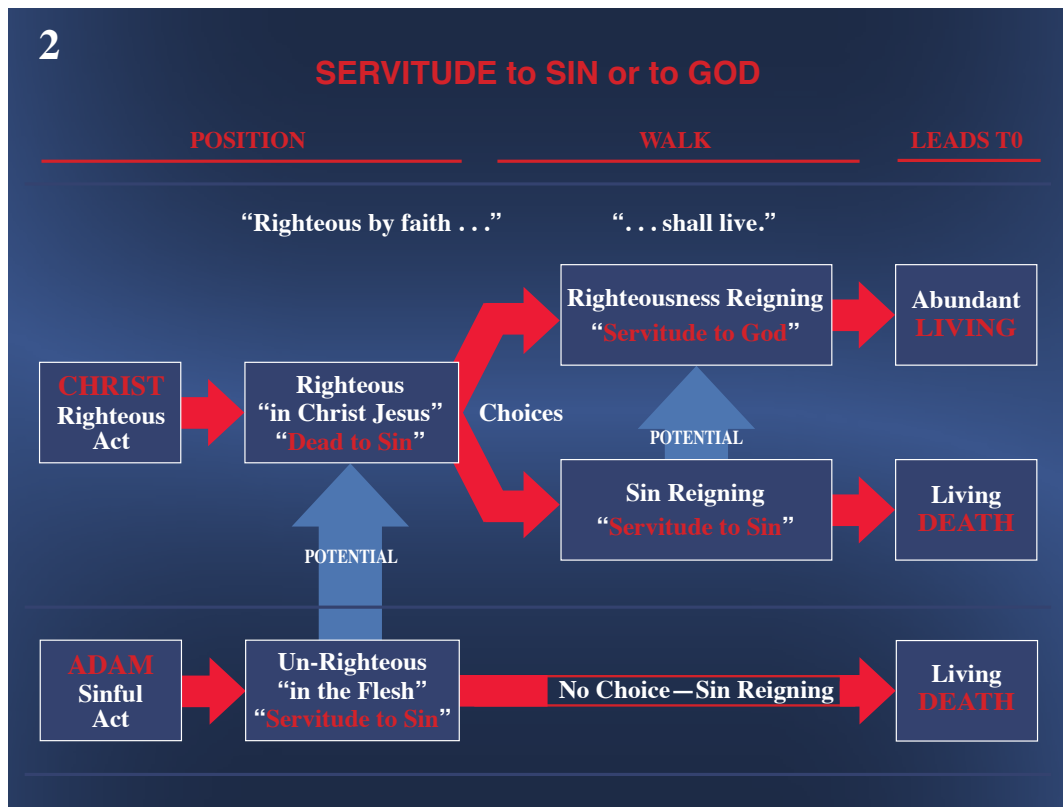
The believer’s options for experiencing either life or death are found in both verse 17 and 21. Each verb form in “[recipients] shall/may reign” (v 17) and in “grace would/might reign” (v 21) indicates the potential of grace reigning and leading to life, but also the possibility of sin reigning and resulting in death.<sup>21</sup> Righteousness granted by a gracious-king should motivate believers to godly living, overthrowing sin’s tyranny (v 18).<sup>22</sup> The issue of Romans isn’t power but rather wise choices based on the Word, allowing God, rather than sin, to have a dominating influence. Christians do have choices. Decisions determine one’s daily experiences to live either in a kingdom ruled by sin leading to a living death, lost fellowship, or in a kingdom ruled by gracious gift of righteousness leading to abundant living.

The word *reign* can be easily misapplied. Most teachers and commentaries insert “power” into the context of Romans 5–8. First, *sin’s power, rather than sin’s influence, unfortunately becomes inextricably linked with sin’s reign*. And second, *the Spirit’s power, rather than the Spirit’s influence, unfortunately becomes inextricably linked with grace’s reign*. Like an automatic default on a computer, “sin’s reign” always reverts to “sin’s power” and “grace’s reign” always reverts to the “Spirit’s power.” Supernatural power becomes the sole “cause” behind the walk of the Christian, whether the “power of sin” for disobedience or the “power of the Spirit” to experience obedience.

Romans 5 exposes these faulty positions. Looking from an *organizational-influential* viewpoint, a kingdom in which the ruler seeks loyalty from its subjects gives us an entirely different perspective. The believer’s inclination to sin can reign if allowed to influence him through the lure of the world system. On the other hand, the gracious gift of righteousness can reign if allowed to influence the believer through the Word and the Spirit (see Romans 8 below). Rather than producing behavior, these two spiritual rulers vie for authority and influence over the choices of their subjects, leading to either sinful or righteous behavior.

Chart 2 graphically reveals the progression from one’s spiritual position, which directly impacts his or her walk, to the consequences of that conduct. The bottom portion of the chart shows that everyone at birth is in “servitude to sin” as the result of Adam’s act and being “in the flesh” (Rom 7:5) are unrighteous before God. The non-believer is spiritually dead, being unable to walk in a manner that is pleasing to God. Resultantly, sin reigns and leads to a living death.

The upper portion of the chart addresses the position of believers based on Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, which broke the bondage of sin for those who believe in Christ for eternal life. Previously spiritually dead and in bondage to sin, believers are positionally “dead to sin” and now “alive to God” (Rom 6:11). They are pronounced righteous before God and are “in Christ Jesus” (8:1). [Notice the blue arrow, pointing up from the “un-



righteous” to the “righteous,” represents the potential for all those who believe in Christ for eternal life.] Now spiritually alive to God the believer can choose to live obediently or disobediently before God. While the theme verse of Romans is “the righteous by faith shall live” (1:17) assumes obedience, being motivated by God’s graciousness, believers can choose either to place themselves in servitude to God and allow righteousness to reign or to place themselves again in servitude to sin and allow sin to reign in their lives. [Notice again a blue arrow, pointing up from “sin reigning” to “righteousness reigning,” represents the potential of believers living obediently rather than disobediently.] Choosing unwisely results in a living death, referring to loss of fellowship with Christ. On the other hand, proper choices lead to abundant living in intimacy and fellowship with Christ.

The reigning theme of Romans 5:15-18 is a precursor to the content of other passages in Romans 6–8.

First, the principle of *putting oneself at another’s disposal* is found in 6:12-13 (see chart 3). As a result of the believer’s position in Christ, Paul writes, “So consider yourselves to be *dead to sin*, but *alive to God* in Christ Jesus” (v 11, italics added). Paul reminds believers to consider the import of their union with Christ in His death and life (vv 4-5). Continuing in he writes (using an alternative translation):

6 Knowing this, *that* our old unregenerate self was crucified with Him, *in order that* our sin capacity might be rendered inoperative [ineffective], *so that* we should no longer serve sin; 7 for he who has died is justified [acquitted] from sin (vv 6-7, italics added).

Prior to salvation, serving sin is non-believers only option. At salvation, “sin’s claim on believers legally ended when they believed in Christ.”<sup>23</sup> Believers are “dead to sin,” meaning they are separated from sin’s domain. Yet, though the believers’ sin capacity has been rendered inoperative, they can choose to open, access, and activate that old capacity to

## 3

## PUTTING ONESELF AT ANOTHER'S DISPOSAL

## Romans 6:6-7, 11-13

6 Knowing this, that our old unregenerate self was crucified with Him, *in order that* our sin capacity might be rendered inoperative [ineffective], *so that* we should no longer serve sin; 7 *for* he who has died is justified [acquitted] from sin.

11 Even so consider yourselves to be *dead to sin*, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore *do not let sin reign* in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

13 and *do not go on putting at the disposal* the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but *put yourselves at the disposal* of God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Alternative Translation (italics added)

sin. This is the very reason Paul moved from the believer's new position in Christ to explain the believer's responsibility through three commands, noted in the following alternative translation:

11 Even so consider yourselves to be *dead to sin*, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.  
12 Therefore *do not let sin reign* in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,  
13 and *do not go on putting at the disposal* of sin the members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness; but *put yourselves at the disposal* of God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.<sup>24</sup>  
(vv 11-13, italics added).

Paul appealed to believers to make their position in Christ a reality in their lives, in every decision and in every action. They should begin to become who they already are positionally (v 11). The first prohibition “do not let sin reign” (v 12) speaks to the realm of existence in which sin reigns, influencing the believer's decision-making process. And the second prohibition, “do not go on putting at the disposal of sin the member of your body” (v 13), focuses on the actual outworking of poor choices, resulting in behavior contrary to God's Word. On the other hand Paul's positive command, “put yourselves at the disposal of God” (v 13), suggests a demonstration of behavior that reveals the righteousness of God within—the gift of righteousness reigning. Each believer is to place himself at God's disposal “as instruments of righteousness to God” (v 13), realizing he is no longer required to serve sin (v 6).

Believers make choice after choice. They can reactivate the old disposition to sin and allow *sin to reign*, with the world's system influencing their behavior as they make themselves available to sinful desires and experience the “servitude to sin.” On the other hand, they can allow the *gift of righteousness to reign*, putting themselves at the disposal to God's Word, given by the Spirit, to live righteously “as instruments of righteousness.”

*Second*, the *principle of servitude to sin or to God* is addressed in 6:16, 19 (see chart 4). While believers are positionally dead to sin, Paul writes (with alternative translation):

## 4

## SERVITUDE TO SIN OR TO GOD

Romans 6:16, 19

16 Do you not know that when you *put yourselves at the disposal* of someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin [disobedience] resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness (*dikaioisune*)?

19 For just as you *had put at the disposal* your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now *put at the disposal* your members as slaves to righteousness (*dikaioisune*), resulting in sanctification (*hagiasmos*).

Alternative Translation (italics added)

16 Do you not know that when you *put yourselves at the disposal* of someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin [disobedience] resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness (*dikaioisune*)?....

19 For just as you *had put at the disposal* your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now *put at the disposal* your members as slaves to righteousness (*dikaioisune*), resulting in sanctification (*hagiasmos*).

Paul reminds Christians first that there are two and only two options for every believer: placing themselves at the disposal of the world's system and its influences or of God's Word and influence. Where should they place their allegiance in their daily walk? "Servitude to sin" produces a living deadness toward God, while "servitude to God" leads to righteous conduct that pleases Him. Paul then reminds believers of their past in which they lived in servitude to sin producing ever increasing lawlessness, but now commands them to live in servitude to God and in order to experience progressive intimacy with Christ.

*Third*, the *principle of walking that manifests position* is addressed by an alternative translation in Romans 8:1, 4 (see chart 5). Romans 8 takes us right back to Romans 5: "Therefore there is no servitude (*katakrima*) to sin for those who are in Christ Jesus" (8:1). Those who are in Christ Jesus are positionally "dead to sin" (6:11) and having been made alive to God "should no longer serve sin" (6:6). The Christian's position in Christ should

## 5

## WALKING THAT MANIFESTS POSITION

Romans 8:1, 4

1 Therefore there is no *servitude* (*katakrima*) to sin for those who are in Christ Jesus.

8 So that the *righteous conduct* (*dikaioisune*) of the law might be fulfilled in [believers] who do not walk *with relation to the flesh* [sinful flesh] but *with relation to the Spirit*.

Alternative Translation (italics added)

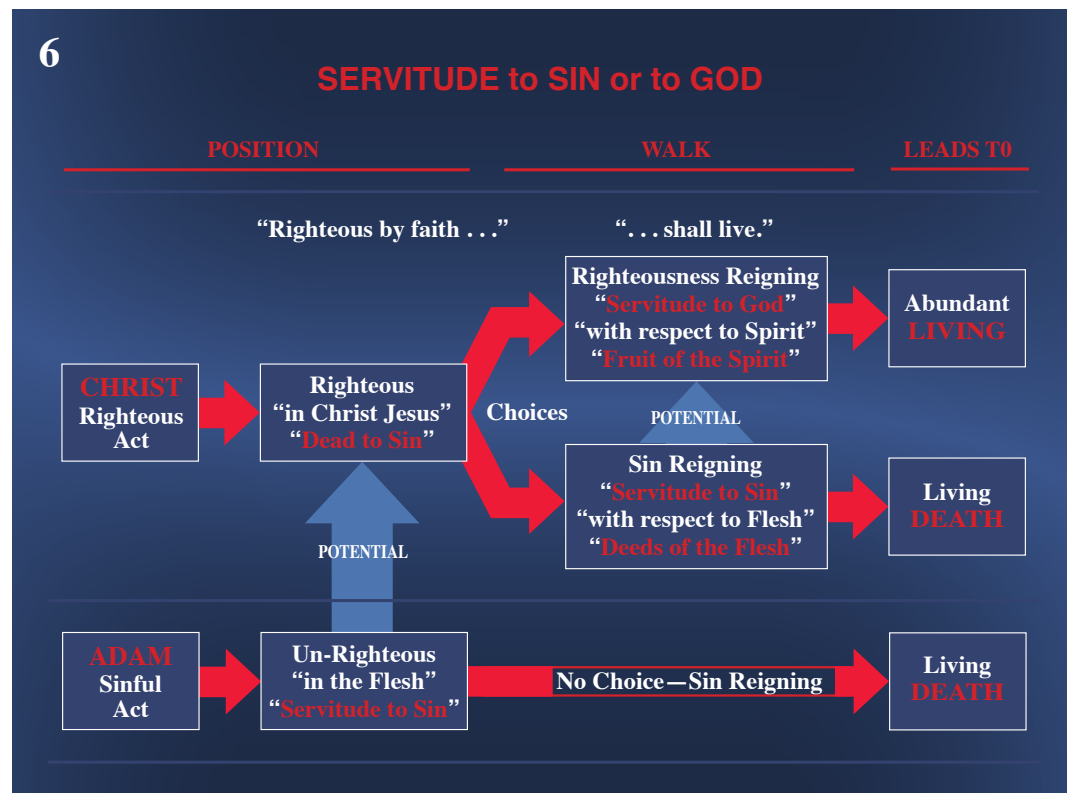


become a reality, being manifested in his or her life experience, “so that the righteous conduct (*dikaionoma*) of the law might be fulfilled in [believers] who do not walk with relation to the flesh [sinful flesh] but with relation to the Spirit” (8:4). [For an explanation of “fulfilling the law by a righteous lifestyle” see chapter 13 of *Escape*. In summary, *fulfilling the law refers to the reality of living out the law through love as originally intended to be lived by God.*]

The alternative translation provides a better explanation when contextual considerations are taken into account. Walking “with respect to the flesh” or “with respect to the Spirit” captures the intent of the text, indicating the “manner in which one behaves.”<sup>25</sup> It pictures “‘those who walk flesh-wise,’ and ‘those who walk Spirit-wise,’ that is, with a fleshly or with a spiritual orientation.”<sup>26</sup> In the words of Roman 5, it distinguishes believers who allow “sin to reign,” making themselves available to the influence of worldly desires, from those who allow “righteousness to reign” by placing themselves at the disposal of the influence of God’s Word, whose source is from the Spirit (2 Pet 1:21) and whose content prepares and equips the believer for every situation in Christian living (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Notice that the alternative translation varies from the typical perception that the Christian can “walk according to *the power of* the flesh/sinful flesh” or can “walk according to *the power of* the Spirit.” While the phrases “the power of” regarding sin or the Spirit are not included in any translations, they are usually taught in that manner solely based on the existence of an *assumed* “power of sin,” which in turn requires an *alleged* counter “power of the Spirit” in order for the believer to walk obediently. Nevertheless, as we have discussed previously, nowhere in the “how-to-live” section of Romans 5–8 does the term *power* occur. Additionally, remember the term *reigning* does **not** imply *causational power*, but only *influence* in an organizational, ruler-subject environment. Sin has no power and there is no “special empowerment” for living the Christian life. Both concepts are scripturally unsupportable.

Looking again at the chart illustrating servitude of sin and servitude to God (see chart 6), notice the new insertions under the “Walk” segment. When the gracious gift of righteousness



is reigning, the Christian is “walking with respect to the Spirit” (Rom 8:4) and in the parallel text manifests the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22-23). On the other hand, when the Christian in “servitude to sin” is “walking with respect to sinful flesh” (Rom 8:4), sin is reigning in his life and he displays the “deeds of the flesh” (Gal 5:19-21). Again, the former reign leads to abundant living, while the latter reign results in a living dead, experiencing forfeiture of fellowship with God.

In Christian living, there is no need for an antidote to oppose an alleged “power of sin” by an assumed “power of the Spirit.” While both the “power of sin” and the “power of the Spirit” are widely taught theological concepts, neither can be supported from Scripture. There is no power of the Spirit to oppose a power of sin for Christian living and all are not then destined to being overwhelmed by a power of sin since no power of sin exists.

Nevertheless, Christians must decide which will reign over and influence their daily walk: the believer’s inner propensity to sin or God. By choosing servitude to sin, believers experience a living deadness as fellowship with God is forfeited. On the other hand, choosing servitude to God leads to enriched living here and now. The choices are clear; our response is critical.



### Endnotes:

1. Ken Neff, *Rethinking Empowerment* (St. Augustine, FL: LeaderQuest, 2011), 89-93.
2. Zane C. Hodges, *Notes on Acts* (Class notes, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1973), 4. Hodges states that only the apostles “are μαρτυροῦσιν [witnesses] (vs. 8) in the technical sense (cf. 1:22) of this term. (In a secondary sense, of course, so are we, but in reference to the Christian martyria the technical use is the only one found in Acts.) The power (δυναμειν) which the official witnesses are to receive apparently refers basically to the miraculous manifestations which in this book are mainly, though not exclusively, apostolic. (Stephen who also works miracles is called a martus at 22:20, but Philip is not. Stephen, of course, saw Christ in heaven—cf. 7:55). For the connection of δυναμεισ with miracles, cf. 3:12 and 4:17, and note 4:33 which in context is formally parallel with 2:43.”
3. As with the Apostles, “signs,” “wonders,” and “miracles” performed through Christ by God authenticated Christ and His message (Acts 2:22).
4. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Future of Power* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2011), xiii.
5. *Ibid.*, 20.
6. Zane C. Hodges, *Romans* (Corinth, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2013), 154-55. The “gracious gift of righteousness” concept from Romans 5:17, 21 is suggested by Hodges when he writes, “This phrase, *the abundance of grace*, is combined here by Paul with the following (*and the gift of righteousness*), but we are not to think of two distinct things. Instead the words from *the abundance to righteousness* are undoubtedly a hendiadys meaning *the abundantly gracious gift of righteousness*” (italics his).
7. Even though a tyrannical ruler can threaten a person’s life if his behavior does not conform to the ruler’s desires, it is the person’s choice of life or death. It is the person’s choice to conform and therefore the person’s choice to live or die. God may intervene as in Daniel’s case in the Old Testament (Dan 6), but not necessarily. Both John the Baptist (Matt 14) and Stephen (Acts 6) died for their decisions.
8. *Life* can be understood from three perspectives: (1) physical, (2) everlasting [due to relationship with God], and (3) here and now [due to fellowship with Christ]. Eternal life begins when a relationship with God is established (John 3:16). Nevertheless, abundant (here-and-now) life can and should be a daily experience (10:10b). Christians have here-and-now choices: to experience daily life or experience daily death. While eternal life is secure, daily living or daily dying is a choice.

9. Since *death* means separation, it must be determined from that which a person is separated. Death can refer to one of three ideas: (1) separation from physical life, (2) separation from God eternally [i.e., lack of relationship], or (3) separation from God temporally [i.e., lack of fellowship]. All three “reigning” texts in Romans 5 refer to the consequences of Adam’s offense, with physical death and eternal separation from God being in view. On the other hand, Romans 6:12 addresses the believer’s responsibility to reject sin in order that the deadly experience of forfeiting fellowship with Christ does not occur.
10. Hodges, 158.  
In footnote #14, Bob Wilkin suggests *dikaiosis*, only used in Romans 4:25 and 5:18, could refer to *righteous living* rather than *justification*. I agree that seems *righteous living* aligns with the context and is preferred.
11. [BDAG–Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich] Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) and [M&M] James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972).
12. BDAG, 518, 567.  
Judgment (*krima*) means a “judicial verdict” and “the verdict came as the result of one violation, and led to punishment.” On the other hand, servitude (*katakrima*) concerns “the adjudication of punishment” following the “pronouncement of guilt.”
13. Hodges, 152.
14. BDAG, 518; M&M, 328.
15. M&M, 328.
16. Hodges, 152.
17. M&M, 328.
18. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 339.  
Moo writes, “This gift is specified to be ‘righteousness,’ here clearly the status of a new relationship with God.”
19. Hodges, 150-55.
20. *Ibid.*, 160.
21. “[Recipients] can/may reign” (v 17) and in “grace would/might reign” (v 21) refer to a possible present experience of the Christian rather than reigning in the future with Christ. Support for this view is from the verb forms used in original Greek text:  
Verse 17—verb form is a *gnomic future tense* indicating “a tendency for a likelihood that something will happen.” Philip R. Williams, *Grammar Notes* (Greek class notes, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1971), 20; Hodges, 154.  
Verse 21—verb form is the *subjunctive mood* and “assumes uncertainty, and is the mood of probability.” Williams, 25.
22. Rene A. Lopez, *Romans Unlocked* (Springfield, MO: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Press, 2005), 122.
23. *Ibid.*, 131.
24. BDAG, 778.
25. Hodges, 208-09.  
“With respect to the Spirit” or “in relation to the Spirit” is also a valid translation for the (*kata* [preposition] + accusative noun [object of preposition]) construction of the prepositional phrase depending on the context. Walter Bauer, the author of the leading Greek resource, indicates that *kata* used with an accusative noun can be translated “with respect to” or “in relation to” when denoting a relationship to something [see, BDAG,513].  
Notice that Hodges was not addressing Romans 8:4 but rather he was addressing verse 1. Some manuscripts as include “Who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” in verse 1 as well as in verse 4. Obviously, Hodges comments would apply to both verses.
26. *Ibid.*, 209.