

Romans 6:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Analysis

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body—*mē oun basileuetō hē hamartia en tō thnētō hymōn sōmati* (μὴ οὖν βασιλευέτω ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι). The present imperative with *mē* means "stop allowing sin to reign" (if it currently does) or "do not begin allowing." *Basileuetō* (βασιλευέτω, "let it reign") personifies sin as a tyrant-king. **Your mortal body** (*thnētō hymōn sōmati*, θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι)—*thnētos* (mortal, subject to death) emphasizes the body's present frailty and fallen condition, making it vulnerable to sin's reign if believers yield.

That ye should obey it in the lusts thereof (*eis to hypakouein tais epithymiais autou, εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ*)—*hypakouein* (obey) indicates submission to authority. *Epithymiai* (ἐπιθυμίαι, lusts, desires) can be neutral but here is sinful desire. The body's desires are sin's foot soldiers; allowing sin to reign means obeying these desires. The command assumes believers' responsibility and ability (through the Spirit, though not mentioned until ch. 8) to refuse sin's kingship. Though positionally dethroned, sin still seeks to usurp control—believers must actively resist.

Historical Context

The body-soul relationship was contested in Paul's time. Greek philosophy often denigrated the body (Platonism, Gnosticism); Judaism affirmed the body's goodness but recognized its fallenness. Paul steers between extremes: the body

isn't evil (it's mortal and fallen, but redeemable), yet it's the arena where sin seeks control. Roman society's indulgence in sensual pleasure (banquets, baths, sexual license among elites) provided constant temptation. Paul's command to not let sin reign in the body was countercultural asceticism—not body-denial but body-discipline for God's glory.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What 'lusts' of your mortal body most persistently seek to obey sin's reign rather than Christ's lordship?
2. How can you actively dethrone sin's attempted kingship in your bodily appetites and desires?
3. Where do you need to recognize that resisting sin isn't automatic but requires your active non-cooperation with its reign?

Interlinear Text

Μὴ	οὖν	βασιλευέτω	ἡ	ἀμαρτία	ἐν	τῷ	θνητῷ
not	therefore	Let	G3588	sin	in	G3588	mortal
G3361	G3767	G936		G266	G1722		G2349
ὑμῶν	σώματι	εἰς	τὸ	ὑπακούειν	αὐτοῦ	ἐν	ταῖς
your	body	that	G3588	ye should obey	it	in	G3588
G5216	G4983	G1519		G5219	G846	G1722	
ἐπιθυμίαις	αὐτοῦ						
the lusts	it						
G1939	G846						

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 5:16 (Parallel theme): This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Romans 6:16 (Sin): Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Romans 8:13 (Parallel theme): For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Psalms 19:13 (Sin): Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Galatians 5:24 (Parallel theme): And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Romans 2:8 (Parallel theme): But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

2 Corinthians 4:11 (Parallel theme): For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Psalms 119:133 (Sin): Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

Ephesians 4:22 (Parallel theme): That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Numbers 33:55 (Parallel theme): But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.