

Romans 06 - The Believer's Relationship to Sin; Set Free from Sin; Slaves to Righteousness; Sanctification

IV. Sanctification (Rom 6:1–8:39)

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Sanctification

Justification is imputed righteousness to us, by faith alone. How can He accept us while we still retain our sin nature? How does He disengage us from that nature?

Paul now moves on from questions about why people need salvation (1:18–3:20), what God has done to provide it and how we can appropriate it (3:21–5:21). He now explains that salvation is more than a right standing before God, which we have through justification. God also provides salvation from the present power of sin in the redeemed sinner's daily experience. This process is called sanctification (Rom 6-8).

When a sinner experiences redemption (justification), they begin a process of sanctification. This is the process of becoming progressively more righteous (holy) in their daily experience, but it is not automatic. It involves growth and requires the believer to cooperate with God to produce holiness in their daily life. God leads the believer and provides the enablement for them to follow, but the believer must choose to follow and make use of the resources for sanctification that God provides.

Our individual process of sanctification will end at death or the Rapture, whichever occurs first, at which time we'll experience glorification. This is when our condition will finally conform to our legal standing before God. We will then be completely righteous as well as

having been declared righteous. God will remove our sinful nature and will conform our lives fully to His will (8:29).

In Rom 6-8, Paul explained how justified sinners go through the process of sanctification (becoming more godly, holy) in daily living, before we are glorified. We need to understand our relationship as believers to sin (victory, Rom 6), to the Law (liberty, Rom 7), and to God (security, Rom 8) to attain that goal.

Preview: Romans 6

In this chapter, Paul prescribes four steps designed to promote practical sanctification:

1. "Know" certain facts about our union with Christ, specifically that sin no longer possesses the dominating power over the believer that it has over the unbeliever (v3-10).
2. "Reckon" (believe) these facts (above) to be true of us personally (v11)
3. "Present" ourselves to God in dedication as His slaves to perform righteousness (v12-14)
4. "Obey" God (v15-23). If we don't, we will find ourselves falling back under the domination of sin in our lives, and becoming its slaves once again.

Romans 6

IV. Sanctification (Rom 6:1—8:39)

(1) The believer's relationship to sin (6:1-23)

(A) Set free from sin (6:1-14)

(a) Question & strong denial (6:1-2a)

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

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1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

— As he does throughout Romans, Paul will explain a kernel of truth he laid down earlier, later in the book

— Here, Paul explains further what he said in 5:20: The Law came in so that the offense would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

— God gave the Law to Moses not as a stairway to heaven (to provide justification), but as something to reveal our sin nature. So Paul says, Don't worry, even though when the Law was given "sin abounded," God's grace "abounded" even more through the sacrificial death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who helps us with our sin problem in a way that the Law could never do.

— Paul answers the likely next thought of his readers: Ok, so if the Law came and sin increased, but God's grace increased much more, why should I not continue in a life of sin,

so that God's grace would increase even more? After all, every time I sin, it gives God an opportunity to forgive me and display His marvelous, amazing grace.

— Paul goes on to say that this would be a false deduction from his statement in 5:20. The rest of Rom 6 details how this is false thinking.

- "What shall we say then?" - in other words, "Where does this glorious truth lead us?"

— If justification depended on *any degree* upon our good works, no such objection to it could be made. Only upon a doctrine of purely gratuitous justification is the objection plausible.

2 **Far from it!** How shall **we** who **died** to sin still live in it?

2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

2 Of course not! How can we who died as far as sin is concerned go on living in it?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

- "Far from it!" - *Me genoita*, the strongest negation in the Greek language; also translated "God forbid!" (Cf. v15; 7:7). Paul says: This is not a proper conclusion!!

— Living in sin so that grace may increase is a lifestyle called licentiousness (license); it's the opposite of legalism, which puts the sin nature into restraints or under rules to coerce obedience (which Paul covers extensively in Galatians), while licentiousness is just letting our sin nature run unrestrained.

- "...we" - contrasts believers, whose new identity is in Christ, with those who are still in Adam, a believer's former state

- "...died" - *apothnesko*, aorist (past) tense ("died"), suggests a specific point when the action occurred: at salvation. Paul is not saying that believers are dying (present tense) to sin, but we "have died" (past tense) to sin. This is our *position* in Christ as of the moment of faith.

— This phrase occurs 3x in Rom 6, 2x in reference to believers (v2,11) and once in reference to Christ (v10). The past tense is important to note:

- It is not in the present tense...we are not *currently* dying to sin
- It is not in the past imperfect tense...we have died and are continuing to die to sin
- It is not in the future tense...we *will* die to sin

— Paul states that it is illogical that those who have "died" in relation to sin should continue to live in sin

— Paul personified sin, describing it as having a ruling power or realm. We died to sin when we experienced conversion.

- Note that Paul did not say it is impossible to live in sin, or that sin is dead to the Christian (i.e. that it no longer appeals to us). He meant it is unnecessary and undesirable to live in sin, to habitually practice it.

— For example, if a man's wife died, it would be unrealistic for him to continue living as though she were alive. Her death changed his relationship to her. He could, of course, continue to live as though she were alive, but such a man no longer needs to do so, and should not.

Where righteousness comes through rules, there is no talk of grace.

3 Or **do you not know** that **all** of us who have been **baptized** into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into union with the Messiah Jesus were baptized into his death?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

- Paul will now explain the thesis statement that he gave in v2b...specifically, what does it mean that believers have "died to sin"?

- "...do you not know" - *agnoeō*, to be ignorant, to not know or understand something

— You can't live the Christian life until you think the right way: doctrine comes before "doing"; orthodoxy (correct belief) precedes orthopraxy (correct practice)

— The reason Christians don't know how to live the Christian life is because they don't understand the doctrine that Paul unfolds for us in this chapter (Cf. Hosea 4:6)

— Living Christianly comes *after* thinking Christianly

— Paul says here, Do you not understand what has happened to your sin nature?

- "...all" - every believer who has put their faith in Christ; there is no such thing as a "super-saint"

- "...baptized" - not water baptism in this context, but rather the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

— When most Christians read this verse, they think immediately of water baptism, then believe that this verse requires water baptism in order to be saved. Not true.

— It is linked with "united" (v5), which is what the Baptism of the Holy Spirit does...it unites us with the Body of Christ

— Water baptism is an outward symbol of an inward reality in your heart. It demonstrates to the world through symbolism that you have placed your faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sin.

— Paul never regarded water baptism as essential for salvation (1 Cor 1:17)

— Jesus' burial was not part of His saving work. It simply proved that He had died (1 Cor 15:3-4). Similarly, His resurrection was not part of His saving work. It proved that death could not hold Him because He was sinless (Acts 2:24).

- Paul emphasized Christ's *death and burial* as an essential part of the Gospel in his definition (1 Cor 15:1-4):

1. Jesus **Died** for our sin *according to the Scriptures*
2. He was **Buried**
3. He **Rose** again *according to the Scriptures*

4 Therefore we have been **buried with Him through baptism into death**, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too **may walk in newness of life**.

4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

4 Therefore, through baptism we were buried with him into his death so that, just as the Messiah was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too may live an entirely new life.

4 Therefore we are buried with him by [through] baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so [too] we also should walk in newness of life.

- "...buried with Him through baptism into death" - no one is buried into death (buried to die). We bury the dead because they have already died.

— Why is our burial with Jesus important? Until a dead body is in the grave, there is a sense in which the decaying corpse is still part of life. Burial removes a dead body from this life fully and permanently. Burial means death to sin is final.

— At the point of personal faith in Christ, every believer was baptized (identified) into Him...when Christ was crucified, every believer was also crucified; when Christ died, every believer also died; when Christ was buried, every believer was also buried; when Christ resurrected, every believer also resurrected; when Christ ascended, every believer also ascended.

— In fact, Eph 1-2 tells us that our position before God is seated with Him in the heavenly places, because I have been baptized (identified, united) into Christ's transaction, His crucifixion, His death, His burial, His resurrection, and His ascension, and my position is now seated with Him, before God, in the heavenly places.

— Paul is telling his readers that they don't understand who they are in Christ, they don't understand their position in God's eyes, they don't understand what they have been baptized (identified, united) into

— You may say that you don't feel like you're seated with Christ in the heavenly places, but your feelings don't matter, they aren't reality. Paul says put your feelings aside, this is a theological reality that we need to understand and live accordingly.

- “baptism” - baptism of the Holy Spirit (see note below, along with [Holy Spirit](#), for a complete explanation of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit).
- Spirit baptism identifies the believer with the death and resurrection of the Messiah
- The resurrection of Jesus was not resuscitation; it was a new form of life in the same way the spiritual lives of believers in Jesus have a new, fresh quality
- A believer’s identification with Jesus Christ is in His resurrection: besides being the start of new spiritual life now, it is also the guarantee of physical resurrection.
- How is this? Gal 3:26—4:9: we are clothed with Christ. Water baptism doesn’t clothe you; it is but a testimony. Only God can do this.
- “...may walk” - *peripateō*, subjunctive mood, the mood of possibility or potentiality. It describes an action that may or may not occur, depending on the circumstances.
- Every believer has the *potential* of walking as the resurrected Christ; sanctification is not guaranteed for the believer (Cf. Luke 8:14; John 15:2; 2 Cor 5:15; Eph 2:10), we must participate in the process, in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- “...newness of life” - God not only raised Jesus, but also imparts new life to believers
- Walking in “newness of life” shows outwardly that the believer has received new life (Cf. 2 Cor 5:17)

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

- Predicted in Acts 1:5
- Only six Scriptures refer to this baptism: Rom 6:4; Gal 3:25-26; Eph 4:4-6; Col 2:11-14; 1 Peter 3:20-21; 1 Cor 12:12-14
- Yet, 1 Cor 12:13 is the only place “Baptism of Holy Spirit” is *defined* in the Word of God.

5 For **if** we have become **united** with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness of His resurrection*,

5 For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness of His resurrection*,

5 For if we have become united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

5 For if [since] we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

- “...if” - 1st class, condition: “since”
- “...united” - *sumphytoi*, “grown together”; united, fused together
- Our union with Christ in His death and resurrection is the basis for our future resurrection
- “...resurrection” - our future physical (bodily) resurrection at the Rapture
- Exact likeness: “death,” thus, exact likeness: “resurrection.” How is this possible?

6 knowing this, that our **oldself** was crucified with *Him*, in order that our **body of sin** might be **done away with**, so that we would no longer be **slaves to sin**;

6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

6 We know that our old natures were crucified with him so that our sin-laden bodies might be rendered powerless and we might no longer be slaves to sin.

6 Knowing this, that our old man [self] is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [done away], that henceforth we should not serve sin.

- "knowing this" - it is critical that we know this in order to progress in sanctification; no doubts allowed

— When God saved us, He did more than guarantee we'll be with Him in glory. God takes us out of Adam and places us into Christ to:

1. Break the power of our present bias toward sin

2. Deliver us from sin's slavery

- "...our old self" - the sin nature that we inherited from Adam

— In Ps 51:5 David says that he inherited a sin nature that is at war with his Creator, at the point of conception (Cf. 5:12)

— We were conceived and born with our sin nature, but then Paul says that something happened...you heard the gospel, you trusted in it, and when you believed, a tremendous transfer occurred...you are no longer identified with the first Adam, but not you're identified with the Last Adam, Christ. Consequently, that "old self" our sin nature has been crucified (Gal 2:20).

- "...body of sin" - using our body for sinful purposes

— The body is "neutral" (neither sinful or sinless), it can be used for good or sinful purposes

— Before I came to Christ, my "body of sin" was used for sinful purposes; but now, after I've come to faith in Christ, my "body of sin" has been "done away with"

- "...done away with" - *katargeō*, defeated but not annihilated; it is a very important word with a very specific meaning. Paul uses the same word to describe the defeat of the Antichrist (2 Thess 2:8).

— Our sin nature/flesh, which we inherited from Adam, was defeated at the point of faith in Christ, but it is not "dead" (it has not been annihilated)

— However, as Paul states later (13:14), we can still make "provision" for the sin nature. It will not be annihilated until the final phase of our salvation, our glorification.

— As long as we are breathing, our sin nature will always be there to entice us to sin against God. But Paul tells us that what we need to know is that our sin nature has been defeated, it just hasn't been annihilated, yet.

- So what this means for the believer is, since our sin nature has been defeated, we have the power to "Just Say No" to sin. Believers have the power to deny our sin nature because we have been united in the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.
- "...slaves to sin" - as a Christian, I sin because I want to, not because I have to. Before you came to Christ, we sinned because we had to because we were slaves to sin. But now that I've been identified/united/baptized into what Christ did, I no longer have to sin. I only choose to sin.
- For example, prior to the Emancipation Proclamation by Abraham Lincoln, slaves were slaves because they were forced to be slaves. They did not have the power to escape slavery. But after the EP, the Civil War, and the Constitutional Amendments following that war, slaves were no longer required to be slaves. However, many slaves chose to continue to be slaves even though legally they didn't have to remain as slaves.
- Before coming to Christ, we were slaves to sin because we had to be a slave to sin. But after we were baptized into Christ's transaction, the power of the sin nature has been broken.
- Now, when a Christian caters to the sin nature, we do so because we want to, not because we have to

Christian living depends on Christian learning; duty is always founded on doctrine. If Satan can keep a Christian ignorant, he can keep him impotent. [Wiersbe]
Satan's great device is to drive earnest souls back to beseeching God for what God says has already been done!

- 7 for the one who has died is **freed from sin**.
- 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.
- 7 For the person who has died has been freed from sin.
- 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.
- Because believers have been baptized into Christ, our sin nature is dead
- Death ends all earthly obligations. Because of our death with Christ, we have no further obligation to respond to the dictates of our sinful nature
- Our position before God is that we no longer have to be a slave to sin. We may choose to do so, but we do not have to and we should not do so (Cf. Eph 4:22-32).
- This verse does not mean that the power of sinful habits or the effect of sinful influences will cease to bother a Christian. It means that a Christian is no longer under the slavery of sin that they used to live under.
- We are free from sin's bondage, but not free from sin's enticement (until our glorification)
- "...freed from sin" - speaks of sin's power in our daily lives

— “sin” - singular, meaning our old sin nature

8 Now **if** we have died with Christ, we believe that **we shall also live with Him**,

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

8 Now if we have died with the Messiah, we believe that we will also live with him,

8 Now if [since] we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

- Paul now turns to the effect our union with Christ has on our problem with death

- “...if” - first class condition in Greek, that in this case represents a condition genuinely true to reality

— Believers *have* died with Christ

- “...we shall also live with Him” - future tense; because the power of the sin nature has been broken, because of my union with Jesus Christ, I can now live for God

— Before we came to Christ, we didn't have much choice to live for God because we were slaves to sin

— But since coming to Christ, I'm free of that master (sin) and am free for God

9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.

9 for we know that the Messiah, who was raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

- Death no longer holds mastery or dominion over Jesus; it cannot hold the believer either

— Neither Jesus or us will die a second time, and we will never again come under the enslaving, spiritual death-dealing power of sin

- This stands in opposition to the doctrine and practice of the so-called perpetual sacrifice of Christ in the Roman Catholic mass

- The glorified Christ says, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev 1:18)

— The Resurrection opens up eternity to Christ, and it will open up eternity to those who trust Him

10 For the death that He died, He died to sin **once for all time**; but **the life that He lives, He lives to God.**

10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

10 For when he died, he died once and for all as far as sin is concerned. But now that he is alive, he lives for God.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

- "...once for all *time*" - follows on from "never to die again" (v9); this destroys the doctrine of transubstantiation, a belief in the Roman Catholic Church that every time communion is celebrated, Christ is crucified again

— The entire transaction was authenticated by the fact that He rose from the dead (v9)

— "...the life that He lives, He lives to God" - in His present position at the right hand of God the Father in heaven, Jesus continues to live for God

— He lived for God while He ministered on the earth, and He continues to live for God, abiding perfectly with Him and His will, right now in heaven

— This life, lived perfectly on earth and in heaven, is what believers have been baptized/united/identified with, it is the theological union that took place the moment one comes to Christ.

11 So you too, **consider** yourselves to be **dead to sin, but alive to God** in Christ Jesus.

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

11 In the same way, you too must continuously consider yourselves dead as far as sin is concerned, but living for God through the Messiah Jesus.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- "...consider" - *logizomai*, an accounting term that means to put into the book exactly what the facts say

— When you "consider" or "reckon" you're doing the work of an accountant; you are putting into the book the truths that Paul has unveiled in v1-10

— You put them in the book...meaning, you consider these things to be so. You don't argue or dispute with God, you consider Paul's teaching here a reality. You acknowledge the theological reality that has happened to us because of our position in Christ and because of our baptism/identification into the work of Jesus Christ.

— This is the first command Paul gives to his readers in Romans. Of course, we need to apply what we learned to this point of the Epistle, but this is the first actual command to do something.

— Earlier chapters are in the indicative mood, describing what is; v11 is in the imperative mood, telling us what to do

— This command is the foundation of sanctification

— Since God has united us with Christ, we should consider ourselves as not under the dominating influence of sin any longer

- Present imperative tense: keep on doing, daily, moment-by-moment; we should definitely and constantly view ourselves this way
- We should count as true what is in fact true, realizing that we are free to enjoy our new relationship with God forever
- Paul previously stated the importance of knowing certain facts (v3,6,9). Now he says that we should count on those things being true. We must not only understand them, but believe them and act on them.
 - "...dead to sin, but alive to God" - the believer's position is: I am dead to sin but alive to God. However, the sin nature is defeated but not annihilated, so I must consider myself dead to sin until my glorification, when my sin nature will die.
- What made me dead to sin and alive to God was my baptism/identification into the Lord Jesus Christ
- This brought forth our freedom and liberation from a terrible master who kept us in a state of bondage before we came to Christ

Paul used the same Greek word (*logisthesetai*, reckon) here as he did in his explanation of justification (Cf. 2:26; 4:3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,22,23,24). God registers righteousness to the believer's account. Similarly, we should register it as true that our relationship to sin and death has changed. Only as we do so will we relate to temptation, sin, and death realistically. If we fail to believe that sin no longer dominates us, we will be much more vulnerable to yield to temptation, to practice sin, and to fear death. However, if we count on sin not having that power, we will be more apt to resist temptation, to stay clear of sin, and to anticipate death less fearfully.

Believers should consider themselves to be what God in fact has made them.

More Christians have memorized 1 John 1:9 than Rom 6:12-13. 1 John 1:9 deals with how to handle sin *after* we have committed it; it is corrective theology. Rom 6:12-13 deals with how to handle sin *before* we commit it; it is preventive theology. We need to pay more attention to Rom 6:12-13. One of the purposes of 2 Sam 13 is to help the reader prevent this type of sin, rather than to help us to recover from it, having fallen. It is a strong warning against letting our passions lead us, because of the consequences that will follow. David's family shows how our inherited sin nature grows and spreads sin unless it is halted by repentance and renewal by God's Spirit.

(d) Thesis applied (6:12-14)

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

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

12 Therefore, do not let sin rule your mortal bodies so that you obey their desires.

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

- Ok Paul, interesting theology lesson...now what does this mean to me?
- "Therefore" - the hinge work in all Pauline epistles that moves the reader from doctrine to practice, from orthodoxy to orthopraxy (Cf. 12:1; Eph 4:1)
 - When Paul uses "Therefore" he is now going to explain to us how to live out what he just taught us in our daily lives
 - Because of the theological truth and reality that Paul explains (v1-11), our baptism into Christ and the *katargeō* (defeat but not annihilation, v6) of our sin nature, we are free to live for God! So now, let's apply it:
 1. "...sin is not to reign in your mortal body" - (v12) - present imperfect, "do not let sin continue to reign." Don't let it reign. Stop letting it—right now!
 - How? By your insisting that what God says is true. The dominion of sin is now *your choice*. It wasn't before (without Christ). When temptation comes, we do not have to yield.
 - Moment-by-moment choices (Rom 7-8 will detail)
 - The Christian life is not trying to become what you are not. The Christian life is experiencing what you are—in Christ.
 2. Allow your body to be used as an instrument of God rather than sin (v13)
 3. Do now allow sin to be your master (v14)
 - Before we came to Christ, sin was the unchallenged ruler reigning in my life; sin had complete authority in our lives, it reigned unchallenged
 - Now that you're in Christ, you no longer need to allow sin to reign; I have the power to tell the sin nature "No"
 - Because of the total alteration of my identity, and my baptism into union with Christ, I no longer am forced to obey the lusts of the sin nature
 - The ability to say No to sin does not come from an increase in willpower, but because of the new identity I have in Christ. You don't have to live like you used to live because your identity has completely changed.
 - "...lusts" - not only the physical lusts and appetites, but also those desires that reside in the mind and will: the desire to get our own way, the desire to possess what other people have, and the desire to have dominance over others.

Is it possible for a Christian to continue on in habitual sin and still be a Christian? Yes, because Paul tells the Romans to not let sin reign in their mortal bodies. This implies that one can be a believer, but still allow sin to reign in their life. This command makes no sense if Christians were not able to allow sin to reign in their lives. If becoming a Christian meant

that you would automatically conquer sin, then Rom 6:12 and a large part of the NT would be completely irrelevant.

13 and do not go on **presenting** the parts of your body to sin as**instruments** of unrighteousness; but **present** yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your body's parts as instruments of righteousness for God.

13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

13 Stop offering the parts of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness. Instead, offer yourselves to God as people who have been brought from death to life and the parts of your body as instruments of righteousness to God.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

- Allow your body to be an instrument of God rather than an instrument of sin

— I no longer have to yield my body to the sin nature, but now I can present my body to God and allow Him to reign in my body (Cf. Rom 12:1)

— Our bodies can do a lot of damage...one example is our tongue. I can use my tongue to be sarcastic, to tear people down, gossip, be derogatory, or I can use it to glorify God, encourage people, teach people.

— "...presenting...present" - offer; offering ourselves to God means setting our minds on loving our heavenly Father

— Like a pin on a map, where our mind is set, our bodies follow. When our minds are set on God, we put Him first.

— In particular, we should not use our natural capacities (our faculties, not only our limbs) to commit sin. Positively, we should "yield" (offer) ourselves to God, and our members: our eyes (what we look at), ears (what we listen to), mouths (what we say), hands (what we do), feet (where we go), hearts (what we love), minds (what we think about), wills (the decisions we make) as "instruments" to fulfill His will.

— "...instruments" - *hopla*, in military context, "weapons" or "armor" (Cf. Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 6:7; 10:4)

— A related passage is Paul's exhortation, "Offer your bodies as living sacrifices...to God" (Rom 12:1)

— God's way to change includes both positive ("Offer yourselves as living sacrifices") and negative action ("Do not conform to the pattern of this world"). If our attempts to change are entirely negative or entirely positive, we will fail.

- We have a choice: we can present (offer, dedicate) ourselves to sin or to God. The unbeliever only has this choice in a limited sense, since he is a slave to sin. The unbeliever can sometimes choose to do what is right, but they can never escape the dominating effect of sin in their lives.
- Your daily choices will now determine the results; not your previous slavery. The power of the old nature is now broken.

THE CHRISTIAN'S THREE-FOLD ENEMY	
Problem	Solution
The World (1 John 2:15-17) Lust of the flesh Lust of the eyes Pride of life	Flee (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22)
The flesh (Rom. 7:18-24)	Deny (Rom. 6:12-13; 8:13)
The devil (1 Peter 5:8)	Resist (1 Peter 5:9)

In Calvinism/Reformed Theology there is a belief that sanctification in the life of a believer is automatic. They believe that God automatically transforms every true Christian into the image of Christ during their present lifetime. If this transformation is not obvious, then the person professing to be a Christian must not be one. If this is true, why does Paul give us three commands in v12-14 to not let sin reign in your mortal body. The command implies that as a believer, I do have the option of allowing sin to reign in my body. If I didn't have the option, the command would be pointless.

The difference between a growing Christian and a non-growing Christian, a carnal Christian and a spiritual Christian, a Christian that is maturing vs a Christian that is stagnant or backsliding, is that the growing, spiritual, maturing Christian knows and understands Rom 6, and is regularly applying it in their life. They are reckoning what Paul says to be true, and consequently it is affecting their moment by moment choices. They've taken the time to read and study doctrine, and used it to inform how they live.

By contrast, the non-growing, carnal, immature Christian is doing the exact opposite...making all sorts of choices outside/beneath their position in Christ.

Is the Holy Spirit being allowed to transform your life? Two possible answers: Yes or No. If the answer is No, there are two possible reasons: either you do not have the Spirit within you (i.e. you're not a Christian), or He is there but you prefer to live life on your own.

- 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under the Law but under grace.
- 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.
- 14 For sin will not have mastery over you, because you are not under Law but under grace.
- 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.
- Do now allow sin to be master over you, because you are not under the Law
- The Law was given to man to reveal his sin nature (5:20), but we are no longer under that system of perpetual frustration
- The frustration is that I want to obey God, but yet I have this Law over me showing me that I can't obey God
- The Law pointed out everything that I've ever done wrong (Paul says he didn't know what coveting was until he understood the Law, 7:7). The Law made our sin visible and apparent...if we didn't have the Law, we would not know what sin is.
- Everyone was under this system in the first Adam, but now there has been a transfer into the Last Adam: believers are no longer under Law, but under grace. Paul says this is a theological reality.
- Until God united us to Jesus through faith, we could not escape sin's relentless increase. Now joined to Christ's death and resurrection, believers cannot return to what we once were (Rom 5:20; 6:3-10).
- Satan can no longer use the Law to hinder the believer's progress
- God redeemed us by grace, not the Law, so we now live under that authority

Grace usually refers to the principle by which God operates. Yet it also describes the sphere in which the believer lives (as here), just as the Law describes the old realm. "Under grace" is not, however, a condition in which we are free from any responsibility (Cf. Matt 11:28-30; Titus 2:11-12), as Paul proceeded to clarify in v15-23. Neither was there an absence of grace under the Mosaic Law.

Two Objectors

Two groups opposed Paul on this point. Jewish traditionalists were committed to the Law as a way of salvation. They argued that without the Law's control, immorality would increase. But Law does not lead to righteousness; all it can do is condemn. Today, those who uphold legalistic moralism make the same mistake.

The other objection came from antinomians ("against law"). They reject the Law, not only as a way of salvation, but even as an expression of right conduct. Antinomians twist our freedom from the Law to mean they are free to do anything they please, even to sin.

The glorious truth of the gospel stands against both objections. Jesus has delivered believers from the Law. Now, united to Him, His Spirit empowers us to do what the Law requires. For the first time, we are free to obey God from the heart. Therefore, the answer

to trying to live under grace is not to live lawless lives. Nor can we correct lawlessness by returning to the Law. The gospel's answer to each of these serious errors is to turn to the Savior, who sets us free.

(B) A slave to righteousness (6:15-23)

In v1-14 Paul told us what to stay away from; in v15-23 he tells us what to devote ourselves to

(a) Question & strong denial (6:15)

15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under the Law but under grace? **Far from it!**

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

15 What, then, does this mean? Should we go on sinning because we are not under Law but under grace? Of course not!

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

- This question follows up what Paul said in v14...that we are no longer under the Law, but under grace

— But some might be under the misunderstanding that this amazing grace of God that has been given to believers is a license to live any way we want since all of my sins (past, present and future) were done away with at the cross

— "...Far from it!" - *Me genoita*, the strongest negation in the Greek language; also translated "God forbid!" (Cf. v2; 7:7,13)

— Paul deals with this misunderstanding by saying that it is absolutely 100% false for someone to think that grace is an opportunity to live however I want to live

(b) Thesis statement (6:16)

16 Do you not **know** that *the one* to whom you present yourselves as slaves for obedience, **you are slaves of that same one whom you obey**, either of sin resulting in **death**, or of **obedience resulting in righteousness**?

16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

16 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?

- Now that Paul has strongly answered the question (v15), he now gives us the reason why...

- "...know" - Paul always starts with a gap in theological knowledge or doctrine...not a gap in Paul's knowledge, but a gap in *our* knowledge. This is why he consistently says, Do you not know...

— Problems for Paul are related to a problem with our understanding of doctrine. According to Paul, you cannot live the Christian life until you begin to think the right way.

— In the early church, the first thing the first Christians gave themselves to was doctrine (Acts 2:42). If you don't understand doctrine, you don't understand how to live as a Christian.

- "...you are slaves of *that same one* whom you obey" - Paul's point of doctrine here is that people are slaves to the master that they obey, whether it is sin or obedience. Paul says that as Christians, we're going to be a slave to one of two masters: the "old" master, which Paul says should not be, or I can be a slave to my new master.

— Jesus said the same thing...that whomever commits sin is a slave to sin (John 8:34).

This is the great deception of sin because sin masquerades itself as freedom, the emancipated life, living life according to my terms. But Paul (and Jesus) both call it slavery.

— Every master will eventually invoke in some type of payment...payday someday

— If we're a slave to sin, it will lead to death (Gen 2:17; Ezek 18:20; James 1:14-15)

— If we're a slave to obedience, it will lead to righteousness

- "...death" - the Bible talks about four types of death:

- Physical death - Gen 3:19 (separation from the soul from the body)
- Spiritual death - Eph 2:1 (no relationship with God; under judgment)
- Eternal death - Rev 2:11; 20:14 (the second death; eternal separation from God)
- Temporal death - the type Paul is referring to here...there are all kinds of things that we "kill" in our lives as we move into sin: if I mistreat my wife, I bring death to my marriage; if I max out my credit cards, I bring death to my future financial prosperity; if I abuse my body with drugs, alcohol, smoking, I bring premature death to my physical body.

— Sin is not first of all about breaking rules; sin breaks relationships. It results in the death of our bodies, the death of relationships, the loss of opportunities.

— Obligation always follows dedication, whether the dedication is to sin or to obedience

- "...obedience resulting in righteousness" - in contrast to sin, which leads to temporal death, Paul gives an alternate choice, which is only open to believers: the choice of obedience to Christ, which leads to righteousness

- Paul is saying to those who have been baptized into Christ, who no longer have an obligation to the sin nature but can return to it at will, I have set before you today life and death (Cf. Deut 30:19; Gen 2:16-17)...
- If you continue in your pilgrimage with Christ, there will be a tremendous harvest of life that will come; things in your life that otherwise would've died (through sin) will be spared
- In contrast, if you go back to the sin nature, which you are no longer obligated to do, there's nothing good that awaits you except for death. Your soul will be saved, but you can rest assured that destruction is coming (to finances, marriages, career, reputation, etc.).

Many people who have been convicted of the guilt of sin and have relied on the shed blood of Christ as putting away that guilt, have not yet, however, seen a state of sin as abject slavery.

Sin has the power of development; it goes beyond the primary intentions of those who give themselves to it.

Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay. [Unknown]

(c) Thesis explained (6:17-22)

(i) Believer's new status (6:17-18)

17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to *that* form of teaching to which you were entrusted,

17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

17 But thank God that, though you were once slaves of sin, you became obedient from your hearts to that form of teaching with which you were entrusted!

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

- Now Paul takes the thesis statement from v16 and unpacks it further...

- Paul again addresses a gap in theological knowledge or doctrine (Cf. v16)...his point in v17-18 is, Do you not understand your new status? Do you not understand who you are in Christ? Do you not understand what Christ has done for you, and the resources that are at your fingertips?

— He tells his readers that they used to be slaves to sin, but now they are obedient "from the heart." They had acknowledged Christian truth...they heard the Gospel, trusted in the Gospel, and their whole spiritual identity changed.

— They are no longer slaves to sin, but now are slaves to Christ, as has been taught to them through this new form of teaching

— Believers know all too well that they are still all too able to sin. Yet now the Holy Spirit lives within us. God enables every believer to obey Him, not automatically, but in dependence on Him. We are now able to do more than follow external rules. As we resist sin in the power of the Holy Spirit, we obey from the heart.

18 and after being **freed from sin**, you **became slaves to righteousness**.

18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

18 And since you have been freed from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants [slaves] of righteousness.

- "...freed from sin" - when we put our faith in Christ, we were crucified with Christ (Gal 2:20), buried with Him, resurrected with Him and ascended with Him (Cf. v4).

— When Jesus rose from the dead, I rose from the dead; when Jesus ascended into heaven, I (positionally speaking) ascended into heaven. This is my new identity in Christ, consequently I have no obligation to the sin nature, although the sin nature is always there to entice me.

— So Paul is saying...considering these truths, and everything that has happened to you in Christ...why would you want to regress back to the sin nature? You want to go back to a master that offered you nothing, and results in death?

- "...became slaves to righteousness" - their slavery to righteousness was voluntary

— Righteousness here is the result of following Christian teaching, equivalent to godly living. It is righteous character and conduct.

— Your new nature will always desire to follow God. Following your old self will result in misery.

— Paul does not say that every believer takes advantage of their freedom from slavery to sin, only that the Roman Christians had done so. Dedication is voluntary, not automatic, for Christians.

— If a believer does not truly dedicate themself to God, they will continue to practice sin to a greater extent than they would if they did present themselves to God (v16)

(ii) Exhortation (6:19-20)

19 I am **speaking inhuman terms** because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented the parts of your body as slaves to impurity and to **lawlessness**, resulting in **further lawlessness**, so now present your body's parts as slaves to righteousness, resulting in **sanctification**.

19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in **further lawlessness**, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in **sanctification**.

19 I am speaking in simple terms because of the frailty of your human nature. Just as you once offered the parts of your body as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater disobedience, so now, in the same way, you must offer the parts of your body as slaves to righteousness that leads to sanctification.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

- "...speaking in human terms" - Paul will often use human illustrations to get a point across to his readers (Cf. 3:5; Gal 3:15)

— Paul is giving his readers a real world illustration that they can understand because of the limitation of their intellect. His human illustration is that of slavery.

— Estimates are up to 30% of the Roman population during Paul's day were enslaved

— Paul again gives them a clear choice, as he did in v17: they used to present their bodies as slaves to sin, and the result was even more sin; he is now exhorting them to present their bodies as slaves to righteousness, and the result will be their sanctification.

- "...lawlessness" [2x] - sin (1 John 3:4); if I choose to live a life of habitual sin, I'm acting as if there is no law or authority over me at all; the attitude is that God's principles may apply to everyone else, but they don't apply to me

- "...sanctification" - a sanctified life; learning to live the Christian life through divine resources

— Once we understand what happened to us in Christ, and we choose to follow king righteousness instead of king lawlessness, good things happen: our development to be more like Christ is accelerated

— But if we play the game of often going back to the sin nature, you are locked in a low level of Christian understanding, maturity and sanctification. Frankly, the church in America is filled with people just like this.

The only way to grow as a Christian is to realize what God has done for us.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in relation to righteousness.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were "free" as far as righteousness was concerned.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

- You used to be a slave to sin, your identity was in the first Adam, but now you are freed from sin and are now a slave of righteousness, which matches who you are in the Last Adam

(iii) Area of enslavement reveals destiny (6:21-22)

21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.

21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.

21 What benefit did you get from doing those things you are now ashamed of? For those things resulted in death.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

- Paul now begins to explain that what we are enslaved to reveals our destiny; your destiny is the quality of spiritual life that you can enjoy

— You're either going to enjoy a low level quality or a high level quality of spiritual life

— The answer to this question hinges on whether I as a Christian am going to choose life over death

- Paul here reveals the truth that whatever we sow, we will eventually reap

— Paul says when you were a slave to sin, look at what you reaped: nothing, no tangible benefit, and the things you did during that time, you're now ashamed of. The unknown toll of temporal death in their lives, because they entertained the sin nature.

22 But now having **been freed from sin** and enslaved to God, you **derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification**, and the outcome, **eternal life**.

22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

22 But now that you have been freed from sin and have become God's slaves, the benefit you reap is sanctification, and the result is eternal life.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

- "...been freed from sin" - aorist tense, once and for all

- Being enslaved to God is a much kinder and easier relationship than being enslaved to sin

— Being a slave to sin brought with it untold cost and death, but being a slave to God brings tremendous benefit, good fruit, good and beneficial things, spiritual development through sanctification, and we begin to reap eternal life

- "...derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification" - some think whatever is spiritual should come without work, but slavery implies effort. Christ-dependent effort is God's way for us to grow in holiness (Rom 14:19; Eph 4:3; Heb 12:14; 2 Peter 1:5-11; 3:14).

— If we try to work on our own, we will grow weary (1 Cor 15:58; 2 Cor 11:27; Gal 6:9; 1 Thess 1:3; Heb 12:3; Rev 2:3; 14:13)

- We may look for a quick fix for our problems—a new relationship, a new job, a new church, a new program, new experiences. But these methods can never "reap the benefit that leads to holiness." There is no alternative to daily dependence on Christ.
- "...eternal life" - we receive eternal life at the moment of faith in Christ (John 5:24)
- But as you study the concept of "life" in the Bible, it means much more than that: it refers to a quality of spiritual life, the sensing of the presence of God, the immediate conviction of the Holy Spirit, the guidance of God in our lives, understanding the truths of His Word
- These are all spiritual qualities that we begin to enjoy when we say no to sin and yes to obedience, no to death and yes to life
- ***As we continue in sin, the pleasure derived from it gets less and less, so we need to engage in even more depraved behavior in order to get that pleasure back***
- And we move even further away from God, then we have to engage in something else to get pleasure, and that begins to diminish, and we find ourselves in a state of bondage
- We're seeking pleasure in deeper and deeper sin, all the while pleasure is running away from us, all while we're engaged in debauched and depraved behavior.

(d) Summation (6:23)

23 For the **wages** of sin is **death**, but **the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in union with the Messiah Jesus our Lord.

23 For the wages of sin is [eternal] death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- "...wages" - *opsonion*, the payoff; what you receive in exchange for something

— When sin is enticing you, you never think about the payoff (wage); all we see is the attraction of sin (Gen 3:6); when Eve sinned, the last thing on her mind was what God said (Gen 2:16-17)

- Sin makes us three promises:

1. Sin will take you farther than you want to go
2. Sin will keep you longer than you want to stay
3. Sin will cost you more than you want to pay

- "...death" - spiritual death, eternal death, and temporal death (Cf. v16)

— Paul distinguishes the means whereby death and life come to people: Death is the wage a person earns by their working, but eternal life is a gift, free to those who rely on the work of Another.

- "...the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" - yes, the wages of sin is death, but sanctification will bring forth a greater quality of spiritual life
- The things that would've died will survive and in fact thrive and prosper
- But Paul is clear that sanctification does not earn eternal life at the outset; that is a free (gracious) gift of God (John 5:24)

Application

- With the command in v11, Paul begins to unfold the important practical matter of sanctification
- Sanctification is a command, not an option
 - Before God saved us, we were under sin's control
 - At our best, we could obey rules but we could not obey God from the heart; we obeyed sin and were powerless against it. But Jesus broke sin's power over us.
- Sanctification is a consequence of what God has done
 - The verbs throughout Rom 6 lay out what happens to every believer (there are at least 11 significant verbs)
 - The consequence of these past acts of God on our behalf is that a life of holiness through the power of God is possible
 - Sanctification is also our work, but it is a consequence of God's work in us (Phil 2:12-13)
- Sanctification is a conduct
 - God does not tell us to act like who we will become; He tells us to be who we are (new creatures in Christ)
 - God enables us to live new lives because of our union with Christ
 - Before we were saved, we served sin (which was consistent and reasonable). Now that He has saved us, it is equally consistent and reasonable for us to serve God.
 - If we live sinfully, our conduct is inconsistent with who God says we are

We may be tempted to settle for our progress so far, but God is committed to growing us into the likeness of His Son. In what ways is your life indistinguishable from the lives of the unbelievers around you?

When God gives us eternal life, He withholds nothing we need to live a consistent, joyful Christian life.

- Three times in this chapter Paul wrote that sin results in death (v16,21,23)
- This death is eternal separation from God in hell, in which unbelievers suffer conscious torment forever (Luke 16:24-25)
- This is the wages they have earned and deserve because of their sin (Rom 5:12; 7:13)
- By contrast, the gift (*charisma*, "grace-gift") of God is eternal life (John 3:16,36)
- Eternal life is a gift that cannot be earned (Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

- Verses 15-23 teach truth by contrasts: obedience to sin yields unfruitfulness, shame and death. Obedience to righteousness results in sanctification and the fullness of eternal life.

A life of sin is unthinkable because it overlooks God's holy character and His purpose in salvation.

God saves believers from:

1. The punishment our sin deserves
2. The guilt and shame sin brings
3. Sin's power over us and the practice of sin
4. The love of sin and the pleasure it once gave us

In our glorification, God will save us from the presence of sin, and remove the last trace of sin's curse from His creation (Rom 8:19-22) and restore all things. Tolerating sin now contradicts God's purpose in our salvation and denies our union with Christ.

What does your attitude toward sin show that you believe about the gospel? Do you make excuses, cast blame, or do you run to Jesus?

What pattern of sin do you consider to be "just who I am"? Jesus came to save us from our sin, not make some sins acceptable. While sin cannot destroy God's saving purpose, God's Word warns that if sin does not bother us, we may not be truly saved (Matt 7:21-23; 1 Cor 6:7-11; Heb 6:4-6).