

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

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 life. But this process 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.

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 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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- This chapter is made up of two sections (v1-14; v15-23), each beginning with a rhetorical question asked by Paul (note: there are approximately 75 rhetorical questions in Romans). In the first section (v1-14), Paul tells us what to stay away from; in the second section (v15-23), he tells us what to devote ourselves to.

- As he does often in this epistle, Paul will explain a kernel of truth he laid down earlier. Beginning in v1, Paul explains what he said in 5:20:

Rom 5:20: The Law came in so that the offense would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

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

- "...Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" - 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.

— In other words, if God loves sinners, then why worry about sin? If God gives grace to sinners, and that grace is always much more than the sin committed, then why don't we sin even more so that we receive more grace from God?

— Paul goes on to say in v2 that this would be a false deduction from his statement in 5:20. The rest of Rom 6 details how this is false thinking.

— "Are we to continue" - *epimenōmen*, present tense, meaning habitual action. Is the believer to remain in [continual, habitual] sin so that God's grace will increase?

— "in sin" - *hamartia*, present tense, subjunctive mood, speaking of habitual, continual action. It is speaking to a believer who continually falls into the same habitual sin over and over and over again. It describes a "lifestyle" of sin.

- Note that Paul never challenged the conclusion of the question, which is that the more people sin, the more God's grace will cover. He didn't challenge it because it is true. What he does challenge is the concept that believers are given license to sin because of grace.

- If you think about this deeper, the very fact that such a question ["Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?"] could be asked shows the truth of the doctrine of justification. If we really believe that we are saved purely by grace through faith and that we can do no work to earn our salvation, then we know that we can do nothing to lose it either. If salvation comes by grace through faith, then our continuance into eternal life comes by grace as well. This concept is part of the doctrine of eternal security. The believer is eternally secure in Messiah and cannot lose his salvation.

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

- The question in many people's minds about grace is whether it is "safe." Since grace is God's undeserved favor bestowed upon all mankind, but especially believers, won't people abuse it?

— From a purely natural or secular view, grace is dangerous. This is why many people don't really teach or believe in grace and instead emphasize living by law (works). They believe that if you tell people that God saves and accepts them apart from what they deserve, they will have no motive to be obedient.

— In their opinion, you can't keep people on the straight and narrow without a threat from God hanging over their head. If they believe their position in Jesus is secure because of what Jesus did, then the motivation for holy living is gone.

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 possible in the Greek language; also translated "God forbid!" (Cf. v15; 7:7). It's akin to saying, "No, absolutely, positively the answer is No! This is not a proper conclusion!!

— In Paul's mind, the idea that anyone might continue committing sin so that God's grace would increase is unthinkable!

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

- "...How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" - this rhetorical question answers why we should "perish the thought" of sinning more in order to receive more of God's grace.

— The answer: because we have died to sin because of our union with Christ. In relation to sin, we are dead.

— "shall we who" - *hostis*, "anyone who" or "whoever"; it is a pronoun of characterization, "placing those referred to in a class."

- "...died" - *apethanomen*, aorist (past) tense ("died"), suggests a specific point in time in the past 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 at the moment of faith.

— Believers are obviously still alive physically, but we are "dead" in relation to sin. The idea is, How could those whose relationship to sin was broken by their dying still be living in sin?

— 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 not 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. Before Christ, we were dead *in* sin; now we are dead *to* sin.

- Note that "died" here does not take on Calvinism's definition of "dead" (Cf. Eph 2:1), which is "like a corpse," a complete inability to respond. If that was true, then all Christians would be incapable of sinning. Unfortunately that's not the case.

- While believers have died in their relationship to sin, sin has not died to them. Sin is ever-present in the life of a believer. However, this does not mean that the believer

needs to "still live in it." Paul does not say that it is impossible for a Christian to live in sin, or that sin no longer appeals to us.

— For example, if a man's wife dies, it would be unrealistic (and a little weird) for him to continue living as though she were alive. Her death changed his relationship with her. Now he could, of course, continue to live as though she were alive, but he no longer needs to do so.

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*, are you ignorant? Paul asks this question 3x in Romans. The question usually implies that his readers are indeed ignorant, yet they shouldn't be.

— They should have a firm knowledge of the fact that because of their union in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, they are looked upon as being united with Him in such a way that when He died, they died and are now dead to sin.

— 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 only comes *after* thinking Christianly.

— Paul's question here is essentially, Do you not understand what happened to your sin nature after you were justified?

- "...all" - every person who has put their faith in Christ.

- "...have been baptized" - *baptizō*, good scholars debate whether this "baptism" refers to water baptism or the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

— In my opinion, this baptism does not *directly* refer to water baptism in this context, but rather the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Many believers are completely ignorant of what the baptism of the Holy Spirit even is, and many interpreters do not even mention

or comment on it. But it critical, and is mentioned many times in the NT, including by Christ Himself (Acts 1:4-5; Cf. Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; 1 Cor 12:13; Col 1:18).

— In brief, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is when Jesus Himself "baptizes" (immerses to change identity) a believer with the Holy Spirit. It is at this time that the Holy Spirit, supernaturally, invisibly, and in a split-second, indwells the new believer, seals them in Christ, and gives them spiritual gifts (Cf. Gal 3:27-28), and "baptizes" (unites) them with His body (the church).

— The reason why this verse does not *directly* relate to water baptism is because water baptism is an outward symbol of an inward reality. The outward symbol is being immersed in water; the inward reality is the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

— Water baptism demonstrates to the world through symbolism that you have placed your faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, and it also pictures the inward reality that the believer has been immersed in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

- Unfortunately this verse, while likely not even referring directly to water baptism, is used by some to argue that water baptism by immersion is required in order for someone to be saved. But Paul never regarded water baptism as essential for salvation (1 Cor 1:17).

— Another unfortunate interpretation is that water baptism is what forgives a person for their sins. This belief unfortunately comes from a misinterpretation of Acts 2:38:

Acts 2:38: Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ **for** the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

— In this verse, the word "for" implies that a person must be baptized to be forgiven of their sins. However, the Greek word translated "for" (*eis*) can be correctly translated as either "for" or "because of." The proper translation is based on the context of the passage in which it is used.

— If you translate *eis* as "because of," it changes the entire meaning of the verse, and now the verse harmonizes with clear teaching everywhere else in Scripture. Baptism does not produce forgiveness or the remission of sins, only Jesus can do that.

— If we're baptized "because of" the forgiveness of our sins, it means that baptism is a *response* to our forgiveness, not a *requirement* for forgiveness (salvation). Peter is not saying that you need to get baptized *in order* to be forgiven, he's saying that you need to get baptized *because you have* been forgiven.

— On top of all this, Peter later promised the forgiveness of sins on the basis of faith alone, not baptism (Cf. Acts 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18).

- "...into Christ" - another the reason why *baptizō* here likely does not refer to water baptism, but rather the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. In water baptism, the water does not

have the necessary power to create this union with Christ or this profound identification.

— Water baptism simply provides a physical picture of a spiritual reality. The spiritual reality of water baptism is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

— What Baptism of the Holy Spirit does, as explained in 1 Cor 12:13, is "unite" us with Jesus Christ, we are baptized "into Christ." Col 1:18 clarifies that the "one body" referred to in 1 Cor 12:13 is the church.

1 Cor 12:13: For by **one Spirit** we were **all baptized** into **one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Col 1:18: He is also the head of **the body, the church**; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

— At the moment a person becomes a believer, the Holy Spirit baptizes them into the body of Christ (the church). This baptism joins the believer to Christ, separating him from the old life and associating him with the new. He is no longer "in Adam" but is "in Christ." Water baptism is the physical portrayal of this spiritual truth.

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.

- The result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit...

— As a result of Spirit baptism, God looks upon the believer as having been united with Christ. When Christ died, the believer died. When Christ was buried, the believer was buried. When Christ was resurrected, the believer was resurrected.

— Thus, believers are now dead to sin because they are considered to be co-crucified with Christ. As a result of this, Paul says that they have a new type of life in which they should habitually walk. This union with Christ breaks the power of indwelling sin.

— Therefore, believers are to now choose to walk by new rules. Make new choices in the way they do things. Choose new paths to walk in, new leaders to walk after, new companions to walk with.

- "...buried with Him" - 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), and also demonstrated the Father's acceptance of His sacrifice (that His sacrifice was sufficient to atone for the sins of every person who ever lived).

- "...through baptism into death" - at first glance, this is strange wording: 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" - likely refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit (see note on v4), which is pictured/symbolized through water baptism. Spirit baptism identifies the believer with the death and resurrection of the Messiah.

- "...Christ was raised from the dead" - the resurrection of Jesus was not a resuscitation; Jesus did not return to life in the same body in which He died. It was a brand 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.

- Understanding the subjunctive mood of this verb (Cf. Eph 2:10, see notes there) is critical to understanding the second tense of our salvation (sanctification).
- Unfortunately, there is a doctrine (Calvinism's doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints) floating around today that does not recognize the subjunctive mood of this verb (they completely ignore it), thus they believe that if you are a "true" Christian, you will have a track record of good works displayed in your life until the day you die.
- Others (those who believe in Lordship Salvation) believe that if Christ is not the Lord of your life, you repent of all your sins, and turn completely to give 100% of your life to Christ, you are not saved.
- Both doctrines/beliefs completely miss the point Paul is making in this verse, and in this entire chapter.
- What the verb *peripateō* here means (as well as in Eph 2:10), is that it is possible, even expected, that a believer will indeed grow in faith and Christlikeness throughout their life. But unfortunately, that is not the reality for many believers. And these believers from which you won't see any fruit (good works), you *will* see in heaven one day.
- The subjunctive mood is the mood of possibility. Every believer has the *potential* of walking as the resurrected Christ, but 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, by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is what Paul talks about in Rom 6-8.
- "...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)

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" - *ei*, first class condition in Greek; could be translated "since" or "in view of the fact."

- "...united" - *sumphytoi*, "grown together"; united, fused together. It is used of grafts that are united with a parent plant. It does not mean "planted together" but rather "grown together."

— It stresses the ultimate union with Christ. In view of the fact that believers have been united in Christ's death, they are in a brand new position altogether.

— Because believers are now in the likeness of Christ's death, they will also be in the likeness of His resurrection. For Christ, the resurrection meant a new life. He was no longer limited by the body He had earlier, which was mortal. Having been resurrected, He now lives a different kind of life than He did prior to His death.

— In the same sense, since believers have been co-crucified, co-buried, and co-resurrected, they should also be living a new kind of life. The power of sin is broken.

- "...resurrection" - our future physical (bodily) resurrection at the Rapture. Our union with Christ in His death and resurrection is the basis for our future resurrection.

— 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 beslaves 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" - *ginōskō*, the deepest and most intimate type of knowing something or someone (Cf. Gen 4:1). It is critical that we know and understand what Paul is saying here 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.

- "...old self" - *palaios anthrōpos*, refers to the sin nature that we inherited from Adam, but the emphasis is on what believers used to be in Adam, not what they are now in Christ. Previously, they were under a death sentence due to imputed sin.

— The NT uses *palaios anthrōpos* two other places (Eph 4:22; Col 3:9) to remind us to consider him done away with. They tell us to "put off" the old man as something that is dead and gone. Strictly speaking, we don't battle the old man, we are to simply reckon him as dead.

— 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

now you're identified with the Last Adam, Christ. Consequently, that "old self," our sin nature, has been crucified (Gal 2:20).

— What they were in Adam was crucified on the cross. Their old self, their old sin nature, was "done away with" when they came to faith in Christ. The significance of this is that sin, as king, no longer has any authority over them. The believer has died to this king. The sin nature no longer has any power over the believer.

- "...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...a KEY distinction. It is a very important word with a very specific meaning. Paul also uses this same word to describe the defeat of the Antichrist (Cf. 2 Thess 2:8).

— Our sin nature, 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.

- "...no longer be slaves to sin" - as a Christian, I now sin because I *want* to, not because I *have* to. Before I came to Christ, I sinned because you had to because I was a slave 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 placed our faith in Christ and were baptized into Christ's transaction, the power of the sin nature has been broken. Now when a Christian caters to the sin nature, they do so because they *want* to, not because they *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! [Newell]

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.

- "for" - *gar*, expresses a cause. Because believers have been baptized into Christ ("died"), 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 (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" - we are freed from sin's power in our daily lives. "Sin" here (*hamartia*) refers to our sin nature. We no longer have to cater to our sin nature because it has been annihilated (v6).

— It's important to note here that our sin nature, which is what Paul is talking about here, is not exactly the same thing as our "flesh." The difference is subtle, but important:

- Sin nature: a theological term (exact wording is not used in Scripture) that describes man's inherited disposition toward sin, which came through Adam (Cf. 5:12). It refers to what we are by nature as fallen beings—our inward bent towards sin and our inability to make ourselves righteous before God.
- Flesh (*sarx*): a broader biblical concept. It is most often used in a moral/spiritual sense to describe fallen human nature operating independently of the Holy Spirit (Cf. 7:18; 8:8; Gal 5:16,19). So the flesh is the fallen human being attempting to live according to his own sinful desires rather than under control of the Holy Spirit.

— It's also important to understand that the Bible never uses the term "new nature" in contrast to the "old nature" (sin nature). The NT does not present the Christian as a person with two natures warring within them. Rather it presents the Christian as a

person with one sinful nature (the flesh) that is in constant conflict with the indwelling Holy Spirit (Cf. Gal 5:16-23).

— It also speaks of the Christian as struggling with the decision to live as the new person that they now are, or to live like the old self, who we were but are no longer (Cf. 7:13-24).

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 *from* the effect our union with Christ has on our problem with sin (v6-7), *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. It could also be translated as "since." 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. Paul presents the believer's conviction as a logical result.

— Before we came to Christ, we didn't have a choice to live for God because we were slaves to sin. But since coming to Christ, we're free of that master (sin) and are free to live 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, thus it cannot hold the believer either. Neither Jesus nor believers will die a second time, and we will never again come under the enslaving, spiritual death-dealing power of sin.

— This verse stands diametrically opposed to the doctrine and practice of the 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*" - *ephapax*, "once and for all"; follows on from "never to die again" (v9). Unlike the sacrifices of the Mosaic Law that had to be offered day after day, He died as a perfect Lamb, never to die again. His sacrificial death was final and sufficient to provide atonement for all mankind.

— When Christ died for sin, He died to sin. When He died, His relationship to sin changed, never to be the same again. Sin now has no power over Him. But how could sin have a claim on Him who knew no sin? Because God treated Him as though He were sinful for our sakes. This is what "bearing our sins" means...that God attributed our sins to Him, then punished Him for those same sins.

— This verse destroys the doctrine of transubstantiation, a belief in the Roman Catholic Church that every time communion is celebrated, Christ is crucified again.

- "...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 ledger the truths that Paul has unveiled in v1-10.

— You put them in the book...meaning, you consider these things to be so. You live as if they were so. Your mind believes that they are so. It's your new reality. 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 (imperative) that Paul gives us to do something. The present tense means that we are to keep on doing this, moment-by-moment, daily. We should constantly view ourselves, consider ourselves, dead to sin.

— In earlier chapters, the verbs are in the indicative mood, describing what is; the verb *logizomai* in v11 is in the imperative mood, telling us what to do. This command is the foundation of sanctification.

— 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.

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

— 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.

In v1-10, Paul spelled out a basic theological truth. In v11 he explains the believer's responsibility in light of this truth. The believer is to respond to this truth by reckoning it to be true and by acting as if it is true because it really is. In v12-14, Paul will now explain how this doctrine is to be applied in the life of the believer.

(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 all of this mean to me?

- "Therefore" - *oun*, 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). Paul's use of "Therefore" here means he is now going to explain to us how to live out in our daily lives what he just taught us.

— 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 now free to live for God! So now, let's apply it:

1. "...sin is not to reign in your mortal body" - present imperfect, "do not let sin continue to reign." Stop letting sin reign—right now! In the choice you have now as a believer to either sin or not, stop choosing sin.
 - How? By 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. You can choose not to sin.
 - 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. Sin is no longer our master, so we can and should stop carrying out its orders.

— Before we came to Christ, sin was the unchallenged ruler reigning in my life; sin had complete authority in my lives, it reigned unchallenged. But now that I'm in Christ, I no longer need to allow sin to reign supreme in my life. I have the power to tell the sin nature "No."

— "sin" - *hamartia*, refers to our sin nature. We're commanded to not yield to it because we are dead to it.

— "reign" - *basileuō*, present tense, meaning that his yielding is not a once-and-for-all experience. Believers have to keep on keeping on resisting sin.

— 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. I don't have to live like I used to live because my identity has completely changed.

- "...you obey" - *hypakouō*, present tense, meaning the believer is not to continuously obey the lusts of the body.
- "...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" - *paristanete*, means "to offer"; it's in the present tense, meaning continuously; imperative mood, meaning a command. We are commanded to now continually offer our body as an "instrument" (weapon) to our sin nature.

- "...parts of your body" - in particular, we should not use our natural capacities (our faculties) to commit sin. This includes: our eyes (what we look at), our ears (what we listen to), our mouths (what we say), our hands (what we do), our feet (where we go), our hearts (what we love), our minds (what we think about), our wills (the decisions we

make). These should not be "presented" or offered to our sin nature as a weapon to be used against us for unrighteousness.

- "...sin" - *hamartia*, refers to our sin nature.

- "...instruments" [2x] - *hoplon*, refers to "weapons of war" (Cf. Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 6:7; 10:4). Believers are not to allow our bodies to become weapons of our sin nature.

- "...present" - *parastēsate*, "to offer"; it is in the aorist tense, meaning a once-and-for-all commitment; imperative mood, meaning it's a command.

- Having made this once-and-for-all commitment that their bodies are to be used by God, believers are then to act and live accordingly. This commitment is like setting our minds on the things of God. Similar to a pin on a map, where we set our mind is where our bodies follow. When our minds are set on God, we put Him first.

- 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 cannot do anything to please God and they can never escape the dominating effect of sin in their lives.

- Your daily choices will now determine the results, not your previous slavery. In Christ, the power of our sin nature is broken.

- It is important to understand the grammatical implications of the tenses that Paul used in this verse ("presenting," *paristanete*, present tense, imperative mood, and "present," *parastēsate*, aorist tense, imperative mood).

- On one hand, believers should continuously fight against subjecting their bodies to the sin nature, which is an ongoing battle.

- On the other hand, believers are to make a once-and-for-all commitment of their bodies to God for His use alone.

- So, in their presentation and attitude, they are to be alive to God and live a resurrected life in Christ. Such a life will prove that they are in reality and in practice what they reckon themselves to be.

THE CHRISTIAN'S THREE-FOLD ENEMY	
<i>Problem</i>	<i>Solution</i>
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)

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 so that we do not have to invoke 1 John 1:9 as often. 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.

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 our 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 not allow sin to be master over you, because you are not under the Law. The believer no longer lives under the authority of the Mosaic Law, thus it has no power over us. God redeemed us under a completely different system—under grace—so now we live under that authority rather than 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 (Cf. 5:20; 6:3-10).

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 rejected 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 this is a different question than he asked in v1. There his question was, "Are we to *continue* in sin so that grace may abound?" Here, his question is, "Are we to sin because we are not under the Law but under grace?"

— In v1 he was referring to habitual, continual sin; here he is dealing with specific acts of sin. His point: both habitual sin (a sinful lifestyle) and individual acts of sin are both inappropriate for a believer who is living under God's gracious authority.

— In v1-14, Paul has convinced us that a lifestyle of habitual sin is not compatible with a person whose life has been changed by God's grace. But, someone might ask, what about an occasional sin here and there? If we are under grace and not Law, must I be concerned about a little sin here and there?

— The objection that Paul is addressing here is the person who would say or think, "Sure, I may take a night off now and then to sin a little, since I am under grace."
- "...sin" - *hamartanō*, aorist tense, active voice, indicates a dabbling in sin every now and then, not the habitual, continual sin described in v1.
- "...Far from it!" - *Me genoita*, Paul's answer to whether a Christian can be ok with sinning occasionally is the strongest negation in the Greek language. This is a direct and decisive dismissal of any permission to sin whatsoever. The Greek can also translated "God forbid!" (Cf. v2; 7:7,13). Paul thoroughly and completely discounts and forbids any thought that God's grace can or should be used as a license to sin, even if it's only occasionally.

(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 of whether it's ok for a believer under grace to sin occasionally (v15), he now gives us the reason why...

- "...know" - *eidō*, to see, to perceive, to notice or discern. Paul always starts his explanations acknowledging and then filling a gap in his readers' theological knowledge or doctrine. This is not a gap in Paul's knowledge, but a gap in *our* knowledge. This is why he consistently says, Do you not know...?

— Paul often had a problem with his readers' understanding of doctrine. Before Paul gave commands in his epistles, he always explained the doctrine first, then gave the commands. 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" - the principle of doctrine Paul is teaching is that people will be slaves to whatever master they obey, either sin or

obedience. 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 our new master.

— Jesus said the same thing...that whomever commits sin is a slave to sin (John 8:34). The great deception of sin is that it masquerades itself as freedom, the emancipated life, living life according to my terms. But Paul and Jesus both call it slavery that reaps death.

— Every master will eventually invoke in some type of payment...payday someday. If we're a slave to sin, it will lead to death (Cf. Gen 2:17; Ezek 18:20; James 1:14-15). If we're a slave to obedience, it will lead to righteousness.

— Paul's point here is that believers are no longer slaves to sin, but rather are slaves to righteousness. But if they continue to serve the master of sin, they will once again become slaves to that which they have already been freed. But if they serve the master of righteousness, then they will become slaves to righteousness.

— So believers have two options: they can choose to sin and reap death, or they can choose to obey and reap righteousness.

- "...death" - *thanatos*, 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 will bring death to my marriage; if I max out my credit cards, I will bring death to my future financial prosperity; if I abuse my body with drugs, alcohol, smoking, I will bring sickness, disease, or 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 you can return to it at will. I have set before you today life and death (Cf. Deut 30:19; Gen 2:16-17)...choose life!

— 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 in various areas of your life.

Your soul will be saved, but you can rest assured that destruction is coming (to finances, marriages, career, reputation, etc.).

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

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. [from the song "Sin Will Take You Farther" by The Cathedrals]

(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...

- After addressing his readers' gap in theological knowledge (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?

- "...you were slaves of sin" - past tense; believers were slaves to sin before they came to Christ, but they are no longer.

— 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.

- "...obedient from the heart" - a great description of faith. The faith that we have in Christ or in the Word of God was not given to us by God (as Calvinism believes). It was developed in the heart. It shows that faith results in obedience because if we really believe something, we will act according to that belief.

- "...form of teaching" - the content of the believer's faith.

— "form" - *tupos*, a mold; it refers to a mold that a craftsman would use to cast molten metal. It is a deeply engraved image or pattern. When pressed on a believer, the pattern reproduces itself.

— Thus, "form of teaching" refers to a teaching that can reproduce itself in the believer's life, and the teaching is that through Christ the believer has been freed from the slavery of sin.

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" - a Christian never has to sin again. Although sin is inevitable until our glorification, it isn't because God designed a system in which we *must* 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 don't have to. You're not forced to. If you do, you choose to. Do you really 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 themselves 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 often used human illustrations to get a point across to his readers (Cf. 3:5; Gal 3:15). In this passage, he is giving his readers a real world illustration (between a slave and a free man) that they can understand because of the limitation of their intellect ("the weakness of your flesh"). They were still immature believers and could not comprehend deep spiritual truths yet.

— Estimates are up to 30% of the Roman population during Paul's day were enslaved, so the illustration of a slave and a free man was something that all of his readers would be able to relate to.

— The illustration itself is simple: In their unsaved state, believers once presented their bodies as slaves to impurity and iniquity, and the result was further lawlessness. However, as believers, they had been freed and were no longer slaves to the sin nature because of their faith in Christ. Consequently, they were to present their bodies as slaves to righteousness. The result would be sanctification with the goal of being conformed to the image of the Son of God.

— Every believer has the option to choose between slavery and freedom. Although the sin nature no longer has any legal authority over him, the believer can, of his own free will, submit himself to it. Of course, the end result of this choice is even more sin, and eventually death.

— But Paul says the other side of the coin is that since you have been freed from the bondage of sin, decide instead to submit yourself to the righteousness of God (obedience) and be set apart for God (sanctified) for the sake of holiness. The end result of this choice is that the believer will be a servant to righteousness, which will lead to sanctification.

- Paul lays down a principle in this verse that is ingrained in human nature: lawlessness leads to more lawlessness, but righteousness leads to holiness, which is more righteousness. This principle describes the dynamic power of our choices and habits, and how we tend to move along in the direction we are pointed.

— An example: think of four trees planted in a row in the ground. The first tree was planted one year ago, the second tree five years ago, the third tree 10 years ago, and

the fourth tree 20 years ago. Which tree will be hardest to pull up from the ground? The longer we are rooted in a behavior, the harder it is to uproot it. This is a principle that works for both good and evil.

- "...lawlessness" [2x] - *anomia*, sin (1 John 3:4); if I choose to live a life of 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" - *hagiasmos*, consecration, purification; a sanctified life; learning to live the Christian life through divine resources. Note that the progressive sanctification of the believer is not passive or automatic. It requires right choices and decisions daily, on a moment-by-moment basis.

— 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 you 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 were free in relation to righteousness" - when you were an unbeliever, you were "free" from righteousness. Meaning, as an unbeliever, you did not have the option to choose righteousness (you were free from it). You only had one option: enslavement to sin.

— Unbelievers are not free to choose between sin and righteousness. Their only choice is sin, thus they are slaves to sin. Whatever they do is based solely on their sin nature because they have no other option.

— The fruit that unbelievers produce is only in accordance with their sin nature, thus even the good things they may do are of no eternal value. As unbelievers, they didn't think about serving Christ...they were "free" from Him.

(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 another principle: whatever we sow, we will eventually reap.

- Paul says previously, 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.

- Given these circumstances, why would believers submit themselves to the sin nature after having been freed from it? All that they would produce is fruit they could be ashamed of, and temporal death in many areas of their lives.

- 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. This is how lawlessness leads to even greater lawlessness.

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.

- "...having been freed" - *eleutheroō*, aorist tense, once and for all. Something that happened in the past that has ongoing results in the present.

- "...enslaved to God" - 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" - if we present ourselves as slaves to God voluntarily, we could anticipate the benefit of progressive sanctification (holiness) and the outcome of eternal life (Cf. John 10:10; 17:3).
- Some think that whatever is spiritual should come without work, but slavery implies effort. Christ-dependent effort is God's way for us to grow in holiness (Cf. 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 (Cf. 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 just eternal life: it refers to a quality of spiritual life we can experience today, the sensing of the presence of God, the immediate conviction of the Holy Spirit, the guidance of God in our lives, and greater insight and understanding of the truths in His Word. These are all the spiritual qualities that we begin to enjoy when we say no to sin and yes to obedience, no to death and yes to life.

(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. What a person earns by working. The contrast between wages and gift are described in 4:4-5.

— Satan is the paymaster for sin, and he will see to it that you get paid. If you work for him, you're paid in death (Cf. Gal 6:7-8).

— When we're tempted to sin, we 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 would be the consequences of her sin (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" - *thanatos*, spiritual death, eternal death, and temporal death (see note on 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" - *charisma*, a gift of grace; in contrast to the "wages" earned from being a slave to sin, eternal life is the free gift of God.

- "...eternal life" - when we work for sin, we are paid in death. When we serve God we get no pay, but He freely gives us the best benefits package imaginable.

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.