

## Romans 6 - Dead to Sin, Alive to God

### ESV

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self[a] was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free[b] from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves,[c] you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.<sup>i</sup>

a. [Romans 6:6](#) Greek man

b. [Romans 6:7](#) Greek has been justified

c. [Romans 6:16](#) Greek bondservants. Twice in this verse and verse 19; also once in verses 17, 20

### NLT

1 Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? 2 Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? 3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? 4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. 8 And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. 9 We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. 10 When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. 11 So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

12 Do not let sin control the way you live;[a] do not give in to sinful desires. 13 Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. 14 Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.

15 Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! 16 Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. 17 Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. 18 Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

19 Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. 21 And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. 22 But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.<sup>ii</sup>

a. [Romans 6:12](#) Or Do not let sin reign in your body, which is subject to death.

**Context:**

In 5:20-21, Paul argues that the law came with the intention of increasing trespasses and sin. By sinning under the law, you are now breaking an explicit commandment and your sin is all the more serious. Now, you not only violate the easily suppressed law of conscience, but the written law of God. Additionally, our awareness of our own sin is increased as we are forced to compare our actions with the law. He argues that this increase has the effect of grace being all the more abundant in Jesus Christ. Inevitably, the question arises, "If my sin serves to increase grace, then should I continue in sin so that grace may abound?" Verses 1-14 of Chapter 6 serve to answer this objection.

This discussion also plays an important role in the broader context of Christian belief, and one which Paul likely had to address everywhere he brought the message of grace. If we are forgiven of our sins, justified purely by free grace in Jesus Christ, what does it matter if we sin? Since I believe that Jesus forgives me, can't I live in sin and still be saved?

**Summary:**

The message of Romans 6 may best be summarized as an exhortation: Be what you are!

There is a tension in these verses between what is true about us, and what is realized in our lives. That is why Paul begins with the declaration that we have died to sin and have been freed from its power, and ends with the exhortation to not let sin reign in our lives. The reasoning in vv.1-14 can be charted like this:

**We have been baptized into Christ's death, which means that since****He:**

Died to sin  
Was given new life by God  
Was resurrected  
Died to sin and lives for God

**Therefore we:**

Are dead to sin  
Should walk in the newness of life  
Shall be resurrected  
Consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God

Paul concludes the section by exhorting us to present ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness, not letting sin reign because we are no longer under the law, but under grace. This raises the question that if we are not under the law, then why can't we sin? He argues:

- Because the one whom you obey shows who owns you!
  - If you serve sin, you are a slave to sin
  - If you serve righteousness, you are a slave to righteousness
  - Each of these has its own result:
    - ♦ Sin leads to death
    - ♦ Righteousness leads to sanctification, which in turn leads to eternal life
- So, since you have been freed from your slavery to sin, you are now a slave to righteousness. Given that, you should serve God, not sin

In other words, "Be what you are!"

	You were		You are
<b>Slaves of:</b>	<b>Resulting in:</b>	<b>Slaves of:</b>	<b>Resulting in:</b>
Sin	Death	Obedience	Righteousness
Impurity/Lawlessness	More Lawlessness	Righteousness	Sanctification
Sin	Shame/Death	God	Eternal Life

## Related Scripture:

### Dying With Christ:

- Gal 2:19-20 "I died to the law...I have been crucified with Christ
- Col 2:20 "...with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world..."
- 1 Pet 2:24 "He himself bore our sins...that we might die to sin and live to righteousness
- 2 Ti 2:11 "...If we have died with him, we will also live with him"

### Baptized into Christ:

- Gal 3:27 "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ"
- Col 2:12 "... buried with him in baptism...you were also raised with him through faith..."

### Newness of life:

- 2 Cor. 5:17 "...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation..."
- Col 3:9-10 "Do not lie...seeing that you have put off the old self...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed..."
- Eph 4:23-24 "be renewed in the spirit of your minds...put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness..."
- Gal 6:15 "neither circumcision counts... nor uncircumcision, but a new creation

### Let not sin reign:

- Psa 19:13 "Keep back your servant from presumptuous sin...Let them not have dominion over me
- Psa 119:33 "Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes
- Mic 7:19 "He will tread our iniquities underfoot..."

### Set free from sin:

- John 8:32 "if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed

### Righteous Living:

- Jam 2:14-17 "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead"
- 1 Jn 3:6-9 "No one who abides in him keeps on sinning...and he cannot keep on because he has been born of God"

## Theological Concepts:

1. **Regeneration:** *"Regeneration, or new birth, is an inner re-creating of fallen human nature by the gracious sovereign action of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-8). The Bible conceives salvation as the redemptive renewal of man on the basis of a restored relationship with God in Christ, and presents it as involving "a radical and complete transformation wrought in the soul (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23) by God the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5; Eph. 4:24), by virtue of which we become 'new men' (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10), no longer conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9), but in knowledge and holiness of the truth created after the image of God (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; Rom. 12:2)"<sup>iii</sup>*
2. **Sanctification:** *"Indeed, the more sanctified the person is, the more conformed he is to the image of his Savior, the more he must recoil against every lack of conformity to the holiness of God. The deeper his apprehension of the majesty of God, the greater the intensity of his love to God, the more persistent his yearning for the attainment of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, the more conscious will he be of the gravity of the sin that remains and the more poignant will be his detestation of it....Was this not the effect in all the people of God as they came into closer proximity to the revelation of God's holiness."<sup>iv</sup>*
3. **Union with Christ:** *"Union with Christ in his death and resurrection is the element of union which Paul most extensively expounds...if we are united to Christ, then we are united to him at all points of his activity on our behalf. We share in his death (we were baptized into his death), in his resurrection (we are resurrected with Christ), in his ascension (we have been raised with him), in his heavenly session (we sit with him in heavenly places, so that our life is hidden with Christ in God), and we will share in his promised return (when Christ, who is our life, appears, we also will appear with him in glory) (Rom. 6:14; Col. 2:11-12; 3:1-3)".<sup>v</sup>*

**Application:**

1. Paul moves quickly from the discussion of being set free from the guilt of sin in Ch.4 and 5 to being set free from the power of sin and living righteously in Ch.6. How can the arguments he uses be useful for Christians who struggle with overcoming various sins in their lives?
2. We Christians often refer to ourselves as “just a sinner saved by grace” or speak of our “fallen nature.” Given what Paul has written in Ch. 6, do you think he would support the use of such descriptions? Why or why not? Does the description of our redeemed reality in Christ affect the way you view yourself?
3. Paul describes the Christian’s overcoming of sin as being grounded in the death and resurrection of Christ. How does the gospel figure into your own struggle with sin? Address some practical ways that belief in the gospel can help a Christian who is struggling with:
  - a. Pride
  - b. Greed
  - c. Sexual Temptation
  - d. Fear
  - e. Self-righteousness
  - f. Spiritual apathy

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<sup>ii</sup> Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

<sup>iii</sup> B. B. Warfield, Biblical and Theological Studies, 351

<sup>iv</sup> John Murray, Redemption Accomplished and Applied

<sup>v</sup> SinClair Ferguson, Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification