

CONCERNING THE WAY

October 5, 2010

LESSON 113: PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS



Chapter 6 - Sanctification Explained in Principle

In chapter 4 Paul talked about justification, the fact that when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, God declares us righteous because of our faith. We are placed in Christ, and from then on God considers us righteous. In chapter 5 Paul discussed what that means to us right now. He told us all of the things that we have in Christ because we are justified before God. Justification is what we have the moment we trust Christ, it is a done deal. God declares it.

Now in this chapter Paul is going to talk about sanctification. Sanctification is about our daily walk, our growth towards holiness, being like Christ. **Justification deals with the penalty of sin, sanctification deals with the power of sin.** Justification is a declarative act of God (we are declared righteous), sanctification is a progressive work of God. Justification deals with the unsaved sinner, sanctification deals with the saved sinner. **It's important to note that both are works of God** – He is the one that brings them about, not us.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to remain in sin so that grace may increase?

Paul is making a shift here from talking about theoretical aspects of salvation to talking about the practical, about our Christian walk. So, Paul, if all my sins for my whole life are forgiven, if God has declared me righteous by His grace through my faith in Jesus Christ, if He sees me as a righteous man because I have the righteousness of Christ, how should I live?

As Paul always does, he considers the response or objections of his audience and then heads them off. Many people are uncomfortable with the idea of justification by faith, because they think it leads to the thinking that you can just go out and live any way you want. This belief has a theological term – antinomianism. That's the belief that we can live as if there is no law or binding moral code.

If I just go out and live my life to please myself, won't that just increase the grace that is given to me? I'm still saved, I'm covered because of Christ's righteousness that is put to my account, so it's OK, right?

Romans 6:2 Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

The King James version translates this phrase wrong, it says "we, that are dead" instead of we who died. Everyone agrees this is an error, because the Greek tense denotes a past act or fact, not a state. This is important, because Paul is saying that at the moment we were saved, we died to sin.

Justification by faith does not mean a license to sin. We can't use our freedom from the law for selfish ends. That's not why Christ died! A believer may occasionally slip into sin but he cannot live in it. It is impossible. This does not mean that all Christians have discovered, or walk in, the path of victory over sin. Paul will describe how to learn that below.

Paul is saying that we died to sin here. What does that mean? If a temptation to sin comes to me, I still may be inclined to do it. I still have a tendency to sin, so what does he mean, we died to sin?

When we trust in Christ for our salvation, we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ. This is not a physical baptism Paul will speak of here. This is what happens to us spiritually – it's a spiritual transformation, but that doesn't make it any less real. God then sees us as united with Christ, who took our sins upon Himself at the cross. God poured His wrath out on Christ for my sins. He took the wrath of God for me that I deserved. Because I'm united with Christ, technically and spiritually my natural self also died on the cross. I died with Christ, and was raised with Him, **positionally**, at the point of my trusting in Christ, and will be raised **bodily** when Jesus comes back for His church at the Rapture. Paul talks more about this great truth in Colossians 2:20-22, 3:3, and Galatians 2:20.

So this dying to sin happened. It is a fact. We are dead to sin. So why do we still struggle with it sometimes? Well, you have to distinguish the **fact** of what happened from our **experience**. We did not die to sin by our experiences. We died to sin in Christ's death. Even though it *feels* like sin still has a hold on us at times, the *fact* is that it *doesn't*. We can't deny it, God says it! So how do we make it true in our experience? **That's part of sanctification, the lifelong process of growing into what God has said we ARE.**

Now Paul is going to explain the principles of sanctification. The secret to sanctification is not found in some pious formula or mystical experience. It is in three words or principles – *know* (v. 3), *consider* (v. 11), and *present* (v. 13).

Principle #1 – The Need to Know

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

The Greek word Paul uses for “not know” here is “*agnoeo*”. Paul has spent a lot of time telling us why we deserved condemnation. Then he spent a lot of time explaining what happens to us when we are justified. So this knowledge (do you not know?) is absolutely necessary to understanding of sanctification. Sanctification is built on knowledge, not feeling, and Paul will explain this further.

Baptism into Christ means to be incorporated into Him, to become a member of His body (1 Corinthians 12:13), and to share with Him His experiences (His crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection). This happens spiritually and positionally, of course – but it is real and all-important. **That's why Paul says we should know this stuff.**

Romans 6:4-5 Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may live a new life. (5) For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united in the likeness of his resurrection.

Because we have been crucified and buried with Him, sin no longer has a legal hold on us. It's the same thing as when a murderer is executed. There is no legal hold on him anymore because he's a dead man. The penalty for the crime has been paid. This is beautifully illustrated in a symbolic way in water baptism. Being plunged under water represents being buried with Christ, and coming up out of the water represents being resurrected into a new life. The point of this is that we are raised to live a new life, not like the old one. **This is not an earthly life Paul is talking about. This is a new heavenly, spiritual life, a new kind of life.**

When Lazarus was brought back from the dead, he still lived his life as before. It was just a continuation of his old earthly life. That's not what happened to Jesus in His resurrection. It wasn't back into His old flesh and blood body that His spirit went back to. It was His body, **but it was completely transformed into a new one, an immortal, heavenly body, more real than ever before.** He was now a heavenly man, or a man that was fit to live in heaven.

This is the "new life" that we believers now share, that we are to walk around this world in! We are one with the Risen Christ! We are "one spirit" with Him NOW. We are "in Him" spiritually and positionally as He sits at the right hand of the Father. All that remains is to receive our new bodies, "conformed into the body of His glory" (1 Corinthians 6:17, Philemon 3:20-21).

To be joined in life with the Risen Christ, and thus daily, hourly, to walk, is a wonder not conceived of by many of us. But it is the blessed portion of all true Christians. They shared Christ's death, and now are "saved by [or in] His life"—as we read in Chapter 5:10. But not only saved: we walk here on earth by appropriating faith, in the blessedness of His heavenly "newness" of resurrection life! This is what Paul meant when he said, "To me to live is Christ"; "our inward man is being renewed day by day"; "I was crucified with Christ; Christ liveth in me . . . the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." William Newell

There are those that think this is physical baptism in these verses, but if that's true then these verses are saying we should be physically buried and killed, so that our bodies can come back to life. No, it's a spiritual transformation. Paul confirms this also in Colossians 2:11-13. Just as Christ was raised to new life, so we too are raised with Him to new life. That spiritual life begins at the moment of our conversion, but we'll get the new body at the Rapture. Right now, we have a new life in Him, a new mind, a new attitude, a new orientation. We are connected to Christ, so we should be living differently than we did before. We have the mind of Christ now.

Since God has done all these things to save us, everything we do in our lives should be lived in relation to that. My life should be lived out of gratefulness for all that God has done for me. You know, when I accepted Christ as a young man, I didn't understand all that God had done to save me, and I did some dumb things – I stumbled around, as most young Christians do, struggling to live my life the way that God wanted me to, but generally just doing things my way. I didn't know all that God had given me. All I knew is that I was a sinner and I needed God to save me. I knew He saved me and I was going to heaven instead of hell. **But there's so much more to it!** This is why we study the epistles of Paul, to learn about all the things God had to do to save us, and all the things He has freely given us in Christ. The more we learn about those things, the more we should love God, and live our lives in response to what He has done.

Romans 6:6-7 We know that our old man was crucified with him so that the body of sin would no longer dominate us, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. (7) (For someone who has died has been freed from sin.)

The Greek word for "know" here means to get to know, come in the knowledge of, become acquainted with the fact. It's a completely different word from the word translated "knowing" in verse 9. "Knowing" in that verse is a common knowledge, not something we come to know. This fact, that our old man was crucified with Him, is something we come to the knowledge of, we have to learn it.

Again Paul stresses the importance of *knowing*. Our "old man", that is our old natural sinful selves, was crucified with Christ. This killed the power of sin in us. We're free from it. This crucifixion, notice, was a past event. It is not a present, daily experience. We don't keep getting crucified again. It

happens once, when you accept Christ. When you're crucified and buried you don't have to repeat it!

"Old self" or "old man" does not refer to the sin nature as such. Unlike what some say, the Bible does not teach that the sin nature was eradicated at salvation or is ever eradicated in this life. **Death is never extinction but separation.** Though we're now separated from sin's power, its presence has not been eradicated. Paul tells us in Ephesians to "lay aside" our sin nature (Ephesians 4:22). "Old man" also does not refer to our flesh.

For example, in Colossians we're told that we have "put off" the old man. Obviously we can't yet put off our bodies! But Paul means all that we naturally were before we came to Christ – our desires, lusts, ambitions, hopes, judgments, as a whole. **We used to be those things, but now we have "put that off".**

We still have a sin nature because we live in these fleshly bodies. While the body itself is not evil, we can easily be tempted through fleshly desires. Our bodies can become the instrument of sin.

So, in regards to the "old man":

1. Our old man was crucified (verse 6). That's a fact.
2. Those that are in Christ have put off the old man.
3. He still exists, because Ephesians 4:22 says we have to continually lay him aside because he "is being corrupted in accordance with deceitful desires".
4. He is to be put away as belonging to our old life (2 Corinthians 5:17)

But our flesh:

1. Unlike the old man which has been crucified at the cross when we accepted Christ, "those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24). **The first is what God did, crucifying the flesh is what we're to do.**
2. The flesh has passion and lusts.
3. It has a *mind* directly at enmity with God.
4. As we'll see in chapter 7, **the flesh is the manifestation of sin in our as yet unredeemed body.** This is where we still have conflict. This is what the Holy Spirit indwelling us constantly wars with. Our bodies are not sinful in themselves, but they are not yet redeemed by Christ, so they can have sinful desires and lusts. Our souls (our faculties of perception, reason, imagination, and sensibilities) are being renewed by the Holy Spirit. The body is not. It will war against us until Christ comes. Only the Holy Spirit has power over the flesh (Romans 8:1).

"Our old man was crucified—The matter of which we are told to take note here is the great federal fact that our old man was crucified with Christ. Perhaps no more difficult task, no task requiring such constant vigilant attention, is assigned by God to the believer. It is a stupendous thing, this matter of taking note of and keeping in mind what goes so completely against consciousness,—that our old man was crucified. These words are addressed to faith, to faith only. Emotions, feelings, deny them. To reason, they are foolishness. But ah, what stormy seas has faith walked over! What mountains has faith cast into the sea! How many impossible things has faith done!" Newell

"Difficulty there will be, no doubt, in taking and maintaining constantly this attitude: but faith will remove the difficulty, and faith here will grow out of assiduous, constant attention to God's exact statements of fact. We are not to go to God in begging petitions for "victory,"—except in extreme circumstances. We are to set ourselves a very different task: "This is the work of God, that ye believe"

We may often be compelled to cry, with the father of the demoniac, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!" But it is still better to have our faces toward the foe, knowing ourselves to be in Christ, and that we have been commanded to reckon ourselves dead to sin, no matter how great and strong sin may appear. Satan's great device is to drive earnest souls back to beseeching God for what God says has already been done!" Newell

Some people point to 1 Corinthians 15:31 as proof that we must "die daily". But that's bad hermeneutics. Let's look at the verse in the NASB:

1 Corinthians 15:30-32 Why are we also in danger every hour? (31) I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. (32) If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.

Remember you must always look at the context of the verse when you interpret it. Notice that Paul is speaking of physical death in this passage, not spiritual death. Verse 31 in the NET Bible shows a better meaning of what Paul was saying:

1 Corinthians 15:31 Every day I am in danger of death! This is as sure as my boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You can see clearly here that Paul is not speaking of spiritual death. So, the spiritual death of the "old man" that happens when we trust Christ is a one-time only event. Our old man is not constantly being crucified day after day, but has been crucified at the cross of Christ. All we have to do is realize that fact. Why were we crucified? Paul says so that our body of sin would no longer dominate us.

So we no longer are under the power of sin, we are free from it (verse 7); we don't have to do it. **This is a truth that has to be cemented in our minds if we're to live a holy life.** If you don't firmly get that in your mind and latch on to it, you will constantly wrestle with that sin and guilt over it.

So then do we become perfect little robots who always do the right thing from that point on? No, being freed from sin does not mean we never sin again. It means that we will never be legally sentenced by God for sin again. It has all been taken away by Jesus' death. All of it is past, gone, dead (even if from our perspective it hasn't happened yet.)

We don't realize that we are not a slave to sin any more. Many Christians live as if they were never saved. They don't recognize their new position in Christ, a position of freedom. Freedom to live your life to God!

It's a mental recognition of what Christ did for you. Recognizing that you are free, that your sinful nature has been crucified. But too often we live as if we did not die with Christ. Jesus died once – once for all for sin. He is not dying continually. We're not to do our own dying to sin. It has already been done by dying with Christ. If we can realize that, then it is simple.

Romans 6:8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Thank the Lord it doesn't stop with crucifixion! This is the answer to verse 1. No, we do not continue in sin, to live our lives as we did before. Since we died with Christ, we are raised to new life to live with Him. This is a wonderful future promise for us, but it also has important meaning in the present. We live IN Him right now. If we can get these truths in our heart, we will not continue in sin. We are

living this new life right now, sharing His life.

Romans 6:9-10 We know that since Christ has been raised from the dead, he is never going to die again; death no longer has mastery over him. (10) For the death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God.

For the third time in this chapter Paul says “we *know*”. You don’t have to be a genius to see that **the sanctified life begins not with emotions, but with knowing the truth, having an informed mind.**

We BELIEVE we will live with Him, because we KNOW He is never going to die again. The belief is confirmed by the knowing. Since Paul has just been talking about our identification with Christ, he’s telling us here about what we have in Christ. Since Christ was raised from the dead, we will be raised from the dead, never to die again. Since Christ died to sin once for all, we died to sin once and for all. Since He lives to God, we also live to God. **The starting point of living a sanctified life is realizing that we are already holy in Him.**

I want you to notice something else interesting about verse 10. Paul says Jesus died TO sin. Wait, doesn’t the Bible say He died FOR our sins. Yes, it does, and He did. But this is something different. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that God made Christ to BE sin on our behalf. **Jesus was made to be what we were, that we might become, in Him, what He is!** It wasn’t just that Jesus bore the guilt of our sin. He took the punishment we deserved. But that, as important as it was, still wasn’t enough. We had to be released from our connection with Adam, the fallen human race. That old relationship had to be annulled, and so it died at the cross in the person of Christ. The sinless one became sin to take care of what we were, as well as what we had done. So we rejoice not just because our sins are forgiven, but because as Paul says, we are literally a new creature!

Principle #2 – Consider Yourself Dead

Romans 6:11 So you too consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Knowing what Christ accomplished for us is not in itself sanctification. It’s only the first principle. If what Paul said in verse 2, that we have died to sin, means that sin is gone from our bodies, then he would have just stopped there. He would have just said, “Sin is gone from you.”, and that’s all he would have needed to say. But sin in our daily lives is still an issue because we still live in these unredeemed bodies. He does not say sin is dead, but that we are to consider ourselves dead to sin.

The word “consider” here is the key word. It may read “reckon” in your translation. **When we daily consider ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God, this can powerfully nullify temptation to sin in our lives.** We don’t “try” to die to sin, but to realize that it has happened! It’s a fact. We consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. We are called to live in our experience what we already are positionally.

This is a practical thing that Paul gives us that we can use when we’re tempted by sin. When we’re tempted, recognize that we are dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ. There should be thankfulness in our hearts to God because He has declared us righteous and that should help us defeat temptation. It’s a logical reasoning process we need to go through in our minds, with the help of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. We should stop and ask ourselves, “What is the right thing to do here?” Is this something that would be pleasing to God? You make a decision logically, not on your emotions.

This too can be difficult. It's a learning process. If you're a person that just "goes with the flow", and does things impulsively, emotionally, you must train yourself to stop and think logically before you act. This generation, raised by this material, selfish, entertainment-driven culture, has an especially hard time with this. People don't stop and contemplate whether what they're doing is right or wrong, they just do it. If they want it, they just do it or buy it.

It doesn't happen automatically, you don't instantly know how to live a surrendered life to Christ when you accept Christ. We must teach ourselves to go through this process, and an integral part of that is regular study of the Bible and quiet time with God. Believers in the Bible had to do this, too. Paul was constantly telling Christians to stop living for themselves and learn how to live for God, out of gratitude for what He has done for us. It's no different for us today.

"This should make the believer's task simplicity itself. The only difficulty lies in believing these astounding revelations! That we should be dead to sin, and now alive unto God as risen ones, sharing that newness of life (verse 4) which our Lord began as "the First-born from among the dead," is at first too wonderful for us. We see in ourselves the old self-life, the flesh—and straightway we forget God's way of faith, and turn back to our "feelings." We say, Alas, if I could escape from this body, I would be free. But that is not at present God's plan for you and me. We wait for the redemption of our body. This body is yet unredeemed. Nevertheless, we are to reckon ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God. Not dead to sin, notice, through prayers and strugglings, nor dead to sin in our feelings or consciousness; but in that death unto sin which Christ went through on the cross, and which we shared, and in that life which He now lives in glory!" Newell

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

As we've talked about, this is why sin is still an issue for a believer.

1. Our bodies are still mortal – they have needs and they will die. We're still waiting for them to be redeemed at Christ's coming.
2. Sin is present in our body, and is ready to reign as king over us if we let it.
3. It's through the lust or desires of our body that sin is ready to take control. This doesn't mean all of the desires of our bodies are sinful. See 1 Corinthians 6:12. But when you repeatedly indulge your natural desires, those desires can become sinful and eventually control you.
4. We're commanded to reject this "reign", which means we're not supposed to just give our body whatever it wants whenever it wants it.
5. Notice the "Therefore". Because we are dead to sin, we cannot let the desires of our bodies control us.

Principle #3 – Present Yourself to God

Romans 6:13 **and do not present your members to sin as instruments to be used for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead and your members to God as instruments to be used for righteousness.**

You may have asked after the last verse, "Well, if I'm dead to sin, how can it still reign in my body?" The answer is if you "present" parts of your body for sinful use. God's way is to present your members to Him. Of course, this will test your faith. You won't always feel dead to sin. Sometimes the old man doesn't seem like he's crucified! **This is simply a matter of obedience. God is commanding us to present ourselves to Him and not to sin, and we must obey Him. If we don't, sin will reign in**

our bodies.

“Members” can be any part of our body that we use – hands, feet, eyes, mouth, etc. Paul is giving us another command, now he’s going from focusing how we think to what is going on with our body. He’s saying don’t use your body to sin! The Greek word for “instruments” has the meaning of weapons or arms used in warfare. It is the same word used in 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 translated “weapons”. We’re supposed to use our “weapons” for God’s purposes, not for sin or selfish pursuits.

Paul is writing this to Christians. That means there were either Christians in Rome that were sinning like this, or they had the propensity to sin. Some were falling back into sin, or they were in danger of it. This is just as relevant to us today. Use your body for holiness, not sin.

Usually we give ourselves a pass. We say to ourselves, “Well, I do trip up now and then (we don’t like to call it sin), but overall I do pretty well.” I don’t think most of us understand the seriousness of sin, how it can drag us down. We don’t realize how much it grieves God when we sin. We don’t realize how it can ruin our everyday fellowship with God, and hinder our prayers. We don’t understand how it can easily rule over us again. We need to continually have an attitude of repentance before God.

It’s important to understand the intent of what Paul is saying in these verses, though. When he is saying “do not present your members to sin”, he is using the Greek present active imperative tense of the verb “present”. That means this phrase literally means “Do not keep on continually presenting your members to sin...” He’s speaking of habitual sins. That’s why he mentioned the danger of letting sin reign over us in the previous verse. **There must come a point in a believer’s life when he or she decides to live for God and abandon the sinful habits of the past. If a person who claims to be a Christian never shows that kind of commitment to God, then you’d have to question whether that person ever really experienced salvation.**

The word “present” has the idea, if you’re in the military, of presenting yourself to the commander in your dress uniform as a member of the regiment you belong to. We give Him our best, we present ourselves holy because we are holy, He has made us that way. We’re instructed to continually present ourselves to God. You keep on doing it as a habit of life.

Now, positionally, as far as our eternal destiny is concerned, we are not judged for sin any more. Christ took all judgment for sin on Himself at the cross. That is settled forever. But if we sin in our lives after we have accepted Christ, there will still be consequences. Just as we discipline our children for doing wrong, so God will discipline those that belong to Him. And we may lose rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Romans 6:14 For sin will have no mastery over you, because you are not under law but under grace.

Every human in their natural selves are enslaved to sin from birth. They can’t help it. But when you trust Christ your natural self dies, ending that enslavement. From then on, sin is no longer your master. That is our position. But we still have to live in these bodies (the flesh), and sin can still reign over our bodies if we allow it. If I want to go back to the cemetery and dig my decayed and moldy old man up, sin will continue to master me.

If believers were still under the Law, it would be impossible to keep sin from gaining mastery over us. But since believers are “under grace,” this can be done by following Paul’s instructions. Paul is saying if you follow the pattern I’m giving you, sin will not have mastery over you. We are under grace.

Grace says there is a freedom that God gives us to live without sin, to recognize that sin has no hold over us. It doesn't happen through gritting our teeth and trying to follow the law.

Notice that "law" here is not capitalized. Paul is not just speaking of the Mosaic Law as such, but the principle of law judgment. **We are not even under the legal principle of law any longer.**

Think of the difference between the Jew in the Old Testament and the Christian in the New Covenant. Israel, placed under Law at Sinai, with a veil between them and God, had to always think of their behavior as affecting their relationship with God in a drastic way. It was all external to them. There was no union between them and Jehovah, and the Holy Spirit was not dwelling in them (except a select few for a specific service and time).

But with believers today, everything is different. We are in Christ, members of His body. We have the Spirit of God in our hearts! We're no longer slaves, but sons and daughters! (Galatians 4:4-7). Our relationship is settled. **We serve God out of Love, not out of obligation.** We serve Him as our hands serve our brains, we're part of His body. Law has nothing to do with that, it's just natural connection. My hand serves my brain because it is one with it.

The law has no grace or mercy. We're now under grace. Grace brings peace and contentment. It takes away fear, especially fear that if we fall we will go to hell. And grace empowers us – it means God continues to give to us. It's about depending on God for living our lives and not depending on ourselves. **Just as we were saved by grace, we must live by grace.**

So, Paul's concept of sanctification is not really a "daily dying to self". It is being mature enough to rest completely on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that we have been justified by His death, daily reckoning that work to be finished, and constantly presenting ourselves to be used of God. When we, as believers, are obedient to what God through Paul has commanded here, we will progress toward being like Christ Himself, His resurrection life!

"The believer today is neither in the Old Testament with the Patriarchs, nor with Israel at Sinai; nor walking with the disciples during our Lord's earthly life and kingdom ministry! The believer lives now after the cross, and in the full right and power of all that Christ did there. God gave Israel at Sinai a Law,—a holy, just and good Law, but they kept it not. The Lord Jesus when on earth said to His disciples, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me"; but they all failed and fled. Why? Man was still under testing. The cross ended that; revealing, as it did, utter wickedness in man; and, also, complete weakness in the disciples,—in God's saints!

Then what? Christ is raised from the dead through the glory of the Father: that we may walk in newness of life. Not only are our sins forever put away by His blood, but we ourselves find our history in Adam over, we being dead with Christ, crucified with Him.

Then the Holy Spirit is given at Pentecost as the power of this new, heavenly walk. Men were then, for the first time, transferred into the Risen Christ. They shared His risen life; for they had been identified with Him as an Adam, a federal man, in His death, at the cross; and were now placed by God in Christ Risen: yea, they were "created," now, in Him; and even made members of His Body" Newell

Unfortunately, many, maybe even most believers today are not walking on the resurrection side of the cross. If you had been in heaven for fifty years, and then were sent down by God to earth to live and witness for fifty years, after which you would be taken back to heaven – how would you live on earth

during that time? Would you constantly doubt if you really belonged in heaven? No, you would both live and speak in the full confidence that you were a citizen of heaven. God says in Ephesians 2:5-6, that He has made us alive together with Christ, and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in heaven. Are you going to try to add anything of Law to that? Are you going to put yourself under something God says we are not?

Sanctification Explained in Practice

Romans 6:15-16 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Absolutely not! (16) Do you not know that if you present yourselves as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or obedience resulting in righteousness?

This seems to be a repeat of verse 1, but there is a difference. In the previous verses Paul is speaking of sinful habits that a Christian continues in after he is justified (see the phrase “remain in sin” in verse 1). Here he seems to be speaking of occasional willful sins after one is justified. The thinking Paul is trying to head off is this: Well, OK, I understand I can’t continually do the things I did before I was justified, but since I’m saved by grace, it’s all right if I sin once in a while, isn’t it? Paul is saying no, you have to understand that if you sin even occasionally, you’re opening the door to making yourself a slave to sin, not to God. Sin can still be your master.

He will use the concept of slavery in these next verses because slavery was very prevalent in the Roman Empire in Paul’s day. It is something that his readers would have been very familiar with. Keep in mind Paul is not condoning slavery in any of these verses. He’s just using an aspect of the existing culture to explain a spiritual truth.

It’s like drugs –every drug addict knows this principle all too well. It can start off with maybe taking a few pills to relieve stress at work, or smoking a joint to relax in the evening. After a while the pills or an occasional joint isn’t enough to relieve the stress. You need something stronger. One drug leads to another. Before you know it you’re on the street looking for Crystal Meth or Crack Cocaine. It gets worse and worse and it happens repeatedly all over the world. Pornography works in exactly the same way. **It’s a downward spiral that ends up in an addiction that requires a stronger and stronger “hit” to satisfy.**

Sin always works like this. Yielding to sin even occasionally can lead to worse and worse sin so that eventually it controls you – you are a slave to it. And, if that continues it will eventually lead to physical death (verse 16).

Does this surprise you that a Christian can be a slave to sin? That is what Paul is talking about here. We need to realize that when we come to Christ, we are not our own any more. We are slaves to Christ. So consider yourself an obedient slave to Christ. **We have no rights to ourselves any more.** Do you see yourself that way? You’re going to be a slave to someone, if it’s not Christ, it will be Satan. Jesus’ yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

This is the good news - presenting yourself as a slave to Christ. The same pattern that drags people down when they yield to sin builds them up when they present their bodies for righteous living. **Over time, if you continually present yourself as a slave to Christ, you will find that the Holy Spirit draws you nearer and nearer in your relationship with God.** You will find that your desires change. When you first become a Christian you kind of want to just sit and listen in church, hesitate to

pray in front of people or talk about spiritual things, and that's normal. But over time and constant obedience to Christ, you will find God leading you to want to pray out loud with others, study the Bible, even teach others, talk to people about Jesus, etc. God will bless you with a deeper love for Him and greater desire to serve Him.

Romans 6:17-18 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves to sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching you were entrusted to, (18) and having been freed from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness.

Paul is saying to the Romans that when they accepted Christ, they were freed from sin and became slaves to righteousness, a slave of God. He bought us. Our lives don't belong to us anymore. The price was His Son. They obeyed "from the heart" the teaching they had been given (that's the Word of God), which means they believed in Jesus Christ for their salvation. It has to be from the heart, or it won't work. **If you're just following a set of laws outwardly, but are still rebellious in your heart, you are still a slave to sin and still lost.**

Many people always look for some new doctrine or new insight. But this is the essence of what living the Christian life is about, right here. It hasn't changed from generation to generation and it's right from the Word of God. What wonderful verses these are! I echo what Paul says, thanks be to God!

Now we are to behave as slaves to Christ. Not to the law, not to sin, but we live to please God now, not ourselves. Recognize that you are a slave to righteousness and then live that way.

Romans 6:19-20 (I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.) For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and 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 with regard to righteousness.

Paul first apologizes for using an analogy to slavery, but he must have assumed his readers wouldn't get his point otherwise. We're not truly like human slaves when we come to Christ, because we become His children (Romans 8:15,16).

Before we came to Christ, we did what we wanted, we used our bodies to live for ourselves, and that included impure acts and things that are against God's law. We used our mouth for sin, our eyes for lusting, our hands for violence, etc. But now we are to present our bodies as slaves to righteousness. And look what Paul says. **Doing this LEADS TO sanctification!** It is a process, it doesn't happen overnight.

You know, all this talk about slavery is very repugnant to those of us in our culture. We don't like slavery of any kind. We want to be free, just leave us alone! But, unfortunately, life doesn't work that way. You're going to be a slave to something. If you're not going to be a slave to God, you will be a slave to sin which will lead to death. Man, we just don't like that idea! But slavery to Christ is not like slavery to sin. First of all, we're slaves to Christ by choice. God doesn't hold His children in bondage. Slavery to Christ is true freedom, and it leads to love, peace, joy, and eventually to eternal life, not death. Now Paul makes a couple of final comments to wrap up this chapter:

Romans 6:21 So what benefit did you then reap from those things that you are now ashamed of? For the end of those things is death.

Before you accept Christ, there is no obligation to live righteously. You were a slave to sin, and you were expected to obey that master. You did what you wanted to please yourself. But what good did any of those things, which you're now ashamed of, do you? They may have given you temporary pleasure, but nothing lasting. And doing those things will eventually kill you, this is physical death. So why would you want to go back to that? Sin always promises more than it can deliver, because it comes from Satan. None of what sin leads to is worth having.

There are some forms of sin that will definitely shorten your life. Alcoholism, sexually transmitted diseases, drug use, engaging in criminal activities – there are many things in this life that can kill you if you indulge in them.

Romans 6:22-23 But now, freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your benefit leading to sanctification, and the end is eternal life. (23) For the payoff of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But now, if you've accepted Christ, you are (positionally, spiritually) freed from the principle of sin and a slave to God. He does this automatically; we have no choice in the matter. Is there any benefit to be a slave to God?

Here it is: "Benefit" can also be translated "fruit". Since you are enslaved to God, good things will be produced in your life. And this results in sanctification in this life, and eternal life in Christ after this life is over. These benefits happen how? Because we are in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's how God sees us.

So why do we ever choose to sin? Good question. That is Paul's argument. Why would you ever want to? I think what we want to understand from this chapter is that **Jesus Christ expects to be Lord of those who have accepted Him as Savior**. You can't take the one and skip the other. If you just see Jesus as a convenient way to escape the penalty of the Judgment but aren't serious about yielding all the parts of your body and mind to Him in sanctification, you're not really serious about salvation. Jesus is our Savior, but He is also our Judge. There are wages that will be paid for what you do. **Make sure you get the right wages.**