

Facilitator Notes for *Set Free!* – A Study in Romans
Lesson 8 ~ No Winning in Sinning! Romans 6

**PLEASE DON'T READ THESE NOTES UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR LESSON.
HEARING GOD FOR YOURSELF IS WAY BETTER THAN MY COMMENTS!**

Questions

Paul preached that the *good news* or *gospel* of Jesus Christ was *justification by grace, through faith and without works*. He ended **chapter 5** by saying, *but where sin increased, grace increased all the more (5:20)* which means that no matter how rampant sin is, grace is more rampant yet and no matter how powerful sin is, God's grace is more powerful. However, some religious people were questioning Paul's gospel because they said it encouraged sinful behavior!

Read Romans 6:1-14 - *The Death that Brings Life*

1. In **6:1**, Paul repeats a question that he has heard from his critics. **What is the question** and **what is the "logic" behind the question?** (In other words, what wrong conclusions had his critics come to about how people would live out the gospel that Paul was preaching?)

The question: Shall we keep on sinning (after we have been saved) so God may keep showing us more kindness and forgiveness?

The logic was that if we increase our sinning, we give God the chance to increase his gracious forgiving, thereby giving him the opportunity to show even more of his love! In other words, the more we sin, the more opportunity God will have to display his wonderful grace!

- ♥ How does knowing that God *has* and *always will* forgive your sins affect your attitude toward sin in your own life? Is God's forgiveness automatic? Why or why not?

It's important to see that God's forgiveness is not "automatic." The offence will stand between God and us until we **confess** (admit our wrong) and **repent** (turn around and go the other direction). Then God is willing and waiting to forgive and to cleanse us of our sin. Sometimes we fool ourselves by thinking, "I'll go ahead and do what I know is wrong and then I will confess it and receive forgiveness." What we may not realize, however, is that when we knowingly continue to sin, we also lose our desire to confess and repent. Our hearts become hard and unresponsive to the grace and forgiveness that God extends.

- ♥ How is continuing in sinful behavior an inappropriate response to God's grace?

2. Paul's answer to the question, "Should we keep sinning to give God a chance to keep on forgiving?" was, "Of course not!" What is the reason he gives to back up his answer (**6:2**)?

Paul's reasoning is that we have died to sin and it has no control over us any longer. So, how can we go on living in something that we have died to? In other words, sinful desires may be present, but they have power over us. With Christ living in us, we can say, "No, I don't want to do that anymore."

From **6:6, 7, 12** and **14**, express in your own words what it realistically means to say that someone has "died to sin."

We are set free from the power of sin. In other words, we have a real choice when it comes to sin. We don't have to let sin control us. Sin will continue to tempt us, but we can say no. If we are dead to sin, we have a new Master and we live under a new regime. We are not under the kingdom of law (which is bondage) any longer; we now live in the kingdom of grace (which is freedom). We also have died to the condemnation and guilt that sin causes. We have died to that; we are no longer under condemnation, even when we sin and fail. The penalty for sin has been pain, once for all, and we are dead to the effects that sin used to have on us.

- ♥ Does it mean that we aren't enticed by sin anymore if we have "died to sin?" Why or why not?

Our old nature still struggles with our new nature. We are enticed to sin and we do sin – but it is no longer a helpless and hopeless situation as it was before we received new life. We now can confess, repent and be forgiven and cleansed and begin anew. This was not possible before.

- ♥ How can the knowledge of your death to sin affect your struggle with sin?

- ♥ Even if God promises to forgive us our sins, what are some practical reasons why a Christian should not continue in sinful behavior?

Sin always has consequences that hurt us and others. Sin is also addictive and habitual and we can't just stop whenever we choose. Sin makes our hearts hard and callous, and we may not respond to the Holy Spirit's conviction of our sin so that we can repent and be forgiven. Sin is always serious!

Paul's answer to his critics is that God's *grace* not only **forgives sins**, but also **delivers us from the power of sin**. Grace does more than justify (make us right with God). It also **sanctifies** – makes us holy – so that we may live for the glory of God. Grace **unites us to Christ** so that we can live **out of his life** that is now **in us**.

3. Regardless of *how* or *when* we are baptized, what spiritual truth does the physical act of baptism illustrate (6:3-4)?

Just as Jesus died and then rose again to new life, so we die to our old selves and are raised to new life that is identified and united to Christ. We are seen as "in Christ" sharing his death, burial and resurrection. In the spiritual realm, what happened to him, happened to us. When he paid the penalty of sin by his death, we, in him, had our penalty of sin paid. When he was buried, we too were buried to our old way of lie. When He rose, we also received a new life or nature and became a completely new person that is capable of living a whole new way.

When we are "baptized into Christ Jesus," we are united to Jesus. The identity of Jesus is inseparably linked with our own identities.

Baptize is the transliteration of the Greek word *baptizo* which means to "dip in" or "dip under" or "immerse." The word was often used to describe the practice of dyeing cloth. As the fabric was submerged in the vat of dye, it would become "identified" or "united" with the dye, taking on its color. In the general sense, the Greek word means to "be identified with something." In the church of Paul's day, new believers were usually baptized by being immersed or completely "buried" in water. They understood this form of baptism to symbolize the death and burial of the old way of life. Coming up out of the water symbolized the resurrection of new life in Christ. The physical act of baptism pictured their spiritual identification and union with Christ. Baptism is an avenue of God's grace to us.

- ♥ How is the baptism that Paul speaks about both a *funeral* and a *birth celebration*?
 - ♥ How real is your own burial and death that Paul speaks of in 6:3-4? What difference does it make?
4. The purpose of our death, burial and resurrection with Christ is that we might "live a new life" (6:4). From the scripture listed below, write down what you learn about this new life and how we live it.

<p>2 Corinthians 5:17 We become new creations or persons; we are not the same; the old life is gone and the new life has come.</p>	<p>Ephesians 4:22-24 We are to throw off our old selves and patterns of behavior and put on our new selves, created in God's likeness – righteous, holy and true. This change begins in the thoughts and attitudes of our minds.</p>
<p>Colossians 3:9-10 Just as we take off old, dirty clothes and put on new, clean clothes, so we are to take off our old selves by choosing to give up sinful practices and instead choose to follow God's way to live life.</p>	<p>Galatians 2:20 Since the old self has died with Christ, we live the new life through faith and trust in Christ, who now lives in us, united to our new self.</p>

- ♥ What is the source of the new life in us? Jesus living in us is the source of the new life. What activities encourage its growth? There are many "spiritual disciplines" we can practice that are beneficial to encouraging this new life in us (Bible reading/study, prayer, worship, service, meditation, etc.). However the most important and effective thing we can do is to develop a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus where we talk, listen and practice (acknowledge) his presence at all times, in all situations. When we begin treating Jesus as a REAL person in our lives, the new life in us will grow and become strong and healthy.

- ♥ What are some ways you can "take off the old self" and "put on the new self"?
- ♥ Even though we need to learn to live from the new life that is in us, where have you seen progress? Where would you like to see more progress?

5. Paul strongly emphasizes the fact that our old self died with Christ when he was crucified for the sins of the whole world. Why is *death* of the old self necessary before we can *live* a new life (6:6-7)?

We used to be slaves to sin and had no choice or power to say no. But just as a human slave is "set free" when they die because the laws of this earth no longer have any power over them, so we are set free from our slavery to sin because our old self that was enslaved to sin has **died with Christ**. It is now free from the slavery of sin.

♥ If we are no longer slaves to sin (6:6) and have been set free from sin (6:7), why do we still sin? In history, we read of cases where slaves who were set free continued to live as if they were slaves. Either they could not believe they were free, or they were so conditioned to slavery that they could not imagine freedom. Sometimes we sin out of habit. Old habits have to be broken and new ones formed. Sometimes we continue to sin out of rebellion – we simply want to; we "love our sin" and we don't really want to change because we don't believe that life without our sin is better than life with it. Sometimes we sin out of ignorance. We have not grown in Christ enough to see that our behavior or attitudes are wrong. Becoming Christ-like is a process that has to be learned and pursued; it doesn't come overnight. We have to cooperate in the process as we access the power of the Holy Spirit. But, the important point is that we do have a choice! Before we were set free, we had no choice and could do nothing to break the power of sin in our lives.

♥ We are *united* with Christ in his death and resurrection (6:5). What effect does union with Christ have on us in each of these areas – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually?

♥ How does dying with Christ to our old selves now dramatically affect our future (6:5, 8)?

Someday we will live with Christ forever.

6. In 6:11-14, Paul gives us some practical steps to take to achieve victory over sin. What is the first thing we are to do in 6:11? **Count or consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.**

Where does this action take place? **In our minds/thoughts**

From what you know about the connection between thoughts and actions, how will **considering** (*counting, remembering, recalling, regarding, pondering*) ourselves **dead to sin** and **alive to God** actually help us to live out of the *new life* within us, rather than out of the *old self*?

Behavior and emotions begin in our minds and thoughts. We become or act out of what we put into our minds and choose to think about. Choosing what we allow our minds to think about is all important in controlling behavior, etc.

♥ Do you really believe that thinking the right thing will affect your actions? Why or why not? Consider **Romans 12:2 – We are made into new person by letting God change the way we think**
Ephesians 4:22-23 – taking on new attitudes in our minds helps us to put off the old self
James 1:13-15 – temptation to sin comes from our own evil desires (usually expressed first in thoughts). If we let the thoughts continue, they will give birth to sin.

Philippians 4:8-9 – The reason we are to think about things that are true, noble, right, pure and lovely is because thoughts have a direct link to emotions and actions.

♥ What are some practical ways you can remind yourself of the truth of 6:11 so that it is in your mind?

7. What are two things we are told **not** to do and one thing we are told **to do** in order to achieve victory over sin (6:12-13)?

Do not let sin reign in your mortal body (control the way you live) so that you obey its evil desires

Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, to become a tool of wickedness

Do offer yourself (and the parts of your body to God) to be used for what is right and for the glory of God.

- ♥ What are some parts of you that seem especially prone to sin (eyes, ears, hands, feet, mouth, mind, imagination, emotions, will, abilities, etc.)? Why do you think this is the case?
- ♥ What is the best way to make sure you **don't** offer the parts of your body to sinful actions and behavior (6:13b)? **Give yourself completely to God**
Why would this strategy work? **We can't serve two masters; either we will hate one and love the other or we will be devoted to one and despise the other (Matt. 6:24).**
- ♥ How, exactly, would you go about offering yourself to God and the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness (6:13b)? What are some creative ways you could do this?

Read **Romans 6:14-23** – *Whose Slave are You, Anyway?*

8. How is the question in 6:15 the same, yet different, from the one in 6:1? Both questions ask if we should go on sinning or sin all the more. In 6:1, the reason given is so that God can continue to give us forgiveness and grace and the reason given in 6:15 implies that since forgiveness is a sure thing (under grace), why not just go ahead and do what you want to do because in the end God will forgive you.

♥ How would you explain the difference between being *under law* and *under grace* (6:14-15)? The law teaches us what sin is (Rom. 3:20) and whets our appetites to do the wrong (Rom. 5:20), but it also condemns us because no one can keep the law. Living under law brings fear, guilt and judgment. Living under grace means love, mercy and acceptance. Grace allows room for failure and growth without condemnation, while the law accepts nothing short of perfection.

Is grace the absence of all rules? Why or why not? (Titus 2:11-15)

When we truly experience grace (that we have been given the gift of freedom and life that we could never earn or deserve) and understand how much it cost God to give it, out of deep gratitude we want to live God's way and not our own self-centered way.

♥ In what ways have you (do you) exploit God's grace? Why? What is the proper response to this abuse?

9. How does 6:16-18 answer the question that Paul raised in 6:15?

Who or whatever we choose to obey becomes our master. In that sense, all human beings are enslaved. We may think we are independent, but humans were created for interdependence and we cannot change this about ourselves. Paul asks the question in 6:15, "Shall we keep on sinning because we are under grace?" The fact is, if we DO choose to keep on sinning, sin will become our master and we will not be under God's grace. We can't have it both ways.

♥ Do you buy into the fact that humans can't be their own masters – truly independent – and that they are mastered and enslaved by either God or sin? Why or why not?

♥ What role do you play in deciding what will have dominion over you? **God has given us the ability to use our wills and choose**

In what ways is our relationship to God like slavery? In what ways is it not?

Our relationship to God is like slavery in that God becomes our Master and we live and do things His way instead of living our own way. The difference is that God does not force us to choose Him or obey him. **If we become his slave, we do so willingly.**

♥ What is the importance of **obedience** in a Christ-follower's life (6:17-18)? Is it within your power to obey? Why or why not?

10. Compare and contrast all you learn about the two types of slavery that Paul describes by filling in the chart below.

Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God
6:16 slavery to sin leads to death	6:16 slavery to obedience leads to righteousness (God's approval)
6:19 slavery to impurity and ever-increasing wickedness	6:17-18 slavery to God means obedience to God's teaching (the gospel); being set free from sin and becoming a slave to a new master, righteousness

6:20 free from the control of righteousness or not concerned about doing what was right	6:19 slaves to righteousness leading to holiness
6:21 results in death or eternal doom	6:22 free from the power of sin; slaves of God which leads to holiness and results in eternal life
6:23 The wages (payment, paycheck) of sin is death	6:23 you receive the gift of eternal life (life with God that never ends)

- ♥ What examples can you think of when exercising the "**freedom**" to sin actually resulted in **slavery**? How about when "**slavery**" to Christ resulted in **freedom**?
- ♥ In **6:19**, the NIV translation speaks of slavery to impurity and "**ever-increasing wickedness**." What does this reveal about the nature of sin? Is this something we can control? Why or why not?
- ♥ In **Romans 6:23**, sin has *wages* but God gives a *gift*. What does this reveal about the difference between slavery to sin and slavery to God? **Wages (payment) means we get what we earned and what we deserve. God's gift means we get what we don't deserve and something we could never earn!**
Whose slave are you?

Response

Six times in chapter 6 (NIV translation), Paul uses the word *offer*, saying we either offer ourselves to God's control or sin's control. It is true that humans are hard-wired to serve something or someone, but thank God, we can choose whom or what we will serve! *Offer* means to hold out something to someone for acceptance. It is a deliberate act; it is something we **willfully** and **intentionally** do, and spiritually speaking, it is something we **continuously** do. When was the last time you deliberately **offered** yourself to God and **offered** specific parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness (**6:13**)? God will not deliver us from sin's power and use us in his Kingdom until we offer ourselves to him. If the Holy Spirit is prompting you to do so, write a prayer on the back of this page, *offering all of yourself to God*.

BELOW IS THE SUPPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURE FOR THIS LESSON THAT CAN BE PRINTED OUT FOR SMALL GROUP TIME.

NIV

2Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Ephesians 4:22-24 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **23** to be made new in the attitude of your minds; **24** and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Colossians 3:9-10 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Ephesians 4:22-23 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **23** to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

James 1:13-15 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; **14** but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. **15** Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Philippians 4:8-9 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. **9** Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Titus 2:11-15 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. **12** It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, **13** while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, **14** who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. **15** These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

NLT

2Corinthians 5:17 What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!

Ephesians 4:22-24 throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. **23** Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. **24** You must display a new nature because you are a new person, created in God's likeness—righteous, holy, and true.

Colossians 3:9-10 Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. **10** In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you.

Galatians 2:20 I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Romans 12:2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

Ephesians 4:22-23 throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. **23** Instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes.

James 1:13-15 And remember, no one who wants to do wrong should ever say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else either. **14** Temptation comes from the lure of our own evil desires. **15** These evil desires lead to evil actions, and evil actions lead to death.

Philippians 4:8-9 And now, dear brothers and sisters, let me say one more thing as I close this letter. Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. **9** Keep putting into practice all you learned from me and heard from me and saw me doing, and the God of peace will be with you.

Titus 2:11-15 For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. **12** And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with self-control, right conduct, and devotion to God, **13** while we look forward to that wonderful event when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. **14** He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing what is right. **15** You must teach these things and encourage your people to do them, correcting them when necessary. You have the authority to do this, so don't let anyone ignore you or disregard what you say.