



Lesson 8 ~ No Winning in Sinning!

Romans 6

Discussion Starter

- What is the closest you have come to losing your life?

Introduction

Up to this point in his letter to the Romans, Paul has thoroughly discussed *sin* (chapters 1-3) and *salvation* (chapters 3-5). We will now begin the next section of the letter (chapters 6-8) that deals with *sanctification* or *spiritual growth*.

Sanctification is the step-by-step process where the Holy Spirit works in the lives of believers, progressively separating them from sin and conforming or shaping them into the likeness or image of Christ.

Chapters 6 through 8 are pivotal chapters in Romans. Even though Paul explains in chapter 6 that those who have been justified and made right with God are now free of sin's control, chapter 7 focuses on the continuing struggle believers still have with sin in their lives. The good news comes in chapter 8 where Paul describes how believers can have victory over sin as they rely on the power of the Holy Spirit within. With God's help, it is possible for Christ-followers to become more and more like the One we follow!

Preparation

1. Before you read **Romans 6**, ask God to open your eyes so that you may see wonderful truths in his Word (**Psalm 119:18**). You may want to make the following prayer your own:

Triune God - Father, Son and Spirit,

I admit that I cannot understand the truth found in God's Word with only my mind.

I agree that spiritual truth has to be understood with my heart as well as my head.

So I ask You to give me spiritual understanding as I do this lesson.

*I pray that You would enable me to see, hear and understand,
with my spirit, all that You want to teach me.*

I ask this in the powerful name of Father, Son and Spirit.

Amen

2. Read **Romans 6** slowly and thoughtfully. As you read and reread, **underline or highlight** any verses, phrases or words that are meaningful to you. Put a **question mark** beside anything you don't understand. Put a ✓ beside anything you would like more information about.

You may also want to read the Scripture in another translation. The Scripture handouts for these lessons contain the *New International Version (NIV)* and the *New Living Translation (NLT)*. The questions are phrased to be answered from **either** of these versions. Other translations and paraphrases should only be used as supplementary texts to help your understanding.

3. Sum up the Scripture passage for this lesson in a short sentence, phrase or title.

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?)

- ♥ 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?
 - ♥ 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**)?

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

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

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**)?

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.

2 Corinthians 5:17	Ephesians 4:22-24
Colossians 3:9-10	Galatians 2:20

- ♥ What is the source of the new life in us? What activities encourage its growth?
 - ♥ 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)?
- ♥ If we are no longer slaves to sin (6:6) and have been set free from sin (6:7), why do we still sin?
 - ♥ 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 area – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually?
 - ♥ How does dying with Christ to our old selves now dramatically affect our future (6:5, 8)?
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?
- Where does this action take place?
- 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*?
- ♥ Do you really believe that thinking the right thing will affect your actions? Why or why not? Consider **Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22-23; James 1:13-15** and **Philippians 4:8-9**.
 - ♥ 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)?
- ♥ 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)? Why would this strategy work?
 - ♥ 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**?
 - ♥ How would you explain the difference between being *under law* and *under grace* (**6:14-15**)? Is grace the absence of all rules? Why or why not? (**Titus 2:11-15**)
 - ♥ 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**?
 - ♥ 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? In what ways is our relationship to God like slavery? In what ways is it not?
 - ♥ 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	6:16
6:19	6:17-18
6:20	6:19
6:21	6:22
6:23	6:23

- ♥ 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? 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*.