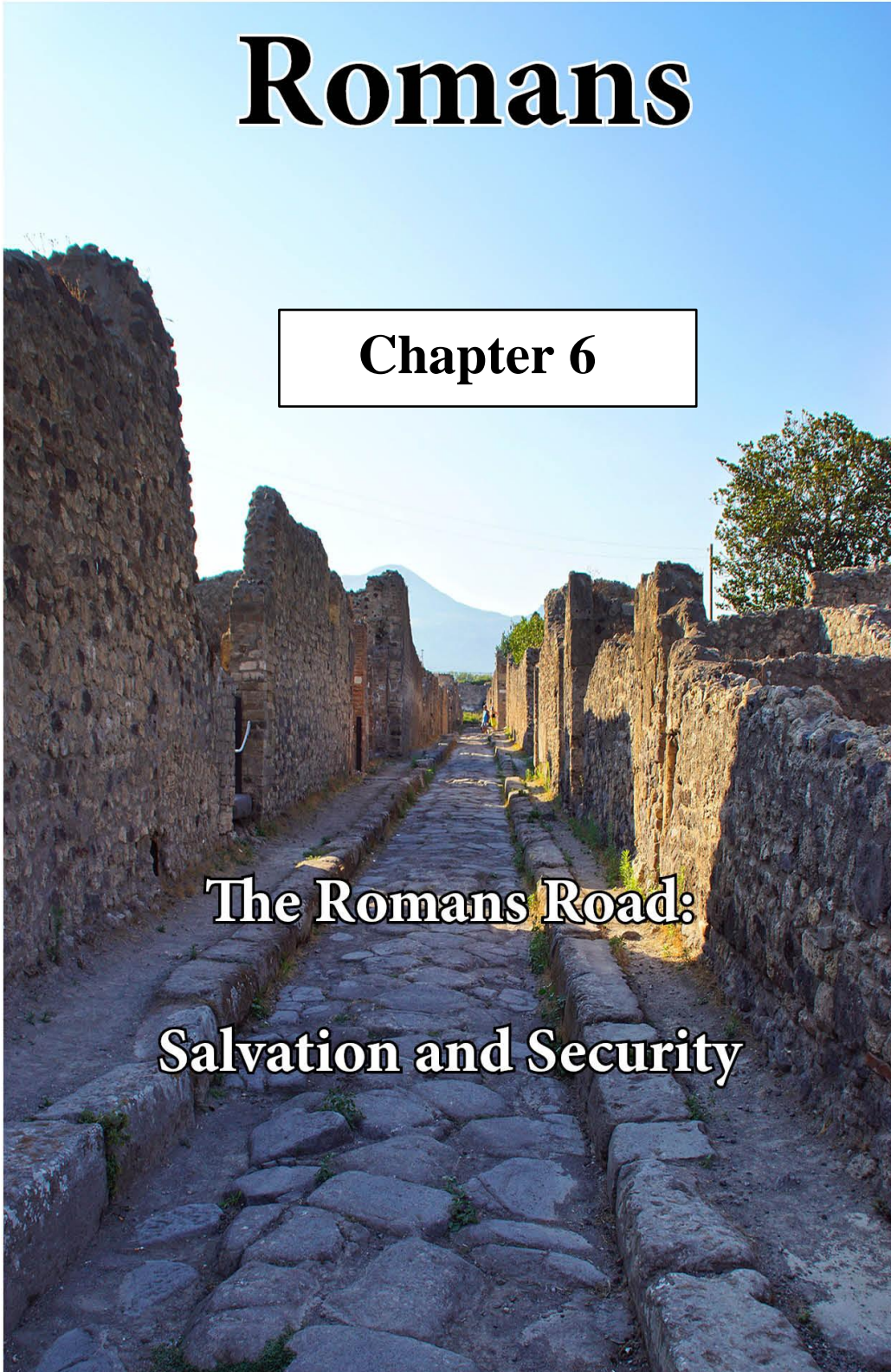


Journeys With God

Romans

Chapter 6

**The Romans Road:
Salvation and Security**



Chapter 6

Romans

Chapter 6 Summary

Romans 6:1 - Don't Stay in Sin

What shall we say then? Should we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Truth to Learn

Salvation does not mean we have a free pass to sin all we want.

Behind the Words

The expression “What shall we say then?” is called a debater’s phrase. This is a Rabbinical way of teaching which Paul no doubt learned under the teaching of Gamaliel (see **Acts 22:3**). The process involves the teacher asking a question like this, then encouraging debate before the giving the answer.

The word here translated “continue” is the Greek word *epimenō* which is a compound word made up of *epi*, meaning “upon, over, in, or at” and *meno*, which means “to stay or remain.” Hence, this word means “to remain or stay longer in or at something.”

Meaning Explained

Paul has, at length, just demonstrated that as a result of Adam’s sin, we are all sinners condemned to death and we are not justified by performing any works of obedience. He also said that the presence of the Law does not serve to make us more righteous; instead, it brings our sinfulness more into the light of revelation, making us appear even more sinful. Also, he has shown us that when we believe God’s promises (in our case, that Jesus Christ died to pay for our sins and rose again from the dead), God chooses, by His grace, to declare us righteous (wiping out any and all of our sins past, present, and future).

Do you remember the point he made back in **Romans 5:11**?

And not only that, but we also are rejoicing in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

We rejoice and God is glorified when we are declared righteous by His grace. And in **Romans 5:20** he said:

And law entered that the offense might increase. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much much more,

A quite natural reaction for a Jewish Christian living in Rome would be, “Well, if all of my sins have been paid for and that glorifies God, and the more I sin the more that grace is demonstrated, then I can sin all I want. Then, God receives even more glory for it, and I will still be found righteous!” This is the point that Paul is now going to argue against.

As is typical of Paul, he states the anticipated objection very plainly, “Should we continue in sin that grace may abound?”

What Paul is really asking is, “Should we continue to live a sinful, ungodly life like we did before we were saved so that God will receive even more glory for forgiving us as an even worse sinner than we already are?”

As you will see in the next verse, his response is an emphatic, “No way!”

Application

One of the misconceptions of believing in eternal security (once you are saved you can't ever lose your salvation) is this notion that we can now sin all we want without repercussion. Eternal security is clearly taught in the Bible, especially by Paul. But he just as clearly argues against giving sin a free reign because we have died to sin.

Romans 6:2 - Sin? No Way!

Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

Truth to Learn

Our lives should no longer be characterized by sinfulness.

Behind the Words

“**Certainly not!**” is a familiar expression with Paul. It is translated from the Greek words *mē genoito*. *Mē* is a particle of negation, meaning “not.” *Genoito* is a form of *ginomai*, meaning “to begin to be” or “to cause to come into existence.” In this expression it is used in the very rare optative mood (there are fewer than 70 examples of the optative mood in the entire New Testament). A literal translation of these two words is “May it not be!” In today’s vernacular we might say “No way!”

“**Died**” is from the verb *apothnēskō*, which is made up of *apo*, meaning “from” or “away from” and *thnēskō*, meaning “to die.” Hence, *apothnēskō* means “to die away from” or “to die off.”

We have talked before about the fact that Greek is an inflected language. That is, the form of a word indicates how it is used in a sentence. We see some of this in English. For instance “I” is a subject and “me” is an indirect object. The word translated “sin” is in the form of an indirect object. Hence, it could be interpreted as “in sin,” “to sin,” or “by sin.” Paul has already taught us that we are dead “in sin” and “by sin.” Now he is teaching us that we are also dead “to” or “with respect to” sin.

Meaning Explained

This verse is a direct response to the previous one: “**Should we continue in sin so that grace may abound?**” Paul’s response is, “**No way!**” He is proclaiming that we should never even consider continuing our sinful ways just so that God’s grace will increase. Paul carries this even further by asking, “**How shall we who died to sin still live in it?**” In other words, if we have, indeed, died with respect to sin, how can we possibly live with respect to sin any longer?

In order to understand this better, it might be helpful to understand what the concept of death really means. We think of death simply as “absence of life,” whereas in reality it means, “separation from life.” By looking at it this way, perhaps you can understand what Paul is saying. We who have been separated from sin (because God has cast our sins as far from us as the east is from the west) cannot possibly be continually in its presence anymore.

Before we were saved, we had no choice but to continually live in a sinful manner. After all, we were controlled by our sin nature. But, because our sins have been paid for and our sin nature has been crucified with Christ, we now have a choice as to how we live.

Application

Paul says we have an obligation to stay away from a life of sinfulness because God has declared us righteous. We also should be motivated by an intense sense of gratitude to God for wiping out our sin debt, which should cause us to want to live an obedient life that will testify to God's grace!

So I ask you, "How do you want to live; in sinful selfishness or in grateful obedience?"

Romans 6:3 - Baptized to Death

Or do you not know that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

Truth to Learn

We don't have to let sin control us. We can have the victory!

Behind the Words

The word "baptized" is translated from *baptidzo*. It's easy to see that the Greek word and the English word are nearly identical. This is what is known as a *transliteration*. A transliteration is when a word in one language is carried over directly into another language. This Greek word means "to immerse, to place into, to dunk, or to wet completely." For this reason alone, it is reasonable to believe that immersion is the form of baptism that was followed by the early church.

Meaning Explained

This verse and the following are an amplification of what was said in the previous verse. Paul just told us that we died to sin. What does he mean by that? When we were baptized into Jesus Christ we were baptized into his death.

Some people interpret this as saying that we were "placed into the body of Christ." The only problem with this is that this verse doesn't say we were baptized into the body of Christ, rather that we were baptized **into Christ**.

I believe that Paul is talking about "believers' baptism," that act in which we were immersed in water (or sprinkled with water, or had water poured on us). This believers' baptism does not in any way save us. As Paul has told us in the earlier chapters of this book, we are saved by believing in God's promise and by God subsequently declaring us righteous; not because we did something (like get baptized) but because we believed his message. Well, if this baptism doesn't save us, then what does it do? It is a public proclamation of our identification with Jesus Christ. It is a proclamation that we have died to sin, and it no longer rules over us, He does.

By identifying with Jesus through baptism, we identify with both his death and his resurrection. The current verse talks about the first half of this. When we were baptized, we were baptized into (identified with) his death; therefore, with Christ we have died to sin and do not have to let it control us.

There is some comfort to be taken in this passage of scripture. The mere fact that Paul is arguing so strongly regarding sinfulness after salvation is proof in itself that we do not stop sinning when we get saved. If that were the case, Paul would simply tell these Roman Christians (and us) that the presence of sin indicates the lack of salvation. But he does not say that!

You will recall that Paul started this line of reasoning because there were some who claimed that we could sin all we want because it only makes the grace of God appear greater. It is clear from Paul's argument that we have a choice to live a life characterized by sin or not. We will always sin because we

have a sin nature, but we don't have to let sin run our lives. We can control it through the power of the Holy Spirit. What Paul is teaching us through this section of the book of Romans is how to control our sin nature instead of letting it control us.

Application

We all battle the lusts of our sin nature, which are inflamed by this world system we live in. But, we don't have to let sin control us. Let us all pray that the Holy Spirit of God will give us victory over our sin nature, and in return let's give God the glory and praise that He deserves.

Romans 6:4 - Raised to New Life

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in newness of life.

Truth to Learn

Because of Christ's resurrection we should live differently.

Behind the Words

The words "we were buried with" are from the Greek word *sunthaptō*, which is made up of *sun*, meaning "together" and *thaptō*, meaning "to bury." In the New Testament this word only appears here and in **Colossians 2:12**. In both instances it refers to us being buried together with Christ in, or through, baptism.

"Raised" is from *egeirō*, which literally means "to arouse" or "to cause to rise." It means to awaken someone from sleep, whether it be restful slumber or death itself.

The word translated "newness" is *kainotēs*, which is derived from *kainos*, meaning "new." *Kainotēs* refers to a renewal, not simply an experience similar to the past, but a qualitatively different one. Hence, here it refers to a newness of life that has a different quality from the previous life that we had without Christ.

Meaning Explained

For Christians, baptism is a public declaration that a person has accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is not part of the salvation process; it happens after salvation. This current verse and those that follow describe a mode of baptism referred to as "immersion." Though this is the mode of baptism that most closely identifies us with the death and resurrection of Christ, it is not the only form of baptism used by Christians today. For the sake of discussion in these verses, however, we will assume that Paul is talking about baptism by immersion.

Baptism involves the baptizer laying the person being baptized backwards into the water until he or she is completely submerged. Paul says that this person was, "buried with him (Christ) through baptism into death." The person being baptized is then raised back up and allowed to stand. Paul says, "that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in newness of life."

What Paul means is that as we were laid back in the water we were identifying ourselves with Christ's death. We were demonstrating that we died with Christ. When we were raised back up, we were identifying with the resurrection of Christ, entering into a new kind of life, that is, eternal life. And Paul says, since we were raised from the dead, we should now walk in this new kind of life. This new life is to be qualitatively different from our former life. It is not to be characterized by sin because, as he said in verse two, we died to sin.

Application

Let me ask you, my Christian friend, “Does the kind of life you are living now differ significantly from the kind of life you lived before you were saved?” It should!

Are you walking in this new kind of life in a manner that is worthy of Jesus Christ, the One you have identified with?

If you were arrested today for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? I certainly hope so!

Romans 6:5 - My Fellow Sprouts

For if we have been joined together in the likeness of His death, so also will we be *in the likeness of His resurrection,*

Truth to Learn

Christian actions should bear a resemblance to Jesus Christ.

Behind the Words

“We have been” is translated from *ginomai*, which means “to begin to be” or “to come into existence.” It is expressed here in the perfect tense. The perfect tense in Greek expresses a past completed action with a resultant state of being, but the emphasis is on the resultant state of being. So the emphasis here is on the fact that, because we began to be together with Him in the past we are now joined together with Jesus Christ in form and action.

The word translated “united together” is an interesting word. It is the Greek word *sumfutos*, which is a compound word made up of *sun*, meaning “together” and a form of *phuō*, meaning “to germinate, to sprout, or to spring up,” as a plant springs up from the ground. It implies not only a unity of form but a unity of action as well. This expression is representative of a field of grain in which the seeds have all been sown at the same time and have sprung up together, but it is also used of other common experiences. Here it means that we are intimately connected or joined together in form and action with Christ.

Meaning Explained

In this verse Paul declares that if we were joined with Christ in death (by identifying with his death) then we shall also be joined with him in His resurrection. It may seem strange that Paul would use an expression that means “spring up together” as a likeness to death. However, Jesus said this regarding his own death:

Truly, truly, I say to you, If the grain of wheat that falls into the earth does not die, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. (**John 12:24**)

So Paul is saying that we have been intimately joined together with Christ in our planting (Christ’s death and our identification with that death) and, therefore, it is perfectly natural to assume that we will grow up together with a strong resemblance of each other. That’s why Paul says that “so also will we be in the likeness of His resurrection.”

The Apostle John said this about our resurrection body:

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it was not yet been revealed what we will be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (**1John 3:2**)

Some day we will have a resurrected body just like Jesus has now! But Paul is not referring to the body here as John is in his letter. Paul is telling us that because we have been planted together with Christ,

portrayed by baptism, we should resemble Him even now, not physically but behaviorally. In fact, the very name “Christian” that we carry with such pride and joy means “one who is like Christ.”

Application

If we are going to bear His name, then we need to bear His resemblance, acting like Him as well! Lord, help me to so resemble Jesus Christ that people around me will see Him in all that I do.

Romans 6:6 - A Servant's Choice

knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Truth to Learn

We are no longer slaves of sin. We don't have to submit to it.

Behind the Words

The word translated "old" is *palaios*, which is an adjective of time, meaning "in the past, long ago, or that which is old."

Meaning Explained

Paul starts off this verse talking about "the old man." What he is talking about is our sin nature, which we have inherited from Adam. You may recall what he said back in verse 19 of the previous chapter: "For as through one man's disobedience many were made sinners." The reason we were made sinners is because we inherited the sin nature from our father Adam. Paul refers to this sin nature as "the old man," and he tells us here that our sin nature was crucified with Christ.

He talks about this old man in a couple of other places in the New Testament as well, and in each case admonishes us to put off the old man.

that you put off, concerning your former behaviour, the old man which is being corrupted according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, (**Ephesians 4:22-23**)

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his practices, and have put on the new *man* which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, (**Colossians 3:9-10**)

From these passages it is clear that Paul uses the expression "the old man" to indicate our sin nature, which was corrupted by the lusts and inclinations toward evil that existed in each one of us before we were saved.

Paul tells us that this sin nature was crucified with Christ so that the body of sin might be destroyed. There has been much debate over what exactly is being referred to by the expression "body of sin" but I believe that it is simply a personification of our sin nature just as "the old man" is. And, if our old man was crucified with Christ, then he died just as Christ died. If our old man is dead then we can no longer be a slave to him. We are free from him!

Before we were saved, we were slaves to sin because of our sin nature. As slaves to sin we did not have a choice of whether we sinned or not. Now that we are saved, however, we are no longer slaves to the old man and we are free to live without being controlled by sin. In other words, before we were saved we had no choice but to sin. Now that we are saved we can choose to sin or not to sin. And even though we do continue to sin, we have that choice and Paul tells that we should not serve sin any more.

Application

If you are a Christian you have the choice to either serve your sin nature (the old man) or God. You cannot serve two masters. You must choose one or the other.

So ... who are you serving today?

Romans 6:7 - Freed by Death

For he who has died has been set free from sin.

Truth to Learn

The death of our sin nature freed us from the bondage of sin.

Behind the Words

The word translated “slaves” in the previous verse is the Greek word *douleuō*, which is the verb form of *doulos*, meaning “one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will being altogether consumed in the will of the other.” It refers to a person who has no rights of his own, one who exists only as the property of someone else. Therefore, *douleuō* means “to be a slave.”

The word translated here as “set free” is the word *dikaioō*, which means “to justify” or “to declare righteous.” The word is expressed in the perfect tense. As we pointed out a couple verses back, the perfect tense in Greek refers to completed past action with a resultant state of being, where the emphasis is on the resultant state of being. The word following *dikaioō*, however, is *apo*, meaning “from.” When used in this way, the word *dikaioō* refers to our having been “freed from something” with the emphasis on the resultant state of being (we have been and, therefore, are now free from sin).

Meaning Explained

In the previous verse Paul told us that since our old man (our sin nature) was crucified with Christ, we should not serve sin. He is telling us that previously (before our salvation) we were not willingly serving sin but we were under bondage as a slave to sin. We had no choice but to obey our sinful lusts because of our sin nature. That is, we had no free will when it came to deciding whether we would obey our sinful nature or not, we had to!

Now that we have crucified our sin nature, however, we no longer have to be subject to sin. That’s what Paul is saying in the current verse, “he who died (our old man) has been freed from sin.

So, the point that Paul is making is, since our old man was crucified with Christ and is now dead, we are no longer forced to be a slave to our sin nature or to sin. We are now freed from that slavery. Do you see the point? We no longer have to obey our sinful impulses. We now have a choice. That is, we can choose to obey God or to obey our sin nature. Before we were saved we did not have this choice.

Does that mean that we always choose to obey God? Unfortunately, the answer is no. All too often, we choose to obey our sin nature instead of obeying God. That, as Paul taught us in the previous chapter, is where grace comes in. Even though we follow our own desires instead of God’s moral law, we have been declared righteous and we need not fear the wrath of God. But - we should not continue in our sinful ways. Our sin nature has been crucified so we have a free will to choose good over evil.

Application

This entire chapter of Romans is about recognizing that we are freed from the slavery of sin. We have a choice every day whether or not we will voluntarily submit ourselves to God. If we don't submit to God then we will be submitted to sin, there is no middle ground.

To whom do you want to be submitted?

Romans 6:8 - Eternal Living with Christ

And if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

Truth to Learn

We are currently living an eternal life with Christ.

Behind the Words

The word translated “believe” is *pisteuō*, which means “to believe” or “to have faith.” It is not simply a trust but a firm, dogmatic belief. It is expressed as a present, active, indicative verb, which implies a current and ongoing belief, not just a momentary faith.

“Live with” is translated from the Greek word *sudzaō*, which is made up of *sun*, meaning “together with” and *dzaō*, meaning “to live.” Hence, it expresses a life that is characterized as living together with Christ.

Meaning Explained

This verse is not simply a reiteration of what was said in the previous three verses. It expresses a very deep truth about our new life in Christ. If we, that is our sin nature, died with Christ, then we live again in newness of life just as He is living again. There is a wonderful thing about the new life that Christ has. Because He has already died for sins and is resurrected, He will never die again. His life is eternal. So, if we are living together with Him, we have eternal life now as well.

There are actually two aspects of eternal life for us: future resurrected eternal physical life and current eternal spiritual life. We know that Jesus has eternal spiritual life because He is God, but He also has eternal physical life because He is completely human, and that human life has been raised from the dead so that death no longer has dominion over Him.

Because Jesus paid the price for our sins and we who believe in His death and resurrection have accepted the gift of grace from God, we too are promised to have eternal life with Him. We are promised that we will be raised from the dead. This is spoken of in one of the most precious passages of the entire Bible:

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we all will be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For a trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then will be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (1 **Corinthians 15:51-55**)

However, if you read ahead to verses ten and eleven you will see that the current verse is not referring to our resurrected life, but our life right now. Because we believe with an active ongoing belief, we also

live together with Christ. And, if we are living with Him, we can't also be living in sin. That's one of the beauties of saving faith – it is also living faith.

Application

Think about this: if we are living “with” Christ right now because of our belief in His death and resurrection, we have eternal life (both aspects of it). If we currently have eternal life, then we can't lose it (if it's eternal it can't end). In other words, if our faith is real we can't lose this salvation we have!

Romans 6:9 - No Separation, Ever!

knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has lordship over Him.

Truth to Learn

Jesus Christ can never die again!

Behind the Words

“Knowing” is translated from the Greek word *eidō*, which can mean either “to see or perceive” or “to know” depending on its usage. Here is what *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* says about this word as it appears in **Romans 3:9**:

[It is] spoken of man's knowledge as a result of and only in view of his relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ. There are certain things that human beings simply cannot know intuitively unless they become the children of God.

The word is expressed here as a perfect participle. That is, we have known in the past and, as a result, we are continually knowing; we have continual knowledge.

The Greek word translated “has lordship” is *kurieuō*, the verb form of *kurios*, meaning “master, lord, or owner.” Thus, *kurieuō* refers to “lordship or ownership.”

Meaning Explained

This verse is a statement of fact regarding what we talked about in the previous verse. Paul starts off by saying “knowing that Christ ... dies no more.” In other words, because we are saved, we have come to know and now are continually aware that Christ was raised from the dead. And, since He was raised from the dead, He will never die again because death no longer has lordship or ownership of Him. That is, death has no power or authority over Him.

Did you know that before the resurrection of Christ, the Devil, Satan himself, had the power to take life? It says so in the book of Hebrews:

Since, then, the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself also in like manner shared in the same, that through death He might destroy **him having the power of death, that is, the devil**, and might release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (**Hebrews 2:14, 15**)

But now that Christ has been raised from the dead, He alone has the keys to death and Hades as it says in Revelation:

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last and the living one; and I became dead; and behold,

I am living forever and ever. Amen. And **I have the keys of Hades and of Death.**" (Revelation 1:17, 18)

Back in verse two we said that death means separation. Physical death means separation from this body. Spiritual death means separation from God. Since we know Christ as our Lord and Savior, we also know that we have eternal life with Him. We will never be separated from Him. And Paul says that we don't simply think that we have eternal life, **we know it!**

Application

As Christians we are united with Christ and can never be separated from Him, ever; not in this life and not in the after-life. We are secure in Him and eternally with Him.

Romans 6:10 - Identity Crisis?

For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.

Truth to Learn

We have identified ourselves with Jesus Christ in His death to sin. We should also identify ourselves with Him in living for God.

Behind the Words

The word translated “once” is *ephapax*, which means “once and only once.” Though some translations seem to indicate that Christ died once for everyone, it really says that He died once and only once for all of time and eternity.

Meaning Explained

Paul makes a couple of key points in this verse that we all need to learn. The first is contained in the expression, “For *the death* that He died, He died to sin.” Paul is explaining the meaning and purpose for Christ’s death. The purpose of His death is that he died to sin. That is, he died paying the penalty for sin so that sin should no longer have dominion over any of us. His death paid for all our sins so, even though sin used to be our slave master, that bond has been destroyed and we are now free from the dominion of sin.

But his death means more than just that we are freed from sin. Paul says that He died once and only once. In other words, He will never have to die again because the sin penalty has been taken care of forever by His onetime death. Since the sin penalty has been taken care of once and for all, we will never have to die after we leave these mortal bodies. We will have to die physically (unless we are raptured) in order to shed these mortal bodies, but we will never have to die spiritually because our sins have been completely paid for.

Remember that death means separation, so we will never again be separated from God – for all eternity. This is not true for those who will be cast into the Lake of Fire. They will be eternally separated from God. That, in fact, is one of the worst torments that they will face in Hell, being eternally separated from God (eternally dead!).

The second half of this verse now tells us what’s on the other side of the coin. Since Jesus Christ will never die again, He lives with respect to God the Father who raised Him from the dead. That is, His life is a testimony to the power of God the Father. Likewise, we who have had our sin penalty paid once and for all (which, incidentally, becomes a problem for those who think they can lose their salvation since it was taken care of once for all time, not just until the next big sin). We now owe this eternal life that we possess to the one who paid our penalty for us.

Paul’s point is that when we were baptized we were identifying with Christ’s death, which He died to sin. And our baptism also identifies us with His life which we should now live to God.

We are indebted to Christ for paying our penalty and we are indebted to God the Father for graciously declaring us righteous. In gratitude and in debt we should now be living our life for God and not for ourselves.

Application

Now that you have identified yourself with Christ in dying to sin, are you being identified with Him in the way you live? Or, put another way, for whom are you living your life now? And, how thankful are you for the eternal life that you now possess?

Romans 6:11 - What's Your Choice?

In this way you also, reckon yourselves to be truly dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Truth to Learn

We don't have to live in sin. We can choose to live to God.

Behind the Words

"In this way" is from the Greek word *houtōs* which is from the pronoun *houtos*, meaning "this thing." *Houtōs* connects what follows with "this thing" which has just been talked about. It is most often translated as "likewise" or "in this manner."

"Reckon" is a word that Paul has used repeatedly. It is from *logizomai*, meaning "to put together with one's mind." It is usually translated as "to consider, to reckon, or to impute."

The word translated "alive" is *zaō*, meaning "to live." It is expressed here as a participle so it should be translated as "living." So this verse should say "... reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but living to God ..."

Meaning Explained

Just as Jesus is now dead to sin, Paul says we ought to also consider ourselves dead to sin. Because of His death we are no longer under the bondage of sin; we have been freed from that master. But, we still have our sin nature to battle and it gives us the tendency to sin. We are still inclined to sin because our sin nature tempts us to act on our desires, which then become sins (see **James 1:14-15**).

But Paul says that we should consider ourselves dead to sin and to the uncontrollable desires that produce sin. Since we are no longer under the bondage of that slave master, we now have a choice of whether to sin or not to sin. Before we were saved we didn't have that choice, but since we now have that choice, Paul says "make that choice!" Determine not to let your sin nature control your life.

Have you ever had someone say to you, "Don't think about an elephant!"? As soon as someone says that, we immediately think about an elephant. That's the way our minds work. We can intentionally think about something but we can't intentionally "not think" about something. God knows this, which is why whenever He tells us to quit doing something, He also tells us what to replace it with. He tells us what to think about so that we can avoid thinking about the elephant.

In this case, Paul tells us that the way to consider ourselves dead to sin is by living to God through Jesus Christ. That is, we should endeavor to emulate Jesus; we should try to follow His example. We should be humble, unassuming, committed to the glory of God, and morally pure. The trouble is, we can't be just like Him because our sin nature and the devil still exist. But they don't stop us from trying to live the way we should. And when we stumble, when we do sin, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one!" (see **1 John 2:1**) He's ever pleading our case in the court of heaven and he shows

our innocence with His blood; therefore, when “we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (see **1 John 1:9**)

Application

Since we now have the choice, let us commit ourselves daily to be living to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Romans 6:12 - Who's Your Ruler?

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, to obey it in its lusts.

Truth to Learn

Don't let sin take control of your life.

Behind the Words

“Reign” is a word we looked at in the final verse of the previous chapter of Romans. It is *basileuō*, which means “to be king or to have ruling power over.” It is expressed here in the imperative mood indicating it is a command, “do not allow sin to rule over your mortal body!”

The word translated “mortal” is *thnētos*, which is derived from the verb *thnēskō*, meaning “to die.” Hence, *thnētos* refers to something which is subject to death.

“Obey” is from the Greek word *hupakouō*, which is made up of *hupo* (or *hypo*) meaning “under” and *akouō*, meaning “to hear.” Hence, *hupakouō* literally means “to hear under.” It is a picture of a disciple listening to, hearing, and obeying the teaching of his or her master.

The word, “lusts” is a translation of the Greek word, *epithumia*, which is made up of *epi*, meaning “above or over” and a form of *thumos*, meaning “the mind.” As we put these together we see it means “to have overly strong thoughts or desires.”

Meaning Explained

This verse and the next form a two part summation of what Paul has been saying in the past few verses with some explanation added. He just told us that we should consider ourselves dead to sin, but living to God. Here he tells us what he means by considering, or reckoning, ourselves dead to sin. He says, “Don't let sin reign in your mortal bodies.” In other words, the way we reckon ourselves dead to sin is to not let it have control. If sin is reigning in our life, it is ruling over us and we are submitting ourselves to it; we are letting it control us. If we are dead to sin, then we are separated from the dominion of sin and we will not live in obedience to it.

The second half of this verse has been viewed by some Biblical scholars as questionable. They believe that it has been added and was not part of the original letter. Others, and I agree with them, believe that it rightly belongs here since it appears in most reliable manuscripts.

Paul says that the way we keep sin from reigning in our mortal bodies is by not obeying it in its lusts. God has put desires within us that are necessary for survival, such as the desire to eat, the desire to rest, and the desire to procreate. However, when we allow these thoughts and desires to get so strong that they overcome us and control us, then they become sinful to us. The Apostle John says that these desires (lusts) are not of God but are part of the world system:

Because all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:16)

We should not allow these desires to control us.

Application

If you are living to God through Jesus Christ then you must have control over your sinful desires. Don't let the world system stir up your desires. Don't let the world system rule over you. Take control of your life by submitting to God!

Romans 6:13 - Stand Beside God

And do not present your members *as* weapons of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* weapons of righteousness to God.

Truth to Learn

We have a choice to use bodies as weapons of unrighteousness or as weapons of righteousness.

Behind the Words

The word “**present**” is the Greek word *paristanō*, which literally means “to stand alongside.” The image is of a leader who is challenging his people to step forward and stand beside him. Standing alongside is a sign of unity with the leader and a sign of submission to the leader.

The word translated “**members**” is the Greek word *melē*, which literally means “the limbs or other parts of the body.”

“**Weapons**” is the Greek word *hoplon*, which means “an implement or a tool.” It is often applied to an implement of war such as armor or an offensive weapon.

The word “**dead**” is from the Greek *nekros*, which refers to a dead body. The interesting thing is that it is expressed here as a plural, so it should probably be translated as “dead ones.” Throughout this chapter Paul uses this word as a plural noun. It is actually expressed as *ek nekrōn*, “out of the dead ones.” The image here is that of Christians having been raised from the membership of the “dead ones” and placed into the membership of the “living ones.” This same expression was used back in verse nine in reference to Christ having been raised from the dead (*ek nekrōn*).

Meaning Explained

When we submit ourselves to our own lusts we are yielding ourselves to them and they become our masters. That’s what Paul is telling us NOT to do. In the second half of the verse, He tells what we should do.

When Paul uses the word “members,” he could be talking about members of our physical body or members of the body of Christ, that is, the church. Based on the context it’s obvious that he is referring to the members of our bodies. However, this does not simply mean the physical parts. It includes the emotional and psychological parts as well. Paul is telling us that we should not yield even part of ourselves, physical or otherwise, to the control of our lusts. When we yield a part of ourselves to our lusts, that part is then used as a weapon of unrighteousness, causing us to sin.

When he tells us that we should not “present” the members of our body, he is telling us that we should not “stand beside” or “join in with” our lusts, not even with part of our being. When we do, that part of us which is surrendered is used as a weapon against us, driving us further into sin.

Instead, Paul commands us to stand beside God, as if we were already alive from among the dead ones (which, spiritually we are). Then we are to yield our members as weapons, or tools, of righteousness.

When we are fully yielded (submitted) to Him, we will not succumb to our lusts, and God can use us for acts of righteousness and as witnesses for Himself.

Application

Because of our sin nature (our old man), we will never be able to live without sin, but that doesn't mean that we have to remain in sin and continue our sinful habits. We have a choice to allow our desires to control us or to exercise control over them. It all comes down to this. What are you submitted to, your own selfish desires or God's will?

Romans 6:14 - Freed by Grace

For sin shall not have lordship over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Truth to Learn

Christians do not have sin ruling over them.

Behind the Words

The phrase “shall not have lordship over” is the translation of the Greek word *kurieuō*, which we looked at back in verse nine. It is the verb form of *kurios*, meaning “master, lord, or owner.” Thus, *kurieuō* refers to “lordship or ownership.” However in the current verse this particular verb is in the “future active indicative” form. The “indicative” is called the *mood* of the verb in Greek. There are four moods in the Greek language which are indicative, subjunctive, optative, and imperative. The indicative expresses the writer’s portrayal of real action whereas the others express the writer’s portrayal of potential action to varying degrees.

“Law” is translated from the Greek word *nomos*, which is the noun form of the verb *nemō*, meaning “to divide among” or “to parcel out.” So, technically *nomos* refers to that which has been parceled out, which someone has in his or her possession. It is also used to express regulations that have been delivered or parceled out, such as the Law of Moses.

Meaning Explained

Paul started off this chapter telling us that we were buried with Christ by baptism and that our old man (our sin nature) was crucified with Him. As a result we should consider ourselves dead to sin so that we won’t be brought under the constant control of sin. Back in chapter four Paul made the doctrinal declaration that we are no longer under the Law, rather we are set free from the Law by the gracious gift of God when He declared us as righteous.

Since we were figuratively buried with Christ through baptism and our sin nature was crucified with Him, Paul now tells us that sin will not have ruling power over us.

So why did we spend so much time and energy on a Greek grammar lesson regarding the verb *kurieuō*? It’s because of what is being said in this verse regarding sin having power or control over us. Since this verb is in the indicative mood it refers to real action, not potential action. So, Paul is not saying that sin **may not** have ruling power over us or that sin **should not** have ruling power over us but that sin **will not** have ruling power over us.

And why will sin not have ruling power over us? Because we are no longer under the ruling power of Law; rather, we are under the grace of God. We have already been declared righteous! Knowing this, it would seem easy for us to cast aside all restraints and live as sinful as we want because we’re no longer bound by Law. But if we did, then we would be letting sin have ruling power over us. And, this brings us right back around to the beginning, doesn’t it? If we are truly saved then we have died with Christ and sin will not have ruling power over us.

Application

Since sin is no longer our master, we should be demonstrating by our attitude and actions that we have been freed from the bondage of sin! Is that what your attitude and actions are demonstrating?

Romans 6:15 - Grateful Willing Restraint

What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

Truth to Learn

Just because our sins are all forgiven doesn't mean we should let our sin nature run wild.

Behind the Words

The expression “What then?” is from two Greek words, *ti oun*. The first word, *ti* (a form of *tis*), in an interrogative pronoun means “who?” or “what?” or “which?” *Oun* is used between two clauses or sentences to show a connection between them or a cause and effect relationship. Paul is using it here to express a question that shows the relationship between what he has just said and the rhetorical question to follow.

“Under” is translated from the pronoun *hupo* (or *hypo*), which can mean physically “under” or “under the influence or dominion of” as it is used here.

Meaning Explained

Paul now asks another one of his rhetorical questions. His purpose for asking the question is to answer an objection that might be raised. He has just declared that we are not under the ruling power of sin any longer because we are no longer under the Law but under grace. Remember, the people to whom he wrote this letter were predominantly converted Jews living in Rome. They had been brought up believing that the way to righteousness was by obeying the Law. When they were saved, they continued to believe that it was necessary to obey the Law.

But Paul has skillfully demonstrated, not only are we no longer bound to the Law, but we are no longer under the ruling power of our sin nature. We are freed from the bondage of the Law, and we are freed from the ruling power of sin. To a Jewish Christian who has felt the weight of the Law and sin his or her entire life, this would sound like a freedom cry and permission to sin without repercussion.

So Paul asks his rhetorical question: *Should we sin because we are not under Law, but under grace?*

In his typical style, Paul immediately answers the question with the Greek phrase, “*me genoito*” which, as we have seen before, means “May it not be!” or “No way!”

We Christians are funny people sometimes. We labor for years under the false impression that we will be punished for our sins. We are very careful to be as obedient and faithful as we possibly can for fear of reprisal from God, as if He were a giant ogre just waiting for us to slip up so He can pounce on us and make us pay. But as soon as we learn that all of our sins are paid for (past, present, and future) and that we are no longer under condemnation, but are declared to be righteous, we immediately want to throw off the mantle of self restraint and let our sin nature run wild.

Instead, we should endeavor to be as obedient and faithful as possible, not because we will be punished for sinning, but because we have been set free and we owe it to our Master and Lord to act the way He wants us to act.

Application

We should be so grateful for having all of our sins forgiven that we willingly restrain our sin nature and live for Him the way He wants us to! But that's not the way we think, is it?

Romans 6:16 - Obedience by Submission

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as obedient slaves, you are slaves of that one whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?

Truth to Learn

We all obey whatever master we submit ourselves to.

Behind the Words

The word translated “*slaves*” is *doulos*, meaning “one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, his will being altogether consumed in the will of his or her master. It refers to a person who has no rights of his own; one who exists only as the property of someone else.”

Meaning Explained

Paul has made a number of points in the past five verses:

- Count yourselves to be truly dead to sin, but alive to God
- Do not let sin reign in your mortal body
- Do not present your members as weapons of unrighteousness to sin, but present your members as weapons of righteousness to God
- Sin will not have ruling power over you

We know what we should do, but sometimes we can't figure out how to do it. In the current verse Paul is beginning his explanation of how to do it. In answer to his own rhetorical question, he uses a word picture that everyone in the Roman Empire at that time would understand: slavery.

The whole concept of slavery was well known because it was widely practiced. The Romans saw slavery as an integral component to developing and building its society. The institution of slavery permeated all of Roman culture. The Italian economy depended on abundant slave labor, with slaves constituting 40 percent of the population. It even reached a point in the third and fourth centuries after Christ when slaves outnumbered citizens five to three. At the time that Paul wrote this letter it was simply a way of life.

Slaves were considered property; they had no rights and were subject to their owners' whims. If they did not obey their masters, they were subject to punishment, including beatings, although the killing of slaves was forbidden.

In light of this, now consider what Paul is saying about not letting sin reign in our bodies. He says, *Don't you know that the one whom you obey is your master and you are his slave?* The difference for the Christian, however, is that we have already determined who our master is. He says we used to be the slave of sin, which produces death, but now we are the slaves of obedience as a result of our righteousness.

Paul says this in answer to his rhetorical question because the born again Christian is not the slave of sin since he or she has been declared righteous and, therefore, is now the slave of God. And God, as our master, wants us to produce acts of righteousness demonstrating the fruit of our salvation. Therefore, we can't continue to live in sin because we are not under the Law (which produced sin) but under grace (which produces righteousness).

Application

Are you living the life your master wants you to live? The answer, of course, should be yes. But, the real question is, "Who is your master?" Who are you submitted to?

Romans 6:17 - Getting Into Shape

But thanks be to God that you were slaves of sin, but you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Truth to Learn

We are molded into Christ's shape by Biblical teaching.

Behind the Words

The words "thanks be" are translated from the Greek word *charis*, which refers to "a favor done without expectation of anything in return." However, this word is also used to express the joy or gratitude (thanks) arising from the favor received.

The word "obeyed" is *hupakouō*, which we have looked at recently. It literally means "to hear under." It refers to hearing, and obeying the teaching of an instructor.

"Form" is translated from *tupon*, which is equivalent to the Hebrew word *cabala*, meaning a mold that is used to create a "copy" or "type" of the original.

The word "doctrine" is from the Greek word *didachē*, a noun derived from the verb *didaskō*, meaning "to teach." Hence, the word *didachē* refers to something that has been taught. It is frequently translated as "a teaching," "a precept," or "a doctrine." Some Christians have a negative attitude toward doctrine, seeing it as unbending dogma. But, as you can see here, it simply refers to something that is taught.

Meaning Explained

In talking about this verse we have to begin with what Paul is not saying. He is not giving thanks to God that we were all slaves to sin. Being a slave to sin is neither desirable nor commendable. It is a state of helpless devotion to things that are contrary to all that God is. What Paul is saying is, "Though you were slaves of sin, you have been delivered from that state." That's what Paul is giving thanks for. He is thankful for every one of us who has believed the gospel message and has been saved from our sins and from the mastery of sin.

The second half of this verse has been misunderstood due to a mistranslation in the past. Literally, it says,

you obeyed, from the heart, unto which you were delivered, a form of teaching.

Now, obviously we don't talk that way in English, so we rearrange the words a bit. Now it says,

from the heart you obeyed a form of teaching unto which you were delivered.

The "form of teaching" is that which was begun by Christ and taught to His apostles, who in turn taught it to others. It includes the gospel message (by which we were made into the image of Christ), but it also includes teaching about how to live our lives. This teaching acts like a mold or a form, shaping us into a

copy of the original and that original is Christ himself. As we obey this teaching we become a “type” of Christ (hence, we are called Christians). We were freed from sin and we were delivered **to** the new teaching. And because we have received the shaping effect of that teaching, we have been delivered **from** the bondage of sin.

Application

I know this is a confusing verse and difficult to understand. What we need to learn from it, however, is that we need teaching from the Bible in order to allow ourselves to be shaped into an image of Christ. Let's all get into His shape!

Romans 6:18 - Slaves of Righteousness

And having been set free from sin, you became slaves to righteousness.

Truth to Learn

When we were saved we were released as a slave to sin. At the same time, we became the slaves to righteousness.

Behind the Words

“Having been set free” is translated from the Greek verb *eleutheroō*, which derived from the noun *eleutheros*, meaning “one who is capable of movement.” In the Roman world a slave was not permitted to travel without the permission of his or her master. However, someone who was freeborn, or a slave who had been given his or her freedom, could travel about without restraint. Thus, someone who could travel about (who was capable of movement) was considered free. It is expressed here in the aorist tense which implies past action which took place at a point in time (not continuous action) and it is in the passive voice which means that it is something done to us (we were set free).

The words “you became slaves” are translated from the Greek verb *douloō*. This may look somewhat familiar because we looked at the noun form of this word, *doulos* (one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another), back in verse sixteen. *Douloō* means “to enslave.” It is expressed in this verse in the aorist tense indicating action that took place at a point in time in the past.

Meaning Explained

Once again, let’s start out by seeing what Paul is not saying. Paul is not telling us that Christians will never sin again. What he is saying is that we don’t have to be enslaved to sin.

Back in verse fourteen he said:

sin shall not have lordship over you.

The reason that sin will not have lordship over us is because we have been set free from sin. We don’t have to obey our old master because we have been set free from him. Then, in verse sixteen Paul told us:

you are slaves of that one whom you obey, whether of sin *leading to death*, or of obedience *leading to righteousness*

When we were slaves of sin we had to obey that master. But, since we have been set free, we are now able to move away from sin and “leave it in the dust.” As a result, we don’t have to obey sin any longer.

If we combine yesterday’s verse and today’s verse we see that Paul is telling us that when we believed that doctrinal form that molded us like Christ we were immediately freed from the bondage of sin and made the property of righteousness. This is a reference to the point in time when we accepted Christ as

Lord and Savior and became a Christian. At that time we were set free from the authority of sin and we became the property of righteousness (that is to say, the One who is righteousness).

In the next verse, Paul will tell us that since we are slaves to righteousness (righteousness is our master), we should yield ourselves to the lordship of that righteousness by obeying Him.

Application

This is easy to talk about, but it is not so easy to do, is it? Even though we want to obey our Lord and submit ourselves to His righteousness, we constantly seem to be slipping away and going back to our old master. Lord, help us learn to flee from sin and yield ourselves to righteousness.

Romans 6:19 - Seeking Holiness

I speak as a man because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness unto holiness.*

Truth to Learn

We should stop giving ourselves to the lordship of sin; instead, we should be giving ourselves to the lordship of righteousness.

Behind the Words

The word translated “as a man” is the adjective *anthrōpinos*. This word is based on *anthrōpos*, which literally means “*manfaced*,” but is most often translated “man” or “human being.” The adjective form means “belonging to man; his manners, custom, nature or condition). Hence, it refers to “that which characterizes man, as opposed to animals, angels, or God.”

“*Weakness*” is from the Greek word *astheneia*, which is made up of the privative *a*, meaning “without” and a form of *sthenos*, meaning “strength.” Hence *astheneia* means “without strength,” “weakness,” or “sickness.”

Meaning Explained

Paul opens up this verse with an odd phrase, “I speak as a man.” What he means by this is that he is using an illustration from everyday human life that everyone will understand. You will recall that several verses back we talked about the fact that slavery was so universal in the Roman Empire that everyone understood it.

Paul now goes on to explain why he is using such a base illustration: “*because of the weakness of your flesh.*” There is some debate over what this expression means. Some say that “flesh” refers to the sin nature, which is how Paul uses this term in many other places; however, this doesn’t make sense in this particular context because the sin nature is not weak. In fact, it is very strong. Others believe that he is using the term “flesh” to refer to the spiritual intellect and what he means is that he is using such a base illustration because of the spiritual immaturity of the Roman Christians and their inability to grasp great spiritual truths in their present condition. I tend to favor this latter interpretation.

Paul’s current point is that we have believed a teaching (doctrine) that is molding us to the image of Christ. Because of that, we have been made free from sin and have become the slaves of righteousness. Therefore, just like we used to yield our members (the various parts of our bodies, including our mind) to uncleanness and to lawless acts (which lead to more lawless acts), so we should now yield our members as slaves to righteousness (or righteous acts) which results in holiness.

The concept that Paul is driving home over and over again is that we have no right to live in sin, under the total influence of our sin nature. After all, sin no longer owns us; God owns us if we are truly saved. And because God owns us, we should yield (or submit) ourselves to Him. As we do, we begin to acquire

His holiness (we become molded into His image) as we become more and more set apart from sinfulness.

Application

This desire for righteousness and holiness should be the desire of all Christians. We should all want to become more like Christ by submitting to Him. Is this the desire of your heart?

Romans 6:20 - Our Old Master

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with regard to righteousness.

Truth to Learn

Before we were saved we could not pursue righteousness.

Behind the Words

The word translated “free” is the Greek word *eleutheros*. We looked at the verb form of this word in verse 18. In the current verse it is the noun form, which means “one who is capable of movement;” in other words, one who is independent or unrestrained.

Meaning Explained

This verse is short and is a restatement of what Paul has been saying repeatedly in different ways for most of this chapter. Before we were saved, we were in slavery to our sin nature. We had no choice but to sin because our sin nature owned us; therefore, we had no choice but to obey our sinful impulses.

One of the things Paul has been pointing out is that there is no gray area when it comes to who our master is. It is either sin or righteousness. We can't be part way in between. While we were the slaves of sin, we were free ones with regard to righteousness, not under its control. That is, righteousness could not influence us because we were owned by sin.

The argument that Paul has been making all along is that since we are no longer slaves to sin, that is, sin does not own us nor control us, we should be in subjection to our new master, righteousness. Unfortunately for us, though, is the fact that we have a choice as to whom we submit and old habits are hard to break. Now that we are freed from sin, we should gladly obey our new master, righteousness. But we seem to fight our new master far more than we did our former master. It's easier to be lazy and submit to our sin nature than to put the effort into obeying righteousness.

But, and this is Paul's point, we have no right to continue in our lazy obedience to sin because we have a new master who wants us to turn from our old ways and commit ourselves to Him. We have a responsibility to obey righteousness, not just because it would be polite, but because that's what our Master wants us to do, and we are under obligation to obey Him.

Did you ever wonder why the world seems to be getting more sinful and wicked with each passing year? It's because those who are of the world are slaves to sin and are constrained to obey their master. As a result, sin continues unchecked, growing stronger and more pervasive with each passing day.

But consider this, in heaven we will not have a sin nature and we will obey righteousness perfectly. We will not have to fight our tendency to sin. That's part of what will make heaven so rewarding. We will always do what is right and our actions will always be pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

But we're not there yet. We still have our sin nature. So, to boil it down to the essence of what Paul is teaching here, we are to submit to our new Master and commit to doing His will. Instead, we constantly try to break free from righteousness so we can "do our own thing," which is called sin.

Application

The laziest thing for a Christian to do is to just sit back and skate through life. But, now that we have the ability to obey righteousness, we also have the obligation to obey righteousness. Let's commit right now to resisting our old master and submitting ourselves to our new Master.

Romans 6:21 - Grace for Shame

Therefore, what fruit did you have in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death.

Truth to Learn

Our sinfulness separates us from fellowship with God.

Behind the Words

The word translated “fruit” is *karpos*, which can refer to the fruit of a tree (or other crop) or that which results from our actions. It is this latter meaning of “fruit” that is implied in today’s verse.

“Ashamed” is from the Greek word *epaischunomai*, which is made up of *epi*, meaning “upon” or “on account of” and a form of *aischunō*, which means “to be ashamed.” Hence *epaischunomai* refers to the shame that someone has brought upon himself or herself.

Meaning Explained

In the previous verse Paul told us that when we were slaves to sin (before we were saved) we were free from (not in bondage to) righteousness. The clear implication is, now that we are slaves to righteousness we are free from sin and should not obey it like a master. Remember also, back in verse fifteen Paul asked the rhetorical question, “What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace?” Since that verse he has been arguing that we certainly should not continue in sin because we now have a new master and we are not under the obligation to sin like we previously were.

In the current verse Paul is making another point in reference to his rhetorical question. Since we once were in bondage to sin we know its effects, we’ve tasted its bitterness, and we’ve reaped its fruit. He is implying here that having once experienced these effects and knowing our tendency to sin, we should not indulge in it now. We can look back at the sinful life we used to live and see that not only are the “pleasures of sin for a season” (**Hebrews 11:25**) not lasting, but the consequences of these sins **are** lasting and we are ashamed of them. Therefore, why would we even consider going back to a state where we were controlled by our sinful impulses?

We are very aware of the end result of our sinful past, and a life characterized by sin, produces death. “But,” you may say, “I’m now saved so I have eternal life and will never die again spiritually.” This is absolutely true, but the definition of death is separation. To die physically is to be separated from this mortal world. To die spiritually is to be spiritually separated from God (that’s the worst part of the punishment of Hell, eternal separation from God). If you are truly saved, then you will never, ever, ever, ever be spiritually separated from God because He has adopted you into His family and has promised that He will never leave you nor forsake you. But - when we sin (after we have been saved) we are separated from fellowship with God and that type of separation (death) can only be overcome by humbling ourselves and confessing our sin to God.

Application

We've all done things in the past that we are not very proud of, haven't we? So the real question is, "Do you have anything that you need to confess to God right now?" He's ready to forgive you and restore fellowship with you if you do. That's grace!

Romans 6:22 - Set-apart to Him

But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

Truth to Learn

God has set Christians apart and has given them eternal life.

Behind the Words

Throughout this chapter Paul has been making a play on words between “death” and “holiness.” Have you noticed? It’s not so obvious in English, but it is in Greek. The Greek word for “death” is *thanatos*, which, as we’ve mentioned before, carries with it the idea of separation. Separation of our soul from our mortal body is physical death, whereas separation of our soul from God is spiritual death.

The Greek word for “holiness” is *hagios*, which means “to be set apart from common use to or for a special purpose.” This is the same word that is also translated “sanctified.” Do you see the subtle difference? Death is separation **from** something while holiness is being set apart **to** something. Spiritual death is separation from God; holiness is being set apart to God.

Meaning Explained

This verse is Paul’s answer to the previous two verses and all three taken together are a summary of what Paul has been saying for this entire chapter. In verse twenty Paul said:

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with regard to righteousness.

Before we were saved we had no choice but to obey sin because we were its slaves. In answer to that he now says:

But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God ...

As born again Christians we are free from the bondage of sin and have become the slaves (the personal property) of God himself. We are no longer owned by sin, but we’re not free to just do as we please either because we are now owned by God; He is our master and we are to submit to His will.

In verse twenty-one Paul said:

What fruit did you have ... For the end of those things is death.

The fruit of the sin of our former way of life was death (separation from God.) In this verse he says:

But now ... you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

The fruit of our salvation now is holiness (being set apart to God for His use), which results in eternal life.

Now let me tie this all together. Throughout this chapter Paul has been saying that before we were saved, we were slaves to sin and we were ***separated from God*** (we were spiritually dead.) Now that we have received His gracious gift of salvation we are ***set apart to God*** (we are spiritually alive for eternity).

Application

When we fully comprehend what Paul is saying in these verses. it should produce in us the greatest praise for Him because of what He has done. Hallelujah!

Romans 6:23 – Free Eternal Life

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Truth to Learn

God offers all of us a free gift of inestimable value.

Behind the Words

The Greek word translated “wages” is *opsonia*, which is the plural form of *opsonion*. This word is a compound word made up of *opson*, which means “meat” and a form of *oneomai*, which means “to buy.” According to *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, “It primarily signifies whatever is bought to be eaten with bread, provisions, or supplies from a soldier's pay. Metaphorically, it means general wages, recompense.” It is what a soldier has earned for being a soldier.

“Gift” is translated from *charisma*, which means “a gift of grace or an undeserved benefit.” In the New Testament, this word is only used in reference to an undeserved gift or favor from God.

The Greek for the gift that God gives us is, *Zoe aionios*. *Zoe* is the word for “life” and *aionios* means “belonging to the continuance of time.” In other words, it means “perpetual, everlasting, or eternal.”

Meaning Explained

This verse is one of the pinnacles of Paul's teaching in the Book of Romans. It is the second step in what has been called “The Romans Road,” the road to salvation. The first is found in **Romans 3:23**:

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Now, after having talked at length about the fact that we used to be slaves to sin, Paul has just taught us that we are now the slaves of God. We learned that when we were slaves to sin, we were dead (separated from God).

In this verse Paul tells us why we were dead when we were the slaves to sin. He says:

For the wages of sin is death,

Paul is saying that death is what we earned for our sin (and we worked hard for it!). But, Paul says, God does not pay us what we have earned if we have received His gracious gift through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. Instead of giving us what we deserve (what we've earned), God gives us a free gift that we don't deserve (and didn't earn).

If you stop to think about it, there is no greater gift that God could possibly give to us than an eternal existence with Him. The one constant in this earthly existence is the fact that we all will die physically someday and we will be separated from our earthly body. But because of this marvelous gift that God

has given us, we will continue our existence in His presence in a heavenly body. We will join with all of our loved ones who have likewise received God's gift, and together we will glorify God for eternity.

Application

God offers a free gift to all who will believe and that gift is eternal life! Wow!

Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the price for your sins? I certainly hope