

**SERMON SERIES DISCUSSION GUIDE****STORY OF FAITH: WEEK 15**

In Romans 6, Paul defends his doctrine of justification by faith. He writes in such a way that he raises objections to his own argument (that an imaginary opponent may make), and then he answers his own objections. In doing so, Paul raises an important question, “Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” (v.1) He’s asking if God’s forgiveness gives us permission to sin. Or, since our sin seems to give God the chance to display His grace, shall we sin even more so that He can show even more grace? Paul responds to this idea with an emphatic, “By no means!” (v.2). We might paraphrase it as an explosive, “Never!” And then he adds, “We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?”

So, as Paul defends justification, he also explains sanctification: the process by which God helps us become free from sin and more like Jesus in our daily lives. If believers truly consider themselves dead to sin, then they will prove their faith by yielding themselves to God and not letting sin have control of their lives (v.12). This yielding is an act of our own will, a step of obedience to the Lord, and a vital step in the process of sanctification.

Paul gives the example of master and servant. No man can serve two masters. Before we were saved, we gave ourselves to sin and were the servants of sin. Consequently, we received the “wages” of sin... death (v.23). But now that we have received Christ as Savior, we have been made free from sin; that is, our new position in Christ gives us a new Master as well as a new nature. We are now the servants of righteousness instead of the servants of sin. As we yield our body to Christ as his “tools” or “instruments” (v.13), He comes to control our lives, and we bear the fruit of holiness (v.22).

The Christian who deliberately sins will and reap sorrow. Why should sin be our master when we have died to sin? Why must we be obedient to a master that has already been defeated by Christ? Christians who deliberately sin are people who have given in to the old nature instead of to the Holy Spirit. They are living beneath their exalted position in Christ and are living like slaves when they could be reigning like kings.

It is important that we keep these three steps in order: Know—reckon—yield. Let’s look at them in reverse order: We cannot yield to God and get victory over the flesh unless we first reckon (or consider) ourselves to be dead unto sin and alive in Christ. But we cannot do that unless we know our position in Christ. Satan does not want you to live up to your high position purchased for you by Jesus Christ, so he tries to confuse you about your victory in the Son of God. It is not enough to know that Christ died for us; we must also know that we died in Christ (consider the imagery of baptism in 6:3-5). It is not enough to know that we have new natures within; we must also know that the old nature was dealt with on the cross.

Know—reckon—yield. These three steps lead to daily victory over the flesh. The answer to the problem of sin is not simply determination, discipline, or any other human endeavor. Victory comes through crucifixion and resurrection.

## ROMANS 6:1-23 (ESV)

*1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

*15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## DISCUSSION GUIDE QUESTIONS

on your own, with family, or with your small group

Reflect on Paul's argument that grace does not give us the license to sin (Romans 6:1-2). How does understanding of our new identity in Christ compel us to live differently?

What is the significance of baptism in Romans 6:3-5? How does baptism symbolize the believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection?

What does Paul mean by being a slave to sin versus a slave to righteousness (6:15-18)? How does understanding our freedom in Christ impact our daily lives and choices?

Examine the process of sanctification and its implications for believers. How does this shape our pursuit of holiness and obedience?

In what ways has Satan confused you about your position and victory in Christ?