**Romans**

**Lesson 10: A New Life to Live Romans 6:1-14**

In chapters 1 to 5, Paul explained, theologically, what it means to be a Christian without being religious. True Christianity is not a religion. All religions are man-centered and teach, in some way, that man must do something (deeds/works) to earn the favor and acceptance of God. Christianity, on the other hand, teaches that man can do nothing to earn God’s favor. However, in Christianity, God has provided a way to have a relationship with Him, and that way is justification through faith in Christ Jesus. By faith, a man can enter into a lasting relationship with God. When God sees biblical repentance and faith in a man’s heart, He declares him righteous. The result? Man has peace with God, stands in the grace of God, and has great hope in the coming glory of God.

Also, in chapters 1 to 5, Paul wrote, at length, about the believer’s secure position in Christ. This secure position includes blessings and privileges that accrue to a man when he places his faith in Jesus Christ and, thereby, enters a new relationship with God. Paul provides a lot of theological information about the believer’s status, but until now, he has not offered any practical teaching about Christian life, growth, or discipleship, which leads us to chapters 6 to 8 of Romans. In these three chapters, Paul will explain:

1. How to Live a New Life in Christ (chapter 6)

2. The Christian’s Ongoing Struggle with Sin (chapter 7)

3. The Necessary Power of the Indwelling Holy Spirit (chapter 8)

In Romans, not only does Paul play the role of a prosecutor in God’s courtroom, but he also fulfills the role of an apologist (one who defends the faith). As Paul begins this section of his letter to the Romans, he anticipates another accusation. Chapter 6 begins, “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” (v.1). Remember, Paul has just written, “where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (5:20). Therefore, he’s prepared for accusers who say believers must have a license to sin since their sins are forgiven. Based on what Paul has written about God’s grace, can’t Christians just do as they please? What is his answer? Paul responds,

By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Verses 2-4)

Paul uses water baptism as an analogy to explain what happens the moment a man believes. Remember, Jesus is our federal head—our representative. Just as Adam represented us, so also Jesus represented those who believe. Whatever Adam did, all of mankind did by physical birth. Likewise, whatever Christ did, all believers did by both faith and spiritual birth.

Water baptism does not and cannot ever save anyone. In the NT, water baptism always occurs after faith is born and confessed publicly (Acts 8:26-38). For this reason, water baptism is *symbolic* of what happens spiritually to a believer who, by faith, is in Christ. Water baptism depicts two events—death and resurrection—in Jesus’ life and, thus, in the life of every believer. Jesus died for us, paid the penalty for our sin, arose from the grave, and conquered death. It is crucial to understand that by faith, whatever Jesus did, the believer did. Thus, in Christ, a believer dies to his old life and arises to live a new life—the Christian life. How does this work? Paul explains,

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. (Verses 5-7)

The key concept here is union with Christ. In Ephesians, Paul uses the phrase “in Christ” or   
“in Him” more than thirty times because it is an *integral concept* of biblical truth. A believer is united with Christ, or “in Christ,” and the Holy Spirit begins to live in his heart the moment he believes (John 14:16-18). This union conveys to the believer all of the actions of Christ—his death and resurrection so that whatever is true of Christ is legally true of the believer. Accordingly, before God, our sin debt is paid because we are in Christ. Accordingly, Paul says, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1-2).   
The believer, by his union with Christ, died when Christ died and arose when Christ arose to live this new life.

Paul writes that “our old self” was crucified with Christ. The “old self” refers to who the believer was—the old man, the former self when he did not know God and lived totally for himself and the world—before he was in Christ. This man has died in Christ; therefore, he no longer lives. So, what is the body of sin? Keller writes,

The “body of sin” is the body controlled by sin. This is not to say that the physical body   
is sinful in itself, or that physical desires are sinful as such. But sin expresses itself through our bodies; or it reigns in us by getting us to obey its dictates; and so Paul calls it a “body   
of sin.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Notice Paul says, “We know.” One of the fruits of our union with Christ is certainty. We know certain things to be true. Therefore, what we think is directly associated with how we behave. We know, writes Paul, that our old self was crucified. Consequently, if you are in Christ, then   
the old you is dead. You must believe this truth. People tend to behave as they see themselves; therefore, Christians need to see the old man is dead. As the believer begins to grasp this truth, he begins to live this new life in Christ and is no longer a slave to sin. In fact, you have been freed from the power of sin. This does not mean that you will not ever sin, *but* you are free from sin’s power. Sin no longer reigns over you.

As you will learn in Romans 8, you have the power of the Holy Spirit to enable you to live this new life. This battle with sin will continue for the believer as long as he is alive in his earthly body. However, there is a significant distinction between the believer and the non-believer. The non-believer lives under the total power of sin. Hence, he has no choice but to sin. When he sins, he is doing what is natural to him. On the other hand, the believer is under the power of the Holy Spirit if he yields to Him. Thus, when the believer sins, he is doing what is unnatural,   
and he cannot continue in sin because it is so distasteful and grieves the Spirit within him.   
Paul expounds,

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that   
since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to   
God. (Verses 8-10)

Believers dies with Christ. We know this and believe, also, that we will live with Him. Just as resurrection followed the death of Christ, so the believer who dies in Christ is free to live this new resurrected life unto God. Verse 10 is simply a summary of verses 5-9. Christians have a guarantee from God. When we died with Christ, any legal claim sin has upon us was completely severed. As Christ now lives in us, through us, and for us, we are free to live this new life. So, the big question is: How do we live this new life? Paul elaborates in verses 11-14,

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts   
of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as   
those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

The first step toward victory over sin is to “count yourselves dead to sin.” This goes back to the idea of how we think. To count means to “reckon” or “consider.” Keller writes, “Being ‘dead to sin’ (i.e., ‘no longer under the dominion of sin’) is like a privilege or a legal right. Though it may be true or in force, a person may not realize or utilize the right/privilege.”[[2]](#footnote-2) You must know it to be true and then act on it.

In his commentary, Keller provides a vital, though lengthy, illustration from Martin Lloyd-Jones that depicts our condition. Keller quotes,

Take the case of those poor slaves in the United States of America about a hundred years ago. There they were in a condition of slavery. Then the American Civil War came, and as the result of that war, slavery was abolished in the United States. But what had actually happened? All slaves, young and old, were given their freedom, but many of the older ones who had endured long years of servitude found it very difficult to understand their new status. They heard the announcement that slavery was abolished and that they were free: but hundreds, not to say thousands, of times in their after-lives and experiences many of them did not realize it, and when they saw their old master coming near them they began to quake and to tremble, and to wonder whether they were going to be sold…You can still be a slave experientially, even when you are no longer a slave legally…Whatever you may feel, whatever your experience may be, God tells us here, through his word, that if we are in Christ we are no longer in Adam, we are no longer under the reign and rule of sin…And if I fall into sin, as I do, it is simply because I do not realize who I am…Realize it! Reckon it! [[3]](#footnote-3)

The word “therefore” in verse 12 brings us to the conclusion of Paul’s argument. Because believers in Christ, through our union with him, are dead to sin and alive to God, we must count ourselves as such. Our entire attitude toward sin and God must change. As believers, we are not to let sin reign; we must offer ourselves to God rather than allow sin to master us. We are no longer bound to the law; we have been set free from it. We now live under grace. Stott writes, “To be *under grace* is to acknowledge our dependence on the work of Christ for salvation, and so to be justified rather than condemned, and thus set free.”[[4]](#footnote-4) Those who know that they have been set free from condemnation are also free to resist sin with new strength and boldness.   
(We will take a closer look at the power available to the believer in Romans 8.)

Are you in Christ? If yes, are you experiencing victory over sin? If not, first remember, “where sin abounds, grace abounds even more.” God’s love and mercy are limitless. Do not forget that He delights in you as his child. Secondly, begin to think of yourself as the man or woman you really are in Christ. God is your heavenly Father, and you are his son or daughter. You belong to him. He loves you. In your mind, count yourself dead to sin. Remind yourself that the “old you” is dead. He no longer exists. You are a new man/woman—a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Begin to see yourself for who you really are. As this new way of seeing yourself transforms your mind, you will begin to live more like the man/woman you really are—a man/woman in Christ who lives for God!

DAYS 1 and 2. Read Romans 6:1-10.

1. Paul states in verses 1-2 that a believer cannot go on sinning, that is, continue in habitual sin. (This does not mean that a Christian never sins!) Why does he make this claim (vv. 3-4)?
2. What does it mean that a believer “died to sin” (v. 3)?
3. How does baptism depict symbolically what happens to a believer through his union with Christ? Use the following verses to help answer this question.
   1. Romans 6:5-7
   2. Colossians 2:11-13
4. Christ was raised to a new resurrection life. Paul declares that “we too may live a *new   
   life*.” What does he mean by this (verses 8-10)? Use the following verses to help answer   
   this question.
   1. Romans 8:5-9
   2. Colossians 1:10-14
5. How are we united with Christ in his death and resurrection? Use the following verses to help answer this question.
   1. John 1:12
   2. Ephesians 1:13-14
6. Verses 6-7 state: “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”
   1. [Challenge question] Explain the difference between “the old self” and “the body of sin.”
   2. Why should we no longer be slaves to sin?
   3. [Personal question] Do you still feel like a slave to sin? If yes, why do you think   
      this way?
   4. Do you think most believers really struggle with specific sins, perhaps even strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4-6)? If yes, why?
   5. What does Paul mean when he writes, “because anyone who has died has been freed from sin?” Use the following verses to help answer this question.

* John 8:31-36
* Galatians 5:1
* Romans 6:18

DAYS 4 and 5. Read Romans 6:1-14, focusing on verses 8-14.

1. Verse 8 says, “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.”   
   Is Paul addressing life now, the life to come, or both? Explain your answer.
2. Unlike Lazarus, who, essentially, was resuscitated, Jesus died and then arose in a new resurrection body. Lazarus later died again. According to verse 9, Jesus cannot die again: “[Jesus] died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.”

Stott illustrates,

*Imagine an elderly believer called John Jones, who is looking back over his long life. It is divided by his conversion into two halves, the old self (John Jones before his conversion) and the new self (John Jones after his conversion). These are not his two natures, but his two consecutive lives. By faith and baptism John Jones was united to Christ. His old self died with Christ to sin, its penalty borne and finished. At the same time John Jones rose again with Christ, a new man, to live a new life unto God. John Jones is every believer. We are John Jones if we are one with Christ. We died with Christ (6-7); we have risen with Christ (8-9). Our old life terminated with the judicial death it deserved; our new life began with a resurrection.*[[5]](#footnote-5)

* 1. In verse 10, what does Paul mean by the phrase “died to sin once for all?”   
     (See 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 7:27, 9:28, 10:10; 1 Peter 3:18)
  2. What does Paul mean by the phrase “the life he lives, he lives to God?”

1. Verse 11 states, “In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in   
   Christ Jesus.”
   1. What does it mean to “***count yourself*** dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ?”
   2. How should this “new mindset” change the way you view yourself? What impact should it have on sin in your life?
2. In verses 11-13, Paul gives three exhortations for living the Christian life and having victory over sin. What are they?
3. Who gives the believer power to live for God (Romans 8:9; Philippians 4:13)?
4. A believer is positionally in Christ and dead to sin. Now, God begins the process of sanctification and enables the believer to experience this new life (what he already is, positionally).
   1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Have you experienced this?
   2. Read Philippians 1:6. Can you see evidence of this in your life?

Keller writes,

Through these verses, Paul has repeatedly said we “know” or “believe” (v 3, 6, 8, 9). This shows that any Christian who continues to sin or falls back into sin has failed to “know” or think out the implications of what has happened to him or her in Christ. How can we use this approach on our sin?

We need to realize that we are not to be stoics when it comes to sin: Just say NO! Paul is showing us here that sinning comes not so much from a lack of willpower, as from a lack of understanding our position and a lack of reflection and rejoicing.

So, the key is to know, to remember, and to think like this:

* *I am bought with Christ’s blood…*
* *I have been delivered out of the “dominion” of sin…We are children of God, and we can exercise our authority over our sinful desires.*
* *I was saved by Christ specifically so I would not sin…All the suffering and torture of Jesus was for that purpose; any Christian who gives in to sin is forgetting that. We should ask: Will I defile the heart Christ died to wash; trample on the very purpose   
  of his pain; thwart the very goal of his suffering?*

So we see that the gospel gives us a new and different incentive for godly living than we had when we were under the law as a system for salvation. When we were using the law to save ourselves, our motives for being obedient were fear and self-confidence. Now, however, we know that Jesus died for us so that we wouldn’t sin. When we realize the purpose of Christ’s death and as we think of it in gratitude, we find a new incentive to be holy! We long to, and we love to, be those who “offer yourselves to God,” because we know we are “those who have been brought from death to life” (Romans 6:13).[[6]](#footnote-6)

1. Ibid., 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. 143. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Romans Series (1989): 25-28, quoted in Tim Keller, Romans 1–7 For You, (Epsom, Surry, England: The Good Book Company, 2014), 144. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Stott, 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid., 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Keller, 147-148. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)