**Romans**

***How to be a Christian without Being Religious!***

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

In chapters 1-5, Paul explained, theologically, what it means to be a Christian without being religious. True Christianity is not a religion. All religions are manmade 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, actually, 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. The moment God sees biblical 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 1-5, 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 provided any practical teaching about Christian life, growth, or discipleship, which leads us to chapters 6 – 8 of Romans. In these three chapters, Paul will explain:

1. How to live this new life in Christ (chapter 6)
2. That the Christian life will always involve a struggle with sin (chapter 7)
3. That strength to live this new life is in and by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (chapter 8)

In Romans, not only does Paul play the role of prosecutor in God’s courtroom, 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 will say believers must have a license to sin since their sins are all 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.* (6:2-4)

Paul uses water baptism as an analogy to explain what happens to a man the moment he believes. Remember, Jesus is our federal head—our representative. Just as Adam represented us, so also Jesus represented those of us 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, cannot, and never will save anyone. In the New Testament, 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*. (6:5-7)

The key concept here is union with Christ. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he uses the phrase “in Christ” or “in Him” more than thirty times. Why? Because it is an integral concept of biblical truth. A believer is united with Christ, meaning he is “in Christ,” the moment he believes. In that instant, the Holy Spirit begins to live in the heart of the believer. 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. Legally, before God, our sin debt is paid because we are in Christ. Accordingly, Paul says, “Therefore there in 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 died when Christ died, and he arose when Christ arose to live this new life.

Paul writes that “our old self” was crucified with Christ. What does he mean? The “old self” refers to who the believer was—the old man, the former self, the man who did not know God and who lived totally for himself and the world—before he was in Christ. This man has died in Christ; thus, 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. We know this! If you are in Christ, then the old you is dead. He no longer exists. You must believe this truth in your mind. People tend to behave as they see themselves. Christians need to see that the old man is dead. As the believer begins to grasp this truth, he will begin to live this new life in Christ. You must know this in order for your body of sin to be done away with, so that you are no longer a slave to sin. In fact, you have been freed from the power of sin. This does not mean that you will sin no more; still you will 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 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 big distinction between the believer and the non-believer. The non-believer lives under the total power of sin. Thus, 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. And so, 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*. (6:8-10)

Believers died 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 eradicated. 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 vv. 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’ (no longer under its dominion) 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 over us any longer. Moreover, 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 that is available to the believer in Romans 8.)

Are you in Christ? If yes, are you experiencing victory over sin? If not, remember first “where sin abounds, grace abounds even more.” God’s love and mercy are limitless. Don’t forget that He delights in you as his child. Secondly, begin to think of yourself as the man you really are in Christ. God is your heavenly Father, and you are his son. 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—a new creation. Begin to see yourself for who you really are. As your mind is transformed by this new way of seeing yourself, you will begin to live more like the man you really are—a man in Christ who lives for God!

**DAY 1**

1. Read chapter 5, pages 55-61 in *How to Be a Christian without Being Religious*.
   1. What subject separates the religious striver from the trusting believer (p. 56)? Explain what this term means to you.
   2. According to Ridenour, why doesn’t a believer have to keep on sinning?
   3. Complete the following sentences:
2. A Christian is not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!
3. A Christian is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!
4. What is the significance of these two truths?

**DAYS 2 and 3** Read Romans 6:1-10

1. Paul states in vv. 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.

Romans 6:5-7

Colossians 2:11-13

1. 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.

Romans 8:5-9

Colossians 1:10-14

1. 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
2. Verses 6-7 say: “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. 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 feel this way?
   4. Do you think the vast majority of 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 v. 9, Jesus cannot die again: “[Jesus] died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.”John Stott gives this homely illustration,

*Imagine an elderly believer called John Jones, who is looking back over his life. His life is divided by his conversion into two halves, the old self (Jones before his conversion) and the new self (Jones after his conversion). These are not his two natures but his two consecutive lives. By faith and baptism Jones was united to Christ. His old self died with Christ to sin, its penalty born 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 v. 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 vv. 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. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Romans Series* (1989), 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)