

# Day 117, Romans 6

by David Servant

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*We are freed from sin through our union with Christ, but we must still resist temptation to sin and cooperate with God's gracious work.*

**Scripture:** Romans 6:1-22

**Topics:** "Freedom From Sin", "Sanctification"

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## Description

David Servant preaches on the believer's freedom from sin as highlighted in Romans 6, contrasting the man in bondage to sin in chapter 7 with the man free from sin in chapters 6 and 8. He emphasizes the importance of understanding our union with Christ through baptism, where we are identified with His death, burial, and resurrection, leading to a new life in Him. While believers are freed from sin, they must actively resist temptation and not allow sin to reign in their lives, acknowledging that they are now slaves of righteousness. Paul's reminder that believers are under grace, not under the law, is a call to live obediently to God, resulting in sanctification and ultimately eternal life.

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## Transcript

Some commentators say that Paul was writing of his personal Christian experience in the very next chapter of Romans---where he refers to "practicing what I would not like to do" and "doing the very thing I hate" (Rom. 7:15). The error of that interpretation, however, is exposed in today's reading of chapter 6, and it will be further exposed when we read chapter 8. The man of chapters 6 and 8 is a man free from sin, while the man of chapter 7 is in bondage to sin. Note how often in today's reading Paul mentions the believer's freedom from sin.

Because Paul affirmed that humanity's unrighteousness demonstrates God's righteousness (3:5), some were slanderously reporting that he was telling people, "Let us do evil that good may come" (3:8). Today Paul asks a rhetorical question that may well have been based on a similar slander, "Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" (6:1). Such an idea was revolting to Paul, and he responded in kind: "May it never be!" (6:2). Continuing in sin is an impossibility for those who had died to sin, which Paul goes on to say includes all who have been "baptized into Christ Jesus" (6:2-3).

Our baptism as new believers was symbolic of what happened to us when we believed. We became one spirit with Christ (1 Cor. 6:17), united to Him in His death, burial and resurrection. To begin to understand this, you have to remove the element of time. Just as Christ in some sense joined Himself to you by bearing your sin in His body before you were born, so you, as a believer, are identified with Christ in what

He did 2,000 years ago. When He was crucified, "our old self was crucified with Him" (6:6). When He died, so did we. And when He was resurrected, we were also resurrected to "walk in the newness of life" (6:4).

The purpose of this union with Christ is "that we would no longer be slaves of sin" (6:6) because we are "freed from sin" (6:7). But our freedom from sin does not automatically prevent us from sinning. Our free will still comes into play, which is why Paul admonishes his readers to consider themselves "to be dead to sin, but alive to God" (6:11), and not allow "sin to reign in your mortal bodies" (6:12). A drug addict may be set free from his addiction, but his freedom doesn't automatically prevent him from once again injecting drugs into his body. He must resist temptation to take drugs. Believers in Christ are similarly released from bondage to sin, but they must still resist temptation to sin.

Paul's words, "You are not under law but under grace" (6:14) have been ripped from their context and construed to mean, "You don't need to be concerned with keeping God's laws because grace releases you from accountability." But the immediate context shows that Paul would have been horrified by such a twisting of his words: "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!" (6:15).

Paul then reminds his readers of what takes place from the first moment of belief in Jesus. When we come to Christ, we present ourselves as "slaves for obedience," turning away from sin, our former master (6:16). Having been "freed from sin" we've become "slaves of righteousness" (6:18).

Is eternal life, what Paul calls a "free gift of God" (6:23), ultimately granted to the unholy? Paul writes, "Now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life" (6:22). That sentence describes a sequence. We are first freed from sin and enslaved to God, and the benefit is sanctification, or ever-growing holiness. The "outcome" of all this is eternal life, and there is obviously no outcome without the steps that lead to the outcome. That outcome is free because the steps to it are God's gracious work. But our cooperation is required. Like a free college scholarship, you've got to keep your grades up to continue to receive the benefits!

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