



Freedom



BELIEVERS ARE FREED FROM THE POWER OF SIN.

ROMANS 6:1-14

The words “debt free” make a happy sound in our hearts. So do the words “cancer free.” Each of these terms brings up different realities. However, they share one word in common: free. For a person drowning in debt, being liberated from it would be a game changer. Anyone who’s dealing with cancer would be ecstatic to be told it was gone. Of course, being freed from sin’s power brings the greatest joy.



In what ways would the promise of freedom make you happy?

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UNDERSTAND **THE CONTEXT**

ROMANS 6:1-14

Chapter 6 plays a pivotal role in the flow of Romans. Chapters 1–4 highlight humanity’s sin and justification by faith. In chapters 5–8, Paul focused on the results of justification, moving from the doctrine of justification to its implications.

Chapter 6 addresses a critical question raised in Romans 5:20. If grace increases where sin abounds, then should believers sin more? Paul was addressing believers who might be tempted to think salvation by grace gave them a license to sin even more. Because sins can be confessed and forgiven, they might conclude that it didn’t really matter how they lived. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Paul reminded the Romans that they were not just forgiven of their sins—they were dead to sin. When they accepted Jesus’s sacrifice, they died to sin because all their sins were nailed to the cross. Not only that, but as Jesus rose from the dead, they had been raised to walk in newness of life. They were to stop embracing the old ways and embrace their Savior rather than their sin.

Paul used the image of baptism to make his point. Baptism pictures the old life of sin being buried with Christ and being raised with Him to live for Him. Paul also used the image of slavery. Before justification, we were slaves to sin. Now we are slaves to righteousness. Jesus has provided a way for believers who were dead in sin to be made alive and free. Like a slave redeemed from physical slavery, believers are set free from sin’s enslavement. This does not mean we no longer battle sin (see Rom. 7) or that we can now live sinless lives. But sin as a power no longer holds us in its enslaving clutches.

Chapter 6, therefore, is key because it connects justification to sanctification. The theme has moved from what God has done for us to what God is now doing in us. The “therefore” in verse 12 introduces the application based on the truths of verses 1-11. We are to demonstrate in the way we live that sin is no longer in charge of us—God is.



Read Romans 6:1-14 in your Bible. How does baptism help you visualize the transformation Paul describes in these verses?

EXPLORE **THE TEXT**

DEAD TO SIN (ROM. 6:1-7)

¹ What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? ² Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of his resurrection. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be rendered powerless so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin, ⁷ since a person who has died is freed from sin.

VERSES 1-4

At the end of chapter 5, Paul affirmed that God's grace multiplied in response to multiplied sin (Rom. 5:20). Once Paul made the affirmation, he immediately raised a probing question about it. If believers wanted God's grace to be multiplied, should they sin more? Growing disciples would have asked the question innocently and honestly. However, enemies of the gospel would have asked the question in an effort to deceive people who had placed their faith in Christ.

No one who claims the power of the gospel should intentionally go looking for chances to sin.

Paul's terse answer to the question keeps us from pondering it for even one second: ***Absolutely not!*** Paul used the phrase translated *absolutely not* ten times in Romans (3:4,6,31; 6:2,15; 7:7,13; 9:14; 11:1,11). Each time it was to distinguish orthodox teaching from heresy. The reason for such a stern response here drives home the truth about the reign of sin in a believer's life. When we gave our lives to Christ, we ***died*** to a way of life controlled by sin. We renounced the rule of sin over us. This powerful truth answers Paul's question about sin and grace. No one who claims the power of the gospel should intentionally go looking for chances to sin.

Baptism serves as a reminder of our liberation from sin. For that important reason, we should not lose sight of what being **baptized** means. Baptism symbolizes Jesus’s **death**, burial, and resurrection. It also reminds us that giving our lives to Christ involves being **buried with him**. It also represents the believer’s own death and burial to sin and his resurrection to a new life in Christ. Baptism is a picture that we have been changed by Jesus to walk in **newness of life**. Thus, baptism signifies a change in lifestyle. We now embrace a new way of living.



KEY DOCTRINE: *Baptism*

Baptism is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. (See Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42.)

VERSES 5-7

Instead of living under the reign of sin that separates us from Christ, we are now **united** with Christ in both His **death** and His **resurrection**.

We didn’t just receive forgiveness of our sins. We also received a new power to live differently. Baptism serves as a tangible reminder that the Christian life involves both dying and living. Our **old self was crucified** with Christ on the cross and His death freed us to live under a new Master.

Paul emphasized his point about newness of life with the picture of slavery. Slaves to sin live under its control. Sin has a firm grip on their thoughts, words, and actions. Slaves to sin do not have the ability within themselves to be liberated from sin’s tyranny over them. Liberty from the reign of sin takes place only when a person turns to Christ by faith. Jesus has **rendered powerless** the rule of sin over anyone who puts their trust in Him. He sets them free from the rule of sin.



In what ways might people today misunderstand or misuse the concept of grace?



Why shouldn't believers continue living in sin if sin multiplies God's grace?

ALIVE IN CHRIST (ROM. 6:8-11)

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, ⁹ because we know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, will not die again. Death no longer rules over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died, he died to sin once for all time; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

VERSES 8-10

Paul used repetition to reinforce the truth that following Christ means identifying with His death. Jesus's death was only one part of the story. His crucifixion reflects our death to sin, but His resurrection means life for us. Because *we died with Christ*, we will also *live with him*.

Because of Jesus's resurrection, we are free from the power of sin. We are both justified—declared righteous—and sanctified—set apart for God's purposes. We live in the power and presence of Jesus each day.

We live in the power and presence of Jesus each day.

Paul placed our hope in the certainty of Jesus's resurrection. He said *we know* that Christ has risen from the dead. Our assurance is not drawn from mere speculation or wishful thinking. Neither is it based on anything that we have done. Instead, we know with certainty that His resurrection is the foundation for our assurance of eternal life.

We also know that His resurrection was unique in the sense that He would not die again. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, but Lazarus would die again (John 11:38-44). He raised the widow of Nain's child and the centurion's daughter (Luke 7:11-15; 8:49-55), but they would die again. Jesus would never die again, and those incorporated into His resurrection will not die spiritually again.

Paul also affirmed that Christ died to sin *once for all time*. In the first part of verse 10, Paul emphasized the finality of Christ’s sacrifice. In the second half of verse 10, he emphasized the ongoing result. Jesus voluntarily experienced death to break sin’s dominion. But this one-time event opened a way of life to all who would trust in Him.



DID YOU KNOW?

Paul used the term “in Christ” eighty-six times in his letters, eleven times in Romans, and twice in chapter 6 (vv. 11,23). This term is rich in meaning, expressing how believers share in all Christ has accomplished—His life, resurrection, and victory—by living in union with Him. It also highlights our connection to Christ as the head of His body and to one another as members of His body. To be “in Christ” is to live out a new identity in which Christ dwells within the believer, reshaping their character, priorities, and purpose.

VERSE 11

In verse 11, Paul focused on the responsibility of believers to *consider* themselves **dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus**. The word *consider* came from the world of accounting. It could be translated as “count, credit, or think.” It carries the challenge to accept God’s words as true. We have died to sin, and we are alive to God in Christ Jesus. We must consider that truth as reality and live in it.



What does it mean to consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God? What does this look like practically in your life?



How does the resurrection of Jesus give you confidence in your daily struggle with sin?

INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (ROM. 6:12-14)

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its desires. ¹³ And do not offer any parts of it to sin as weapons for unrighteousness. But as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves to God, and all the parts of yourselves to God as weapons for righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will not rule over you, because you are not under the law but under grace.

VERSES 12-13

The implications of salvation are not only for eternity. Salvation has implications for the here and now. Having given attention to explanation, Paul turned his attention to practical application with one word: *therefore*.

Paul portrayed sin as a cruel taskmaster. Sin dominates and enslaves those who live under its authority. But everything changes in Christ. The phrase ***do not let sin reign*** is a command in Greek. Throughout this passage, Paul has referred to sin as a monarch, reigning over those who do not believe. Not letting sin reign over us involves an exercise of the will. It is not completely divorced from grace, though, as Paul says in verse 14. However, as believers, we have a responsibility to declare war on sin in our lives. To consider ourselves dead to sin (v. 11), we actively struggle against its temptations and lure in our own lives.

Paul used the language of warfare. Before we came to Christ, our mortal bodies were ***weapons for unrighteousness***. The enemy used us in his battle against God. But now, we ***offer*** ourselves to God as ***weapons for righteousness***. The word *offer* points to the Old Testament sacrificial system and worship. We offer ourselves now as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1-2). When we yield to God, we become weapons for His righteous purposes.

***As believers, we have a responsibility
to declare war on sin in our lives.***

VERSE 14

Verse 14 contains a promise, which ends this section: ***sin will not rule*** over believers. Here, Paul returned to a theme from earlier in this letter: law versus grace. Because sin no longer rules over us, we no longer need to worry about satisfying the demands of the

APPLY THE TEXT

- + Believers need to understand that they live in union with Christ and act accordingly.
- + Believers are to consider themselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ.
- + Believers are to offer themselves to God for the accomplishment of His righteous purposes.

 **Discuss with your Bible study group the importance of baptism. How does it symbolize your new life in Christ? How does recalling your baptism encourage you to remain focused on devoting yourselves to God?**

 **Take a look at your personal walk with Christ. How do you exhibit your new life in Him with your thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions? Where does God’s grace fit into your life as you try to devote yourself to Him each day?**



Memorize Romans 6:11.

Prayer Needs
