

R & R BIBLE STUDY 2019-20



breath-taking grace

THE BOOK OF ROMANS

LESSON 7

Paul is on a roll, isn't he? He firmly believes that Christian living depends on Christian learning; that duty follows doctrine. Because of this, it's normal for him to begin everything by trying to increase our knowledge. In chapter six, Paul discusses what was to happen in a believer's life after their sins had been forgiven and they had been declared righteous in God's sight. This process of growth in spiritual maturity is called sanctification, which can be defined as "the lifelong process of transformation into the likeness of Christ."

This is the subject matter of chapters 6-8. He spends time defending the doctrine of justification by faith that he has presented to his readers. He anticipates some objections, which he addresses here in chapter six. He knows that if you tell people that their good works won't earn their salvation, their natural inclination may be to wonder why, then, should they be good at all? Read his words carefully this week as we wade through it. At first it sounds like he keeps repeating himself, but upon closer observation, he is simply adding another dimension to his main point. Keller wrote, "Chapters 1-5 explain what God has accomplished **FOR** us in the Gospel; Chapters 6-8 tells us what God will accomplish **IN US** through the Gospel." Try to notice that this week as you read our chapter.

Like I encourage you every week, remember to pray before you begin, asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten you and give you understanding. What is Paul trying to tell us? What is the Holy Spirit, today, trying to show you, as well?

First Day

1. Read Romans 6:1-23. Let's break it up into two parts to do this. By section, list the repeated or key words, phrases, or thoughts.
 - a. Verses 1-14:

Paul is saying that the minute you become a believer, you are no longer under the ruling power of sin. No longer does sin have to control us. Before Christ, our sinful desires ruled over us and we were completely under their control. Now sin no longer can dominate us. We have the ability, through the Spirit, because of the cross, to resist and rebel against it. There is a new power in control of our lives. Paul's answer pretty much says that it would be crazy to suggest that we continue to live "under" its rule. In this context, sin is not something we "do," but a power that enslaves us. It should no longer be our Master.

4. "Sin has power in us but not over us." What does this statement mean?

So ... having "died to sin" doesn't mean that there is no sin in us, or it can't have power over you or influence you. It does. Although you may obey it and choose to sin, you no longer HAVE to.

5. Paul goes on to explain how we "died to sin." What illustration does he use in verses 2-5? How is a believer "identified" with Christ?

This section refers to our union with Christ (5:12-21). The word Paul uses for baptism speaks of literal immersion, as well as its figurative meaning: "to be identified with." The believer is "buried" in water and brought up again as a picture of death, burial, and resurrection. We identify with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Whatever is true of Christ is now legally true of us. Since Christ died, and dead people are freed from sin, so we are freed from sin. We were united with Him at the moment of our conversion.

I love this analogy from Chris Ash: "Although individualistic cultures claim to find this corporate belonging hard to understand, we know what it is to say, 'We won' when our football team or army won, even if we ourselves were not on the field or in the battle. This can apply to things that happened before we began supporting a team. 'We won' the cup in 1925 can be true, even though the young supporter was not even born then. The team's story has become our story. Israelites of every generation could say 'We won' when David killed Goliath. So the Christian is caught up into the career of our champion, the Lord Jesus Christ."

6. Write your thoughts on the paragraphs above. Did they help you understand our "union" with Christ, or do you still have questions?

7. How are we united in His resurrection? What does it mean to walk in the “newness of life”?

8. We’ll continue with these thoughts tomorrow, but first I need to ask the hard question. Is there still some sin in your life that you have allowed to “enslave” or “control” you? Do you feel powerless over it? How does the truth of this chapter encourage you today?

9. It has been said that “The only power that sin has over the believer is the power of bluff.” What do you think that means?

10. How can we “expose” sin’s bluff when it threatens us, lies to us, and tells us we can’t escape, reminding us of our past failures, and anything else to make us think it has the final power over us?

We aren’t free from sin’s ability to tempt us, but we are free from its ability to kill us! Christ has given us freedom! The power of sin has been broken by the cross and we need to make use of the freedom won for us by Christ! Three cheers for Jesus!!!

Third Day

What’s your memory verse?

So far Paul isn’t really giving us any commands or exhortations; those begin in verse 12. He is making a statement: We are not being told to crucify our flesh or our old self, but that our old self HAS been crucified with Christ.

1. Read Romans 6:1-14 again. How would you describe your “old man”?

2. Ok, hang with me on this for a minute. So, our new identity is “in Christ.” If my old self has died, and sin no longer controls my life, sinful behavior should now go against my “new nature.” When a non-believer sins, that’s because it’s in line with who they are, their identity, their nature. Why wouldn’t they sin, so to speak? So, if we are “in Christ,” everything changes. We forget our identity when we sin; we forget what has been done for us on the cross; we forget WHO we belong to. What are your thoughts on this? (Chris Ash says Paul is simply telling us to bring our thinking in line with God-given reality.)

3. Do you really believe that you don’t “have” to sin? What difference would this make in your life?

Verse 11 has an interesting word in it ... reckon. Not a word we typically use unless you live in the South! This Greek word is used forty-one times in the New Testament, nineteen times in Romans alone. It means to “take into account, to calculate, to estimate.” It means “to put to one’s account.” Simply, it means to believe what God says in His Word is really true in your life! I love what Weirsbe wrote about it: “Paul didn’t tell his readers to feel as if they were dead to sin, or even to understand it fully, but to act on God’s Word and claim it for themselves. Reckoning is a matter of faith that issues in action. It’s not claiming a promise but acting on a fact.”

4. What are we supposed to “reckon” according to verse 11? Do you? What “fact” are you supposed to act upon, according to Paul? How would this reckoning change our perspective and behavior?

5. Notice the word “present” is repeated in verses 13 and 16 and 19. (Some translations say “yield.”) Why is this significant? What does it imply?

Fourth Day

What's your memory verse?

1. Let's pick it up today by reading Romans 6:1-23, focusing on verses 15-23. What objection does Paul anticipate once again in verse 15? Is this objection, and that in verse one, identical or different? How?
2. Paul gives his readers two choices regarding who we are slaves to. What are they?
3. If we decide we just want to be in control of ourselves and not serve a "Master," what choice have we actually made? Why?
4. If we are slaves to sin, what are the consequences?
5. If we are slaves to God, what are the rewards?
6. How does one bring holiness and the other produces shame?

In verse 15, Paul restated the objection of verse 1 but with a slight difference. Chris Ash wrote, "Verse 14 says we are not 'under the law' when we might have expected it to say not 'under sin.' Paul will return to law in chapter 7, but the objection restated says, 'Dear Paul, it seems to me that the Law of God is necessary to safeguard morality in religion. If we are released from the authority of Law, what is to stop our religion becoming a license to sin?'" In other words, if we're not under the Law as a system of salvation, are we under any obligation to it at all? Can we do whatever we choose? Do we have to obey the Ten Commandments

anymore? What's our motivation for right living? Paul answers this question in his slave/master illustration. We always will have a master, either sin or God, but it can't be both. Keller wrote, "Paul's main argument is this: anyone who wonders if a Christian can sin is ignorant about sin's enslaving nature. Put another way: a Christian does not have to obey the Ten Commandments in order to be saved, but a Christian does have to obey them in order to be a free and Godly human being. If you don't obey the Law of God, you become a slave to selfishness and sin."

7. We all "live" for something. What are you living for? Rebecca Manley Pippert wrote, "Whatever controls us is our lord. The person who seeks power is controlled by power. The person who seeks acceptance is controlled by the need for acceptance. We do not control ourselves. We are controlled by the lord of our lives." Thoughts?

8. Verse 17 says they "obeyed from the heart" (or "wholeheartedly") the teaching to which they were entrusted. The Gospel of grace can transform our hearts. Until it does that, we can possess a mere intellectual or "behavioral" Christianity. What do you think that means? Have you ever experienced that?

9. Paul puts a bow on all his points in verse 23. Sin pays off, and always pays in full. Contrast the differences between "wages" and "gifts."

10. Death means separation from God. Forever. In this chapter Paul shows two lives which are totally opposed to each other. Jesus portrays these same roads in Matthew 7:13-14. How does He describe this same thing?

Well, ladies, it's reckoning time! Have you chosen the road to follow? Have you decided to present your body unto the Lord, allowing the Lord to be Your Master and the Lord of your life? I remember accepting Christ in June of 1979. I remember the EXACT time. But honestly, I had a very limited knowledge of God. About 6 months later, after growing in my faith, reading the Word, and coming to a better understanding of who this God was, I fully surrendered my life and gave Him control and made Him my Lord. I remember that day as well. I was baptized in the Holy Spirit and "presented" myself to Him. No longer was it an intellectual faith or a "behavioral" faith, it was a heart faith. Have you made the choice?

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory.

We're going to do some review and recap part of the lesson today ... hope that's ok! There was a lot to soak in, so I'm going to lead us into more "soaking"!

1. I was reading Shepherd's Notes on Romans and I loved this question, so here ya go! "Contrast the life of a person who is a slave to sin and a person who is a slave to righteousness. What are the major differences?"
2. In verse 11, Paul said to reckon or consider yourself "dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." This doesn't just "happen." It's something we must do daily. What does this look like practically?
3. We have been set free to live a life of holiness and follow our Lord! There is freedom in slavery! Are you enjoying that freedom or still living in some type of prison or bondage of sin? What can you do about it?

4. It's been called "absurd" that believers continue to live in sin. (I think that's what Paul was trying to say!) Do we see a lot of this today? Is there sin in your own life that you've chosen to hold onto rather than surrender and experience victory? (I hate this question.)

5. Warren Wiersbe writes that this chapter gives three instructions that need to be heeded each day that we live. He said, "KNOW that you have been crucified with Christ and are dead to sin. RECKON this fact to be true in your own life. YIELD your body to the Lord to be used for His glory." Which of these are the most difficult for you, if any?

Kent Hughes wrote, "This chapter is a powerful call to commitment. It is a call to slavery: a call to total obligation, total commitment, total accountability." It's also a chapter about obedience, which isn't a popular word today. I love Bonhoeffer's words, "... cheap grace, the grace which amounts to the justification of sin without the justification of the repentant sinner who departs from sin and from whom it departs. Cheap grace is not the kind of forgiveness of sin which frees us from the toils of sin. Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate ... Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man His life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life."

6. Is there any evidence of "cheap grace" in your life or your perspectives on things?

7. What is your greatest "take-away" from Romans 6?

8. What did you find most challenging? Most confusing?

9. What did you find most encouraging?

See you next week, ladies! Romans 7 promises to be a good one!!! 😊

