

# THE WORK OF CHRIST: OUR SANCTIFICATION

## Romans 6: 1-14

*Please review this week's catechism question.*

### INTRODUCTION

How do people normally behave when they are told they can't do something but there is no penalty for refraining from the activity and engaging in the activity will result in pleasure? For example; many states still have laws that make it illegal for unmarried people to have sexual relations. However these laws are never enforced. If you know that you will not be punished for breaking a rule and will be rewarded with pleasure, will you obey the rule or not?

In the first five chapters of Romans Paul has repeatedly said that God does not declare people acceptable to himself, nor treat them as his dear children because of anything they do, but entirely as a gift, by his grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus. (Rom. 3: 20, 24, 28, 4: 5, 23-25, 5: 1-2, 9-11, 15-21) In other words, sinners are forgiven, declared perfectly righteous, reconciled to God because of what Jesus did, not because of anything they have done. Therefore, why in the world should a justified sinner care about obeying God's laws? Does it matter how a Christian lives? If all my sins (past, present and future) are forgiven because of Christ (2:13) then why should I not sin?

This is the question that Paul begins to address in this passage. (Actually, all of Rom. 6:1 through 8:17 are in one way or another related to this question.) Paul's main point here is that the grace of God delivers those who trust in Christ from the dominating power of sin.

### STUDY

1. The first thing we need to be clear about is who is the "we"? Make a list of what is true of the "we" and "us" from 4:23 to 6:1. Summarize who the "we" is referring to in 6:1.

*You may want to do this in pairs and assign a few verses to each pair and then share to make the entire list.*

- *Those to whom God credits righteousness 4:24*

- *Those who believe in "him who raised Jesus from the dead 4:24*
  - *Those for whom Jesus is Lord 4: 24*
  - *Sinners for whom Jesus was delivered over to death 4:25*
  - *Sinners for whom Jesus was raised for their justification 4:25*
  - *Those who have been justified by faith 5:1*
  - *Those who have peace with God through Jesus (who is their Lord) 5:1*
  - *Those who now stand in grace. They have gained access into this grace through Jesus by their faith. 5:2*
  - *Those who rejoice in the hope of the glory of God 5:2*
  - *Those rejoice in their sufferings 5:3*
  - *Those who know that suffering produces a hope that doesn't disappoint, i.e. that is not a vain hope 5:3-5a*
  - *Those who have had God pour his love into their hearts by the Holy Spirit 5:5*
  - *Those who have been given the Holy Spirit by God 5:5*
  - *Those who were at one time powerless (to do anything to please God or save themselves) 5:6*
  - *Those who were ungodly when Christ died for them. 5:6*
  - *Those whom God loved and demonstrated his love for when Christ died for them. 5:8*
  - *Those who were sinners when Christ died for them. Christ died in behalf of these people. 5:8*
  - *Those who are now justified by the blood of Jesus 5:9*
  - *Those who will be saved from God's wrath through Jesus 5:9*
  - *Those who used to be God's enemies 5:10*
  - *Those who were reconciled to God by Christ's death 5:10*
  - *Those who will be saved through Christ's life 5:10*
  - *Those who rejoice in God through Jesus 5:11*
  - *Those who have received God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness 5:17*
  - *Those who are now reigning in life through Jesus*
  - *Those who will be made righteous through the obedience of Jesus*
- In Paul is talking about Christians. He is asking if Christians should continue to live sin so that grace can increase. NOTE: The preceding list is an awesome list of what is true of you if you are a Christian.*

2. In Romans 5:20 how does Paul describe the relationship between sin and grace?

*Wherever sin increases in its power to condemn and make men miserable, the grace of God increases all the more. Whenever sin increases in its quantity, power and effect, the grace of God "super" increases.*

3. Describe the logic, based on 5:20, that is behind the question that Paul asks in 6:1. Begin by answering this question, "Is it good to experience God's grace?"

*Major premise: It is a joyful thing to experience God's unmerited favor forgiving the guilt of sin. God is glorified by his gracious dealings with sinners.*

*Minor premise: When we sin we experience more of God's grace and God is more glorified for his grace.*

*Conclusion: Let's sin much so that we can enjoy God's grace and increase his glory.*

4. How does Paul feel about this logic? What is his answer to this question in v. 2?

*He says this is absolutely wrong thinking. He is very impassioned and emphatic about the fact that Christians cannot continue to live in or dwell in sin. The reason that Christians will not continue in sin is because they died to sin.*

5. In vv. 3-5, what reason does Paul give for saying that Christians died to sin and so will not continue to live in sin?

*He says that every Christian (That is what Paul means when he says, "all of us who were baptized") is united with Christ in his death in order that they might experience his resurrection life. The reason Christians died to sin and will not continue to live in sin is because they are united with Christ in his death and resurrection. When Jesus died to sin (v. 10) every Christian died with him to sin. When Jesus was raised to live a new life, every Christian was raised with him to live a new life now and a resurrected life in the future (vv. 4-5).*

**The grace of God delivers those who trust in Christ from the dominating power of sin because every Christian is united to Christ in his death and resurrection.**

6. What does it mean that every Christian has died to sin because they died with Christ? The first step in answering this question is to note that in v. 10 we are told that Jesus, when he died, also "died to sin". Therefore, we died to sin in the same way that Jesus died to sin. How did Jesus die to sin?

A popular way to understand the phrase "we died to sin" is summed up in this quote: "A Christian is as responsive to sin as a corpse is to stimulation, i.e., loud noises, smells, being pinched, etc." Why can this

not be what it means based on our dying to sin must be the same as Christ's dying to sin?

*This way of understanding our dying to sin presumes that we used to be responsive to sin's demands but now that we died to sin we are no longer responsive. This cannot be correct because this would mean that Jesus used to be responsive to sin's demands. In other words it would require that we say that Jesus used to sin but now that he has died, he sins no longer. This cannot be as Jesus never sinned (Hebrews 4:15). Therefore, being dead to sin cannot mean that Christians don't sin or that sin has no power over Christians. This is confirmed by the fact that in v. 12 we are commanded to not let sin reign in our mortal bodies. If we were dead to sin in the sense we are no longer responsive to sin's demands, then why would Paul tell Christians to not let sin reign?*

7. So, in what sense did Jesus die to sin? An important clue is to notice all the times that "reign" and its synonyms are used and "slave/slavery" and its synonyms are used and "free/freedom" are used from 5:15-6:23.

*Throughout this passage, Paul describes sin as a power or authority that enslaves men. Christ, by becoming a man, placed himself in the concentration camp with us and under the demands of our slave master, sin. He subjected himself to live in the world ruled over by sin and Satan. However, with this important difference; he never submitted to sin's demands. He never believed sin's promises and gave in to sin's demand to find security and happiness in obeying its commands. But he voluntarily chose to live in the world dominated by sin. So when he died he died to the demands of sin to trust its promises. He left behind sin's tyranny in this world and now lives out from under the tyranny of sin. This is what has happened to every Christian.*

8. According to vv. 2-5, apart from trusting in Christ/being baptized into Christ, does the Christian do anything to achieve the status of being dead to sin?

*No. Being dead to sin is a condition, a state of being, a fact of the Christian life. No Christian makes himself or herself dead to sin. They are dead to sin by virtue of being united to Christ.*

9. Verses 5-7 describe how we died to sin. Outline the cause-effect logic of vv. 5-7.

*We are united with Christ in his death, which guarantees we will be raised with him. This is a certainty because we know by teaching and by experience that our old man was crucified with Christ. The result of our old man being crucified with Christ is that our body of sin is abolished, nullified, done away with. The result of having our body of sin done away with is that we no longer obey sin as slaves obey their masters. The reason we do not obey the commands of sin any longer is that dead slaves are free from the tyranny of their master.*

**10.** What does Paul mean by the phrase “old self” (literally “old man”)? (CLUE: Note the use of “old” in 1 Cor. 5: 7-8 and “old self” in Eph. 4: 21-22, Col. 3:9. Please also note Paul’s argument in 5: 15-19.).

*Our “old self” is our old non-Christian, unbelieving self. All who are “in Adam” live in a state of sin and condemnation. “In Adam” is our old self. When we were united to Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit, through faith and baptism we left behind our old non-Christian self. Our life of seeking all our happiness in the things of this world ended. Our living as if this world is the only reality ended. Our life lived without Christ, separate from God, indifferent to the things of God is over. This is a stated fact, this is not something I do. My old way of life is dead; I do not make it dead. When Christ died to life in this world of sin, so did everyone who belongs to Christ.*

**11.** What does Paul mean by the “body of sin” and in what sense has it been nullified or abolished or rendered powerless (NIV margin)? (CLUE: Note Paul’s use of body in 6:12, 7:24, 8:13, 12:1).

*Paul is using body in a metaphorical sense. It stands for me and my relationship to the world I live in. Everything I am and do is expressed through my body. As a non-Christian, everything I do in thought, emotions, actions, belief structures, thinking about reality, etc. is sin (See Rom. 1: 18-23, 3: 9-18). Every use of my body as a non-Christian and the capacities of my personhood is sin. When my old self was crucified with Christ, my “body’s” relationship to sin was forever altered.*

**12.** The result of my body’s sinful response to sin’s demands being broken is that I am no longer a slave to sin. What does it mean to be a slave to sin and what does it mean that I am no longer a slave to sin?

*Slaves must obey their master. As a non-Christian, I am not able to not sin. That is the meaning of being a slave to sin. I must obey sin’s demands. But now that my old man has been crucified with Christ and as a result my*

*personhood’s necessary response to sin is broken, I am now able to not sin and there is a day coming, when I am resurrected, that I will not be able to sin. I am currently in the condition of being able to resist sin’s demands because my body of sin has been nullified or rendered powerless. You are free to not sin. Before you were united to Christ everything you did was sin. You were free to sin but you were not free to not sin. You need to understand that our slavery to sin is voluntary. In our unbelieving condition, all we want to do is sin. Now that your old, non-Christian life was killed with Christ, while you still live in this mortal body you do not live as a person who must sin. Your old affection for sin and for self-dependence and self-glorification is broken. Things that were pleasurable to you are no longer pleasurable because you don’t want to obey sin anymore. You see this quite plainly in the final result. You are no longer a slave to sin.*

**13.** Do you know, in your experience, that the power of sin over you is broken? Are you able to not sin? In other words do you, at times, obey God from a heart of faith and for his glory?

**The grace of God delivers those who trust in Christ from the dominating power of sin because dead slaves are free from the control of their masters.**

**14.** Not only are we united with Christ in his death but we also will be united with him in his resurrection (vv. 4, 5 & 8). In v. 10 Paul says that the life Christ now lives, he “lives to God”. What does it mean that Christ “lives to God”? How does Christ’s being resurrected to “live to God” affect us?

*Jesus is living in the presence of God in a resurrected, glorified body. While Jesus is fully God he is also, fully human. He is the first man raised from the dead and living in the state that all who are in him will live forever. His experience as a resurrected, glorified human will be the experience of every Christian. What is his experience in heaven? He lives in the fullness of the pleasure of God. Psalm 16: 11 is quoted by Peter as applying to Jesus (Acts 2:24-28) and it says, “You have made known to me the path of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” Right now, Jesus is living in the full enjoyment of God. He is experiencing what every Christian will one day experience, the joy of living with God forever. This is what we were made for and what we are saved for.*

*What is new for the Christian is that we have hearts that now love God and long for one thing, to live with him forever. It is our ambition to know this*

great God, to love him, to please him. It is so easy to talk about the Christian life in purely moral terms or in the language of duty or service. But to share with Christ in his resurrection is to have a new affection born in us for God. The life that Jesus is living is a life lived to God and so this is the life he has given to every Christian, a life directed to God. Paul talks about enjoying this life with God at the resurrection because that is when we will know it fully. But by doing this he shows us that this is how Christians live life in the present. They have their eyes fixed on the prize, life lived in the enjoyment of God forever. Psalm 73:25 is the affection that every Christian is given by virtue of being united with Christ. “Whom have I in heaven but you and earth has nothing I desire but you.” I don’t live a moral life for the sake of being moral. I want to live a moral life because I want to please my heavenly Father. I don’t want to read my Bible, pray, and go to church because I enjoy these activities in themselves. I do them because I want to know God. I don’t talk with others about Christ because it is my duty. I love to have others love this great God because he alone is worthy.

15. Do you find in yourself longings for God? Do you yearn to “live to God” and to enjoy God forever in heaven?

**The grace of God delivers those who trust in Christ from the dominating power of sin because resurrection life is lived to God.**

16. What are the five commands Paul gives in vv. 11-12?

1. We are to consider (count, reckon) ourselves dead to sin but alive to God because we are in Christ Jesus who died to sin and lives to God.
2. We are to not let sin reign in our mortal bodies.
3. We are not to offer the parts of our bodies to sin as instruments of wickedness.
4. We are to offer ourselves to God as those alive from the dead.
5. We are to offer the parts of our bodies to him as instruments of righteousness.

17. How would you know if you were obeying v. 11?

Paul is telling us that we must think about ourselves in a particular way. Paul commands us to consider that what he just described in vv. 1-10 is actually true for you. I am no longer a non-Christian. I no longer am subject to sin’s demands. I no longer have to sin. I am free to not sin. Christ is my life. God is my joy. My ultimate ambition and hope is to live in the enjoyment of God forever. This is what I am living for. I want to know Christ. I want to be like Christ. This is what I think about, this is what I aim for in everything that I do.

I consider myself dead to a life that is in pursuit of the pleasures of this world and alive to the pleasures of life with Christ. This is what you must fix your attention upon as a Christian.

18. Why does Paul call our bodies “mortal” in v. 12? Why is it a “mortal body” and not a “body of sin”? (HINT: What kind of body does Jesus now have?)

While we have been delivered from sin’s power, we are not free from sin’s voice, its influence over us because, unlike Jesus, we do not yet live in our immortal bodies. Although we do not have to obey the voice of sin, yet we can still choose to do so.

19. According to v. 12, how would a Christian end up sinning?

Sin is continually offering us pleasure through illegitimate means. It is commanding us to seek our pleasure apart from God and his ways. We will sin when we obey the command of sin to pursue our pleasure apart from God and his ways.

20. In v. 13, how do Christians keep from sinning? (“Parts of your body” does not refer only to your physical body but to all the capacities of your humanity.)

There is both a defensive and offensive part to our fight against sin. We don’t use our senses of sight, hearing, speaking, tasting, touching and our capacities of thinking, feeling, deciding in the service of sin. We don’t use our God-given capacities to pursue pleasure apart from God, without reference to God, without depending upon God. Rather, we offer ourselves and our capacities to God as resurrected people, believing his promises, loving what he loves using our faculties to delight in him and please him. We engage all of our human capacities to pursue all our pleasure in God forever by believing his promises and obeying his commands.

21. How are you doing at obeying these commands? Where are you most struggling against the commands of sin to pursue your pleasure apart from God? Are you engaged in a war with sin?

**The grace of God delivers those who trust in Christ from the dominating power of sin because we are engaged in a war with sin.**