

# Romans

## Bible Study

### Living in Grace

#### Romans 6:1—2

Romans 6, 7 and 8 all deal with the Christian life, specifically our sanctification. Sanctification is the process of separating ourselves from the world and unto God (which is what being holy is all about). We are positionally sanctified when we are saved (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11), however, we are also told to sanctify ourselves (progressive or experiential sanctification). This is the process of living our standing (position) in Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:3—4; 2 Timothy 2:19—21; Ephesians 4:22—24; Colossians 3:5—8). Ultimately, we will be fully sanctified at the rapture (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Chapter 6 of Romans lays out the argument that we don't have to sin. It emphasizes our standing, or our position in Christ. Before we were saved, there was nothing we could do that would please God. We were born in the line of Adam who introduced sin and death into the human race. Because of Adam's sin, we are all born into sin, and that sinful nature is not capable of righteousness. Many people think that all it takes to please God is to try harder. If we do something wrong, it is human nature to work harder at not failing. When we try harder to please God, we are actually doing so in the power of the sinful old nature, the flesh, which can never please God.

The flesh is activated when a person attempts to obey the Ten Commandments. Those who think the Law was given for us to follow today are using the old nature to try to adhere to it. Since God has not put the Law upon us today (we are under grace, not the Law—Romans 6:14), trying to obey it in order to please Him is not only a waste of time, it is detrimental to the Christian walk. As with Israel, following the Law only produced death. Those who desire to live under the Law, thinking they contain instructions for believers to follow today, are doing what Paul told the Galatians to stop doing. They were following another gospel (Galatians 1:6), and were called foolish for not obeying the truth (Galatians 3:1). They had begun living by the Spirit, but were attempting to perfect themselves by acts of the flesh (Galatians 3:3). There is nothing of worth in the old nature. We can't tame it, pretty it up or use it to please God. This is why we are not to seek after self worth, boost our self-confidence, believe in ourselves or buy into the lie that we have some built-in intrinsic value. We are only of value to God when the old nature is dead and we allow Him to take control.

#### **Dead to sin** (verse 2)

It's quite interesting to count how many times Paul uses terms relating to death, sin and life in chapter 6. More than 15 references are about dying, and over 10 references are about living. Also interesting is that the word sin is used 16 times. Romans 6 is about dying to sin and being alive to righteousness.

Verse 2 is presented with the assumption that the believer is dead to sin. This verse sets the stage for the rest of the chapter by explaining what this means and how we can know this is true. In order to understand why we are dead to sin we must understand our position in Christ. Lacking this knowledge will lead to a failed Christian walk.

We are dead to sin because the old nature has been crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6) which completely destroyed the body of sin. According to Colossians 2:11, believers have been circumcised by Christ. This circumcision was a cutting off of the body of sins of the flesh. We are no longer connected to the old sinful nature, but are now connected to the new nature given to us by God (Ephesians 4:24). This new nature is in the likeness of God and is therefore righteous and holy.

#### **Completely identified with Christ** (verse 3)

According to Paul, we are completely and absolutely identified with Jesus Christ. Believers are identified so closely with Christ that we are described as the Body of Christ (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians

4:12; 5:30). Our identification with Him is wrapped up in being baptized into Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). People almost always associate baptism with water even though the Bible often uses baptism apart from water (Matthew 3:11; 20:23; 1 Corinthians 10:2). It's not correct to think water when baptism is mentioned. Baptism is actually about identification. When people were baptized by John, they were actually being identified with the Little Flock of believers. When Israel was baptized unto Moses, they were fully identified with Moses as they wandered in the wilderness. When we are baptized into Christ, we are fully identified with Him. We are even identified with His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:). Any time the Bible speaks of baptism, substitute the word identification.

Since we have been baptized into Christ, we are fully identified with Him. This is why Romans 6 says that we have died, been buried and have been raised with Him. This is also why we are coheirs with Christ (Romans 8:17). Just as certain that Jesus' body of flesh was put to death, our body of flesh has also died. Just as He was raised in newness of life, we have also been raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). Just as certain that Christ died, we have died to the hold that sin had on us before we were saved. He was put to death once never to die again because he controls death, death does not control Him. We, likewise, are not controlled by death, nor by the body of death, our old nature. It has once for all been taken care of when we died with Christ.

### **Alive to Christ**

Since we are completely identified with Christ in His death, we are now also fully identified with Him in His life. Not only does this speak of being eternally secure in our heavenly destination, it also speaks of the freedom we now have from the constraints of sin. We once had no power over sin, being completely overcome by the power of sin. We now have been made free from sin so that we can be a slave of righteousness (Romans 6:18—20).

We not only have died with Christ, but we also have been made alive in Him. Since we are alive to Christ, we are assured that we will also live with Him eternally (Romans 6:5, 8). Being alive with Christ does not begin at the resurrection, but at the point of salvation. Our eternal life is not something we need to wait for because we have already been given it. This is why God sees us as already having been glorified (Romans 8:30) and seated in heaven with Him (Ephesians 2:6).

### **Our walk**

Knowing this should change how we live our lives. We were bought with a price so we now need to use our body to glorify God (1 Corinthians 6:20). Our walk should now reflect our position in Christ. We are now to walk in the newness of life, not in the manner that we were born into. We are to follow the Second Adam, Jesus Christ, not the original Adam, who brought the whole human race into sin. Instead of living for self, we need to live for God's glory.

We do this by applying what Paul is teaches in this chapter. We are dead to sin, now we need to live as if our old nature has been put to death. If we are completely identified with Jesus Christ's death, then the old nature is dead and so there is no room for a believer to sin. We consider ourselves dead to sin and live knowing that sin is not to dominate our life any longer. God expects us to live a sin-free life. When we fill our minds with Him, there is no room for anything else. We need to continually renew our minds walking in the power of the Holy Spirit (Colossians 2:6; Galatians 5:16). There is absolutely no reason why we have to sin, however, there is a strong pull for us to please the flesh. This is the struggle of the Christian life that is highlighted in Romans 7.

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