

## Introduction to Romans Chapter 6

Romans chapter 6 marks a decisive shift from **justification** to **sanctification**. Having established in chapter 5 that grace reigns where sin once ruled, Paul now anticipates a dangerous misunderstanding: If grace abounds where sin increases, should believers continue in sin so that grace may abound even more? His answer is immediate and emphatic—“**By no means!**”

In Epistle to the Romans chapter 6, Paul addresses the ethical implications of the gospel. Justification by faith does not produce moral indifference; it produces transformation. Grace does not license sin—it liberates from its dominion.

The chapter centers on union with Christ. Believers are identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Through baptism, Paul illustrates this spiritual reality: we have died to sin and been raised to walk in newness of life. Sin’s authority has been broken. The “old self” has been crucified with Christ so that we are no longer slaves to sin.

Paul then introduces the language of slavery to clarify spiritual allegiance. Every person serves a master. Before salvation, we were slaves to sin, leading to death. In Christ, we become slaves of righteousness, leading to holiness and eternal life. Freedom in the gospel is not autonomy; it is a transfer of lordship.

Romans 6 therefore confronts the believer with a critical truth: identity determines behavior. Because we have died with Christ, we must reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. The imperative (“present yourselves to God”) flows from the indicative (“you have died with Christ”). Theology grounds ethics.

The chapter concludes with one of the most well-known contrasts in Scripture: “*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Sin pays what it owes—death. Grace gives what we could never earn—life.

Romans 6 teaches that the gospel not only justifies; it transforms. Grace does not merely forgive the penalty of sin—it breaks its power and establishes a new way of living under the reign of righteousness.

Father,

As we open Romans chapter 6, teach us what it means to be united with Christ in His death and resurrection. Help us to understand that we are no longer slaves to sin, but alive to You through Jesus.

Give us grace to reckon ourselves dead to sin and present our lives as instruments of righteousness. Strengthen us to walk in newness of life, empowered by Your Spirit.

May this truth transform our thinking, our choices, and our obedience.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Romans 6:1–4**

“So, what should we do? Should we keep on sinning so that God can keep on showing us more and more grace? Absolutely not! Since we have ‘died’ to sin, how can we keep living in it? Don’t you know that when we were baptized into Christ Jesus, we were sharing in His death? We were buried with Him through baptism into death so that, just as Christ was brought back to life by the glorious power of the Father, we also can now live a brand-new life.”

### **The Context:**

Paul has just finished saying that "where sin increased, grace increased even more." He knows exactly how the human mind works. Someone is going to say, "Wait a minute—if God gets glory for being gracious, and my sin gives Him the chance to be gracious, then I’m actually helping God by sinning! Let's party!" In Chapter 6, Paul shuts this down. He explains that grace isn't a "Get Out of Jail Free" card that lets you stay a criminal; it's a Heart Transplant that makes you a different person.

### **The Meaning of "Died to Sin" and "New Life":**

In modern American English, we’d say, "You can't go back to your ex after you’ve already moved on," or "That’s not who you are anymore."

- "Died to Sin": This doesn't mean you never sin again, but it means the relationship has changed. Sin used to be your "Master" or your "Spouse." Now, that legal bond is broken.
- "Buried and Raised": Baptism is a physical drama of this reality. Going under the water represents the "funeral" of your old, selfish self. Coming out of the water represents "walking out of the grave" as a new version of yourself.

### **The Core Lesson:**

Grace is for transformation, not just for forgiveness. Paul is teaching us that you can't claim to be "saved" by Jesus while choosing to stay exactly the way you were. If you have truly been "joined" to Jesus, His "death" becomes your death to your old habits, and His "life" becomes the power you use to live differently.

### **The Illustration: The Escaped Prisoner**

Imagine a man spent 20 years in a dark, damp prison cell. He was a criminal, and he deserved to be there. One day, the Governor gives him a full pardon. The gates are opened, and he is a free man.

Does that man walk out of the gate, look back at the prison, and say, "You know, I really liked that moldy bread and the cold stone floor. I think I'll just stay in my cell and act like a prisoner, even though I'm forgiven"?

Of course not! He’s "dead" to that prison. The "Prisoner Version" of him is gone. He has a new life now. If he went back to the cell, he would be denying the very freedom the Governor gave him.

Romans 6:1–4 is Paul saying: "Sin was your prison cell. Grace didn't just open the door so you could sit in the dark; it brought you out into the sunlight. Why would you want to go back to the 'moldy bread' of your old mistakes?"

## **Romans 6:5–11**

“If we have been united with Him in a death like His, we will certainly also be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our ‘old self’ was nailed to the cross with Him. This happened so that the power of sin over our bodies would be crushed, and we wouldn't be slaves to sin any longer. For when a person dies, they are legally free from the power of sin. Now, since we died with Christ, we believe we will also live with Him. Death has no more power over Him, and it has no more power over us. So, you should look at yourselves this way: consider yourselves ‘dead’ to the power of sin, but ‘alive’ to God through Jesus Christ.”

### **The Context:**

Paul is getting into the "psychology" of faith. He knows that even though we are forgiven, we still feel the pull of our old habits. In verses 1–4, he explained the legal fact (we are new). Now, in verses 5–11, he explains the mental shift. He tells us that our "old self"—that version of us that was addicted to selfishness and pride—is gone. It was executed on the cross with Jesus. Now, we have to learn to think like the new people we actually are.

### **The Meaning of "United" and "Count Yourself":**

In modern American English, we'd say, "You've got to get your head in the game," or "Stop acting like you still work for your old boss."

- "United" (Grafted): Paul uses a word that describes how two plants are joined together so they share the same sap and life. What happened to Jesus (Death and Resurrection) is now what is happening to you.
- "Our Old Self Was Nailed": Your old identity didn't just "fade away"; it was legally executed.
- "Count" (Logizomai): This is that accounting term again! It means to "calculate" or "reckon." You have to look at the facts and say, "According to the books, I am dead to sin."

### **The Core Lesson:**

Identity determines behavior. Paul is teaching us that the secret to beating temptation isn't just 'trying harder'; it's remembering who you are. If you believe you are a "sinner who is struggling to be good," you will eventually fail. But if you believe you are a "new person who is dead to sin," you start to see temptation as something that doesn't belong to you anymore.

### **The Illustration: The Freed Slave**

Imagine a person was born into slavery under a cruel master. For 30 years, every time that master barked an order, the slave jumped. It was a "reflex."

One day, the slave is set free by a new King. He moves to a new kingdom and becomes a citizen. However, a week later, his old master walks by on the street and yells, "Hey! Get over here and carry my bags!"

The man's heart starts to race. His muscles twitch. He almost starts to walk over because he's so used to obeying. But then he stops and remembers: "Wait. Legally, that man is not my boss. He has no power over me. I am dead to his authority."

Romans 6:5–11 is Paul saying: "Sin is your old master. He's going to keep shouting orders at you. Your job isn't to fight him; it's to remember that you don't work for him anymore. You are 'dead' to his voice and 'alive' to the King."

### **Romans 6:12–14**

“Therefore, do not let sin run the show in your temporary bodies, making you do whatever your selfish desires want. Do not let any part of your body become a tool for doing wrong. Instead, give yourselves completely to God—as people who have been brought from death to life—and offer every part of your body to Him as a tool for doing what is right. Sin will no longer be your master, because you aren't living under the 'Rule Book' of the Law; you are living under the 'Welcome' of God's grace.”

### **The Context:**

Paul has established the "Theory" (you are a new person). Now he moves to the "Practice" (how to move your hands and feet). He knows that even though we are "dead to sin," our bodies have "muscle memory." We have spent years using our mouths to gossip, our eyes to look at things we shouldn't, and our hands to take what isn't ours. Paul is telling us to go through a "re-training" phase. He calls us to stop being a "toolbox for evil" and start being a "toolbox for God."

### **The Meaning of "Instruments" and "Mastery":**

In modern American English, we'd say, "Don't let your cravings drive the bus," or "Put your money where your mouth is."

- "Do Not Let Sin Reign": Sin is like a squatter. It has no legal right to live in your house, but it will try to sit on the throne if you let it. You have to "evict" it daily.
- "Instruments" (Hoplion): In the original language, this word actually refers to weapons of war. Your body parts are like weapons. You can use your tongue as a sword to hurt people, or as a tool to heal them.
- "Under Grace": This is the "Why." You don't fight sin because you're afraid of being punished by the Law; you fight sin because you've been welcomed into a better life by Grace.

### **The Core Lesson:**

Your body is a "neutral" set of tools that follows whoever is in charge. Paul is teaching us that Christianity isn't just a change in your "soul"; it's a change in how you use your "skin." Every morning, you have to decide: "Am I going to hand the keys of my life to my old selfish habits, or am I going to hand them to God?"

## **The Illustration: The Two Musicians**

Imagine a high-quality violin. The violin itself isn't "good" or "bad"—it's just an instrument.

If you give that violin to a toddler, they will use it to make a screeching, horrible noise. They might even use it as a hammer to smash things. The violin is being used as an "instrument of chaos."

But if you take that same violin and give it to a Master Composer, he will use it to create a beautiful masterpiece that brings tears to people's eyes. The violin is now an "instrument of beauty."

Romans 6:12–14 is Paul saying: "Your body is that violin. For years, you let 'Sin' play it, and it sounded like a wreck. But now that you're alive, take the violin out of Sin's hands and hand it to God. Let Him play the music of your life instead."

## **Romans 6:15–19**

“So, since God’s grace has set us free from the Law, does that mean we can go ahead and sin? Of course not! Don’t you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you have obeyed from the heart the teaching we passed on to you. Now you are free from your old master, sin, and you have become slaves to your new master, righteousness.”

## **The Context:**

Paul is circling back to the "Gotcha" question from verse 1, but he's using a different angle: Ownership. In the Roman world, slavery was a visible, everyday reality. Paul uses this gritty imagery to make a point about human nature. He's saying that "total independence" is a myth. Everyone is "hooked" on something. You are either being driven by your impulses (Sin) or led by your Creator (God). You aren't choosing if you will have a master; you are choosing which master you will serve.

## **The Meaning of "Slave to Obedience":**

In modern American English, we'd say, "You are what you do," or "Whatever you feed grows, and whatever you starve dies."

- "Slave of Whatever You Obey": If you keep saying "Yes" to a specific habit, eventually you lose the power to say "No." The habit starts to own you.
- "Obeyed from the Heart": This isn't forced labor. This is a "slave of love." It's choosing to follow God because you actually want what He has for you.

· "Free from Sin": This doesn't mean sin is gone; it means the title deed to your life has been signed over to a new Owner.

### **The Core Lesson:**

Freedom isn't the ability to do whatever you want; it's the ability to do what is right. Paul is teaching us that sin is a master that pays you in death, while God is a Master who pays you in life. When we "submit" to God, we aren't losing our freedom—we are finally finding the purpose we were built for.

### **The Illustration: The Two Apprenticeships**

Imagine you want to be a professional chef. You have two choices for your apprenticeship.

The first chef is a Chaos Chef. He tells you, "There are no rules! Throw whatever you want in the pan! Use dirty knives! Smoke while you cook!" At first, it feels like "freedom." But within a week, the kitchen is a mess, the food is poisonous, and you've lost your job. You became a "slave" to the mess.

The second chef is a Master Chef. He is strict. He says, "Wash your hands. Chop the onions exactly this size. Respect the fire." At first, it feels like "slavery" to the rules.

But after a year of obeying the Master Chef, you can create world-class meals. You are "free" to cook anything because you submitted to the discipline.

Romans 6:15–19 is Paul saying: "Sin promises you a 'no-rules' life, but it ends in a wreck. God asks for your 'obedience,' but it ends with you becoming a master of your own life. Choose the Master who actually wants you to succeed."

### **Romans 6:20–23**

“When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in death. But now you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God. The benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

### **The Context:**

Paul is bringing his "Master/Slave" argument to a close by looking at the End Result. He asks his readers to do an "audit" of their past lives. He says, "Look back at the time you were 'free' from God's rules. What did it actually get you? Did it make you happy? No, it just left you with things you're ashamed of now." He concludes with a sharp contrast between what we "earn" on our own and what God "gives" us for free.

### **The Meaning of "Wages" vs. "Gift":**

In modern American English, we'd say, "You get what's coming to you," versus "Winning the lottery."

- "Wages" (Opsōnia): This was the word for a soldier's pay or a daily salary. It is something you have earned by your work. If you work for Sin, Sin is a boss that is "legally obligated" to pay you in death.
- "Free Gift" (Charisma): This is the opposite of a wage. It is a favor or a present that has nothing to do with your performance.
- "Holiness" (Sanctification): This is the "benefit" or "fruit." Living for God starts producing a life that actually works, leading toward an eternal future.

### **The Core Lesson:**

You can't out-earn God, and you don't want to. Paul is teaching us that the "freedom" to sin is actually a death sentence, while "slavery" to God is the only path to true life. We are all working for a paycheck. Paul's goal is to get us to quit our "job" with Sin and accept the "inheritance" from God.

### **The Illustration: The Two Paychecks**

Imagine two different people at the end of a long career.

The first person worked for a Corrupt Company. They did everything the boss asked—lied, cheated, and stayed late. On their last day, they walk into the office to get their "wages." The boss hands them a final paycheck, but when they open the envelope, it's a Termination Notice and a bill for all the damage they caused. Their "pay" is ruin.

The second person didn't even have a job; they were an Adopted Child of a billionaire. They didn't work a single hour for the company. On their 21st birthday, the Father sits them down and hands them a "gift"—the keys to the entire estate.

They didn't earn the keys (Wages); they received them because of who their Father is (Gift).

Romans 6:20–23 is Paul saying: "Stop trying to earn a living from Sin. The only thing Sin can pay you is Death. Instead, step into the family of God, where the 'pay' is a gift you could never afford—life that lasts forever."

Father,

Thank You for the truth of Your Word and for the freedom we have in Christ. Seal in our hearts what You have taught us. Help us to live as those who are dead to sin and alive to You.

Strengthen us to resist temptation and to present our lives as instruments of righteousness. May Your grace continue to shape our obedience and deepen our devotion.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

