

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

— A Study of Romans —

Lesson Twelve

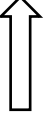
Romans 6:15-23

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

Romans 6:22

Day 1

Pray:



Father, I need your Spirit to teach me and help me understand what you are saying in your word. Help me to be diligent to dig into your word and find the treasures there and take them into my heart and live them out in my life.

Read: Romans 6:15-23. Read it again in another translation such as NLT.

Observe:

- Write key words and themes, repeated words, or phrases. Circle on your Scripture pages any transition words (therefore, but, because, if/then etc.)
- Are there any commands to be obeyed, or truths to be trusted?
- What questions do you have about the text?

Day 2- Romans 6:15-16

We ended the previous lesson on verse 14 where Paul reminds believers that we are not under the law as a system of salvation any longer. We are now saved by grace. So again, Paul anticipates a question that might arise—**If I don't earn salvation through the law, do I still need to obey God?**

For Discussion:

How would you answer this question the way it is phrased above and why?

1. In verse 16 Paul presents a truth that is a theme of the rest of the passage. Fill in the blanks. You are _____ of the one whom you _____.(ESV)
2. What does Paul present as the only two options to be slaves to, in verse 16?

Digging Deeper

What does Jesus have to say about this subject in Matthew 6? Why do you think this is true?

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other...Matthew 6:24

Scholar's Note: "The question of man's being free in the sense of having no master at all simply does not arise. The only alternatives open to him are to have sin, or to have God, as his master (the man who imagines he is free, because he acknowledges no god but his own ego, is deluded; for the service of one's own ego is the very essence of the slavery of sin.)¹

Picture and Ponder:

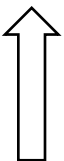
It is helpful for us to understand the kind of slavery in Paul's mind as he made this analogy in Romans 6. It was very different from the slavery of America's past. "Roman slavery had distinct traits. First, slavery was neither ethnic nor racial in character. Neither skin color nor clothes necessarily indicated enslaved status. Second, enslaved people were often paid for their work at normal rates, so they could save their wages to buy their freedom. Third, slavery was not necessarily permanent; slaves typically gained their freedom before old age. Fourth, they labored in fields and homes, but also as physicians, estate managers, or city treasurers. Fifth, people became slaves by birth, by kidnapping, by defeat in battle, and also by selling themselves into slavery. Why? Because a master would provide food, shelter, and possibly an education. Thus, people occasionally chose slavery as a pathway to a better life."²

3. What does slavery to sin lead to according to verse 16?

a. What does slavery to obedience lead to?

For Discussion:

Remember that the essence of sin is to live as if there is no God. Slavery to sin doesn't always look like slavery to something bad—like being enslaved to drugs or alcohol. What can slavery to the notion that there is no God look like? When someone (or you) offers themselves as an obedient slave of sin, what are the kinds of things they obey?



Lord thank you for delivering me from slavery to sin! Convict me when I serve myself and obey sin rather than you and help me to quickly turn away from that master and back to you.

Day 3- Romans 6:17-18

1. In verse 17, Paul thanks God for the Roman believers who have committed their lives to the truths of the gospel. How have they changed?
 - a. What is the opposite of obeying from the heart?

2. In verse 16 Paul talks about being a slave of obedience. In verse 18 what does he call this kind of slavery?

Digging Deeper:

How does the verse below describe slavery?

They promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you. 2 Peter 2:19 (NLT)

- Is there anything in your life that controls you other than God? (Think about how you spend your time and money, and about what consumes your thoughts.)

For Discussion:

We learn in verse 18 that to be truly set free from sin you must become a slave of righteousness. What kind of freedom do you gain from being a slave to righteousness?



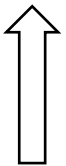
We get a clue to how *freedom* is found in being a *slave* to righteousness, with the phrase *obedient from the heart* (v.17). God so changes our heart that when we put our faith in Jesus for salvation, we want to obey him, and we are now able to obey him! We are free to obey—no longer held captive by sin, and we want to obey—we are not being forced against our will.

- ◆ What do you learn about the freedom found in obeying God (being a slave to righteousness) from the following verses?

- ◆ What in these verses inspires the devotion required of a true follower (slave) of Jesus?

Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. 1 John 5:3 (NLT)

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. John 15:9-11



Thank you Jesus that you love me as the Father loves you! Nothing is better than this! Help me to live in this reality and find joy in obeying and loving you.

Day 4- Romans 6:19

Scholar's Note: "Paul admits that the analogy is imperfect when he acknowledges that he speaks "in human terms" (Rom. 6:19). To use an analogy is not to endorse slavery in all its forms. In fact, Paul undermined slavery, especially in Philemon, for it perverts God's design for human dignity. The analogy works because the common thread is full-time service and absolute loyalty. Anyone can have two employers, but no one can belong to two masters, for total devotion is essential to slavery and to discipleship."³

1. Paul is using the analogy of slavery which his readers were well acquainted with to illustrate the life of a true believer. What are the two masters Paul depicts in verse 19?
 - a. What do these two very different lives of service lead to?

Sanctification- the process of growing in holiness; the process of God's grace working in the life of a believer to transform them into the image of Jesus.

Digging Deeper:

Romans teaches us that justification (being declared righteous) leads to sanctification. (growing in holiness). This small verse in Hebrews teaches us something about each of those. The first half of the verse (in red) tells us about justification. What do you learn about justification?

- What do you learn about sanctification from the second half of the verse?

For by a single offering he [Jesus] has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. Hebrews 10:14

Picture and Ponder:

"Justification is an act once and for all and forever.
Sanctification is a continuous process.

Justification is an act of God the Father as Judge.
Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Justification takes place outside me.

Sanctification takes place inside me.

Justification removes the guilt of my sin.

Sanctification removes the pollution of my sin.”⁴

For Discussion:

Verse 19 states the fact that when you give yourself to sin it leads to more sin. Why do you think giving yourself over to sin makes it easier to sin next time? Do you think the opposite is true- when you give yourself to holiness it leads to more holiness?



Verse 19 says to *present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification*. Other translations say, *give yourself to be slaves, offer yourself, yield your body and faculties, surrender yourself entirely*. So how do we live this out? Tim Keller helps us understand: “It means coming to daily situations and recognizing the possibility of treating God as my highest good and thus my Master, or of treating something else as my highest good and thus my master.”⁵

- ◆ Do you believe God is your highest good? Why?

- ◆ Write out a prayer based on your answer.

- ◆ If you are brave enough, share a situation from your daily life where you might struggle to see God as your highest good. Brainstorm with your group on how to see God as your highest good in that situation and how it might play out.

Day 5- Romans 6:20-23

1. How does verse 20 reiterate that you can't serve two masters?

Picture and Ponder:

“When someone says that they are rejecting Christianity because they want to be free, they are right only in the narrow sense that they’re free from living in the way that will most satisfy and fulfill them; in every other way they are slaves.”⁶

2. In verse 21, what change does Paul imply there has been once you are no longer a slave to sin? (See NLT)

Digging Deeper

In verse 21 Paul teaches that the final outcome of slavery to sin is death. But he says there is also fruit in this life that comes from being a slave to sin. What kind of fruit does slavery to sin produce according to the following verse? How is this a kind of living death?

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. Titus 3:3

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19-21

3. In this week’s passage, Paul uses three different words to describe the same reality: slaves of *obedience* (verse 16), slaves of *righteousness* (verse 18), and now in v. 22 slaves of *God*. What does the fruit you get from slavery to God lead to according to verse 22?

Digging Deeper:

Paul says that the fruit you get from being a slave to God leads to sanctification and eternal life. What is the fruit that comes from being a slave to God according to the verses below?

- How does this fruit lead to sanctification (growing to be more like Jesus)?

- Paul will introduce the Spirit in chapter 8, but what do you learn about the Spirit here and how is the Spirit related to the fruit?

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law... ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Galatians 5:16-18, 22-25

4. What does sin earn for us according to verse 23?
 - a. How does this differ from the way we get eternal life?

Scholar's Note: "Wage" translates *opsōnion*, a term for the daily allowance for food and necessities. Masters gave this to slaves and commanders gave it to soldiers to sustain their lives. Reversing the image, Paul states, "The daily stipend of sin is death."⁷



To be a slave of God is to be bound to him in devotion and service, sealed with the mark of his ownership—his Spirit—in order to carry out his will as your own, all the while enjoying the full benefits of the riches of his kindness now and forevermore. All this because of Jesus!

Contemplate on the Psalm's passage below by reading it through a couple times slowly and then spend some time in prayer praising God for sending Jesus to buy you out of wretched slavery to sin and to bring you into his glorious kingdom.

*Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!*

² *Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
whom he has redeemed from trouble...*

*Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,
prisoners in affliction and in irons,*

¹¹ *for they had rebelled against the words of God,
and spurned the counsel of the Most High.*

¹² *So he bowed their hearts down with hard labor;
they fell down, with none to help.*

¹³ *Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.*

¹⁴ *He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
and burst their bonds apart.*

¹⁵ *Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,
for his wondrous works to the children of man!*

¹⁶ *For he shatters the doors of bronze
and cuts in two the bars of iron. Psalm 107:1-2, 10-16*

One Thing:

What is one thing from this week's study that God has impressed on your heart, or convicted you about; is there something new that you learned or is there a verse you want to ponder and meditate on?

Praise God for this and thank him for the work he is doing in your life. Ask him to help you remember this and live it out for his glory.

¹ Cranfield, C.E.B. Romans A Shorter Commentary p.143 William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1985

² Doriani, Daniel M.. Romans (pp. 299-300). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

³ Doriani, Daniel M.. Romans (p. 300). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Martin Lloyd Jones Written in Their Hearts sermon <https://www.mljtrust.org/sermons/book-of-romans/6/>

⁵ Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (p. 170). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

⁶ Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You - Romans Series) (pp. 171-172). The Good Book Company. Kindle Edition.

⁷ Doriani, Daniel M.. Romans (p. 309). P&R Publishing. Kindle Edition.

