

FREE  
April 5, 2020  
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Romans 6:1-14

Do sweet little old ladies sin? Do innocent little babies sin? Did Billy Graham sin? When we think of sweet little old ladies, innocent little babies, and God's man Billy Graham, we probably have a hard time imagining any of them having a "sin problem." Even if people seem sweet, kind, gentle, even spiritual, **what kinds of sin might they still struggle with? Old ladies? Babies? Billy?**

In the history of mankind Jesus was the only sinless person and that's because when He was here He was both God and man. If we trusts Him as Savior and Lord He makes it possible for us to be free from slavery to our sinful nature.

When the Bible tells followers of Christ NOT to let sin "*reign in our mortal body*" and to NO LONGER be "*enslaved to sin,*" it begs a couple of questions:

- I've never been a pastor (just a pastor's kid) but I have to assume one of the most common questions people ask pastors begins with "*Is it a sin to \_\_\_\_\_?*" So, how do we know if something is a sin? We'll talk about that.
- Even if I know how to spot a sin in my life, how can I really be FREE from letting my sinful tendencies run my life? We'll talk about that too.

Big Idea: Trusting Christ as Savior and Lord brings freedom from slavery to sin. The question: how does a Christ-follower fully embrace and enjoy that freedom?

Before we dive into the text, some context: God's law was given so people could see how sinful they were. God's grace was given to cover that sin in forgiveness. In Romans 5:20, Paul wrote, "*...as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant.*" He anticipated the challenge from the legalistic rule-keepers: "*Are you saying because of grace just sin all you want?*"

Romans 6:1–14 (ESV) [Underlining and emphasis is my own]

**6** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again;

death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

<sup>13</sup> Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

- Paul's first point is this: God's grace isn't a license to sin!
- Paul's convicting question: How can we who died to sin still live in it?
- How many new converts ask themselves, *"If Christ freed me from sin why do I still struggle with it so much?"* **How would you answer them?**
- Here's a historical illustration. In his book "Up from Slavery," Booker T. Washington described what he observed as a nine year old when the slaves were emancipated in the U.S. After much celebration, the sober reality of what freedom meant settled in on the former slaves. Suddenly they had to make a way for themselves.
- The older slaves struggled the most. They were up in years and life on their own would be harder. The old life of slavery seemed comfortable, more realistic, and more feasible.
- Washington wrote, *"Gradually, one by one, stealthily at first, the older slaves began to wander from the slave quarters back to the "big house" to have a whispered conversation with their former owners as to the future."*<sup>ii</sup>
- Chuck Swindoll comments: *"How foolish this appears from the perspective of people who have never known slavery. Yet, Christians—I would say the majority of them—choose slavery over freedom every day. Having been set free, for them to live as free men and women comes neither easily nor naturally. It's a process and, like salvation, it must be accomplished supernaturally. Theologians have given a name to the gradual, internal transformation of a newly freed slave of sin into a fully mature and completely free individual. That term is "sanctification."*<sup>iii</sup>
- **Do you know that term? How would you describe sanctification?**
- Sanctify and sanctification in scripture go all the way back to Exodus.
- In the New Testament Jesus prayed to God the Father in John 17:17 that He would *"Sanctify them [followers of Christ] in the truth."*<sup>iv</sup>
- The word means: [to] **dedicate**, to service and loyalty to God (1Co 1:2); **make holy**, to cause one to have the quality of holiness (1Th 5:23)<sup>v</sup>
- Practically speaking: "The result of this divine sanctification is a person freed from the 'evil inclination' of the human heart and obedient to the will of God."<sup>vi</sup> "...it is the work of the Holy Spirit bringing the whole nature more and more under the influences of the new gracious principles implanted in the soul in regeneration."<sup>vii</sup> [The Holy Spirit making us more like Jesus.]
- We SHOULD be growing to be more like Jesus because we have been IDENTIFIED with Him, with His death, and His resurrection.

- Paul talks about this in verses three through ten. Here is a summary of the key points:
  - We were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism (spiritual not water.)
  - Followers of Christ have been spiritually united with him in His death and we are also spiritually raised to life as He was raised. “Buried with Christ in baptism, raised to walk in newness of life.”
  - Our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.
  - When we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.
  - Since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him.
- Water baptism is NOT a means of salvation (that would make it salvation by a deed and not grace.) **If baptism isn’t necessary why is it important? What does it symbolize to the believer and to others?**
- Galatians 2:20 (ESV) <sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- That brings us to verses eleven through fourteen which are statements of fact and commandments for a follower of Christ. Look at those verses.
  - Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ. [The word “consider” means you count it as a fact you are dead to sin.]
  - Don’t let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires.
  - Don’t “let any part of your body become an instrument to serve sin.”
  - Instead, give yourselves completely to God,” and “use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.”
  - “Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God’s grace.” <sup>viii</sup>
- Verse twelve is the key: Don’t let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires.<sup>ix</sup> How do we do that practically speaking? Let’s circle back to our two questions we mentioned earlier:
  - How do you know if something is a sin so you can avoid it?
  - How does a Christ follower access God’s power to resist sin?
  - Let’s discuss both questions.
- **How do you know if something is a sin?**
- Scripture makes many sins very plain. Examples:
  - The Ten Commandments ([Exodus 20:1-17](#))
  - The Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5–7](#)),
  - [Proverbs 6:16-19](#), [Galatians 5:19-21](#), and [1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#).
- **What about “gray areas” not specifically written in the Bible?**
- John MacArthur poses some great questions to ask ourselves. (<https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A332/what-to-do-in-the-gray-areas> )
  - Will it benefit me spiritually? (1 Cor. 10:23)
  - Will it bring bondage? (1 Cor. 6:12)
  - Will it defile God’s temple (my body?) (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
  - Will it cause anyone to stumble? (1 Cor. 8:8-9)
  - Will it further the cause of evangelism (1 Cor. 10:32-33)

- Will it violate my conscience? (1 Cor. 10:25-29)
- Will it bring glory to God? (1 Cor. 10:31)
- Scripture is our ultimate source to know what is pleasing and displeasing to God, and healthy vs. harmful for us. There IS a problem with this “checklist” approach to battling sin. **Any idea what the problem is?**
- One commentator wrote: *“When we try to compile a list of sins, we find ourselves buried under the guilt of our own failures because we discover that we have sinned far more than we realized.”*<sup>x</sup>
- That can make us feel defeated! *“Though I’ve trusted Christ, the more I read my Bible the more I realize just how sinful my heart can be.”*
- That feels like bad news but it’s really good news because it points us back to verses six and seven of this text:
- <sup>6</sup>We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. <sup>7</sup> For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.<sup>xi</sup>
- Paul himself knew this struggle. Look ahead to Romans chapter seven.
- Romans 7:15 (ESV) <sup>15</sup> For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.
- Romans 7:22–24 (ESV) <sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, <sup>23</sup> but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. <sup>24</sup> Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
- Not only do little old ladies and innocent babies sin, Paul did too!
- V.25 NLT: <sup>25</sup> Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>xii</sup>
- **How does a Christ follower access God’s power to resist sin?**
- Illustration: A huge elephant chained to a small stake in the ground.
- When the elephant was a baby he wasn’t strong enough so he quit trying.
- That elephant is huge and strong now. It has power. One pull and it’s free!
- When we were sinful “baby elephants” (before salvation and regeneration) we were shackled to sin’s “stake in the ground.” When we follow Christ as Savior and Lord we’re given the power to pull away and live free from sin.
- The power is His Holy Spirit living inside us and He’s only a prayer away.
- Jesus said in John 16:8 (ESV) <sup>8</sup> And when he [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

### So, What’s The Takeaway?

- Trusting Christ as Savior and Lord brings freedom from slavery to sin. So, how does a Christ-follower fully embrace and enjoy that freedom?
- First, how can I spot sin in my life? To grow more Christ-like (sanctification) I must study God’s word to know what He says about sin.
- Caution: it’s a guidebook for obedience not a checklist of rules. Even if I’m a Christ follower, my sinful nature makes following rules impossible.
- That brings us to the real question: How can I access God’s power over sin? Two words: Holy Spirit.

- When Jesus went back to Heaven He didn't leave us to fend for ourselves in the Christian life. He gives His followers His Holy Spirit living inside our heart and soul so that "sin will have no dominion" over our lives.
- Jesus also knew that even with the Holy Spirit's power inside us, we would sometimes forget that we're a "big elephant" and feel chained to our old sinful ways like a "baby elephant."
- That's why He gives us His grace and forgiveness when we do sin.
- This week let's remember the power we have to "consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

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<sup>i</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Ro 5:20). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>ii</sup> Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (New York: Doubleday, 1901), 19–20. Swindoll, Charles R.. *Insights on Romans* (Swindoll's New Testament Insights) (p. 162). Zondervan. Kindle Edition. Quoted in Swindoll, Charles R.. *Insights on Romans* (Swindoll's New Testament Insights) (p. 108). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

<sup>iii</sup> *ibid*

<sup>iv</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jn 17:17). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>v</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>vi</sup> Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). In [Harper's Bible dictionary](#) (1st ed., p. 904). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

<sup>vii</sup> Easton, M. G. (1893). In [Easton's Bible dictionary](#). New York: Harper & Brothers.

<sup>viii</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Ro 6:14). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>ix</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Ro 6:12). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>x</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/list-of-sins.html>

<sup>xi</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Ro 6:6–7). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>xii</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Ro 7:25). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.