

October 4, 2026

FREEDOM: ROMANS 6:1-14

Introductory Activity

Explain that today we are going to begin with a True and False game about Graceland in Memphis, Tennessee. I am going to read you a statement and call out if you think it is a true or false statement.

1. Graceland was built by Elvis Presley. (False; it was built by Dr. Thomas Moore and his wife, Ruth, who named it after her aunt.)
2. Elvis bought the house for about \$100,000. (True; he paid 102,500 in 1957)
3. The size of the house is approximately 30,000 square feet. (False; it is 17,552 square feet. Elvis expanded it from its original 10,266 square feet.)
4. Graceland has five sets of stairs and three fireplaces. (True.)
5. More people visit Graceland than the White House. (False, Graceland receives about 600,000 visitors a year. However, it is the second most visited home in the United States after the White House)

Why all this talk about Graceland? Because today we are going to talk about living in Grace-land. "Justification [which] involves being saved from the *penalty* of sin [was the focus on Romans 1-5]. Glorification (which Paul will address more fully in chapter 8) involves being saved from the *presence* of sin." (Exalting 98) The logical question, then, is: how does one live in the land of grace between justification and glorification? That is what Paul is going to get to in chapters 6 and 7. We are going to see that the believer is to live righteously as he or she experiences and participates in the process of Sanctification. "Sanctification is about being saved from the *power* of sin." (Exalting, 98)

Summarize and Transition: So, let's dive into chapter 6 and see how we are to live in Grace-land and resist the power of sin.

1. DEAD TO SIN (ROM. 6:1-7)

Read (or have someone read) Romans 6:1-7.

Explain: In chapter 5 verse 20 Paul writes, "But where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more." From the statement comes a **logically, illogical question and answer** (vv. 1-2): "Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply?"

Discuss: Before we examine Paul's reasoning, let's answer the question on page 50 of the Personal Study Guide: "Why shouldn't believers continue living in sin if sin multiplies God's grace?"

On the face of it, the question in verse 1 is a logical question based on Paul's statement about sin abounding and grace abounding. This might simply be a rhetorical question used by Paul to teach about righteous

Notes:

This Lesson was created using:

- *Explore the Bible Leader Guide* (ETB LG)
- *Explore the Bible Personal Study Guide* (ETB PSG)
- *Explore the Bible Commentary* (ETBC)
- *New American Commentary: Romans*, Mounce (NAC)
- *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans*, Moo (NICNT)
- *Exalting Jesus in Romans*, Merida (Exalting)
- *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Romans*, Bruce (TNTC)
- *Be Right*, Wiersbe (Be)

"questions that people logically could have asked after hearing Paul's teachings about sin, law, and grace (Rom. 1:18-5:17), teachings that he had just summarized succinctly (Rom. 5:18-21)." (ETBC, 51)

living. It could have also been a real question that people asked Paul. We can know that it might have been a real question because it's a real issue that some have addressed throughout history. The idea that we can continue in explicit, intentional sin as recipients of God's grace is called antinomianism (Pron: Ān-tī-nō'-mī-ān-izm). This is a "false teaching that since faith alone is necessary for salvation, one is free from the moral obligations of the law."¹ Believers and non-believers alike have presumed on God's grace in this way. Voltaire, for example, wrote, "God will forgive; that is his 'business.'" (NICNT, 356) Likewise, W. H. Auden quipped, "I like committing crimes. God likes forgiving them. Really the world is admirably arranged." (NICNT, 356) Moo and Barclay both use the reasoning of a child to illustrate. An analogy might be a young child who knocks over a glass of milk. In response, the father says that it was an accident and forgives the child. The child likes receiving the father's forgiveness, so he pours a glass of milk on the floor expecting to receive more forgiveness. Moo writes, "Only a foolish parent would tolerate such a situation, and God's grace must not be interpreted in these terms." (NICNT, 356) To live in this way is to "slip from a celebration of grace to an abuse of grace." (NICNT, 356) The question is logically sound based on 5:20, but it is illogical based on the salvation experience of the believer. That is why Paul says, "Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" He then uses **baptism and an object lesson** to help the reader understand.

Reread verses 3-4 (See Notes Box.)

Explain: This passage is not about baptism. In that, it does not provide us with a theology of baptism. However, Paul assumes that the believers in Rome had been baptized. During the very early days of the church, baptism was practiced relatively close to the time of conversion. So, when Paul speaks of baptism here, he is equating it with the time of salvation. We should stop and consider a few key facts here. First, Paul is assuming and affirming **believers' baptism**. Baptism comes *after* salvation, and only those who have professed their faith in Christ should be baptized. Second, like elsewhere in the New Testament, the language Paul uses here **implies baptism by immersion**. In order for baptism to serve as an object lesson for Paul, as it does in the passage, and for the believer who experiences it, baptism should include full immersion in water.

Discuss: Why is baptism an important step in the believer's Christian journey?

Explain: Baptism, in the 1st century and the 21st century, serves at least two purposes. First, it allows the new believer to show the church that he or she is all in. Second, it pictures for the believer and the church what takes place at the moment of salvation. That is how Paul is using it here. Paul

Notes:

Romans 6:3-4

³ Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

⁴ Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.

"Believers have obtained grace and exist in that state of grace." (ETBC, 42)

¹ Chad Brand et al., eds., "Antinomianism," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 75.
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says that when a person goes under the water, he or she is showing that he or she is united with Christ in His death and burial. And when they come up from the water, they are united with Him in His resurrection. Paul says that we identify with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection **so that** we can walk in newness of life. In verses 5-7, he is going to flesh this out and show that the believer is **Freed from Sin** (vv. 5-7).

Reread verses 5-7 (See Notes Box.)

Explain: In verse 5, Paul says that since we have identified with Christ in His death, we will also identify with Christ in His resurrection. So firstly, **The Believer Dies to Sin**. Earlier in verse 1, Paul asked the question, "Should we continue in sin?" While this could be read as "should we continue in practicing sin," that would be too narrow an understanding of this passage. "Should we continue translates a Greek word meaning to remain or to abide in a state." (ETBC, 51) You see, when we are united with Christ in His death on the cross, our spiritual residency changed. We moved from Sin-land to Grace-land. Moreover, in dying to sin, we move from death to life and from weakness to power. This leads to Paul's second point: **Sin is Rendered Powerless**. This is so because the believer also identifies with Christ in His resurrection. The ETB curriculum asserts that this is a promise of an end-times resurrection. However, the context seems to imply that believers identify with Christ's present resurrected state. We walk in resurrection power that we might confront and successfully battle against the sins in our mortal body. That is so "we **too** may [currently] walk in newness of life." (v. 4 emphasis added)

Summarize Transition: In this passage, Paul does two things. First, he answers the question about abounding in sin. He says that is illogical for the believer. It is so because through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the believer is freed from the mastery of sin. Second, the believer walks in resurrection power, meaning he is not only released from the mastery of sin; he now has the power to master his sinful desires.

In the next passage, Paul is going to help us understand more fully what it means to identify with Christ, and he will introduce us to the idea of sanctification.

2. ALIVE IN CHRIST (ROM. 6:8-11)

Read (or have someone read) Romans 6:8-11

Explain: Here Paul reveals three truths. First, verse 8 reveals **The Truth About Us** (v. 8). While our English translation includes the word "if," we should read that as "since." "Now since we died with Christ, we believe we will also live with him." Here again we see the promise of resurrection both in the end of all things and in the here and now. Paul is moving from a discussion about justification to one of sanctification. "Paul [has] demonstrated how God has done everything necessary for salvation. However, when it comes to sanctification, Paul emphasized that Christians must express faith. The object

Romans 6:5-7

⁵ For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of his resurrection. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be rendered powerless so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin, ⁷ since a person who has died is freed from sin.

of that faith is the resurrection of Christ.” (ETB LG, 60) If we are going to walk in newness of life, we must have faith/belief/assurance/confidence in the power of Christ’s resurrection.

Second, he reveals **The Truth About Christ**. In verses 9-10, Paul reaffirms the object of our confidence—the truth of Christ’s death and resurrection. Through Christ’s work, He defeated sin. Christ’s defeat of death was accomplished on the cross. It was a one-and-done thing. Christ’s suffering does not have to be repeated. “But this one-time event also opened *a way of life* to all who would trust in Him.” (ETB LG, 60, emphasis added)

Third, Paul reveals the **True Way of Life**. In verse 11, we find the first command given by Paul in the book of Romans. Since we know that Christ’s death and resurrection rendered sin powerless, Paul instructs the believer to do something. “Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” The command is to think differently. He says, change the way you think about yourself. Instead of searching for loopholes to sin more (see verse 1), consider/know/determine to be dead to sin. Moreover, be alive in God.

Read 1 Pet. 2:24a (See Notes Box)

If the believer is going to live for righteousness, he must determine to do the work of sanctification.

Summarize and Transition: In this passage, Paul elaborates on the work of Christ and the effects of the believer’s union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Paul is laying the stage for the believer’s part in the sanctification process. First, we see that the believer must have confidence in the resurrection power of Jesus. In the next passage, we will get a little more practical and define sanctification and see what that means for us.

3. INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (ROM. 6:12-14)

Read (or have someone read) Romans 6:12-14.

Explain: Having given his first command of the epistle in verse 11, Paul now continues to instruct the reader on how to live in Grace-land, the time between justification and glorification. First, he instructs the reader with a **Command to Revolt** (v. 12).

The “therefore” of verse 12 connects this command to the command given in verse 11. In that verse we are commanded to consider ourselves (determine to be) dead to sin and alive in Christ. With that mindset, we are now commanded to fight. Throughout this passage, Paul has personified sin as a ruling monarch. Since we have now spiritually moved from the kingdom of sin to the kingdom of grace, we are in revolt against our former kingdom. Therefore, we should not live like those in the former kingdom. Paul says that we are not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies. As long as we live on this earth, we have a mortal body, and that

Notes:

1 Peter 2:24a
“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness”

mortal bodies still have a proclivity towards sin. Believers "must realize that in Christ they have the power to renounce the sin typical of the world and of their former lives... 'Do not let sin reign' is an imperative, implying believers have a choice to refuse to allow sin to rule over them." (ETBC, 58)

Sanctification is the process of moving from a life dominated (ruled) by sin to a life that mirrors Christlikeness. The first step in this process is verse 11: determine in your mind that you are dead to sin. Step two is verse 12: revolt against your former master and the desires of sin. Next, Paul gives the **Command to Resist** (v. 13a)

Paul instructs us, "do not offer any parts of [your mortal body] to sin as weapons for unrighteousness." Paul is not calling for a quiet revolt against sin. He tells us to actively resist. When the desires of our flesh rise up, we are to refuse them. This is *active* refusal. It is a determination to resist living unrighteously. The word translated weapons has a military context, thus that translation, but it also can mean any kind of tool. Any part of our mortal body should be off limits to sin. Our hands, our eyes, our mouths, and our minds are off limits to sin.

Discuss: How can we actively resist sinful desires?

Explain: The sanctification process involves a refusal to actively fulfill sinful desires. This begins in our minds. If we consider ourselves dead to sin, if we are revolting against the sinful kingdom, we must determine, in our minds, to resist sinful desires. Each day we should look forward into the day and analyze the situations in which we will find ourselves and the people we will encounter, and ask the Lord to help us resist sinful desires in those situations. However, we know that sinful desires arise in the moment. Therefore, we should actively resist by removing ourselves from situations, averting our eyes, biting our tongues, and resisting sinful impulses.

Paul not only tells us to revolt and resist. He also issues the **Command to Retaliate**. Now that sounds weird for a Christian, I know. He is not telling us to retaliate against *people*. Instead, he is telling us to actively fight against the kingdom of darkness by being weapons of righteousness. In the second half of verse 13, he writes, "But as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves to God, and all the parts of yourselves to God as weapons for righteousness." It is not enough to determine in our minds to be dead to sin (v. 11). It is not enough to leave the kingdom of darkness and join the Kingdom of Light (v. 12). It is not enough to resist unrighteousness (v. 13a). If we are going to participate in the sanctification process, we must actively pursue righteousness.

Discuss: How can we actively pursue righteousness?

Explain: The first step in actively pursuing righteousness is to **learn what righteousness is**. As sinful humans in mortal bodies, indoctrinated by the

sinful kingdom for many years and surrounded by those still in that kingdom, we know how to be unrighteous. Therefore, we must *learn* how to be righteous. We do this through a study of Scripture. The Ten Commandments help us know what is right and wrong on a basic level, and the Sermon on the Mount expounds on those ten. That is a good starting place. But it might be helpful to read the gospels with an eye toward the acts of Jesus. Sanctification is the process of becoming more like Jesus. Therefore, we have to learn what Jesus was like. How did He interact with sinful desires in His mortal body? Moreover, how did He use His mortal body as a weapon or tool for righteousness?

The second step in our battle against the kingdom of sin is to **practice righteousness**. I don't mean passive righteousness. Passive righteousness is resisting unrighteousness (v. 13a). To put it plainly, passive righteousness is "not doing bad stuff." But Paul's command to retaliate against the kingdom of sin means that we go beyond "not doing bad stuff" and "do good stuff," that is, be actively righteous. Seek out opportunities to do good stuff. Actively look for someone in need and help them. Actively look for someone who is lonely and befriend them. Actively look for service opportunities in the local church and fill them.

Paul commands the believer to revolt, resist, and retaliate. That means we are to have the mindset of being righteous, resist being unrighteous, and actively pursue righteousness. That might seem a little daunting. But that is why he says we do this "as those who are alive from the dead" (v. 13). In other words, we do this in Christ's resurrection power. We are united with Him in His present resurrected body, and He will enable us to live righteously in this mortal body.

Summarize and Transition: Paul concludes this paragraph with a promise in verse 14. He writes, "For sin will not rule over you." Why? Because, concludes verse 14, you live in Grace-land. God's grace is not something we experience only at the moment of salvation. In last week's lesson, we learned that we stand in grace; we live in grace. The grace of God will enable us to live righteously in this mortal body.

CONCLUDE

God's grace is effective at the moment of salvation (justification). God's grace will be evident at the moment of our eternal resurrection (glorification). God's grace is in effect today as we resist unrighteousness and pursue Christlike righteousness (sanctification).

So how do we live in Grace-land?

1. Determine to see yourself united with Christ in His resurrection power. Begin your day with a reminder that you are His.
2. Determine to learn what it means to be righteous. Examine the Scriptures this week for examples of how Christ lived.
3. Look for ways to be an instrument/weapon/tool of righteousness and do something righteous. Don't just avoid unrighteousness; do something righteous.