

Does Following Christ Mean That I Can Sin Anytime Because My Sins Are Forgiven?

Romans 5 & 6

When Jesus died on the cross, and you became a follower of Christ, Christ's death paid for your past sins and your future sins.

So does that mean you can sin anytime you want?

18 Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. 19 Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:18–19 NLT)

We are all sinners, but we are made righteous because of Christ's death on the cross.

20 God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. 21 So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:20–21 NLT)

The bigger the debt, the more forgiveness it takes to forgive that debt.

So does that mean we can sin all we want?

Paul knew some people would go there with that question, so he went into more detail in chapter six.

What Does The Bible Say?

Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? 2 Of course not! Since

we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? (Romans 6:1–2 NLT)

So we should do our best to stay away from sin. Why?

3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death?

6 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.

9 We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. 10 When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. (Romans 6:3, 6, 9-10 NLT)

Christian living depends on Christian learning; duty follows doctrine.

As a follower of Christ, our identity is in Christ. Therefore, we are to be like Him.

His death and resurrection mean the dominance of sin has been broken, and we are free from sin.

11 So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. 12 Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires.

13 Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.

(Romans 6:11–13 NLT)

We should not sin since we are to be like Christ, who did not sin.

How Can You Obey?

Practically this means that when we sin accidentally, we remember 1 John 1:9.

9 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (1 John 1:9 NLT)

What is the most straightforward test to know if you are a Christian?

When you feel guilty when you sin.

Therefore, if you sin intentionally, wouldn't that mean you are probably not a Christian.

20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. 21 And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. 22 But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to

holiness and result in eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:20–23 NLT)

So how do you feel when sin, okay or guilty?

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Additional Notes:

This week's Talking Theology is from Walter C. Kaiser Jr. et al., *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 43.

Explore:

Paul spoke often in this passage of union with Christ. It is an important concept worth examining in more detail. We can look at the analogy of political union, for example. The 13 original colonies that broke off from English rule to form the United States eventually formed a constitutional union. When a new state became part of the union, the union's history became its history, and vice versa. When Hawaii joined the union in 1959, it also acquired the history of the American Revolution. Bunker Hill, Lexington and Concord, the Declaration of Independence, the Liberty Bell, and Freedom Hall, all became part of its history. Likewise, Hawaii's history up to that point became part of the larger history of the union itself. Christ suffered on the cross for our history of sin. We benefit now from His history of obedience and new life. We now share our histories, through union with Christ.

Explore:

In Romans 5, Paul wrote about the fact that God's grace abounded even more abundantly than sin. To some of his critics, this sounded dangerous—"well, then, maybe we should sin all the more to make sure that God's grace keeps abounding!" Paul responded emphatically to this faulty thinking in Romans 6.

Believers Are Dead to Sin and Alive to God

(Romans 6:1-11)

Verse 1 contains the objection that critics or unbelievers might raise: Why shouldn't we continue in sin in order to cause God's grace to abound even more! Verse 2 answers forcefully, "No!" May that never be the case! Those who have died to sin can no longer live in it. Verse 3 begins to explain what it means to die to sin. The baptism into Christ refers to our union with Christ at conversion. His death for sin brings about our death to sin. We speak often of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Believers are united with Jesus in faith and know a spiritual parallel in their own lives. Through union with Christ, they are dead to sin, buried by baptism, and most importantly raised to a new way of living (verse 4).

Paul continued, making it plain that union with Jesus' death for sin entails union with a resurrected life (verse 5). It is as though our old sinful self died on the cross so we could escape sin's reign. Sin always gets its payment: death. But once that payment has been made in full, it has no more claim—not on Christ and not on us. We may feel its pull and do battle with it, but it has no legitimate claim on us now that we are united with Christ. We are raised to live a new life. We owe nothing at all to sin. Indeed, just as Christ was raised, so are we (verses 5-8).

Jesus died for sin—ours, not His. Sin has nothing to say to Him, nor will it ever exercise a hold on Him. Jesus underwent the worst that sin could inflict and came through in glorious life.

Even so, we must consider ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God (verses 9-11). We must let that reality guide how we think and how we act. We think and live as if we want nothing to do with sin. We now live to know, walk with, and serve God who has forgiven us, placed us in Christ, and given us new life.

We no longer answer to the old boss, Satan. He has no legitimate claim upon us—not our actions, not our feelings, not our desires, not our thinking. God's grace and forgiveness have changed everything. We are now free to live as forgiven people. Our union with Christ means we have died to the power of sin and can now live to please God.

Explore:

Believers Are to Present Themselves to God as Instruments of Righteousness

(Romans 6:12-14)

Believers are no longer to let sin rule or reign over us. Speaking of the body and its passions makes it clear that sinful behavior is Paul's target in these verses. The Bible does not teach that living for God occurs only in the mind or soul, not affecting the body. Salvation affects every part of our existence and most definitely includes what we do in this physical world. We must not allow our bodies to become tools of unrighteousness. Instead, we are to use our bodies as tools God can use for righteousness. This is only fitting, for sin is no longer the boss. Being under the Law, even God's excellent Law given to Moses, ensured that we would fall short and be delivered up to death. Now however, we are under the regime or rule of grace (verses 12-14). God took care of the penalty we incurred and raised us from spiritual death to live for Him—grace in all its glory!

Surrender to God is something we must do daily, just as we eat and sleep. If we do not surrender to God, we will end up surrendering to the pull of sin and temptation. Surrender to God

leads to joy and peace while surrender to sin and temptation leads to bondage and despair. Now that we are free from the power of sin, we can choose each day to follow God's will and direction for our lives. We can choose to live in a way that brings Him glory and us joy, rather than giving in to sin and temptation.

Explore:

Human beings love to think of themselves as the masters of all they survey. We seek to conquer disease, distance, and even time itself in various ways. We believe we get to define what is right and wrong. We look upon service to a master as something unworthy, something only the weak or servile would accept. In truth, however, humanity must always have a master. Through our fall into sin, we are, by default, servants of a harsh taskmaster, Satan. Through salvation in Christ, we become

servants of a good and kind master, the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot escape having a master. At the same time, we cannot serve two masters. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus made it quite clear. We will serve God or Satan, but we can never serve neither or both. Some may object that by saying all this, we are saying that those who do not worship God worship Satan, and it is clear that most people are not Satan worshipers! However, a closer look at the Scriptures shows that this is not what we claim. On the contrary, it speaks of service, not worship. The cruel despotism of sin and Satan is such that many must serve him whom they do not worship.

Explore:

Believers Are Free to Serve God Rather Than Sin

(Romans 6:15-23)

In verse 15 Paul repeated the objection of verse 1 and again rejected it. Then he began to explain from a different angle: slavery and obedience. We are slaves to the one we obey.

Employees are subject to their employer, not someone else's.

Dogs obey their masters, not strangers. Believers are now subject to their good and kind Master, not to the old slave driver (verse 16). We once were slaves of sin and Satan, but the gospel teaching of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ freed us from that former life and set us free to live a new one as God's servants (verses 17-18). Paul was trying to find some way to describe this miracle of grace in a way that the Romans (and we) could understand. In summary, just as they once gave themselves over to impurity and rebellion against God's Law, they now were to present themselves as slaves of righteousness. The lawlessness of sin always gave way to even more lawlessness. On the other hand, obeying and practicing righteousness leads to sanctification (verse 19).

Paul then spoke frankly to the Roman believers (verses 20-22):

When you were slaves to sin, how much regard did you give to righteousness? None! No, you gave yourselves fully to unrighteousness. Your march toward death involved sinful behavior you are now ashamed of. You wholeheartedly gave yourself over to that which would destroy you. Now, however, having known God's grace, you should be just as eager to practice righteousness for Him. You should just as wholeheartedly follow the path that will lead to sanctification and eternal life.

We must understand we are not independent, autonomous creatures, answering only to ourselves. Everyone needs to learn submission to authority. People who reject the authority of parents, government, teachers, spouses, or other authority in general will usually find it very difficult to submit to the authority of God. They are most likely to remain in bondage to Satan.

The only people who are not slaves to sin are those who are slaves to righteousness. Sin pays what is deserved: death. God's gift of grace bestows upon us what we do not deserve: eternal life in Christ (verse 23).

Question 1 of 5

Do you think God behaved differently in the Old Testament than in the New Testament?

Question 2 of 5

What is the difference between the judgments in the Old Testament and the New Testament?

Question 3 of 5

How does our union and identification with Christ affect our relationship with sin?

Question 4 of 5

What does it mean to be an instrument of righteousness?

Question 5 of 5

What are some general purposes of God we can seek to fulfill each day?