



3/4/26

Do you ever think about the fact that Philippians 2:6 says Jesus took "the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man"? That means you and I are servants. We are either servants of the Lord or servants of the domain of darkness, but either way... we are servants. When I compare the two, I have to say... serving God is the better choice! And that's definitely an understatement. The one thing we never ultimately serve is ourselves. Ephesians 2:3 shows us that when we think we're serving ourselves by indulging our sinful desires, we're really serving the devil. Yikes! Today's passage will give us a little more insight into our choices.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Romans 6:12-23

Well... I started with a therefore yesterday and I start with a therefore today. Therefore, I have to look back to see what it's there for. I see in the previous verses a call not to use the grace God has given me as an opportunity to indulge in sin. If I'm being honest, it took me a LONG time to understand that God has set me free FROM sin and not TO sin. I used to think that sin could produce good. If I had been asked, I probably would have denied that... but my actions would prove otherwise... overindulging in food to comfort myself... lashing out in anger to fight for MY rights... justifying grudges... the list goes on. But all those things, while feeling powerful or comforting, were (and still can be) ensnaring traps that wage war against my soul. God wants to free me from the deception of sin!

So, as I read vs 12 I look back to see, what's the therefore there for? What's the reason I should not let sin rule in my life? I have died to sin through Jesus' death. I have been raised with His resurrection to walk in newness of LIFE... eternal life. My old, corrupt self was crucified with Jesus and I have truly been set free from the condemnation that sin brings. Sin only has power over me that I give it. Not only have I been set free from sin, but I have been set free from the finality of death. I am dead to sin and alive to God. Therefore...

Vs. 12 ~ "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions." Don't give sin the power it does not have! It may FEEL like I have no power over sin, but the GOD of

TRUTH says I do... with His help.

When I LET sin reign in my body... it WILL make me obey ITS passions. The passions of sin seem like they will satisfy, but sin is a liar. It promises satisfaction and it crushes the soul. It's a bait and switch.

This seems impossible! How do I not LET sin be on the throne of my heart? How do I not LET anxiety or anger or fear or worry or desire for comfort or escape or over indulgence rule my heart? It is so easy for me to think, "This is just my personality." But that's the deception of sin. God doesn't give sin as a personality. God wants to free me from the lies! How do I LET Him?

Vs. 13-14 ~ "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." It is ALL in where I focus my attention.

If I focus my attention on the sin and the desire for sin... even if I'm trying to tell myself to stop doing it... then my "members" necessarily bow before sin and unrighteousness as my master.

What are my members? They're just that part of me that acts on where my attention is focused. They are neither good nor bad. They can be used for good or bad... depending on who or what I LET be in charge.

SO... I need to put my attention on the one true God. He is the one who brought me from death to life through the blood of Jesus. Sin does not give me life. Sin ALWAYS leads to death. I need to LET my members bow to God so that I can be an instrument for righteousness. It is righteousness that brings peace. God wants to bless me with His righteousness and peace. He said in Isaiah 48:17-18, "I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit (what is best for you), who leads you in the way you should go. Oh that you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea." This is what God wants for me... because He loves me. Sin does not love me. Sin loves to crush me.

"For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." It is because of God's grace, His pleasure and favor on me that I am set free from sin's power over me. The law could not take away its power. The law only multiplied its power because it either made me want what I couldn't have, or I tried so hard to obey that it made me arrogant when I thought I was successful and ashamed when I thought I wasn't, thinking I should either get the credit or that I deserved the pain. Sin is so deceptive.

But God's GRACE is what gives me the strength to refuse to bow down to sin. My job is not to fix myself, but to look to my God who will help remove the tentacles of the sin that Romans 7 says, "dwells in my members." I will not be free of sin's ATTEMPTS to control me until God

takes me home. But I AM free from its power over me even now. I just have to put my attention on the LORD!

Vs. 15-16 ~ "What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" Paul understood the deception of sin. He understood that my corrupt old self would rationalize, "Well, if I have God's grace and I know that I will never be condemned, why not just sin? It feels good!" But Paul said, "DON'T LET YOUR MIND GO THERE!!! Don't you get it? Wherever you set your attention, you become the slave of it.

Before Christ, we WERE slaves of sin. But now that I have Christ, I am a voluntary slave. Yes, no matter what, I am NOT master of my destiny. I am a servant, a slave. When I set my mind on sin, it leads to death... not my eternal death, but still nothing good. Let me not be deceived.

But when I set my mind on being obedient to Jesus, it leads to all that is good and righteous! Why would I set my mind on the things for which Jesus had to die? O Lord, let me keep my eyes FIRMLY fixed on You!!!

Vs. 17-18 ~ "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness." I WAS a slave of sin. But now, I am a slave of God... I'm also His child and His friend... but I serve at the pleasure of the King. The evidence of who I serve is in who I obey. The evidence of serving at the pleasure of my King is in obeying the standard, the pattern, of teaching to which I committed my heart... the control center of my desires, feelings, and choices. I pray that Paul could say of me, "Thanks be to God that the evidence shows that your heart is fully committed to the Lord."

Vs. 19 ~ "I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification." This statement was kind of a dis on these believers. Paul was saying, "I'm talking about this in laymen's terms because you're kinda spiritually immature. Yes, you want to obey God, but you seem to also want to obey your sinful desires." It almost sounds like he could be talking to me. 😊 Paul was saying, "There was a time you were enslaving yourselves to impurity and lawlessness leading to more lawlessness."

There is a very important point being made here... 1 John 3 says that sin is lawlessness. So... sin has a snowball effect. It leads to more sin. There's never a time I can say, "I'll only engage in this level of sin but go no further." Eventually, I will go further. And there is no in between. I'm either serving the Lord or I'm serving sin. My choice is, who will I present myself to? O Lord, I want it to be You and Your righteousness! I want to enjoy the beauty of sanctification... being transformed to be more and more like Jesus.

Vs. 20-23 ~ "For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 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. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." There IS a freedom that comes in being allowed to indulge in sinful desires. The problem is, it's a freedom FROM righteousness. I know from Hebrews 12:11 that peace comes through righteousness. So freedom FROM righteousness is absence of truth and peace. And the fruit that comes from unrighteousness brings shame.

I can personally testify to that. I emphatically walked away from the Lord for 2 years when I was in college. They were the 2 most miserable years of my life, and they brought nothing but shame. I praise God for His mercy and patience as He lovingly drew me back to Him. And now, being set free from that sin, God is truly helping me to bear fruit for Him that helps sanctify me... taking me from one degree of glory to the next. I still bear bad fruit that needs to be plucked and thrown out. But little by little, God is helping me to bow to Him and not to sin.

Nothing good comes from sin. The payment for choosing a life of sin is death... eternal separation from the Lord. So... if I've been set free from the things that cause death, it would be crazy for me to cling to them.

The wonderful news is that the FREE GIFT of God is LIFE. It's not payment. It's a gift. So... death is a payment for sin, because there is no free gift to cover my debt. Life is not a payment because Jesus already paid my debt and now gives me life as a free gift.

So... with sin on the throne I get...

- *Death*
- *Impurity*
- *Lawlessness*
- *Freedom from righteousness*
- *Shame*
- *I PAY*

With God on the throne I get...

- *Life*
- *Righteousness*
- *Grace*
- *Freedom from sin*
- *Sanctification*
- *I RECEIVE*

Well... when you put it like that, it kinda seems like a no brainer. So Lord, please help me to set my attention on You. That's the big choice. Set my attention on You. All the rest... life, righteousness, grace, freedom, sanctification... flows from that. O my soul, LET me present myself to God.