

# THE ROAD OF THE RIGHTEOUS

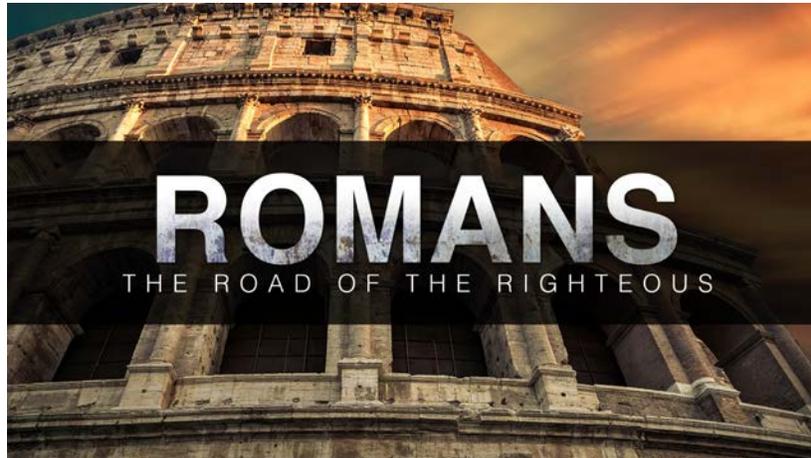
## Expositional Study Of Romans

Romans 6:1-14

Written By

©Pastor Marty Baker

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What's the sign of a great teacher or preacher? He possesses the unique ability to anticipate questions from his students or worshippers so he can address those questions and move everyone toward more consistent and mature thinking. Enter Paul the master of pedagogy and homiletics, which is the art of preaching.

Having just waxed eloquent in Romans 5 about how a repentant sinner is declared righteous for all time in the courtroom of God because of his faith in the person and work of Jesus, Paul quickly turns in Romans 6 and posits a logical question (which is a rhetorical device he employed often to drive home his points: Rom. 3:1, 3, 5, 9; 4:1, 3; 6:15, 21; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14, 22, 30; 10:8; 11:4, 7 . . . many of these references contain the familiar *ti oun*, τί οὖν, phrase, "what therefore"), one I'm sure he had heard before:

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? (Rom. 6).

The first question is directly linked to the discussion about the eternal security of the justified saint detailed in Romans 5. Paul knew certain people would quickly posit the more precise second question: "Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" Paul had been falsely accused of being a complete libertine, thus permitting redeemed people to live any way they wanted since their salvation would never be in doubt from God's perspective. The apostle vehemently rejected that false, unfounded notion:

<sup>2</sup> May it never be!

*Me genoito* (μὴ γένοιτο) is a forceful way of saying, “No way!” or “There’s no way this is ever going to happen” in Greek. Paul employs it quite frequently in Romans to steer people toward true biblical teaching (Rom. 3:4, 6, 31; 6:15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11). Next, Paul launches into one of the greatest discussions in the New Testament regarding how believers should look at their daily walks with Jesus. *All of this teaching, of course, is strategically designed to show believers they are not saved to sin freely, but are saved to live free of their former cruel taskmaster, Sin.* Reading that sentence, we might just need to read it again before we move into these theologically complex and highly practical waters. *All of this teaching, of course, is strategically designed to show believers they are not saved to sin freely, but are saved to live free of their former cruel taskmaster, Sin.* Put differently, we are now equipped to sin less each day, not more. We are equipped, by God, to live victorious spiritual lives, not compromised, carnal ones. This overview discussion leads naturally to some personal questions to saints: Does my Christian walk reflect an ever increasing freedom from the chains of sin, or are there certain areas of my life which are still shackled to the sins of my old sinful man?

While you ponder that question, I direct you to the main motif of this section of Scripture. At the end of the day, Paul’s argument can be stated in a propositional form.

## Salvation Frees You Live For God, Not To Freely Sin (Rom. 6:1-14)

Paul develops this concept one supportive doctrinal point, followed by an application of that point. This is so Pauline. He knew, and taught, that sound doctrine is always to be followed by sound living for the saint.

### Sound Doctrine Speaks Of Our Freedom (Rom. 6:2-11)

Two doctrinal sub-points validate the argument that believers are free to live not lives of disobedience like the first Adam, but lives of obedience like the second Adam, Jesus.

*Identification With Christ’s Death Frees You* (Rom. 6:3-7). Paul begins to develop this exciting concept with two additional questions:

<sup>2</sup> How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

Prior to salvation and justification by faith, when we, as sinners, were related to the first Adam, we were “dead in sin,” or under its power (Eph. 2:1). As Paul states in Ephesians 2:2, when we were “dead in sin,” we naturally lived like sinners, doing whatever we wanted or desired:

<sup>2</sup> in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2).

However, now that we are alive in Christ, we have “died to sin,” or died to its power and domination over us. This does not mean our sin nature is extinguished, for we still reside in fleshly bodies with evil desires. It does, however, mean, since we are dead to sin by being identified with Christ’s death, we have a choice now not to sin and follow the dictates of our old sinful master.

With verse 3, Paul acquaints believers with the *reality* they have died to sin based on their association with Christ’s death by means of their baptism.

<sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? (Rom. 6).

“Surely, you understand this truth” is Paul’s emphasis. Which baptism is he speaking about: our spiritual or physical baptism? I think the former is in view. For one, to limit baptism here to the physical version is to make it a basis of salvation, which is not a New Testament concept (Eph. 2:8-9). For another, 1 Corinthians 12:13, which speaks about Spirit baptism, clearly says that *all* saints are mystically baptized into the body of Christ. Paul’s emphasis upon *all* in Romans 6:2 echoes what he says in the Corinthian passage. The saints literal baptism, however, simply demonstrates outwardly what has occurred spiritually, as R. C. Sproul comments:

My baptism signifies my identification with Jesus’ death on the cross, and that I am mystically crucified with Christ. I identify with that act; I put my personal trust in the act of Christ on the cross, and as Christ was taken down from the cross and buried in the ground, so I, in terms of my old nature, am put to death and buried.<sup>1</sup>

Paul’s point here is clear: As Christ died and was buried, your sinful status was buried too, and your baptism, spiritual and physical, merely illustrates the truth of this premise.

The *reason* for this baptism reality is driven home starting in verse 4:

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6).

The first clause restates what Paul has just communicated, namely, that our baptism intrinsically identifies us with Christ’s death. Schriener rightly underscores this tight relationship between the believer’s baptism and its association with Christ’s death:

First, “with (σύν, *syn*) Christ” expressions permeate verses 4–8. We “were buried together” with him (συνετάφημεν, *synetaphēmen*, v. 4); we “were united together” with him (σύμφυτοι, *symphytoi*, v. 5); we “were crucified together” with him (συνεσταυρώθη, *synestaurōthē*, v. 6); “we died with Christ” (σύν, v. 8) and “we shall live together with him” (συζήσομεν, *syzēsomen*, v. 8). The σύν expressions show that our union with Christ is at the forefront of Paul’s thinking.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this union is formally detailed in the second clause of the sentence with the “in order that” conjunction in Greek, *hina* (ἵνα). Here it introduces the *reason* for our identification with Christ’s death. The we “might walk in newness of life.” The *Bible Knowledge Commentary* opens up the meaning of this Greek word for new, viz., *kainotati* (καινότητι).

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<sup>1</sup> R. C. Sproul, *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), III.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, vol. 6, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 307.

The Greek word “newness” (*kainotēti*) speaks of life that has a new or fresh quality. The resurrection of Jesus was not just a resuscitation; it was a new form of life. In the same way the spiritual lives of believers in Jesus have a new, fresh quality.<sup>3</sup>

Paul could have used the Greek word for chronological time, but he didn't. He used the one which speaks of something brand, spanking new. Further, by relating this concept of newness to *walking* (*peripateo, περιπατήσωμεν*), Paul definitively demonstrates he is speaking about a new moral/spiritual ability the saint did not possess prior to salvation/justification. This moral walk is a favorite of Paul (Rom. 13:13, Eph. 2:10), and was probably derived from the imagery of Solomon in Proverbs. A wise man is one who walk, or goes, on the righteous road (Prov. 1:15; 2:7, 20; 8:20; 11:20). The prophets, which Paul knew well, also highlighted the importance of walking in a moral fashion before God (Isa. 2:3-5; Jer. 13:10; Ezek. 11:20; 20:13-21; Mic. 4:2; 6:8; Zech. 3:7). Because the saint is dead to sin, he is now capable of not living according to the dictates of the power of sin which formerly enslaved him. He can now choose to walk in a way which pleases God because he is free from the mastery of sin inherited from Adam.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones offers this helpful comment about the believer's newness of life being tied to his baptismal relationship to Jesus's death:

So what Paul is saying is that, as the Lord Jesus Christ when He died, died to the realm and the reign and the sphere of sin once and for ever, we also have done the same . . . His death means the end of the relationship to the realm and the reign of sin, therefore we have died to the realm and the relationship and the reign of sin . . . We are joined in His death, so what is true of His relationship to sin as a reign and a realm is equally true of ours. It has nothing to do with our subjective experience; it has everything to do with our relationship to this reign of sin.<sup>4</sup>

His death and our relationship to that death by means of baptism demonstrates we are no longer slaves to the reign and power of sin. Paul drives this truth home in the next three verses:

<sup>5</sup> For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, (Rom. 6).

Verse 5 tells us we are not only united with His death, but we've been separated . . . or freed . . . from the power of sin because we are now spiritually alive, just as much as Jesus is alive. This freedom is expounded for all to see in verses six through seven:

<sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; <sup>7</sup> for he who has died is freed from sin.

This is the pinnacle of the point Paul has developed in these verses. As Sproul observes, Paul may be thinking here about a barbaric form of capital punishment in Roman times:

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<sup>3</sup> John A. Witmer, “Romans,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 462.

<sup>4</sup> Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: The New Man* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 46.

A somewhat barbaric form of this punishment was for the convicted murderer to be sentenced to have the rotting corpse of his victim tied to his own back, so wherever he went he was reminded of the loathsome act that he had committed. He walked around with a dead human body attached to his own back reminding him of his criminal transgression. Some have said that this is what Paul had in mind by the phrase 'body of sin'. We carry the foul-smelling, corrupt old man that is still clinging to us, but in our sanctification we are to be set free from the power of that corpse.<sup>5</sup>

While we were unbelievers, the body of sin and death was firmly chained to us. However, after conversion, our faith relationship to Christ's death and resurrection caused these chains to be broken, forever. We are now free to live lives which smell of spiritual life, not spiritual death. This is Paul's emphasis in verse 7. We are freed from sin, or sin's power over us. We can choose to sin, and, at times, we do; however, we are now capable of resisting sin and embracing holy living. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:3, temptation now takes on a whole new dimension:

<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it (1 Cor. 10).

When we were unsaved, we didn't really care about finding a way out of temptations because we loved darkness more than light, and because we were children of disobedience and rebellion (Eph. 2:1-3). Now that we are saved, we have the power and desire to look for the door, or the way out, so we can live holy lives.

Why, then, would we ever think that our eternal security based on God's grace should ever be used as a pretext for sinful activity? We are dead to sin, which means its power has been broken in our lives. Jesus has positioned us, now, to choose to live lives of holiness. Are you living like a saint whose life has been freed from the dominion and power of sin? Or have you picked up the old decaying body of sin and death and placed it willingly on your back? Paul will tell you what you need to do if this is the case when we get to verse 12. At this point, it is important to remember our relationship to Christ's death, which is illustrated by our baptism, readily shows the power of the old sinful man is forever neutralized.

A second point validates the premise that sound doctrine teaches we are free to choose holiness over godlessness.

*Identification With Christ's Life Frees You* (Rom. 6:8-11). First, let's read these verses, and then come back and offer some observations:

<sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,  
<sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. <sup>10</sup> For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup> Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6).

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<sup>5</sup> R. C. Sproul, *The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Romans* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1994), 112.

Just as we identify with Christ's death by means of our baptism, we also identify with His glorious resurrection and the power it unleashes. Christ is alive right now, and the power of His life is readily available to us to live victoriously over the desires of the old sinful man. Our sin nature has not been eradicated, but the mastery of sin has been broken by Christ's death and resurrection. The power which raised Him from the dead is now available to help us live lives which glorify God. Are you tapping into the power available to you? Are you truly living as if you are dead to sin? Or are you sinning as a saint by living as if sin still has mastery over you? You don't have to live this way because the power of Christ's resurrected life waits to be unleashed in your life so your life resembles His life. Here's a prayer which might need to be prayed, "Lord, forgive me for living like I'm still shackled to the old man. Empower me to walk away from the old man and to embrace the life of the new man."

Doctrine is wonderful for it teaches us how to think about many spiritual concepts. Here, it informs us that we are free to live for God because of our identification with Christ's death and resurrection. This is our new, lofty position. What are we supposed to do with this all-important sound doctrinal teaching? As Paul shows us, we are to move to real, radical life change.

### Sound Commands Speak Of Our Freedom (Rom. 6:12-14)

Paul moves here, as he typically does, from the abstract to the concrete, from the doctrinal to the applicational. Here he answers the question, "Paul, now that we are believers, what are supposed to do with the fact we are freed from the shackles and mastery of sin?" Several commands leave us with no doubt concerning what God expects from us.

*Negative: Don't Let Sin Reign In You* (Rom. 6:12). The point is quite clear:

<sup>12</sup> Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts,

The Greek command, composed of a negative wedded to a present tense imperative, forbids and action in progress (Μὴ οὖν βασιλεύετω ἡ ἁμαρτία). Translated, the saints in Rome were guilty of living like they were still slaves to sin. What were they doing? They were giving into the lusts and desires of the old man, be what they may: lewd behavior, anger, greed, pornography, promiscuous sex, drunkenness, gossip, love of money, love of power at all costs, hate . . . you name it (Gal. 5:19-21). Paul commands then, and us by proxy, to stop living like we are slaves to sin. Why in the world would you want to live for a master Christ has defeated for you? But many Christians do.

Here are some prayers which need praying . . .

- Lord, show me where a particular sin reigns in my life right now.
- Lord, show me specifically what lust is getting the best of me.

Maybe your well into your second marriage, but your mouth still needs taming. Maybe you're into your late teens but your penchant for lying to your parents is still a very real thing. Maybe your such a legalist you have your wife and children on pins and needles all the time. Maybe you have a secret sin which utterly dominates you, but no one knows it, but you do. Maybe you still get a rush about stealing little things when no one is looking. Maybe you are cutting the body that God now calls His temple. Maybe you just can't break yourself free from the bar when you're on a business trip. Maybe it's time to say, Enough! Maybe it's time to say, "I, by God's resurrected power, am going to stop living as if I'm chained to sin." Today is the day for victory because you are a victor in Christ. Godly life should reign in your life.

*Negative & Positive: Don't Participate In Sin, Do Participate In Righteousness* (Rom. 6:13). The Greek imperative here, again, forbids actions in progress in the lives of Roman saints:

<sup>13</sup> and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness;

The word for *instrument* here is, *hopla* (ὅπλα), from which the Greeks referred to Hoplite soldiers. Literally, the word means *a weapon*.

**ὄπλον, ου, τό** (s. prec. entry; Hom.+; ins, pap, LXX; TestSol 8:6; TestLevi 5:3; EpArist, Philo, Joseph.; Tat. 31, 1; Ath. 35, 1)

① any instrument one uses to prepare or make ready, *τοὺς ὄπλα ἀδικίας tools of wickedness*, i.e. tools for doing what is wicked Ro 6:13a (cp. Aristot., Pol. 1253a). Opp. ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης vs. 13b. But mng. 2 is also prob.; it is found in all the other pass. of our lit., and specif. in Paul.

② an instrument designed to make ready for military engagement, *weapon*

ⓐ lit., pl. (Demetr.: 722 Fgm. 5 Jac. ὄπλα εἶχον; Jos., Vi. 99 ἤκον μεθ' ὀπλῶν) J 18:3. Riders μετὰ τῶν συνήθων αὐτοῖς ὀπλῶν *with their usual arms* MPol 7:1. Sing. τίθησιν Μωϋσῆς ἐν ἐφ' ἐν ὄπλον *Moses placed one weapon = shield* (so as early as Hdt.; Diod S 17, 21, 2; 17, 43, 9 [interchanged with ἀσπίδες 8]; 17, 57, 2; Sb 7247, 24 [296 A.D.]; TestLevi 5:3 ὄπλον καὶ ῥομφαίαν) *on the other one*, to stand on them and gain a better view of the battlefield 12:2.

ⓑ in imagery, pl. of a Christian's life as a battle against evil τὰ ὄπ. τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικά *the weapons of my warfare are not physical* 2 Cor 10:4. ἐνδύσασθαι τὰ ὄπ. τοῦ φωτός *put on the weapons of light* Ro 13:12. τὰ ὄπ. τῆς δικαιοσύνης τὰ δεξιὰ καὶ ἀριστερά *the weapons of righteousness for offense and defense* (s. ἀριστερός) 2 Cor 6:7. ὀπλιζέσθαι τοῖς ὀπλοῖς τῆς δικαιοσύνης Pol 4:1 (s. ὀπλιζώ). Of evil desire: φοβουμένη τὰ ὄπ. σου (*your weapons*, i.e. those of the Christian who is equipped for the good fight) Hm 12, 2, 4. Of baptism: τὸ βάπτισμα ὑμῶν μενέτω ὡς ὄπλα *let baptism remain as your arms* ('remain' in contrast to the deserter, who throws his weapons away) IPol 6:2. Of Christ himself ὄπλον εὐδοκίας (God's) *shield of good pleasure* AcPl Ha 8, 23 = Ox 1602, 34f//BMM recto, 30.—B. 1383. DELG. M-M. TW.<sup>6</sup>

This is an interesting and powerful word image. Paul commands believers to stop using their bodies as weapons for sin. Wow. Are you guilty?

- When you cut another person down, you've weaponized your body for sin.
- When you pass on information you know probably isn't true, you've weaponized your body for sin.
- When you use sarcasm to put other people down in order to elevate yourself, you've weaponized your body for sin.
- When you are rude to others, you've weaponized your body for sin.
- When you engage in illicit sexual activity, be what it may, you've weaponized

<sup>6</sup> William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 716.

- your body for sin.
- When you fail to serve others while making them serve you, you've weaponized your body for sin.
- When you hold a grudge and seek ultimate revenge, you've weaponized your body for sin.
- When you, well, I'm sure you can fill in the proverbial blank.

Here are some more items for prayer.

- Lord, show me where today where I have weaponized my body for evil and not good.
- Lord, show me how I've cleverly rationalized my weaponization so I don't feel compelled to do anything about it.

Don't worry. The Lord won't waste any time answer these prayers because He wants you to grow up, quickly.

When does spiritual growth occur? When you stop presenting your body as a weapon for evil, and start presenting it as a tool, which is the other meaning of the Greek term, for righteousness. As Paul commands us:

... but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God (Rom. 6:13).

The verse hardly warrants a comment because it is so clear, and practical. I think we all have our marching orders from this command, don't we? Here's a committal prayer which needs praying .

..

- Lord, I commit my body, my mind, my emotions all to you right now. May my feet take me to where you would be pleased. May my eyes look upon things which would make you happy. May my hands be your hands each day. May my sexual nature be subservient to your will and not mine. May my mind steer clear of thoughts and teachings which don't honor you. May my emotions be true and pure and not tainted in any fashion.
- Lord, I give you my body as a tool for righteousness, not unrighteousness, no matter what.

And why should we live this new life of freedom? Paul tells you in verse 14:

<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace (Rom. 6).

When man lived under the Law, Law constantly showed him his sin. It also caused him to sin more because he lived to rebel against the Law. Now, however, we live under the rule of grace, God's grace. And what does God's grace say? God's grace says I love you. God's grace says, Look at what I did to provide for your salvation. I gave you my only Son so through your faith relationship with Him you could be freed from slavery to sin. Based, therefore, on His rich, red,

royal grace, we are internally inspired to live lives of complete freedom from sin, not to live lives free to sin.

You're a victor, not a slave. Go out and live in light of your new position in Christ.

*Addendum*

I closed my sermon with a personal marriage story based on a Gary Smalley book. Many have asked for that title so here it is: Gary Smalley, *The Joy of Committed Love* (New York: Inspirational Press, 1984), 53-66. The chapter in question is titled, *Your Wife Needs Your Shoulder Not Your Mouth*. Enjoy.