

Romans 6... 7... 8

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

Romans 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Romans 6:18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Romans 6:19 I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading to more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves *of* righteousness for holiness.

Romans 6:20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

Slavery was a reality in first century Rome. Paul's readers would understand it as an illustration. He uses it to explain why it is grace does not lead us to sin but rather to obey God.

Romans 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

- being changed to bring change -

The question, **What then?**, anticipates an argument. The Jews believed righteousness came from keeping the Law. Paul taught it was by God's free grace. Those who prefer the Law insist that grace gives you a license for sinning.

Paul meets this error head-on. We are free from the law but not lawless. Grace means freedom to serve the Lord, not to sin against Him.

Think of it on a purely logical level. Why would God free you from sin just so you could continue to sin? It makes no logical sense.

Paul introduced his illustration:

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?

Before you were saved you were a slave to sin. Now that you are saved you have a choice to make. You can still **present yourselves slaves... of sin leading to death**, or you can **present yourselves slaves... of obedience leading to righteousness**.

The slaves listening to Paul would think, "If I was given a choice of remaining a slave or being set free, I'd take freedom!" God gives you that choice as a Christian. Obviously you will want to **present yourselves slaves... of obedience leading to righteousness**.

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

God is to **be thanked** reminds us that salvation is His free gift to us. We did not and could not earn it. While we were yet **slaves of sin** God saved us. Jesus' death on the Cross redeemed us from slavery as He paid the price necessary to set us free.

Obedied from the heart is a poetic way of describing faith. They had been saved by grace through faith.

Delivered is a word associated with freedom from slavery. You were **delivered** from slavery to sin by **that form of doctrine**. First of all this refers to the hearing of the Word of God. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

That's just the beginning. God's Word continues to affect you. The word **form** was used of castings into which molten metal was poured. He's saying that you are being cast into the image of **righteousness** described in the Bible. First the Holy Spirit melts us, as we are saved. Then we are being poured into a mold and are being shaped into His righteousness.

If you want to know what God's righteousness looks like then study the person and work of Jesus! We are predestined to be conformed – molded and shaped – into His image.

Romans 6:18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

The form of doctrine to which you were delivered is something more than an intellectual pursuit. It is something more than gaining knowledge. It's as if you are a slave to its essential theme, which is righteousness, or how to live right.

It's possible to be set free but still think like and live like a slave. I've been using the more modern analogy of a prisoner. If all you've ever known is prison life, you find it hard to live out in the world as a free man. You often end up right back in prison.

As Christians we should be yearning for and learning more about the righteousness of God. Why go back to prison?

These are strong words. You are being cast into righteousness; you are slaves of righteousness. **Grace definitely does not lead you to sin!**

Sinless perfection in this body is an illusion. The Apostle John made this clear in 1John 1:8, *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* Yet we know that in the power of Jesus Christ, we can resist the next temptation - and that's all Jesus wants us to be concerned with.

"Because of the frailty of man, the Christian at infrequent intervals does yield to the evil nature and sin. *But the point is, God has so constituted him, that he need not do so*" (Kenneth Wuest).

Jesus Christ tells us to no longer behave as if we were slaves to sin. We have been set free; now we are to *think* and *live* as free people.

Romans 6:19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

Paul explained that, in using the illustration of slaves and master, he was speaking in human terms. He was using a familiar illustration

from everyday life. He seemed somewhat apologetic. After all, many of his readers were still slaves of their Roman masters! But, at the same time, that is precisely why the illustration was so powerful.

Before our conversion we surrendered our bodies as slaves of all kinds of uncleanness and to one kind of wickedness after another. Now we should dedicate our same bodies as slaves of righteousness, so that our lives would be holy.

Imagine starting a new job. At lunch you go back to your old employer and ask him what he wants you to do. It makes no sense! And neither does **presenting your members as slaves of uncleanness**.

God's purpose in setting you free from sin is not to give you the freedom to do as you please. It is to give you true freedom, which is to do as He pleases – which is for you to live right and become more-and-more like Jesus.

Romans 6:20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

Before you were saved the only freedom you had was to be **free in regard to righteousness**. Here is what I think Paul meant.

Most people think themselves basically good; or at least more good than bad. If they fall into bad behavior they seek reformation of some kind. They categorically resist the statement Paul made in verse twenty-three!

It's true that most people are decent, honest, law-abiding, helpful and even religious. But apart from grace they are totally separated from God's standard of **righteousness**. They are **free in regard to** it thus means they are unable to achieve it.

You've been set free, but not to sin. Perhaps this will help. God's people were once slaves in Egypt. He delivered them. When God commanded Pharaoh to let His people go He said this about their freedom: **that they may serve Me in this wilderness** (Exodus 7:16).