

Romans 6... 7... 8

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Romans 6:2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

In the early part of the twentieth century, the Russian monk Gregory Rasputin taught and lived the idea of salvation through repeated experiences of sin and repentance. He believed that because those who sin the most require the most forgiveness, a sinner who continues to sin with abandon enjoys more of God's grace (when he repents for the moment) than the ordinary sinner. Therefore, Rasputin lived in notorious sin and taught that this was the way to salvation. This is an extreme example of the idea behind Paul's question **shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?**

Because there's a little bit of Rasputin in all of us, Churches can be afraid to emphasize grace. They believe that if you tell people that God saves and accepts them apart from what they deserve, then they will have no motivation to be obedient. In their opinion, you simply can't keep people on the straight and narrow without a threat from God hanging over their head.

- being changed to bring change -

Neither extreme is biblical. We do not sin so that grace may abound; but neither do we limit grace to keep people in line.

Instead we should explain to believers that they are free from sin's power and domination in our lives.

Bear in mind the difference between the believer's *position* and his *practice*.

1. Our position is our standing in Christ. We've been justified – declared *Not guilty!* by God.
2. Our practice is what we can be in everyday life. It is our sanctification – our daily walk.

Grace puts us into the position then teaches us to live it out as our daily practice. Our position is absolutely perfect because we are in Christ. Our practice should increasingly correspond to our position. It never will correspond perfectly until we see Jesus in heaven, but we should be becoming more and more conformed to His image in the meantime.

Romans six, seven, and eight explain how we both avoid sinning and continue in grace to grow in the Lord without putting ourselves under any outward rules and regulations.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

What shall we say then? alerts us we are starting a new section of the book. Paul has demonstrated in earlier chapters that no one can ever achieve righteousness (a right standing with God). God must declare you righteous and He does it on the basis of what you believe rather than how you behave.

Towards the end of chapter five Paul said, **but where sin abounded, grace abounded much more** (5:20). As chapter six begins he was anticipating the objections to abounding grace as a way of living for God – that it would encourage sin.

The word **continue** is in a present tense which refers to a continual and willful practice of sinful behavior. He's describing a lifestyle of habitual sinning.

William MacDonald (Believers Bible Commentary) has this to say:

It has been helpfully suggested that there are four answers in the chapter to the initial question, **Shall we continue in sin?**

1. You cannot, because you are united to Christ (v1-11).
2. You need not, because sin's dominion has been broken by grace (v12-14).
3. You must not, because it would bring sin in again as your master (v15-19).
4. You had better not, for it would end in disaster (v20-23)

Romans 6:2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Certainly not is a strong statement – like saying *God forbid!*

God's grace – His unmerited favor in saving you – should encourage you to stop practicing sin.

When we are born again, when we have believed on Jesus for our salvation, our relationship with sin is permanently changed. We have **died to sin**.

Look at it this way: When a person physically dies he is free from all his former responsibilities and relationships. He can't be late for work and be fired; his wife is free to remarry; his parking tickets go unpaid.

The analogy is that you have died to sin and it therefore no longer has a hold on you. You are just as free from sin as a dead man is from paying his parking tickets.

We'll see as we go on this is true of us because of what Jesus did on the Cross. He died not only as our Substitute - that is, for us or in our place - but He also died as our Representative - that is, as us. Therefore, when He died, we died. All those who are in Christ are seen by God as having **died to sin**.

You are not said to be *dying* to sin, as if it were being overcome a little at a time. A person does not continually physically die. You die and that's it, you're dead. Death and life are incompatible.

Yes, we grow in our sanctification throughout our entire walk until we are glorified at death or the Rapture. What Paul is trying to establish here is that when you were born-again, when you were justified, you began the process of sanctification. **But you are at an advantage because your old sin nature is now a dead corpse.**

In First John 3:9 you have this same truth:

1 John 3:9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

The verbs are in the present (continuous) tense. A believer does not continually practice sin.

Therefore, if (since) we have **died to sin**, then we should not **live any longer in it**. You have been set free once-for-all from the controlling power of sin. Knowing and believing that you have **died to sin** is essential. If you are a Christian you can say **NO!** to sin.

Warren Wiersbe said, "Christian living depends on Christian learning." There are no steps involved in becoming **dead to sin**. It's done; you're dead! It's something you need to know and believe.

What if someone professes to be a believer but continues in willful, habitual sin? Either they are not saved; or they are severely backslidden.

We're not really talking *to* or *about* the unsaved or the severely backslidden in these verses. We're talking *to* and *about* the average believer who desires to walk with God in victory. We are declaring that you can walk with God in victory because your old sin nature is a dead corpse that you have no reason to yield to. **Sin is tempting a dead man!**

We still commit individual acts of sin. Why? Because we are still in this body of flesh with its lusts and habits.

When we sin, we confess it and are restored in our walk with God. Then we press forward, knowing we are **dead to sin** and living by grace rather than the law.