

## The Book of Romans Study Guide

### Chapter 6

In the previous chapter, Paul drew a series of parallels between the death caused by the sin of one man—Adam to the eternal life caused by the act of righteousness by one man—Yeshua. Now, in this chapter he continues with a series of comparisons between sin and grace, and death and life.

#### 6:1-5

In 5:20, Paul introduced the concept that where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

- v 1 He asks rhetorically if someone might interpret that truth as an excuse to sin so that grace might increase, because, in the goodness of God, He will overcome that sin with more grace.
- v 2 He answers his own question with a phrase that he used three times in chapter 3 – *mē genoito* – “may it never be” or loosely translated as “God forbid.” And then he poses another rhetorical question along the same line based on the fact that when we believe in Yeshua for our salvation, our relationship with sin is permanently changed, which he describes as having died to sin. And because of that reason that since believers have spiritually died to sin, we should not continue living in it. In other words, it is not right to keep on living in the same sinful ways that we did before believing in Yeshua.
- v 3-4 The meaning inherent in the Greek term *baptidzo* is immersion. A similar term is *bapto*, which has the sense of dipping. *Baptidzo* is an intensified form, in which the subject is submerged and overwhelmed completely so that the subject’s condition is permanently changed. It is used in classical Greek literature to describe ships that “baptized” (sank) and became a wreck. In another example, a recipe for pickling called for a vegetable to be first “dipped” briefly (*bapto*) in boiling water and then “baptized” (*baptidzo*) in vinegar to become a pickle, which is a permanent transformation.

But when you see it used in Scripture, you cannot assume that it is being used in the context of water.

- i.e. In Mark 10:38-39, Yeshua asked James and John if they would be able to baptized into His suffering unto death.
- In Matthew 3:11 Yeshua referred to the Baptism with the Holy Spirit (cf.; Acts 1:5; 11:16).
- In 1 Corinthians 10:2 Paul says the Israelites were “baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,” referring to their initiation into Moses’ leadership and the covenant.

The same is true here in verse 3, where believers are said to be baptized or immersed completely into Messiah Yeshua and also into His death. And that is confirmed by the context, because Paul is proving that our old life as sinful unbelievers has been overwhelmed by Yeshua and is now dead, so we need to live in accordance with that and we need to live in accordance with our permanently changed identity, what he calls at the end of verse 4, walking “in newness of life.”

- v 5 He shows that just as we are united with Yeshua in the likeness (*homolōma*) of His death, we will be united with Him in His resurrection

### **6:6-13**

- v 6-7 Paul introduces the concept of unbelievers being slaves to sin. And since believers have been crucified or died with Yeshua, that former life is over and thus we have been freed from sin.
- v 8-9 He continues this argument by showing that because believers will also be raised from the dead through Yeshua, and never to die again, death is no longer our master. So, we have been freed from both sin and death.
- v 10-11 And then he summarizes his argument by calling upon believers to consider themselves as being dead to sin and alive to God in Messiah Yeshua.
- v 12 Paul then gives his first exhortation in light of this reality, and that is not to let sin reign over our mortal bodies. In contrast to non-believers who are only free to sin and are not free to stop sinning and to live righteously, believers are set free from that restriction and are offered the opportunity to obey our new transformed nature. But that won't happen if you act as if sin is still reigning over you.
- v 13 His second exhortation is to present the members or parts of our bodies as instruments of righteousness, not unrighteousness. In other words, we are to dedicate our eyes, ears, lips, hands, mind and every other part of our body to serving the Lord, not serving our desires, which gives birth to unrighteous behavior.

### **6:14-23**

- v 14 Paul introduces another reason for not sinning by stating that we are not under law, but under grace. There are three ways that is true:

#### **1. It is a change in master.**

To be “under Law” means to be under its authority as a judge. In this position, the law serves as a mirror that reveals sin but provides no power to stop it, ultimately leading to condemnation because no one can keep it perfectly. Being “under grace” means your relationship with God is now based on the finished work of Yeshua, who fulfilled the law's requirements on your behalf.

#### **2. Freedom from condemnation.**

Under the system of the Law, breaking a rule results in a penalty. Under grace, believers are liberated from the Law's final penalty—eternal death. This doesn't mean the Law is “bad,” but rather that it can no longer be used by sin to condemn or enslave those who belong to Messiah.

#### **3. Empowerment, not permission.**

Crucially, being “under grace” is not a license to sin. Instead, it provides the spiritual power to actually live righteously—something the Law alone could never do.

- v 15 Paul then asks a similar rhetorical question to verse one – “Shall we sin because we are not

under Law, but under grace?” His answer? *Mē genoito* – “may it never be” or “God forbid.”

- v 16 He gives the reason for that conclusion by showing that freedom from the law does not mean freedom from God’s moral standards. We still need to be obedient to righteousness. Or to put it another way – grace is not a license to sin.
- v 17-18 He then develops the concept of slavery further by showing how believers never stop being slaves. But, instead of slaves to sin, we need to see ourselves as being slaves of righteousness. When we believe in Yeshua, we undergo a total transfer of ownership. So when we are freed from bondage to sin, we are not autonomous, but we are owned by God and that means needing to abide by His standards, which are described as righteousness.

In the remaining verses, Paul brings his argument to a close by showing that every person is on a trajectory. Depending on who your master is, you are moving toward a specific destination.

- v 19 Paul acknowledges that he is using human analogies (slavery) because our minds are “weak.” He then points out a simple truth:  

You used to offer your body to impurity, which led to ever-increasing wickedness, because sin is addictive; it always wants more. Now, you are to offer your body to righteousness leading to sanctification, which is the process of becoming holy. Just as sin grows if you feed it, righteousness grows as you practice it.
- v 20-22 Paul asks and answers the question – What benefit did you derive from your old life when you were a slave to sin? Shame that leads to an outcome of death. But now, with God as our Master, we receive the benefit of sanctification that leads to an outcome of eternal life.
- v 23 The final verdict is all people will receive either the wage of death that we earn through sin, or something that we can never earn, namely God’s free gift of eternal life that is offered by Messiah Yeshua when we make Him our Lord. And because it is a gift, it is a matter of grace.

So for all of these reasons given in this chapter, we cannot cause grace to increase by continuing to sin. But we can show our deep appreciation for God’s grace by living in a righteous manner continually.