

6:1-2: *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?*

The expression “*What shall we say then*” was used to conclude one argument and begin another (or another point). Readers of the original text would have sensed this new thought deserved close attention because the word *say* (*ereo*) meant more than saying something; it was also a matter of emphasis (CBL, GED, 2:593). Paul’s new area of attention is found at the end of verse 1. He asked if people should “*continue in sin so God’s grace would abound.*” This question comes right after Rom. 5:20 (*where sin abounded, grace abounded even more*). This question also ties in with the material presented in 3:5-8. Paul had to deal with the erroneous idea that sin is good because it magnifies God’s grace.

Paul dealt with this subject in verse two by using plain but strong wording: “*God forbid.*” Even though grace will always be more abundant than man’s sin (man can never sin too much to be forgiven), the idea that we should sin more and more to see God’s grace poured out is wrong. Paul said that sin is something to which God’s people “*die.*” The old life is put to death as the following verses show.

Before dealing with the Christian’s relationship to sin, three observations are in order. (1) The word *continue* (*epimeno*) was used to describe a person who was a guest in someone’s house. This word carried with it the ideas of fellowship and cordial relations (see 1 Cor. 16:8 and Phil. 1:24 for how this word was sometimes used). It also contained the ideas of persistence, perseverance, and continuance (see how this same term is also used in Acts 12:6 and Jn. 8:7). Some manuscripts treat *continue* as a present tense verb in Rom. 6:1; others have it in the future tense. Whichever tense is accepted, the point is clear: should people persist in sin if they have been freed from this way of life? Mankind has two clear choices: the way of salvation here designated as *grace* or the way of death which is described as *sin*. (2) The expression *God forbid* is used in other places such as 3:4, 6, 31; 6:15; 7:7; 1 Cor. 6:15; Gal. 3:21. This expression could be translated *may such a thing never occur, away with the thought* (Wuest, 1:92). Another expression of the thought is *do not let it happen*. “This extremely strong denial is a rhetorical device (always used after a question) popular with Paul” (CBL, GED, 1:620). (3) At this point in the book, Paul began to reveal the true nature and purpose of God’s grace. He stated that grace was never supposed to be a tool to let people wallow in sin. Grace was extended so people would leave sin (2:4), not increase their participation in it.

Another major thought is at the end of verse two. Contrary to what many believe, it is possible to “*live in sin.*” When someone becomes a Christian the friendly relationship with sin must end. People are to become very conscious of sin and do their best to avoid it. Some believe it is impossible to live in sin, but this chapter plus Col. 3:5-7 shows that many do live in sin.

At the end verse two Paul asked how a Christian could continue to live in sin. He understood that no Christian will be perfect (Jas. 3:2), but living *in sin* is not acceptable to God. Christians are to do their very best to limit and destroy sin because they have died to it (2a).

The word from which “*died*” is translated (*apothnesko*) is an aorist verb. This means a Christian’s death to sin was at a particular point and time in the past. It happened at a definite time (the time of conversion as the following verses show). Notice that Paul included himself by using the pronoun “*we.*”

In the following verses, Paul showed how sin is killed. Before dealing with this information, Lanier’s observations (p. 37) are worthy of consideration. He said, “When Jesus died, he died unto sin - his relationship to sin was severed. a. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3). b. He ate with sinners (Luke 15:1). c. He was tempted to sin (Matt. 4:1-11). After his death this no longer happened. The death of Jesus was both ‘for sin’ (1 Cor. 15:3) and ‘unto sin’ (Rom. 6:10). When we are baptized into his ‘death for sin’ we accept him as our atoning sacrifice for our sins and apply that sacrifice to our benefit and we receive forgiveness of the sins we committed from the day of responsibility to the time of our baptism. And when we are baptized into his ‘death unto sin’ we participate, have fellowship, with him in death unto sin. And in that act our relationship with sin is severed. (1) We are no longer the property of Satan. (2) We no longer serve Satan.”

McGuiggan (p. 189) said, “But what does it mean to ‘die’ to sin? Does it mean that the Christian is no more attracted by sin than a dead man is by the things of this life? I’ve read people who said this is what

Paul means! It isn't my own experience. I don't know of anyone who has experienced this. But this is less to the point than Galatians 5:17 is. Or, 1 John 1:7-9. In those passages we are told that saints not only find sin attractive but that they often sin. John insists that we confess our sins in order to have them cleansed. Use your sanctified common sense and you'll know that the phrase can't mean this. It isn't true to Bible or experience."

Nygren (p. 234) added: "In the death of Christ the regnant power of sin was broken; all the dominions and powers of the old aeon were cast down. And in the resurrection of Christ the new aeon began. Since the Christian shares in the death and resurrection of Christ, all of this is also true of him: he has been delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13)."

6:3: *Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?*

Paul did not want these Christians to be "*ignorant*" (*agnoeo*) about their conversion. Paul often used this verb when giving corrective instructions to congregations (it is used in 1:13; 7:1; 1 Cor. 10:1; 1 Thess. 4:13; etc.) It occurs only a couple times in the gospels, but Mk. 9:32 does a good job of illustrating its meaning. Here it is in the present tense (are you continually in a state of no understanding?), and it is joined with the fact that the Romans had been "*baptized into Jesus Christ.*" Because of these facts it has the force of "Do you not know?" or "Have you failed to realized?" (Brown, 2:406). The Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (1:21) describes it as "Surely you know," "Surely you have not forgotten." Paul seems to have asked if some weak Christians (specifically his opponents) did not understand everything that baptism involved. He wanted to insure they realized that the act of baptism separates people from sin.

The *baptism* (*baptizo*) experienced by these Christians is more fully explained in the commentary on Acts 2:38 because the same word is used in both places. Key cross-references for Bible baptism are 2 Tim. 2:10 and Eph. 1:3, 7, verses that affirm that salvation and all spiritual blessings are only found *in Jesus Christ*. In order to be saved and enjoy all God's blessings (not the least of which is salvation), a person must have **faith** (Jn. 8:24), be willing to **repent** (Lk. 13:3—this step is also discussed in the Acts 2:38 commentary), and after **confessing** Christ as Lord (see the commentary on Rom. 10:9-10), the final step is **water baptism** (Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Pet. 3:20-21). Proper baptism in water puts a person "into Christ" (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3) and results in the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). According to the Bible, people are not saved by "saying a sinner's prayer," merely "confessing Christ," "accepting Jesus into the heart," or "praying with someone." God requires all the steps listed above, and this system is known as "*grace through faith*" (Eph. 2:8). Additional information on true faith is found in the commentary on Rom. 1:5.

The essentiality for baptism is so clear (compare Mk. 16:16) that many must struggle to deny it. The Bible Knowledge Commentary (p. 461) says: "The question here is whether Paul had in mind Spirit baptism (1 Cor. 12:13) or water baptism...others take Romans 6:3 to refer to water baptism, but the problem with that is that it seems to suggest that baptism saves." The commentary is right in its conclusion that if water baptism is described then baptism has a part in man's salvation (see Mk. 16:16). Paul *did* describe water baptism and this passage *cannot* describe Holy Spirit baptism.

By the time Paul authored the book of Ephesians, only one baptism existed (Eph. 4:4-5). This *one baptism* was either Holy Spirit baptism or it was baptism in water. If water baptism is something that God still commands/requires/recognizes, Holy Spirit baptism is no longer available because there is now only *one baptism*. This *one baptism* is either water baptism or Spirit baptism, and the following chart shows that *water baptism* is the one baptism from now to the end of time.

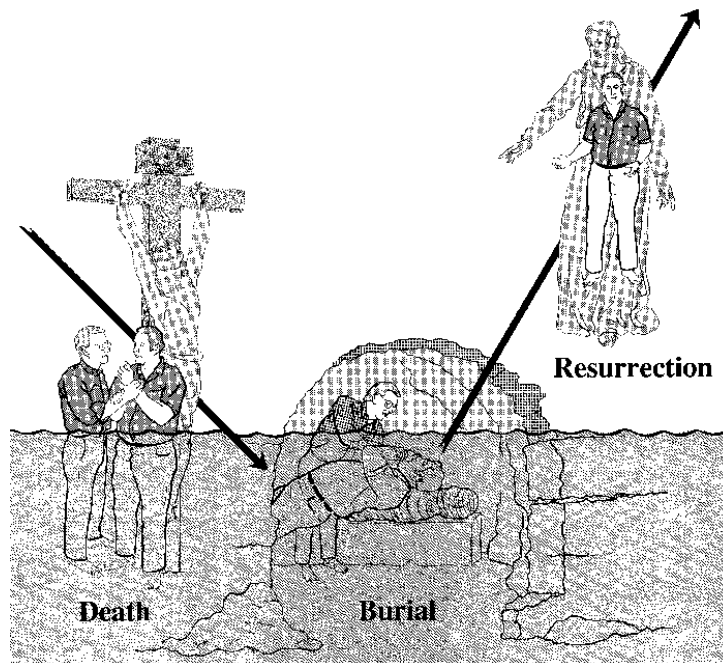
WATER BAPTISM	VERSES	SPIRIT BAPTISM	VERSES
For all people	Mt. 28:19	For the apostles	Acts 1:1-5
Is commanded	Acts 10:48	Was promised	Acts 1:4-5
Performed by men	Acts 8:35-38	Done by Jesus	Acts 1:5; Jn. 16:7

Condition of salvation	Mk. 16:16	For the saved	Acts 2:4, 14, 32
People didn't wait	Acts 16:33	Told to wait for it	Acts 1:4
Father, Son, Spirit	Mt. 28:18-19	Done by the Lord	Acts 1:5
An act of faith	Col. 2:12	Done for faithful	Acts 1:4-5
Burial and resurrection	Rom. 6:3-5	Done for the faithful	Acts 1:4-5
Follows repentance	Acts 2:38	Came 3 ½ years later	Acts 2:1f
Needed for cleansing	Acts 22:16	Came after cleansing	Jn. 15:3
Puts us into Christ	Gal. 3:27	For people in Christ	Acts 1:4-5
Continue to end of time	Mt. 28:18-20	Only 2 recorded cases	Acts 2, 10
Effects are invisible	Rom. 6:3	Audible and visible	Acts 2:2-4
There is now only <i>one baptism</i> (Eph. 4:5). This is water baptism.			

Another verse showing what water baptism does is Acts 8:12. Those who “*believed*” (heard the gospel) were *baptized* so they could participate in the “*kingdom*.” The book of Acts repeatedly shows that people were immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38) and to have their sins washed away (Acts 22:16). Even Peter affirmed that our salvation is partly based upon Bible baptism (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

Item Associated With Baptism	Immersion Requires?	Sprinkling/Pouring Requires?
Water (Acts 8:36)	Yes	Yes/Yes
Much water (Jn. 3:23)	Yes	No/No
Going to water (Mt. 3:13)	Yes	No/No (it can be brought to you)
Going into water (Acts 8:38)	Yes	No/No
Coming out of water (Acts 8:39)	Yes	No/No
Form of birth (Jn. 3:3, 5)	Yes	No/No
Form of burial (Rom. 6:4)	Yes	No/No
Form of resurrection (Rom. 6:4)	Yes	No/No
Form of planting (Rom. 6:5, KJV)	Yes	No/No
Washing of body (Eph. 5:26)	Yes	No/No

The third verse in Romans 6 shows that those who are baptized in water are baptized “*into Christ’s death*” (i.e. we gain access to all the benefits of His death). Perhaps the following picture (the source for this is unfortunately unknown) will help.



Based upon what Paul wrote and looking at the above diagram, there is a definite connection between the death of Jesus Christ and the justification of mankind (Owen, p. 39). The information in Rom. 6:3 ties in with Rom. 3:25; 5:9; and 5:10. Verse 3 is very plain in both Greek and English: We are either baptized “into” (*eis*) Christ and baptized “into” (*eis*) His death or we are not. Proper baptism results in both conditions; a lack of baptism or a baptism other than the “one baptism” described in Eph. 4:5 results in a person’s being out of Christ and outside the benefits of Jesus’ death. Proper baptism is so important Paul spoke of these same ideas again in verse 4. Furthermore, when people were not baptized correctly and Paul was made aware of this, they were immersed again (Acts 19:3-5).

McGuiggan (p. 192) said, “We were baptized into his death. And what kind of death was that? It was a death caused by sin at the hands of sinners! It was a death that was intended to atone for sin! It was a once-for-all death to sin! And if we entered into union with such a death could we continue to live in sin? That would be moral contradiction. Did teaching like Paul’s lead (logically) to a life of continuance in sin? Not at all. The logic of his teaching would be a hatred of that which slew the Master; a longing to have that sin covered and appeased for and a decisive severance from sin. If a person enters into union with Christ he endorses all that Christ endorses and repudiates all that Christ rejects.”

6:4: *We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.*

In order to enter into Christ’s death, one must be “buried” (*sunthapto*), a word occurring only here and Col. 2:12. This is an interesting word because it meant “to bury with someone” or “be buried together with another” (CBL, GED, 6:201). Kittle (7:786) says “to bury with, together, at the same time.” The preceding diagram illustrates this entombment. One can only share in the likeness of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection if he *dies to sin* (i.e. changes his life through repentance), *is buried* (immersed) by baptism, and is *raised up* (comes up out of the water). Paul was emphatic on this point because he said “through” (*dia*) “baptism.” Translators of the KJV rendered the text “**by baptism.**”

The word *baptized* (*baptisma*) is identical to the word in verse 3, only here it is a noun and in verse 3 it is a verb. Like the verb *baptize*, *baptisma* is not a translation of the Greek text; it is a transliteration. This

means the Greek letters of the word used by Paul were given their English equivalent. This was necessary because “there was no equivalent [word, BP] in our language....To baptize is to put into water and take out again. It involves immersion, submersion, and emergence—death, burial, and resurrection” (Vine, 1:367). This definition of baptism, when combined with Jn. 3:23, shows that it must be a *burial* (immersion). Sprinkling water on someone’s head or pouring water on people is not Bible baptism. God has given us a pattern (2 Tim. 1:13), part of this pattern involves baptism (Rom. 6:1-4), and this pattern must be followed.

Turner (p. 37) said the word *baptized* “is peculiar to Christianity. It represents a rite performed in water involving repentance and the remission of sins. It was administered by both John the Baptist and the Christians. The verb is more frequently used than the noun for the Christian rite and, though it was originally a pagan word, it has become peculiarly Christianized.” For additional information on Bible baptism see the commentary on Acts 2:38.

After someone has been properly baptized, the fourth verse states that his or her life is “*new*” (*kainotes*). The Bible Knowledge Commentary says this term “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” (p. 462). The word Paul used “is from *kainos*, new in quality, which is to be distinguished from *neos*, new in time” (Vine, 1:368). Aside from this verse and Rom. 7:6, this term is not found in the New Testament. It “denotes the fullness of the reality of salvation which Christ has given to Christians in comparison with the worthlessness of their former condition” (Kittle, 3:451) and refers “to one’s manner of living” (CBL, GED, 3:212). Because of our new life we are obligated to “*walk*” (*peripateo*), a common word occurring in most of the New Testament books “and denotes the general life-style—ethical, moral, religious” (CBL, GED, 5:158).

McGuiggan (p. 192-193) said, “The ‘also’ indicates that Jesus too lived a life of newness. Before his resurrection he lived the life of a servant, struggling against sin in order to be victorious over it. But because of his utter obedience he was given a glorious resurrection and glorious life. The saint identifies himself with all that. As his Master was ‘born again’ from the dead (Revelation 1:5; Colossians 1:18) even so the sinner had been ‘born again’ as he (by faith) entered into union with the death and resurrection of Christ.”

Before baptism a person has the devil as his or her spiritual father and master (Jn. 8:44). The unsaved are bondservants to sin (Jn. 8:34). People belong to the devil. However, in baptism, sinners are united with Christ, their relationship with sin is severed, and entrance into Christ occurs. The information in Rom. 6 is parallel to 2 Cor. 5:17.

Nygren (p. 235) noted that Paul gave a positive and negative picture of baptism. Baptism is negative in that those who experience it must die because Jesus died. Baptism is also positive in that it is compared to a resurrection, another thing experienced by Jesus.

Barclay (Romans, p. 86), lists what he calls *three great permanent truths*:

- “It is a terrible thing to make the mercy of God an excuse for sinning. Think of it in human terms. How despicable it would be for a son or a daughter to consider himself or herself free to sin, because he or she knew that a father or a mother would forgive. That would be taking advantage of love to break love’s heart.”
- “The man who enters upon the Christian way is committed to a different kind of life....In modern times we have tended to stress the fact that acceptance of the Christian way need not make so very much difference in a man’s life. Paul would have said that it ought to make all the difference in the world.”
- “There is a real union with a real identification with Christ...A man is in Christ.”

Although not mentioned by Barclay, there are four great truths in this verse. Paul said Jesus was raised “*from*” (*ek*) the dead. This preposition indicates Jesus was really among the dead. He actually went to the place of the deceased (Hades), but He broke the bonds of death. This affirmation is in contrast to some of the false theories used by skeptics to explain the resurrection (i.e. Jesus “swooned” but did not actually die). A story is told about a worshipper who heard a preacher say Jesus really didn’t die; He merely lost consciousness and was revived by the disciples. When she asked others for comment she received this reply: “Beat your preacher with a cat-of-nine-tails with 39 heavy strokes; nail him to a cross; hang him in the sun for 6 hours; run a spear through His side, and then put Him in an airless tomb for 36 hours.”

Paul associated Jesus’ return from the dead with the “*Father’s glory*.” Spicq (1:370) says “This glory is God in the splendor of his majesty and the omnipotence of his interventions.” Brown (2:46) concurs by saying the thought points to “God’s glory, majesty and power.”

6:5: *For if we have become united with (him) in the likeness of his death, we shall be also (in the likeness) of his resurrection;*

This verse further emphasizes the importance and necessity of baptism. If a person wants to be in the *likeness of Christ’s resurrection* (saved), he must first be united with Christ in the *likeness of His death*. This is accomplished by baptism. There is no other way to accomplish this. The CBL (Romans, p. 95) noted that “We share the life of Christ just as a branch that is grafted into a tree shares the life of the tree (John 15:5). The believer becomes grafted into Christ.”

The wording in the ASV (“*united with*”) is better than the word “*planted*” (the KJV translation). *United* (*sumphutos*) is an adjective that occurs only here in the New Testament. “The term carries the primary sense of being ‘born with one’” (CBL, GED, 6:168). Spicq (3:322) says “In medicine, it refers to the healing of fractured bones and means specifically ‘to grow back in such a way as to connect the two fragments, to mend.’” Furthermore, “Through baptism, Christians share in the ‘virtue’ of the crucified Christ. The members and the head make up a unity; the two organisms are in a vital union, suggesting the ‘incorporating personality’ of the Lord” (ibid, p. 323). The verb translated “*have become*” in the ASV (“*have been*,” KJV) is in the perfect tense. Once we are joined to Christ we never again need to be joined unless we sever the bond.

The “*death*” and “*resurrection*” referred to by Paul must primarily refer to sin. We die to sin before baptism because we repent (turn from sin). After we are immersed into Christ, sin is no longer our master. Those who are baptized as the Bible describes belong to Christ. Also, after being baptized we share in the likeness of Jesus’ *resurrection*. We come up out of the water, and since our sins have been forgiven (Acts 22:16), we have new life and joy (Acts 8:39). Those who are baptized have left the gutter of wrongdoing and condemnation for fellowship with Christ. This thought is developed more fully in verses 6-7.

6:6-7: *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with (him), that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; 7 for he that hath died is justified from sin.*

Verse 6 opens with the expression “*knowing this*” (this is in the present tense). Owen (p. 39) noted that Paul “is still answering the question, ‘Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?’”. The “*old man*” Paul referred to has been described elsewhere in this book (see 3:9; 5:6, 8, 10), though this is the only place in Romans where Paul actually used the word translated *old* (*palaios*). This adjective is applied to old clothing (Mt. 9:16), old wine-skins (Mt. 9:17), and even the Old Testament (2 Cor. 3:14). In Classical Greek it described items that were old, worn out, and thus worthless/unusable. Here it includes “everything connected with the fall of man and with his subjection to the distress and death of a transitory life, separated from God. In this concept we can hear deep undertones of God’s wrath and the wages of sin. At the same time we are pointed to the completely new, to that healing and salvation which are given to a man when he is crucified with Christ and raised with him” (Brown, 2:715).

The old way of life is to be “*crucified*” (*sustauroo*), a verb occurring only here, Mt. 27:44; Mk. 15:32;

Jn. 19:32 (verses describing the crucifixion of Jesus), and Gal. 2:20. Instead of merely meaning crucify, it denotes “to be crucified along with” or “among others” being crucified (CBL, GED, 6:217). This word describes our response to sin; Thayer (p. 608) says it means “the extinction of our former corruption.” Gingrich and Danker (p. 795) say “the crucifixion of a person when he becomes a Christian.” Much of this crucifixion is mental. When someone *crucifies sin*, he decides to end his relationship with wrongdoing. Crucifying sin means that someone admits he is a sinner (a person who has broken God’s laws) and determines to right his relationship with God. This decision includes *putting away* the “*body of sin*.” When unsaved people become Christians, they stop living in sin. They stop being controlled by sinful lusts and desires because they deactivate the things that keep them in continual sin.

The KJV has the word “*destroyed*” (the ASV says “*might be done away with*”). “The term ‘destroyed’ does not mean annihilated but rendered ‘powerless.’ Sin is not destroyed, but is robbed of its power. The one who is born again is commanded to take his stand on this verse for ‘he that is dead is freed from sin.’ Death breaks all ties and cancels all obligations. By his union with Christ the Christian dies to the old self and is free from it, even as the Law has no jurisdiction over a dead man, regardless of his crime. The only power that can cause the believer to sin now is his own power of choice. He *can* sin, but he does not *have* to do so” (CBL, Romans, p. 95). The term Paul used to describe the loss of sin’s power (*katargeo*) is used in other parts of this book (3:3—“*none effect*”, 31—“*none effect*” or “*void*”; 4:14—“*void*”; 7:2 and 7:6—“*discharged*”). It means “God’s putting out of action through the cross...the powers which threaten man’s spiritual well being” (Brown, 1:73). Certainly one of these *powers* is sin.

Lanier makes some excellent points though I have reversed them (this material is from page 39 of his commentary):

- The old covenant was done away with (2 Cor. 3:11), but it was not destroyed. It simply ceased to be the authority for religion.
- Prophecy was done away (1 Cor. 13:8), but this does not mean that prophecies would fail to be fulfilled. The ending meant the act of speaking under the direction of the Holy Spirit would cease.
- The same is true for the body of sin (a body controlled by sin). The body will not cease, but it will cease to be controlled by sin if we are a Christian.

We are freed from sin by Jesus’ blood; without the Lord’s sacrifice we could not be released from sin’s power. A good example of sin’s power comes from pornography. Some studies have revealed that close to 60% of all males who profess to be Christians struggle with sexually explicit material. If those who profess to be Christians are strongly drawn to this material, what must be true of those who are not Christians? The unsaved are shackled by sin and they can only be set free by Christ’s blood. When people are released from the vice grip of sin, their interest in things like pornography must be crucified. Sinful desires must be recognized, addressed, and overcome. For most, this is a daily struggle.

Not all people struggle with the same issues, but all do struggle with something. Those who struggle without Christ are “*in bondage to sin*” (6b). That is, sin is a person’s master. Sins that can control people include drinking, drugs, smoking, pornography, foul speech, fornication, lying, cheating, etc. *Bondage* (*douleuo*) is a present tense verb that is sometimes translated “*serve*.” Jesus said we cannot *serve* (same word) two masters (Mt. 6:24). At the end of Mt. 6:24 this term is used a second time. In the book of Acts this word has a positive sense in Acts 20:19 (*servicing*). In these verses (as well as others), this word denotes the *servicing* towards a power such as God (Acts 20:19), idols (Gal. 4:8), desires of the flesh (Tit. 3:3), and sin (Rom. 6:6)—Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 1:3500. Spicq (1:383) defines it as “consecrate oneself to a work, devote oneself to a master.”

The list of addictive sins that can lead to bondage is long, and this chapter teaches God’s people to get out of sin’s grip. Our departure from sin begins with **baptism** (6:1-4). An excellent parallel reference is

Gal. 2:20 (Paul the sinner died). Paul made the thought even clearer in the 7th verse. When a person obeys the gospel he has *died* and he attains *justification*. Lanier (p. 39) makes this argument:

- Justification is simultaneous with death to sin.
- Death to sin takes place in burial in baptism.
- Therefore *justification takes place in baptism* (emphasis added, BP)

When Paul said people are “*justified*” (*dikaioo*), he used a *perfect* tense verb. Several times in chapters 2-8 of this book this term occurs, and it means “God does not ascribe to the sinner the penalty for his sin but by grace ascribed to him righteousness... This same topic is discussed in the Epistle to the Galatians” (CBL, GED, 2:142). By using the perfect tense Paul affirmed people are justified at the point of their conversion, and their justification is on-going. Justification continues because Christians *stand in the grace of God* (5:2), and because *they walk in the light* (1 Jn. 1:7). We can only lose our justification if we allow Satan to take God’s word from our heart and life (Lk. 8:7, 14; Gal. 5:4).

6:8-11: *But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; 9 knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him. 10 For the death that he died, he died unto sin once: but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.*

Verses 8-11 repeat some of the material from verses 5-7. In fact, these verses even begin in the same way (compare the *if* in verse 5).

In verse 8, Paul referred to those who had obeyed the gospel (*if we died with Christ*). This described Paul and others who had died with the Lord (verses 2, 4). Since these Christians had died with the Lord, they had access to a great privilege—living with the Lord. This same promise is still available to all who obey the gospel.

When Paul said that he and the Romans “*believed*” this (*pisteuo*), he used a present tense verb. In other words, Paul and other Christians continued to believe this. Eternal life with Christ was something these people thought about and thought about often. It was not something they were once taught and then forgot. We would do well to continually believe and remember that if we too have died with Christ, we are entitled to “*live*” with the Lord. Live (*suzao*) is a verb that occurs only here, 2 Cor. 7:3 and 2 Tim. 2:11. In all three places Paul “connected ‘living with’ someone to ‘dying with’ the same person. In Romans 6:8 and 2 Timothy 2:11 that person is Christ” (CBL, GED, 6:145). Thayer (594) offers a simpler definition: living “a life dedicated to God.”

In verse 9, Paul argued that Jesus will never again die (this is the force of “no more”). These two words come from a single adverb (*ouketi*), and sources like the CBL (GED, 4:410) define this adverb as “never again” (this adverb is used twice in this verse). This point is also made in verse 10. Christ died once physically and He died to sin one time. Now the Lord’s association with death and sin has been forever severed. Christ lives, and He lives “unto God” (10b). Paul used this fact to make a comparison. Just as the Savior cannot die again, so the child of God cannot die a second time. That is, a child of God is not to die to sin a second time (death to sin is discussed in verses 5-7). If we have died to sin once (and we did at the time of conversion), the process is never to be repeated. At the end of verse 9 Paul introduced this same thought with another illustration: death no longer “*rules*” over Jesus. *Rules* (*kurieuo*) is found elsewhere in this book (6:9; 7:1; 14:9). Outside the New Testament this term was especially associated with one who had “the rights to the produce of some land, the harvest from a certain territory” or the “owner of a slave or of a house and property” (Spicq, 2:351). Here it means “death no longer holds sway” over us if we are in Christ (*ibid*). Death did not control the Lord and sin cannot be in control of someone’s life after becoming a Christian! Another statement or example of this is found in Eph. 4:21-22.

In the Ephesians reference, the words put off are an aorist infinitive. A second passage to consider is Col. 3:9; in this verse put off is an aorist participle. The aorist tense expressed a one time action or a single act. Thus, the death to sin that saved people have experienced is a once in a lifetime process. This

fact does not mean that Christians forget about sin (see Rom. 8:13). There are many times when God's people must work to conquer sin, and it is even possible to be overtaken in sin (Gal. 6:1). Paul meant that Christians must make a deliberate decision in their lives to leave sin alone. This decision (choice) is a one-time act.

The believer is to experience what the Lord experienced (i.e. a type of death). We die to sin so sin and Satan cease to be our masters (compare Mt. 6:24 and the commentary on that verse). We begin living in a new way that says we are alive to God and dead to sin. Our master becomes God and we gratefully rid ourselves of Satan and his evil ways. The sin we leave behind is habitual sin, since all still sometimes slip (see the comments on Rom. 3:23).

At the present time Christians are living with Christ (Col. 3:1-2). Christ is serving as Teacher, High Priest, Mediator and King for those who are saved. Thus, those in the kingdom of God have an added reason to stay away from habitual sin. This is the conclusion in the next verse: be "*dead unto sin*" (11a) but "*alive unto God*" (both expressions are in the present tense). "*Reckon*" (*logizomai*) means "consider yourselves dead" (Gingrich and Danker, p. 476), and as indicated in the previous sentence, it is in the present tense.

When Paul said that Jesus died "*once*" (*ephapax*), he used a word meaning "'once for all,' once and completely, to be distinguished from *pote*, 'once upon a time'" (Vine, 1:369). The word *ephapax* is a strengthened form of *hapax* (for information on *hapax* see the commentary on Jude 3) and is thus an "emphatic term" (CBL, GED, 2:62) emphasizing the "singularity and uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice and its results" (ibid). Vine (1:369) describes it as "the absolute sufficiency and finality of the death of Christ for all the purposes for which he died." Another excellent definition is offered in the Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (1:91): "Christ, who sacrificed himself once for all...in contrast to the 'daily' sacrifices of the high priests."

Those who received this letter "*knew*" (9 a) this information. *Know* (*oida*) is in the perfect tense, and this means these Christians had received these truths in the past and Paul believed they still remembered. There are certain facts and figures in life that we may forget—even pieces of information related to God and His word. There are other truths, however, that stay with us for life, and some of the information that should be permanently imprinted on our psyches involves God and His word. If this point is taught in a classroom setting, ask for examples of truths that should always be remembered.

6:12: *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof:*

In light of the preceding material this conclusion is obvious. Yet, to make the point even more forceful Paul used the word "*therefore*." He told the Romans that sin was not to "*reign*" (*basileuo*), present tense, in their mortal body. Thayer (p. 98, column 2) said this word meant, "to exercise the highest influence, to control." In Romans, this term occurs only here and Rom. 5:14, 17 (twice), 21 (twice).

The controlling forces in the life of the Christian are to be God and His word (compare Eph. 6:17). Our attitude towards sin must be, "Sometimes you are going to get me. You are going to win a few battles, but I am going to win the war." As Paul described this battle he said mankind is "*mortal*" (*thnetos*), an adjective used in Classical Greek to contrast man with God or "the gods." In Biblical terms, man is subject to death and a very frail creature (Jas. 4:14).

Two other key words at the end of this verse are "*obey*" (*hupakouo*) and "*lusts*" (*epithumia*). *Obey* is noun and occurs only a few times in this book (6:12, 16, 17; 10:16), and here it is in the present tense. The word is also used as a noun in Romans in places like Rom. 1:5 (the faith given by God is to be "obeyed"). Here the sense is "to allow one's self to be captivated by, governed by, etc." (Thayer, p. 638). Gingrich and Danker (p. 837) say "of the thing to which one is obedient or which one embraces in full surrender." *Lusts* is defined in the commentary on Rom. 1:24. By using these terms Paul presented a "contrast to Stoic morality" (Richardson, "Desire"). That is, he "did not regard the flesh or the body as inherently evil: the body can indeed be the prey of lusts, but it can also be the instrument of righteousness" (ibid).

6:13: *neither present your members unto sin (as) instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members (as) instruments of righteousness unto God.*

Here Paul returned to the theme of “*unrighteousness*” (compare 1:18, 29; 2:8; 3:5). He understood that unrighteousness is the result of sin. Sin causes unrighteousness and unrighteousness causes God’s wrath to be poured out on sinners. Paul realized that man has a choice. He can choose to be an instrument of righteousness or an instrument of unrighteousness. We choose by using our “*members*” (*melos*), a noun meaning our body parts. Another source defines this word as “the situation of humankind in service to the power either of sin or of God” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 2:404).

The word “*instrument*” (*hoplon*), which is used twice in this verse, carried with it the idea of *weapons* (see how this same term is used in places like Jn. 18:3; 2 Cor. 10:4). It was a term that indicated the existence of a battle (in this case the conflict is between God and Satan). The weapons that God and Satan use are *people*—people from around the world. Human beings are either a weapon in the army of God or the army of Satan. Because of this on-going war, Jesus said there can be no middle ground (Mt. 12:30). “Both the KJV and many of the newer translations prefer ‘instruments’ here, simply because the context does not explicitly denote warfare. In Romans 13:12, however, where again the context is not specifically militaristic, the KJV selects ‘armor’ where ‘equipment’ or even ‘apparatus’ would suffice” (CBL, GED, 4:369).

In verse 13, Paul discouraged people from allowing themselves to be used in the devil’s service (“*neither present your members unto sin*”). If we allow sin to be the guiding force in our lives, we are one of Satan’s weapons. The wise and right choice for all men is found at the end of verse 13. We should “*present ourselves unto God*” (i.e. enlist in God’s army). Those who do this are described as being *alive from the dead*. This means that Christians have been resurrected from a state of sin (Eph. 2:1-2) through a process that includes baptism (Rom. 6:1-4). Since we have been freed from sin, we are now soldiers in the army of God. In 13a *present* (*paristemi*) is a present tense verb that means putting our “members” at “the disposal of God” (CBL, GED, 5:94). Stated another way, the “consequences for conduct arising from baptism is that members...that *were* previously *at the disposal of* impurity must now (vv. 19, 21) *be placed* in the service of righteousness” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 3:41). The thought can be rendered, “do not continue to present,” or “stop presenting.” The construction used by Paul was often employed to stop an action that was in progress (Robertson, Romans, p. 363). As soldiers in God’s army, our interests have changed. We are now interested in learning how to defeat Satan, his schemes, and how to bring more people into God’s army. Christianity is a system that is likened to an on-going war. Christians are people who are in a battle (see the commentary on Eph. 6:10-20). If we refuse to fight, we will be like a coward or an AWOL soldier. Our punishment will be spiritual death.

Towards the middle of verse 13, Paul said *present* (the KJV has “yield”). Paul used an aorist imperative; this meant “present your body once and for all” (Bible Knowledge, p. 463). Verse 13 is very similar to Rom. 12:1. Christians have an obligation to present themselves unto God because they were once dead to sin (Eph. 2:1) but now have a new life (Rom. 6:11) through God’s love, grace, and mercy. The CBL (Romans, p. 99) added, “Often one comes across a highway sign, ‘Road closed.’ Break down the barrier or drive around it and you will have trouble. Break down God’s ‘Road Closed’ barriers and you will pay the price.”

6:14: *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.*

This is more familiar material since these thoughts are found elsewhere in this letter. Because baptized people have a *new life* (verse 4), and Satan is no longer their master, Paul again said that sin does *not have dominion over us*. This expression would have been very meaningful to the people at Rome.

Owen (p. 41) said, “In the slave culture of Rome this statement made wonderful sense. To say that sin does not rule kupieusei, is to say that sin is not your master. All in the Roman culture knew that the slave was to serve his master, not somebody else’s master. Therefore, since sin does not rule over you, do not serve sin! Sin cannot rule because its power to rule has been taken away by Christ, Col. 1:13.” All who

are not in Christ get to face the full power of sin—a power that is described as being “slaves to sin” (Rom. 6:17, 20); a power that can “harden the heart” (Heb. 3:13); and a power that results in death (Rom. 6:23). Sin is not like a disease; it is the most powerful negative force man will ever face and it will be our lord (Rom. 6:14, “*dominion*”) and king (Rom. 5:21, “*reigned*”) if we do not conquer it through Christ. “*Dominion*” in this verse (*kurieuo*) is found elsewhere in this book (6:9; 7:1; 14:9). Outside the New Testament this term was especially associated with one who had “the rights to the produce of some land, the harvest from a certain territory” or the “owner of a slave or of a house and property” (Spicq, 2:351). Here it means sin “has been dethroned by grace” (ibid).

At the end of verse 14, Paul returned to a previously discussed point. He made it clear that no one is under law as a system of (for) justification. Trying to live under any law and be justified by obeying every rule is impossible because this requires perfection. Instead of being under a burdensome law that none can keep, we have freedom in Christ. This verse should be related to Gal. 5:1, Jn. 8:32, and 1 Pet. 2:16.

The New Testament emphasizes freedom in Christ, but some still say, “Your religion is too restrictive. There are too many prohibitions in your faith. I would need more freedom.” In places like Rom. 6:14, Paul denied that New Testament Christianity lacks freedom. He said believers are “*not under law*” (for justification)—this is in the present tense—and God’s people are “*under grace*” (both points are covered by a single present tense verb). Those who assert that Christians lack freedom are either ignorant of what the Bible teaches or they are looking for an excuse to reject New Testament Christianity.

What many want is freedom *from* religion. There are many who do not want any rules, restrictions, guidelines, etc. This is not freedom. True freedom requires some regulations and rules. If there are no rules or guidelines, chaos and not freedom is the result.

Owen (p. 37b) commented, “In 6:15-23 Paul states that grace does not preclude obedience. Each person chooses the master he will obey. When one chooses Christ as Master, he chooses to obey Christ. It is only at this point that such a person becomes free from sin (6:16-18). Because Christians are slaves to Christ, they live lives of obedience while they rejoice in the grace of God that is theirs.”

6:15-16: *What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves (as) servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

Paul often said “*what then*” to conclude one argument and begin another (compare Rom. 6:1), and here is another example of this technique. The point in verse 15 is nearly identical to what Paul previously said. About the only difference is the statement that Christians are not under law (this means under law **as a system of justification**).

Because Christians are not under law as the means for salvation, and because grace covers all sin, Paul again asked a previous question. That is, “Isn’t sin okay for the Christian?” These Christians thought release from the law made sin irrelevant and, therefore, acceptable to God.

There is a slight difference between the problems Paul dealt with in verse 1 and here. In verse 1 the problem was, “Grace covers all sin so let’s sin a lot. God will need to heap His grace upon us and that will make Him look good.” The problem expressed in verse 15 is the same only in that people thought sin didn’t matter, so they could sin from time to time.

McGuigan (p. 200) said the word *sin* “is ‘hamartesomen’ (aorist, active) which seems to stress ‘sin’ as viewed as individual acts of rebellion rather than a ‘way of life’ sinning (see verse 1 for that notation). If a ‘life of sin’ is not acceptable, what about (planned) occasional sinning? Since the demand for flawlessness has been removed as the way to acquittal before God does this mean occasional sinning is quite acceptable?”

Roy Lanier (p. 42 of his notes) also offers a good observation. He said, “Since we are not under law, may we ‘take a night off occasionally?’ Does grace allow occasional sin?” These two questions are still significant for the present time for some believe that it is okay to take a night off. Grace is sometimes viewed as a license to commit sin. Paul responded to this type of thinking by saying, *God forbid*. He continued his response to this erroneous idea in the following verses.

Verse 16 may be compared to the comments on verses 12-13. Each person who is accountable makes a choice. Either we present our bodies to sin and engage in unrighteous acts, or we present our bodies as a weapon for God to use in the spiritual war that is being fought. We willingly or unwillingly become a *slave* to God or the devil. Because someone owns us (God or the devil), humanity has nothing about which to boast. *Slavery* (*doulos*) is spoken of emphatically in verses 16-20 (the ASV and KJV refer to it with the word “*servant*”), and this term means “*Christians* are snatched away through baptism from the enslaving power of sin, of the law, of death, of the cosmos, and freed for sonship” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 1:352). The “sonship of Christians does not mean autonomous and certainly not unbridled freedom...but rather *service* to God” (ibid).

If we choose to serve sin and the devil, there is a consequence (this is stated in verse 16). The price for serving unrighteousness (sin) is “*death*” (eternal separation from God). Those who choose to side with the Lord will receive “*righteousness*” (see 1 Pet. 1:9). The word “*yield*” (*paristemi*), which is here in the present tense, means “It is up to each person to *place* himself at the disposal of the good or evil power” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 3:41). *Servants* (*doulos*) is a common New Testament word, but in this book it occurs only in Rom. 1:1 and a few times in this chapter (6:16, 17, 20). Normally it describes a Christian as God’s slave, a Christian as a *servant* to fellow Christians, or Jesus as the *servant of God*. Here the meaning is “obedience to the will of another” (sin/Satan/evil), whether this is voluntary or involuntary, and the result is a state of being “lost” (Kittle, 2:274). Non-Christians are “controlled” by the forces opposed to God (ibid). “*Obedience*” (*hupakoe*) unto *righteousness* means “obedience to the preaching which brings righteousness” (Brown, 2:179). “1 Pet. 1:2 and 14 also refer to this obedience: Christians are ‘children of obedience’, because this obedience must embrace their whole lives” (ibid). *Obedience* is a noun and *obey* is a verb—a present tense verb (the verb form of obey occurs again in verse 17 with some additional comments). No one can become a Christian without being obedient, and after doing God’s will Christians must continually obey God (this does not, however, mean they are perfect). Disobedient people include both non-Christians and the backslidden (for information on Christians and apostasy, see the commentary on Simon in Acts 8:13 as well as the commentary on Gal. 5:4).

6:17-18: *But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; 18 and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness.*

Those at Rome had been “*servants of sin.*” This corresponds with what was said earlier (3:10, 23). When someone becomes accountable for his or her actions (their sin is *full-grown*, Jas. 1:15), Satan becomes that person’s spiritual master. It is at this point that a person is a slave to sin and needs to be saved. The way to be released from the devil’s grip is explained at the end of verse 17. *Obedience from the heart* is how the Romans were released from sin. This is still how people are released from Satan’s power. For additional information on the word *servants* in verse 17, see the commentary on verse 16 (verse 18 uses a different term, but it is still translated *servants* in the ASV and KJV).

Many emphatically deny that obedience is involved in justification (salvation), but Paul made it very clear (verse 17) that obedience to God is essential. This is how unsaved people are “*delivered*” from sin. A person’s obedience must be genuine (sincere). Conversion must be “*from the heart.*” It must also be in accordance with God’s terms. “*Obedient*” (*hupakoe*), the same verb used in verse 16, was “often used in the papyri, meaning either strict obedience to an order or a law, or an agreement to carry out one’s responsibility; or even the spontaneous and loving submission of a wife to her husband” (Spicq, 1:447). In the New Testament this word “always means ‘obey’...except in Acts 12:13” (ibid, p. 448). Matthew (8:27), Mark (4:41), and Luke (8:25) used it to say the forces of nature *obeyed* the Lord. It also occurs in Acts 6:7. Here it means the people obeyed from the “bottom of their hearts” (Spicq, 3:449). There was a desire to be completely obedient to God’s terms, and this is still required today (see Heb. 5:8-9).

The “*form of teaching,*” based upon this context, appears to describe *baptism*. McKnight (p. 87) said, “The original word *tupos*, among other things, signifies a mould into which melted metals are poured, to

receive the form of the mould. The apostle represents the gospel doctrine as a mould, into which the Romans were put by their baptism, in order to their being fashioned anew.” Spicq (3:386) adds that in this passage, the word *form* (*tupos*) describes “a sort of yardstick according to which the authenticity of the faith could be verified.” These definitions are helpful for they indicate that God has provided mankind with a pattern (for a fuller study of the New Testament and its use of *tupos*, see the commentary on 1 Thess. 1:7). Christians must do things in a certain way (follow the *truth*, Jn. 4:24) if they desire to please God. Though some ridicule the idea of following a specific pattern, Scripture is replete with examples of God giving men patterns and specific instructions to follow (Heb. 8:5). Those who obeyed these patterns were blessed. Those who did not were cursed. For related verses (though these passages do not have the word *tupos*), see 2 Tim. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:10-11; and Tit. 1:13-14.

At the beginning of verse 17 is the word “*thanks*” (*charis*), a word that often means *grace* but here means *thanks*. Thayer (p. 666) says “*thanks* (for benefits, services, favors).” Gingrich and Danker (p. 878) well describe it as “gratitude.” Thus, when Paul said *thanks be unto God*, he was not thanking God because the Romans had been sinners. His thanksgiving was based upon his readers’ release from their sins and change of masters. In verse 18, Paul finished describing the process that his readers had undergone. Those at Rome (1) had been slaves to sin; (2) had obeyed the gospel; (3) had been freed by obedience; and (4) had changed masters by leaving the devil and coming to God.

Part of Paul’s appreciation is further expressed in the expression “*made free*” (*eleutheroo*), a single word in the Greek text that occurs seven times in the New Testament (Jn. 8:32, 36; here; Rom. 6:22; 8:2, 21—*delivered*; Gal. 5:1). In secular Greek this term described the freeing of slaves. When viewed from the perspective the New Testament, Brown (1:717) said it “dissociates itself from the idea of freedom as power to do with oneself and one’s life whatever one wants.” New Testament freedom is a Christian’s bond-service “to God (Rom. 6:22), to Christ (1 Cor. 7:22), to righteousness (Rom. 6:18), and to all men for the sake of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:19-23) and of the Savior (II Cor. 4:5). The ‘law of liberty’ (James 1:25; 2:12), which is the ‘law of Christ’ (Gal. 6:2; cf. I. Cor. 9:21) for his free servants, is the law of love (Gal. 5:13-14), the principle of voluntary self-sacrifice without limit for the good of men (I Cor. 9:1-23; 10:23-33) and the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31)” (*Baker’s Dictionary of Theology*, p. 230, entry on *free/freedom*). All these points are further seen in the expression, “*ye became servants*” (these three words are all translated from a single term—*douloo*). “Paul, in a classic paragraph, underscored the radical change instituted by the gospel. Believers were formerly slaves to sin (Romans 6:17; cf. Galatians 4:3; 2 Peter 2:19), but now they have been set free from sin (Romans 6:18). They have been ‘enslaved’ for righteousness and have become ‘servants of God’ (Romans 6:22)” (CBL, GED, 2:176).

An easy word to overlook in these two verses is “*teaching*” (*didache*). In this book this term occurs only here and 16:17 where it is translated “*doctrine*.” The CBL (GED, 2:120) offers a thoughtful entry on this word: “A study of the Scriptures reveals that the teaching ministry of the Church has both a positive as well as a negative aspect. While it involves presenting eternal truths, it also combats delusion and false doctrine. To readers of the present time it is at times shocking to read how aggressive, almost violent are the Bible’s attacks upon false teachers. Jesus Himself exemplified this fact. Consider, for example, His fierce condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees. ‘Whited sepulchers,’ ‘serpents and vipers,’ and ‘blind leaders’ are but a few samples of the harsh words He used. Others in the New Testament were just as severe as Jesus. Paul pronounced a curse on those who were preaching another gospel (Galatians 1:8, 9) and called his opponents ‘dogs’ and ‘evil workers’ (Philippians 3:2). Peter compared false teachers to unreasoning animals, condemning them with the certainty that their destruction was inevitable (2 Peter 2:1, 3:12-14). The same denouncement is expressed in the Epistle of Jude which attacks false teachers who had slipped into the church.” What we believe, teach, and allow to be taught is not only serious, it is of great importance to God.

6:19: *I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye presented your members (as) servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members (as) servants to righteousness unto sanctification.*

Paul spoke “*after the manner of men.*” This means he spoke in such a way that people understood him. The specific word Paul used (*anthropinos*, an adjective) “denotes the ‘humanness’ of something and speaks of the shared nature that all human beings experience” (CBL, GED, 1:272) or “*human terms*” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 1:104). Paul used words and images that were common to his readers. One of the illustrations that would have hit home with these Christians was the *master/servant* relationship. This relationship was something these people saw on a daily basis because of the vast number of slaves living and working in Rome. It has been estimated that there were some 60 million slaves in the first century; this number was about “one-third of the population of the Roman Empire” (CBL, Ephesians, p. 165).

Paul’s everyday illustration provides a good example for those who preach and teach. When we present Biblical information to others, we should do it with as much simplicity as we can muster. Using illustrations from everyday life is wise, right, and scriptural.

When Paul wrote to the Romans he needed to write in a way that was simple and easy to understand. This was necessary because of an “*infirmity*” (*astheneia*) in the “*flesh.*” That is, these people would not have grasped the material if Paul had not made it plain and uncomplicated. According to the Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (1:170), *infirmity* means “*weakness in the capacity to understand.*” The same is still true for many that we meet. Unless people are very familiar with the Bible, or unless Scripture is explained very, very well, many “don’t get it.” Man’s lack of understanding, which often extends into the realm of spiritual things, is an *infirmity of the flesh.*

Barclay and Cranfield believe Paul actually apologized for writing as he did. Cranfield (p. 144) said, “Paul is clearly aware of the fact that the figure of slavery is inadequate, unworthy and frighteningly liable to mislead as a way of speaking about the believer’s relation to righteousness (that is, righteousness in its moral sense) - that is why he apologizes for the all too human nature of his language, as soon as he has made the statement that they have been enslaved to righteousness.”

The middle and end of verse 19 again introduces material previously discussed. Prior to becoming a Christian, people “*present their members as servants to uncleanness*” (people live in sin, Col. 3:5-7). Instead of using the word *present*, KJV translators selected the word *yield*. The original word (*paristemi*) is found earlier in this chapter (6:13, 16), twice in this verse, and in other places like Rom. 12:1. Brown (1:475) says it “is a sort of codeword for changing the form of one’s existence by changing one’s Lord. The justified recognize that Jesus is *Kyrios, Lord, and practise* (sic) submission.” Before becoming a Christian, sin is the master, king, lord, and god. In fact, Paul referred to the time prior to conversion as a period of “*iniquity unto iniquity*” (a lot of sin). After conversion, life radically changes, and Paul expressed this drastic transformation by the “mood” of the verb. When he used the word *present* (*yield*) the second time, he put it in the imperative mood (i.e. it is a command). Christians have orders from the king to avoid sin. For information on the word “*uncleanness*” (*akatharsia*), see the commentary on Rom. 1:24 and especially Gal. 5:19. For a detailed commentary on the word *iniquity* (*anomia*), see the commentary on Rom. 3:23.

When we deal with people who are not Christians, we should not be surprised to find that some have plunged into sin. The Bible pictures some non-Christians as living wicked and even depraved lives. Not all non-Christians live this way, but there are many who do.

When people desire to leave a state of sin, the end of verse 19 applies. Lost people *present their members to righteousness unto sanctification*. When people obey the gospel and begin to live the Christian life (*righteousness*), they are *sanctified* (set apart). “*Sanctification*” (*hagiasmos*) is also used in 1 Thess. 4:3 where Paul associates it with “God’s will.” Christianity allows us to be far removed from our old manner of life (instead of saying *sanctification* the KJV says we are in a state of *holiness*). This is a comforting truth to many who want to leave behind some bad memories and a horrible past. W. E. Vine (1:372) added, “As there are no degrees of justification, so there are no degrees of sanctification; a thing is set apart for God, or it is not, there is no middle course; a person is either in Christ Jesus, justified and sanctified, or he is out of Christ, in his sins and alienated from God. But while there are no degrees of sanctification, it is evident there can and should be progress therein; hence the believer is urged to ‘follower after.... sanctification’ and is warned that without it ‘no man shall see the Lord,’ Hebrews

12:14.”

Towards the end of this verse Paul spoke about our “members” (*melos*), a word meaning body parts. Here the thought is using body parts (such as the eyes, ears, legs, etc.) for sinful acts and wickedness (this word is used twice in verse 19). Jesus used this same word in Mt. 5:29 to express a similar point. Instead of literally dismembering ourselves, there are “evil functions of which the eye and the hand are instruments. It is these that are to cease” (Brown, 1:231). “The test of whether a man has this new life is whether he practices (sic) righteousness in his relationships in the world” (ibid).

6:20-23: *For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness. 21 What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The information in verse 20 has often been misunderstood and misapplied by those studying divorce and re-marriage. Some have concluded that non-Christians are not under God’s marriage law and this section of Romans teaches they may divorce and re-marry as often as they want prior to becoming a Christian.

Aside from the word *whosoever* in Mt. 19:9 (this word shows that God’s law about marriage and divorce applies to all people), the context of Rom. 6 shows that marriage and divorce is not being discussed. Paul dealt with the master/slave relationship. He showed that either God or the devil owns each person, and that each person is in a spiritual war.

This information helps us understand Paul’s point. If we are in the army of Satan, *we are free* from Christ’s army. If we are in Christ’s army, *we are free* from service with Satan. We cannot have two masters. This is the point.

Applying this passage to marriage completely ignores the context and it forms a contradiction with Mt. 19:9. Also, if Rom. 6:20 means non-Christians are not accountable to God’s marriage law, where did Paul get the authority to say the Corinthians had been guilty of “adultery” and “fornication” (1 Cor. 6:9-11)? Was the adultery a crime in Corinth, or was it a sin against God? If it was a sin against God, how could it be wrong unless the two partners were bound by God’s marriage law? Furthermore, what may be said of two people today—both of whom are not religious—but are married by a minister who says, “God has bound you together?” Do preachers who make this type of statement to non-religious couples tell the truth? What about cases where one person is a Christian and one is not? In cases such as this, is there a marriage covenant with God that can be violated, or is there no marriage covenant? Romans 6:20 shows that when we were serving sin *righteousness was not our master*. Sin was the thing that controlled and owned us, not God and His word (compare Mt. 6:24). Bengel (2:78) further elaborates on the meaning of “free” (*eleutheros*): “This is the liberty of the flesh, which frees us from subjection to God, that it may bind us as slaves to the devil.” People are not forced to subject themselves to God, but this does not mean God’s laws do not apply to them.

In verse 21, Paul asked about the advantages of sin. The word “fruit” (*karpos*) may be defined as *benefit*. A fuller definition is “the conduct of one’s life in the realm either of salvation or of damnation” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, 2:252). Paul wanted to know what these people had received from sin. Had sin been good to them? Was sin somehow helpful? The thought goes back to the information at the beginning of this chapter: “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” The questions raised in verse 21 further reinforced Paul’s point.

Other reasons to abandon sin are also found in verse 21. Sin (if it is not forgiven) results in *death*—spiritual death. Sin also results in *shame*, a fact to which countless people (saved and unsaved) will attest. “Ashamed” (*epaischunomai*) is a present tense verb which is also used in Rom. 1:16. Here it means ashamed of “former evil doing” (Vine, *ashamed*). Things that were done prior to conversion often result in years of regret and guilt.

When believers forsake sin and become Christians (see the commentary on Acts 2:38), they are “*made free from sin*” (*eleutheroo*), the same word used in verse 18. This term is also used in Jn. 8:32 (this verse should be read). Associated with this change is becoming “*servants of God*” (22a). “*Become servants*” (*doulo*) is the same verb Paul used in verse 18. People also enter into a “state of sanctification” (this is addressed more fully in the commentary on Rom. 8) because they were bringing forth (present tense) “*fruit*” (the same word is used in verse 21). Because of this new and right choice, these and all other Christians have access to the promise of “*eternal life*.” The whole matter is summarized quite nicely in verse 23. The end result of sin is “*death*.” The end result of righteousness is “*life eternal*.” The people who receive salvation are those who have been *poured into the mold* and those who have *obeyed from the heart* (verse 17).

The final verse in this chapter shows that sin pays “*wages*” (compare 2:5). The word *wages* (*opsonion*) originally meant a soldier’s pay “which he received above and beyond natural provisions such as cereal and oil” (Brown, 144). As time passed it came to mean “payment which one is entitled to receive daily or monthly, etc., and for which one could eventually sue, if need be” (ibid). These ideas can be found in Lk. 3:14 and in 1 Cor. 9:7 (they have this same term). Furthermore, “On special occasions an emperor handed out a free gift of money to his soldiers. This was not earned and came through the emperor’s kindness and grace” (CBL, Romans, p. 105). The only other place this term occurs in the New Testament is 2 Cor. 11:8.

The “free money” was for those who were “in the army.” Brown (3:145) words the thought this way: “The wages of sin and the gift of God are set over against one another in antithesis.” Wages “are the provisions which sin pays out to those who do military service for it, and these provisions for life consist in death! Sin promises life and gives death; but this death does not just begin at the end of our temporal life, it is the current payment which we already receive. This is the only right which we can lay claim to, as sinners (v. 23a)” (ibid). Salvation is a “*free gift*” to those who are “*in Christ*.” We can only be *in Christ* by being baptized, by immersion, for the forgiveness of sins (Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:38; 22:16—see the commentary on these verses).