

Death Becomes Life

Teaching Tips

July 31, 2016

Bible Study Guide 9

Words You Should Know

A. Baptism ([Romans 6:4](#)) *baptisma* (Gk.)—Immersion, submersion; Christian rite of immersion in water as a sign of public confession of faith in Christ. 

B. Have dominion (v. 14) *kurieuo* (Gk.)—To exercise influence over; to have power over.

Teacher Preparation

Unifying Principle—Choose Life! People often give in to the temptation to do wrong. How can they overcome this temptation and avoid it altogether? Paul tells the Romans that through Christ, they can be freed from sin and can become slaves of righteousness, thus receiving sanctification and eternal life.

A. Pray for your students and lesson clarity.

B. Read [Romans 6](#) in multiple translations. 

C. Complete the companion lesson in the *Precepts For Living*® Personal Study Guide.

O—Open the Lesson

A. Open with prayer.

B. Have your students read the Aim for Change and Keep in Mind verse together. Discuss.

C. Tell the class to read the In Focus story silently, then discuss it.

P—Present the Scriptures

A. Have volunteers read the Focal Verses.

B. Read The People, Places, and Times; Background; Search the Scriptures; In Depth; and More Light on the Text.

E—Explore the Meaning

A. Divide the class into groups to discuss the Discuss the Meaning, Lesson in Our Society, and Make It Happen sections.

B. Connect these sections to the Aim for Change and the Keep in Mind verse.

N—Next Steps for Application

A. Summarize the lesson.

B. Close with prayer.

Worship Guide

For the Superintendent or Teacher

Theme: Death Becomes Life

Song: “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

Devotional Reading: [2 Corinthians 5:17–21](#)



Bible Background • [ROMANS 6 Printed Text](#) • [ROMANS 6:1–4, 12–14, 17–23](#) | Devotional Reading • [2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-](#)



Aim for Change



By the end of the lesson, we will: RECALL Paul’s explanation that accepting Jesus frees one from sin while it enslaves them to righteousness and gains them eternity; CONNECT being baptized into Christ with giving up sin and renewing creation; and RENEW our baptismal commitments.



In Focus



Derrick couldn’t believe it. He had just run into his good friend Rob at the local grocery store. He hadn’t seen him for three years. They had both went their separate ways after college and failed to keep in touch. While in college, Derrick and Rob had both accepted Christ and were baptized at the same church.

As they stood there in the aisle catching up on old times, something about Rob rubbed Derrick the wrong way. Now Derrick could see why they hadn’t kept in touch. Rob was living with his girlfriend and cussed like a sailor. Derrick silently prayed for Rob as he listened to him recap the last few years. “You know, Rob,” Derrick said, “one of the best things I remember about college was when we both were baptized together.” Rob looked at him like a deer caught in headlights. “That was a commitment we made because of what we believed God had done for us. What happened?”

Rob looked down. “I really can’t tell you, but I’ve been wanting to get back to that same level of commitment. It’s just been hard to keep up my involvement.” Derrick nodded with understanding. Before they parted ways, he invited Rob and his girlfriend to church and they exchanged numbers.

As Christians we are freed from sin in order to serve God in righteousness. How does being baptized remind us of this reality?

Keep in Mind

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” ([Romans 6:4](#)).



Focal Verses

KJV

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



2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

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

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those 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 holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

NLT

Romans 6:1 Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace?



2 Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?

3 Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death?

4 For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

12 Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires.

13 Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.

14 Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the

freedom of God's grace.

17 Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you.

18 Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

19 Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right.

21 And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom.

22 But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

The People, Places, and Times

Baptism. Baptism is cleansing through water immersion. It was the ritual for non-Jews to convert to Judaism. It initiated their life in God by symbolically washing away their Gentile ways and turning their life toward His commandments. This ritual is related to Levitical law, which required cleansing from impurities. John espoused a similar ritual as he preached a baptism of repentance and renewal, and later Jesus did as well, as a command for all those who would become initiated into the Christian faith.

Slavery. In the Greco-Roman world, slavery was quite common. As much as one-third of the urban population of the Roman empire is thought to have been made up of slaves. Slaves could be acquired through warfare, piracy, kidnapping, seizing infants, and criminal sentencing. Unlike slavery in the antebellum American South, this type of slavery was not based on race. Slaves could buy themselves out of slavery and also be freed through their master's own free will. Nevertheless, while enslaved, the slave was the master's property and was forced to do the master's bidding. It is this picture of slavery that permeates many of Paul's writings, where he refers to himself and other believers as slaves to Jesus Christ.

Background

In Romans, Paul outlines the Gospel that he preached throughout the Roman empire. He clearly shows the need for the Gospel by painting a picture of the sinful Gentile world as well as the equally sinful and hypocritical Jewish world. This picture shows that all are under sin and in need of God's grace. This grace has come to us in Jesus Christ. Paul explains that the Good News is that Christ died for all and everyone can be justified in God's sight through Him.

He also explains how the Gospel is for all and must be received by faith. He then shows the effects of the Gospel in the believer's life. As we believe in the person and work of Christ, we have access to God and experience peace and joy, because we are now in Christ and have been freed from the condemnation that came through the sin of Adam. This is all because of grace, not works. Paul now demonstrates that although our salvation is based on grace, the believer must still honor the grace given through Christ by yielding to God and His righteousness, not sin.

At-A-Glance

1. Baptized and Raised to New Life ([Romans 6:1–4](#))

2. Freed from Sin's Power (vv. 12–14)



3. Made a Servant of Righteousness (vv. 17–23)

In Depth

1. Baptized and Raised to New Life ([Romans 6:1–4](#))



Paul wants the believers to know that grace does not exempt them from righteous living. He anticipated that some would think continuing to sin would just further the effects of grace. He counters with the truth: if one has experienced the genuine grace of God, they could not do things that displease Him. He further supports this claim by asking a rhetorical question concerning the believer's union with Christ in baptism. This union with Christ in baptism is given as the foundation for the following passage concerning living righteously.

Baptism is symbolic of the believer's union with Christ and His work; just as Christ was buried, the believers are also "buried" in the water of baptism, and the power of sin is buried with them. Those who are baptized is raised from the water to "walk in the newness of life" (v. 4), They are called to live and walk in a different way than before, outside the influence of sin. Baptism is a symbol of the new creation and life in the kingdom of God, which is devoid of the effects and influence of sin and radically different from the fallen, old creation.

2. Freed from Sin's Power (vv. 12–14)

Followers of Christ were once under the reign or control of sin, unable to break free from the lusts that sin produced in their hearts and under the sway of a different master. Sin ruled over their lives, and they could do nothing about it. Now sin no longer reigns over the believers' lives; they do not have to obey its desires. So Paul exhorts them to take this truth and make it reality.

This is coupled with another exhortation to take our body parts and make them instruments or weapons of righteousness instead of unrighteousness. We are to present our bodies to God, which is the same language of [Romans 12:1](#), in which Paul exhorts believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices. Those who believe in Christ are alive, and the old life of sin no longer has sway over their actions.



3. Made a Servant of Righteousness (vv. 17–23)

Now Paul points us toward the past. Believers can thank God that they "were servants of sin" (v. 17). The key word is "were," past tense; that occupation is no more because they have obeyed the entire doctrine that was delivered to them, and have become servants of righteousness. In the earlier verses, the picture is one of soldiers presenting themselves for battle as they present their bodies as weapons of righteousness. The current picture is one of slaves presenting themselves as ready for service. They are freed from sin, not to be their own masters, but for their new master: Jesus Christ.

By contrasting their former lives of being "servants to uncleanness and to iniquity," Paul presses further into the example of a servant and puts the argument in terms that they can understand. He states that just as they were servants to sin, now their loyalty and allegiance are to righteousness toward a growing holiness. Serving sin made them free from the obligation to do right, but they did not profit from their sin. Now they look on those things as shameful because the end was death. Because they serve God through righteousness, holiness and eternal life are the fruit of their service. Paul concludes with contrasting the two different lifestyles: The lifestyle of sin only brings about death, while God's gift is eternal life. The old creation life brings us nothing but death and decay, while God's gift of eternal life motivates us to live according to the righteousness of the new creation.

Search the Scriptures

1. Why does sin not have dominion over believers ([Romans 6:14](#))?



2. What words does Paul use to contrast death and eternal life (v. 23)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. Many people live as if they are still under the Law, prioritizing following rules and regulations. What words would describe a believer who lives under grace?
2. Grace is not a reason to sin but a reason to live for God. What motivates a person to yield his or her body as an instrument of righteousness?

Lesson in Our Society

God is often seen as a stern judge sitting on a throne in heaven. Many imagine Him as looking down on us to see if we have done something wrong so He can zap us. This is far from the truth. Jesus died and rose from the dead so we can have a better picture of God. We are no longer under the expectations of the Law, but called to grace, God's unmerited favor. For the believer, this motivates all of the good that we do for God. We do not need to practice righteousness in order to escape hell and judgment, but because we have already escaped hell and judgment. We yield ourselves to God because Jesus' sacrifice means so much for us.

Make It Happen

Righteousness is more than just about avoiding bad things; it is also about doing good things. There are not only sins of commission but also omission. On a sheet of paper, write "Slave of Sin" and "Slave of Righteousness" at the top. Next draw a vertical line between them all the way down the middle of the paper. On the side under "Slave of Sin," write sins that you will avoid, and on the "Slave of Righteousness" side, write down positive actions you will do this week to live a righteous life.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do.

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned.

More Light on the Text

[Romans 6:1–4, 12–14, 17–23](#)

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Here Paul enlists rhetorical questions to lead into the next section of his argument. In [Romans 6](#), he outlines the different position the believer is placed in as a result of God's grace. In the previous chapter, Paul showed how sin magnifies grace, saying that this could be taken as a license to sin. Here he shows that grace—far from being an encouragement to sin—is actually an impediment to sin.

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Christ's death and resurrection in the Gospel are much more than historical facts and the basis for Christian doctrine; they are the personal experiences of all true Christian believers. What does it mean to be baptized into Christ? Many commentators believe that the phrase "baptized into Christ" implies that union with Christ is a direct result of baptism. In [Romans 3–5](#), Paul argues that justification is by faith alone. It is inconceivable that the apostle would now make the work of baptism the means of justification. The context clearly indicates that Paul is evoking the symbolism of baptism rather than the physical act. In this case, the word "into" speaks to the effect, not the

cause, of our union with Christ.

Baptism is a physical act that symbolizes the spiritual reality appropriated by faith. All believers are inwardly (by faith) and outwardly (symbolized by baptism) placed into personal union with Christ, meaning we are united to Christ in both His death and His resurrection. Christ's died once for all to cover all sin (see v. 2). The phrase "dead/died to sin" occurs three times in [Romans 6](#); two times referring to believers (vv. 2, 11), and one time to Christ (v. 10).

Because of our union with Christ, we died to sin in the same way that Christ died to sin. Since Christ did not have a sinful nature, He was never sensitive to sin in the first place; therefore, He could not become insensitive to it. So how did Christ die to sin? Christ died to sin in the sense that He bore the penalty for our sins. Paul soon says that the "wages of sin is death" (v. 23). Jesus paid the penalty for all of our sins. Death has no claims or demands on Christ or our union with Him. The wage has been paid; the account has been settled once and for all.

We are dead to sin. We generally misunderstand death; it is often equated with the physical effects of death, where the senses cease to operate and the dead person cannot respond to physical stimuli. This concept leads to the false notion that those who are dead to sin are no longer sensitive to temptation and therefore cannot respond to sin. In this view, our "old nature" was somehow actually supernaturally crucified with Christ on the Cross. However, careful observation of the text points out the flaws of this view. When a person dies, the spirit separates from the body. In fact, when the New Testament speaks of death, it generally refers to separation. The spiritually dead are those people separated from God. To be "dead to sin" in this case means to be separated from the penalty of sin.

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

The rite of baptism has changed over the centuries and varies for different Christian traditions, but the symbolism remains the same. When the convert enters the water, it symbolizes that the person is "in Christ." The immersion shows that the person is "buried with him," and his or her emergence from the water demonstrates understanding of being raised up from the dead and walking in "newness of life."

"Newness of life" means that believers are to live their present lives as resurrected creatures. The verb for walk (*peripateo*, **peh-ree-pah-TEH-oh**) is in the subjunctive mood, which implies that our living out the resurrection life is a potentiality and possibility, not an accomplished fact. This is something that the believer must choose to do based on the new reality of being planted in Christ's death and resurrection.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Paul exhorts the believer to not let sin reign (Gk. *basileuo*, **ba-see-LEW-oh**) or to control completely as king. Bodies are described as mortal (Gk. *thnetos*, **thnay-TOSE**), or subject to death. This is indicative of Paul's understanding of the role of the body. It is subject to death and is temporary, the site of sin or righteousness. To let sin control us as king is to obey its lusts (Gk. *epithumia*, **eh-pee-thoo-ME-uh**), inordinate, self-indulgent cravings. These lusts compete with the proper affection for God.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

The government analogy is then changed to a warfare analogy. Our "members" refers to our collective body parts. These are to be yielded (Gk. *paristemi*, **pah-REESE-tay-mee**) or presented as instruments (Gk. *hoplon*, **HOP-Ion**) of righteousness. "Instruments" is the word used for any tool, but especially a weapon. The picture is of soldiers presenting arms and ready for battle, but this battle is not physical but spiritual. We are to present ourselves to God as those spiritually alive from the dead.

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

Sin is not supposed to have dominion (Gk. *kurieuo*, **koo-ree-EW-oh**) or exercise control over the believer as a

master. This signals a change in Paul's analogies to that of the servant/master relationship. The basis for this statement lies in the fact that the believer is "not under the law," which refers to the Mosaic Law and all its stipulations. Believers no longer function under the realm of the law which brought condemnation. Now they live within the realm of grace (Gk. *charis*, **KHAH-reese**). This is the unmerited favor of God, and the vehicle for true righteousness through Jesus Christ.

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

An exclamation of thanksgiving interrupts the flow of thought in these verses. Paul thanks God that the Roman Christians, who were once servants (Gk. *doulos*, **DOO-lohs**) of sin, are no longer obeying sin as their master. The word *doulos* can also be translated "slave," which would bring to the Romans' minds the slavery of those days, where someone was owned by someone else and his or her livelihood and purpose was determined by their owner. To be a slave of sin was to be owned by it and do its bidding. Now the Roman believers are obeying the form (Gk. *tupos*, **TOO-pohs**) of doctrine delivered to them. The word "form" is a pattern to imitate. The teaching, or doctrine, was delivered to them, and now they obey it from the heart (Gk. *kardia*, **kar-DEE-ah**), which is the center and seat of their intellect, emotions, and will. This resulted in being free from sin's power and becoming servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

Paul has used so many different analogies for salvation, he explains, because of the weakness of the Romans' flesh. Their natural limitations caused him to use word illustrations they could understand, and in verse 19, he continues to drive the point home. He continues and urges them to present themselves as slaves to "righteousness unto holiness." The word "unto" (Gk. *eis*, **ACE**) indicates that presenting themselves as servants of righteousness will lead toward holiness (Gk. *hagiasmos*, **ha-gee-oss-MOSE**), or sanctification. This is quite the opposite of presenting themselves as servants of uncleanness (Gk. *akatharsia*, **ah-ka-thar-SEE-uh**), which can describe any kind of sexual or moral impurity, but especially sexual sins in the New Testament. Another synonym for the word is "filth."

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those 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 holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The things that were done as servants of sin made the Roman Christians ashamed (Gk. *epaischunomai*, **eh-pie-SKHOO-no-my**). This is a strengthened form of the normal verb "to be ashamed" and indicates the utter shame the Christians would feel over their past sin. These things produced no fruit (Gk. *karpos*, **kar-POCE**), which metaphorically stands for any benefit or advantage.

The fruit that comes from being a servant of God leads to holiness and everlasting life. In contrast, the wages (Gk. *opsonion*, **ope-SO-nee-on**) or reward for sin is death. The gift (Gk. *charisma*, **KHAH-reese-ma**), or gracious act, of God is to bestow eternal life on the believer.

Say It Correctly

Dominion. doe-**MIN**-yon.

Infirmity. in-**FUR**-mi-tee.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Kept in Christ
([John 17:1–6, 12–15](#))



TUESDAY

Raised in Christ
([1 Corinthians 15:12–19](#))



WEDNESDAY

Alive in Christ
([1 Corinthians 15:51–57](#))



THURSDAY

Ambassadors in Christ
([2 Corinthians 5:17–21](#))



FRIDAY

In Christ for Others
([Philippians 1:20–26](#))



SATURDAY

Pressing On in Christ
([Philippians 3:7–14](#))



SUNDAY

Death Becomes Life
([Romans 6:1–4, 12–14, 17–23](#))

