

THE GRACE AWAKENING STUDY SEVEN

If You're Free, Why Not Live Like It?

Romans 6:1–15

By the power of Christ who indwells you, you don't have to sin. Now think about that. You really don't have to sin!

—Charles R. Swindoll

DURING the Civil War, hundreds of thousands of Americans lost their lives over the issue of slavery. It was a bloody conflict, the bloodiest in United States history. Even as battles raged and soldiers died, President Abraham Lincoln declared freedom for the slaves in his Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Day, 1863. In 1865, the smoke of war finally cleared, and the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was officially adopted, forever abolishing slavery in the United States.

Although pronounced by presidential decree, ratified in the Constitution, and purchased by blood, liberty was slow in reaching the plantations where slaves toiled. Some owners hushed the news to keep their labor force working. Others strong-armed slaves with threats. The fear of living as a freed slave in a hostile culture held some slaves on the plantations. As a result, many of those who had the legal right to freedom could not, didn't know how, or simply chose not to live free. How tragic!

How tragic also is the fact that many Christians remain enslaved to sin and shackled to shame despite the precious blood Christ spilled to pay their ransom and God's emancipation declaration, "You are free from your slavery to sin" (Romans 6:18).

Are you experiencing freedom from sin's mastery? Perhaps you think you can't live free or you don't know how, or maybe you simply choose not to. In this study, we'll examine Romans 6 and discover Paul's plan for living free from sin and shame.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you prepare your heart to hear God's Word today, review Paul's analogies regarding slavery in his letter to the Romans. First, all of us were born in bondage to sin.

*"No one is righteous—
no not even one."* (Romans 3:10)

Sin gave the orders, and we had no power to resist. But then, a day came when Christ set us free! Read Paul's declaration of freedom in Romans 7:5–6. Can you hear the liberty bell ring?

When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.
(Romans 7:5–6)

Slowly reread Paul's words of liberation in these verses. In prayer, thank the Lord that He has freed you from your former captor, and express your deepest desire to serve Him. Ask Him to reveal the "new way of living in the Spirit" (7:6) through our study of Romans 6.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Romans 6 can be divided into two sections which answer two questions about grace. In the first part of the chapter, Paul answered the question in 6:1, and in the last part of the chapter, he answered the question in 6:15. Although these questions look similar, they address our freedom from different angles. Let's take a closer look.



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 **Observation: Understanding the Themes of Romans 6**

A chart is a helpful tool to record observations, particularly contrasts. Read the verses in the chart below, looking at them closely. Write down any contrasts you observe regarding the type of person who might ask the question, and define the issue addressed about grace.

	Romans 6:1	Romans 6:15
	<i>Should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace?</i>	<i>Since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning?</i>
Who might ask this question?		
What issue about grace is addressed?		

Can you see slight differences in perspective? As Chuck observed these verses, he noticed that the question in Romans 6:1 seemed to refer to people who *failed to claim their liberty*, like freed slaves who remain in bondage. For these people, the issue was grace *nullification*. Since the grace that set them free had no practical effect, its power to transform was not utilized.

Additionally, Chuck noticed that the question in Romans 6:15 seemed to refer to people who *took freedom too far*. They viewed their liberty as a license to sin, and for them the issue was grace *abuse*.

To both questions about whether we can keep on sinning, Paul's immediate response was emphatic: "Of course not!" (Romans 6:2, 15). Then he explained how we live free from sin.

In this study, we'll focus on Romans 6:1–15, which is Paul's answer to the first question. We'll study Paul's answer to the second question in the next study, "Guiding Others to Freedom."



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Interpretation: Living Out Our Freedom from Sin

In Romans 6:1–15, Paul offered three principles that direct us away from sin and light freedom's path to our new Master, Christ. The first principle is based on a theological truth that we must know.

Know Our Union with Christ

Read [Romans 6:2–9](#) in the New American Standard Bible, highlighting the word *know* in verses 3, 6, and 9.

What does it mean that we have been “baptized into Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:3 NASB)? Read 6:3 and 6:5 in the New Living Translation below for a clue to the meaning of baptism. What is the theological truth Paul was teaching in these verses?

Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? . . . Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was.

Water baptism symbolizes our spiritual baptism, which is our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ. When we trusted in the Savior for eternal life, we became “dipped” into His death and resurrection, and our identity changed (2 Corinthians 5:17). We didn't necessarily see the change, hear it, or feel it, but our identity changed nevertheless. What did Paul say are the implications of this theological truth regarding sin's power over our lives ([Romans 6:5–7](#))?

Victory over sin begins with *knowing* about our union with Christ, our new identity in Him, and the implications of this truth. But it's not enough simply to know the truth. The next step is essential.



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When we came to Christ we were, by His Spirit, identified with Christ. He came to live within us; we came to live within Him. The strength that was His became our strength. Power that was His became our empowerment. Hope that He had become our hope. No fear of death became our no fear of death. We have been identified with Christ! —Chuck Swindoll

Consider Ourselves Dead to Sin

Find the word *consider* in *Romans 6:10–11*. What did Christ accomplish through His death (Romans 6:10)?

Because of Christ's victory over death, what should we consider ourselves to be (6:11)?

Why do you think considering ourselves “dead to the power of sin and alive to God” (6:11) is essential for experiencing victory over sin?

Paul's points about knowing and considering culminate with two commands that form the center point of Paul's teaching: “Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires” (6:12). Only through Christ's sin-breaking and life-giving power can we obey these commands. But there's one more step on the path to freedom.



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Present Ourselves to Our New Master

The first step was *theological*; the second step was *intellectual*; now this third step is *volitional*. Find the word *present* in the NASB version of [Romans 6:13–14](#). What do these verses mean? You might wish to read [Romans 6:13–14](#) in the NLT as well. Put the ideas from these verses into your own words as if Paul were writing them to you personally.

In our lives before accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior, we didn't have the power to stop sinning. Now we have the power! We can say with confidence, "Sin is no longer my master!"



Correlation: Grace Greater Than Our Sin

The sin nature is strong, but grace is stronger! Read [Romans 5:18–20](#) and write down what you learn about the power of grace to supersede sin.

The more the sin, the more abundant God's grace to empower us to "serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit" (Romans 7:6).



Application: Practical Warnings

In his message, Chuck compared defeating a sinful habit with an old seaman harpooning a whale. Fighting our sin may feel like we're outmatched by forces greater than we can handle, but victory is possible. Know your union to Christ, consider yourself dead to sin, and present yourself to your new Master, Christ.



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As you think about a sin you'd like to tame, what do you now *know* that can help you say no to this sin?

What do you need to *consider* in order to say yes to righteousness?

And how can you *present* yourself to righteousness rather than to sin?

We were chained to sin, standing on the slave block. Out of the love of His heart and the grace of His act, Jesus saved us. He not only set us free, He threw away the chains and said, "You are freed to serve Me, carry out My works of righteousness, and live the kind of empowered life I lived. I give new life to you and by my grace, you are free!" —Chuck Swindoll



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, You have the power. I don't. You have authority. I don't. Since You live in me, I ask You to answer the door when sin knocks. I ask You to take charge of my life right now to keep me from sin. In the victorious name of Jesus, amen.



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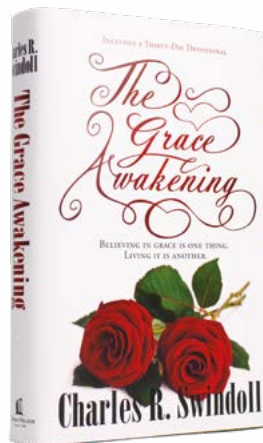
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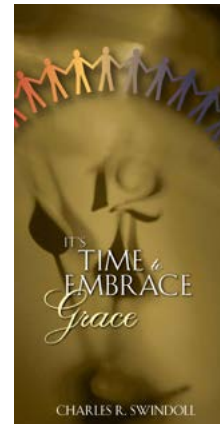
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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