

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this Bible study series two teachers will do Bible study from ROMANS 6:12-23.

Romans 6:1-10 is a *doctrinal exposition*: what to believe; while Romans 6:11-16 is an *exhortation*: how to live; and Romans 6:17-23 is an *encouragement* with regard to the progress already made. This chapter is an example of the good order how to build up Christians: sound faith, consistent application and encouragement to persevere.

(S) **STEP 1. READ**

Let us read Romans 6:12-23 together. When you are two or more people, take turns to read one verse each until you have completed the reading. Due to shortage of time, please read Romans 6:12-23 for yourself.

(T) **STEP 2. DISCOVER**

Let us discover and discuss some important truths in Romans 6:12-23. "Which truth in this passage is important for you?" or "Which truth in this passage touches your mind or heart?" Think and write your answer in your notebook. After a few minutes take turns to share your discoveries with one another.

(S) An important truth for me is from Romans 6:12-15. Paul exhorts Christians that they have the responsibility to no longer live the wicked and unholy life, as non-Christians do by nature and as the false Antinomians in Rome teach.

First. Romans 6:12-13 teaches that Christians must not let sin reign in their mortal body. Christians have the personal responsibility not to live in accordance to their sinful nature, but in accordance to their regenerate nature (cf. Gal 5:16-18). While in Romans 6:1-11, Paul argued that God has already taken *the absolute power of their sinful nature* away, in Romans 6:12-23 he exhorts Christians no longer to obey *the evil desires of their sinful nature*, which is still present in Christians (6:12). Christians should rather offer the members of their physical bodies as instruments of righteousness (6:13). Although the sinful nature is still present, its absolute power has been broken! Christians have already been justified from sin (6:7), that is, the power of their sinful nature has already been condemned to be destroyed and God is now executing that judgement through the Christian living the new and holy life in the power of the Holy Spirit (8:13). The Christian has therefore graciously been given the ability to resist the sinful nature and to devote himself to the new and holy life.

Second. Romans 6:14-15 teaches that Christians must not live "under law". Instead, they must live "under grace". Paul teaches the relationship between law and grace. He encourages the Christians in their efforts to resist the corrupt desires of their sinful nature and to live "under grace". Compare "to live by the Spirit" in Galatians 5:16-26.

One. Many people are still "under law", that is, they try in their own power to be saved or to please God by doing the works of the law. The Bible says that such people do not have the legal state of justification and they also do not have the moral state of holiness. They can never live the new, righteous and holy life, because they try to do it in their own power.

Two. But people who are "under grace", that is, who have been saved by God's grace through faith, have not only the legal state of justification, but also the moral state of holiness! The Bible says that such Christians *can never continue to live in sin*. They may still fall into some sin, but they will not continue to live in that sin (cf. 1 Jn 3:6-9). They will repent of their sin, confess their sin, receive God's forgiveness and grace to keep on resisting that sin! Thus, in order to live the new, righteous and holy life continually, Christians should enjoy God's grace and make use of God's grace (cf. Heb 12:14-15)! By continually receiving God's grace through faith, they are able to keep on resisting the sinful nature and able to keep on devoting themselves to live the new, righteous and holy life. The sinful nature should not be the master in a Christian's life. The sinful nature need not be the master in a Christian's life. By depending on God and his grace, the sinful nature will no longer be the master in a Christian's life (6:14).

Three. In Romans 6:15, Paul says that the doctrine of justification by grace through faith does not give anyone the right to reject the moral law, that is, the Ten Commandments, and continue to sin with impunity. Although Christians are never justified by keeping the law, they still need the law to show them how to live the Christian life (cf. chapter 7).

(T) An important truth for me is from Romans 6:16-23. Paul exhorts Christians that they have the responsibility to live the righteous and holy life. Christians must no longer be slaves of sin, that is, they should no longer be slaves of their sinful natures and do the sinful deeds that belong to the sinful nature. Instead they must be slaves of righteousness, that is, be committed to live out of their righteous and holy state and do righteous and holy deeds. While John 15:15 and

Galatians 5:1 teach that only submission to Christ leads to true freedom, Paul in this context illustrates the true state or condition of Christians by two pictures about the relationship between a slave and his master.

First picture. According to verse 16, before their conversion, Christians voluntarily offered themselves to be slaves of their old master called “sin”, that is, their sinful nature together with all its manifestations of disobedience. “Sin” was such a powerful master, that they could not do any good, but only obey evil. The consequence of living under the dominion of sin is “death”, that is, spiritual death now, physical death at the end of life on earth and eternal death in hell thereafter.

Second picture. According to verse 16, after their conversion, Christians voluntarily offered themselves to be slaves of their new master called “righteousness” together with its manifestations of obedience. “Righteousness” here refers to righteousness in all its aspects and virtually means the same as salvation in all its aspects (cf. 5:17). “Righteousness” is such a powerful master, that Christians can obey everything that is good. The consequence of living under the dominion of righteousness is “life”, that is, new, spiritual and holy life now, physical resurrection after death and continuance of eternal life thereafter.

Thus, Paul teaches that no human being can live without a master! No one in the world is really “free” or “independent”, in the sense that he has no master over him. Everyone in the world has a master, under whose lordship he has voluntarily put himself, and that master is either “sin” or “righteousness”. The master “sin” obligates people to offer the members of their body as instruments of unrighteousness and this leads to a state of unholiness, that is, an inability to resist sin and an inability to obey God. But the master “righteousness” obligates Christians to offer the members of their body as instruments of righteousness and this leads to a state of holiness, that is, the ability to resist sin and the ability to obey God. When a Christian knows that these are the consequences of service to sin and service to righteousness, he will tend to devote himself to continued faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

(S) STEP 3. QUESTION

Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 6:12-23 and ask our questions about the things we still do not understand. “Which question about anything in this passage would you like to ask to the group?” Think and write your question in your notebook. Then discuss the questions and try to find answers.

1st Question. What does Romans chapter 6 teach about holiness?

(T) One. What is holiness? Romans 6:6 says, our “old man or old self” was crucified with Christ. The tense of this verb indicates a once-for-all decisive putting to death of our unregenerate nature in its entirety. Our “old man” is our inward state and outward condition before regeneration. The “old man” is not regarded as being slowly put to death in a process over a period of time. “Holiness” refers to our “new man”, our inner state and outward condition after regeneration. In Romans 6:19 and 22, the word “holiness” does not refer to “the process of being made more and more holy” (sanctification), but rather to “the state of being made holy” (cf. 1 Cor 1:30). It refers to the ability given by God to resist sin and to obey him wholeheartedly by living the new life. In Romans chapter 6 *the emphasis is not on the process of sanctification, but on the state of sanctification, called holiness.* The emphasis is on the once-for-all-decisive break with sin and the power of sin and an ability and commitment to righteousness.

Two. What is the purpose of holiness? According to Romans 6:6, the purpose of the once-for-all decisive crucifixion of our “old man or old self” was “to do away with the body of sin” and “to stop the slavery to sin”. The “body of sin” is our physical body as conditioned, controlled and used as an instrument by our sinful nature, that is, by the sinful tendencies that still dwell in the Christian. The crucifixion of our old self was to render our body of sin powerless, ineffective, or even stronger, to wipe it out. The body of sin has already been sentenced to destruction and the sentence is now being carried out through living the new and holy life in the power of the Holy Spirit (8:13). When a person becomes a Christian, his physical body should no longer be conditioned and controlled by his sinful nature, but according to Romans 6:16, it should be conditioned and controlled by his regenerated state, that is, by righteousness that manifests itself in holiness or by the resistance to sin and by obedience to God (6:18-19; Gal 5:16-26).

Three. What is the evidence of holiness in our life? The evidence of holiness in our life is death to the power of sin (6:2,7,11,14), that is, we show that we are no longer a slave to our sinful nature (6:6). The evidence of holiness is when we live the new life (6:4) and when we live “to God”, that is, live under the control of God and in obedience to God (6:11). The evidence of holiness is when we offer the physical members of our body to God as instruments of righteousness (6:13,19) and when we wholeheartedly obey “the form of teaching” to which we were subjected (6:17).

Four. What is the motive of holiness? The most important doctrine in Romans chapter 6 is that, not the law, but grace is essential for the exercise of holiness (6:14). People who are “under law” have a self-righteous or legal spirit and try to be justified by doing the works of the law. Their motive to obey the law is fear of punishment by God and their aim to obey the law is to merit their salvation and to receive rewards from God. However, when people are “under grace”, they are deeply aware that they are already justified by God’s sovereign and free grace, which they have received through

faith. Their awareness of God's love for them awakens in them a holy desire and will to obey God. Their motive to obey God is love for God, and their aim to obey God is to glorify God.

Five. What is the certainty of holiness? The certainty of our holiness is grounded in the literal death and resurrection of Christ on the one hand and our spiritual death and resurrection with Christ on the other hand. Just as the certain consequence of Christ's death was his resurrection, likewise the certain consequence of the Christian's dying to the power of sin is a new, righteous and holy life! The death and resurrection of Christ renders the justification and holiness of Christians certain! Christians share in Christ's death in order that they may share in Christ's life. Because of their once-for-all decisive spiritual death and resurrection with Christ, Christians "can and will live the new resurrected life to God" (6:8-11)! Therefore, Christians *not only should, but want to, can and will* offer themselves to God as his slaves (6:13) and to obedience of God's will (6:16)! Christians are not only bound to obey, but they are made to obey in spite of the resistance of their still imperfectly sanctified nature. They cannot but obey, because according to Philippians 2:12-13, God works in them to will and to act according to his good purpose (cf. 8:30; Phil 1:6; 1 Pet 1:1-2). Therefore we have the assurance that the power of our sinful nature shall never have absolute dominion or control over us anymore - not now and also not at any future time! God's grace, given to us in our spiritual death and resurrection with Christ, ensures that we can and will realise what we should do! Victory is certain (8:31,37). The struggle against sin is not hopeless, because the power of the sinful nature has been effectually (sufficiently) broken. The triumph of holiness has been effectually secured by the completed salvation work of Christ. This is really good news! This is the "gospel"!

2nd Question. (6:19). How can Christians devote the members of their physical body to the service of righteousness?

(S) The Old and New Testaments emphasise the importance of our bodily members and other faculties in the struggle against sin. Some positive devotion of the members of our body is the following.

- Proverbs 4:23 says that we should guard *our heart* above all else.
- Proverbs 4:26-27 says that we should use *our feet* to take only ways that are firm and not swerving.
- Proverbs 15:30 says that we should use *our face* and with a cheerful look bring joy to people.
- Proverbs 19:20 says that we should use *our ears* to listen to advice and accept instruction.
- Proverbs 24:16 says that even when we fall seven times, we should use *our feet* to always rise again.
- Proverbs 24:27 says that we should use *our hands* to finish our higher priorities first.
- Proverbs 24:32 says that we should use *our eyes* to observe and learn lessons.
- Proverbs 25:15 says that we should use *our mouths* to speak patiently and gently, which is very persuasive.
- Philippians 4:8 says that we should use *our minds* to think about whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy.

3rd Question. (6:17). What is meant by wholehearted obedience to the form of teaching to which Christians were entrusted?

(T) One. What is this form of teaching? The form of teaching is the pattern or standard of Christian teaching, which was used by all the apostles and was recorded in the New Testament. It is the correct and fixed pattern of teaching the Christian doctrines (cf. 2 Tim 1:13). It is especially illustrated in the book of Romans and according to 2 Peter 3:12,14-16 was also well known by the apostle Peter. This "correct and fixed pattern of teaching the Christian doctrines" regulated the thinking and practice of Christians. It taught the only true method of justification as well as the only true method of sanctification. It is God's whole rule of faith and practice, that is, the doctrines that all Christians should believe and the practices that all Christians should obey. In Acts 20:17-35, the apostle Paul says that his task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace included the unhesitating proclamation of "the whole will of God." He taught the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He taught the need to repent and have faith in Jesus Christ. He taught the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, just as Jesus Christ did in all his parables. He taught the leaders of the Church to watch over one another and over the flock which God had entrusted to them and to especially protect them from false teachers that came in to distort the truth of the Bible. And he taught them to care for the weak and the needy. Likewise in the book of the Romans, he taught the only true method of justification and the only true method of sanctification. Christians today cannot and may not ignore the "the Christian form of teaching"!

Two. Christians are subjected to this form of teaching. Paul does not say that this correct and fixed form of teaching was entrusted to Christians, so that they may interpret and obey it as they please. Instead, he says that all Christians are entrusted to this correct and fixed form of teaching! God sovereignly subjected Christians to his whole rule of faith and practice. This implies that what God wants all Christians to believe and do is objective. It is not subjective and not dependent on people's own interpretation. God has revealed it, and man has not invented it (cf. 1 Cor 2:9-10). The matter of Christian doctrine and practice is sovereignly decided by God and not by the Church and also not by church leaders. God sovereignly commanded Christians what to believe and how to live. Christians may not select certain things from the Bible to believe or to practice and ignore the rest. Christians are sovereignly subjected to "the whole will of God"!

Three. Christians wholeheartedly obey this form of teaching. Christians were not passively transferred from one master to another. According to Romans 6:16-17, after God sovereignly broke “the power of sin” in them, they voluntarily, sincerely and gladly renounced their “slavery to sin” and offered themselves to God and to obedience of God! This implies that the person that receives Jesus Christ as Saviour receives him as Lord! The person that comes to Jesus Christ for justification also comes to Jesus Christ for sanctification! Obedience to the call to put our trust in Christ as our righteousness implies the call to obedience to his whole revealed will (Act 20:27)! And God’s revealed will comes to us in a correct and fixed form of teaching of doctrine and practice! In order to grasp this correct and fixed form of Christian doctrine, Christians must do more Bible study and study whole Bible books within their contexts instead of only studying certain Bible verses that are scattered throughout the Bible.

(S) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Join a house fellowship that does Bible study. Use “the five steps” Bible study method to prepare Romans 7:1-13.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and preach God’s Kingdom” and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to “Discipleship training on the air”.