

Is Grace a License to Sin?

A Study On Romans 6:1-23

Romans 6:1

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

Peter warned us that many would wrest Paul's writings to their own destruction, so it would benefit us to carefully consider his statements concerning grace "that we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14.)

Paul recognizing that many might come to a misunderstanding of the gifts of grace he focused on in the chapters 3-5, decided to meet that misunderstanding in Romans chapters 6-8. There would be some who would turn the grace of God into a license to continue in sin citing that, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20.)

Galatians 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

2Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Jude 4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

How do they deny the Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ? By denying their power to make them holy.

Introduction:

The message in the following verses are necessary as a background for understanding Romans 6.

Romans 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8) But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9) Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Romans 5:15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

1Corinthians 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21) For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23) But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.

1Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Romans 3:24 Being justified [rendered innocent] freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Romans 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Hebrews 7:25 Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

1John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

Jude 24 Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Because of the relentless love of God, while we were ungodly, sinners, enemies, God gave His Son to die for us. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:2): We being descendants of Adam "were by nature the children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3,) provided a way to be "saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:9). "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1Corinthians 15:22). Whereas all were destined to eternal death by the first Adam, for "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23,) and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), "even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1Corinthians 15:22). "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (1Corinthians 15:45).

However, even though through grace, an eternal attribute of God, the provision was made for all, not all will benefit from "the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:15). Romans 5:15 also states that because of Adam's offense, "**many** be dead," (not all), "the gift by grace" "hath abounded unto **many**" (not all).

Even though we have been "justified or forgiven [rendered innocent], freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24), "much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him (Romans 5:9). "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10). How is it "we shall be *saved by His life?*" Because "He ever *liveth* to make intercession for them," therefore "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Hebrews 7:25).

"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1John 2:1). He is "able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of His glory" (Jude 24.) Not only is "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," He is able also "to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9.)

Though the gifts of God through Christ are unconditional and irrevocable, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Romans 11:29), not all will benefit from them. Love cannot force any to receive these gifts of salvation. Only by love is love awakened. It is "the goodness of God that leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2:4). It is "the righteousness of God revealed" (Romans 1:17) in "the gospel of Christ" that "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). The conditionality of salvation is on

our part. "Whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9).

As we have learned of the unconditional, irrevocable gifts of God in the previous chapters of Romans, Paul now in chapter six invites us to focus on our response to those gifts. Will we allow those gifts to have their eternal purpose in us by believing in them, accepting them and cooperating in their fulfillment? Will we take for granted those unconditional gifts believing them to simply be a license to keep sinning?

Let's look at how Strong's concordance defines grace.

Grace: the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude:

Let's unpack grace. Grace, "the divine influence upon the heart," which is often referred to as, "unmerited favor," can also be understood from Paul's terms as, "the goodness of God that leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2:4), and "the righteousness of God" (Romans 1:17.) The righteousness of God revealed in the "gospel of Christ," also referred to as the "grace of Christ," is "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16.) Paul refers to this unmerited favor as justification, in other words, the righteousness of God imputed to us while we were yet sinners, ungodly and enemies of God. God, which "calleteth those things which be not as though they were (Romans 4:17,) imputing righteousness to us, "being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him [Abraham] for righteousness" (Romans 4:21, 22.)

Let's unpack grace, "its reflection in the life." "The reflection in the life," refers to the effect of "the power of God unto salvation." In other words, we are saved by grace because we have been changed by grace.

God's grace, unmerited favor, imputed righteousness to us because He "calleteth those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17,) "being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform," and therefore it was imputed to him [Abraham] for righteousness" (Romans 4:21, 22.)

God promised that He could take away our sins knowing that we could not save ourselves.

Romans 11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Luke 18:27 And He said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

2Corinthians 12:9 And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

The full gospel includes not just the forgiveness of sins, but the cleansing of sins. We don't need power to believe that we've been forgiven, we need power to be cleansed of sin.

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2Corinthians 5:21 For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

2Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

2Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

Romans 6:2

Romans 6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

God forbid, means certainly not!

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

What does Paul mean, "dead to sin?"

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Galatians 5:24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Romans 6:3

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

In this context, baptism represent a change of heart that desires a change of character, a willingness to die to the old nature, to become a new creature. Becoming a new creature ensures us that we shall also live with Him.

2Timothy 2:11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him:

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Hebrews 13:21 Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Romans 6:4

Romans 6:4 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.

1Peter 2:24 Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Not only does Christ have the power to resurrect our mortal bodies, but He has the power to quicken us spiritually and give us a new heart.

Romans 6:5

Romans 6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

1 Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2) That He no longer should live the rest of His time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Hebrews 2:18 For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.

Hebrews 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16) Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Romans 6:6

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

How is “the body of sin” destroyed? We “through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body,” and if we do, “we shall live.”

Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Colossians 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4) When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.

Romans 6:7-9

Romans 6:7 For he that is dead is freed [justified, rendered just or innocent] from sin. 8) Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: 9) Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.

Because of Christ's victory over sin, death had no dominion over Him because the “wages of sin is death.” Where there is no sin, there will be no death.

Proverbs 26:2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Romans 6:10, 11

Romans 6:10 For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. 11) Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

As Christ has reckoned us dead to sin, not imputing sin to us while we were sinners, we too should reckon ourselves dead to sin by exercising faith in His power to perform that which He promised, to take away our sin.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9) Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

It is by the unconditional and irrevocable gift of grace we are saved through the gift of faith which we have in Christ which will produce good works as He works in us His will and good pleasure, which has always been the eternal purpose of God.

Romans 6:12

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

Romans 6:13

Romans 6:13 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.

Colossians 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Romans 6:14

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

Some have misunderstood the above verse to say that the law shall not have dominion over us for we are no longer under the law but under grace. But as we have learned, if there is no law, there is no sin, and if there is no sin, there is no need of grace, the power to save us from sin.

Romans 4:15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

1John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

What law is Paul referring to when he states, "for ye are not under the law, but under grace?" Let's examine some other verses where Paul uses the term "*under*."

Romans 3:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

Logically speaking, they must be under the law if they are under sin, because sin is the transgression of the law. Sin, transgression of the law, brings guilt as the following verse states.

Romans 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Because the wages of sin is death, then logically speaking transgressors of the law are under the curse.

Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

However, Christ became the curse so that we are not automatically destined to the curse of eternal death as the following verse reveals.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Christ took the curse. This is the “unmerited favor” grace defines. If Christ could have excused sin, would He have needed to die? He died proving that the law could not be changed and that death is the result of sin. Again Paul reasons with us asking the question, shall we continue to sin because Christ redeemed us from the curse?

Romans 6:15

Romans 6:15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Romans 6:16

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

In the above verse Paul goes on to emphasize if you are a servant of sin, it has dominion over you and the end result is death. Even though Christ was made the curse for us, it does not give us a license to sin and if we choose to become servants of sin, it will lead to death. The provision has been made to escape the consequences of sin, but we must receive the gift of grace given us unto “obedience unto righteousness” which obedience is defined as the result of grace, “the reflections in the life; including gratitude.”

Romans 6:17, 18

Romans 6:17 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.

Having become “the servants of righteousness,” which leads to “holiness” “and the end everlasting life.”

Romans 6:19

Romans 6:19 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 of righteousness unto holiness.

Romans 6:20

Romans 6:20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

Christ taught that we can only serve one master.

Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Romans 6:21

Romans 6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

Have you noticed how many times Paul refers to the result of sin being death? How can we continue in sin and live forever? Christ has done all that He could do in His attempt to reveal to us His love and forgiveness and yet emphasizes the fact that it in no way gives us the license to continue in sin.

Romans 6:22

Romans 6:22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Paul is adamant. Sin leads to death, but righteousness leads to holiness and the end, everlasting life. For Paul, that is an absolute truth. How we become righteous is by falling in love with the One who became sin and redeemed us from the curse, and by choosing to let Him continue to work in us to cleanse from all unrighteousness by the power of His grace. We must choose to die to sin and live in righteousness.

Romans 6:23

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Romans 5:21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

James 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Romans 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

1Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

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