

ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH

VI. God's Righteousness Transferred: Practical Sanctification, Romans 6:1-8:39

B. Why Believers Should Cease All Acts Of Sin

(Romans 6:15-23)

I. Introduction

- A. The theme of the epistle to the Romans is that God's righteousness is available to man by faith from start to finish (Romans 1:16-17; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 441).
- B. This belief is often not accepted in Christendom: Some claim that one must have faith plus works to be justified, and others say that though we are justified by faith, we cannot righteously live a godly life by faith.
- C. After teaching why believers should **cease living** in sin, Paul in Romans 6:15-23 answered the question as to whether a believer could **occasionally** commit **acts** of sin since he was not under the Law, but under grace.
- D. We view the passage for our insight, application, and edification (as follows):

II. Why Believers Should Cease All Acts Of Sin, Romans 6:15-23.

- A. The question in Romans 6:15 of "shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace?" to the English reader seems to repeat the Romans 6:1 question "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?", but the tense for "sin" in Romans 6:15 is the aorist or past tense that often means "committing an act of sin now and then, in contrast to living a life of sin as stated in verse 1," Ibid., p. 464.
- B. Paul's response in Romans 6:15 is the same as that in Romans 6:1, an emphatic "By no means!" (Ibid.), and he explained "that in effect there is no middle ground between being a slave to sin and a slave to obedience to God," Romans 6:16; Ibid.
- C. The apostle explained in Romans 6:19 that he was using the illustration of slavery for the sake of his readers due to their feeble spiritual perception, for to "talk of being 'enslaved' to righteousness and to God is not correct in one sense . . . because God does not hold His children in bondage. But the word 'slavery' appropriately describes an unregenerate person's relationship to sin and to Satan," Ibid.
- D. In reality, sin is the opposite of righteousness, so one is either enslaved to sin or he is righteous, there being no middle ground, so Paul equated the believer's spiritual position and appropriate resulting experience to being either a slave to sin or to righteousness, making the imperfect illustration of "slavery" feasible for his readers.
- E. Thus, before justification, Paul's Christian readers were enslaved to sin that led to death, but when they obeyed the Gospel by believing it from the heart to be justified by God, they were transferred out of slavery to sin to become "slaves" to righteousness and the Lord, Romans 6:17-18.
- F. Since the believer is positionally transferred from slavery to sin over to Paul's alleged "slavery" to God and to righteousness, that **positional** transfer needs to be applied to the believer's **practical experience**: the believer should present the members of his body as "slaves" to righteousness leading to separation from sin, or "sanctification," in contrast to his unsaved past when he presented his members as slaves to impurity and lawlessness that had led only to more lawlessness and its unedifying results, Romans 6:19.
- G. Paul then stated the **positional basis** for his readers to make this **experiential commitment**, Romans 6:20-23:
 1. When they were slaves to sin before they were justified, they were also free from righteousness (Romans 6:20), but that came at an awful price: the "fruit" or produce resulting from enslavement to sin was shame (Romans 6:21a) and eventual eternal death and damnation (Romans 6:21b with Revelation 20:11-15).
 2. However, now that they had been positionally set free from sin by faith in Christ to become "slaves" of God, the resulting "fruit" was separation from sin, or "sanctification," and eternal life, Romans 6:22.
 3. Paul summed that the wages for one's work that slavery to sin pays for an unbeliever is eternal death, but in vast contrast for the believer, the free gift of God that is acquired not by works but by God's grace so that there are no "wages" needed to obtain it, is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, Romans 6:23.

Lesson: *Not only has a believer been saved from a life that remains in a state of sin so that he should no longer live a sinful life but his position in Christ makes it illogical for him even to commit an occasional act of sin. Sin is the opposite of righteousness, so enslavement to sin in one's pre-salvation days is positionally the opposite of one's "enslavement" to righteousness in Christ, requiring that a believer live without EVER committing ANY act of sin!*

Application: *(1) May we realize that sin is the opposite of the perfect righteousness of God that we have in Christ so that our experience should NEVER tolerate involvement in even an occasional act of sin! (2) May we continue to praise God for His salvation that is so rich and so free and that delivers us from shame and eternal damnation.*