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Transformation

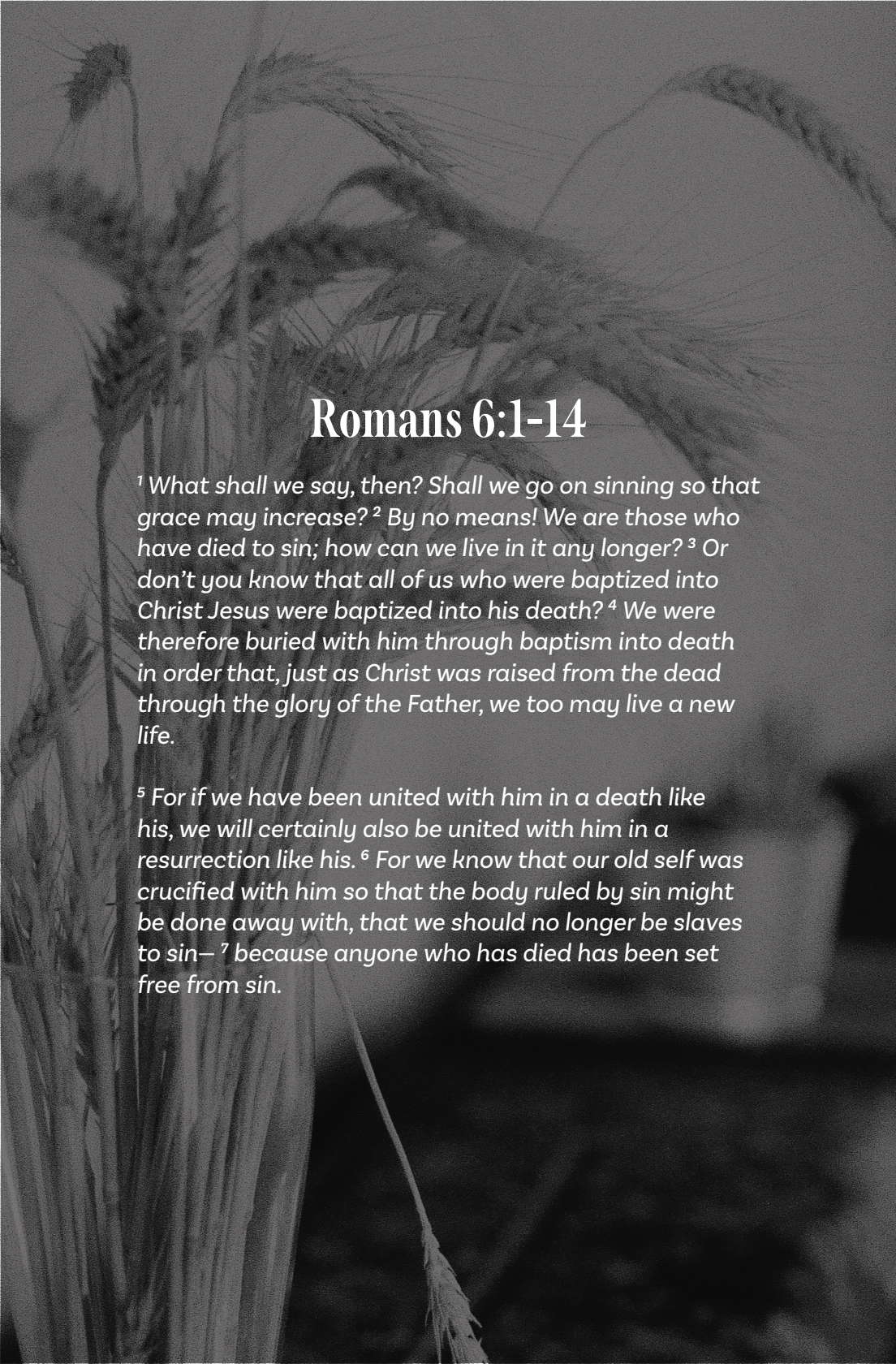
What does it really mean to live a new life?

Discuss:

*When is a time in your life when you
experienced significant change?*

How did it change you as a person?

*When have you observed
transformation
in someone else's life?*



Romans 6:1-14

¹ What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

The last chapter talked about the gospel and how, by the death of Christ, you were cleared of your crimes. We ended with the idea that through His death you have been granted admission into a new state governed by grace, yet this is only a part of the gospel. Yes, you have been forgiven, but that is not enough. One who is forgiven receives a blank slate and yet, as humans, our nature is still to rebel. Reveling in our forgiven state, we might try to “behave” for a while, but in the end, our human nature will prevail. This is why forgiveness is not enough. We need a new nature. In Romans 5, Paul talks about the death of Christ. In Chapter 6, he reveals a second part to this gospel: Christ’s resurrection.

Read Romans 6:1-11

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We died to ourselves when we returned to God and let Him justify us. Therefore, when Christ died, we died with Him. However, this was not the end of the plan. In 1 Corinthians, Paul stresses the gospel is that “Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again.” Christ was raised from the dead and through his resurrection we were brought to life. Paul argues that without Christ’s resurrection, our faith is futile and we are still in our sins. However, with the resurrection, we no longer belong to sin. In your returning to God, the old part of you that wants to rebel was put to death with Christ. In its place, God makes you a new creation with a new nature. This is why the resurrection is so integral to our faith. This is also why the way you live must change.

Read Romans 6:12-14

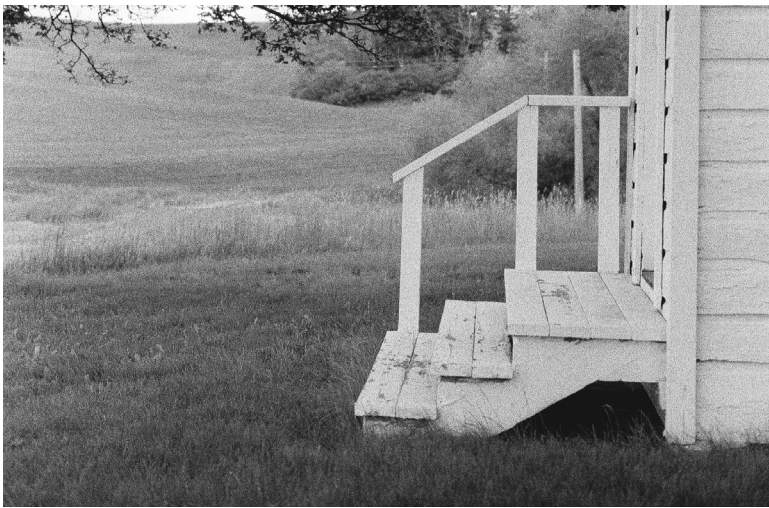
As you continue walking with God, the old rebellious you will try to return. The difference is you do not have to follow it; those traits no longer define you. In fact, they are contrary to your new nature. You have been reborn and given a new kind of life infused with the life of Christ. Now you have a choice to which nature you will obey: the old or the new. This process of rejecting and killing your old nature and becoming like Christ through your new nature is known as sanctification. With justification God does everything. In sanctification, we partner with God in bringing about change in our lives.

Understand, however, this is a process. You were reborn and, just like a newborn baby, you entered a new world where you will grow and learn. With time, you recognize who your parents are and begin to pick up their characteristics. You will make messes, but it is ok, because that is what babies do. Their messes do not change the relationship with their parents, just like your failings do not change your relationship with God. In your mistakes, there is grace. However, infancy is also a stage. Something is wrong if an infant fails to grow. The same growth is anticipated for you. Know that the whole sanctification process is saturated with the same grace found in the justification process.

There are some people who will accept Christ's death as a means to escape punishment, but will choose to live life as if nothing has changed. They fail to embrace the new life they have been given. It is as if they were corpses who were brought to life and yet chose to stay in their coffin. This is not what God intended when He saved us. John 1:12 says that "Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." If you believe this, you can know that you are saved. With this new life, you have been adopted as a child of God. As such, God wants you to know Him, to experience His love and to be marked by the traits that characterize Him. There is life to be lived.

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It is important to note that while the gospel is the foundation of what we believe, it is not just something basic that we learn in the beginning, understand, and then move on from. We can never grow beyond the gospel. It is true that it is the story of how God saves us, but it is also what moves us forward in this journey. It's the power to save us and the power to change us.



ACTION STEPS

Take some time to read each of these verses. Write a brief statement of how each one speaks of your new nature and what you like about this truth:

Romans 8:14-17

Ephesians 1:3-14

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Ephesians 2:19

Colossians 1:13-14

The Father has the same view of us as He has of His Son since we are His adopted children. Is it difficult for you to believe that God takes pleasure in, is proud of, and delights in you? Why or Why Not?

Are there any ways you have noticed that God has made you new, or changed you, since your decision to follow Him? What are those things?

What are some ways that you have held onto your old life and continued to sin? What is God telling you to do about them?

You need to know that God is all in. He is committed to you and is not changing His mind. Read these verses and write down some notes of what they mean for you:

Romans 8:35-39

John 10:27-30

John 6:37

1 Peter 1:3-5

Philippians 1:3-6

1 John 5:11-13

Copy all 10 of these passages onto a sheet of paper. (You can write them out or copy/paste them from BibleGateway.com). Print this out and read it every morning this week. Let these truths cement in your mind and remind you of your new identity in Christ.