



LETTERS TO THE CHURCH [ROMANS 6]

Romans 6 confronts one of the most uncomfortable but important questions in the Christian life: If God's grace covers our sin, does sin still matter? Paul's answer is emphatic—by no means. Following Jesus fundamentally changes our relationship to sin. Sin is no longer meant to reign over the believer because, through union with Christ, the old self has been crucified and a new life has begun. While many Christians still feel painfully aware of sin's presence, Paul invites believers to move beyond simply acknowledging their struggle and to begin seeing themselves as people who are genuinely alive to God and no longer defined by their old master.

Throughout Romans 6, Paul uses the language of slavery and servitude to talk about the believer's relationship with righteousness (or sin, and unrighteousness). While modern ears instinctively resist the idea of belonging to anyone, Paul's point is that every human life is shaped by some kind of master—whether sin, approval, comfort, success, control, fear, or Christ. The question is not whether we serve something, but what is forming us. Sin promises autonomy while quietly enslaving us; Jesus invites surrender that leads to liberation. Drawing from Exodus, Paul's use of servant language, and Jesus' own example of sacrificial servanthood, the message argues that becoming a "slave to righteousness" is not dehumanizing, but restorative—an invitation to become fully human as God intended.

Paul's language in Romans 6 directly echoes Jesus' words in Mark 8: "Take up your cross and follow me." Rather than interpreting discipleship primarily as misery, burden, or grim obligation, the message presents surrender as the pathway to true freedom. Jesus does not call people to lose themselves for nothing, but to release the false self that is slowly destroying them so they can discover resurrection life. For Trellis, this becomes a direct challenge: resist the temptation to skip straight to outward action ("do as Jesus did") without first being deeply formed through abiding with Jesus and becoming like Him. Otherwise, Christian activity risks becoming performance rather than transformation.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you believe is currently exerting the strongest formative influence over your life? In other words, what or who is your "master"?
2. Where do you still feel "alive to sin" even though Paul says you are dead to it? How is that forming your life?
3. What version of "freedom" are you most tempted to pursue? Remember, according to Paul, we are all serving something. Might you be trying to escape something? If so, what?

4. Have you been trying to “do as Jesus did” without first being with Jesus and becoming like Him? How has the generally worked out?

5. What would “taking up your cross” practically look like in this season of your life? Be specific and consider sitting in silence and reflection as a group to allow God to speak directly to you.