SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Romans

Chapter Six, Verses 1–23

Dead to Sin, Alive to God — union with Christ, a change of masters, and the wage grace refuses to pay

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

If grace abounds where sin abounds, why not keep sinning? Paul answers with a funeral and a resurrection: everyone joined to Christ has died to sin's reign, been raised to walk in newness of life, and changed masters — from the one who pays death to the One who gives eternal life. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Paul's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Romans 6:1–23

Died · reckon · present · two masters

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

Contents

Three verbs, one union, two masters, two outcomes

—	**How to Read This Study** · *the four voices & their colors*	3
—	**Before the Passage** · *from abounding grace to a changed life*	3
I	**Shall We Continue in Sin?** · *Romans 6:1–4 · the question and the burial*	5
II	**Crucified, Raised, and Reckoned** · *Romans 6:5–11 · know and consider*	7
III	**Do Not Let Sin Reign** · *Romans 6:12–14 · present your members*	9
IV	**Slaves of the One You Obey** · *Romans 6:15–19 · two masters*	11
V	**Two Wages, One Gift** · *Romans 6:20–23 · wages and the gift*	13
VI	**The Passage in the Whole Bible** · *cross-references*	14
†	**At a Glance** · *the four voices side by side*	16
†	**Key Insights & Questions for the Table** · *discussion*	16
†	**Sources** · *where each voice comes from*	17



"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." — Romans 6:23

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Romans 6:1–23

Dead to Sin, Alive to God — know, consider, present — died, buried and raised with Christ, and freed from one master to serve Another

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Romans 6 in 5 movements, in Paul's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the argument so you can see where Paul is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word
R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle
MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED
God — His character & actions
Command / instruction
Key repeated word
Sin / warning
Promise / blessing
Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 6:11

"Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

† Before the Passage

Romans 6 answers a question that Romans 5 makes unavoidable. Paul has shown the whole world guilty (1:18–3:20), God's righteousness given as a gift through faith in Christ (3:21–4:25), and two men standing at the head of two humanities — Adam, through whom sin and death reigned, and Christ, through whom grace reigns (5:12–21). Then comes the sentence that sounds almost reckless: "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (5:20). Any honest listener asks the next question out loud, and Paul asks it for him: "Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?" (6:1). Chapters 6–8 are his answer about the life of the justified — sin's reign broken (ch. 6), the law's role (ch. 7), and the Spirit's life (ch. 8).

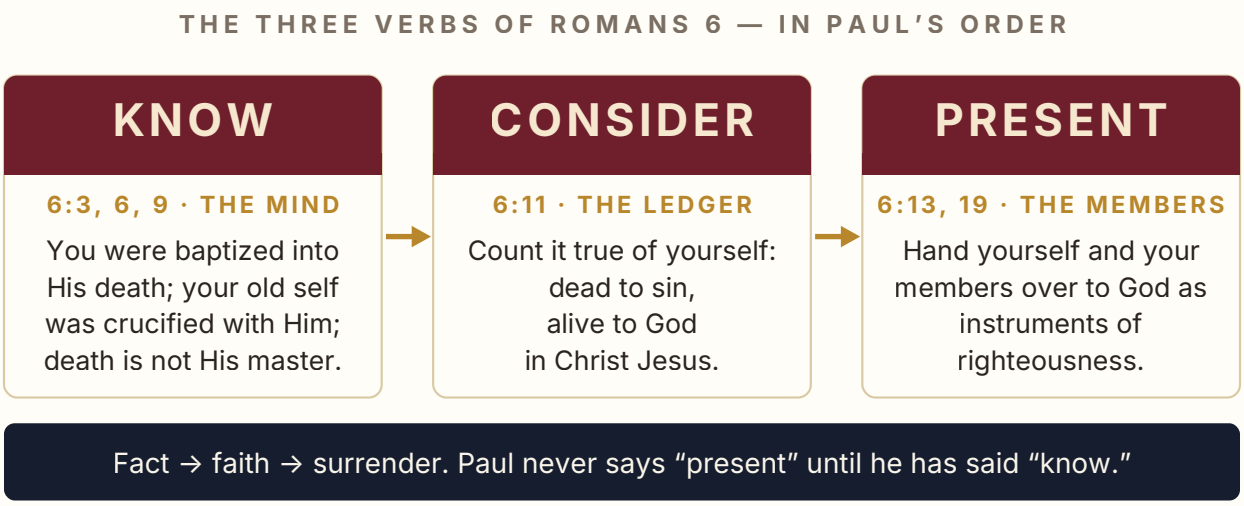
The chapter is built on two parallel objections and two pictures. The first objection (v. 1) is about a lifestyle — the verb is present tense, "keep on in sin" — and Paul answers it with **union**: you died with Christ, were buried with Him, and were raised with Him (vv. 2–14). The second (v. 15) is about a single act — an aorist, "shall we

sin (now and then)?" — and Paul answers it with **slavery**: everyone serves someone, and the master you obey is the master you have (vv. 16–23). Both questions draw the same reply, *mē genoito*, "May it never be!" (vv. 2, 15). Running through the first half are three verbs that give the chapter its spine: **know** (vv. 3, 6, 9), **consider** (v. 11), **present** (vv. 13, 19).

Paul's first readers heard the slavery picture with Roman ears. Slaves were everywhere in the capital — in households, shops and offices — and many in the church knew the life from the inside; Paul even apologizes for the image: "I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh" (v. 19). Baptism, too, is assumed rather than argued: "all of us who have been baptized" (v. 3). Our teachers baptize differently — Sproul, a Presbyterian, defends infant baptism; Spurgeon, a Baptist, preached believer's immersion — but in this chapter they agree on the main thing: baptism is the sign of union with Christ, not the cause of it.

The Old Testament stands behind every line. Adam was warned that sin and death come together (Genesis 2:17); Israel was redeemed out of slavery in Egypt not to be masterless but to serve the LORD (Exodus 4:23; 8:1); Aaron and his sons were consecrated with blood on the right ear, thumb and big toe — the whole body handed to God (Leviticus 8:23–24), an image Guzik brings to the word "present." Romans 6 is the gospel's exodus: a death that ends the old slavery, a resurrection that begins the new service, and a Master whose wages are replaced by a gift.

FIGURE · KNOW · CONSIDER · PRESENT



Read the three panels left to right: what God has done is learned (know), then counted true of yourself (consider), and only then acted on with the body (present).

I
MOVEMENT

ROMANS 6:1–4

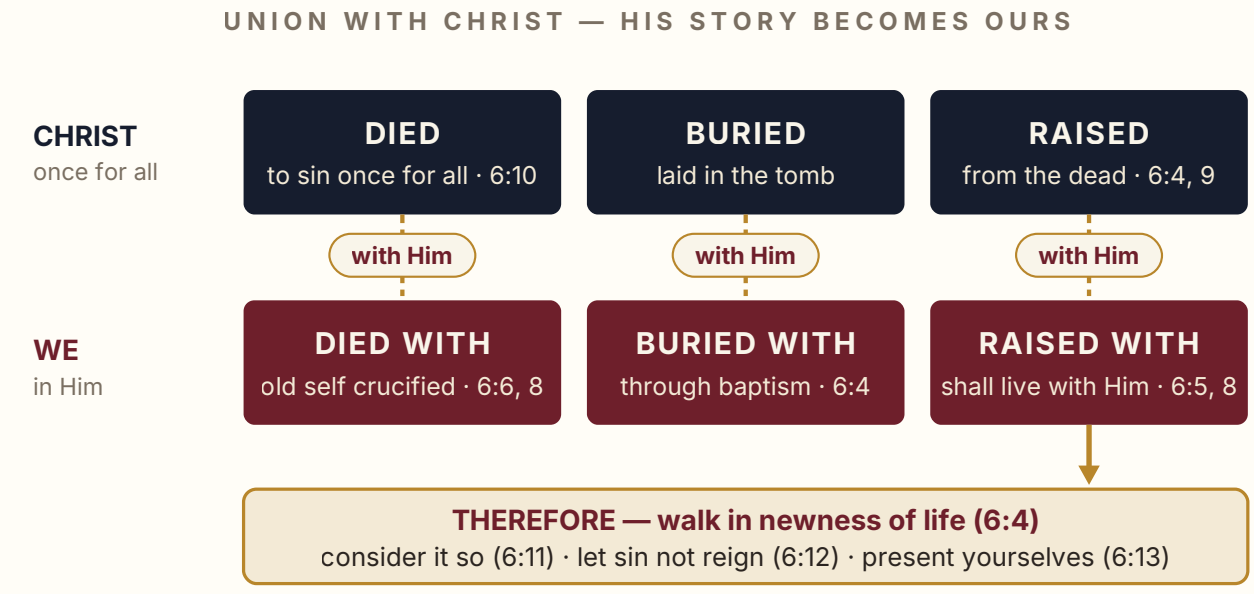
Shall We Continue in Sin?

The objection from abounding grace — and an answer shaped like a funeral

> 1 *What shall we say then? Are we to* ⚠ *continue in sin* *so that* ⟲ *grace* *may increase?* 2 ◷ *May it never be*! *How shall we who* ☆ *died to sin* *still live in it?* 3 *Or do you not* ⟲ *know* *that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been* ☆ *baptized into His death*? 4 *Therefore we have been* ☆ *buried with Him* *through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through* △ *the glory of the Father*, *so we too might* ▤ *walk in newness of life*.
>
> ROMANS 6:1–4

> *"The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased,* ☆ *grace abounded all the more*, *so that, as sin reigned in death, even so* △ *grace would reign* *through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*
>
> ROMANS 5:20–21

FIGURE · DIED, BURIED, RAISED — WITH HIM



Each event in Christ's story (top) is joined by "with Him" to the believer's story (bottom), and the chapter's commands flow only from the last box.

μὴ γένοιτο

MĒ GENOITO · "MAY IT NEVER BE" · G1096

An optative of *ginomai*, "to become" — literally "let it not come to be." It is Paul's strongest repudiation, and Romans uses it ten times (3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11). The KJV's "God forbid" has no word for God in it; it is an English idiom for the same horror. The question it answers uses *epimenōmen* (G1961), present subjunctive — "remain on, keep living in" — a settled way of life, not a single fall. Paul is not asking whether a Christian can sin; he is asking whether a Christian can make his home there.

ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ

APETHANOMEN TĒ HAMARTIA · "WE DIED TO SIN" · G599 · G266

Apethanomen is aorist — a finished event at a point in the past, not a slow process of dying. And "sin" carries the article: *tē hamartia*, "the sin," sin as a power. In this chapter sin is personified: it reigns (v. 12), it is a master (v. 14), it owns slaves (v. 17) and pays wages (v. 23). Paul does not say sin died to us; he says we died to it. The tyrant is still alive in the land — but his subject has been executed with Christ, and a dead man owes a king nothing.

ἐβαπτίσθημεν · συνετάφημεν

EBAPTISTHĒMEN · SYNETAPHĒMEN · "BAPTIZED · BURIED WITH" · G907 · G4916

Baptizō means to dip, immerse, overwhelm; "baptized *into* (*eis*) Christ Jesus" is the language of being joined to a person, as Israel "into Moses" (1 Corinthians 10:2). *Synthaptō*, "bury together with," occurs only here and in Colossians 2:12. Burial is how you certify a death. The goal clause is a walk: "so we too might walk (*peripatēsōmen*, G4043) in newness (*kainotēti*, G2538) of life" — not a repaired old life, but a new kind of one.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik hears the question coming straight off 5:20, and he admits why it comes: from a natural point of view grace looks dangerous, which is why so many people retreat to law-based religion. The verb is a present tense — habitual, continuous sin — and he cites Rasputin as the extreme case of a man who sinned on purpose so he could be forgiven again. Paul's answer — "Certainly not!" in the NKJV Guzik teaches from — is close to "Away with the notion!" Then Paul appeals to what every believer should already know. Baptism means to immerse or overwhelm; water baptism pictures the union with Christ, it does not manufacture it — and yet, quoting Bruce, Paul "did not regard baptism as an 'optional extra' in the Christian life."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul starts at 5:20: the law came in to expose sin, and the contrast Paul draws is not a balance but a superlative — "Sin is far outweighed by the grace that God gives." Then he names the error of 6:1 antinomianism, the charge Rome threw at the Reformers. His answer is a formula: "We are justified unto good works, not justified by good works," and "We are justified by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone." A justified man is a changed man, so obedience is "not only inevitable, but immediate." He rejects the "carnal Christian" idea of Christ as Savior but not Lord. Baptism, for him, "does not make us justified, but it is the sign of God's promise" — and we "have already died, already been buried."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In “Baptism: A Burial” (No. 1627, 1881) Spurgeon sets aside the debate over who should be baptized and preaches what the burial means. We are buried with Christ “to show that we accept him as being for us dead and buried”; baptism is “an acknowledgment of our own death in Christ.” Burial, he says, “is, first of all, the seal of death; it is the certificate of decease” — you do not bury the living. So baptism is “the funeral rite by which death to sin is openly set forth before all men.” What died? Not our capacity to sin, but sin’s throne: “We are dead to the reigning power of sin.” And the man raised from that grave says of his old master, “Sin is my bondage, not my pleasure; my misery, not my delight.”

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

Henry reads the question as a temptation more than a puzzle, and answers it the way Christ answered Satan: “God forbid; far be it from us to think such a thought.” Any teaching that gives “any countenance to sin,” however attractively dressed, is to be “rejected with the greatest abhorrence.” He frames the whole chapter as a call to holiness — what sanctification is and why it is necessary. Baptism is “*externa ansa Christi*—the external handle of Christ,” the outward grip by which faith takes hold of Him; and “we were baptized into his death,” which means that a baptized life that keeps on loving sin contradicts its own sign.

II
MOVEMENT

ROMANS 6:5–11

Crucified, Raised, and Reckoned

What we know — the old self crucified, death’s mastery ended — and what we are told to count as true

5 *For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,* 6 *knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;* 7 *for he who has died is freed from sin.* 8 *Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,* 9 *knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.* 10 *For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.* 11 *Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

ROMANS 6:5–11

σύμφυτοι

SYMPHYTOI · “UNITED · PLANTED TOGETHER” · G4854

From *symphyō*, to grow together — the only use of the word in the New Testament. The KJV’s “planted together” keeps the garden in it; Morris (in Guzik) says it “exactly expresses the process by which a graft becomes united with the life of a tree.” A graft does not imitate the tree; it lives on the tree’s sap. “United with Him in the likeness (*homoiōmati*, G3667) of His death” guarantees the rest: “certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection (*anastaseōs*, G386).”

ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη … καταργηθῇ

HO PALAIOS ANTHRŌPOS · SYNESTAURŌTHĒ · KATARGĒTHĒ · G3820 · G4957 · G2673

"Our old self" is literally "our old man" (*anthrōpos*, G444) — who we were in Adam. *Systauroō*, "crucify together with," is used of the two thieves crucified with Jesus (Matthew 27:44; John 19:32) and of Paul in Galatians 2:20. It is aorist and passive: it was done, and it was done to us. The purpose: that "the body of sin might be done away with" — *katargeō*, to make idle, put out of business, render powerless (KJV "destroyed"). Then v. 7: "he who has died is freed from sin" — the verb is *dedikaiōtai* (G1344), "has been justified." Death settles the case; the court has no more claim.

λογίζεσθε · ἐφάπαξ

LOGIZESTHE · EPHAPAX · "CONSIDER · ONCE FOR ALL" · G3049 · G2178

Logizomai is a ledger word — to count, credit, reckon (KJV). It is the verb of chapter 4, where Abraham's faith "was credited to him as righteousness" (4:3). God counted righteousness to us that we did not earn; now we are told to count as true what God has done. It is a present imperative — keep on reckoning. And it rests on v. 10: Christ "died to sin once for all" — *ephapax*, a single, unrepeatable act (Hebrews 7:27; 9:12; 10:10). Death "no longer is master" (*kyrieuei*, G2961) over Him; in Him, it is no longer ours. *Text note:* the KJV's "our Lord" at the end of v. 11 (its "through" renders the same *en*) follows the later manuscripts; NASB95 and SBLGNT end "in Christ Jesus."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik separates three things readers often blur. The "old man" is the self patterned after Adam — the law can describe it but never reform it; it has to die, and God did that (Lenski: "God had to do this."). The "new man" is the renewed self of Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10. The "flesh" is different again — the part of us trained by the old man, the world and the devil. Freedom comes by death; he recalls Spartacus saying death is "the only freedom a slave knows." Then v. 11: "Reckon is an accounting word." God never tells us to crucify the old man; "We simply reckon him as dead." He tells D. L. Moody's story of a freed slave unsure she was free — "This is exactly the place many Christians are."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul calls this "the hardest portion of this whole epistle." We are united to Christ, so we died with Him at Calvary and share His resurrection now. By nature we were dead and enslaved — Augustine's picture of a rider who gives up the reins reluctantly — and regeneration is God alone raising the soul. On the "body of sin" he admits uncertainty but rejects the idea that the physical body is evil; it is the mass of sin, and the old man dies "by inches." "Christ has not just died for your sins, but He has died for your sinfulness." To reckon is "thinking, judging, or esteeming": the old man is ancient history, like D-Day — the war is decided though the fighting goes on.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Dead But Alive" (on 6:11–14) calls this "a great fact to be reckoned upon." "We are dead with Christ to sin by having borne the punishment in Him," and so "forever dead to its guilt and reigning power." But he guards the reckoning from a lie: to count ourselves sinless "would be a reckoning based on falsehood, and would be exceedingly mischievous" — "None are so provoking to God as sinners who boast their own fancied perfection." Count what is true: guilt gone, reign broken, a new life alive to God. "Be a ready reckoner in this fashion." In the baptism sermon he adds the other side of the ledger: "The life of the Christian is the life of Christ."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

Henry names the two halves of holiness that run through these verses: "mortification and vivification—dying to sin and living to righteousness." Mortification is more than stopping outward acts; "The body of sin must be destroyed" — the corrupt habits and inclinations underneath them, so that sin no longer rules. Union with Christ's death is the believer's release, and Henry finds comfort in it for tired strugglers: "Death brings a writ of ease to the weary." On v. 11 he reasons from the slave's side: "As the death of the oppressor is a release, so much more is the death of the oppressed" — and in Christ, it is we who have died to our oppressor.

III
MOVEMENT

ROMANS 6:12–14

Do Not Let Sin Reign

Present yourselves to God — sin shall not be master, for you are under grace

12 *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,* 13 *and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.* 14 *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

ROMANS 6:12–14

μὴ οὖν βασιλευέτω ἡ ἁμαρτία

BASILEUETŌ · "LET … REIGN" · G936

The verb is the one Paul used in chapter 5 for the two kingdoms — death "reigned" (5:14, 17), sin "reigned in death," grace will "reign through righteousness" (5:21). Here it is a present imperative with a negative: stop letting sin reign, don't give it the throne. Sin is still present in the "mortal body" — the body that will die — but it has lost its right to rule. Its weapon is the body's "lusts" (*epithymiais*, G1939): strong desires, not merely wrong thoughts.

μηδὲ παριστάνετε … ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε · ὅπλα

PARISTANETE · PARASTĒSATE · HOPLA · "PRESENT · INSTRUMENTS" · G3936 · G3696

Paul uses *paristēmi*, "to place beside, put at someone's disposal," twice in one verse with two tenses. "Do not go on presenting" is present — stop the habit of handing your members over to sin. "Present yourselves to God" is aorist — a decisive handing-over, once and for all. It is the verb of 12:1, "present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice." *Hopla* are tools, and very often weapons (13:12, "the armor of light"; 2 Corinthians 6:7; 10:4). Your hands, eyes and tongue are weapons; the only question is whose army they are fighting for.

ἁμαρτία γὰρ ὑμῶν οὐ κυριεύσει

KYRIEUSEI · "SHALL NOT BE MASTER" · G2961

The same verb as v. 9 — death "no longer is master over Him." Here it is future indicative: not a command but a promise — sin *will not* lord it over you. The reason is not that you have finally tried hard enough, but that "you are not under law (*nomon*, G3551) but under grace (*charin*, G5485)." Law demands and condemns; grace forgives and empowers. The promise is not that you will never fall, but that sin will never again own you.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik makes "present" as concrete as Paul does: "We must not present the parts of our body to the service of sin." He reaches back to the priests' consecration, when sacrificial blood was applied to the ear, the thumb and the big toe — what you hear, what you do, where you go, all handed to God. Following Spurgeon, he reads v. 14 three ways: as a test, a promise and an encouragement. Grace, not law, is the power to live right, and he quotes Bruce: "To treat being *under grace* as an excuse for sinning is a sign that one is not really *under grace* at all." His picture is the butterfly: a creature with wings has no reason to crawl back into the caterpillar's life.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God" starts with the "therefore" of v. 12 — because you died with Christ, do not let sin reign. Regeneration is God's work alone, but sanctification, he says, is a joint work in which the believer cooperates with grace through the means of grace — the Word, prayer, corporate worship. "Members" means the whole person: mind, tongue, hands. Like a sculptor's chisel or a baseball bat, a tool can build or destroy. "Under grace" is not license; grace governs the whole Christian life: "You are sanctified as much by grace as you are justified by grace." And he is honest: "We still sin when we are Christians."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon preached v. 14 more than once. In "The Upper Hand" (1869) it is a test — "Has sin dominion over you? If so, then you are not a believer" — and he names reigning sins as plainly as he can: temper, grumbling, greed, pride, sloth. "This sin is hard to overcome, but conquered it must be." In "Believers Free from the Dominion of Sin" (No. 1410, 1878) it is a promise for the man who keeps falling: "Sin may vex you and thrust itself upon you, but it cannot become your lord." A child of God may go down, but "it is not his nature to lie there" — sin "casts us down, but it cannot make us take delight in its evil."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

Henry concedes that sin will remain while we live — it must not *reign*: "Let it not make laws, nor preside in councils, nor command the militia; let it not be uppermost in the soul." The members may "perhaps, through the prevalency of temptation, be forced to be instruments of sin," but they must never be handed over willingly. Instead, "Yield yourselves to him as wax to the seal, to take any impression, to be, and have, and do, what he pleases." Grace, he explains, accepts sincere obedience and supplies strength, where the law demanded perfect performance and gave none.

IV
MOVEMENT

ROMANS 6:15–19

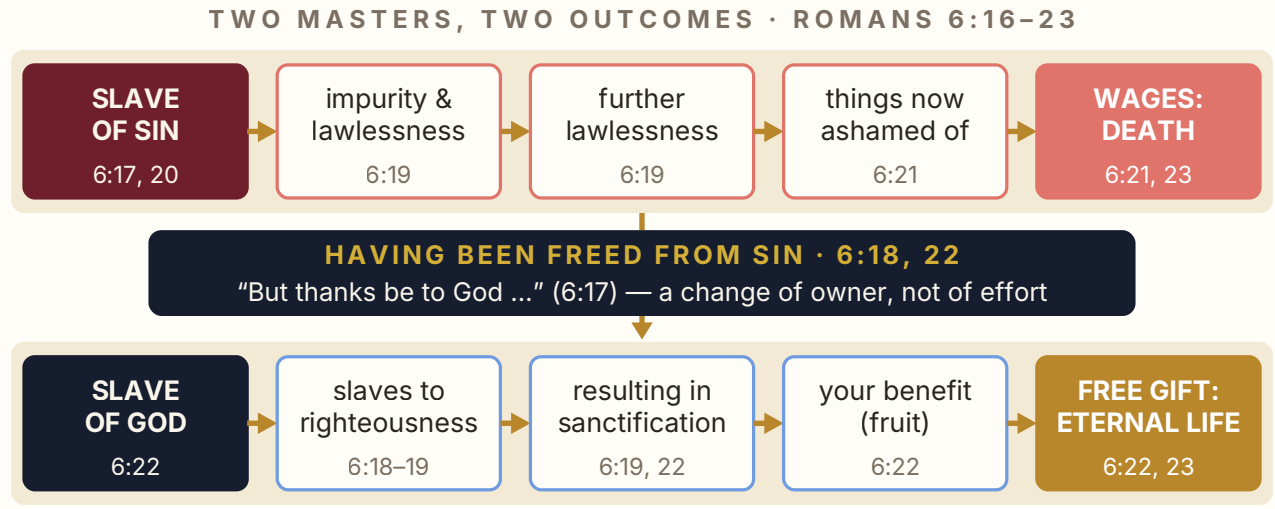
Slaves of the One You Obey

The second objection — and the truth that every man serves someone

15 *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under* ⟲ *grace*? *May it never be!* 16 *Do you not* ⟲ *know that when you present yourselves to someone as* ⟲ *slaves for obedience, you are* ⟲ *slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?* 17 *But* △ *thanks be to God that though you were* ⟲ *slaves of sin, you became* ▤ *obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,* 18 *and having been freed from sin, you became* ⟲ *slaves of righteousness.* 19 *I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as* ⟲ *slaves to impurity and to lawlessness,* ⚠ *resulting in further lawlessness, so now* ▤ *present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in* ⟲ *sanctification.*

ROMANS 6:15–19

FIGURE · TWO MASTERS, TWO WAGES



Sin pays *opsōnia* — wages, earned. God gives *charisma* — a gift, never earned.

Every man serves someone (6:16): follow each lane to its end, and note that the only crossing between them is God's act of setting free.

δοῦλοι · ἐδουλώθητε

DOULOI · EDOULŌTHĒTE · "SLAVES · BECAME SLAVES" · G1401 · G1402

Doulos is not a hired servant who can quit on Friday; it is a slave, owned. Paul calls himself "a bond-servant of Christ Jesus" in the first words of this letter (1:1). Verse 16 is a law of the moral world: "when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey." Verse 18 says it happened to us — *edoulōthēte*, aorist passive, "you were enslaved" to righteousness. Freedom in Romans 6 is never masterlessness; it is a change of owner.

τύπον διδαχῆς … παρεδόθητε

TYPON DIDACHĒS · PAREDOTHĒTE · "FORM OF TEACHING · COMMITTED" · G5179 · G1322 · G3860

Typos is the mark left by a blow — Thomas wanted to see "the imprint of the nails" (John 20:25) — and so a pattern or mold. The surprise is the direction of *paradidōmi*: Paul does not say the teaching was handed to you (as the KJV "delivered you" and Henry's "delivered to you" have it) but that you were handed over to it, like metal poured into a mold. Henry's image: "as into a mould, as the wax is cast into the impression of the seal." The gospel does not just inform; it shapes.

εἰς τὴν ἀνομίαν … εἰς ἁγιασμόν

ANOMIA · HAGIASMOS · "LAWLESSNESS · SANCTIFICATION" · G458 · G38

Verse 19 is built on two chains, each with *eis*, "into, resulting in." The old one: slaves to impurity (*akatharsia*, G167) and to lawlessness, *eis tēn anomian* — "resulting in further lawlessness." Sin does not stand still; it compounds. The new one: slaves to righteousness *eis hagiasmon* — "resulting in sanctification," the process of being made holy. Same mechanism, opposite direction. Habits are the road; the master decides which way it runs.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notices the change of tense: the verb in v. 15 is aorist, a single act — not habitual sin as in v. 1 but, in his words, "dabbling in sin" — "a little sin here and there." The answer is the same. Everyone serves someone; the choice is sin leading to death or obedience leading to righteousness. Faith itself is "obedience from the heart," and the "form of doctrine" is a mold that shapes us (he draws on Adam Clarke). With Wuest he lists four marks of slavery — born into it, will swallowed by another's, bonds only death can break, service against one's own interest — and applies each to the old master and the new. On v. 19: "Lawlessness leads to more lawlessness … This describes the dynamic power of our habits."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul refuses the myth of a neutral free will. "We are, by nature, in bondage to sin" — Augustine, Luther's *Bondage of the Will* and Edwards all said so — morally unable to do the things of God until God frees us. He then explains the picture Paul chose: "in the ancient world, the number one reason for slavery was indentured servitude" — people sold themselves into it. So it is with sin: we present ourselves, and we become what we serve. The pursuit of righteousness is the Christian's central business (Matthew 6:33), and he shames modern believers with the Pharisees' diligence: "Freedom from sin means freedom of righteousness, freedom for righteousness, and freedom for eternal life."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In "Our Change of Masters" (on 6:16–18) Spurgeon says man is made to serve: "Man cannot serve two masters, but he must serve one." Alexander, the Caesars, Solomon — none escaped a master. "There is no interregnum. Man passes from one master to another, but he is always in subjection." Sin has its "liveried servants" and its secret ones, and it holds them illegally: "Sin did not make us, does not feed us, has no right to us whatever." But Christ bought us, and now "You are the slave of Christ; you bear in your body the brand of the Lord Jesus" — and "His service is perfect freedom and supreme delight."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

Henry sees obedience as the giveaway: a man's master is known by whom he obeys, whatever he calls himself. To abuse grace as a license for sin is not clever theology but ingratitude — it is to "spit in the face of such love." He reminds believers what they were — servants of sin — to keep them humble and thankful, and he describes conversion as obeying the gospel from the heart, being freed from sin and becoming God's servant. He also warns how habits grow: "Every sinful act strengthens and confirms the sinful habit" — and every holy act strengthens the holy one.

V
MOVEMENT

ROMANS 6:20–23

Two Wages, One Gift

What benefit were you deriving? — the outcome of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life

20 *For when you were* ⟳ *slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.* 21 *Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For* ⚠ *the outcome of those things is death.* 22 *But now having been freed from sin and* ☆ *enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in* ⟳ *sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.* 23 *For* ⚠ *the wages of sin is death, but* ☆ *the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

ROMANS 6:20–23

καρπός · τέλος

KARPOS · TELOS · "BENEFIT (FRUIT) · OUTCOME (END)" · G2590 · G5056

NASB95's "benefit" in vv. 21–22 is *karpos*, "fruit" (as the KJV has it) — what a life produces. Paul asks the ex-slave to remember the harvest: things "of which you are now ashamed" (*epaischynesthe*, G1870). And *telos* is the end, the goal a road arrives at: for sin, "the outcome of those things is death"; for the slave of God, sanctification now and "the outcome, eternal life." Every road has a destination whether the traveler is thinking about it or not.

ὀψώνια

OPSŌNIA · "WAGES" · G3800

Originally a soldier's ration-money — his pay. John the Baptist told soldiers, "be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14); Paul asks who ever serves as a soldier "at his own expense" (1 Corinthians 9:7). It is plural here, paid out regularly. The military picture fits the chapter: sin has weapons (*hopla*, v. 13) and pays its troops. Spurgeon catches it exactly — "Death is the rations which sin pays to those who enlist beneath its banner." Wages are earned; nobody receives them by surprise.

τὸ δὲ χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ

CHARISMA · "FREE GIFT" · G5486

Paul switches words in mid-sentence. Not "the wages of God" but *to charisma*, from *charis*, grace — the same word he used twice for the "free gift" in 5:15–16. Death is paid; life (*zōē aiōnios*, G2222 · G166) is given. And the gift is located: "in Christ Jesus our Lord." Chapter 5 ended "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (5:21); chapter 6 ends "in Christ Jesus our Lord." The whole argument began and ends in Him.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads vv. 20–23 as a final audit. Sin's "fruit" was shameful and ended in death; holiness bears fruit that ends in eternal life. Then the bottom line: "When you work for sin, your wages are death." Quoting Adam Clarke, "Every sinner *earns* this by long, sore, and painful service." But the other column is not a paycheck: "When we serve God we get no pay – but He freely gives us the best benefit package imaginable." His conclusion for the whole chapter is simple — believers have changed owners, so stop clocking in for the old master.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul closes his sermon on the two words Paul set side by side: "Wages are something you earn; a gift is something you cannot possibly earn." He told his congregation of a moment of terror over his own salvation that drove him back to the gospel, and he insists that what moves a believer to obey is not duty but thanks: "The essence of Christian theology is grace, and the essence of Christian ethics is gratitude." The man who knows the wage he deserved and the gift he received will not ask, "Shall we sin?"

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

"Death and Life: The Wage and the Gift" (No. 1868, 1 Nov 1885) is Spurgeon on v. 23. "Sin, the captain, pays his hired soldiers a dreadful wage." Death is "the separation of the soul from God," partly paid now — in ruined bodies, minds and homes — and fully paid in eternity. "The misery of the misery of sin is that it is earned." Then: "Note well the change: death is a wage, but life is a gift." "When a man is lost, he has earned it; when a man is saved, it is given him." So he pleads, "You are not called upon to earn life, but to receive it" — for "Grace reigns all along—not only in removing sin, but in working virtue."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

Henry invites the reader to do the sums: "reckon your gains, what fruit had you then?" His answer: "Nothing that deserves the name of fruit." On v. 20 he turns the slave's boast upside down — free in regard to righteousness? "A freedom from righteousness is the worst kind of slavery." And on v. 23 he keeps the two columns apart: "Death is the wages of the least sin," but "the life is a gift, it comes by favour." Then one line that every proud heart needs: "Sinners merit hell, but saints do not merit heaven."

VI
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

Crucified with Christ, buried and raised, a new creature — and the Son who makes slaves free

> *"△ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."*
>
> GALATIANS 2:20

> *"having been ☆ buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."*
>
> COLOSSIANS 2:12

> *"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, ☆ he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."*
>
> 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

> *"that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."*
>
> EPHESIANS 4:22–24

> *"Truly, truly, I say to you, ⚠ everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So ☆ if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."*
>
> JOHN 8:34–36

> *"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that ☆ we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."*
>
> 1 PETER 2:24

> *"For ⚠ the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,"*
>
> TITUS 2:11–12

> *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."*
>
> MATTHEW 6:24

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik ties the chapter to its partners. The "old man" who was crucified and the "new man" who lives to God are the old self and new self of Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10; and the union of v. 5 is the vine and branches of John 15 — a graft that lives on the life of the tree.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary · Romans completed after 1714

Henry's summary of the whole chapter could be Titus 2 in one sentence: grace that saves is grace that teaches. Death is owed as wages and eternal life is given freely through Christ — "Sinners merit hell, but saints do not merit heaven" — and so grace, rightly received, never becomes an excuse but always a reason.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four men from four centuries read the same chapter. Guzik walks the text and its illustrations; Sproul presses the doctrine of union and sanctification; Spurgeon preaches its comfort and its warning; Henry turns it into counsel for daily obedience. Where they differ — on who should be baptized, on how far holiness can go in this life — the chapter itself keeps them together: dead to sin, alive to God.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · The question	Grace looks dangerous; present tense means habitual sin; baptism pictures union, not optional.	Justified unto good works, not by them; faith alone, never a faith that is alone.	Baptism is a funeral rite — the certificate that we died to sin's reign.	Reject any doctrine that excuses sin "with the greatest abhorrence"; baptism is Christ's handle.
II · Know, consider	Reckon is an accounting word — count the old man dead; don't try to kill him again.	United to Christ we died at Calvary; the old man dies by inches; reckon it ancient history.	Be a ready reckoner — guilt and reign gone, but no boasting of fancied perfection.	Mortification and vivification — the body of sin destroyed, death a release for the weary.
III · Present	Present ear, hand, foot like the priests; v. 14 is a test, a promise, an encouragement.	Sanctification is cooperation with grace; members are tools; we still sin as Christians.	Sin may vex you but cannot become your lord; it is not your nature to stay down.	Let sin not make laws or command the militia; yield yourself as wax to the seal.
IV · Two masters	Verse 15 is aorist — not even occasional sin; lawlessness leads to more lawlessness.	No neutral will; slavery came by selling oneself; freedom is freedom for righteousness.	No interregnum — every man serves; sin has no right to us; Christ's service is freedom.	Obedience shows the master; abusing grace spits on love; every act strengthens a habit.
V · Wages and gift	Work for sin and the pay is death; God gives no wage but a gift beyond measure.	Wages are earned, a gift cannot be; theology is grace, ethics is gratitude.	Death is a wage, life is a gift — the lost earned it, the saved received it.	What fruit had you then? Nothing worth the name; saints do not merit heaven.

ROMANS 6:1–23 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **Paul never asks "can a Christian sin?"** He asks whether a Christian can keep on in it (v. 1, present tense) or treat an occasional sin as harmless (v. 15, aorist). Both get the same answer: "May it never be!" THE GREEK
- **We died to sin; sin did not die to us.** The tyrant is still in the land, but his subject has been executed with Christ (v. 2). That is why the fight goes on and why it can be won. THE TEXT
- **Burial is the certificate of death.** Baptism does not create the union, but it publicly certifies it — "the funeral rite by which death to sin is openly set forth before all men." SPURGEON
- **Reckon is an accounting word.** Consider is not pretending; it is counting as true what God has already done. We do not crucify the old man again — "We simply reckon him as dead." GUZIK
- **The order of the verbs is the order of the battle.** Know (vv. 3, 6, 9) before consider (v. 11), consider before present (vv. 13, 19). Paul never commands surrender until he has told us the facts. THE TEXT
- **"Done away with" means put out of business.** *Katargeō* (v. 6) does not mean the sinful nature vanishes; it means it loses its power to command. The body of sin is unemployed, not absent. THE GREEK

- **Verse 14 is a promise, not only an order.** "Sin shall not be master" is future indicative. A believer may fall, "but it cannot become your lord." SPURGEON
- **Sanctification is by grace too.** "You are sanctified as much by grace as you are justified by grace" — and the engine of obedience is gratitude, not dread. SPROUL
- **Habits compound in both directions.** Lawlessness results "in further lawlessness"; righteousness results "in sanctification" (v. 19). "Every sinful act strengthens and confirms the sinful habit." HENRY
- **The last verse changes the vocabulary.** Sin pays *opsōnia*, a soldier's wages, earned. God gives *charisma*, a free gift. Nobody earns eternal life — and nobody is surprised by death. THE GREEK

† Questions for the Table

1 **Paul says "we who died to sin" in the past tense. If that is true of me, why does sin still feel so alive?**

Sin is still in the land; it has lost its throne, not its voice. Spurgeon: it "may vex you … but it cannot become your lord."

6:2, 6–7, 14

2 **What does my baptism say about me — and do I live like a man whose funeral has already been held?**

Burial certifies death. Baptism is a sign of union, not a charm; but a sign that is contradicted every day accuses us.

6:3–4; COL 2:12

3 **"Consider yourselves to be dead to sin." What lie do I most often believe about who I am — and what does God say is true?**

Reckoning is counting what is true, not pretending. Name the lie, then say the fact out loud.

6:11; 2 COR 5:17

4 **Which of my members — eyes, hands, tongue, feet, phone — am I still lending to sin? What would it look like to present that one to God this week?**

Paul is concrete: members are weapons. Present the one sin uses most, on purpose, in advance.

6:12–13, 19; ROM 12:1

5 **Where have I seen "lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness" in my own life — and where have I seen the other chain begin?**

Habits compound both ways. Every surrender to sin strengthens the old road; every act of obedience lays the new one.

6:19–22

6 **Sin pays wages; God gives a gift. Am I still trying to earn from God what He only gives — or still collecting from sin what it always pays?**

Death is a wage; life is a gift. The ex-slave quits both ledgers and receives.

6:21–23; TITUS 2:11–12

Romans 6 does not tell tired men to try harder; it tells them who they are. You died with Christ, you were buried with Him, you are alive to God in Him — so count it true, and hand your members to the Master who gives, not to the one who pays.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry died in 1714 having reached Acts; the Romans volume of his *Commentary* was completed by his successors (John Evans) from his

notes and method, and is cited under his name as it is published. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

- David Guzik, Enduring Word Commentary — Romans 6 — https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/romans-6/
- R.C. Sproul, "Dead to Sin, Alive to God (Part 1)" — Romans 5:20–6:4 (2 Apr 2006) — https://learn.ligonier.org/sermons/dead-sin-alive-god-part
- R.C. Sproul, "Dead to Sin, Alive to God (Part 2)" — Romans 6:4–11 (9 Apr 2006) — https://learn.ligonier.org/sermons/dead-sin-alive-god-part-2
- R.C. Sproul, "From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God" — Romans 6:12–23 (23 Apr 2006) — https://learn.ligonier.org/sermons/slaves-sin-slaves-god
- C.H. Spurgeon, "Baptism: A Burial," No. 1627 (Rom 6:3–4) — https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/baptism-a-burial
- C.H. Spurgeon, "Dead But Alive" (Rom 6:11–14) — https://biblehub.com/sermons/auth/spurgeon/dead_but_alive.htm
- C.H. Spurgeon, "Believers Free from the Dominion of Sin," No. 1410 (Rom 6:14) — https://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/believers-free-from-the-dominion-of-sin
- C.H. Spurgeon, "The Upper Hand" (Rom 6:14) — https://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/the-upper-hand
- C.H. Spurgeon, "Our Change of Masters" (Rom 6:16–18) — https://mail.biblehub.com/sermons/auth/spurgeon/our_change_of_masters.htm
- C.H. Spurgeon, "Death and Life: The Wage and the Gift," No. 1868 (Rom 6:23) — https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/death-and-life-the-wage-and-the-gift
- C.H. Spurgeon, No. 1868 (CCEL text) — https://ccel.org/ccel/spurgeon/sermons31.liii.html
- Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible — Romans 6 (Bible Study Tools) — https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/romans/6.html
- Matthew Henry, Commentary — Romans 6 (CCEL) — https://www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhc6.Rom.vii.html
- Greek and Strong's numbers — Romans 6 interlinear — https://biblehub.com/interlinear/romans/6.htm
- NASB95 — Galatians 2:20 (Bible Gateway) — https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%202:20&version=NASB1995
- NASB95 — 2 Corinthians 5:17 (Bible Gateway) — https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%205:17&version=NASB1995
- NASB95 — 1 Peter 2:24 (Bible Gateway) — https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Peter%202:24&version=NASB1995
- NASB95 — Colossians 2:12 — https://biblehub.com/nasb95/colossians/2.htm
- NASB95 — John 8:34–36 — https://biblehub.com/nasb95/john/8.htm
- NASB95 — Ephesians 4:22–24 — https://biblehub.com/nasb95/ephesians/4.htm
- NASB95 — Titus 2:11–12 — https://biblehub.com/nasb95/titus/2.htm
- NASB95 — Matthew 6:24 — https://biblehub.com/nasb95/matthew/6.htm

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. Greek: SBL Greek New Testament; Strong's numbers per biblehub.com. · Smith For Christ Publishing · Ed Smith