

ROMANS

From Wretchedness to Righteousness

Study 10

Romans 6:15-23

Slaves to Righteousness

Verse 15

Rom 6:15

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!

1) a) Comprehension question. Paraphrase the “objection question” in verse 15 in your own words or in the modern language.

-Ha? Under grace ah? Then no need to follow and obey the law since we can be forgiven by God's grace.

-If we are no longer under the law as a system of salvation, are we under any obligation at all?

-Can we do whatever we choose?

-Do we have to obey the 10 commandments anymore?

Principle of Obedience (Romans 6:16-18)

Verse 16-18

Rom 6:16-18

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

2) a) Comprehension question. Summarize Paul's argument in verse 16-18 which is against the idea that “Christians have the license to sin”.

#1-no one is free, that everyone is a slave to something or someone!

#2-there are fundamentally only two kinds of masters or categories of slavery; we either are slaves of God or slaves of sin.

b) Fill in the blanks. There are similarities in format between Romans 6:1-14 and 6:15-23, fill in the blanks on different points each passage highlights according to the video lecture.

	Romans 6:1-14	Romans 6:15-23
Shall we?	V1: go on sinning so that grace may increase	V15a sin because we are not under law but under grace?
By no means!	v2	v15b
Lengthy answer	v3-14	v16-23
Main point: Because of...	What was done to us-United with Christ	Our obligations- Offer ourselves to obey Him
Type of Freedom	Freedom from sin	Freedom to serve

c) Fill in the blanks. Verse 17 says that the Roman Christians “obey from their heart”. What other bible verses command obedience from the heart according to the video lecture?

Points	Bible Verse	Write and Read the verse
With heart and soul	Deut 11:13	So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul—
Not just lip service	Matthew 7:21	“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.
Even when serving people	Ephesians 6:5-7	Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people.

d) Objective question, choose the most appropriate answer. In verse 17, “pattern of teaching” means:

A. Christian teaching very pattern

B. The pattern of the way of life demanded by the gospel that Christians should follow

Background information & Quick Verse Reference

Romans 6:17

But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.

“Obedience is the very essence of slavery”

– John Stott

e) Fill in the verses from these passages about Freedom.

Verse	Write down and read out the verses
John 8:31-32,36	If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free...So if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed.
Galatians 5:1	It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Purpose: Sanctification (Romans 6:19-20)

Verse 19-20

Rom 6:19-20

I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.

3) a) Objective question, choose the answer(s), can be more than one. Which of the following is true for “I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations” in Verse 19 according to the video lecture?

A. “I am using layman terms.”

B. Paul is saying they are very dumb.

C. The master-slavery relationship or imagery is used because it is the everyday life example to the audience at that time.

D. Human nature produces a weakness in understanding that can be overcome in this life only by the use of (imperfect) analogies.

E. Paul is apologizing for using the slavery imagery.

b) Comprehension question. Paraphrase verse 19b in your own words.

Verse 19 b	Paraphrasing in own words
“Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.”	Just as you so rajin and all your energy and time working for your idols (eg. money, status, career, romance, children, lust, evil boss), channel all that gung-ho passion towards God and God’s work.

c) Reflection question. Go one round and reflect on periods in life where sin has been subtly allowed in your life and controlled your life where you spent your time, energy, passions "serving" it.

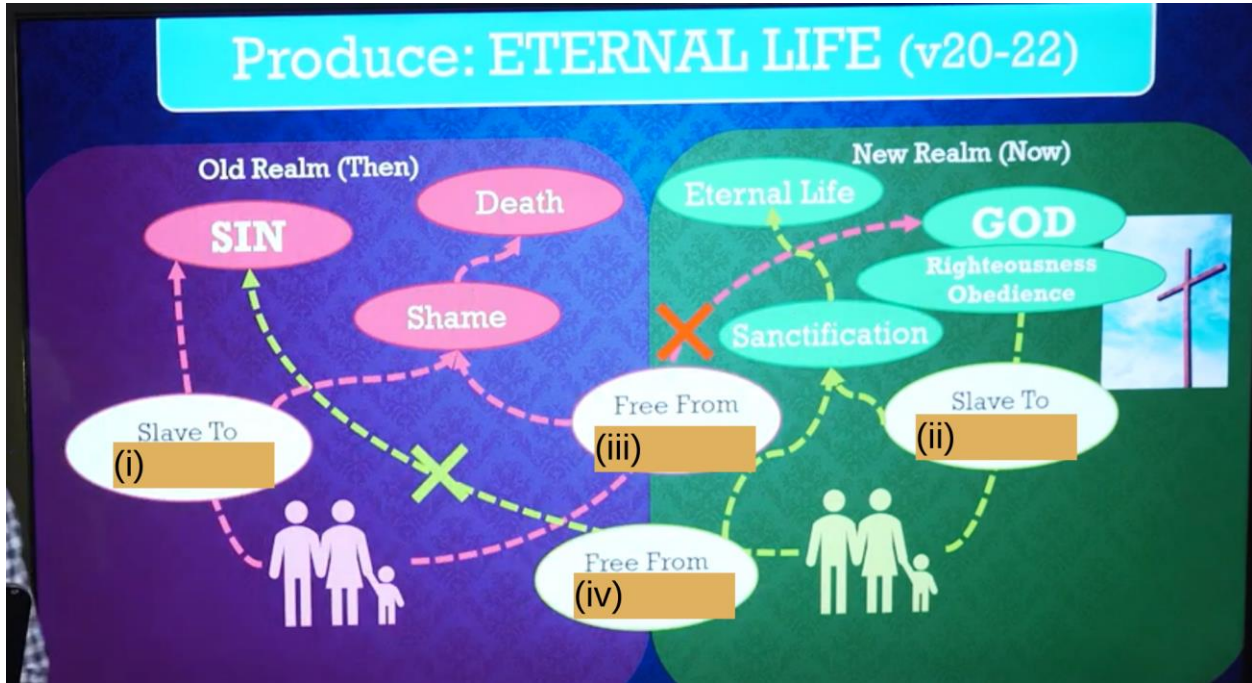
Kx sharing sample: When I was younger I was obsessed with beautiful people due to influence. So I rated people’s faces, spent time and money on beauty products and got upset at a single pimple, worshiped and adored beautiful people and spent quite some allowance on grooming items.

Produce: Eternal Life (Romans 6:21-23)

Verse 21-23

Rom 6:21-23
 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4) a) Fill in the blanks. Fill in the effects of each 'freedom' and 'slavery' according to the video lecture.



Set#1/ before	Negative results (-)	Set#2/ after	Positive results (+)
i) Slave to sin	Degrading	ii) Slave to God	Ennobling
iii) Free from God	Spurious (fake news!)	iv) Free from sin	Authentic

b) Fill in the blanks. Verse 23 can be categorized in a Master-Outcome-Means of attainment type of relationship. According to the video lecture, fill in the blanks below.

Master (who is served)	Sin	vs	God
Outcome (of the service)	Death	vs	Eternal Life
Means (by which outcome is attained)	Wages earned	vs	Gift received

Sanctification is ACTION too!

V11: **“Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God”**

V12: **“Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires”**

V13a: **“Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness”**

V13b: **“..Offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness”**

V19b: **“..Offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness”**

c) Discussion question. The video lecture declares that “Sanctification is ACTION too!” meaning it is ACTIVE-ly done and not PASSIVE-ly waiting for God to change us. How do we balance the fact that Sanctification is both “the FREE GIFT of God” and “our CHOICE and ACTION”?

Paraphrasing John Piper’s quote below, all the good that we do after believing in God is God’s gift to us to allow us to do real good for him. As to the sanctification process- it is a personal journey where we “work out our salvation in fear and trembling” like in Philippians. We will need to think through each situation on figuring out which behaviour fulfills his good purpose.

Background information and Quick Verse Reference

“Your doing is the gift of God. Your choosing is the gift of God. Your preferring God over sin is the gift of God. God’s gift is your doing and choosing and preferring God.”

– John Piper

Philippians 2:12-13

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

Case Studies

Case 1

Ryan Lee had just heard the gospel and accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour with great enthusiasm. However his Christian friends noticed that after a year of going to church there was not much change in his behavior. He still lied at the drop of a hat and was still living with his girlfriend totally unashamed of his sexual indiscretions.

When they confronted him, he exclaimed: "Holiness is just an ideal, that holy living isn't attainable." He went on to explain that not only was God's command to be holy not actually intended to be obeyed but also, since our sins are covered by Jesus' death on the cross, we needed to not be so worried about trying to obey everything He commanded us. "Life was to be fun, not burdensome," he said. "Whatever habitual sins each of us dealt with—the idols, the pride, the attitude, the addictions—they were bound to get the best of us. Why always be fighting what was going to inevitably happen when you've already been forgiven for it? When God has got you covered?"

"Who are you to come and judge me? As long as I confess my sins every day I see no problem in continuing my current lifestyle." He then challenged them in retaliation and said to them: "Let he who has no sin please cast the first stone"

His friends were shocked and did not know how to respond.

5) a) If you were one of Ryan's friends how would you respond? Would you use the slavery metaphors in Romans 6:15-23 to explain to him that his current attitude is in error? You may summarize the model answer below.

Kx comment: There are a few points of bad theology in Ryan's argument.

#1 "Let he who has no sin please cast the first stone"

Ryan is trying to talk his way out of this by dismissing ANY right to judge. Whereas he quotes John 8:7, he only needs to read on a little bit more to John 8:11 to see that Jesus himself says: "and from now on sin no more." If Jesus is in front of you right now, you think he would say:

A. "Continue your life in sin, as long you confess can edi!"

B. Or like in 1 Sam 15:22, say: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams." Where obedience is better than confessing later.

The answer is likely B.

#2 "bound to get the best of us" from Ryan suggest he thinks he is a slave to sin.

Romans with slavery metaphor suggests that we are free to choose to NOT sin. And it shows who your true master is. Like a dog going back to its own vomit in Proverbs 26:11.

Other bad theologies in the argument

Alex's comment:

#3. "holiness is just an ideal, holy living is unattainable" is completely unbiblical... and you can't find other verses to support it... ironically it is precisely because we can never "ATTAIN" holy living on our own accord or by following THE LAW even to the dot. That is precisely the point in Romans 6. Romans 6 teaches us holiness/sanctification is NOT something we can achieve by our own accord, it is FIRSTLY a free gift of God through Christ who died for us, enabling us to work out our salvation with trembling and fear ... OUR PART

so Ryan is completely ignoring HIS PART To work out his salvation with trembling and fear..it's about recognizing WHO WE ARE in this new life with Christ, and BE WHO WE ARE ... i.e our IDENTITY is in Christ, therefore, ACT LIKE ONE!

#4. "life was to be fun, not burdensome" is also non biblical...

#5. "when God has got you covered" is manipulative to say the least.

#6. "let he who has no sin cast the first stone" is completely misinterpreted and the context was totally different...

Model Answer

Paul's Point #1

Paul says first that no one is free, that everyone is a slave to something or someone! Everyone is offering themselves to "someone." Everyone lives for something, we "offer" ourselves as sacrifices on some altar, we are all serving some cause, some "bottom line," and that something becomes a master and we its slaves.

"Whatever controls us is our lord. The person who seeks power is controlled by power. The person who seeks acceptance is controlled by acceptance. We do not control ourselves. We are controlled by the lord of our lives."

– Rebecca Pippert, Out of the Saltshaker

Paraphrasing Rebecca Pippert's quote, in terms of our text, we say we "offer ourselves" whatever we "seek" as our highest good in life, whether power or acceptance or some cause. Then we become "slaves" of whatever that may be. Thus, no one is in control of his or her life — we are controlled by that to which we have offered ourselves.

Paul is showing how the theology of chapter 1 works itself out in practical, personal experience. Every human being is involved in "covenant service" with something; we are all bond-servants to some god, we all worship something. We all feel "pulled" and "controlled" by directives and orders coming deep from within. We are all yielding our bodies to some

inner lord which then works its will out in the world through our bodies.

Paul's Point #2

Beyond that, Paul says that there are fundamentally only two kinds of masters or categories of slavery; we either are slaves of God or slaves of sin. To be a slave of sin is truly slavery indeed, for it leads to death. To be a slave of God leads to righteousness — love, joy, peace, self-control, kindness.

So Paul's main argument is this: Anyone who wonders if a Christian can now sin is ignorant about the enslaving nature of sin. Put another way: a Christian does not have to obey the 10 commandments in order to be saved, but a Christian does have to obey the 10 commandments in order to be a free (and thus godly) human being. If you don't obey the law of God, you become a slave to selfishness, sin.

But you say, "I'm not religious." ...but everybody's religious. What is your religion? Well, your religion is what you rely upon... Your religion... is what you live for, is what you hope for... Your god is that to which you give yourself, you give your time, attention, your greatest thought, your money — you live for it. It is the thing that keeps you going... It is what you turn to when life gets so hard. Everybody has a religion. But the question is — what is your religion?"
— D.M. Lloyd-Jones, A sermon on Jer. 2 "Fake Religion"

b) Reflection question. The question in verse 15 : "Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?" is targeting this issue: "What now is a Christian's motivation and understanding of obligation in day to day living?"

For example,

"Are Christians obligated to have a "quiet time" (daily devotions)?"

"Why does a Christian get up in the morning to pray?"

"What is the inner motivation that leads to self control now that we aren't "under law," not afraid that God will cast us off because of moral failure?"

Go one round and share what are your personal motivations for obeying God day to day? Or do you feel that there is no need to obey any of the laws?

KX personal sharing: I am against the "no need obey laws" idea (Antinomianism). There are mixed reasons on why I obey different things, God may not always be in the picture. For legal stuff, I obey because I do not want to be sent to jail or fined. For social rules, I obey so that I can be accepted in society and can get things done. For more specifically God-related stuff, if I agree that it is "practical" and can lead people to think, know or love about God more, I will be motivated to do it. There are certain times where I don't feel as motivated to obey God and reject sin because a certain sin seems 'minor' enough and I want to enjoy the selfish benefits of

the sin.

Note to leaders: participants may have different motivations and reasons when sharing and this question helps them do some self-assessment, not correcting at this point although Paul had given a list of how we should be motivated.