

# Gamma

**Romans 6b-7a**

**Study 11 Servants of God**

## **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 that 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? God's got you covered.

Who are they to come and judge him? As long as he confesses his sins every day he sees now problem in continuing his current life style. 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.

1. If you were his friend how would you use the slavery metaphors in Romans 6 :15-23 to explain to him that his current attitude is in error?

The essential elements of Paul's argument: a) When you offer yourselves to someone to obey... you are slaves to the one whom you obey; b) whether slaves to sin... or to obedience.

a) 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 this 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.

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.]

b) 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.

Spurgeon, in his sermon “The Obedience of Faith,” said, “The more of faith in Him you have, the more of obedience to Him will you manifest.” We tend to use the phrase “we’re saved by faith and not works” as an excuse for not living “holy” lives. In reality, our faith should be what drives us to holy living.

Although disobedience certainly doesn’t make us lose our salvation, it should create conflict in our hearts because we are acting in a way that is contrary to what we believe. Trusting that God’s wisdom and knowledge are superior to our own thoughts and desires will lead to obeying what He says.

2. **Ryan then replies after hearing the slavery metaphor in Romans 6, In that case since I am now a slave to righteousness, I really don't have a choice I must obey the law, I must live a righteous life. I must try harder to discipline myself. Is this the right way for him to go? In Romans 7:1-6 Paul uses a marriage metaphor to counter this probable misunderstanding what does this metaphor teach us**

**We are released from the law, because in Christ we legally “died” (v4).** In vv.1-3 Paul gives an illustration of a basic fact; the law only binds those who are alive! Death breaks the law's power. Marriage is a binding legal relationship, but it is only binding if *both* husband and wife are alive. If either dies, both are freed from the law of marriage. Then in vv.4-6 Paul applies this to us. While it is the husband's death that frees the wife to remarry; in our case it is *our* death (in Christ) that frees us to “remarry.” The analogy is not completely parallel, but the principle is the same.

**b) Becoming a Christian is a complete change in relationship and allegiance.** What an incredible metaphor; we are married to Christ! To be a Christian is to fall in love with Jesus and to enter into a legal YET personal relationship as *comprehensive* as marriage. To marry is a comprehensive thing. No part of your life goes unchanged or unaffected. So though Christians are now not “under law,” they have every aspect and area of their lives changed by the coming in of Jesus Christ. No single area is untouched.

**c) Being “married to Christ” is the final answer to the question, “Can a Christian live as he or she chooses?” No, because we are in love with Christ!**

Marriage does entail a significant loss of freedom and independence. You *cannot* live now simply as you choose. A single person can make decisions unilaterally but a married person cannot. There is now duty and obligation. BUT, on the other hand, there is now the possibility of an experience of love and intimacy and acceptance and security that you could not have as a single person. Because of this love and intimacy, our loss of freedom is a joy not a burden. In a good marriage, your whole life is affected and changed by the wishes and desires of the person you are in love

with. *You get pleasure from giving pleasure.* You seek to discover the wishes of the beloved and are happy to make changes in accord with those wishes. So now Paul has given us the ultimate answer to how Christians live. We are not “under law,” in that we don't obey the law *out of fear of rejection*. In other words, we aren't using the law as a system of salvation, a way of acceptance or access to God, a ladder up to him. No! Jesus' perfect life and death is the

ladder up to God, and we are accepted in him. So does the Christian ignore the moral law of God? Not at all. We now look at it as expressing the desires of God. He loves honesty, purity, generosity, truth, integrity, kindness, and so on. We now use the law to please the one who saved us. So we are not “under the law.” We are not married to *it*. We are married to *Christ*, we are seeking to please him, and so the law’s precepts are ways to honor the one we love. They are now not a burden.

**Sum:** Someone might say, “If I thought I was saved totally by grace and could not be rejected, I’d lose all incentive to lead a holy life.” The answer is: “Well then, all the incentive you have now is fear. You are under the law. If you understand that you are accepted, the new incentive is *grateful joy and love*. That is the right incentive.”

## **2. In light of the marriage metaphor, what do you think it means to serve “in the new way of the Spirit” rather than in “the old way of the written code?”**

This does NOT mean that the written law of God in the Holy Scriptures is not binding

on us, but rather that we obey in a new motivation (love for our husband) and in a new framework (we are accepted on the basis of Christ’s fulfilling the law, not ours). John Stott puts it perfectly:

“Is the law still binding on the Christian? The answer to that is “No!” and ‘Yes!’ ‘No’ in the sense that our acceptance before God does not depend on it. Christ in his death fully met the demands of the law, so we are delivered from it [as a means of salvation]. It no longer has any claims on us [to condemn us for sin]. It is no longer our lord. ‘Yes’ in the sense... we still serve... But the motive and means of our service have altered. Why do we serve? Not because the law is our master and we have to, but because Christ is our husband and we want to. Not because obedience to the law leads to salvation, but because salvation leads to obedience to the law. The law says, ‘Do this and you will live’. The gospel says, ‘You live, so do this.’ How do we serve? Not in oldness of letter, but in the newness of spirit. That is, not by obedience to an external code, but by surrender to an indwelling Spirit.”

– John Stott, *Men Made New*

## Case 2

Lindsay Lee was a prominent lawyer in town having won many politically sensitive cases and served as a deacon in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baptist Church. She humbly served in the kitchen ministry serving food and collecting money as well as contributing by cooking. She enjoyed the ministry and her friends in the ministry. One day, a nasty member criticized her in public saying “Lindsay, you are such a hypocrite!! You serve in this lowly capacity even though you are a prominent lawyer so that people will think you are humble. But I know you, you are a proud arrogant woman!!. When you dish out the food you give more to your friends and to the rest of us your servings are so stingy. Moreover your cooking sucks and the only reason they let you in the kitchen is because you are friends with the pastor. I heard you paid for his holiday!!.

Lindsay, felt a mixture of horror and anger and was about to respond

### 1. Look at verses 18-19 and discuss how Paul’s principles here can apply and provide Lindsay with a proper response

As in 6:13, “parts of your body” (also translated “members”) is not strictly referring to our arms and legs per se, but rather *all our components that can carry out or act out on design or purpose*. Paul says that “impurity” is a motive or a purpose; to “offer the parts of our body” to it is simply to “act out.” Thus we see that slavery to God is the result of an active effort on our part to “*act out*” *what we know is true of us*. “Offering our members (or “parts of our body”) means we are to act in accordance with what the Bible tells us about reality.

**1. The principle:** We must remember that v.19 comes after v.18. In v.18 Paul says, “You *have* been set free from sin.” Conversion brings us into a new realm and puts a new power into us. Therefore sin no longer can *force* us to do anything. So when v.19 says, “Now offer them in slavery to righteousness,” he is saying, *be what you are*, be controlled in your behavior, not by feelings or appearances, but by realities that the gospel tells you about.

Other examples of this kind of exhortation: “Work out your salvation in fear and trembling, for it is God that works in you...” (Phil.2:12-13). In other words, *knowing* that God is at work — work! Work *as if* this is true, because it is.

“The New Testament method way of sanctification, therefore, is to get us to realize our position and standing, and to act accordingly. That is the New Testament way of teaching... holiness. In other words, ‘be what you are’... How often we are told that we need something further... but there is no indication of that anywhere here. It is because of what has *already* happened, it is because of

what is true of us, that this command is addressed to us [to offer ourselves slaves of righteousness, v.19].”

– D.M.Lloyd-Jones

Hence Lindsay needs to reflect before she replies and think about what she is in Christ.

## **2. In practice how should Lindsay response after realizing what she is in Christ?**

It means coming to daily situations and recognizing the possibility of treating God as my “highest good” and thus my master or of treating something else as my “highest” good and thus my master.

Lindsay has been abused but she has a choice to respond..” I “offer myself” as a slave to God or sin at that moment. I could let my desire for “face” and to look good be my master. I could let my heart say, “This is a disaster! I look like a fool! I have to discredit this person quickly! I must pay back!” At that point, if I act out of this kind of thinking (offering myself to it) I will respond with bitterness, harsh language, and so on. Or I could remember that pleasing Christ is my ruling motivation. I could have my heart say, “Well, this person has pointed out (albeit with a hateful motive) some flaw in me I really should deal with. But fortunately, God is my judge and he has accepted me in Jesus Christ.” At that point, if I act out of this kind of thinking, I will respond by repenting in my heart toward God for what I truly am guilty of and responding with a soft answer (Prov.15:1) to the person who made the point.

“From the moment a creature becomes aware of God as God and of itself as self, the terrible alternative of choosing God or self for the center is opened to it. This sin is committed daily by young children and ignorant peasants as well as by sophisticated persons, by solitaries no less than by those who live in society: It is the fall in every individual life, and in each day of each individual life, the basic sin behind all particular sins: At this very moment you or I are either committing it, or about to commit it, or repenting it... We try, when we wake, to lay the new day at God’s feet; [but] before we have finished shaving, it becomes our day and God’s share in it is felt as a tribute which we must pay out of ‘our own’ pocket, a deduction from the time which ought, we feel to be ‘our own’...”

– C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain, ch 5

- 3. Can the group go around and share each others experiences when you were each abused or insulted and how you reacted and why you reacted and now with this new knowledge how you could have reacted better? Perhaps this is a good time to pray for each other in this area.**