

ROMANS

THE GRACE OF GOD: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Slaves to Righteousness

• Romans 6 : 15 - 23 •

Week 11

DEVOTION

Grace has been defined as the free and unmerited (undeserved) favor of God. Romans 3:24 says “[We] are justified by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” I like to think of grace as God giving us unmerited favor that is the opposite of what we deserve. While we deserve wrath, God showed us mercy. While we deserve death, He gave us eternal life through His Son. How great, how marvellous and how amazing is the grace of God.

Having received this amazing grace of God, do we simply continue to live as we please? Does the grace of God give us a license to sin? “Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace?” (v15) That is the question Paul addresses in this week’s passage and his answer is an emphatic “NO”. Absolutely not! By no means!

Why not? As believers we are united with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. The power of sin has been broken and we are a new creation with a new identity, a new nature and a new life. We have died to the old one. Thus, we cannot go on living the life that we used to live. A lifestyle of sin is incongruent with our new life. Using the master/slave relationship analogy, Paul shows that the believer’s relationship to sin after salvation is different than before. Sin is no longer our master. We now have a new Master and a new Lord.

Freedom! The dictionary defines it as “the power or right to act, speak or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint”. Isn’t that doing whatever you want and living life as you please? Interestingly, Paul tells us that to be truly free from sin, we need to be slaves of righteousness and yield ourselves to God. He will give us a new ability to obey Him and live a holy life.

The desire of God is that we will be a holy people unto Him. Salvation is not just a ticket to heaven. It is a spiritual transformation where we are given a new nature to pursue righteousness in Christ. The grace of God enables us to live a life of obedience. Our obedience reveals our true allegiance.

Monday

Read: Romans 6:15 - 23; John 8:34; 2 Samuel 11

Slave to sin: Paul says that we are slaves of the one whom we obey. Jesus says that everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

1. In what ways can one be a “slave to sin”? How would you describe slavery in terms of freedom, rights and submission?
2. Paul says in verse 19 that lawlessness leads to more lawlessness. How does the story of David and Bathsheba illustrate this principle?
- 3.1. Are there areas of your life where sin reigns and you are struggling to resist it? Spend some time confessing and asking God for help to resist sinning.

Tuesday

Read: Romans 6:15 - 23; Matthew 22:37 - 40

Slave to righteousness: Paul says that we are either slaves of sin which leads to death or slaves of obedience which leads to righteousness.

1. Compare and contrast "obedience from the heart" with "following rules". Which describes your actions?
2. What is the difference between wholehearted and half-hearted obedience?
3. Where do you need God's help to wholeheartedly obey Him in your life?

Wednesday

Read: Romans 6:15 - 23; Matthew 6:24; Exodus 34:14; Luke 9:57 - 62.

Two Masters: Jesus states that we cannot serve 2 masters. Different masters make different demands which lead down different paths. Our devotion cannot be divided. We will love one master and hate the other.

1. The Lord describes Himself as a "jealous God" in Exodus 34:14. What do you think this means?
2. During Jesus time on earth, some people followed Him with superficial devotion. They weren't committed and merely wanted something Jesus offered. In what ways are you attempting to serve two masters?
3. This passage presents only two choices - we are either enslaved to sin or to God. We are not given the option of being our own master i.e. neither enslaved to sin nor to God. Why do you think this option is not a possibility? (TIP: Think about what it means if you are your own master.)

Thursday

Read: Galatians 5:1

Freedom: Galatians tells us that it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. What is true freedom? Let's explore.

1. List ways in which people define freedom and why these things are not true freedom.
2. What has Christ set us free from? (see Romans 8:1; Romans 10:11; 2 Timothy 1:10; Romans 6:14; Galatians 3:13; Colossians 1:13)
3. What has Christ set us free to do/be? (see Hebrews 10:19 - 22; Galatians 4:7; Ephesians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 6:15 - 17; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 2:10)
4. Having been set free, Paul exhorts in Galatians not to submit again to a yoke of slavery. As believers, in what ways do we find ourselves tempted to return to a yoke of slavery?

Friday

Read: Romans 6:15 - 23; John 15:15; Romans 8:12 - 17

Our Relationship with God: Paul uses the analogy of slavery to describe our relationship to God. On the one hand it helps to express some important truths but like all analogies it is imperfect.

1. In what ways is our relationship to God like slavery?
2. In what ways is our relationship to God not like slavery? (see John 15:15; Romans 8:12- 17)

Worship. Spend some time praising God for His amazing grace, for Jesus Christ who has set us free from the dominion of sin and that we are now joint heirs with Christ.