Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Dying to Live, Part 1
Scripture: Romans 6:1-5
Code: 45-45

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background

The epistle of Paul to the Romans presents several major doctrinal themes. After a basic introduction and summary of redemption in Romans 1:1-17, Paul launches into a treatise on three major doctrinal themes: (1) The transgression of man (1:18; 3:20), (2) The justification of man (3:21; 5:21), and (3) The sanctification of man (6:1; 8:39).

Paul ends his epistle by discussing how Israel fits into God's future plans (9:1; 11:36), giving practical examples of sanctification (12:1; 15:13), and speaking of personal matters to the church in Rome (15:14; 16:27).

1. The transgression of man

Romans 1:18; 3:20 shows us how utterly sinful man is. It could be argued that this portion of Scripture gives the most definitive explanation of how guilty, hopeless, and doomed man is apart from God.

2. The justification of man

Paul discusses the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ. In response to man's dire need, God reached down to unworthy man and offered him full pardon through the finished work of Jesus Christ. Paul finished his discussion on the work of Christ by saying, "The law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Rom. 5:20-21). The work of Christ was so complete that the grace of God more than exceeds the worst of sin.

3. The sanctification of man

Beginning in Romans 6, Paul's develops a third line of thinking: the believer's holiness. The inevitable result of man's forsaking his sin and coming to God is his sanctification.

B. The Barriers

Paul knew the way he discussed man's sinfulness would inevitably bring opposition to the gospel message. And he was good at anticipating the arguments of his adversaries. He had preached the gospel enough times to know the kind of responses it generated. He knew the gaps he needed to fill to continue his own argument effectively. That is why he began his third argument by saying, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (6:1).

1. The bondage of legalists

Many of the antagonistic Jewish leaders would have had a difficult time with Paul's argument about salvation by grace because they assumed it would lead to antinomianism--a disregard for the law of God. They said in effect, "Your doctrine gives far too much liberty. If more sin generates more grace, then people would continue sinning so God could be more gracious." They assumed salvation by grace through faith alone would lead to freedom gone mad. It could lead a person to think, "If the more I sin the more grace I receive, I'm going to sin like mad so God can receive more glory by giving me grace."

Legalists had a hard time with Paul's argument because they believed you had to earn good favor with God through good works. The Pharisees would follow all the minute elements of the law, surpassing the God who wrote the law. Their bondage to the law kept them from seeing that God's saving grace could free them from the law. We know those legalistic critics accused Paul of antinomianism because in Romans 3:8 he says, "We are slanderously reported, and ... some affirm that we say ... Let us do evil, that good may come."

People today echo the same criticisms. Many doubt the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer because they think it gives far too much liberty, saying, "If you believe in eternal security, you are really saying that once a person becomes a Christian, he can sin all he wants and God will forgive him anyway. He might as well just live it up!" However such a suggestion violates the purity of God's saving grace to control people who might otherwise abuse His grace.

2. The boldness of libertines

Not only were critics attacking Paul on negative grounds, but also some were welcoming his arguments as a justification for their own evil life-styles. The legalists objected to Paul's arguments because they said it led to antinomianism, so the antinomians (libertines) were therefore happy to accept them! Such people took Paul's arguments to an extreme, and abandoned all obedience to God under the guise of grace.

a) Illustrated by Rasputin

Rasputin, the evil monk who influenced the Romanov family, taught and exemplified the antinomian view of salvation through repeated experiences of sin and false repentance. He believed that the more you sin, the more God gives you grace! So the more you sin with abandon, the more you give God the opportunity to glorify Himself. Rasputin declared that if you are simply an ordinary sinner, you aren't giving God an opportunity to show His glory, so you need to be an extraordinary sinner!

b) Illustrated by the Corinthians

If there ever was a group of people in the name of Jesus Christ who lived without any of the normal restraints of holiness, the Corinthian church was it. They were characterized by divisions (1 Cor. 1:10-11), carnality (3:1- 9), incest (5:1-8), worldliness (5:9-13), lawsuits (6:1-8), fornication (6:12-20), abuse of liberty (8:1-13; 10:23-33), demon worship (10:19-22), insubordinate women (11:2-16), abuses of the Lord's Supper and love feast (11:17-34), and abuses of spiritual gifts (12:1; 14:40). Such abuses typified the libertine, who pushed the doctrine of grace to an extreme.

3. The balance of liberty

Paul however would have neither of the extremes of legalism or libertinism. He would not abandon the correct view of grace to accommodate the legalists or restrict the libertines. True salvation is inextricably linked with sanctification. The believer is not in bondage to the law, yet he is not free to disregard the spirit behind the law: obedience to God. That is why the apostle Paul wrote the book of Romans in the way he did. Romans 3-5 deal with how you become saved (justification) and Romans 6-8 deal with how you live after you are saved (sanctification).

There is no need to force an external control on people who are redeemed because they are under the constant control of the Holy Spirit. The believer functions internally--with the heart--and not externally--simply following a list of rules without intrinsic motivation.

Holiness is as much a gift of God to the believer as salvation is in His redemptive act. When someone is redeemed, that is not merely a divine transaction, but a miracle of transformation. Redemption is not merely a legal reality but a reality period. God not only says it's true, but also begins to make it true! God declares us righteous, and begins to create Christ's righteousness in us.

It is vital for the church today to understand the connection between justification and sanctification. That's because if you are not living a holy life, you are not truly saved. I am convinced that for the most part, the American church is an unredeemed church because there is such a lack of any practical holiness there. The life of God must be present in the one who claims to know Christ.

LESSON

I. THE ANTAGONIST (v. 1)

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"

A. The Quandary (v. 1a)

"What shall we say then?"

Paul here was referring to an hypothetical antagonist, although he no doubt dealt with many who opposed his teaching on the gospel of God's grace. He had been accused many times of preaching an antinomian gospel.

1. Acts 21:26-28--"Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until an offering should be offered for every one of them. And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews who were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help! This is the man that teaches all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and further brought Greeks also in the temple, and hath polluted this holy place."

After collecting an offering for the poor Jerusalem church from Gentile churches, Paul went back to Jerusalem with Gentile representatives to present the gift. He wanted to show love not only in a physical way, but also in a spiritual way, so he went into the Temple with some of the Gentiles to offer a vow. He wanted to show he had not abandoned his kinship to Judaism. A riot broke out because Paul brought those men into the Temple and they accused him of speaking against the law, the Temple, God, and everything else they counted to be sacred. Why? Because the doctrine of grace to them seemed to be libertine teaching. Paul wanted to communicate that simply entering the Temple doesn't make or break someone's spirituality. What makes or breaks someone's spirituality is whether he has received Christ or not.

2. Galatians 2:16, 19--Paul said, "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.... For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."

The Judaizers--Jews who believed circumcision was essential for salvation--went into the Galatian region and found people teaching that you could enter into God's Kingdom by God's grace alone. They countered that you first must be circumcised, followed by diligent obedience to the law of

Moses, and only then could you come into God's Kingdom. This is not unlike today. Most people think you must follow all sorts of rules to be spiritual. They think by enforcing particular rules, they can fit people into a certain mold of spirituality.

3. Jude 4--Jude said, "There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." These false teachers turn God's grace into a cloak for their own sinful activities.

I know a preacher who for his entire public ministry has lived in habitual sin. A major emphasis of his teaching has been the freedom that God's grace provides. He constantly preaches on God's grace because it's the only way he can face himself every morning in the mirror, and fits perfectly into what Paul describes in Romans 6:1-2. The problem of libertinism is as contemporary as the issue Paul dealt with in this chapter of Romans.

On the other hand, I have been accused by legalists of preaching about God's grace without having any other rules. Many pastors have said to me, "What are the rules for membership in your church? Do your members have to sign a list of rules before joining?" Many are shocked when I respond, "If the Lord lets them into His Kingdom on the basis of faith alone, we ought to let them in our churches on the same basis." As representatives of His church, we need not set standards higher than God's. Christianity has never been a list of rules imposed upon people to force them to become spiritual. God has a better plan.

B. The Question (v. 1b)

"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"

The critics of Paul contended that the doctrine of grace put a premium on sin. They said that if God justifies the ungodly (cf. Rom. 4:5), what is the point in being godly if God accepts us anyway?

1. The specifics

The Greek word translated "continue" in verse 1 is epimeno, which means "to abide," or "to remain," or "to stay." The Greek preposition epi intensifies the verb it prefixes. The same Greek word is used of staying in a house, or making residence there (cf. Acts 15:34). In Romans 6:1, Paul is in effect saying, "Shall we continue in a state of sin so we can see grace at work? Shall we who have been saved by grace sustain the same relationship to sin that we had before we were saved? Shall we continue abiding in the house of sin?"

2. The significance

Paul was also posing a theological question: Is there any link between justification and sanctification? Can a person really be saved, yet continue in the same pattern of sinfulness? Can there be a divine transaction that has no impact in the believer's life? Many Christians today would answer that question by saying yes. They believe that if you have ever asked Christ to come into your life, then regardless of how you live thereafter, you can be sure you're going to heaven. But that is to say sanctification doesn't necessarily follow justification. Some people say you can be saved and have absolutely no fruit--no practical righteousness. They say that isn't desirable; that isn't God's will; that isn't the best, but it is possible. Let's see what God's Word has to say about that point of view.

II. THE ANSWER (v. 2)

"God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer in it?"

A. The Strong Response (v. 2a)

"God forbid."

The translators of the King James Version translated me genoito as "God forbid" in verse 2, but it is actually much more emphatic than that. This phrase is an idiom denoting the strongest possible negative reaction in the Greek language. It is tantamount to outraged indignation. To put it in the words of my grandmother, "Perish the thought!" The contemporary vernacular would be, "No way!" The New American Standard Bible comes closer to the actual meaning by translating it, "May it never be!" The very suggestion that a believer could continue in habitual sin is thoroughly abhorrent to Paul. He didn't begin his response to this hypothetical question with some great argument, he simply said, "No, no, no--by no means--absolutely not!" A person who claims to be a Christian yet continues to remain in habitual sin is not only impermissible, but impossible! The thought creates utter disgust. Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, commenting on this verse, wrote, "Holiness starts where justification finishes; and if holiness does not start, we have the right to suspect that justification has never started" (Romans, vol. 3 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961], II:12).

B. The Startling Reality (v. 2b)

"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer in it?"

1. The principle in salvation

The phrase "died to sin" (NASB) is the fundamental premise of the entire argument of this chapter. The King James Version translates it "dead to sin," but that isn't the most accurate translation. The

apostle Paul wasn't speaking of the present state of the believer as daily dying to sin, but the past act ([Gk., apothnesko, second aorist active]) of being dead to sin. Paul's argument is that when a person receives Christ as Savior and Lord, he died to sin, so it is therefore impossible for a Christian to remain in a constant state of sinfulness.

Paul is saying that death and life are incompatible. It is impossible to be dead and alive at the same time. So a Christian can't be living in sin when he has died to it. All who come to Christ make a break with sin, a definite act that took place in the past at the moment of salvation. If someone abides in a state of sin, he is not a believer. The apostle John said, "No one who is born of God practices sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9, NASB). The person who remains in a constant state of sinfulness gives evidence that he has never left his unregenerate state.

2. The permanence in salvation

If you were to view sin as a realm or sphere, you would see that the believer no longer lives in that realm. However that is not to say that Christians never sin. Paul's argument is simply this: believers have died to sin and no longer live in that dimension. Salvation is not simply a forensic transaction, but also brings about the process of transforming the believer into Christlikeness. Christ died not only for what the believer did, but also for who he is.

a) Colossians 1:13--Paul said Christ "delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

b) 2 Corinthians 5:14-17--Paul said, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that, if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again. Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Paul was saying that since Christ died, and since Christians are by definition in Christ, that therefore all believers died, too. And since Christ rose from the dead, we have too--as new creatures, dead to the sphere of sin, where we previously were enslaved.

c) Colossians 3:1-3--Paul said, "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

Many people have reacted against the truths of Romans 6:1-14 because they're afraid it means that Paul is referring to the eradication of the believer's sin nature. I have been asked, "Do you believe that when you become a Christian you are instantly perfect?" My answer is always, "Of course not!

No Christian is ever totally perfect on this earth." What Paul is attempting to communicate is that because the believer died to sin, he simply cannot remain or reside in sin the way he did before his conversion.

III. THE ARGUMENT (vv. 3-14)

In Romans 6:3-14 the apostle Paul explains what it means to have died to sin as if he were a lawyer in a courtroom. Paul--God's defense attorney--presents a series of logical truths that explain the believer's new state.

A. The Believer's Baptism into Christ (v. 3a)

"Know ye not that, as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ."

A person who thinks Christians are free to sin betrays a lack of understanding of what a Christian is. A Christian is not someone who is merely declared righteous and then chooses to do as he pleases. By definition a Christian is one who has received Jesus Christ and desires to be wholly obedient to Him. Salvation isn't merely God's looking through the heavenly records, drawing a line through the entry "Sinner bound for hell," and penciling in the word, "saved!" Romans 6:3 declares that when a person is saved, his life is fused with Jesus Christ. As Paul said, the believer is baptized (Gk., baptizo , "immersed"), into Christ.

1. 1 Corinthians 10:1-2--Paul said, "Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Paul was recounting the children of Israel in the wilderness "Baptized into Moses" means the children of Israel came under the authority of Moses. To be baptized into Moses was to be involved in all that God was doing in the life of Moses. Moses was the channel through which God spoke to the children of Israel. He was their anchor to God. In a deeper and more profound sense, believers are baptized into Jesus Christ.

Paul was using baptizo in metaphorical terms in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2, for he was not referring to literal water baptism. He used that word the same way when referring to the believer's baptism with the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), the Spirit's ministry of placing each believer into the Body of Christ. In Romans 6, the believer's baptism into Christ speaks of intimate, personal fellowship with Him.

2. 1 John 1:3--John said, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship [our union with Christ] is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

3. Matthew 28:20--Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always." He was speaking of His intimate union with all believers.

4. 1 Corinthians 6:17--Paul said, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." When a person becomes a Christian, he begins an intimate union with Jesus Christ. A good definition of the Greek word baptizo is when a person, place or thing is put into a new environment thereby forever altering its relationship to its previous environment. The union between Christ and the believer is a profound concept we will never fully understand until we are glorified (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12).

5. Galatians 3:27--Paul said, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Here Paul equates the putting on of Christ (cf. Rom. 13:14) with baptism into Christ. Those are simply two ways of conveying the same idea.

6. Colossians 2:11-12--Paul said that in Christ "ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, in which also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The believer in a sense participates in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

7. 1 Corinthians 6:15-17--Paul said, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I, then, take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he who is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." Paul's argument is that if a believer joins himself to a prostitute sexually, he is joining Christ to that prostitute because he is in union with Christ.

8. Ephesians 2:5-6--Paul said, "When we were dead in sins, [God] hath made us alive together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." All true believers have died with Christ, are risen with Christ, have ascended with Christ, and now presently reign with Christ.

9. Revelation 3:21--Jesus said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

10. 2 Peter 1:3-4--Peter said, "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; by which are given unto us exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." God has led the believer out of corruption and made him a partaker of His divine nature.

From these verses alone, we can conclude that because we are united with Christ, it is impossible for us to continue in the same relationship to sin that we had before we were saved. And because of Christ's eternal holiness, we too will become holy.

Does Romans 6 Refer to Water Baptism?

Many people interpret Paul's argument in Romans 6:3-10 as referring to water baptism. However Paul is simply using the physical analogy of water baptism to teach the spiritual reality of the believer's union with Christ. Some have said, "If Paul weren't speaking about literal water baptism in this passage, he would have simply said, `All who believe in Christ believe in His death and resurrection and are therefore united with Him. Why does he use the word baptized?" The reason Paul used the symbol of water baptism is it is the outward identification of an inward reality--faith in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Paul was not advocating salvation by water baptism; that would have contradicted everything he has just said about salvation by grace and not works in Romans 3-5, which has no mention of water baptism.

Water baptism was a public symbol of faith in God. Very often in Scripture when you read the word baptism, you can substitute the word faith. The apostle Peter said baptism is a mark of salvation because it gives outward evidence of an inward faith in Christ (1 Pet. 3:21). Titus said the same thing in Titus 3:4-5: "After the kindness and love of God, our Savior, toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration." So did Paul in Acts 22:16: "Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Those verses are not saying a person is saved by water, but that water baptism is a symbol of genuine saving faith.

The Roman believers were well aware of the symbol of baptism. When Paul said, "Know ye not?" in verse 3, he was in effect saying, "Are you ignorant of the meaning of your own baptism? Have you forgotten what your baptism symbolized?" They were unaware that water baptism symbolizes the spiritual reality of being immersed into Jesus Christ. The only valid mode of baptism is immersion because it alone fully demonstrates the believer's union with Jesus Christ. The tragedy is that many mistake the symbol of water baptism as the means of salvation rather than the demonstration of it. To turn a symbol into the reality is to eliminate the reality, which in this case is salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone.

B. The Believer's Death and Resurrection with Christ (vv. 3b-5)

1. The believer's old life (vv. 3b-4a)

"Know ye not that [we] were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death."

Believers are identified with Christ not only in baptism but also in His death. The first part of verse four is a restatement of the last part of verse 3.

a) Our position in Christ

The first thing we do when we are saved is attend our own funeral! When a person comes to faith in Christ, by divine miracle, he is taken back symbolically to Christ's own death and there dies too. A death takes place within the believer, and what comes out of that grave is totally different from what went into it. We die to sin that we might be alive to God (v. 10). Dying to sin is where the believer's new life in Christ begins.

b) Our practice in Christ

Because a believer is a new creation in Christ, his new life-style is vastly different from his old. That is why a believer cannot habitually sin. He now lives in a different realm. Those who simply add Christ to their sinful life-styles are not saved at all. When a person comes to Christ, he shares in His death and becomes a different person. Believers die in Christ to live in Christ. We have been justified that we might be sanctified. Those are inseparable realities.

Theologian Charles Hodge well said, "There can be no participation in Christ's life without a participation in his death, and we cannot enjoy the benefits of his death unless we are partakers of the power of his life. We must be reconciled to God in order to be holy, and we cannot be reconciled without thereby becoming holy" (Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.], p. 195).

2. The believer's new life (vv. 4b-5)

a) Its certainty (v. 4b)

"As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

The apostle Paul was saying that as Christ died and rose from the dead, so His people also died to sin and rose to God. The glory that Paul refers to in verse four is the sum of all God's majesty and power in raising Christ from the dead. As God's glory was displayed in the resurrection of Christ, so also it should be displayed as believers walk in newness of life.

By "should" Paul wasn't referring to the "should" of obligation, but the "should" of divine accomplishment. Paul used a hina purpose clause in the Greek text, which means the verse should be translated, "in order that we might be raised to walk in newness of life." Paul is stating that the believer will walk in the newness of life. As Christ's resurrected life was the certain consequence of His death, so the believer's holy life is the certain consequence of His resurrection and death to sin.

By "newness" " (Gk., kainos) of life, Paul is referring to a new quality or kind of life, not new in terms of chronology (Gk., neos). Righteousness now becomes the pattern for believers as opposed to the past, which was characterized by habitual sin. Sin may manifest itself from time to time in the believer's life, but it will not characterize his new life-style.

Scripture is filled with descriptions of the believer's new life: We receive a new heart (Ezek. 36:26), a new spirit (Ezek. 18:31) a new name (Rev. 2:17), and a new song (Ps. 40:3); and are considered to be a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), a new creature (Gal. 6:15), and a new man (Eph. 4:24).

The term "walk" in verse four refers to daily spiritual conduct. That meaning is consistent throughout the New Testament. When a person becomes a Christian, the direction of his life changes. He begins to walk the right way. The quality of his life before Christ was evil, but the quality of his new life in Christ is righteous.

b) Its fruition (v. 5)

"If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

Paul affirms the truth of the believer's new life by using another analogy to sum up his thought. The Greek word for "planted together" is sumphutos which means, "to grow together." Believers grow together into the likeness of Jesus Christ, a truth reminiscent of the vine and the branches in John 15:1-8. Paul was saying that if believers are growing together in Christ, and if it is His power bearing fruit in us, we will become progressively more conformed to His image.

Bishop Handly Moule said, "We have `received the reconciliation' that we may now walk, not away from God, as if released from a prison, but with God, as His children in His Son. Because we are justified, we are to be holy, separated from sin, separated to God; not as a mere indication that our faith is real, and that therefore we are legally safe, but because we were justified for this very purpose, that we might be holy.... the grapes upon a vine are not merely a living token that the tree is a vine and is alive; they are the product for which the vine exists. It is a thing not to be thought of that the sinner should accept justification--and live to himself. It is a moral contradiction of the very deepest kind, and cannot be entertained without betraying an initial error in the man's whole spiritual

creed" (The Epistle to the Romans [London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.], pp. 160-61). Moule was saying that you cannot have justification in the believer without sanctification.

The Relationship Between Justification and Sanctification

Paul said, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God--not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10). A person isn't saved because of his good works; he is saved to produce good works.

Charles Wesley wrote this in his great hymn "And Can it Be That I Should Gain?"

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin in nature's night;
Thine eye defused a quick'ning ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

Wesley knew that justification led to sanctification. If you have truly come to faith in Christ, you have also been set apart for holiness. The believer is a different person, so if you aren't different, you better examine yourself to see whether you're really in the faith (cf. 2 Cor. 13:5). A Christian is a brand-new creation in Christ. He has become something he never was before. Salvation is not addition, but a transformation. Becoming a Christian is not simply receiving something new; it is becoming someone new. The believer has died to sin because sin is no longer the abiding power in his life. Salvation is more than something God says; it is something He actually does in the life of a believer! That is where we must start to explain the relationship between man and sin.

Focusing on the Facts

1. What are the major doctrinal themes of Paul's epistle to the Romans?

2. What other areas does Paul cover in his epistle?

3. True or False: Romans 1:18; 3:20 gives a most definitive explanation of the sinfulness of man.

4. The inevitable result of man's forsaking his sin and coming to God is his _____ .

5. List and describe those who would object to Paul's argument in Romans 6.

6. Explain why the church in Corinth is a good example of the libertine philosophy of grace.

7. True or False: Salvation and sanctification are not necessarily linked together. You can have one without the other.

8. Salvation is not merely a divine _____, but a miracle of _____ .

9. What is important for the church today to understand?

10. Give examples from Scripture of how the apostle Paul was accused of preaching an antinomian gospel.

11. What did Paul mean when he asked, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" What was the theological issue behind his question?

12. The phrase _____ ___ _____ is the fundamental premise of Paul's entire argument in Romans 6.

13. Do believers still live in the realm of sin? Support your answer from Scripture.

14. Is the believer's sin nature eradicated at the point of salvation? If not, what exactly is Paul communicating in Romans 6:1-14?

15. With what great theological truth does Paul begin his argument in Romans 6? Explain his point.

16. Does Romans 6:3-10 refer literally to water baptism? Why or why not?

17. What is the purpose for believers dying to sin?

18. What are the inseparable realities of the believer's life in Christ?

19. What was Paul referring to when he spoke of believers walking in newness of life?

20. True or False: Sin will manifest itself in the life of a believer and will continue to dominate his life-style after salvation.

21. What analogy does Paul use to describe believers being in the likeness of Christ's resurrection?

22. Becoming a Christian is not simply _____ something new, it is _____ someone new.

Pondering the Principles

1. The apostle Paul encountered much opposition both from the legalists and libertines concerning the doctrine of justification by faith. Both types of people have existed throughout history. Legalists contend that the doctrines of justification by faith and eternal security give far too much liberty and therefore leads people to think they can sin habitually without losing their salvation. However the libertines however welcomed the doctrine as a justification for their own evil. What do you think? Can a person really be saved and continue to live an ungodly life-style? Are you living an unholy life-style, yet claim to be saved? Study the following passages on unholy living and determine if they describe your life. Ask God to give you a clear answer about your own salvation: 1 Corinthians 6:9- 11, Galatians 5:19-24, Revelation 21:8.

2. The apostle Paul said that because the believer has died to sin and is resurrected with Christ, he should walk in newness of life. Are you walking in newness of life? Is it clear to everyone around you that you now walk according to the Spirit and not according to this world? Study the following verses about the Christian's walk and ask God to cause you to walk in this way: Galatians 5:16, Ephesians 5:2, Philippians 3:17-18, Colossians 1:10, and 1 John 1:7.

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