

THE BELIEVER IS NOT TO CONTINUE IN SIN (PART 3): HE DOES NOT HAVE LICENSE TO SIN ROMANS 06: 14–23

Introduction

A believer is not to continue in sin, for he does not have license to sin.

- I. Learn something: sin will not dominate the true believer (vv. 14-15).
- II. Know something: you can serve only one master, sin or God (v. 16).
- III. Remember something: remember your decision — you chose righteousness (vv. 17-18).
- IV. Do something: serve God with the same fervour that you served sin (vv. 19-20).
- V. Question something: what benefit is there in sin (vv. 21-22)?
- VI. Consider something: the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life (v. 23).

I. *Romans 06:14–15 Grace vs. Law*

Learn something, sin will not dominate the genuine believer. There is a strong reason for this: the believer is under grace and not under the law.

1. The person under law is always struggling to keep the law, yet he is constantly aware that he fails and comes short of the law. The law is ever before his face. He struggles and strives, wrestles and grapples, works and labours to obey; but his experience is full of tension and pressure, disappointment and discouragement. The person under law never lives a victorious life, for he is constantly coming short of God's glory and perfection. When he fails, he goes through periods of self-accusation, of reproaching and censoring himself for having failed. He accuses and downs himself, feeling unworthy and undeserving, wretched and vile before God. He is constantly feeling unacceptable to God, as though he no longer has the right to approach God; and he often does not approach God for long periods of time, living a defeated life, always bearing the burden of his sin and failure. (See *Spiritual Struggle*, Rom. 7:24.)

Rom 2:9 *There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

Deu 28:66-67 *You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. In the morning you will say, "If only it were evening!" and in the evening, "If only it were morning!" — because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see.*

Job 9:20 *Even if I were innocent, my mouth would condemn me; if I were blameless, it would pronounce me guilty.*

Psa 38:4 *My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.*

Job 15:20 *All his days the wicked man suffers torment, the ruthless through all the years stored up for him.*

Psa 40:12 *For troubles without number surround me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me.*

Psa 51:3 *For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.*

Psa 107:17 *Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.*

Prov 13:15 *Good understanding wins favour, but the way of the unfaithful is hard.*

2. The true believer is under grace, not under law. God is not a legal judge hovering over the believer to punish him every time he sins by breaking a particular law. The believer is not under such frightening dominion: he is not under law, but under grace. What does this mean?
 - a. It means that the believer accepts the grace of God demonstrated in Jesus Christ. That is, the believer accepts the righteousness, the sinless perfection of Christ as his own righteousness. The believer identifies his life with the life of Christ, and God takes the believer's acceptance of Christ and counts his acceptance as righteousness. (See *Credited*, Rom. 4:22; *Justification*, Rom. 4:22; 5:1; 6:1-10.) Very simply stated, God credits righteousness to the believer when the believer accepts the righteousness of Christ. God counts the faith of the believer as the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Such is the *great love of God*. But note, this is the position of grace, that is, the believer is counted righteous and placed in the *position of righteousness* when he believes in Christ. He is *placed into Christ* and *positioned in Christ* once-for-all when he truly believes. Such is the *righteous position* of the believer.

However, what about the *righteous life* of the believer? Very practically, how does the believer keep from serving sin and from living under sin and from displeasing God? How can he honestly live *under grace* day by day? How can he live *under God's* favour all of the time? How can he go about pleasing God and receiving His approval and acceptance?

- b. The genuine believer must *constantly keep* before his face the glorious truth: he is under God's grace. God is the believer's Father, and the believer has become a true child of God's. Therefore, the true believer is favoured and accepted by his Father. What the child has to do is stay in that favour. He must keep his Father's favour and approval. When he sins, he needs to go to His Father in all sincerity and ask forgiveness and repent of his sin. If he keeps an open relationship with His Father — always approaching Him and asking His forgiveness and repenting — he is forgiven. The slate is wiped clean — sin does not have dominion over him. There is nothing between the child and his Father. All have been discussed and forgiven. The offense is gone, resolved, put away forever. Therefore, sin does not dominate and rule over the child.

Now, note the point: God is a gracious and loving Father. He cares and suffers long with growing children. When His child falls into sin, God is long-suffering, ever willing to forgive His erring child — if the child will only come and ask forgiveness and turn from his sin (Lk. 17:3-4; 1 Jn. 1:9). Just how patient, how long-suffering is God? “His love endures forever;” His mercy covers every sin and all sin (Psa. 106:1; 107:1; 118:1-4).

Luke 17:2-3 *“It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. So watch yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.”*

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Psa 136:1 *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.*

Psa 138:8 *The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever — do not abandon the works of your hands.*

3. In light of so wondrous a relationship, a question needs to be asked. Is the child of God allowed to continue in sin? Can he sin and sin expecting God to forgive and forgive him? Scripture shouts: By no means! Then Scripture argues that a true child of God must not continue in sin. (See Rom. 6:1-2.) He does not set God aside for a night or two and sin. He does not rationalize that he can go ahead and sin because God is going to forgive him anyway. Why does the true child of God not do this? Why does he keep away from sin?

=> Because his Father (God) loves him and he loves his Father. A true child of God does not want to hurt and displease his Father, and his Father is displeased with sin. Consequently, the true child of God strives not to sin (Rom. 2:23-24; Heb. 6:6). He fights against it, for sin is contrary to the nature of his Father and cuts the heart of his Father beyond all else. Therefore, he does all he can to keep away from sin.

Heb 6:6 *If they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.*

Deu 25:16 *For the Lord your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly.*

Psa 5:4 *You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell.*

=> Because he turned to God in order to get away from sin and its shame and destruction. He did not turn to God in order to have the freedom to sin, but to be set free from the enslavement and habits of sin, to break the bondage and consequences of sin (see *License*, Rom. 6:1-2).

Rom 6:21 *What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!*

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

In summary of what is said above, the believer must learn something: sin will not dominate the true believer. There are three reasons.

1. God is not a legal judge hovering over the child to punish him every time he sins by breaking a particular law. The child is not under such frightening dominion.
2. God is a gracious and loving Father. He cares and suffers long with growing children. When His child falls into sin, God is long-suffering, ever willing to forgive His erring child — if the child will only come and ask forgiveness and turn from his sin (Lk. 17:3-4; 1 Jn. 1:9).
3. God is a teaching Father who disciplines. He exhorts His child not to fall into the dominating trap of sin (see Heb. 12:5-11; 1 Jn. 2:1-2).

The emphasis of this chapter, however, is of supreme importance. A believer who is genuine — who really belongs to Christ — shows his genuineness by obeying Christ as Master. He does not consistently practice sin. (See Rom. 6:1-2.)

II. Romans 06:16 You can Serve Only One Master

Know something —you can serve only one master, sin or God. A person is either the slave of sin or of God, and there is a very simple test to tell which master a person serves.

=> Do you yield to sin, that is, serve sin?

=> Do you yield to God, that is, serve God?

If you yield to sin, you will die. If you yield to God and obey Him, you will be counted righteous and live.

Now note a crucial point. Either sin is your master or God is your Master. You either yield to sin or you yield to God. This does not mean that you become sinless and perfect, but that...

- you do not plan to sin.
- you hate sin and fight against it.
- you struggle to please God by not sinning.
- you diligently seek to make God the Master of your life by obeying Him.
- you study God's Word so that you will know His commandments and can obey Him.
- you immediately seek God's forgiveness when you do sin and you repent - you turn away from the sin (1 Jn. 1:9; 2:1-2).
- you walk in open confession before God, talking to Him all day long, ever gaining an unbroken fellowship with Him as the Master of your life.

Again, note the results, for *whom* we serve determines our destiny. If we yield to sin, we will die; but if we yield to God, we will be counted righteous and live eternally.

Mat 6:24 *“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”*

John 8:34 *Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.”*

Rom 6:16 *Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?*

Rom 7:22-23 *For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.*

1 Cor 10:21 *You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.*

James 1:8 *He is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.*

2 Pet 2:19 *They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity — for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.*

Prov 5:22 *The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast.*

III. **Romans 06:17–18 Remember Your Decision**

Remember something, remember your decision. You chose righteousness.

1. Note the stated fact: believers “used to be slaves to sin.” The word “slaves” (doulos) means bond slaves, persons bound to a master. Believers used to yield to sin, all kinds of sin ranging from...

=> simple off-coloured jokes to using God's name in vain.

=> immoral thoughts to adultery.

=> simple thoughts of pride to drunkenness.

=> simple acts of selfishness to stealing.

=> wanting more to actually indulging.

=> seeking position and power to hurting and crushing people.

But *now* believers have obeyed the teaching of God, that is, the gospel of justification. Note the word “obeyed.” They obeyed the gospel of God, doing exactly what God commanded.

They obeyed God's commandment. They “believed” in the name of God's Son, Jesus Christ; therefore, God took their faith and counted (credited) it as righteousness. They chose God and righteousness, and because they did, God accepted them as righteous.

1 John 3:23 *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*

Mat 7:21 *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”*

John 2:17 *“The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”*

2. Note the stated result: believers are set free from sin. They are counted righteous by God, *not sinful*. God sees believers as righteous people, not as sinners. Therefore, believers are set free from sin and its consequences. God does not charge believers with sin; He does not lay sin against them. Believers are set free from the accusation of sin, and they shall never be charged with sin. God has set them free from sin through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (see Rom. 8:33-34).

Now this means something significant, very significant. The believer becomes the slave of righteousness. There is no way he could ever serve sin again, not if he has really been justified, not if he has really come to know God’s love revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Once he truly knows God’s glorious love, he is driven to serve God in appreciation for what God has done for him in Christ Jesus. He is driven to be the servant of God by living righteously and godly in this present world.

Thought 1. The degree to which a believer grasps the love of God in justification is the degree to which he is driven to serve God and to live righteously.

Rom 8:33-34 *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

2 Cor 5:14-15 *For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

2 Cor 5:17, 21 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

IV. Romans 06:19–20 Serve God with Dedication

Do something — serve God with the same fervour that you served sin.

1. Your sin did further sin; it resulted in more and more sin, an ever increasing wickedness. The word “parts” means the parts of a person’s body: the eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, hands, feet, mind or any of the covered and dressed parts. Before a

person obeyed the gospel, truly believed in Jesus Christ, he yielded parts of his body to serve uncleanness and to work sin upon sin. He sinned and found that *sin worked sin*, just increased and increased, grew and grew. He found that sin enslaved him, became a bondage, a habit that he could not easily break. Sin simply led to more sin, no matter what the sin was...

- smoking
- drinking
- immorality
- overeating
- greed
- lust
- gossip
- criticism
- grumbling
- cursing
- selfishness
- popularity
- recognition
- power
- fame

The point is this. The believer had found that his sin worked more sin and that he could not break the power of sin, not the power of all sin. Therefore, he had turned to the only hope he had, God Himself.

Rom 7:5 *For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.*

Eph 4:22 *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires.*

1 Pet 4:3 *For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.*

James 1:14-15 *But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

2. Now the believer is to let righteousness work and lead to holiness (hagiasmon). The word means sanctification or holy. The believer is to yield the parts of his body to serve righteousness, and he is to let righteousness sanctify him more and more. He is to live righteously and become more and more holy like God. (See *Holy*, 1 Pet. 1:15-16.)
3. The believer never had the opportunity to work righteousness before he was justified. Before believing in Christ, the believer was not counted righteous, not by God. God never credits a person with righteousness unless the person honours His Son by believing in His Son's glorious name. Only those who believe are counted righteous. Therefore, the message is loud and clear: "When you were slaves to sin, you were free from righteousness: you were not credited with righteousness. You did not have the opportunity to live righteously before God. *But now* you have obeyed God; you have believed. Now you have the opportunity to live righteously, so begin to serve God with the same fervour and energy with which you were serving sin. Let righteousness enslave you and become the bondage and habit of your life."

Rom 13:14 *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

Rom 6:13 *Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

Gal 5:16 *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

Gal 5:24 *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

Col 3:2-5 *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

1 Pet 2:11 *Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.*

1 Pet 4:2 *As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.*

V. **Romans 06:21–22 Sin**

Question something — what benefit there in sin? Note several clear facts.

1. The true believer is ashamed of his past sin.

Gen 3:10 *He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”*

Ezra 9:6 *And prayed: “O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens.”*

Psa 44:15 *My disgrace is before me all day long, and my face is covered with shame.*

2. The fruit of sin is death (see *Death*, Rom. 6:23; *Death*, Heb. 9:27). The fruit of sin is not good; there is nothing good about it. Sin corrupts, destroys, and dooms all who seek its fruits. This should always be remembered by men.
3. Believers are “set free” from sin by justification, that is, through the glorious love of God. Therefore, they have become slaves to God...
 - bearing the benefit of holiness.

John 8:32 *“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

John 15:5 *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

Rom 6:22 *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.*

Rom 6:18 *You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.*

Rom 8:2 *Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*

Luke 1:74-75 *To rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.*

2 Cor 7:1 *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

1 Th 3:12-13 *May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.*

Heb 12:14 *Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.*

1 Pet 1:16 *For it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

2 Pet 3:11 *Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives.*

- bearing the glorious hope and result of eternal life.

John 3:36 *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."*

John 12:25 *"The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."*

John 4:36 *"Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together."*

John 5:24 *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

John 17:3 *"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*

Gal 6:8 *The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

VI. Romans 06:23 Wages of Sin: Death

Consider something: the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life

1. The wages of sin is death. (See *Death*, Heb. 9:27.) Sin deserves death for two very clear reasons.

- a. Sin is acting against God, acting against His very nature. Sin strikes out against God, attempts to tear down God's nature...
- of purity and morality
 - of holiness and glory
 - of justice and righteousness
 - of love and grace
- b. Sin is rebellion against God. It is rejecting God, ignoring God, disobeying God, denying God, and refusing to live for God. (See Rom. 5:10.)

The point is this. True justice demands that sin receive its payment or its wages. Since sin is so opposed to God's nature and is actually rebellion against God, it deserves to die...

- to be cast far, far away from God.
- to have no part of God.
- to be banished from God's sight.
- to be separated from God's presence forever.
- to be condemned and punished for having dishonoured and cursed God so much.

As a labourer receives his wages, so sin shall receive its wages. Just as it would be unjust not to pay the labourer, it would be unjust not to pay sin for its work. In fact, if sin did not receive its just punishment, it would be the most gross injustice of eternity. Why? Because sin is against the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, against God Himself. Sin must receive its just wages. Sin must die; it must be banished forever from the presence of God.

Rom 5:12 *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.*

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

James 1:15 *Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

Rev 21:8 *“But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.”*

Gen 2:17 *“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”*

Prov 11:19 *The truly righteous man attains life, but he who pursues evil goes to his death.*

Ezek 18:20 *The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.*

2. The gift of God is eternal life. Note that eternal life is *not* the payment of wages. A man cannot work for and earn eternal life. It is the gift of God, and it is only through Jesus Christ our Lord (see Rom. 6:14-15; 5:1; 6:1-10).

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

Titus 3:5-7 *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. ■*