

Chapter Forty-nine
Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans
God Forbids the Abuse of His Grace

“¹ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? ² God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein” (Romans 6:1-2)?

The basis of the believer’s justification is the gift of the imputation of God-kind-righteousness received by grace through faith in the finished propitiatory work of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary. That is the theological truth from which the three rhetorical questions of Romans 6:1-2 come. The believer’s justification has absolutely no relationship to mankind-righteousness. It is totally of grace. God’s grace in the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ super-abounded over the condemnation that came on all mankind due to Adam’s sin.

“¹ Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: ² By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1-2).

“⁸ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Romans 5:8-9).

“¹⁵ But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. ¹⁶ And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. ¹⁷ For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) ¹⁸ Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life” (Romans 5:15-18).

Justification is so freely the product of abounding grace, it only seems logical that to continue to allow the sin nature free expression would allow God continued opportunity to freely express His grace. It is a logical conclusion but it is a wrong conclusion. God still forbids sin (Romans 6:2). His grace is not intended to be abused in such a way.

“How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein (Romans 6:2b)?

Paul now begins to shift his attention to the inward transformation to practical righteousness that begins within the believer who has truly been regenerated (“born again”). When a person places saving faith in the finished propitiatory work of Christ, he is immediately “born again” of the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit immediately indwells that believer and the believer’s body becomes the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The indwelling Holy Spirit is both the *New Nature* of the believer and the imputation of God-kind-righteousness.

True righteous living could not and cannot come through human efforts to obey the moral aspects of the Law. The only way true righteous living can be produced in the life of a believer is when he learns to crucify his Sin Nature (the “Old Man”) and yield His body to the indwelling Holy Spirit. To crucify the sin nature means to die to the emotions and desires of the “flesh” (another metaphor for the sin nature).

“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Galatians 5:24).

Salvation is not an end of the work of God's grace in our life. It is a beginning.

True saving faith is the foundation upon which the Christian life is built. When the structure itself is complete it will be defined by one word, HOLINESS. The believer is commanded to add to his saving faith the building blocks of holiness.

“² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, ³ According as 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: ⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding 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. ⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; ⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; ⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. ⁸ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” (II Peter 1:2-9).

Although the believer is not saved by his good works (works of righteousness), he is saved unto good works (works of righteousness). The Scriptures are redundant with this truth. God's grace did not save us just to free us to live a life of sin.

“⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24).

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

“²⁰ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹ Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20-21).

“¹⁹ Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. ²⁰ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. ²¹ If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work. ²² Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (II Timothy 2:19-22).

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14).

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7).

“He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (I John 2:6).

The word “we” in Romans 6:2 is from the Greek word *hostis* (hos'-tis). “We” refers to every person who has ever been saved or ever will be saved. It refers to any person who calls himself a Christian.

The words “are dead” are from the Greek word *apothnesko* (ap-oth-nace'-ko), which is in the Aorist tense meaning something that happen in the past with continuing results. Therefore the words “are dead” would better be translated, “How shall we (professing Christians), that have died to sin, live any longer in sin?”

Christ died for sin. In the act of repentance, when a person accepts Christ by faith, the believer dies unto sin. In that the Sin Nature was crucified with Christ, the believer’s servant relationship to the Sin Nature was broken.

“¹ Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? ² For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. ³ So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. ⁴ Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Romans 7:1-4).

The questions of Romans 6:1-2 relate to what happened to our Sin Nature through the crucifixion and death of our new Federal Head in Jesus Christ. If we are saved, the Sin Nature was crucified with Christ. It died positionally. The driving and controlling force of our life should no longer be our Sin Nature with its carnal emotions and life consuming lusts. The driving and controlling force in our lives ought to be the indwelling Christ. This will only happen when we do what Romans 6:11-13 says. This theological truth was the testimonial reality to the accomplishments of the Apostle Paul. It can be the same for every believer.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Chapter Forty-nine
Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans
God Forbids the Abuse of His Grace

1. What is the theological truth from which the three questions of Romans 6:1-2 come and why do you think they need to be addressed? _____

2. Read the following verses and discuss why these truths might lead a person to abuse God's grace, Romans 5:1-2, 5:8-9, and 5:15-18. _____

3. Discuss how the questions of Romans 6:1-2 are used to lead the believer's attention to the inward transformation that begins when he is "born again and how you might use them to do the same." _____

4. Read Galatians 5:24 with Romans 6:11-13. Discuss how (the only way) truly righteous living is produced in the life of a believer and how that relates to the doctrine of grace. _____

5. Read the following Scripture verses and use them to answer the questions of Romans 6:1-2. (Write these verses in the margin of your Bible next to Romans 6:1-2: II Peter 1:2-9; Ephesians 2:10, 4:24; Philippians 1:6, 2:13; Hebrews 13:20-21; II Timothy 2:19-22; Titus 2:14; I John 1:7 and 2:6.) _____

6. Discuss the broad scope intended by the word "we" in Romans 6:2. _____

7. Discuss the significance of the fact that the Greek word translated "are dead" in Romans 6:2 is in the Aorist tense and how that relates to the act of repentance when we accept Christ. _____

8. Read Romans 7:1-4. How do these verses build upon the fact that the believer died to sin and how should that truth impact our relationship with our sin nature? _____

9. Summarize your understanding of the sin nature's death with Christ and how that ought to impact the driving and controlling force in our lives as an answer to the three questions of Romans 6:1-2. _____
