



Romans 6:1-14 (ESV)

¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

Romans 6:1-14 (HCSB)

¹ What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? ² Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in a new way of life.

⁵ For if we have been joined with Him in the likeness of His death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of His resurrection. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that sin's dominion over the body may be abolished, so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin, ⁷ since a person who has died is freed from sin's claims. ⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him, ⁹ because we know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, will not die again. Death no longer rules over Him. ¹⁰ For in light of the fact that He died, He died to sin once for all; but in light of the fact that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its desires. ¹³ And do not offer any parts of it to sin as weapons for unrighteousness. But as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves to God, and all the parts of yourselves to God as weapons for righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will not rule over you, because you are not under law but under grace.

English Standard Version Bible - *Study Bible*¹

Romans 6:1-14

6:1-23 *The Triumph of Grace over the Power of Sin.* The law does not and cannot conquer sin, but the grace given to followers of Christ triumphs over sin and death.

6:1 Paul is likely responding to a question posed regularly by his Jewish opponents. They did not raise this question so that they would have an excuse to sin, though in every age some have wrongly interpreted and applied Paul's gospel of grace to rationalize sin. Instead, Paul's opponents argued that his gospel must be mistaken since, in their view, it led people to **continue in sin**. Paul will now show why their interpretation of his gospel is mistaken.

6:2 Paul's gospel does not lead to more sin, since those who belong to Christ have **died to sin** (as explained in the following verses).

6:3 Christians died to sin when they were **baptized into Christ**. Paul is not arguing that baptism magically destroys the power of sin. Baptism is an outward, physical symbol of the inward, spiritual conversion of Christians.

6:4 In the early church, baptism was probably by immersion, at least as a general rule, though Christians dispute whether such a practice must always be followed literally today. Therefore, baptism pictures a person being **buried** with Christ (submersion under water) and being **raised** to new life with Christ (emergence from water). This symbolizes the person's union with, and incorporation into, Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they now have the power to live in **newness** of life.

6:6 The power of sin has been broken in those who believe, for their **old self** (lit., "old man," meaning who they were in Adam) **was crucified** and put to death with Christ. They were born into the world as sinners, with the result that their bodies were ruled by sin. **Body of sin** refers to the rule of sin, but without excluding the involvement of the personal self that lives through the body. Sin's rule, however, was broken when Christians died with Christ, and therefore they are no longer **enslaved to sin**. Paul does not argue that Christians do not sin at all (a view called sinless perfection); instead, the tyranny, domination, and rule of sin have been defeated for them. This means that the normal pattern of life for Christians should be progressive growth in sanctification, resulting in ever greater maturity and conformity to God's moral law in thought and action.

6:7 **One who has died** means one who has died with Christ.

6:10 **died to sin**. Jesus died because he took sin upon himself, but his resurrection demonstrates that he has defeated both sin and death.

6:11 **Dead to sin** means dead to the pervasive love for and ruling power of sin. Christians must realize that the mastery of sin has been broken in their lives (see note on [v. 6](#)).

1. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 6".

[6:12-13](#) The tension surfaces here between what God has already accomplished and the responsibility of his people to obey. They are still tempted by desires to sin and must not let those desires gain control. Each day they must give themselves afresh to God.

[6:14](#) **sin will have no dominion over you.** This is not a command but a promise that sin will not triumph in the lives of Christians. Because they live in the new era of fulfillment, they are no longer under the old era of redemptive history; that is, they are no longer **under law**, where the Mosaic law and sin ruled over God's people. By contrast, **under grace** means living under the new covenant in Christ, in an era characterized by grace (cf. [3:24](#); [4:16](#); [5:2](#), [15-21](#)).

Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*²

Romans 6:1-14

[6:1-23](#) Can a justified person live the same way as he did before justification? This was a major question in the debates of the Reformation. If as sin abounded, grace super-abounded, why not commit more sin to receive more grace? Some false teachers in church history have actually argued that you can experience more grace by committing more sin. This chapter explains why this is not possible.

[6:2](#) Paul rejected the invalid inference ([v. 1](#)) with the strong expression **absolutely not**. Phillips aptly translated it, "What a ghastly thought!" Paul argues that believers have **died to sin**. He does not mean that our sin nature was eliminated at the cross or at the moment of our conversion or baptism. Instead, as he says elsewhere, God "rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves" ([Col 1:13](#)). Having experienced such a transfer, dare we go on living in sin?

[6:3](#) In defense of his claim that believers have died to sin, Paul points out that through baptism we were **baptized into Christ Jesus and His death**. As R. Mounce put it, "Christ's death for sin becomes our death to sin" (*Romans*, 149).

[6:4](#) Believers are symbolically **buried** with Christ through baptism and **raised** with Him **from the dead** in order that we may **walk in a new way of life**. This makes clear the absurdity of the idea that we can "continue in sin so that grace may multiply" ([v. 1](#)).

[6:5](#) Though believers have not yet experienced resurrection, we are assured this future reality by the fact that Christ, in whose death we share, has been raised from the dead.

[6:6](#) **Our old self** (Gk *palaios anthropos*; lit "old man") is everything that we were before we became Christians. By contrast, the new self is what we are once we become Christians ([Eph 4:22-24](#); [Col 3:9-10](#)). The new self is not perfect. We still sin because we have indwelling sin in our mortal bodies ([Rm 7:13-25](#)), but we are in the process of renewal ([Eph 4](#); [Col 3](#)). Thus we have the answer to the question about whether a Christian can still live in sin. We cannot live as we once did because the "old self" **was crucified with Him** (Christ). In Christ the believer is a "new creation" ([2Co 5:17](#)).

2. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., HCSB Study Bible, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 6".



Ancient Byzantine baptistry at Avdat, Israel, showing the importance given baptism by the early church ([Rm 6:3-4](#)).

[6:7](#) Sin (personified) has no claim over a dead person and can claim no loyalty from him.

dikaioo

Greek Pronunciation	[dih kigh AH oh]
HCSB Translation	free
Uses in Romans	15
Uses in the NT	39
Focus passage	Romans 6:7

The Greek verb *dikaioo* means *to justify* or *to declare righteous*. Two related words occur quite often in the NT: the noun *dikaioōsunē*, meaning *righteousness*, and the adjective *dikaios*, meaning *just* or *righteous*. The common thread in this word family is conformity to a standard, and the standard is primarily God's will. In the Greek OT *dikaioo* occurs 30 times, most are in judicial contexts, both divine and human (either God is Judge or man is judge). Human judges are to "declare righteous the righteous" (cp. [Dt 25:1](#); [1Ki 8:32](#); [2Ch 6:23](#))—to pronounce the innocent to be so and *free* him legally. The legal aspect of these terms also involves relational concepts, for judges must promote an individual's relation to society by judging fairly.

These two concepts carry over into Paul's letters, especially Romans and Galatians, as he explains how to have a right relationship with God. At the point of faith God declares the believer to be righteous ([Rm 3:30-4:9](#); [5:1](#); [Gal 2:16-17](#); [3:8,11,24](#); [5:4](#)), free from the penalty of sin and in a right relationship with God.

[6:8-9](#) It was because of our sin that death fixed its grip on Jesus, but He arose to live forever. **Death no longer rules** the believer, for we **died with Christ** who no longer dies.

[6:10](#) Jesus went through an irreversible transformation in His death and resurrection. Believers also undergo an irreversible transformation: we die to the "old self" ([v. 6](#)) at conversion and thereafter live as new creatures ([2Co 5:17](#)). Like Jesus, the believer **lives to God**.

[6:11](#) This is the first command in the book of Romans.

[6:12-13](#) The believer, as a member of the new kingdom, must not offer any help to the old king (Satan, sin, death) and his kingdom. We are still slaves, but now we have a new Master. Note that Paul continues the personification of sin as a king (complete with a kingdom and subjects) who seeks to extend his rule. There is a spiritual war between these two kingdoms. We must give ourselves as **weapons** to be used in this warfare on the side of the rightful King. Aiding and abetting the enemy is treason.

[6:14](#) **Sin** personified has been in view since [5:20-21](#). Sin is no longer the believer's ruler. Sin gained its power by using the **law**, but the Christian is under the rule of **grace** rather than law.

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

Romans 6:1-14

[6:1-8:39](#) This section deals with *sanctification*—the change God makes in our life as we grow in the faith. [Chapter 6](#) explains that believers are free from sin's control. [Chapter 7](#) discusses the continuing struggle believers have with sin. [Chapter 8](#) describes how we can have victory over sin.

[6:1, 2](#) If God loves to forgive, why not give him more to forgive? If forgiveness is guaranteed, do we have the freedom to sin as much as we want to? Paul's forceful answer is *Of course not!* Such an attitude—deciding ahead of time to take advantage of God—shows that a person does not understand the seriousness of sin. God's forgiveness does not make sin less serious; his Son's death for sin shows us the dreadful seriousness of sin. Jesus paid with his life so we could be forgiven. The availability of God's mercy must not become an excuse for careless living and moral laxness.

[6:1-4](#) In the church of Paul's day, immersion was the usual form of baptism; that is, new Christians were completely "buried" in water. They understood baptism to symbolize the death and burial of the old way of life. Coming up out of the water symbolized resurrection to new life with Christ. If we think of our old, sinful life as dead and buried, we have a powerful motive to resist sin. We can consciously choose to treat the desires and temptations of the old nature as if they were dead. Then we can continue to enjoy our wonderful new life with Jesus (see [Galatians 3:27](#) and [Colossians 2:12](#) and [3:1-4](#) for more on this concept).

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1904-1905.

[6:5ff](#) Because we are united with Christ in his death, our evil desires and bondage to sin died with him. Now, united by faith with him in his resurrection life, we have unbroken fellowship with God and freedom from sin's hold on us. For more on the difference between our new life in Christ and our old sinful nature, read [Ephesians 4:21-24](#) and [Colossians 3:3-15](#).

[6:6, 7](#) The power of sin over us died with Christ on the cross. Our "old sinful selves," our sinful nature, died once and for all, so we are freed from its power. The "power of sin" refers to our rebellious sin-loving nature inherited from Adam. Though we often willingly cooperate with our sinful nature, it is not us but the sin in us that is evil. And it is this power of sin at work in our life that is defeated. Paul has already stated that through faith in Christ we stand righteous before God. Here Paul emphasizes that we need no longer live under sin's power. God does not take us out of the world or make us robots—we will still feel like sinning, and sometimes we will sin. The difference is that before we were saved we were slaves to our sinful nature, but now we can choose to live for Christ (see [Galatians 2:20](#)).

[6:8, 9](#) Because of Christ's death and resurrection, his followers need never fear death. That assurance frees us to enjoy fellowship with him and to do his will. This will affect all our activities—work and worship, play, Bible study, quiet times, and times of caring for others. When you know that you don't have to fear death, you will experience a new vigor in life.

[6:11](#) "Consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin" means that we should regard our old sinful nature as dead and unresponsive to sin. Because of our union and identification with Christ, we no longer want to pursue our old plans, desires, and goals. Now we want to live for the glory of God. As we start this new life, the Holy Spirit will help us become all that Christ wants us to be.

[6:12](#) How can we keep this command to not let sin control the way we live, to not give in to its desires? We can take the following steps: (1) Identify our personal weaknesses, (2) recognize the things that tempt us, (3) stay away from sources of temptation, (4) practice self-restraint, (5) consciously invest our time in good habits and service, and (5) lean on God's strength and grace.

[6:13](#) When Paul uses the term "instrument of evil," he uses a word that can refer to a tool or a weapon. Our skills, capabilities, and bodies can serve many purposes, good or bad. In sin, every part of our bodies are vulnerable. In Christ, every part can be an instrument for service. It is the one to whom we offer our service that makes the difference. We are like lasers that can burn destructive holes in steel plates or do delicate cataract surgery. Will you give yourself completely to God, asking him to put you to good use for his glory?

[6:14, 15](#) If we're no longer under the law but under grace, are we now free to sin and disregard the Ten Commandments? Paul says, "Of course not!" When we were under the law, sin was our master—the law does not justify us or help us overcome sin. But now that we are bound to Christ, he is our Master, and he gives us power to do good rather than evil.

Life Application Concise New Testament Commentary⁴

Romans 6:1-14

Sin's Power Is Broken / [6:1-14](#)

Up to this point in his letter, Paul has shown people's need for salvation, God's gift of that salvation through the death of his Son, and God's grace in forgiving the sins of all who accept him. This next section of the letter ([chapters 6–8](#)) deals with God progressively separating believers from sin and making them more like himself. The key point to realize is that all believers have a new nature and the Holy Spirit within, yet they also have the old, human nature with its capability to sin. These opposites are in constant tension, yet God promises help and victory.

[6:1-2](#) Paul realized that his statements about God's wonderful kindness to sinners could be interpreted to suggest that people ought to **keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more kindness and forgiveness**. "If God loves to forgive, why not give him more to forgive?" would be their erroneous reasoning. Paul answers with an emphatic, "**Of course not!**" The availability of God's mercy must not become an excuse for careless living and moral laxness. The idea that someone would claim to believe the gospel while planning to continue in sin is preposterous to Paul. The point of the gospel was not to find an excuse for sin, but to give freedom from sin.

To make his answer clear, Paul introduces a new concept—believers have **died to sin**. How?

- In the legal sense, we died in the sight of God's judgment.
- In the conversion sense, believing in Christ is dying to sin.
- In the baptismal sense, that burial implies we have died with Christ.
- In the moral sense, sinful desires may be present, but they are mortally wounded.
- In the resurrection sense, we exchange our sinful life for Christ's resurrection life.

Paul speaks of this death as fact and concludes, therefore, that believers cannot **continue to live in it**.

[6:3-4](#) Baptism is a picture of a spiritual truth. In the very early church, baptism followed a person's decision to trust in Christ (see, for example, [Acts 2:41](#); [8:37](#); [9:18](#); [10:48](#)), marking these first generation believers as followers of Christ, members of the Christian community. Paul assumes that these Roman believers were baptized at conversion and would vividly recall the experience. Those who believe in Christ are baptized into him and baptized into his death; in other words, they are **baptized to become one with Christ Jesus**. As he died, we die to our old, sinful lifestyle, and a new life begins. Immersion may have been the form of baptism—that is, new Christians were completely buried momentarily in water. They understood this form of baptism to symbolize being **buried with Christ**, thus the death and burial of the old way of life. Coming up out of the water symbolized resurrection to new life with Christ, as well as the promise of a future bodily resurrection—as **Christ was raised from the dead**, so too believers **may live new lives**.

If we think of our old, sinful life as dead and buried, we have a powerful motive to resist sin. We can consciously choose to treat the desires and temptations of the old nature as if they were dead. Then we can continue to enjoy our wonderful new life with Jesus (see also [Galatians 3:27](#); [Colossians 3:1-4](#)).

4. Barton B. Bruce et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 599-601.

6:5 United literally means, “we have become grown together.” Our baptism painlessly acts out the union that Christ painfully made real. God’s plan was that in Christ’s **death**, believers would also die (to sin and to rebellion against God). Dying to sin is a lifelong process. When we accept Christ and die to our old nature, we begin a life of continually dying to the enticements of the world and living to please the One to whom we belong. Also as Christ was **raised**, believers also will be raised from death to eternal life with God. What people do with Christ now will greatly influence what happens to them later.

6:6 The **old sinful selves** describe believers before they trusted Christ, people who were ruled by sin and rebellion (**5:10**). That old self was **crucified with Christ**—believers have died the same death as Christ when Christ was crucified. Why? This was the only way that **sin might lose its power** in people’s lives, the only way our sinful nature could be set aside so that God’s nature could live through us.

As a result, believers **are no longer slaves to sin**. Those who have accepted God’s gracious gift of emancipation will be able to participate fully in a new life of obedience. As slaves to sin, we are set free by Christ before we can begin to live free. The power and penalty of sin died with Christ on the cross. We are no longer slaves to our sinful nature; we can choose to live for Christ.

6:7-8 During slavery, freedom was rare except through death. Death brings about a release that cannot be reversed. In the same way, **when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin**. We are not yet sinless, but sin no longer has control over us. With our death to sin, we are free to begin our **new life** in Christ. This new life in Christ (this side of physical death) is already the beginning of resurrected living. Getting used to this new life requires that believers exchange old habits and patterns for new ones.

6:9 Jesus experienced physical death and **rose from the dead, and he will never die again**. His resurrection was a victory over death, so **death no longer has any power over him**. Paul concluded that dying with Christ, then, ends the power of death over us as well.

6:10 Christ **died once to defeat sin**, emphasizing the finality and completeness of Christ’s work. When Christ groaned from the cross, “It is finished!” (**John 19:30**), he knew that the sacrifice was complete, once for all (see **Hebrews 7:27**). Unlike Christ, we will still fall into sin’s traps now and then; but like Christ who **now lives for the glory of God**, we can focus on living for God. God’s great plan was to liberate us from sin’s ruling power. Thus our perspectives, attitudes, relationships, and desires will change, in light of the incredible events that have taken place on our behalf—death to sin and the ability to come to God and live for him.

6:11 If we have identified with Christ, what is true for him can be true for us. This identification starts in our minds by an act of mental reckoning or accounting. We can **consider** ourselves **dead to sin**. In other words, just as a dead body cannot respond to temptations or enticements, neither can we respond to them. Thus we are **able to live for the glory of God through Christ Jesus** because we have been given new life, a new lifestyle, and the sure promise of eternal life (see also **Ephesians 2:5**; **Colossians 2:13**).

6:12 If we are dead to sin, how can **sin** still **control** us? We have died to sin, but we are constantly being freed from sin. When sin is in control, people have no choice but to **give in to its lustful desires** because they are its slaves (**6:6**). Believers have died to sin, but as long as we live in our mortal bodies, we will have the compulsion to sin. But only because we have died to sin do we have the power to no longer let it control us. We are, in fact, free from our slavery. But each day we must reject our old slave ways.

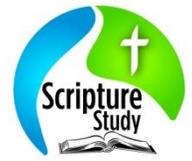
[6:13](#) While we are in our bodies, there will always be the chance that some actions will be sinful or used as a **tool** to distort our relationship with God or with others. Because our bodies are mortal (decaying and dying), we should not yield to sinful desires and temptations. Why yield to a decaying master? Why offer the parts of our bodies to sin, something to which we have died? Instead, Paul tells believers, **give yourselves completely to God and use your whole body as a tool to do what is right**. We have a choice. We have been given new life by God; thus, our bodies are to be given to him to use for promoting righteousness. We are to refuse sin and instead be wholly committed to living for God. We make these choices moment by moment.

[6:14](#) Sin cannot and will not ever again be our **master** because we **are no longer subject to the law**. What does it mean that we are not under the law?

- We are not under the law's demands, as were the people of the Old Testament.
- We are not under curse implied by the impossible standard of the law (see [Galatians 3:10-14](#)).
- We are not under its system of requirements, the ceremonial laws that had to be meticulously kept.
- We are not under the fear of failing the just standard of the law.

If believers were still under the law, then the sin would have to be master. By itself, the law produces both the proof and the acute awareness of sin but cannot direct or motivate a person to do what is right. Instead, believers **are free by God's grace** because only grace can overcome sin. Only by living in that grace can we defeat the power of sin in our lives. When our lives are under the law alone, sin is our master. But when we live under grace, our master is God.

Study and Discussion Questions



Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ - [Romans 6:1-14](#)

Topics: [Change](#), [Consequences](#), [God](#), [Holiness](#), [Jesus Christ](#), [Life-style](#), [New Life](#), [Salvation](#), [Sin](#), [Slavery](#)

Open It

1. What would most people like to change about their lives?
2. What is one thing you'd like to change about your life?
3. *What motivates people to make major changes in their lives?

Explore It

4. Why should a forgiven, justified person make a strong effort not to sin? ([6:1-2](#))
5. For what reason would a person not want to live in sin any longer? ([6:2](#))
6. What does baptism symbolize about our relationship to Christ? ([6:2-4](#))
7. *What makes it possible for a person to live a new life? ([6:4](#))
8. Before a person is united to Christ, to what is he or she a slave? ([6:6](#))
9. How does being united with Christ through His death change our relationship to sin? ([6:7](#))
10. After Christ died and was raised, why did neither sin nor death have any power over Him? ([6:7](#), [9-10](#))
11. *How will uniting with Christ in His death change the future of our lives? ([6:8-10](#))
12. *In a person's new relationship with God, what is his or her relationship to sin supposed to be? ([6:11-12](#))
13. What change in attitude and action toward God happens in a person who follows Christ? ([6:11-13](#))
14. Under whose control does a Christian live? ([6:14](#))
15. How does being under grace change a person? ([6:14](#))

Get It

16. What does this passage tell us about God and Christ?
17. What does this passage tell us about all people and their relationship to God?
18. What kind of changes does God want to make in our lives when we become Christians?
19. *Why should a Christian stop sinning even though he or she knows God has forgiven and will forgive those sins?
20. *How does God help a person discard old habits and tendencies?
21. How does God give a person a new self?
22. What are the symptoms of a person in slavery to sin?
23. How would you describe the character of someone who is alive to God in Christ?
24. What does it mean to live a new life for God?
25. In what practical sense is sin no longer the master of a Christian even though he or she might still commit specific sins?
26. In what ways is a Christian truly free?

Apply It

27. How can you actively resist the tendency to sin in your everyday life?
28. *How can you offer yourself as an instrument of righteousness to God and to others this week?