

DEVOTIONAL

WHEN IN ROME VI // THE HUSTLE
APRIL 10, 2022

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Note: Today is commonly known as Palm Sunday. It begins Passion Week, which culminates on Easter Sunday. For details about the daily events that occurred during Passion Week, see the resources in “For Further Study” at the end of this devotional.

Discussion Starter: In what ways do some Christians compromise with sin? Why is this dangerous?

Key Text: *“I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. ²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.” (Romans 6:19-22)*

Evangelist Greg Laurie tells a story about a bear hunter walking through the forest one day when he finally found what he was looking for. He got his gun ready, lowered his sights, and began to squeeze the trigger when the bear suddenly turned around and said, “Excuse me, but isn’t it better to talk than to shoot?” The hunter, trying to recover from the shock of an animal talking to him, didn’t know what to say. “Can’t we negotiate the matter?” the bear continued. “What is it that you’re looking for?” “I’m looking for a fur coat,” the hunter replied. “Ah!” said the bear. “Well, I’m looking for a full stomach. Let’s have a discussion about it, and perhaps we can reach a compromise.” “All right then,” said the hunter, and the two disappeared into the forest. A while later, the bear came out of the forest alone. Apparently, the negotiations were successful, and everyone got what they wanted. The bear got a full stomach, and the hunter got a fur coat.

Any time we try to compromise with sin—to make a deal with the devil – we will lose. In our previous lesson, Paul emphasizes that rather than continuing to lead lives of volunteer slavery to sin, we should live as if righteousness was our master. In today’s text, Paul asserts that we should obey righteousness instead of our sinful desires because we now understand the consequences of sin. We should serve God, who gives eternal life, instead of serving sin, which gives shame and death.

1. We who are in Christ must present ourselves as slaves in the service of righteousness just as we once presented ourselves as slaves to sin (v.19).

Paul describes all who are not in Christ as under compulsion to serve sin. Obeying their sinful desires is their work, and it leads to more and more “lawlessness” (v.19). They succeed only in creating more sin in their lives and in the world.

In contrast, serving righteousness is the work of those who are in Christ. And this results in sanctification—the process of being made holy, of becoming like Christ.

Discuss: How does serving righteousness contribute to the process of making us holy?

2. Human beings cannot be morally independent or neutral—we either serve sin and thus are free from righteousness, or we serve righteousness and thus are free from sin (v.20).

A human being is either a sinner saved by grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8; Revelation 22:1–5) or a sinner who rejects God and is separated from Him now and forever (John 12:48; Revelation 20:11–15). Paul argues that one “advantage” of being a slave to sin is that you are free from the authority of righteousness (v.20). Since the slave to sin has no identity to Christ, he has no mandate to do what is right. However, Paul is going to show that such autonomy requires a high cost.

Discuss: How would you answer a non-Christian who thinks he is free because he can do what he wants and does not have to do what is right in the eyes of God?

3. Living under sin’s authority and free from the control of righteousness ultimately leads to shame and death (v.21).

All of us who have experienced being slaves to sin and free from righteousness before we trusted in Christ likely agree that shame was the fruit that came from indulging in our sinful desires.

Discuss: Can conviction and shame over sin ever be a good thing? Why or why not?

4. Our identity is now so closely associated with Christ that we are transformed into people who are bound to do what is right (v.22).

We are not all that we should be, nor are we all that we will be, but the good news is that we are not what we were! The process of becoming what God wants us to be—more and more like Christ—is called “*sanctification*” (v.22). Ultimately, the result of this path we are on in Christ will be eternal life.

Discuss: What changes are you recently seeing in your life that give evidence of the process of sanctification?

For Further Study:

“What is sanctification?” article at www.gotquestions.org

The Pursuit of Holiness by Jerry Bridges

Pleasing God: Discovering the Meaning and Importance of Sanctification by R.C. Sproul