

Romans Chapter 6 – John Karmelich

1. My title for this less is how to live the sin-less life.
 - a) When I say “sin-less”, I mean to sin-less-often.
 - b) To live the Christian life is to understand the dual aspect that:
 - i) We are not perfect and no matter how we try, we will mess up.
 - ii) The other aspect is despite our imperfections, God expects us to live as sin-less as possible. Chapter 6 lays out some guidelines to live a sin-less life.
 - c) Chapter 6 focuses on the “how” question. Here is a brief summary of why it is necessary:
 - i) For starters, to be a Christian, means that Jesus is now Lord of your life.
 - ii) That means living in obedience to His commands for us.
 - iii) God designed all of these commands for our happiness. We can live a much more full and productive life in obedience to His commands.
 - iv) Also, remember that as Christians, we are God’s representatives to the remainder of the world. If we don’t act differently, non-Christians would never see a reason to become one in the first place. Again, perfection is unattainable, but God does expect behavior modification nonetheless.
 - v) We’ll deal more with why obedience is necessary in latter chapters of Romans. This chapter focuses on the “how” question of obedience. In particular, this chapter is about how to take the steps to sin-less-often.
2. In Chapter 6, Paul raises up two questions in Chapter 6. To paraphrase those questions:
 - i) What about Christians who engage in habitual sin?
 - ii) What about Christians who engage in occasional sin?
 - b) The reasons these issues are important is that they “logically” follow from Chapter 5.
 - i) In Chapter 5, Paul ended with the idea that “God’s grace is greater than our sin”.
 - a) God can forgive any and all of our sins. Jesus said the only unforgivable sin is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31, et. al.). That means to continually deny Jesus as Lord up to the point of your death.
 - b) That means all other sins, no matter how bad are forgivable if we confess it and turn from that sin. We as humans still have to suffer the consequences of sin in this lifetime, but from God’s perspective, they are forgiven.
 - ii) To use an illustration from the last lesson, “If we a headache, we need a medicine stronger than the headache pain so it will go away. God’s medicine (i.e., His forgiveness) is greater than any headache, (i.e., our sins).
 - c) Now let’s get back to the “logic” of Chapter 6: If God can and does forgive us of any and all sins we confess to Him, does that give us a free license to sin?
 - i) Getting back to the illustration, “If we know we can take God’s “aspirin” any time we want, are we now free to do anything that can give us a bad headache?” ☺
 - a) Let me summarize Chapter 6 in one word answer to that question: No.
 - b) In a sense, all of Chapter 6 is a commentary on that “no” answer.
 - c) Romans Chapter 6 deals with why Christian behavior is important.
 - d) Paul is going to teach that just because God’s grace and forgiveness are greater than our sins, that does not give us a free license to sin.
3. “Romans Chapter 6 is not “no, no, no”, it’s “know, know, know”. (Jon Curson)
 - a) That means is the emphasis of the chapter is not on “You shouldn’t do this or that”, it is on what we should know as Christians. We’ll get into the specifics in this lesson.
 - b) My point here is Paul does not spend Chapter 6 saying, “No you shouldn’t do this or that.” Paul is not our mom here scolding us like little children. Instead, Paul is educating Christians on what our lifestyle should be like. Our behavior should follow.

- c) Chapter 6 is all about education for Christians. It gives us the knowledge of how to live the sin-less (often) lifestyle.
 - d) I should also add that it is not as easy as, "God says to do it this way, let's go". We are still imperfect beings. I'm going to cover this issue a lot in this lesson. There is a false idea that, "All I have to do is believe in Jesus and all my problems magically should go away". I've yet to see that happen in reality.
 - e) Much of the remainder of Romans sets up a "model" of how Christians should behave. Chapter 6 is in some ways, the first chapter of that model.
4. One last illustration and then I'll start Verse 1. I call this the "two dog" story:
- a) There was once a man who had two dogs. The dogs had a bad habit of fighting each other. Once a neighbor, who observed the dogs, asked the owner, "Which dog usually wins the fight?" The dog owner responded, "The one I fed the most that week."
 - i) In a sense, all Christians have two "inner dogs" inside of us. That doesn't mean we have a craving for dog food or see every tree as a potential bathroom. ☺
 - b) What it does mean is that all born-again believers have two "natures" inside of us.
 - c) One "nature" is the Holy Spirit, who did take up residence inside of us to give us the power to overcome sin and live a life pleasing to God. The other "nature" is our old human nature, which is born with the incurable "sin-disease". God keeps this nature inside of us as to keep us dependant upon Him. If we as Christians never sinned, we would easily turn away from God and our egos would think we are responsible for overcoming sin.
 - d) If we spend a week "feeding" our spiritual side, i.e., regular prayer, regular bible reading, time with other Christians, time just praising God, we are "feeding" our spiritual nature, and it grows stronger.
 - e) "Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 5 18a-19 NIV)
 - f) On the other hand, if we spend a week ignoring God, He in turn, says in so many words, "OK, if you're going to ignore me, I'll just stand back for a little while. I'll wait until you get into trouble and want to call me back."
 - g) Does this mean if I just pray enough and read my bible enough, my life will be perfect and all my problems go away? No. We'll get into that issue in Chapter 7. To summarize, we are imperfect beings. As long as we live as mortals, we have this sin nature inside of us. We will always have to deal with it. On the other hand, it doesn't mean we "give in" to our sinful nature. That's the point of Chapter 6. Speaking of which... ☺
5. Chapter 6, Verse 1: What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means!
- a) It's best to start with the reminder that when Paul wrote this letter, there were no chapter numbers and verse numbers. Those were added many centuries later for our reference.
 - i) Verse 1 of Chapter 6 is a continual thought from end of "Chapter 5".
 - b) A main point of Chapter 5 is that no matter how much we mess up as Christians, as long as we are trusting in Jesus for payment of our sins, "God's forgiveness is greater than our sins, period". Our sins may and do mess up our lives here on earth, but anything and everything is forgivable as long as our trust is in Jesus for payment of the sins.
 - c) To recap another illustration, "God's forgiveness-aspirin is more powerful than our sin-headache; no matter how bad it is, with no side effects!"
 - d) Chapter 6 then asks the question in effect, "So, can I do what I want that causes the headaches in the first place, since God provides this powerful "aspirin"? In other words, "If I can truly get forgiveness for my sins, can I now sin as much as I want?"

- e) Remember the word “repent” means to turn-away from that sin. Repent means we desire to do the exact opposite behavior as the sin itself. Therefore, confession is not only an admission of guilt; it is an admission that we want to change for the better.
 - f) Understand that concept of “repent”, and “sinning all we want” is a contradiction. If we think that deep down, we can sin all we want because God is going to forgive us, we are not truly turning from that sin with the desire to not do it again.
 - g) It is important to understand that the word translated “sinning” here has the concept of “keep on sinning”. If I had to pick a single word to add to this translation, it would be the English word “habitual”. The verse can be “correctly” translated, “If we keep on habitually sinning, will God’s grace increase?”
 - h) Understand that from Verses 2-14, we are going to deal with the issue of “habitual” sin. This is a sinful that one commits as a habit. It is something one continually does knowing that such action is a violation of one of God’s laws.
 - i) Let me give an extreme illustration: Let’s say you have a bad, expensive drug addiction. You need to steal in order to keep that habit going. Every time you steal something, you say, “Lord, forgive me and help me never to do this again.” At the same time, you never do anything to change that lifestyle. You never seek help and you just think, “Well, God knows I want to change and I understand He does forgive me.”
 - i) That is wrong thinking. If one wants to be obedient to God, one takes the steps necessary to change one’s behavior.
 - j) Paul is saying in effect, “Look folks, yes God can and does forgive of any sin. That is not a free license to live anyway you want. There are behavior issues for Christians. (We’ll discuss them specifically as we go.) For right now, just understand, that Christianity is not a license to sin and turn from God thinking, “God will just love me despite my bad behavior”. Yes God still loves you, but at the same time He does care about behavior.”
6. Verse 2 (cont.). By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?
- a) Verse 2 opened with idea of “heaven forbid!” or “no way!” to use different clichés.
 - i) Paul answers the question of “can we now sin as much as we want? With a colorful way of saying “No, that is completely incorrect.”
 - b) Verse 2 opens with the “no” answer to the issue of, “Can we sin all we want? The remainder of Verse 2 to Verse 14 focus on why the word “no” is the correct answer.
 - c) Paul’s second sentence in Verse 2 is, “How can we live in it (sin) any longer?”
 - i) One of the issues we are now going to begin is how to live the Christian life.
 - ii) The first part of Romans, which covers Chapters 1 through 5, deal with the fact we are saved by grace alone. We believed in Jesus’ payment for our sins, and “that’s that” as far as salvation is concerned. The next question is, “Now what?” We still have a life to live. Much of the remainder of Romans deals with that issue. It’s a complicated question and requires much of Romans to answer that question.
 - iii) Remember that Paul is going to focus on “know know know” as opposed to “no, no, no”. He is not teaching, “just don’t do this because it is wrong and stop doing it through willpower”. Instead, Paul is giving us a set of guidelines to follow so that God can work through us to live in obedience to His will. That is the greater concept of what we have to “know”.
 - d) Now let’s get back to Paul’s question in Verse 2: “How can we live in it (sin) any longer?”
 - i) When you read God’s set of do’s and don’ts throughout the bible, there is a logic to it all that says, “You know, this is right. I would live a happier and healthier life if I obeyed these rules than if I didn’t obey these rules.”
 - ii) One reason God gave us all those laws is is for our own happiness. If we all went around not murdering and stealing, the world would be a better place. Jesus said the two greatest commandments are to 1) love God and 2) love your neighbors as yourself. (Ref. Matthew 22:39-40).

- a) The first gives us the power to obey the second. Jesus implied that all the other laws are ""commentary and examples"" based on these two laws. Remember, ""Without God, we can't"". God gave us all of these laws for the sake of our health and happiness.
 - iii) Becoming a Christian has an actual point in our life where we realize that the life we are currently living is wrong. I like the illustration that, ""To become a Christian, one takes their wallet (or purse), their keys and their checkbook and say, ""OK, God, I'm throwing all of these at your feet. All that these items represent (keys, wallet, etc.) now belong to you"". It does not mean we take a vow of poverty. It means that to be a Christian means that God is in control of our lives, and not us. We want God to take over every aspect of our lives.
 - a) We struggle as Christians as there are parts of our lives we ""take back from God"" or never give Him in the first place. Christianity is a constant struggle over who is in control of our lives at any given moment.
 - iv) Which leads us back to Verse 2: Paul said, ""How can we live in it any longer?""
 - a) To become a Christian means that we no longer live the lifestyle we did prior to becoming a Christian. We desire to ""put God on our throne." In practical terms, that means reading our bible for guidance. We study the direct commands and the ""story patterns"" to learn how to live this new life.
 - b) I ask at this point that you be patient with the ""how"" question. We'll talk a lot more about how to live a sin-less (often) life through this lesson.
7. Verse 3: Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
- a) We are now starting the ""know know know"" process of the book of Romans.
 - b) The first thing Paul asks us to know is we ""died with Christ"" before we started this new Christian lifestyle. These two verses focus on the ""death"" of our old nature.
 - c) The next thing we need to understand the term ""baptism"".
 - i) The word ""baptism"" literally means to be immersed with water. This is why our Baptist brethren prefer ""dunking"" to ""sprinkling"". ☺ That's another topic.
 - ii) The Christian ritual of baptism is about associating our lives with Christ.
 - iii) There is a lot of ""friendly debate"" among Christians on this issue. My view is that baptism is not a requirement for salvation. One should be baptized as a public identification with Christ.
 - iv) The classic example is the ""thief on the cross"". When Jesus was on the cross, one other person also being crucified next to Jesus called him Lord and asked Jesus to ""remember him"". Jesus said in effect that this other guy gets to go to heaven. (Reference Luke 23:42-43). The point is this guy was saved and he didn't have time for baptism.
 - v) The counterargument is that Jesus commands us to baptize people when they get saved. Again, I view baptism is a public expression of one's faith in Christ, not an act that salvation itself.
 - vi) What baptism is, from our perspective is saying, ""I want to follow Jesus. I want people around me to know it. I don't want to be a secret. Dunk me!" ☺
 - vii) Some people are probably wondering about baby baptisms. My view is that it doesn't save people. If a baby is baptized, and then ignores God for the rest of their lives, they are not saved. I don't have a problem with the ritual as long as the parents understand it. The baby has no idea what's happening. I see a baby baptism as a ritual for the parents of their commitment to raise the children as Christians. Personally, I would rather see parents go through ""some"" Christian ritual with their children. Any effort to raise children to follow Christ is a step in the right direction.

- d) With all of that in mind, Paul now gets into more specifics about baptism.
 - i) In the traditional ritual, one is put completely underwater by another person, and then raised out of the water.
 - ii) Step one is to be put completely underwater. We as humans cannot live underwater as we cannot breathe. That part of the ritual is associated with death.
 - iii) Step two is to be brought out of the water. The second step is associated with our new life in Jesus Christ. We will discuss that more in Verse 4.
 - iv) The symbolism of our association with Jesus' death and life is the main topic of the early verses of this chapter. We'll discuss "why" of these verses later. For right now, just know that we associate with Jesus' death in "step one" of our baptism.
8. Verse 4: We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.
- a) Paul then answers the question of why Christians should get baptized. It is a public association with our "new life" in Jesus Christ.
 - b) In our modern society, we have many signs of "identification":
 - i) Most adults carry around their driver's license that identifies who they are.
 - ii) We may wear a t-shirt of our favorite sports team to "identify ourselves" with that team. Another example is a passport. It identifies which country of which one is citizen. The idea is we do things to identify ourselves with other "things".
 - iii) As Christians, we "identify" ourselves with Christ. It does not mean bumper stickers are required. ☺ We identify with Christ through our baptism and more importantly, through our new lifestyle in obedience to God's commands.
 - iv) If Jesus is in charge of our lives, we take our orders from Him. He "tells" us what to do, mainly through his Word and prayer. We identify ourselves with Jesus.
 - c) This leads us back to baptism in Paul's example: Paul is emphasizing "identification".
 - i) Paul starts with "death". In the baptism ritual, we put ourselves under water to identify ourselves with Christ death. I once heard of a church that used a coffin for it's baptism ritual. That's actually a good word picture of "identifying" ourselves with Jesus death. When we come out of that water, we are then identifying ourselves with our "new life" in Jesus. That's the point of Verse 4.
 - d) So what is this "new life" that Paul is talking about in Verse 4?
 - i) I'll give you a clue: It's more than the fact we are resurrected after death.
 - ii) It is about living a new life here and now. That is a main topic of Romans Chapters 6 through 8, along with the latter chapters of Romans.
 - iii) To start, God did not save us, so we could then walk around earth waiting to die. If God has called you and me, then He has a purpose for our lives. It is more than just trusting God; it is about having a joyful life living in obedience to His word.
 - iv) Further, a "sin-less" life is possible. I'm not talking about being perfect. Chapter 6 shows us how to sin-less-than-we-do. In Chapter 7, Paul deals with the issue that no matter how we try, the sin "issue" is still there. The point is sin is a "beast", but that beast can be tamed if we follow God's directions. It won't go away until we die, but God lays out a program to keep it under control.
9. Verse 5: If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.
- a) The point here is that our baptism "association" with Jesus comes with a bonus prize. ☺
 - b) That prize is we are "united" with Jesus in this life as we will be united with Him in the next life. It is as if we all get married to Jesus with the preacher saying, "until death do you part". Well, we don't die. We live forever. That "association" with Jesus goes on forever. Christians live here on earth for a purpose: To glorify God in all that we do. That purpose then continues into the next life. Grant it, the next life won't be as difficult with the sin curse dragging us down, but the "marriage" continues into the next life.

- c) One has to read Verse 5 with a sense of hope. Not hope with doubt, but hope as in, “this hope is what I live for”. Life here has its wonderful moments, but also its tragic ones. Jesus wants us to get to a point of maturity where we realize that life with Him is better than any and all aspects of our life here on earth.
10. Verse 6: For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—⁷because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.
- a) Earlier I alluded to the fact that one can live a “sin-less” (as in sin-much-less) lifestyle. Paul is laying out the “how”. Remember, this chapter is not “no, no, no”, but “know know know”. Paul is giving us a set of instructions to follow.
- b) Remember that Paul opened this section talking about a person who is living in habitual sin. Notice Paul never says, “You know that bad habit of yours? Well you can just kiss heaven goodbye because God’s given up on you.” That’s a lie of Satan, pure and simple.
- c) Paul is teaching that whatever habitual sin we have is wrong, but Paul never, (emphasize never) says we are beyond hope. Remember that turning one’s life over to Jesus is the first step. The remainder of our lives is God “cleaning us up” of our sinful habits, whether they are “habitual” or “occasional”.
- d) Now let’s talk about the “Paul’s know know know” of Verse 6. He states that since we “identified” ourselves with the cross, part of that ritual means that we no longer have to be associated with sin. One can describe our new life as a Christian as the discovery of “Hey, we’re in jail, it’s a comfy jail, but a jail nonetheless. Hey look, Jesus unlocked the door and all I have to do is walk out. Still, this jail is pretty comfy and I’m accustomed to this place. I’m not sure I’m ready to leave just yet.” ☺
- i) What Paul is saying is “freeing” in the sense that we should realize we are free from prison. We no longer have to be obedient to that habitual sin. We no longer have to be obedient to that occasional sin. Jesus has set us free.
- ii) I can just here some of you saying, “Wait a minute. I’ve been guilty of fill-in-the-blank for twenty-seven years. Are you saying “just like that” I won’t commit that sin no more? What about drug addicts? Are you saying that all they have to is give their lives to Jesus and the addiction magically goes away?” Usually, no.
- a) There are exceptions. Every now and then one will hear of the bad drug addict, who accepts Jesus and, immediately, no more craving.
- b) For most others, it’s a much longer road. Jesus had to have sin crucified in a painful bloody death. Our sins, in many cases have been around for years. They too, must often suffer that long painful death.
- iii) One can read of the Israelites wandering through the desert as a word-picture of this issue. The “Promised Land” represents the rich full life that God desires for us, free of the sins that chain us. The problem is we miss our old life. To use an old bible cliché, “It took the Israelites 40 days to get out of Egypt, and 40 years to get Egypt out of the Israelites. The point is it often takes a lifetime for God to help us set ourselves free of the sins we have “enchained ourselves to”.
- iv) This sort of leads to the topic of the “12-step” program. I respect the technique highly with minor reservations. The 12-steps are originally bible-based. The support groups are helpful, especially for accountability. My personal beef (take it as that) is that for example, an alcoholic during these steps always calls himself an “alcoholic” no matter how long they’ve been sober. In Jesus, we are a “new being” as implied in Verse 6. We are no longer, say an alcoholic. Our “new being” still has to battle our old nature, but the perspective should be “With God, we’ve already crossed the finish line”. The rest is just the clean-up operation.
- e) Meanwhile, I think I got up to Verse 8. ☺

11. Verse 8: Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.
- a) It's time for another classic Christian cliché: "Born once, die twice; born twice, die once."
 - i) That means is for a person who never commits their lives to Jesus, they are going to die two times. The first is at the end of their human life. The second time is when they get judged and sentenced to hell for eternity. The idea of "born twice" is the actual moment of committing one's life to Jesus. One begins a second life. That is our second birth. We only die the human death. There is no second death.
 - ii) Jesus said, "You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'" (John 3:7 NIV)
 - iii) "Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years." (Rev. 20:6 NIV)
 - iv) I once attended a birthday party for a pastor. The band sang this cute song: "Happy birthday to you; happy birthday to you; you used to have one birthday; but now you have two! Happy birthday to you!" (Any Christian can apply this!)
 - b) Now let's get back to the verse. Verse 9 says, "He can no longer die again".
 - i) Jesus died once for our sins. There will be no repeat performance. ☺
 - ii) The same applies for Christians. Once we die the human death, that's a wrap for us ever having to experience death.
 - iii) Remember this is about "association". We associate with Jesus. We symbolically do that in baptism. We associate with His death. We associate with His new life.
 - iv) Understand this is a "done deal". Once one is physically born, they can't become "unborn". I've yet to see a baby make a u-turn back in the womb once they are fully out. ☺ Our new life as Christians is guaranteed only because it's not based on our faithfulness, but God's faithfulness. Christians can take comfort in the fact we can't lose our salvation as long as we trust in Jesus' payment for our sins.
 - c) Now let's look at Verse 10: "The death he died, he died to sin once for all";
 - i) This sentence teaches us a couple of things. Every now and then you will read a story of someone attempting to crucify themselves like Jesus. The correct answer is "why?" This verse says it wasn't necessary. If Jesus paid the full price for sins, there is no reason to self-inflict any pain upon ourselves.
 - ii) There is also why I reject the idea of "purgatory". There are no bible references to that place whatsoever. To those who believe in purgatory, I like to ask the question, "So are you saying Jesus' payment for your sins was insufficient?"
 - d) Consider this: If Jesus died for our sins, why do we punish ourselves? We all spend time in guilt thinking, "I should have not done that." If God is willing to forgive us, why can't we forgive ourselves? Our problem is our ego's think we're better than we really are!
12. Verse 11: In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
- a) Remember Paul is dealing with the issue of habitual sin. The way to conquer bad habits is to start with proper knowledge. Know, and accept the idea that we no longer have to commit that sin. We are "freed" from those habits. "Step 1" to a sin-less life is to know that a born-again believer has the power and knowledge that the "jail door is open".
 - b) The method for us to overcome any type of sin requires the surrender of our will to God's will. Praying for God's will in our life gives us the power to overcome any and all sin in our life. Again, God changes some people faster than others. As Christians, we never are perfect in this life on earth. Paul's methodology is about sinning "less" and helping us enjoy, the rich, full life God has intended for us.

13. Verse 12: Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³Do 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.
- a) So far, I've given you mostly "theory" without the practical applications. If there is one thing my many years of formal education has taught me, is that theory does little in terms of practical knowledge of say, the business world. Formal education teaches you how to "think, process and reason". After that, the best way to get practical training is usually through on the job training and just plain practice.
 - i) The reason I state this principal is that Paul is using a similar method of education.
 - ii) First Paul has been teaching in this chapter what we have to know:
 - a) Know that we are freed from the deadly grips of sin.
 - b) Know that we know longer "have" to sin.
 - c) Know that we are "identified" with Christ. That means we are "one of His". That means we live to obey His commands, not ours. That means our desire is for God to reign in our hearts and not ourselves.
 - iii) Verse 13 is the "practical" instruction.
 - b) The key to understanding these verses is to look at the middle of verse 13. It says, "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin". Ok, what does that mean? Does that mean we tell our arm to put down that ninth drink of alcohol? ☺ Does that mean we tell our leg to hold still when we want to kick someone in anger? ☺ Not exactly.
 - i) To explain this, one has to understand momentum. If you are driving a big 18-wheel truck, it doesn't go from 0-60 mph in two seconds. It takes time to build up to that speed. At that same time, that same truck can't stop in a 10-foot stretch once it is going 60 mph. Momentum has to be built up in the truck speed and momentum is needed to change the speed.
 - ii) Remember the issue of the moment is habitual sin. A bad habit does not start in a moment. I've yet to meet a young person who says, "When I grow up, I want to be the town drunk and make my life miserable". ☺ It takes "momentum" in the wrong direction for such a thing to happen.
 - iii) Turning your life around for the better also requires momentum. Paul gives us the tools to "apply the brakes". That is what all the "know know know" stuff is all about. These are things to tell ourselves in order to change. Even if we have the head-knowledge to apply the breaks, we still have to put our foot on that pedal. "Wisdom" is actually applying the "spiritual breaks" to that bad habit.
 - iv) Which leads back to: "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin". Paul is saying in effect, "Apply the brakes, man! God has provided the brake pedal and the brake pads. You can do it!" It starts with that first step in the right direction.
 - v) In summary, God wants us to "change directions" from a bad habit.
 - vi) I have found the best way to kill a bad habit is to let it die a slow painful death. The longer we walk away from it, the easier it gets. Grant it, we are still "sinful people" by nature and it never fully goes away, but it does get easier as one walks away from it.
 - c) So are you saying to the habitual sinner, "Just walk away?" That's a start. Is it easy? Of course not. Is it painful? Of course it is. Is it worth it? Yes, it's worth it. Change is always uncomfortable. It's easy to live with bad habits because we are used to them.
 - i) Let me also add that prayer is a necessary part of the momentum-change-picture.
 - ii) Remember the line, "Without God, we can't". God not only wants us to change, but does provide the power to help us change. That is what Paul meant by, "But rather offer yourselves to God" in Verse 13. The "rather" is prayer help. The "rather" is instead of falling temptation to that habitual sin, pray for God's help.

- iii) Let me offer a sample prayer. "Lord, right now, I'm feeling that urge again. I need your help. Without You, I can't do it. I know that sin no longer controls my life. Give me the power and faith to accept that fact. Please help. Help me to remember my body belongs to You. Bring help in my life for accountability if need be. I associate with you Lord Jesus, and I am asking for your help."
 - iv) A bible promise is that God does provide a way of escape. (See 1st Corinthians 10:13). In a sense, this prayer is putting God to the test. God promised to provide help. It is an unconditional promise. I've yet to see God fail to answer a prayer related to one of God's unconditional promises.
- 14. Verse 14: For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.
 - a) Paul ends this section on "dealing with habitual sin" with a final reminder of the key point: We as Christians are not "under law". We are "under grace".
 - b) Let's talk about being "under the law". That means you desire that God judge you based on your ability to keep say, the 10 Commandments, or say, all of the Old Testament laws.
 - i) In the next chapter, we'll get into more details about being under God's laws. For right now, just think of it as trying to please God based on our efforts.
 - ii) Peter spent his life trying to keep all of those laws prior to his conversion. Notice "elder" Peter's statement, made later in his life: "Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke (keeping the law) that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." (Acts 15:10-11 NIV)
 - iii) God formally gave "The Law" to Moses. It was roughly 1,500 years later that Jesus came. Why such a large time gap? To show us, through history of man's inability to please God by keeping those laws.
 - c) Does that mean we are ignore God's laws? Of course not. The issue is not obedience; it is the issue of "self-discipline" versus "God's power". This leads to being "under grace".
 - i) God's grace does not mean God says to us, "I love you just as you are. Now go out and play and I'll let you know when it's time to die." ☺ God loves us too much to leave us in our present sinful state. God's grace is all about Him loving us in our present sinful state and God working through us to change us for the better. Does God desire obedience? Of course. That obedience comes from submitting our will to His and letting God work through us to mature us.
 - ii) The difference between "under law" versus "under grace" is like trying to tell God, "I can keep your laws all by myself, I don't need your help" as opposed to correctly saying, "Lord, I see your laws and realize how rotten a person I am. Work through me so I can live in compliance with Your will for my life."
 - d) Again, this is about dealing with habitual sin. A key step to overcome such issues is to remember, "without God, we can't". We have to realize that God loves us as we are. That is understanding God's grace. Next we have to accept God wants to work through us to change us for the better. That is also part of God's grace.
 - e) Grace is receiving a free unmerited gift. Yes, that includes eternal life and that's a pretty nice gift. ☺ The free grace gift is also about God working through us to change us for the better here and now.
- 15. Verse 15: What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!
 - a) Let's look at the first few sentences of Chapter 6 again. It said, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ²Certainly not!
 - i) My point here is "What's the difference between Verse 1 and Verse 15?"
 - ii) They appear to be fairly identical. You have to know a little about the original Greek language to understand the difference.

- iii) Verse 1 is about “habitual” sin, while Verse 15 and onward deal with “occasional” sin. The difference between Verses 1 and 15 has to do with the grammar of the verb “sin” in the original Greek.
 - iv) In Verse 1, notice it says, “continue in sin”. That refers to habitual sins.
 - v) In Verse 15, it says, “shall we sin”. That refers to occasional sins. It refers to some sin we committed that say, for the moment, is not part of some habitual pattern.
 - b) Now that we understand that, let me summarize the remainder of Chapter 6. Suppose someone asked the question at this point, “OK, I understand God’s grace helps people stuck in some habitual sin. What about the person who doesn’t have any particular bad habits but just the “occasional” sin when that person messes up?
 - i) In other words, the question of Verse 15 is, “You know, I read my bible, pray and go to church. I’m not aware of any bad habits in my life. So far, I appear to be doing pretty well all on my own without having to submit to God. Am I in the same “category” as those habitual sinners of the first part of Chapter 6?”
 - ii) The idea of the rest of the chapter is that the same “problem and solution” applies to all Christians, not just those dealing with some habitual issues.
 - c) Another aspect of this verse is Paul asking the question in effect, “Is it ok to sin once in awhile since we are “under God’s grace?” Paul ends Verse 15 with “By no means”.
 - i) Are you saying we are to be perfect and never mess up? No. We are imperfect beings. Remember this chapter is about how to live the sin-less (often) lifestyle. God wants us to be obedient in every aspect of our lives. When we mess up, we are to confess that sin. Still, knowledge of our imperfection is no excuse to ignore God in the first place or not turn our lives over to him.
- 16. Verse 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?
 - a) It’s time to talk a little about the concept of slavery. When we think of slavery, we think of somebody captured in chains and being forced to work for someone against their will. Slaves endure slavery because the physical pain and punishment of running away is worse than the duties as a slave.
 - b) There is also another type of slavery. Let’s call it “volunteer slavery”. It is the idea that you love someone so much, you want to be his or her slave.
 - i) The opening sentence of Romans 1 is where Paul calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ. The idea is that of a voluntary slave.
 - c) Now think about someone with an addiction problem. Nobody starts that way. It starts “voluntary” and grows to a point where they become an addict. They are “slaves” to that drug of choice. That can be an example of “slaves to sin, which leads to death”.
 - d) At this point it is important to understand that all people serve some sort of God. There are no exceptions. All humans are born with a need to worship something. Some people suppress that need, but it comes out in different forms. If you were invisible and could watch any person for a week, or so, you will find out their “god”. If you could see how they spend their spare time and spare income, you will find their god(s).
 - e) The main point of this verse has to do with people who look to other “things” as a central focus of their lives instead of God. People who are more interested in making money than say, going to church is a prime example. People who are more interested in “having fun” on a Sunday morning instead of a desire to praise God (out of love, not out of guilt!) is an example of “serving another god”. Paul’s point is that serving any and all other false-gods (including the gods of pleasure, fame, etc.) leads to eternal death. Remember my cliché, “Born once, die twice, born twice, die once”.

- f) As I've stated in the past, I am not anti-hobby for Christians. If you truly love God with all of your heart and soul, one's desire for "other things" are limited. The way to "test" that hobby or interest is if God told you to walk away from it tomorrow, would you still obey God and follow Him?
 - i) I have also seen God use our hobbies and interests for His glory. For example, I know someone who loves surfing. He started a surfing ministry program for kids. He holds a surfing contest and then holds a bible study afterwards. That's a wonderful way of combining one's hobby in a way to glorify God.
 - g) Let's get back to the concept of "volunteer slavery". God desires that we act that way toward him. Turning our lives over to God is a word picture of "volunteer slavery". It is the idea that we desire God to rule over every aspect of our lives. In every part of our daily lives, "God is the master and we are the slaves in that we must obey our master".
 - i) Christian maturity is about constantly finding old and new parts of our lives where God is, for the moment, not our "master". This is what Paul meant in the last phrase of Verse 17 with "obedience, which leads to righteousness".
17. Verse 17: But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. ¹⁸You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.
- a) The good news about slavery is that you can only have one slave-master. Paul is saying in effect, "If you choose to be a slave to God, then you are no longer a slave to sin".
 - b) Remember the issue-of-the-moment is how to deal with the "occasional" sin. The occasional sin can be some sin we commit once a day or once in awhile. The point is we don't overcome that sin by thinking, "If I only try harder, I can do better next time." We do overcome that sin by saying, "Lord, I am servant. I confess that sin to you. I submit my will to yours in that I agree what I did is wrong and I want to act differently. Be in charge of this aspect of my life and all aspects of my life. May Your grace work through me to mature me into the person You want me to be."
 - i) Paul wants us to have the attitude of we are "set free of all and every sin". We don't "have" to commit that sin. Christians can't use the excuse of "I couldn't help myself". It starts with knowing that God gives us the power to overcome any and all sin. All we have to do is harness that power, through prayer to change for the better. Again, this is not about perfect. We're imperfect beings. Still, that is no excuse with not submitting ourselves to God in the first place.
 - c) If I had to pick one word to remember in these verses, it is "wholeheartedly". That is the idea that every aspect of our lives should be as if we are slaves to God's commands.
18. Verse 19: I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.
- a) Verse 19 starts with "I put this in human terms". That means Paul wanted to use word-pictures that people can understand. When Paul wrote this letter, the majority of people living in the Roman Empire were slaves. I'm speculating most of the Christians living in Rome reading this letter were slaves.
 - i) Did Paul condone slavery? No. I'm guessing that if Paul were emperor of Rome, he would set everyone free. Paul had "bigger fish to fry". He was busy trying to get the gospel message out within the Roman Empire and not a political upheaval.
 - b) Now let's talk about "used to offer the parts of your body to slavery". That doesn't mean for example, that if you are an alcoholic, it's your arm's fault for putting those drinks in your mouth and not your fault. ☺ Paul is saying that people offered their body parts for sin. The sin started as a thought and we acted on that thought. We then used our body parts to perform that sin.

- c) Paul is saying in effect, “The body follows the thoughts of the brain”. Since we are now submitting ourselves to God, the body should now follow the brain for God’s glory and not for sin. That is what Paul means by offering our body parts for good.
 - i) Let me give an example. Let’s say you have a bad temper and you yell at others constantly. You can pray, “Lord, I offer up my mouth for your glory. May my mouth be used to say things that are pleasing to you.
 - ii) Another example is Psalm 19:4, “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. (NIV)
19. Verse 20: When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.
- a) For those who saved as adults, think back to before you were saved: Did you care about pleasing God? The answer is truthfully, not really. Did you care about whether or not you were accountable to God? Again, not really,
 - i) That is why Paul says, we were “free from the control of righteousness”. If we didn’t care what God thought about our lives, we were free from accountability.”
 - b) The only problem with ignoring God is it leads to hell. Other than that, it’s not so bad. ☺ If it wasn’t for the fact God “drafted you” for salvation, you and I would still be going down the “party-path to hell.” We change because we see the futility of a life without God. We change because in the end, there is no sense of satisfaction. Any sin choice always desires more. “Occasional” sins become habitual sins if left unchecked.
20. Verse 21: What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!
- a) Most Christians, including myself, can look back in shame at our lifestyle before we turned our lives over to God. All I can do is thank God He forgave me for my past.
 - b) Living a life for anything and everything other than God leads to eternal death. Unfortunately, most people have to learn that the hard way.
 - c) There was a seminary professor whose entire life is around other Christians. He said in effect, “Every now and then, I go out and hang around some non-Christians long enough to remind myself how bad it is out there”. That should be our motto as well. There is nothing wrong with spending time with non-Christian friends assuming it doesn’t lead to some sinful action. If our primary desire is to please God, our actions should follow and that includes who we spend time with. Remember we are always witnesses for Jesus Christ in every aspect of our lives. That includes humility in our attitudes!
21. Verse 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.
- a) Verse 22 is Paul answering the question of, “Why bother”? Let’s face it being a Christian is a difficult thing to do. Our ego wants us to be in charge of our lives as opposed to God. We serve a God we can’t see, hear or touch.
 - b) Given all that, why bother? Paul answers, “He benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.” Ok, that’s a pretty good reason. ☺ We get to live forever.
 - c) Paul’s point is that it’s worth it. It is worth whatever suffering we have to go through. It is worth all the difficulty. Further, once we’ve crossed that line of giving our lives over to Jesus, we realize that living in obedience to God’s rules brings far greater joy and satisfaction to our lives than any and every alternative the world has to offer.
 - d) This gets back to the issue of “occasional sin”. God not only wants us to live forever in heaven with Him, but to live now in obedience to Him. Life on earth is “preparation” for heaven. Every sin we commit is a direct act of disobedience to God. If God is our slave-master, then everything we do must be pleasing to Him. No sin can be tolerated.

22. Verse 23: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- a) This verse is considered one of the most famous in the bible. It has been often memorized by Christians throughout the ages. It is used to show others the Gospel of God.
 - i) There are a handful of verses called the “Romans Road”. These verses, when laid out in a certain order, are a good summary of the Gospel message. Verse 23 is part of that Romans Road. For those who want to see all those verses together, they are Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:13, 10:9-10. I’m running long, so you’ll have to look them up yourself. ☺
 - b) This verse can be summarized by the idea of “two paths in life”. One is a path leading away from God and one is a path leading to God. The cost of living a life apart from God is eternal death. Again, “live once, die twice, live twice (i.e., born-again), and die once”. Jesus himself talked about this concept in Matthew 7:13-14:
 - i) Jesus said, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. (NIV)
 - c) Let’s be honest. A sinful life can be a lot of fun. The problem is there is always a price to pay. There is no exception to this.
 - d) On that happy note, ☺ we can wrap up Chapter 6.
23. If Chapter 6 is depressing, hang in there, Chapter 8 is coming, which is one of the high-points of the bible. The purpose of Chapter 6 and 7 is to give us the knowledge and methodology to deal with the sins in our lives.
- a) In summary, know that as a Christian we are no longer under the power of sin. Step 1 is to realize that fact.
 - b) The next step, which usually requires the remainder of our lives on earth, is to constantly and consistently pray for God to be in charge of our lives.
 - c) We need to pray for God’s guidance and His grace to overcome any and all actions of our lives that are displeasing to Him.
 - d) We need to submit ourselves as slaves to God in order to overcome our sins. God’s power is greater than our sins. God wants to help us overcome our sins. Once we accept that, we can lead live a sin-less (often) life.
 - e) I’ll consider this last bullet point my closing prayer and end it for this lesson. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.