

# Power to Live Without Sin

<b>Key Text:</b>	Romans 6:1-23; 7:1-25
<b>Key Verse(s):</b>	“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.” (Romans 7:18-19)

## Background to the Study

In Romans 6, Paul explores foundational Gospel doctrines, including sin’s penalty, living without sin, the significance of water baptism, and the necessity of sanctification. The chapter divides into two sections: the first addresses freedom from sin (vs. 1-11), and the second focuses on living as servants of righteousness (vs. 12-23). Paul rejects the idea that salvation by grace permits continued sin, responding with a strong “God forbid” (vs. 2). He emphasizes that being “dead to sin” means one cannot live in it any longer. Baptism, Paul explains, symbolizes believers' death to sin and new life in Christ (vs. 3-5).

He also teaches the subject of sanctification, stating that “our old man is crucified” that the “body of sin [carnality, the sin nature, or the old man] might be destroyed.” The Greek word translated “sin” in these verses (harmartia) implies an inward condition of sin out of which acts of sin originate. As a result of the crucifixion and death of the old man, the justified individual is “freed from sin” – the inclination or bent toward sinning is eradicated. The Greek word in verse 6 translated destroyed (karatgeo) means “abolish or eradicate,” and thus conclusively proves that the sin nature is not merely suppressed but is done away with at sanctification. Though sin no longer reigns, the justified and sanctified person still must maintain his experiences by living “unto God” (verse 10). Paul urges believers to present themselves as instruments of righteousness, yielding to God for holiness and eternal life (vs. 13-22). He reiterates that freedom from sin results in righteousness, while sin that is not repented of will lead to eternal separation from God and eternal punishment. (vs. 23).

In Romans 7, Paul reflects on his struggle with sin before his conversion. In verses 1-6, Paul substantiated the point he had made in Romans 6:14 – that Christians are not under the Law but under grace. In that verse, he had used the analogy of slavery to illustrate that the person living under the Law is dominated by sin; in this substantiation of his point, he used the analogy of marriage to illustrate emancipation from the Law. A married woman is legally bound to her spouse, but when the husband dies, the law of marriage no longer applies. Just as death dissolves the binding connection between husband and wife, so believers are freed from the Law through the death of Christ – when Jesus died on the Cross, the Law ceased to be in effect. The believer thus becomes “dead to the law” and is freed to become united with Christ.

He clarifies that the Law's purpose is to reveal sin, not to save (vs. 7-13). Paul describes his internal conflict, acknowledging the Law's holiness but his inability to overcome sin due to his carnal nature (vs. 14-25). Although he had recognized that the Law was "holy" (verse 12) and "spiritual" (verse 14) because it was from God, he had been unable to overcome the tyranny of his carnal nature. While the Law had stirred up his conscience, it could not purify his heart nor create the obedience which it enjoined. He ends with gratitude, recognizing that only through Jesus Christ can he be delivered from sin's power (vs. 24-25).

## Testimony from Our Day

The concept of freedom differs for many. In the USA, Independence Day on July 4th marks freedom from British rule, seen as a God-given right. For the Chris Botofan family, freedom meant escaping the oppression of Communist Romania when they arrived in Portland, Oregon, in 1979. A more dramatic example of the desire for freedom came when two prisoners escaped a New York maximum-security prison, but their freedom was short-lived, illustrating that what they experienced was not true freedom.

True freedom, as Paul describes in Romans 6:17-18, is liberation from sin's bondage and power. Sin harms and destroys; freedom is healing and wholeness of the inner man. Sin brings guilt; freedom brings a clear conscience. Sin causes condemnation and fear; freedom results in peace with God and having no fear of death or eternity. Those who have made Jesus the Lord of their lives are no longer enslaved by sin – they have the power to live victoriously without sin. They are truly free! Is that your experience today? It can be!

In the early 18th century, spiritual apathy led God to raise John Wesley. Despite his devout upbringing, Wesley struggled with sin until a spiritual awakening on May 24, 1738, when he found assurance in God's salvation and deliverance from his sin nature. Wesley's experience of entire sanctification, a second work of grace that cleanses the heart and enables victorious living, became central to his teachings.

Both Paul and Wesley understood the two-fold nature of sin: committed sins and the sinful nature. They taught that repentance and faith bring forgiveness, but sanctification is necessary to overcome sin's power. Paul's letters and Wesley's teachings fuelled the spread of Christianity and a holiness revival that continues to bring victory today.

# A Closer Look

Question 1	In Romans 6:11, what did Paul indicate believers were to be dead to? What do you think this means? How would you explain the significance of water baptism, based upon Paul's allusion to it in Romans 6:3-5?
Question 2	In Romans 6, Paul addressed several foundational doctrines of the Gospel including the nature of sin and its penalty. Based on verses 1-11, how would you summarize Paul's description of what it means to be free from sin?
Question 3	What are some ways we can yield our members as "instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13)?
Question 4	In Romans 7, the Apostle Paul described himself prior to his Damascus Road experience, and described the conflict that raged within while he was a religious sinner. Though he had genuinely wanted to do right, the power to do so was lacking because it was overcome by a stronger prevailing force: the nature of sin. In verses 14-25, Paul wrote of the awful failure of his former efforts to break free from sin's dominion. While the Law had stirred up his conscience, it could not empower the obedience which it enjoined. Still, he recognized the value of the Law. What words did he use to describe the Law in verses 12 and 14? In spite of those words, what did the Law fail to do? How did the Law create in Paul a vivid awareness of sin?
Question 5	In Romans 7:11, Paul asserted that sin "deceived" him. What are some ways we can guard against the deceitfulness of sin?

## Take Home

While people view freedom in different ways, salvation is what brings true freedom. Freedom from the captivity of sin allows us to offer ourselves as obedient and willing servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The best of intentions and the most strenuous of efforts are no match for the nature of sin with which we are born. However, God provides victory through the experiences of justification and sanctification.