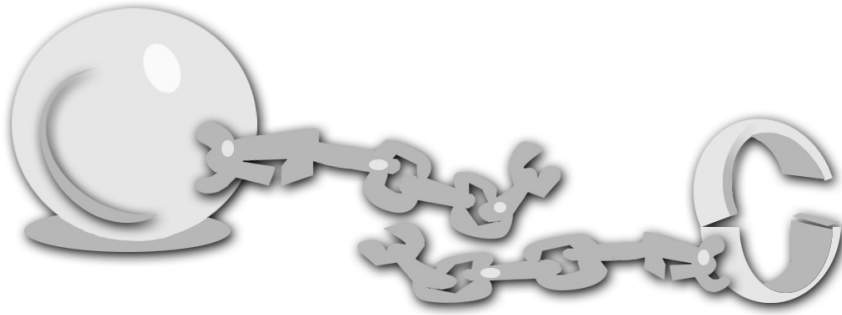


# Victory (Winning) Over Sin



## SABBATH—AUGUST 7

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Romans 6; 1 John 1:8–2:1.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Sin will not be your master. Law does not rule you. God’s grace<sup>1</sup> has set you free” (Romans 6:14, NlrV).

**PAUL PREACHES ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, APART FROM THE DEEDS (ACTS) OF THE LAW.** Then he goes on to answer the obvious question: If works cannot save us, why bother with them at all? Why not just keep on sinning?

In chapter 6, Paul answers this important question. He now is dealing with “sanctification.”<sup>2</sup> Sanctification is the way we overcome sin and become more Christlike. But the word *sanctification* does not show up in Romans. (The word *sanctified* [made holy] is used once, in Romans 15:16.)

Does this mean that Paul has nothing to say about sanctification? Not at all. Paul simply does not use that word.

In the Bible *to sanctify* means “to dedicate [to be given],” usually to God. So, to be sanctified is often talked about as something that has already happened. For example, “all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32). The sanctified ones are the ones who have been dedicated to God.

But this use of “sanctify” in the Bible does not deny the important doctrine of sanctification. And it does not deny the fact that sanctification is the work of a lifetime. The Bible strongly supports this doctrine (belief). But it usually uses other words to describe it.

This week we will study another side of salvation<sup>3</sup> by faith. This is the side that easily can be misunderstood. It shows the promises of victory over sin in the life of anyone who is saved by Jesus.

1. grace—God’s gift of forgiveness and mercy (kindness that is not deserved) that He freely gives us to take away our sins.

2. sanctification—growing in Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit.

3. salvation—God’s plan for saving sinners from eternal (without end) death; the gift of eternal life; being saved from sin or evil.

**SUNDAY—AUGUST 8****GRACE OVERFLOWING****(Romans 5:20)**

In Romans 5:20, Paul makes a powerful statement: “But where sin increased, God’s grace increased even more” (NirV). The point Paul makes is that sin may be strong, and the results of sin may be terrible. But Paul argues that God’s grace is enough to deal with sin. That should bring great hope for each of us, especially if we are tempted to feel that our sins are too great to be forgiven! In the next verse Paul shows that sin has led to death. But God’s grace through Jesus has defeated (beaten) death and can give us eternal (forever; without end) life.



**Where sin overflowed, God’s grace overflowed even more!**

**What reasoning is Paul dealing with in Romans 6:1? In the following verses (Romans 6:2–11),**

**how does Paul answer that kind of thinking?**

In chapter 6 Paul explains why a justified<sup>4</sup> person should not sin. To begin with, Paul says that we should not sin, because we have died to sin. Then he explains what he means.

To be baptized<sup>5</sup> in the water is like being buried in a grave. What gets buried? The “old man” of sin does. The “old man” means the body that is fully controlled by sin. When a person is baptized, this “body of sin” is destroyed, so that we no longer serve sin. In Romans 6, sin is pictured as a master who rules over his servants. Once the “body of sin” that served sin is destroyed, sin has no more control over it. The one who rises from the watery grave comes up a new person who no longer serves sin. He or she now walks in the newness of life.

Christ died once and for all. But He is now alive forevermore. Death can never rule Him. So, in the same way, the Christian who is baptized has died to sin once and for all. And he or she should never again come under the control of sin.

Of course, as any baptized Christian knows, sin does not just disappear from our lives as soon as we come up out of the water. Not being under the control of sin does not mean that we will not have to struggle with it. We have a daily, moment-by-moment battle to keep thinking of ourselves as dead to sin and alive unto Christ. The

4. justified—forgiven; made holy; made righteous (holy and pure); cleansed from sin.

5. baptized—to be put completely under water and brought back up out of it. This shows that Jesus has forgiven the sins of this person and has given him or her a new life.

promise of victory is there, but we must claim that promise by faith. We always must remember that God's grace is overflowing, even when we sin.

**What has been your experience with the power of sin in your life, even after baptism? What choices are you making that let sin have the power over you that it should not have? This may occur (happen) even though we have all the promises in the Bible for victory over it.**

### MONDAY—AUGUST 9

#### SIN PICTURED AS A PERSON (Romans 6:12)

**What warning is given to us in Romans 6:12?**

The word *reign* (rule) shows that "sin" is pictured as a king. The Greek word here translated as "reign" means "to be a king" or "to work as a king." Sin is very willing to rule over our mortal bodies as a king and control the way we act and think.

Paul says "let not sin . . . reign [rule]" (KJV). By this Paul suggests that the justified person can choose to stop sin from becoming king of his or her life. This is where the action of our will (the power of choice) comes in.

"What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing [ruling] power in the nature<sup>6</sup>



The word *reign* in Romans 6:12 shows that "sin" is pictured as a king that wants to rule over us.

of man. It is the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. God has given this power of choice to men and women. It is theirs to use. You cannot change your heart. You cannot by yourself give to God the heart's own interests. But you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will. God will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So, your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ. Your interests will be centered upon Him. Your thoughts will be in unity<sup>7</sup> with Him."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 47.

The Greek word in Romans 6:12 translated "lusts" means "desires." These desires may be for good things or for bad. When sin rules, it will make us desire the bad. The desires will be strong, even hard to say No to if we fight against them on our own. Sin is a tyrant.<sup>8</sup> It never is happy with what

6. nature—the particular aspect or quality of something that makes the thing what it is; the heart and mind.

7. unity—the state of being in full agreement.

8. tyrant—a cruel ruler.

it has. It always comes back for more. Only through faith and claiming the promises of victory can we overthrow (defeat) this stubborn ruler.

The word *therefore* in this verse is important. It goes back to what has been said before, especially in verses 10 and 11. The baptized person is now living “unto God.” That means God is the center of his or her new life. The person is serving God. He or she is doing what pleases God. So, he or she cannot serve sin at the same time. He or she is “alive unto God through Jesus Christ.”

**Review Ellen G. White’s quote in today’s study. Notice how important the idea of free will is. As moral<sup>9</sup> people, we must have a free will. We have the power to choose right and wrong, good and evil, Christ or the world. Over the next 24 hours, think about how you are using this moral free will. What can you learn about your use, or abuse, of this holy gift?**

## TUESDAY—AUGUST 10

### UNDER THE LAW? (Romans 6:14)

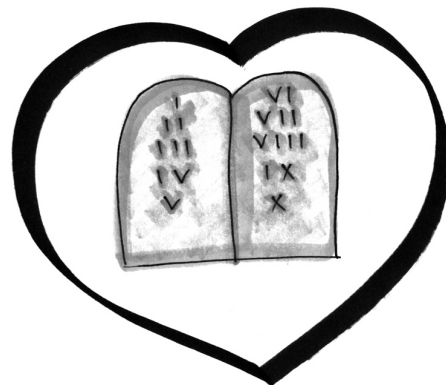
**How are we to understand Romans 6:14? Does it mean that the Ten Commandments are not legal anymore? If not, why not?**

Romans 6:14 is one of the key verses often used to tell us that keep-

ing the seventh-day Sabbath is no longer necessary.

But that is clearly not what this verse means. As we asked before, how could sin still be around if the moral law<sup>10</sup> was removed? This is because the moral law is what describes sin.

Paul is saying to the Romans that the person living “under the law,” which means under the Jewish system,<sup>11</sup> will be ruled by sin. But a person living under grace will have victory over sin. This is because the law is written on his or her heart. And this is because he or she is letting the spirit of God guide his or her steps. This means accepting Jesus Christ as the Messiah (Chosen One). It means being justified (made clean and right) by Him. It means being baptized into His death. It means having the “old man” destroyed. And it means rising to walk in the newness of life. These are the things that will dethrone (drive out) sin from our lives. They are the promises God has given to us of victory over sin.



**A person living under grace will have the law written in his or her heart.**

9. moral—concerning or relating to what is right or wrong in human (having to do with people) behavior.

10. moral law—the Ten Commandments.

11. system—a set of beliefs and practices.

We should not interpret<sup>12</sup> “under the law” too strictly. The person who is supposed to live “under grace” but disobeys God’s law will not find grace but will find judgment against him or her. “Under grace” means that through the grace of God, Christ removes the judgment of the law against sinners. So, now free from this judgment of death brought by the law, we live in “newness of life.” This is a life that shows that we are dead to “old selves” and are no longer slaves to sin.

**How have you experienced and enjoyed how real Christ is? What proof can you point to that shows what Christ has done in you? In what areas are you refusing to let go of the things that keep you from Him? Why must you let them go?**

### WEDNESDAY—AUGUST 11

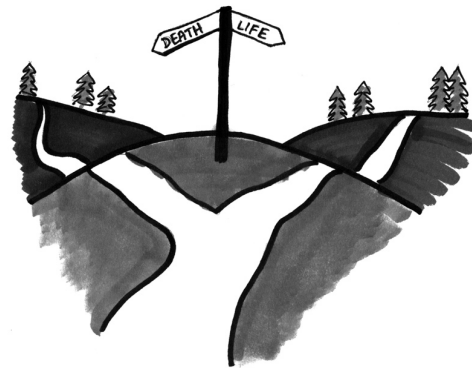
#### TWO OPPOSITE MASTERS (Romans 6:16)

**What point is Paul making in Romans 6:16? Why is his argument very black and white? That is, why must we choose one side or the other, with no middle ground? What lesson should we learn from this very clear difference?**

Paul comes back to the point again that the new life of faith does not mean that we are free from sin. The life of faith makes the victory over

sin possible. It is only through faith that we can have the victory that God promises.

Paul has described sin as a king ruling over his subjects. Now he returns to the example of sin as a master forcing his servants to obey him. Paul points out that a person has a choice of masters. He can serve sin, which leads to death. Or he can serve righteousness,<sup>13</sup> which leads to eternal life. Paul does not leave us any middle ground. It is one or the other because we face either eternal life or eternal death in the end.



**We can serve sin, which leads to death.  
Or we can serve righteousness,  
which leads to eternal life.  
There is no middle ground.**

**In Romans 6:17, how does Paul make what he said in verse 16 clearer?**

Notice how obedience<sup>14</sup> is joined together with correct doctrine (beliefs; teachings). The Greek word for “doctrine” here means “teaching.” The

12. interpret—to explain the meaning of something so that others can understand it.

13. righteousness—God’s character (the qualities, such as goodness and love, that make Him who He is). God’s character, or righteousness (holy life) is given to us by faith in Him; holiness.

14. obedience—following the rules or laws.

Roman Christians had learned the principles (rules) of the Christian faith, which they now obeyed. So, for Paul, correct doctrine (correct teaching) helped the Romans become “servants of righteousness” (verse 18). Some may teach that what we believe is not important as long as we show love. That is too simple for something that is not so simple. Paul was very concerned about the false doctrine that had deceived the members of the Galatian church and caused them to fall. So we need to be careful about arguments that lessen the importance of correct teaching.

***Servants of sin, servants of righteousness: the difference is very clear. If, after baptism,<sup>15</sup> we sin, does this mean that we are not truly saved? How do the verses in 1 John 1:8–21 help us understand what it means to be a follower of Christ and yet still be able to fall?***

### THURSDAY—AUGUST 12

#### FRUIT THAT LEADS TO HOLINESS (Romans 6:19–23)

**Keeping in mind what we have studied so far in Romans 6, read the rest of the verses (19–23). Write a short paragraph that explains what Paul is saying. Most important, ask yourself how you can**

**make the important truths real in your life. Ask yourself, also, what issues (problems) are here?**

Paul shows in his words that he fully understands the sinful nature<sup>16</sup> of humans (men, women, and children). He talks about the “infirmity [weakness] of our flesh.”<sup>17</sup> The Greek word for “infirmity” also means “weakness.” Paul knows what fallen human nature,<sup>18</sup> left on its own, can do. So, once again, Paul focuses on the power of choice. It is the power we have to choose to surrender<sup>19</sup> ourselves and our weak flesh to a new master, Jesus. He will help us live a righteous (holy) life.

Romans 6:23 often is used to show that the penalty (price to be paid) for sin is death. Sin means breaking God’s law. Certainly the penalty of sin is death. But in addition to seeing death as the penalty of sin, we should understand sin as Paul describes it in Romans 6. Paul describes sin as a master controlling his servants, fooling them, and paying them off with the wages of death.

Notice, also, that Paul uses the example of the two masters. In this example, Paul shows that the service of one master means freedom from the service to the other. Again we find a clear choice: one or the other. There is no middle ground. But it is important to remember that being

15. baptism—the act of putting a person completely under water and then bringing him or her back up out of it.

16. sinful nature—any of the fallen qualities or aspects that we as humans (men, women, and children) are born with. Without God, our natures are sinful, fallen, selfish, proud, unkind, and so on.

17. flesh—the physical nature of a person rather than the mind or spirit.

18. human nature—any of the qualities or aspects that we are humans (men, women, and children) have that make us who we are. Without God, our natures are sinful, fallen, proud, unkind, and so on.

19. surrender—to give oneself completely to Christ.

free from the control of sin does not mean sinlessness. It does not mean we do not struggle and, at times, even fall. It really means that we are no longer under sin's control, even though it is still real in our lives. And it also means that we must claim the promises of victory over it every day.

These verses are a powerful call to anyone who is serving sin. This tyrant (sin) offers nothing but death as payment for doing shameful things. So, a wise person should desire freedom from this tyrant. Now, those who serve righteousness do things that are upright and praiseworthy. They do not do good with the idea that it will earn their salvation. Instead, they do good as a result of the fruit of their new experience. If they are trying to earn salvation, they are missing the whole point of the gospel.<sup>20</sup> They also do not understand what salvation is and why they need Jesus.

### FRIDAY—AUGUST 13

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Read Ellen G. White, “Victory [Winning Over Sin] Appropriated,”<sup>21</sup> pages 105, 106, in *Messages to Young People*; “The True Motive in Service,” pages 93–95, in *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*; “Appeal [Call] to the Young,” page 365, in *Testimonies*<sup>22</sup> for the Church, volume 3; pages 1074, 1075, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 6.

“He [Jesus] did not give in to sin. Not even by a thought did He surrender [give in to] to temptation. So it should be with us. Christ’s human form was united with His godly nature. He was fitted for the struggle on earth by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partners of the godly nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more control over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to lead us to accept Christ’s godly nature. In this way we may reach Christ’s perfect character.”<sup>23</sup>—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 123.

“At our baptism we pledged [promised] ourselves to break all connection with Satan and his workers. We also promised to put heart and mind and soul into the work of making the kingdom of God grow. . . . The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have promised to cooperate [work together] with faithful Christian believers.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White *Comments, The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 6, page 1075.

“Claiming to be a Christian without having the faith and works to go along with the claim will mean nothing. No man can serve two masters. The children of Satan are their own master’s servants. To Satan they surrender themselves as servants to obey him. They are Satan’s servants, and they cannot be the servants of God until

20. gospel—the good news that Jesus saves us from our sins; the good news about salvation.

21. appropriated—to take or use something for oneself.

22. *Testimonies*—the writings of Ellen G. White.

23. character—who God is; God’s Ten Commandments show us who He is.

they reject [refuse] the devil and all his works. It cannot be harmless for servants of the heavenly King to become involved in the pleasures and amusements that Satan's servants take part in. God's children should avoid these things, even though it is often claimed that such amusements are harmless. God has given holy truths to His people to separate them from the ungodly and to purify [make clean] them unto Himself. Seventh-day Adventists should live out their faith."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 1, page 404.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① We have all these wonderful promises of victory over sin. But the fact is that all of us as born-again Christians
- know just how fallen we are, how sinful we are, and how sinful our hearts can be. Is there any disagreement here? Explain your answer.
- ② In class, share what Christ has done in you. Also, discuss the changes you have experienced and the new life you have in Him.
- ③ It is very important that we always remember that our salvation rests only in what Christ has done for us. But what dangers arise if we share that wonderful truth without teaching the other part of salvation? Why is it important to share with others what Jesus does in us, to change us into His image? Why do we need to understand and focus on both of these important parts of salvation?