

Romans Lesson 5

Reading: Romans 6

Memory Verse: Romans 6:4

Definitions:

Count – compute, take inventory, consider, recon

Increase – to abound, to be the best it can be

Baptism of the Holy Spirit – when someone trusts in Christ as savior, the Holy Spirit places that person into the body of Christ

After reading the lesson, answer the questions using the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfBd9nWgwPPITjrmGG32tovQdDmwcBywKJ5mXoNJCUC1ob_Q/viewform?usp=sf_link

Imagine being alive and well and having news reporters announce your death. This has happened many times. Sometimes someone somewhere has simply made a mistake and other times it is a hoax when a person stages his own or someone else's death.

Here are a few well known, not yet dead but still alive stories.

1. Rex Allston, a BBC sports commentator was accidentally reported dead when a newspaper was updating his on-file obituary and made the mistake of publishing it. Shortly after he was pronounced dead, the same paper announced his marriage.
2. William Baer, a professor at NYU, read his obituary in the *New York Times* – thanks to his students playing a joke on him. (Some joke).
3. James Brady, White House press secretary, present at the time of Reagan's assassination attempt was reported dead by the three major networks. Brady was seriously injured by a gunshot to the head, but did not die.
4. John Darwin staged his own death (or maybe originally it was an accident) by drowning while paddling his canoe. This was in March 2002. His wife claimed the insurance money, Darwin secretly returned home and the two decided to enjoy life in Panama. His conscience got the best of him, however, and in 2007, he turned himself into a London police station, claiming amnesia. The police, hearing about the insurance money and the trips to Panama didn't fall for it. Both Darwin and his wife ended up in prison.
5. Mark Twain, writer, is probably one of the most famous "declared dead" personalities. In 1897, a journalist mistook a story about Twain's cousin for a story about Twain himself. This was when Twain made the now famous statement: "The report of my death is an exaggeration."

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Those stories are fascinating to read, but did you ever consider that, as a Christian, you are both dead and alive? We are dead to sin, but alive to Christ.

Let's consider.

Paul tells us that where there's sin, there's even more grace. Does that mean we should sin more often, so that God will give us even more grace? That's the exact question Paul anticipated the Romans would ask.

Paul's initial response was emphatic. "Certainly not!" You can picture him slamming his fist on his desk. Then he calmed down and explained to the Romans why this reasoning was confused.

He answered the question logically.

1. If you are a Christian, then you are both dead and alive. (That sounds strange, but it's true.)

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 (6:6).

Once we trusted Christ as Savior, our identification with Adam was finished. We became dead to sin. God put us, the children of Adam, to death when he died and shed his blood on the cross. As Christians, we should know that our old self (sinful nature) is crucified with Christ. Old doesn't refer to age. "Old" means worn out, discarded, fit for the garbage. That's a description of us without Christ! Paul wrote... *nothing good lives/dwells in me (7:18).*

Paul uses the word "reign" to describe sins' position in our lives. When a king reigns, he has ultimate power and control. When sin reigned in our lives, it had ultimate power and control. But now for the good news. *So that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (5:21).* We are now alive in Christ! It is not sin, but rather grace that reigns!

2. We must count it as true that we are dead to sin and alive to Christ.

The moment we understood we were sinners and trusted Christ as Savior, we were baptized, or placed, into the body of Christ. *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 (6:4).* We were made a new creation (new nature) in Christ. To God, the old sinful part of us is dead, but it is still active within us. When we let our dead, sinful nature reign, it's like living in garbage (2 Peter 2:22).

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Sometimes Christians think they can get away with sin, but Paul wrote, *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows (Galatians 6:7)*. Sin has natural consequences.

Because we are alive in Christ, we are free from our old, sinful selves. No longer should sin be our master and rule over us (6:14). We are free to say “no” when we face temptation.

We can make the choice not to become involved in sin. We should flee (run away) from it (1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:22).

Sometimes making this choice is difficult. The old, sinful “you” and the new “you” both want control. You need, with God’s help, to make the choice to let the new nature have the victory.

Paul wrote to Corinth: *I beat discipline my body and make it my slave [making it do what it should] (1 Corinthians 9:27)*. Like all of us, Paul sometimes failed. (We will see this in Romans seven). But he disciplined himself to say “no” to sin. Discipline means that we are in the world, but because we are led by God’s Word, we don’t do everything that is of the world.

3. Must offer (present) ourselves (our bodies) to the Lord.

To explain further that Christians have a choice, Paul talks about the relationship of a slave to the master. Before we were Christians, we were slaves of sin. Now we are slaves of righteousness. We have the freedom to say “no” to our old master, Satan, and instead be obedient to our new master, Christ. We are his servants. The members of our body can be *instruments [tools] of righteousness (6:13)*.

Of Course, we can’t say “yes” to righteousness and “no” to sin in our own strength, but rather in the strength of Christ. Remember Galatians 2:20: *I no longer live, but Christ lives in me*.

Make the choice to stay away from the garbage of your old, sinful life and to live a new life (6:4). Yes, we fail, but isn’t it great to know we have forgiveness in Christ (Ephesians 1:7)? For the Christian, there is no condemnation (8:1).

Fast Fact

Paul’s illustration about a slave serving his or her master was easy for the Romans to understand. Out of 120 million people in the Roman Empire at that time, half of them were slaves. The duty of the slave is to serve the master. We are slaves of righteousness (6:16). Our slave (us) and master (Christ) relationship is beneficial because of Christ’s love.