



Study Guide: Romans – Chapter 6

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Romans Chapter 6 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Romans Chapter 6 marks a pivotal transition in Paul's letter from theological exposition to practical application. It addresses the believer's relationship to sin in light of the profound truths about grace and justification discussed earlier. This chapter challenges readers to consider what it means to live as those united with Christ in His death and resurrection. As you study this chapter, watch for Paul's use of baptism imagery and his argument that believers are no longer slaves to sin but alive to God, highlighting the transformative power of grace.

Context

Romans 6 follows Paul's detailed explanation of justification by faith and the role of grace in salvation found in chapters 3 through 5. The immediate literary context is Paul's response to a potential misunderstanding: if grace abounds where sin increased, does that mean believers should continue sinning? The chapter is set within the covenantal framework of the new life inaugurated by Christ's death and resurrection, which fulfills and transcends the Old Testament law. Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, writes to the Roman church, composed of both Jewish and Gentile believers, addressing foundational issues of sanctification and ethical living in the Christian community.

Outline

Romans 6 can be divided into several key movements. First, Paul confronts the objection that grace might encourage sin, emphasizing that believers must not continue in sin. Next, he explains the believer's union with Christ in His death and resurrection, using baptism as a symbolic representation of this union. Then, Paul discusses the implications of this union for the believer's relationship to sin, asserting that sin no longer has dominion. Finally, he contrasts slavery to sin with slavery to righteousness, urging believers to live as instruments of righteousness in newness of life.



Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1-3: Paul begins by addressing the question, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” He firmly rejects this notion, explaining that those baptized into Christ Jesus are baptized into His death, symbolizing the end of their old sinful life.

Verses 4-7: These verses elaborate on the believer’s identification with Christ’s death and resurrection. Just as Christ was raised from the dead, believers are called to walk in newness of life, no longer enslaved to sin. Paul emphasizes that our old self was crucified with Christ so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless.

Verses 8-10: Paul affirms that because Christ died to sin once for all and now lives to God, believers too should consider themselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. This highlights the permanence of Christ’s victory over sin and death.

Verses 11-14: Here Paul urges believers to reckon themselves dead to sin but alive to God, warning that sin must not reign in their mortal bodies or obey its desires. He reminds them that they are not under law but under grace, which empowers them to live righteously.

Verses 15-23: In this concluding section, Paul contrasts two kinds of slavery: slavery to sin resulting in death and slavery to obedience resulting in righteousness and eternal life. He exhorts believers to present themselves as instruments of righteousness, highlighting the transformative effect of grace that leads to sanctification and eternal life.

Key Themes

A central theme is the believer’s union with Christ in His death and resurrection, which redefines their identity and relationship to sin. This union means that sin no longer has dominion, and believers are empowered to live a new life. Another theme is the contrast between slavery to sin and slavery to righteousness, illustrating that grace leads to transformation, not license. The chapter also emphasizes the role of baptism as a symbolic act representing this profound spiritual reality. Finally, the chapter underscores the ethical imperative rooted in grace: believers are called to live holy lives as instruments of righteousness.

Cross-References



Romans 6 connects closely with Galatians 2:20, where Paul speaks of being crucified with Christ and living by faith in Him, reinforcing the theme of union with Christ. Colossians 3:1–4 also parallels this chapter by urging believers to seek the things above, having died to the earthly life. Additionally, 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 highlights the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, echoing the call to present oneself as an instrument of righteousness. Finally, John 8:34–36 contrasts slavery to sin with the freedom found in Christ, illuminating the chapter's focus on spiritual liberation.

Application

For modern discipleship, Romans 6 challenges believers to embrace their new identity in Christ fully. This means rejecting any notion that grace permits ongoing sin and instead living in the reality of being dead to sin and alive to God. Baptism is not merely symbolic but a reminder of the transformative power available to believers. Practically, this calls for daily reckoning with this truth, resisting sinful impulses, and choosing obedience as an expression of gratitude for grace. It also encourages believers to view their bodies and lives as instruments for God's righteousness, fostering holiness that flows from union with Christ rather than legalistic effort.

Summary

Romans Chapter 6 presents a compelling argument that believers, united with Christ in His death and resurrection, are freed from sin's dominion and called to live new lives empowered by grace. Through baptism imagery and the contrast between slavery to sin and slavery to righteousness, Paul emphasizes that grace transforms identity and behavior. This chapter bridges theological truths with ethical living, urging believers to live as instruments of righteousness in response to the gift of new life in Christ.