

Romans 6 New Life

PREFACE

God's Word contains the answers to all of life's problems and needs. As we apply God's Word to our daily lives, the Holy Spirit strengthens us, our faith grows, and our lives are transformed.

But for many the bible is a complex book, too huge to tackle.

By selecting important chapters of the Bible (20 from the Old Testament, 20 from the New Testament) and focusing on them, I hope to encourage you to get into God's Word. To help accomplish this, I have prepared a visual memory aid for each key chapter. The aids are purposely *weird* in order to increase retention. Each aid has three elements:

1. The *book* of the Bible
2. The *chapter*
3. The *theme* of the chapter

By studying the memory aid several times and focusing on it, you will recall the image and consequently the book, chapter and theme.

Remembering these key chapters will enrich your daily life. It will also help you to relate God's Word to others. As you write greeting cards or speak with people, you will be able to apply God's Word directly to their problems or needs.

At times, you will be unable to speak directly to a person. Send them a Key Chapter booklet! They are designed for sharing!

Each Key Chapter booklet is presented in the same format:

1. *Background* for the chapter
2. *Key verses* of the chapter
3. *Thoughts* on the theme of the chapter

Bible classes and small study groups will find the third section helpful for discussions. The *thoughts* will provide a variety of applications upon which to reflect.

God will not let his Word return void (Isaiah 55:11)!

He will bless you abundantly as you meditate on his Word (Psalm 119:48)!

He will enable you to be a blessing to others as you spread his Word (Genesis 12: 2-3)!

Soli Deo Gloria,
Paul R. Schroeder

Explanation of the Memory Aid

1. The BOOK of the Bible:
The Coliseum in *Rome* = **Romans**
2. The CHAPTER:
The *number* of petals on the flower = **CHAPTER 6**
3. The THEME:
A *new* flower growing in the midst of the ruins= **NEW LIFE**

ROMANS 6: BACKGROUND

Astounding words: *new life!* A caterpillar becomes a butterfly. A tulip bulb, dormant through the winter, breaks through the ground in a blaze of blooming color. A wound heals and the skin becomes as good as new. Night turns to dawn, darkness to day. Weariness disappears and strength is renewed. The old passes away, the new comes. Former things are past and gone. The present is here—new and fresh. Let him who sleeps be awakened. It is a new day—and the new day calls forth *new life*. He who sits on the throne says, “I am making everything new!” (Revelation 21:5).

In his letter to the congregation at Rome, Paul employs vivid pictures to describe the Christian life. The new relationship with Christ is equated with a resurrection from the dead. Paul uses themes such as “old and new man” and “darkness to light” to focus on the radical change that occurs when a person becomes a believer in Jesus Christ.

To the Galatians he wrote, “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature” (Galatians 5:24).

To the Ephesians he wrote, “You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self...and to put on the new self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4: 22-24).

The second time he wrote to the Corinthians he said, “Therefore if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

To the Colossians he wrote, “Since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator” (Colossians 3: 9-10).

These are all metaphors for conversion. The new life is often described as the “second birth” or as having been “born again” (John 3: 5-6). The new life is ongoing from the time of conversion. It is a new way of life that is reflected in all our daily activities. The Holy Spirit, who creates this new life in us (conversion), strengthens and nourishes us so we can continue to live the new life (sanctification) to the glory of God.

KEY VERSES OF MATTHEW 6

Verses 1-2

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

The opening verses of Matthew 6 warn us about doing spiritual things (giving, praying, etc.). It would be unthinkable that someone who has been brought to faith (new life) in Christ would want to live as he did in the past. This is an unthinkable as it would be to expect a corpse to move. (Also, read v. 15).

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.

In our baptism, his death becomes our death, and his resurrection becomes our victory—our *new life* through faith in Christ.

Verses 6-7

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—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Since we have died with Christ, we are free from sin's ruling power.

Verse 8

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Paul restates verse 4 for emphasis. Christ's death was *for us!* So is his resurrection. We believe we have not only died with Christ, we also believe we are raised to a new life (conversion). The Holy Spirit does all this and strengthens us as we daily grow in that new life. (See Key Chapter booklet *John 15: Growth*).

Verse 11

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

We are not left to guess at the meaning of these words. The explanation is given. We are "dead to sin" (vv. 5-7) and "alive to God" (vv. 8-10) through faith in Christ. Show no "signs of life" toward sin. A corpse cannot react. Show your life by responding to God who brought you life in Christ. This *new life* is possible only to those who are united with Christ.

Verse 13

Do 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.

We are to offer ourselves to God. The Spirit enables us to be available to him to fulfill *his* purposes.

Verse 14

For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

The Law makes slaves; people who have no choice and can't obey God. Under grace we have been set free. We are made willing servants to righteousness. The Law gives no power to resist the control of sin nor to do righteousness. By grace we are enabled to live the new life of choosing to follow Christ.

Verses 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.

Having been set free by the Spirit through the Word enables Christians to choose to be "slaves" of God. God becomes the owner; we become his servants. James refers to himself in this way (James 1:1) by following Christ as our Lord (Master), our lives will be blessed—and the end result is eternal life.

Verses 23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There are only two possibilities:

1. Sin, death, and damnation;
2. Christ, forgiveness and eternal life

All people (those who have lived, are living, and will live) will be judged by God, based on their belief in or rejection of Jesus Christ as their Savior. Those who believe in him will be saved. Those who do not believe in him will not be saved.

THOUGHTS ON NEW LIFE

Day 1

The new life is not without sin. But sin is not in control. God's will has become the goal—in direct conflict with the flesh. The battle is described in Romans 7: 14-25. The outcome of the battle is guaranteed victory for the believer (Romans 8:1, 10, 11, 13-18).

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As we walk in this new life even things that appear negative and harmful will be used by God for our good (Romans 8:28). As part of our new life, we also have new insights and new awareness of God's presence in our lives (Philippians 2: 12-13).

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All living things must grow to stay alive! This is also true of spiritual life. God has provided his Word and Sacraments for our nourishment and growth.

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Sin must be dethroned in our lives, or we will end up serving it by yielding to evil desires (Romans 6:12).

The new life in Christ created by God results in our offering our bodies and lives to the service of God (Romans 6:19, 12:1).

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A truly happy life is one that is yielded and committed to God (Psalm 37:3-6). (See also Key Chapter booklet *Philippians 4: Joy*).

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When a worldly person is converted to Christ (and the new life), his or her old friends may have to go. Why? Because the new life is evidenced by new priorities, new goals, a new lifestyle. When you live a new way, you may need new friends.

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Our bodies are to be instruments that bring glory to God (Romans 6:13). (See also Luke 4:8; Romans 7:6; Galatians 5:13; and Hebrews 9:14)

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The new life is not weak and passive. God makes it bold and strong (2 Timothy 1:7).

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Day 2

Prayer is an inseparable part of the new life. Believers will want to be in contact and in dialogue with God. When communication breaks down, it shows that something is wrong with the relationship. We enjoy communicating with those we love.

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When God gives a person new life he also gives other gifts. These are to be used to glorify God as we serve others in love. The New Testament gives three lists of these gifts: Romans 12: 3-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 7-11, 27-30; and Ephesians 4: 11-13.

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Being baptized into Christ is being placed into a faith relationship with Christ—into a union with him (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3: 26-27).

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Death has no lasting power over those who believe in Christ. It cannot hold us captive. We will rise from the grave. The victory is ours through Christ. This new life is also eternal life (Romans 5:22).

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Death is separation. In our death to sin, we are separated from its controlling power. In Christ we are attached to *life*. Being attached to Christ produces fruit. The evidence of growth in our new life will be the abundance of good works. There can be no good work (from God's view) apart from Christ. When Christ fills the person, the harvest of works will be plentiful (John 15).

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New life has costs. Jesus asks his followers to count the cost (Luke 14: 25-35). The cost is complete surrender to him.

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Sin begets sin. Un-repentant sin grows and spreads. It can enslave. Repentance must occur. The Holy Spirit begets new life—the evidence of which is repentance. Growth will follow.

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Day 3

In Romans 7-8, Paul continues his argument that a believer in Christ is no longer a slave to sin but a slave to righteousness. In chapter 8 he reveals that the power to overcome sin comes from the Holy Spirit. Not only is the new life a gift of God, but even the power to live the new life is from God (Colossians 2:13; 3:1).

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A Christian is a living tool in God's hand to do God's will (Romans 6:13).

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Both the force of God's judgment and the tenderness of his merciful forgiveness can be seen within one verse: Romans 6:23 (a proper summary for the chapter).

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It takes the almighty power of God to raise the dead. It also takes the almighty power of God to raise the dead sinner to life in Christ. Conversion can only be brought about by God. It is his gift.

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The new life is associated with abundance (John 10:10), resurrection (John 6:40), eternal life (Colossians 1:13; 2 Peter 1:11), holiness (Romans 6:22), and joy (John 15:11).

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While the new life is a continuous struggle (Ephesians 6: 10-15), it is to be lived joyfully and victoriously.

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As a new person living the new life, we are set apart (from the world), made holy (through forgiveness), and united with others to form God's family, the church. (Paul pictures the church as God's family or household in Ephesians 2:19 and 1 Timothy 3:15).

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The new person in Christ has a new heart and new spirit (Psalm 51:10). A believer is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

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Day 4

The choices are clear: wages (of sin) or gift; sin's slave or God's servant; death or life eternal. A choice must be made. A person cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). God enables us by Word and spirit to choose to be God's servants.

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While the amount of water or the method of application is not of importance in Baptism, the early church's use of immersion lent itself to some symbolism regarding the theology of Baptism. As a person went under the water is seemed like a grave or dying. The coming up out of the water resembled a new rising or a coming to life again. It's possible Paul had this mind as he wrote. Regardless, it is not the symbolism in Baptism that is paramount, but rather the theology.

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A commitment to Christ includes a commitment to follow the teachings of Christ. Obedience is one mark of the new life. (See Romans 6:17; Matthew 7:21). Obedience needs testing. (See 2 Corinthians 2:4; James 1: 2-4, 12; 1 Peter 1: 6-7).

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The new life is illustrated beautifully in the parable of the prodigal son. When the father welcomes home the son, he says, 'This son of mine was dead and is alive again' (Luke 15:24).

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Just as surely as we must have air to live and the air must be in us, so also we must have Christ and he must be in us—if we are to live a God-pleasing life.

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Day 5

Motivation for growth in the new life comes not from the fear of God but from gratitude fro what he has done for us.

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A corpse will not respond to stimulation. By considering ourselves through faith as dead to sin and alive to God, we will not respond to temptation (Romans 6:11).

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Scripture repeatedly speaks of the Christian as a new man (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:15; 4:24).

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Consider those areas of your life you would like to keep under your private control. Then repent, and surrender them to God.

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Death makes it *personally* impossible for a person to carry through with obligations and responsibilities. Being dead to sin, we are no longer obligated to serve Satan.

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“A truly converted man hates sin with all his heart, and even if he could sin without suffering for it, it would be misery enough to him to sin at all” (C. H. Spurgeon).

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Though perfection cannot be achieved here on earth, the goal is to grow strong and victorious against sin. Satan often presents sin as enjoyable. We must learn to reject his deception and see sin in its true ugliness and horror. Yes, we must learn to hate sin.

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Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10).