

Lesson Eleven

(6:1 — 7:6)

CHRIST, THE AUTHORITY FOR LIFE

For Christians there are obligations to fulfill as well as blessings to enjoy. The disciple of Christ is responsible to live a Christlike life. Reproduction of the Christ-life can only be accomplished by one who makes Christ's example and his teaching the supreme goal and authority for life.

Paul appeals to his readers to recognize their union with the sinless Christ to turn from sin to righteousness and to "bring forth fruit unto God." Three successive illustrations are used to support his appeal: Union with Christ and thus living like Him is illustrated by baptism (6:1-14); change of authority from the rule of sin to the reign of righteousness is illustrated in the master slave analogy (6:15-23); living in harmony with the will of Christ is set forth in the example of the relationship of husband and wife (7:1-6). The basic teaching in all three illustrations is that the authority of Christ must be recognized.

IN UNION WITH CHRIST

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer

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live therein? 3 Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; 7 for he that hath died is justified from sin. 8 But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; 9 knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him. 10 For the death that he died, he died unto sin once: but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

Chapter six is connected to the content of the preceding lesson by questions with which the chapter begins. What are we to conclude from all that has been written, asks Paul. Because of the super abundance of God's grace, shall we just go on sinning so that this grace, which already abounds, may yet increase? Paul answers his own question with eight good reasons why Christians should not continue to sin. All eight reasons are closely related to the ordinance of baptism and are based in the true meaning of being baptized into Jesus Christ.

1. We have died to sin (v. 2) and dead men do not continue the activities in which they were previously engaged.

2. Those who have been baptized were as Williams translates, "baptized into union with Christ" (v. 3), and He is the sinless one. How can a person be in union with the Christ who is wholly sinless and continue in sin? (Cf. Galatians 3:27).

3. One is baptized into the death of Christ (v. 3). The death of our Lord occurred for the specific purpose of taking away sin. How can a true disciple of Christ deliberately perpetuate sin which Christ died to remove?

4. Following the burial in baptism we were resurrected to a new life (vv. 4, 5). This is the new birth of John 3:3-5; it is the ethical resurrection of Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 3:1-3 and John 5:24, 25. Is it possible to live at the old sinful level if we have been raised to a new high ethical level in Christ? (Cf. II Corinthians 5:17).

5. The old man is crucified with Christ to remove sin and free the sinner from the control of sin (v. 6). This is the equivalent of Paul's statement, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live

in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20).

6. It is a legal fact that a dead man cannot be accused and tried in court (v. 7); (Cf. Romans 7:1). Records of posthumous trials which have occurred are found in the annals of history, but they are a mockery of law. No matter what the severity of crimes against society, death frees the criminal from prosecution. How then can sin lay any claim to the life of the one who is dead to sin?

7. We died with Christ when he died and were with him in the resurrection. Therefore, we should live like Him in a resurrected state (vv. 8, 9). Verses 10, 11 help us to understand that Paul is talking about present life status rather than the ultimate state of the redeemed person who has experienced the final, transcendent resurrection. Paul speaks of a here and now situation in which the Christian lives with Christ and like Him.

8. Christ died just once but the life which he lives unto God is continuous (vv. 10, 11). We too should die to sin once for all and continually live a God-oriented life.

INSTRUMENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof; 13 neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace.

The imperative of verse twelve and the instruction which follows form a natural conclusion to the eight arguments just stated. The physical body of man is amoral. The human body in which I live is neither good or bad, ethically speaking, any more than the instrument with which I write is good or bad. The pen in my hand could be made to write the filthy concepts of the world, or it may be used as an instrument to express that which is honorable. So, also, the human body may be made to be a servant of sin, or it may be an instrument of glory for God. Sin which operates in the body, is the culprit. The body should not be allowed to become subject to the forceful influences of sin and its lust. The word "lust" as used in America suggests immediately the desire for something evil. Actually it is the object of lust which determines whether lust is good or evil. The word translated "lust" (*epithumia*) is used without any connotation of evil by Jesus when he says, according to Luke 22:15

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where the same Greek word is used, "With lust (desire) I have lusted (desired) to eat this passover with you before I suffer." The English use an interesting expression to describe a youngster. They say, "He is a lusty little fellow." They do not mean that the child is full of evil thoughts and desires. Rather, they are describing youth which is full of vitality and life. He has strong desire for all that life has to offer, and he wants to participate in it. When one thinks of the exercise of strong desire, he should remember that Jesus pronounced blessing upon those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness." The Christian is commanded in verse twelve not to allow strong desire for that which is sinful to become the controlling factor in his life. Again Paul argues from the general to the specific. The body, as a whole, is not to become obedient to evil lust, but more specifically not any individual member of the body is to be used as an instrument of sin. Instead, the members of the body should be presented to God as "instruments of righteousness" (v. 13). Verse fourteen does not contain a command as does verse twelve. "For sin shall not have dominion over you" indicates the state of freedom from sin in which, by God's grace, the Roman Christians lived.

THE SLAVE MART ANALOGY

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; 18 and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification. 20 For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free in regard of righteousness. 21 What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The question of verse fifteen, "shall we sin because we are not under the law?", is very much like the question of verse one and shows that

as Paul introduces his second illustration, he is still pursuing the same general line of thought. The caption for this section of verses (15-23) has been borrowed from Bruce and I can think of no other designation which would be more picturesque or accurate than "The Slave Mart Analogy." Like Jesus, the master teacher, Paul used illustrations which were common to everyday life. Baptism was common among Christians for every Christian had been baptized and baptism was not considered to be optional. Marriage, though greatly abused, was an everyday occurrence in Rome. And how common was slavery in an empire whose populace was fifty percent slaves. The auction block on which men and women were sold and transferred from one owner to another was a common sight. Owners were proud of their assets which included not only hundreds but sometimes thousands of slaves. "Know ye not" of verse sixteen is Paul's way of referring to common knowledge. Every normal mind in the Roman Empire was keenly aware that a servant (*doulos* = slave) belongs to the person whom he obeys as master. Just two ethical masters are bidding for the services of the Romans: sin, with its payment of death or righteousness with its gift of life (v. 16). Paul rejoices that his readers had made choice of the right master. At this point the master-slave analogy breaks down because a slave seldom had any say about whom he would serve. God never violates the free moral agency of man, and that power of choice is honored even in an illustration which basically militates against it. Verse sixteen makes it plain that men "present themselves" to one master or another. The Romans had shifted their allegiance from the old master of sin, to the new master, righteousness (vv. 17, 18). Their obedience to the new master was not the kind of service a slave rendered bodily, but it was "from the heart." The phrase, "that form of teaching" (*doctrine*) has caused a good bit of speculation. Some think this is to be a reference to the Gospel Paul presented with its special emphasis upon justification through faith. The weakness of this explanation is that it implies that Paul's teaching was unique in its emphasis of faith and grace. Both of those aspects of the Christian teaching, however, are seen vividly in the prophet's predictions concerning the Gospel in general as well as with more specific reference to the person and work of Christ. Both faith and grace were preached regularly from the Day of Pentecost, when the church was born, and throughout the history of the Church as recorded in the book of Acts. Galatians 2:1-10 records the information that Paul was preaching the same Gospel as those preached who were of reputation at Jerusalem. It is sheer speculation to suggest that Paul received a gospel for the Gentiles which was different from that preached by Peter to the Jews.

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A second view of the phrase, "form of teaching" is that it refers generally to the Gospel as a whole without any emphasis upon Pauline uniqueness.

A third view, held by Moses Lard, and he is the only one of whom I am aware who holds this view, is that the word "form" (*tupos* = type) has specific reference to baptism. His reasoning is that Paul defines the Gospel to be the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (I Corinthians 15:1-4). The only act of obedience which in "form" encompasses the "death, burial and resurrection" is baptism. The idea is that Paul still has in mind the lengthy discussion in verses 1-11 about baptism and compliments the Romans for "obeying from the heart" that "form" which embodies the heart of the Gospel message.

"Speaking after the manner of men" (v. 19) may refer to the immediate observation about the weakness of flesh which follows and surely we must admit that spiritual weakness is common to man. Or Paul may be speaking more generally about the content of this entire chapter of his book and the beginning of the next in which he uses illustrations which surely fall under the heading of "the ways of man." At any rate, the discussion turns back at this point to the master-slave analogy. Phrases like "iniquity unto iniquity," "righteousness unto sanctification," or "faith unto faith" appear to be a literary device used to intensify the meaning. Previous to becoming Christians the pagans of Rome had piled up sin upon sin upon sin. Now they were to heap up righteous act upon righteous act upon righteous act until their lives were characterized by sanctification. Some understand verse twenty to teach the doctrine of the total depravity of man. Alfred Barnes for example, says "that settles it" in favor of man's depravity. If one, however, contends that verse twenty teaches total depravity, by the same logic one would be forced, on the basis of the content of verse twenty-two, to teach the absolute holiness of the saint. If "free in regard to righteousness" (v. 20), means a man has no native goodness whatsoever, then "free from sin" in verse twenty-two could mean nothing other than that the Christian is incapable of sin.

The end of serving sin is shame and death; the result of serving righteousness is sanctification and life (vv. 22, 23). Note that salvation is a gift, not a wage, and salvation cannot be earned.

THE MARRIAGE ANALOGY

7:1 Or are ye ignorant, brethren (for I speak to men who know the law), that the law hath dominion over a man for so long time as he liveth? 2 For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the

husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. 3 So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were through the law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter.

The last in this triplet of illustrations is matrimony (7:1-6). The main line of thought in 5:1-11 is not baptism. Baptism is introduced incidentally as an illustration just as slavery is only an example and not the main subject of discussion. The same may be said about marriage. There is no intention to give direct teaching about the relationship of the husband and wife as is the case in the household instruction of Ephesians 5:22, ff. and Colossians 3:18-25. So Paul's allusion to the law of marriage as reflected in the Old Testament, or in Roman law, should not be used as a legalistic club to hold over the heads of those who may have already been nearly destroyed by marital problems.

Three laws may be involved in the discussion of verses 1-3: law in general (Roman); the Mosaic law; the law (authority) of the husband.

Any spiritual interpretation of these verses involving a marriage of the Christian to Christ is ruled out by many scholars. They contend, as does Lard, that "The disciples are not here viewed as a wife and Christ as a husband . . . Accordingly the common rendering 'that you might become married to another' is gratuitous and inept." A literal translation of the phrase, "joined to another man" of verse three would read, "be to another man." English versions suggest similar ideas such as: lives with another, gives herself to another or consorts with another man. "Be joined to another" of verse four is the same in the original language. So it is claimed that the marriage concept is gratuitous. No one would deny that the basic element of the illustration is marriage or that betrothal and marriage to Christ is Scriptural (Ephesians 5:25-33; II Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7, 8). God is spoken of as married to Israel (Jeremiah 3:14). Whatever Paul had in mind as he penned verse four is not now certain. Neither those who oppose nor those who support the marriage concept in verse four do any violence to Scripture. Bruce accepts the idea that verse four does suggest marriage to Christ, but

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he thinks it farfetched that the "fruit here spoken of is viewed as the offspring of the new marriage." He holds that the figure of marriage changes to a tree and its fruit. It is true that the fertile mind of Paul functions like that. He can move rapidly from figure to figure as he does in Ephesians 2:19-22 where, in rapid succession, Christians are pictured as a civil kingdom, a household, and a holy temple. I do not think, however, that the person who was familiar with Scripture terminology would have any problem with the single figure of marriage. Note the Biblical usage of the word "fruit":

Fruit of the womb,	Genesis 30:2; Deuteronomy 7:13; Psalm 127:3; Luke 1:42
Fruit of thy seed,	Deuteronomy 22:9
Fruit of thy body,	Deuteronomy 28:4, 11, 18; 30:9; Psalm 132:11
Fruit of thy loins,	Acts 2:30

A strict literal interpretation of the marriage analogy holds the first husband to be the law of Moses (Cf. Colossians 2:14), the second husband to be Christ, and the wife to be persons under grace who are freed from the law. There are two allegorical interpretations, the most common of which is the universal, corporate church theory. In this interpretation the first husband is the law of sin. The second husband is Christ and the wife is the church (II Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:6-8). The other allegorical interpretation is limited and personal. Gleason Archer, a current writer, and John Calvin of the sixteenth century are examples of those holding this view. The first husband is the lower nature of man, the carnal man, which is put to death in conversion (Cf. Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:14). The second husband, as in each of the other views, is Christ. The wife is the higher nature of man, the inward man, spirit or soul man. H. C. G. Moule reflects both the corporate and personal allegorical views in one sentence, "The church, the soul, is married to her Lord."

Immortality seals the permanence of this marriage bond. Neither Christ (Romans 6:9) nor the Christian (II Corinthians 5:4, 5; I Corinthians 15:54) shall die. If Christ were dead, the union would be broken and one could only belong to Him in memory or ideally, like the one who after losing a mate in death, keeps a picture in a convenient place for viewing to remind of the ideal relationship which once existed. Christians, however, actually, really, and eternally belong to Him who lives.

"In the flesh" (v. 5) means that one is responsive to the passions, forces, and directives of the principle or force operating in man which Paul calls, "the law (principle) in my members" and "the law of sin" (Romans 7:23). Much will be said about Paul's unique usage of the word "flesh"

in the next lesson. The attacking force of the flesh is in some sense, inadvertantly, assisted by the law. Verse seven speaks of "sinful passions, which were through the law," verse eight adds, "sin . . . wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting" and verse eleven echoes the same thought, "sin, finding occasion, through the commandment." Perhaps the law functions like the parent who unintentionally creates a desire in the child to do something by prohibiting it. Many times a child has no desire to touch or to do until he has heard, "no, no." Charles Erdman quotes old Roman authors: "We always endeavor to obtain that which is forbidden, and desire that which is denied." "The permitted is unpleasing, the forbidden consumes us fiercely." In *Gargantua and Pantaguel* Francis Rabelais has his monk opposing all the rules of the strictly ordered monastic life of his day and puts into his mouth this observation: "It is agreeable with the nature of man to long after things forbidden and to desire what is denied us." Bible College students illustrated this principle of human nature when they went on a venture of stealing apples. They had to cross over a six-foot high woven wire fence with barbed wire strands above it. They were not hungry. They could have purchased apples. They were not bad people and most of them have been highly successful in Christian service. One of the errant students later became the wife of a fine Christian educator who served as president of a Bible College. She stands faithfully at his side in support of his labors today. As Augustine says in his *Confessions*, "The desire to steal was awakened simply by the prohibition of stealing."

Verses five and six indicate two results to the one who has died to the flesh. He has been made free from the law, sin, condemnation and death. Secondly, his motivation for service is changed. "Oldness of the letter" refers to service rendered under an external, legalistic code. "Newness of the spirit" has reference to internal compulsion. One is motivated by a spirit which is subservient to the Holy Spirit to serve the living Christ.

READER'S REVIEW:

1. Cite the three illustrations used by Paul in this section of study and indicate in one summary sentence for each what is the basic lesson to learn from each illustration.
2. How is the opening question of Chapter Six connected to the closing content of Chapter Five?
3. From memory list six of the eight reasons given by Paul for Christians to refrain from sinning.
4. What is the imperative of verse twelve?

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5. How do you explain the author's statement, "The physical body of man is amoral."
6. What is it that makes "lust" good or bad?
7. Cite one example from this lesson and one from a previous lesson of how Paul argues from a general concept to a specific example of the general concept which he has stated.
8. In what sense may it be said that 6:1-11 contains an incidental allusion to baptism and that baptism, itself, is not the main-line thought of that paragraph?
9. Relate the various views of the meaning of the phrase, "the form of doctrine." Support your choice of the view which you consider to be best.
10. What evidence would you use to oppose the contention that Peter and Paul preached a different gospel?
11. What does Paul mean when he indicates that he is "speaking after the manner of men"?
12. What is Paul's literary device used to intensify meaning?
13. In what way are the doctrines of "total depravity" and the "absolute holiness of the saint" introduced at the close of Chapter Six? If these doctrines are not taught in verses 20-22, what is the meaning of these verses?
14. List the three laws which may be involved in the marriage analogy.
15. Cite two claims made in connection with the marriage illustration which are commonly accepted by many but are rejected and are even repulsive to some.
16. What is the strictly literal interpretation of the marriage illustration?
17. State two allegorical interpretations of the marriage illustration.
18. What difference would it make in the marriage analogy if Christ had not been raised from the dead?
19. In what sense may it be said that the law gives an assist to sin?
20. What are the two results of the dying to the flesh (7:6)?