

# That We Might Bear Fruit For God

## Lesson 2.

How the Cross of Christ enables Christians to bear fruit for God.  
(Romans 6:1-15)

By F. M. Perry

“(1) What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? (2) May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? (3) Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? (4) Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, (6) knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; (7) for he who has died is freed from sin. (8) Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, (9) knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. (10) For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all, but the life that He lives, He lives to God. (11) Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (12) Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, (13) and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (14) For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. (15) What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!” (Romans 6:1-15 NASV).

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#### Questions for study:

1. What do Paul's questions in Romans 6:1 (Are we to continue in sin?) and in Romans 6:15 (Shall we sin?) assume to be happening in the lives of the Roman Christians?
2. What inherent human problem hinders Christians from serving God's purposes? How and to what extent does the problem hinder the effectiveness of a Christian's effort to "bear fruit for God? (Romans 5:19; 6:1-2).
3. What was Paul's argument in the last sentence of Romans 6:2?
4. What has Christ done once and for all about this problem?
5. What did Paul explain in Romans 6:3-4? What does this teach about baptism?
6. Do baptized believers still encounter the human problem of proclivity to sin when they try to bear fruit for God? Did the Cross of Christ remove the problem from the life of the Christian? Or, did it give the Christian a new life removed from the problem? (Romans 6:3-5).
7. How did Paul state the goal of the Christian life in Romans 6:4?
8. What appears to you to be Paul's primary purpose in the thoughts presented, in Romans 6:6-14? Do you recognize any instructions given to the Christian in these verses that are related to the goal stated in Romans 6:4?

9. List three specific and separate instructions that Paul gives to Christians in Romans 6:6-14. (Hint: Find the action verbs which apply imperatively to Christians. Note that the first verb is in present participle form in most translations.)
10. What is the meaning of the word "knowing?" What is the difference between "knowing" and "believing?" What are the Christians to "know?"
11. What is the meaning of the word "reckon" ("consider" in some translations)? What are Christians to "reckon?"
12. What is the meaning of the word "present?" What are Christians to "present?" To whom?
13. To what next action does the "knowing", "reckoning", and "presenting" lead?
14. What should a Christian do after he begins his "walk according to the Spirit?" Who actually accomplishes the "good work" in his "walk," the Christian, or the Holy Spirit of Christ? (Ephesians 2:8-10).

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Questions and answers.

1. What do Paul's questions in Roman 6:1 (Are we to continue in sin ...?) and in Romans 6:15 (Shall we sin.. .?) assume to be happening in the lives of the Roman Christians?

They assume that the Roman Christians, although they had been forgiven of their past sins when they had believed, had repented, and had been baptized, were continuing to sin in their Christian lives.

It does not mean that the Roman Christians were continuing blatantly in sin as if they had never repented, or that they did not want to refrain from sinning. The context of chapters 6 and 7 deals with the sin principle in the lives of all people who are descended from Adam. The Roman Christians had discovered that they did not stop sinning (breaking law) altogether after they became Christians. They found that sin was still a problem in their lives.

Why didn't Paul just tell them to repent of their new sins and pray to God for forgiveness and let it go at that? Of course, they were to repent and pray to God for forgiveness! But, after that, sooner or later, they would sin again. The Roman Christians were beginning to wonder if their lives were to just be continuous failures because of their inability to stop sinning. It was very frustrating and prevented them from "bearing fruit for God." Paul asked this question--are we to just continue in sin and continue to call on the grace of God to forgive us?--as if the question were--Is there no way we can break the vicious cycle?

Paul asked the question in order to center their minds on a major problem in the lives of all Christians. He is going to show that the problem has been remedied by the Cross of Christ and that there are steps of obedient faith for the Christians to take in order to minimize the

problem in their lives.

2. What inherent human problem hinders Christians from serving God's purposes? How and to what extent does the problem hinder the effectiveness of a Christian's effort to "bear fruit for God?" (Romans 5:19; 6:1-2).

The inherent human problem common in the lives of all Christians comes through their descendancy from Adam. Through Adam's disobedience the many (including us) were made sinners. We have a proclivity to sin, even after we become Christians and have a real desire to live a sinless life. So we do sin, often without realizing it at the time. We find that we really are not naturally equipped, within ourselves, to accomplish anything for God. We eventually find that it is virtually impossible to bear fruit for God.

We may make great plans to accomplish great things in the service of our Lord. We may work very hard and even enlist other Christians with us in some worthwhile program. But, have we ever had the experience that after awhile the program just runs out of steam and we become frustrated. Then we grow weary of work which we thought the Lord said would be easy, light, and a cause of joy in our lives. The problem can cause disastrous results in a Christian's life. Remember the warning of 1 John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

3. What was Paul's argument in the last sentence of Romans 6:21.

The last sentence of Romans 6:2 is the question, "How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" It is a rhetorical question. Those who have died to sin must not live in it.

4. What has Christ done once and for all about the problem of the sin principle in the lives of Christians?

He submitted Himself to the cross! In His death, burial, and resurrection He has solved our problem. However, as with everything Christ has done for us, we must accept and embrace the remedy through

"obedience of faith." Paul's Roman letter makes this very clear. The steps of obedience are not difficult once we determine to commit ourselves to it. Nor are the steps of obedience synonymous with any kind of "works of merit."

Galatians 2:20. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me."

Galatians 6:14. "But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Romans 6:3-5. "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

5. What did Paul explain in Romans 6:3-4? What does this teach about baptism?

He explained how Christians had died to sin and been raised to newness of life.

This teaches us that baptism is the act in which people actually encounter death of their old person of sin and the resurrection to newness of life which Christ laid up for them when He went to the cross. Paul is referring here to baptism as the act of obedience of faith which brings about the resurrection of a new person who is equipped to be a vessel of God's mercy on earth and is equipped to bear fruit for God.

Paul had already written in the first 4 1/2 chapters of Romans about the blood of Christ, which Christ shed on the cross, being the sacrifice on which justification from the guilt of our past sins was based. He

completed that portion of his Roman letter with these words in Romans 5:9: "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."

Beginning in Romans 5:12 Paul changed from the subject of guilt for our past sins to the subject of the power of the sin principle in the lives of Christians. It can keep them from bearing fruit for God in their earthly lives. So, when Paul wrote of baptism as a burial and a resurrection in Romans 6:3-5, he was primarily teaching about how baptism helps us overcome the power of the sin principle in our Christian lives of stewardship for the Lord. He was illustrating a benefit that, perhaps, many of the Roman Christians had not realized. Perhaps many of us today have not realized it.

(Paul said in Romans 6:6, "... our old self was crucified with Him, ..." And in Galatians 2:20 he said, "I have been crucified with Christ, ..." This was written as though Paul and other Christians, such as ourselves, were in some sense actually with or "in Christ" when He went to the cross, was buried, and was resurrected. Perhaps we were. It is the same sense that we, being the offspring of Adam, were in Adam when he lived and sinned and was expelled from the Garden. Adam was our prototype. When God's Son took on flesh, He became our new prototype. Now we, who by faith are the offspring of Jesus Christ, were "in Jesus Christ" when He went to the cross. In a sense then, through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, those who would become Christians today have already died to sin and have already been raised to walk in new life. Christ's death, burial and resurrection was for, and in place of, the death, burial, and resurrection of those who through faith would become Christians. But we, when we learn who we are, and being free will agents, have to embrace our heritage. We do that through baptism, an act of obedience of faith.)

6. Do baptized believers still encounter the human problem of proclivity to sin when they try to bear fruit for God? Did the Cross of Christ remove the problem from the life of the Christian? Or, did it give the Christian a new life removed from the problem? (Romans 6: 3-5).

Christians (baptized believers) like us certainly do have this problem

when they try to serve God. Although we have new life in Christ which is not subject to this problem, we are still tied to the old life of flesh as we carry on in the world. We have not yet died a fleshly death which is the only way we can be rid of the fleshly man of sin. We have an inner warfare as long as we live in the flesh.

Paul said in Romans 8:7-8 that "the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." Romans chapter 7 indicates that the Apostle Paul had this problem in his life.

Christ did not remove the problem from our fleshly lives, but He gave us new lives which are removed from the problem. We are called upon to take certain steps of obedience which submits our lives to Christ and then allows Him to use our new lives to "bear fruit for God."

7. How did Paul state the goal of the Christian life in Romans 6:4?

The goal is "that we might walk in newness of life."

8. What appears to you to be Paul's primary purpose in the thoughts presented in Romans 6:6-14? Do you recognize any instructions given to the Christian in these verses that are related to the goal stated in Romans 6:4?

To me the action verbs found in these verses are instructions to Christians. The action verbs are forms of the verbs "to know," "to consider" or "to reckon," and "to present." When we are enabled to "walk in newness of life" our yoke will be easy and our burden will be light, as Jesus said. The real difficulty is not in "the walk" with Jesus but in ourselves, in just getting ready "to walk," in giving up the demands of the "old man" who, although "crucified with Christ," is still hanging onto us. These instructions are to enable us to deal with the "old man" and the inner warfare that he causes in us.

We cannot "walk in newness of life" until we accept the disposal of our "old man" who died with Christ.

9. List three specific and separate instructions that Paul gave to Christians in Romans 6:6-14. (Hint: Find the action verbs which apply imperatively to Christians. Note that the first verb is in present participle form in most translations.)

The verbs which call for action by the Christian are:

"Knowing" (Romans 6:6, 9).

"Consider", or "Reckon" (Romans 6: 11) .

"Present", or "Yield" (Romans 6:13).

The imperative instructions are:

a. Know that our old self was crucified with Christ that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. Know that through Christ we are freed from sin. Know that we shall also live with Christ because we know that the death that Christ died He died to sin, once for all, and the life that He now lives, He lives to God. (Romans 6:5-10).

b. Consider (reckon) yourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:11).

c. Do not go on presenting (yielding) the members of your body to sin, but present (yield) yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (Romans 6:13).

10. What is the meaning of the word "knowing?" What is the difference between "knowing" and "believing?" What are Christians to know?

"To know" something is to have it become a dominant factor in our world of reality. "Knowing" in this passage seems to be a first step in our "obedience of faith" after we have believed. It is an opening of the eyes of the inner man to a realization of what we have in Christ so that we can actually utilize it in real life situations.

The New Testament Greek word "believe" (PISTEUO) means "to adhere to, to trust, or to rely on." The New Testament Greek word "know"

(GINOSKO) means to be resolved, to be sure, to perceive, or to understand." There is not a lot of difference in the meanings of the two words. But apparently, "knowing" requires a deeper depth of perception and resolve than does "believing."

Paul wanted Christians to have a full realization of the practical meaning in their lives that their old self was crucified with Christ and that this resulted in their being freed from the power of the sin principle in their lives.

11. What is the meaning of the word "consider," or "reckon?" What are Christians to "reckon?"

The New Testament word "consider", or "reckon" (LOGIZOMAI) has also been translated "count," "impute," "number," or "lay to one's charge." The Greek word is said by some scholars to be an accounting term used to describe the work of administering financial accounts or doing financial bookkeeping.

Apparently, to "reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" is to bring the facts of your "death" and "new life into the realm of things which you actually use in your daily life. You have already come to "know" these facts. Now you can actually "spend" them!

12. What is the meaning of the word "present," or "yield?" What are Christians to "present?" To whom?

The New Testament word "present," or "yield," (PARI STANO) means "to set alongside" or "to place alongside." The thing to be "presented" is "the members of your body." Paul reminded us that we have been presenting or yielding the members of our bodies to sin, but now we must present the members of our bodies to God. This is the third step mentioned in a path of progress enabling us to "walk in newness of life," or, as indicated in Romans 8:4, to "walk according to the Spirit."

13. To what next action does the "knowing," "reckoning," and "presenting" lead? (Romans 6: 4; 8: 4).

The first three steps of progress enable us to realize the final goal of "walking in newness of life" (Romans 6: 4), or "walking according to the Spirit" (Romans 8: 4). Someone may dispute the thought that "walking according to the Spirit" is the final goal. Someone might say that "bearing fruit for God" (Romans 7:4) is the final goal for the Christian life on earth. But "fruit" is produced in Christians only by the work of the Spirit of Christ. The Christian is only the "instrument" or "vessel" through which the "righteousness of God" is put to work in Christian lives (Romans 6:13). And it is the "righteousness of God" exercised through His Holy Spirit which produces "fruit."

14. What should a Christian do after he begins his "walk according to the Spirit?" Who actually accomplishes the "good works" in his "walk?" The Christian? Or the Holy Spirit of Christ? (Ephesians 2:8-10).

The figure of speech, "walking according to the Spirit," enacted consistently in the Christian life, represents the most that the Christian can do to "bear fruit for God." The step of progress towards the final "walk" which probably gives the most difficulty in the Christian life is that of "presenting" that life to God. Almost inevitably the Christian at some point in his life starts trying to do something on his own initiative for God instead of just letting God do something through him. Through his own will power the Christian can do nothing for God. He simply must learn to "present the members of his body" in the sense of releasing them from his own selfish control to the control of God. It is in the "presenting" that the will power of the Christian must have a part.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them". (Ephesians 2:8-10). The Holy Spirit of Christ actually accomplishes the "good works" in the Christian's walk, not the Christian himself.