

That We Might Bear Fruit For God

Lesson 3.

Requirement of "sanctification" for a Christian to bear fruit for God.
(Romans 6:16-23)

By F. M. Perry

“(16) Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? (17) But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, (18) and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (19) I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. (20) For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. (21) Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. (22) But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. (23) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:16-23 NASV).

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Questions for Study

1. What is the concept of Paul's usage of the words "obey" and "obedience" in Romans 6: 16-17?
2. Is "obedience" to God by a Christian in any way equivalent to or synonymous with, "good works" or "bearing of fruit?" In the cooperation between God and the Christian, which one is simply to render "obedience", and which one will actually produce the "fruit?" (Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 2:9-10; Romans 6:16-17; Romans 7:4; Hebrews 5:9; John 15:4; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9).
3. What did Paul mean in Romans 6:17 by the phrase "that form of teaching to which you were committed?"
4. What was the concept of Paul's usage of the word "sanctification" ("holiness") in Romans 6:16-23?
5. What has God always required for the use of any vessel in His service? (Consider the people and the vessels used in the Tabernacle and Temple worship: Exodus 19:10-11, 29:36-37, 29:40-44, 31:13, 40:10; 2 Chronicles 7:12-16, 29:5).
6. What does God require to prepare Christians to serve Him today? (1 Peter 1:2; Romans 6:19/ 15:16; Hebrews 9:13-14, 10:9-14; 13:12).
7. How has a Christian's "sanctification" for God's use been made possible? What is a Christian to do so that he is sanctified and available for God's use in the "bearing of fruit?" (Romans 6:19). Can a Christian

"bear fruit for God" without obeying the commands of Romans chapter 6 (commands to know, to reckon, to present, and to walk)?

8. To what are the people of the world enslaved and to what are they free? What part does "obedience" and "presenting (yielding) your members" have in this slavery?

9. To whom and to what must Christians be enslaved in order for them to "bear fruit for God?" To what must Christians be free in order for them to "bear fruit for God?" What part does "obedience" and "presenting (yielding) your members" have in this slavery (servanthood)?

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Questions and answers:

1. What is the concept of Paul's useage of the words "obey" and "obedience" in Romans 6: 16-17?

Paul used the Greek verb HUPAKOUO for "obey" in verse 16. This verb means "to hearken submissively." He used the Greek noun HUPAKOE for "obedience" in that same verse. The noun's meaning is a "hearkening submissively." The same word "obedience" was used by Paul in his opening statement of the Roman letter (Romans 1:5) as he stated that Jesus Christ had made him an apostle for the purpose of bringing about the "obedience of faith" among all the Gentiles. Again the same word "obedience" was used by Paul in his closing statement of the Romans letter (Romans 16:26) as he gave glory to God that the gospel had been made known to all the nations, leading to "obedience of faith."

The theme of the Roman letter is that "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith," and that God's righteousness is imputed to people as they live by faith. Paul's use of the phrase "obedience of faith" in the opening and the closing of the letter leads us to expect that the letter contains much about the connection between "faith" and "obedience."

And so it does. The letter shows that in every phase of the Christian life the righteousness of God imputes additional gifts to the Christian as he exercises his faith, and that every aspect of the exercise of faith involves the exercise of obedience.

In coupling the word "obedience" with the word "faith," Paul put forth the idea that the exercise of faith requires "submissive hearkening." In Romans 6:1-15 which we studied in our last lesson, the requirements of

"obedience" to the action verbs "know," "reckon," "present," and "walk" are examples of requirements for steps of "submissive hearkenings." In Romans 6:16-17 Paul contrasted our "submissive hearkening" to sin which results in death, to our "submissive hearkening" to the righteousness of God which results in freedom from sin and in sanctification as God's holy vessel.

2. Is "obedience" to God by a Christian in any way equivalent to, or synonymous with, "good works" or "bearing of fruit?" In the cooperation between God and the Christian, which one is simply to render "obedience," and which one will actually produce the "fruit?" (Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 2:9-10; Romans 6:16-17; Hebrews 5:9; John 15:4; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9).

Having bonded ourselves in faith to God as slaves, we are called upon merely to obey, that is, to hearken submissively. It is mere obedience of faith which results in freedom from sin. And through that obedience we become sanctified "vessels" that can be used for "good works." But God performs the good works through the use of the sanctified vessels. The vessels never act on their own. "Obedience" is not equivalent to, or synonymous with, "good works." Christians simply hearken submissively, or render "obedience." God does the "good works." This same idea is brought out in Philippians 2:12-13. Paul reminded the Philippians of their fundamental action of obedience with the phrase "just as you have always obeyed." Then he called upon them "to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." This call to "work out your own salvation" is Paul's call to them to continue to obey as bond slaves.

Paul knew that human nature prompts Christians to want to "take matters into their own hands" and "do things for themselves" just as Adam did in rejection of God in the Garden of Eden. So Paul reminded the Philippians that the "work" belongs to God, and "it is God who is at work in you."

Paul expressed this same idea in 1 Corinthians 3:6 when he wrote of his part in the conversion of the Corinthians. He said, "I planted, Apollos

watered, but God was causing the growth."

This same idea is brought out in several of the other referenced scriptures.

3. What did Paul mean in Romans 6:17 by the phrase "that form of teaching to which you were committed?"

The Greek word translated "form" or "standard" in Romans 6:17 is TUPOS, which means "form" or "impress." When one is baptized he obeys the gospel (i.e. the death, burial and resurrection of Christ - 1 Corinthians 15:1-4) in a form. In other words, through baptism, he re-enacts the doctrine which he has been taught. James MacKnight wrote concerning this word translated "form:" "The original word TUPOS, among other things, signifies a 'mold' into which melted metals are poured to receive the form of the mold. The apostle represents the gospel doctrine as a mold, into which the Romans were put by their baptism, in order to their being fashioned anew. And he thanks God that from the heart they yielded to the forming efficacy of that mold of doctrine, and were made new men, both in principle and practice" (as quoted by Whiteside, pp 139-140).

Acts 6:7 says that in the early days of the preaching of the word of God, many "were becoming obedient to the faith." Here the word "faith" was used to represent a "form of teaching." Paul taught extensively in the Roman letter a "form" which he referred to as "obedience of faith." Jude spoke of "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." These are some of the Biblical expressions referring to the gospel message and the "form of teaching" which required "commitment" on the part of the one who embraced it.

In the Roman letter perhaps the expression "obedience of faith" is one which expresses in a "nutshell" the "form of teaching" which Paul taught and "to which you (Romans) were committed." Of course, the basis of the gospel teaching were the facts of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Son of God who was also the Son of Man.

4. What was the concept of Paul's usage of the word "sanctification" ("holiness") in Romans 6:16-23?

The word "sanctification" or "holiness" is translated from the Greek word HAGIASMOS which means "separation" or "setting apart." In Romans 6:16-23 Paul wrote of the "sanctification" of Christians as God's separation of them from the rest of the world and God's "setting apart" of them to bear fruit for Him.

5. What has God always required for the use of any vessel in His service? (Consider the people and the vessels used in the Tabernacle and Temple worship by the Jews: Exodus 19:10-11, 29:36-37, 29:40-44, 31:13, 40:10, 2 Chronicles 7:12-16, 29:5).

In Exodus 19:10-11 the Lord told Moses to consecrate the Israelites and have them wash and wear clean clothes. The reason they were to be "set apart" in that way was that they were to stand that day near the presence of the Lord. The people's obedience resulted in God's sanctification of them, making it possible for them to be in the presence of God. In Exodus 29:36-37 the necessity to sanctify the altar of sacrifice to God is mentioned. In Exodus 29:40-44 is mentioned the consecration, or sanctification, of the sacrifice itself, the tabernacle, the altar, and even the priests Aaron and his sons. In 2 Chronicles 7:12-16 the sanctification, or making holy, of Solomon's Temple was mentioned.

The point is that everything and everybody which served in any way in the worship of God had to be sanctified or made holy before the service could be performed. The actual sanctification was done by God but only after the people had obeyed certain instructions concerning sprinkling of blood, washing, wearing of certain garments, etc. These things were all "types" of spiritual preparations for God's sanctification of Christians for His service today.

6. What does God require to prepare Christians to serve Him today? (1 Peter 1:2; Romans 6:19, 15:16; Hebrews 9:13-14, 10:9-14, 13:12).

Romans 6:19 tells us that God requires Christians today to "present your

members as slaves to righteousness" in order for Him to sanctify Christians in His service. In Romans 15:16 Paul tells us that his ministry to the Gentiles was anti-type to the work of priests in the Old Testament. He and his work was sanctified by the Holy Spirit, making his "offering" of the converted Gentiles a sanctified and acceptable offering. The lesson for us: We must be sanctified by God's Holy Spirit in our Christian service in order that our offering of the fruit of our service be acceptable to God. (This has to do with the Christians' "spiritual service of worship" mentioned in Romans 12:1.)

Peter told us that his service to God as an apostle as well as our service as Christians was made possible "by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood." Thus we learn that it is God's Spirit who sanctifies us through the blood shed by Jesus on the Cross. The sanctification comes after our proper obedience to the word of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:13-14 gives us insight into a benefit that the Christian servant receives when God sanctifies him. This benefit is necessary in order that the worshipful service of the Christian be acceptable to God. This benefit is the cleansing of our consciences from dead works through the blood of Christ. Our works were ineffective works that we attempted to offer to God before our sanctification. This cleansing of our consciences enabled us to start effective service to the living God.

7. How has a Christian's "sanctification" for God's use been made possible?" What is a Christian to do so that he is sanctified and available for God's use in the "bearing of fruit?" (Romans 6:19). Can a Christian "bear fruit for God" without obeying the commands of Romans chapter 6 (commands to know, to reckon, to present, and to walk)?

The Christian's sanctification has been made possible by the "offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all," and specifically in that offering of His body, the shedding of His blood. Hebrews 9:13-14 and Hebrews 10:9-14 give us this information clearly. The thing that is left for the Christian himself to do in order to be sanctified is to offer his

"obedience of faith" to the Spirit's instructions. Romans chapter 6 says that the Christian must "know," "reckon," and "present." The final step before beginning the Christian's "walk in the Spirit" is to "present your members as slaves to righteousness." (Romans 6:19). All the steps are summed up in Romans 6:22: "But now having been freed from sin (God's part) and enslaved to God (the Christian's part), you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life."

God does not allow people who have not been sanctified by Him to "bear fruit" for Him! God sanctifies us for His use when we render obedience of our faith in the Cross of Christ. Chapter 6 of the Roman letter was presented to us through Paul by God's Spirit to inform us of steps of obedience toward progress in effectively serving God. The Spirit wants us to know that the faith that leads us to "present our members as slaves to God" will result in God's sanctification of us in His service. Therefore, we must say that the Christian cannot "bear fruit for God" without obeying the commands of Romans chapter 6.

8. To what are the people of the world enslaved and to what are they free? What part does "obedience" and "presenting (yielding) your members" have in this slavery?

The people of the world (that is, people who have not yet believed, repented, been baptized, and presented themselves for God's use) are enslaved to sin (Romans 6: 17). They are enslaved to impurity and to lawlessness (Romans 6:19). They are slaves to sin because they have "obeyed" the forces of lawlessness and have presented the members of their bodies "to sin as instruments of unrighteousness." (Romans 6:13).

Romans 6:20 tells us that slaves of sin are free in regard to righteousness. I take that to mean that they are free from any sense of responsibility or obligation to live righteously. The people of the world are still slaves of sin. Because they are enslaved to sin they are "free" with regard to anything else. Sin cannot produce "righteousness" therefore slaves of sin are "free" to "righteousness."

9. To whom and to what must Christians be enslaved in order for them

to "bear fruit for God?" To what must Christians be free in order for them to "bear fruit for God?" What part does "obedience" and "presenting (yielding) your members" have in this slavery (servanthood)?

Christians must be "slaves of righteousness" (which only comes through "enslavement to God") with resultant "sanctification" by God for them to serve God, or to "bear fruit for God."

Christians, who have already been forgiven and freed from the guilt of their past sins, must also be "freed from sin" (that is, freed from the power of the sin principle in their lives) in order to "bear fruit for God."

Paul's discussion in these verses pictures actual human slavery as a type where one person owns another person. A person can be the slave of only one master at a time. A person cannot be the slave of "sin" personified and the slave of God at the same time. He is always enslaved to one and "free" from the other. Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other". (Matthew 6:24).

In this discussion, Paul not only refers to the two possible masters, "sin" or God, but also to the results or "benefits" of the two possible enslavements. The so-called "benefit" of enslavement to sin is something that Satan actually presents to us as having positive benefits, as he presented the fruit of the tree of knowledge to Adam in the Garden of Eden. But the "benefit" is a big lie! It is not a "benefit" at all. It brings about "spiritual death" (Romans 6:21), something of which the Christian has become ashamed. On the other hand, the real "benefit" of enslavement to God is "righteousness," "sanctification," and "eternal life."

We should remember, of course, that we Christians once were living in sin and we are still subject to the possibility of sin. Even though we are Christians, we still sin. Sin has not been just a "possible" master in our lives. Before we turned to Christ we all had the experience of being enslaved to sin. Paul reminded Christians of their former enslavement

to sin when he said in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

The point in the sixth chapter of Romans is that Christians, who all still suffer because of the inherited sin principle in their lives, should take note that Christ has already freed them from enslavement to sin and they can now present themselves as slaves to the Lordship of God, something they could not do before they became Christians. After all, "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23).

In the 6th chapter of Romans Paul presents the Holy Spirit's plea that we "obey" God in the "presenting" of ourselves as slaves to God. This is the step of obedience that makes it possible for us to "bear fruit for God". We should understand the importance of "obedience" and "presenting" in our lives because it is simply in our "obedience" to "sin" and in the "presenting" of ourselves to "sin" that we Christians still have a problem with "sin." We will not sin if we do not present ourselves to sin! God through the sacrifice of His Son has made the fruitful Christian life possible for any Christian. We exercise our own wills to simple steps of obedience to God's word. In our Christian lives on earth it is crucial to whom we "obey" and to whom we "present" ourselves.