

The event that split history into “before” and “after” and changed the world took place about thirty years before Paul wrote this letter. The event - the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus - took place in a remote corner of the extensive Roman Empire. The province of Judea in Palestine. Hardly anyone noticed, certainly no one in busy and powerful Rome.

And when this letter arrived in Rome, hardly anyone read it, certainly no one of influence. There was much to read in Rome - imperial decrees, exquisite poetry, finely crafted moral philosophy - and much of it was world-class. And yet in no time, as such things go, this letter left all those other writings in the dust. Paul's letter to the Romans has had a far larger impact on its readers than the volumes of all the Roman writers put together.

The quick rise of this letter to a peak of influence is extraordinary, written as it was by an obscure Roman citizen without connections. But when we read it for ourselves, we begin to realize that it is the letter itself that is truly extraordinary, and that no obscurity in writer or readers could have kept it obscure for long.

The letter to the Romans is a piece of exuberant and passionate thinking. This is the glorious life of the mind enlisted in the service of God. Paul takes the well-witnessed and devoutly believed fact of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth and thinks through its implications. How does it happen that in the death and resurrection of Jesus, world history took a new direction, and at the same moment the life of every man, woman, and child on the planet was eternally affected? What is God up to? What does it mean that Jesus “saves”? What's behind all this, and where is it going?

These are the questions that drive Paul's thinking. Paul's mind is supple and capacious. He takes logic and argument, poetry and imagination, Scripture and prayer, creation and history and experience, and weaves them into this letter that has become the premier document of Christian theology.

#### **Commentary on Romans from The Bible Project:**

- <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/romans-1-4/>
- <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/romans-5-16/>

#### **Commentary on themes in Romans from The Bible Project:**

- Holiness: <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/holiness/>
- The Law: <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/law/>
- Sacrifice and Atonement: <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/sacrifice-and-atonement/>
- Covenants: <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/covenants/>

#### **Overview of Romans from [bible.org](#):**

- <https://bible.org/seriespage/56-romans>

#### **Commentary on Romans 6 from [bible.org](#):**

- <https://bible.org/seriespage/10-end-reign-death-romans-61-14>
- <https://bible.org/seriespage/11-stupidity-sin-romans-612-23>

## **READ Romans 6**

(The following discussion questions are adapted from The Serendipity Bible)

### *Opening*

- What is the closest you have come to losing your life?
- Who was your first “boss”? Was this person easy to work with or a slave driver?

### *Digging in — Discovering the Word*

- What motivates you to live a good life?
- In this passage, “death” and “died” are used many times. What is the main point Paul is trying to make?
- How is baptism a symbol of what Christ did?
- The Roman Christians that read Paul’s letter may not have had any other documents from the New Testament. Describe what happens in baptism if you only have Romans 6 to work from.
- In what ways do people become “slaves to sin”? How can a person escape this bondage?
- What do you do with the flashbacks and bad memories that keep reminding you of your past mistakes?
- What does it mean to be “dead to sin”?
- If we are dead to sin how is it that Christians still sin? What does it mean to practice the teaching in verses 11-13?
- If Paul were around today, what would he say enslaves our society? What about Christian community?
- What are the two choices we have to “serve” (vvv.16-18)?
- What is the result of slavery to sin?
- What is the benefit of slavery to God and its result?
- How do you feel about being a slave to God?

### *Connecting the Dots — Applying the Word*

- Does the language of slavery in this chapter make you uncomfortable? How do we as “free” people get comfortable with voluntarily becoming slaves?
- How does the knowledge of your death to sin affect your struggle with sin, or how can it? How can it affect your prayer life?
- Where do you need to be dead to sin but alive to Christ?