

ROMANS SEASON 2

HOW THE GOSPEL WORKS

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- What are some highs and lows from the past week?
 - What's your most memorable road trip?
 - What's one of the most enjoyable work projects you've gotten to work on?
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TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

If you wanted to go to Maine, there's only way direction to head: north. If you got onto I-95 and headed south, you might get to New York City, but not Maine. In chapters five and six, Paul is making a similar point about sin—if you allow sin to be the direction your life takes, you'll arrive at a certain destination. But now that Jesus provides freedom from sin, there's another direction to take, and it heads in a different direction, it leads to a different destination.

A Quick Note on Paul's "Slavery" Metaphor

Paul uses the metaphor of slavery through this passage. Slavery in Paul's day looked different in many ways than slavery in American history. The slavery that Paul has in mind here is economic. In order to advance socio-economically, you would offer yourself to be in someone's service to gain connections or be able to save up money. The point is that you "presented" yourself as a slave because there was something to be gained.

Two Directions

READ: Romans 6:15-18

DISCUSS: Paul says Christian obedience is "from the heart." What do you think that means?

The two directions here are very clear: you either present yourself as a servant to sin, or present yourself as a servant to obedience. Freedom from sin isn't freedom to do whatever you want; it's freedom to obey God. Notice, however, that Paul doesn't see it as blind, begrudging obedience. It's obedience "from the heart" that makes you say, "thanks be to God!" For the Christian, obedience makes sense because God's instruction must be for our good. He did, after all, send his Son to die to save us.

Two Destinations

READ: Romans 6:19-23

DISCUSS: What stands out to you from these verses and why?

Taking the direction of sin leads to shame in this life and death in the life to come—eternal separation from God and his goodness. Obedience leads to sanctification in this life, and life in the age to come. Sanctification is the process of being made holy. Holy literally means “set apart.” So, by taking the path of obedience, we are used for more of God’s purposes and experience more of his goodness. Eternal life isn’t just perpetual existence, but rather the future reality of God’s restored creation. We get to experience it in a measure now and fully in the age to come. The better of the two destinations is quite of obvious.

GRACE *SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS*

READ: Romans 6:18

Talking in such stark terms can make us fall into an oversimplified view that says, “Obey and you’ll go to heaven. Disobey and you’ll go to hell.” But Paul reminds us that our very ability to obey doesn’t come from us but from God. God has set us free from sin. Now we can walk in it and experience his freedom. Yes, we still sin, but we stand with God against sin, and the resurrection power of God is at work in us to shape us into the image of his Son.

CHANGE *APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS*

- In what ways have you experienced God sanctifying you recently?
 - We’re told to present ourselves as slaves to obedience. In what specific areas do you sense God wanting to use you? Are there things he’s asked you to do that you’re holding back on?
 - Have you been trying to obey in your own power? What could it look like to rely on God more?
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PRAYER *RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER*

- Jesus asked the Father to sanctify his disciples in truth, then added, “Your word is truth” (John 17:17). Pray that same prayer over each other.
- Pray for clarity from the Holy Spirit about how God wants to use you for his purposes in this time of your life.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?