

Romans 6:12—23

A born-again believer should not yield to the temptation of the flesh. That is allowing your bodies desires to control your life. Temperance and self-control are virtues made possible through the new life in Christ. Believers must cease from wallowing in human experience and feelings; Christianity is a way of life, not a series of feelings.

Sin and Satan look for weapons to use against God. Don't allow the members of your body to be used as a vehicle for the Devil to drive. Make yourself available as instruments to God's glory.

Conquering sin is not through restraint but through inspiration. It is not through trying, it is through trusting. It is not through trying to keep the law by abstaining, but rather by grace abounding. At best the law restrains people through fear of its consequences but Grace empowers believers to triumph. The battle between two opposing forces of good and evil are at war in the *battlefield for our minds*. Let grace conquer the fear of the law. In other words, I abstain from evil and sin not because of fear of God's Judgment against me, but I abstain because I understand His love for me - *what mercy, what grace!*

In a monastery of monks, a man is accepted for probation of one year before taking a vow of service to the Catholic Church. For this 12 month period, his civilian clothes hang in the closet of his room and he wears a garment called a "habit". At any time of his probation, if he wants to "give up", he can disrobe and put on his worldly clothes and walk out of the monastery with the assurance that the church wouldn't think anything less of him. However, a monk who endures will, after one year, have his secular clothes removed as a symbol that he has succeeded.

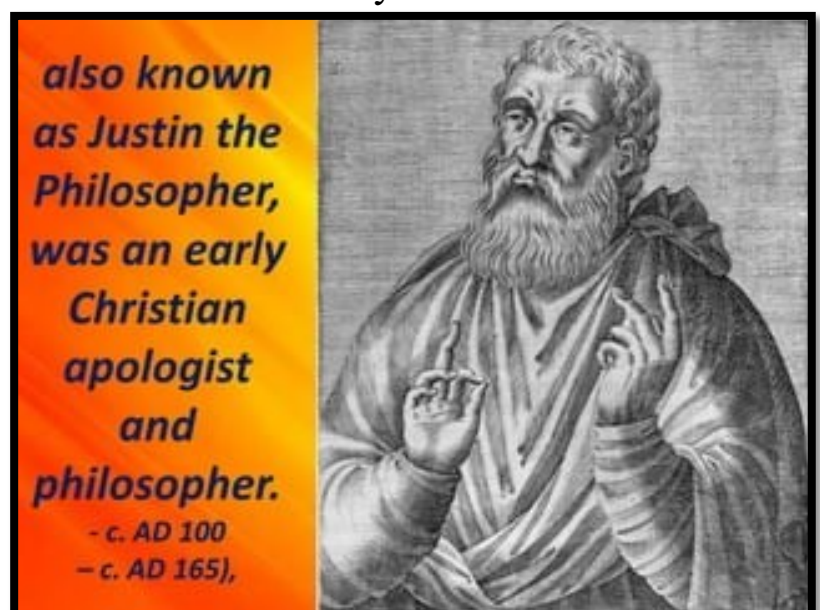
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In the same way, when we accept Christ as Saviour and Lord of our lives, there is no turning back. We should understand that it's not just a token change, but a total change. We no longer can live under sin's domination. From a heart of sincerity, we are genuine about our commitment to Christ. We know that it's not going to be easy but by God's grace, we choose to live God's way.

The weakness of man is evident in the lifestyles of immorality. Such sub-standard living was common throughout the Roman Empire, very much the same as it is today with such low morals and indecency.

A great believer, Justin Martyr, commented on the hedonistic lifestyle of Romans in the early century A.D, that Roman citizens were so low in morals that they threw away their unwanted babies, especially girls, in the forums and market place. Martyr poked fun and ridicule at such a practice pointing out that paedophiles and pimps



would take these unwanted children and bring them up to be prostitutes. Justin then infuriated his opponents by suggesting that when the depraved men visited by brothels of Rome they would be unwittingly engaging in immorality with their own daughters! How sick, how depraved, how low has the human race sunk. Paul seems to be saying to Roman believers that indulging in **minor acts of immortality** will produce major diabolical and obscene conduct that will destroy any ounce of decency.

Paul draws a distinction between the world system and the new life in Christ. In the past, we lived a lawless and ungodly life with no or little regard for moral values and spiritual truth, but now we have the opportunity to give our lives as instruments of honour to God's glory.

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A born again believer who truly appreciates and values God's grace **will never** use another human being to gratify their desire for pleasure. Righteousness simply means right conduct. In some way sanctification and righteousness are on the same page.

The Greek word Hagios means clean or holy life. All Greek nouns ending in "asmos" describe not a complete state but a process. Sanctification or holiness is both a state or position and a step or process. It's something we already have in Christ but needs to be lived out in practise. We are "positionally" in the bus, but now we have to continue the journey.

The by-product or fruit of our past life is death and destruction. The fruit of a right relationship with God will produce works of righteousness. The end or destiny of believers is **eternal life**.

This chapter ends with a verse that every Christian should learn to quote. Paul uses a twin metaphor.

“Sinful living will earn the pay of death (separation), but God's gift will give you eternal life” **Rom 6:23.**

The Greek word “opisonia” means pay or wages, which is something you earn through your work and labour. The Greek word “charisma” is an unearned gift, which is something you receive although you haven't worked for it, i.e. unmerited favour.

- Opisoni : receiving what you deserve
- Charisma : receiving what you do not deserve, (a free gift from God).

DO NOT MISUSE GOD'S GIFT!

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QUESTIONS:

1. Where exactly does the battle of life take place?

2. Complete this quote:
“Conquering sin is not through restraint, but ...”

3. What is so dangerous about “minor acts of immorality”?

4. What is the fruit (result) of:
 - a) Unrighteousness

 - b) Righteousness

DISCUSS:

How and when does our immorality result in abuse of others?

*He is no fool
 who gives up
 what he cannot
 keep to gain
 what he cannot
 lose.*

JIM ELLIOT.