

GRACE TO YOU

ROMANS 6:15-22

# HAPPY SLAVERY



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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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# INTRODUCTION

Have you ever tried to help an addict? Maybe it was a drug addict, a porn addict, a gambling addict, or an alcoholic. You've tried everything and yet it's getting no better, only worse. So many false dawns, so many disappointed hopes. **How can we beat addiction?**

Or maybe it's yourself. You're in the grip of a destructive habit that you've tried to deny, minimize, excuse, or beat, but it's stronger than ever. **How can we beat addiction?**

The Apostle Paul proposes three ways to beat addiction that involve three ways of viewing yourself.

- See yourself as dead with Christ (6:1-11).
- See yourself as under grace (12-14).
- See yourself as a slave of righteousness (6:15-22)

It's this latter view that is our focus in this sermon.

## BACKGROUND

In general terms we can summarize the first six chapters of Romans as follows:

- Chapter 1. The Gentiles are guilty
- Chapter 2. The Jews are guilty
- Chapter 3:1-19. Everyone's guilty
- Chapter 3:20-31. Get from deadly guilt to healthy joy through faith in Jesus.
- Chapter 4. Follow Abraham's example of faith in the promises and you'll inherit the world.
- Chapter 5:1-5. God invites us into his love through trouble
- Chapter 5:6-11. God proves he loves us (with the graces of substitution, propitiation, and reconciliation)
- Chapter 5:12-21. God proves he loves us with the grace of representation.
- Chapter 6: Super-abounding grace means super-abounding holiness.

Romans 5: Grace frees us from the law's **penalty** for sin.

Romans 6: Grace frees us from the law's **powerlessness** over sin.

Romans 7: Grace frees us from the law's **provocation** of sin.

Our passage, Romans 6:15-22 begins with these verses: **What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey (15-16).**



What kind of slaves are we or were we?



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# 1. WE WERE WEAK SLAVES

## The Slaver

**"If you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death" (16). "You who were once slaves of sin" (17). You were "slaves to impurity and lawlessness " (19). "You were slaves of sin" (20).**

The slaver is the person who buys and owns the slave. The slave is his property. In Paul's teaching, the slaver is sin, which he also calls "impurity and lawlessness."

Most people view sin as beautiful, kind, helpful, loving, compassionate, fulfilling, freeing, and tolerant. It's no wonder then if people want sin, want to sin, and think they will find the best life in sin. What a difference it makes when we take the biblical view of sin as a slaver. Then we see sin as ugly, hideous, cruel, hateful, merciless, draining, binding, and intolerant.

## The Slaves

**"If you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves" (16). "For just as you once presented your members as slaves" (19).**

The slaves come to the slaver called sin and say, "I want to be your slave and therefore I present myself and all my members to you to do with me as you please."

Sometimes we think that sin just happens out of the blue. "I don't know what came over me....What just happened?" But Paul teaches us that sin is a choice to present ourselves and our members to sin. Sin does not just happen. No, it's a personal choice to give ourselves to the slaver called sin. Others say, "It's just the way I am, I can't help how God made me." Paul says, every sin is an active choice of sin as our slaver.

## The Slavery

Sin "leads to death" (16). You are "**slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness**" (19). "**For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death" (20-21). "**The wages of sin is death**" (23).**

What does this slavery look like? Death, lawlessness, 'good-less,' barrenness, shamefulness, death, and more death.

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Are you addicted?** This explains why. You have chosen to be a slave of the worst ever slaver. It's a choice, a deliberate decision to present yourself to that sin. Don't blame, genes, circumstances, upbringing but your choice.

**Are you tempted?** Here's how to escape. See sin as it really is, by seeing the slaver as he really is, the slaves as they really are, and the slavery as it really is. The temptation will weaken and you will get strength to overcome.

WHEN WE CHOOSE SIN  
WE CHOOSE SLAVERY



How do we get free from this slaver and this slavery?  
We need a new slaver.



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## 2. WE ARE POWERFUL SLAVES

### The Slaver

"If you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey...of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (16). "You have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed" (17). "You have become slaves of righteousness" (18). "Present your members as slaves to righteousness" (19). "You have become slaves of God" (22).

Paul is aware that picturing the Christian life as slavery is potentially problematic. That's why he says, "**I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations**" (19). He says, it's not a perfect analogy, but it's good enough to make at least some valuable points and offer some practical help for the Christian life.

Paul sees the Christian life, not as just deliverance from slavery to freedom, but deliverance from bad slavery to good slavery. The Christian's slaver is "obedience," "the standard of teaching to which you were committed," "righteousness," and "God" all different ways to view this slavery. The Christian does not pass out of ownership but from bad ownership to good ownership.

Sin-slaves think God-slaves have the worst slaver in the world - ugly, hideous, cruel, hateful, merciless, draining, binding, and intolerant. Paul wants God-slaves to view their slaver as beautiful, handsome, kind, helpful, loving, compassionate, fulfilling, freeing, and forgiving. What a difference it makes when we see God and his standards in this way.

### The Slaves

"If you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey" (16). "So now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification" (19).

The slaves come to God and his Word, and say, "I want to be your slave and therefore I present myself and all my members to you to do with me as you please." This is an active deliberate presentation.

### The Slavery

Obedience from the heart "leads to righteousness" (16, 18) which is committing "to the standard of teaching" (17), "sanctification" (19), holy fruit (22), unashamedness (21), freedom from sin (22), the free gift of eternal life (23).

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Are you done with sin's slavery?** Go to God and say, "Free me to be your slave. Take my heavy chains off and put your yoke upon me because your yoke is easy and your burden is light (Matt. 11:30). Your commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3). Make me your slave, addict me to righteousness, for my good."

**You can't stop sin without replacing it with its opposite.** Just stopping will always stop. Instead, you need a new slaver and a new slavery. You break bad addictions by replacing them with good addictions.

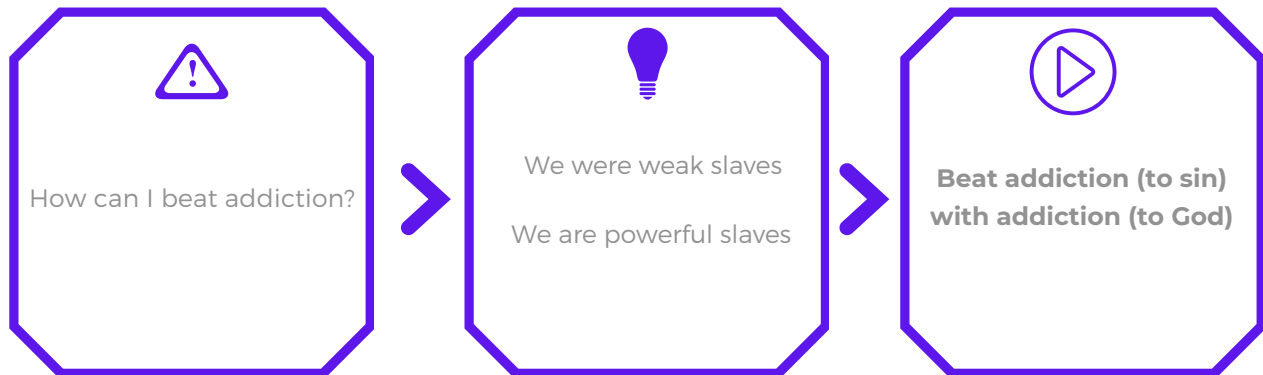
STOP BAD SLAVERY  
WITH GOOD SLAVERY



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories



## SUMMARY



## A NEW CHAPTER

**Look at your addiction through the lens of this passage.** It will cause revulsion and rebellion against your slaver. You will be revolted and repulsed by your choices. It will stop your excuses, justifications, and evasions.

**Look at godliness through the lens of this passage.** You will see living as God's slave is beautiful, attractive, valuable, wise, and productive. You will want that and go after it. A different view of your life will produce a different life.

**Prayer.** Good Slaver, enslave me to all that is good: for my good, others good, and your glory.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Make a list of everything people can get addicted to?
2. How do people usually try to beat addiction?
3. How did this passage change your view of sin?
4. How did this passage change your view of the Christian life?
5. Describe the ways in which God is a better slaver than sin.
6. How would you use this passage with an addict (or yourself if you are one)?

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