

New Covenant Presbyterian Church  
Sunday School 1/29/23  
Romans 6:15-23

WSC Q68: What is required in the sixth commandment?

A: The sixth commandment requires all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

Romans 6:15–23

[15] What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! [16] Do you not know that 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, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? [17] But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, [18] and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. [19] I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

[20] For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. [21] 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. [22] But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. [23] For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)

- The freedom of the “ex-Christian”
  - “The Christian religion is nothing without fear”
  - “Christianity is a system of mind control that terrorizes believers into submission”
  - “I am no longer a Christian and I finally feel free”
  - “I came out as a non believer today to my friends and family. It’s intense! But, I feel free.”
  - Christian answer:
    - John 8:36 “if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”
    - Romans 8:2 “for the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”
  - “Are we to sin because we are not under the law but under grace?”
    - Paraphrase: Since I am not under the law, why can I not do whatever I want now?
- “Thus, you will recognize them by their fruits”
  - Paul here says our fruit reveals our master
    - Matthew 7:20 “Thus, you will recognize them by their fruits”
    - John 8:34 “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin”
    - 1 John 3:6 “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.”

- 1 Cor 12:3 “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit.”
- John 13:35 “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- Therefore, the one to whom you are obedient is your master

**DQ: Is there any such thing as true human autonomy - freedom from all outside powers and influences?**

- Free from one, slave to another
  - Your will and actions are always bound to external influences
    - God’s grace: BOTH liberating and constraining power
    - Matthew 12:43-45 “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first.”
    - There is no state of neutrality
  - Not whether to be slave or free, but whom you will serve
  - Christian freedom is freedom from sin, non-Christian freedom is freedom from righteousness
    - Moo: They are “free from the power and influence of the conduct that pleases God; they are deaf to God’s righteous demands and incapable of responding to them even were they to hear and respect them.”

**DQ: How does the image of slavery help us to understand our status before God?**

- You “have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were handed over”
- “We must remember that Paul’s concept of freedom is not that of autonomous self-direction but of deliverance from those enslaving powers that would prevent human beings from becoming what God intended.” (Moo)
  - Not merely “let my people go” but “let them go so they may serve me in the wilderness.”
- What about Romans chapter 7?
  - Experiencing temptation simple means that sin is giving commands
    - Romans 8 “we are debtors, not to the flesh”
  - “The Christian is not just called to do right in a vacuum but to do right out of a new and powerful relationship, that has already been established.” (Moo)
    - Justification precedes sanctification!
- The most important fruit is not temporal, but eternal
  - What is the fruit? Impurity→lawlessness. Righteousness→sanctification
    - Death is earned; eternal life is a gift
  - Moo: "We may summarize the verse by its three contrasts: the master that is served - sin versus God; the outcome of that service - death versus eternal life; and the means by which this outcome is attained - a 'wage' versus a gift received."