

## “Slaves of Sin” OR “Slaves of Righteousness”

(NKJV)

John 8:34

Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, **whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.**”

Luke 4:18

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim **liberty to the captives** And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

II Peter 2:19, NAS

...they themselves are **slaves of corruption; for BY what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved** [‘brought into **bondage**’—NKJV].

Rom. 6:6

knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that **we should no longer be slaves of sin.**

Rom. 6: 12-13

Therefore **do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.** And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.

Rom. 6: 16-22

<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that **to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?** <sup>17</sup> But God be thanked that **though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed** from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. <sup>18</sup> **And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.** <sup>19</sup> I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading to more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves of righteousness for holiness. <sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. <sup>22</sup> But **now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God,** you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

Rom. 7:23

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and **bringing me into CAPTIVITY to the law of sin which is in my members.**

Rom. 8:7

Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is **not subject** to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

—

Rom. 12: 1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Gal. 4: 7-10

Therefore **you are no longer a slave but a son**, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how *is it* that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years.

Gal. 5:1

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a **yoke of bondage**.

1 Cor. 6: 19-20

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and **you are not your own? For you were bought at a price;** therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Cor. 7: 22-23

For he who is called in the Lord *while* a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called *while* free is **Christ's slave. You were bought at a price;** do not become slaves of men.

James 1:25

But he who looks into the perfect **law of liberty** and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Psalms 119: 44-45

So shall I keep **Your law** continually, Forever and ever.  
**And I will walk at liberty, For I seek Your precepts.**

1 John 5:3

For this **is** the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And **His commandments are NOT burdensome.**

Many people think that certain New Testament scriptures refer to “bondage to God’s law”—when those scriptures *actually* refer to people being in bondage **to sin and Satan**.

Let’s first look at some scriptures that are very *plainly* speaking of bondage to sin and/or Satan. Jesus Christ plainly stated that “whoever commits sin is a **slave** of sin” (John 8:34). Here, Christ was speaking of those who sin as a *way* of life—those who are unrepentant—those who have not surrendered their lives to God—those who are not *striving* to live by every word of God (Luke 4:4).

What does Peter say of such people? He says, “they themselves are **slaves** of corruption;

for **BY** what a man is overcome, by this he is *enslaved* [‘brought into *bondage*’—*NKJV*]” (II Peter 2:19, *NAS*).

Now notice the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans, where Paul discusses what happens to a truly repentant person at baptism. Among other things, baptism pictures the “crucifixion” and *burial* of the old self—the *sinning* self. It pictures the coming up *out of* that watery “grave”—symbolic of a *changed* person, who is resurrected to a new, spiritual life in Christ. “...that our old man [our old self] was crucified with Him [Christ], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should *no longer be slaves of sin*” (verse 6).

“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves **slaves to obey**, you **ARE** that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether **of sin** [leading] to death, or *of obedience* [leading] to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you *were slaves of sin*, yet you [now] *obeyed* from the heart... and having been set **free** from [slavery to] sin, you became *slaves of righteousness*... now having been set free from sin, and having become **slaves of God**...” (verses 16-22).

Yes, sin *enslaves* a person, and brings him into bondage. Yet, as we’ve seen, one can be set *free* from that bondage. But, such freedom has its price: the price of becoming a “slave of God”—a “slave of righteousness.” In other words, at baptism, we unconditionally surrender our lives to God---and, from then on, we become a living *sacrifice* (Rom.12: 1-2).

We are then no longer our own! As Paul said, “do you not know that...you are *not* your own? For you were **bought** at a price” (I Cor. 6: 19-20). And that “price” was the *supreme* price—Christ’s shed blood!

So, we then become “Christ’s slave” (I Cor.7:22). And Christ *does* require **obedience** (Matt.19: 16-19; 7:21-23; Luke 8:21). Yet, such obedience *leads* to a life of peace and happiness. Accordingly, Christ said, “Take My yoke upon you...and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is **easy** and My burden is light” (Matt.11: 29-30).

Having examined the above numerous and *plain* scriptures about how one can stop being a “slave of sin,” we can now understand the true meaning of certain other scriptures (especially in Galatians) which people tend to misunderstand.

Notice Galatians chapter 5: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled **again** with a yoke of bondage” (verse 1).

Likewise, in chapter 4, verses 6-11, Paul is addressing *Gentiles* who had converted to Christianity. Here, Paul said, “you are **no longer** a slave [to sin]” (verse 7). Yet, these Gentile converts were beginning to resume their **former** pagan and sinful practices—including the observance of *pagan* holy days (verse 10). So, Paul warned them to not *return* to such sinful practices. Paul said, “But now after you have known God...how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements [‘weak and miserable principles’—*NIV*], to which you desire *again* to be in **bondage**?” (verse 9).

No, Paul was *not* speaking of bondage to God’s law! *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* discusses what *type* of “bondage” that Paul was referring to in Galatians chapter 4: “He [Paul] would be thinking of a *demonic* bondage in which the Galatians had indeed been held *prior* to the proclamation of the gospel...The ultimate contrast to freedom in Christ is **bondage to Satan** and the evil spirits” (Vol. 10, p.472).

*[from website article “Is God’s Law ‘Bondage’ and a ‘Heavy Burden’?”]*

---

## Two Natures

Every human being is born with, and has, human nature. Is human nature inherently “good”? Is it naturally “in tune” with God and His way? No! “...the carnal mind [the *natural* mind, which we all have from birth] is **enmity [hostile] against God**; for it is not **subject** to the *law* of God,

nor indeed *can be*” (Rom. 8:7). “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately **wicked**...” (Jer. 17:9). “...truly the hearts of the sons of men are *full of evil*...” (Eccl. 9:3).

So, the carnal, natural mind is *not subject* to God’s spiritual **law**. As explained in Rom. 8: 4-9, it is only **by receiving God’s Holy Spirit** that one can become “spiritually minded” and become *able* to live according to God’s spiritual law—both the letter *and intent* of that law.

In receiving God’s Spirit, one becomes a partaker of God’s very nature—“the divine nature” (II Peter 1:4). God’s divine *nature* is in perfect harmony with God’s *law*—which is the way of Godly *love*.

Yet, if a person *receives* God’s Holy Spirit—partakes of God’s divine nature—the person’s own human nature remains! The person then has *two* natures: God’s divine nature, and his own carnal, human nature. And these two natures are at constant *war* against one another! “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are *contrary* to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish” (Gal. 5:17). The Apostle Paul describes this war at some length in Romans 7:15-25.

Yes, even Paul had to *struggle* against his own human nature and Satan. He gives us this admonition: “do not **let** sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts” (Rom. 6:12). Paul said, “I have **fought** the good fight...” (II Tim. 4:7). “...I *discipline* my body and bring it into subjection...” (I Cor. 9: 24-27).

If a person has God’s Holy Spirit dwelling within him, then God’s Spirit *guides* the person, and *enables* the person to fulfill God’s spiritual law. It *enables* him to live by the spirit and intent of that law (Ezek. 36: 26-27). Yes, God’s Spirit guides him, but it does not *force* him. It is up to the individual whether he *follows* that guidance!

It is *not* true that Christ “did it all for us.” We have *our* part to do! It is a *requirement* of God that we **strive** to live according to His word. “*Strive* to enter through the narrow gate,” said Christ (Luke 13:24). “You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, *striving* against sin” (Heb. 12:4). Notice Paul’s comment: “if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I *press on*, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I *press toward* the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:11-14).

It’s certainly true that no Christian will ever *attain* perfection in this life. Yet, God requires that we strive *toward* perfection. “Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” said Christ (Matt. 5:48, *KJV*). We are to be “bringing every *thought* into captivity to the *obedience* of Christ” (II Cor. 10:5). Christ also instructs us to *live* “**by every word** of God” (Luke 4:4).

How does God want us to regard His written word? “But on *this* one will I look: On him who... **trembles** at My word” (Isa. 66:2).

If God’s Spirit dwells within you, it is actually Christ living *His* life within you (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8: 9-10). To the *extent* that you yield your life to Christ’s guidance, Christ then lives, in you, the **same** manner of life He lived 2,000 years ago—a life of *obedience* to God’s law! “Jesus Christ is the **same** yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

You then begin to take on the very *mind* of Christ (Phil. 2:5)—a mind of humble *obedience* to God (verse 8)—an attitude of “not My will, but Yours, be done”! (Luke 22:42).

Again, we have our part to perform; but it is *only by* having God’s Spirit within us that we *can* fulfill God’s will of living by both the letter and the “spirit and intent” of His spiritual law.

[from website article “Is ‘Belief’ All That is Necessary for Salvation?”]