

CHAPTER SIX

THE FRUITS OF JUSTIFICATION (I)

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Have you ever noticed how few Christian books have interesting covers? Oh, there are some, of course—like Franky Schaeffer’s *A Time for Anger*, with its Pieter Brueghel painting of “The Blind Leading the Blind.” It intrigued me to the point that I searched for the print and had it framed for my office. And then there are the delightful pictures on the jackets of C.S. Lewis’ *Chronicles of Narnia* which just about transport you there.

One of the most fascinating book covers I’ve ever seen appeared on a series of paperback pamphlets. The illustration shows a forlorn man gazing vacantly out the barred window of a jail cell. As you look you become aware that the door to his cell is ajar behind him. But he doesn’t notice. If he simply turned around he would see that he could walk out a free man. Instead he remains locked up by his own ignorance.

The point is clear enough. Many Christians—no, *most* Christians—are like this man. They are tragically unaware of the liberty and privileges which are theirs through the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are unnecessarily imprisoned saints.

To change the figure only slightly, numerous slaves continued living as they always had even after the Emancipation Proclamation. Some were kept in the dark about their new standing. Others, though aware of their liberty, never walked off the plantation because of fear. Freedom requires courage and carries with it great responsibility.

It appears that the gospel has made little difference in the lives of countless Christians. Although they are truly justified and the sentence of condemnation has been lifted, the same problems seem to trouble them. The same fears, habits, and doubts that characterized their lives before they trusted Christ still hold sway. Why? I think

Meditate on Luke 4:18-19. Do you realize this “Emancipation Proclamation” was given for you?

“ When God pardons, he pardons all sins, original sin and actual sin, sins of omission and of commission, secret and open sins, sins of thought, word and deed...Full pardon, or none at all, is what God designs to give. This suits human necessities. Nor is this gift ever revoked by God. When he forgives, he forgives forever.¹ ”

— William S. Plumer

“ I must take heed what I say: but the apostle saith, “God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Such we are in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God himself. Let it be counted folly or frenzy, or fury, whatsoever, it is our comfort and our wisdom; we care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned and God hath suffered; that God hath made himself the Son of man, and that men are made the righteousness of God.² ”

— Richard Hooker

the greatest single reason is ignorance. To not a few, the Bible is still a closed book. The fact that a tremendous inheritance has been reserved for those justified by God seems not to have dawned on them.

A growing knowledge of God's Word is vital. As you read, memorize, and meditate on the Scriptures, you will begin to experience the wonderful provision of God. The final two chapters of this book will explore the fruits of our justification, our inheritance in Christ. Any remaining doubts that may exist in your mind regarding the purpose or providence of God should be cleared as we inventory the benefits of this surpassingly great salvation.

Stepping Down from the Bench

The imagery surrounding the doctrine of justification comes straight from the law courts, as we learned in the previous chapter. God, the Lawgiver and Judge of all the earth, has issued a declaration that acquits the condemned sinner of all guilt. Justification gives us a brand-new status before God and exonerates us from all sin and the penalties associated with it. Though we were convicted felons awaiting the inevitable on Death Row, the Judge pardoned us and destroyed our criminal records. As wonderful as that is, there is an aspect of justification that is even more remarkable.

I've been in a few courtrooms and they are not very cheerful places. You can't really be yourself. It would be inappropriate to laugh out loud or put your feet up. No one thinks of getting together with the judge after the trial for ice cream or a pick-up game of basketball. There's a certain decorum to be maintained, formal and intimidating—and it's meant to be that way. This is no less true

1 Open to almost any section of your Bible and you will find wonderful promises from God. Check the one below which means the most to you right now.

- “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Heb 13:5).
- “God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear” (1Co 10:13)
- “Anyone who has faith in me...will do even greater things than [I do], because I am going to the Father” (Jn 14:12)
- “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Php 1:6)
- “You are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir” (Gal 4:7).

in the presence of the sovereign Judge.

But there is a monumental difference between heaven’s courtroom and its earthly counterpart. For after decreeing that we are free from all accusation and condemnation, God opts *not* to retire ceremoniously to his chambers as would be expected. Instead, he violates all precedent by stepping down from the bench, gathering us into his arms, and then carrying us from the courtroom to the family room.

To have God as our Father is truly amazing. The Scriptures make it quite clear that we are legally and intimately related to God. Not only that, but to be his children carries certain privileges. Paul described it like this: “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are chil-

dren, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ” (Ro 8:17).

While justification is for us a free gift, it cost the Father his Son. It cost the Son his life. And it will cost us our pride, for the only way to receive this gift is to come before God in humility and repentant faith.

What It’s All About

Children of God. Heirs of God. Co-heirs with Christ. What does it all mean? Let’s first establish one crucial fact. Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, is the Father’s true and rightful heir. Any inheritance we have is ours only because we are “in Christ” (Eph 2:7). Furthermore, Christ himself embodies this inheritance. *He* is our peace, *he* is our righteousness, our hope, our sanctification and redemption. In *him* are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. *He* is the resurrection and the life. The greatest thing we will ever receive from God is Jesus himself.

It’s also important to understand that salvation comes not through a doctrine but through a Person. We’re not saved by justification, but by Jesus. When we take time to study God’s Word we run the risk of becoming expert in doctrine yet inept in the true knowledge of our Lord. And knowing him is what it’s all about.

For Further Study:

What are the “riches” Paul describes in Colossians 2:2-3? Where do the “treasures” reside? Have you taken full advantage of this inheritance?

For Further Study:

How could the man who lived through the experiences recorded in 2 Corinthians 11:23-33 write Romans 15:13?

A friend of mine told me the following story about Scott McGregor, a dedicated Christian and an outstanding left-handed pitcher for the Baltimore Orioles in the '70s and '80s. Once, at a crucial point in a game, Scott found himself facing a dangerous hitter with men in scoring position. He was taking a good bit of time to survey the situation when an impatient woman in the box seats behind the Orioles dugout screamed out, "Jesus Christ! Pitch the ball!"

2 Read Matthew 7:21-23 and then answer the following questions:

- What praiseworthy things did these individuals accomplish?
- What is God's four-word assessment of them?
- In one sentence, how would you sum up their fatal mistake?

Now it's not uncommon to hear the Lord's name used in vain at a ball game. On this occasion, however, McGregor was so taken aback that he nearly lost concentration. Recovering himself, he managed to make the right pitch and the inning was over. Then he did something totally uncharacteristic, something players are not supposed to do. As he walked back to the dugout he looked directly at the lady and spoke to her. In a distressed but caring tone, full of concern for her and his Lord, he said, "Lady, if you really knew Him, you'd *never* say his name like that."

McGregor demonstrated that Christianity is more than a truth to be believed. It's a life to be lived and, most of all, a Lord to be loved.

When considering something as vast and wonderful as the inheritance we have in Christ, described by Paul as "the incomparable riches of his grace" (Eph 2:7), it's hard to know where to begin. Interestingly, Paul had a similar problem. In his letter to the Ephesians, he gets carried away with the overwhelming implications of justification. As he attempts in the first chapter to relate all that God has done and is doing, he begins a sentence in verse three that doesn't end until eleven verses later. It may not be grammatically pretty, but his overflowing heart bears testimony to the unfathomable grace of God.

The following passage from Paul's epistle to the Romans provides an excellent starting point: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Ro 5:1-2). John Stott explains the significance of this passage:

The earlier chapters of [Romans] are devoted to the need and the way of justification. They are concerned to make it plain that all men are sinners under the just judgment of God, and can be justified solely through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus—by grace alone, through faith alone. Now, at this point, having set forth the need and explained the way of justification, Paul goes on to describe its *fruits*, the *results of justification* in a life of sonship and obedience on earth and a glorious hereafter in heaven (emphasis added).³

This chapter will look at three of justification's fruits: peace with God (reconciliation), forgiveness of sins, and the process of sanctification. In the final chapter of this book we will examine our adoption in Christ as well as our hope of future glory.

Peace with God

Peace with God underlies everything else we receive in Christ. It is the gift that puts all other blessings in perspective. "The primary business of the Christian gospel is not to give us blessings," writes D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. "Its primary purpose is to reconcile us to God."⁴ Having peace with God means we are in a state of reconciliation with him. The declaration of justification has removed all obstacles between God and man. While there is certainly a subjective peace *of* God (that is, one that can be felt), what Paul has in mind in Romans 5:1 is the *objective* fact that the gospel has removed everything that divided us from God.

To reconcile means to bring together those who had been separated because of hostility. A prime example of this meaning is found in Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin when he recounts an incident from the life of Moses: "The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to *reconcile* them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?'" (Ac 7:26). The King James version of the Bible translates "reconcile" in this context as "set them at one again." The Greek word used is the verb form of the word normally translated "peace." What's important for us to keep in mind is that now, from God's point of view, there is no more hostility between God and those who are justified. His anger and wrath against sin were justly expressed and fully satisfied at the Cross. The battle is over. Peace has been made.

**Meditate on
Ephesians 2:11-20.**
What did Jesus do to
the barrier of hostility
that stood between
himself and us?

Not only has the conflict been resolved, but any legal problems resulting from former hostilities have been erased, never to reappear: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies” (Ro 8:1,33). If the highest tri-

““ When our holy war with God ceases, when we like Luther walk through the doors of Paradise, when we are justified by faith, the war ends forever. With the cleansing from sin and the declaration of divine forgiveness we enter into a peace treaty with God that is eternal. The firstfruit of our justification is peace with God. This peace is a holy peace, a peace unblemished and transcendent. It is a peace that cannot be destroyed.⁵

— R.C. Sproul ””

bunal in the universe has declared us justified, there is not a charge that can stick.

Be aware that the phrase “no condemnation” does *not* mean “no accusation.” We touched on that in the first chapter. The enemy of our souls continues his dirty work of casting aspersions and shooting fiery darts, and it often happens that we mistake God’s gifts of conviction and correction for the devil’s denunciation. But the fact that Jesus has taken

our place means we shall never have to face the condemnation of final judgment. “Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding

for us” (Ro 8:34). The only One authorized to condemn for eternity has instead ruled in our favor.

Knowing that we have peace with God puts our minds at rest. It enables us to overcome worries and fears. Even if the entire world were to oppose us, we are secure in Christ. “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more,” Jesus explained to his disciples, who were destined to face great opposition. “But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell” (Lk 12:4,5). God, the One worthy of our fear, has initiated an eternal pact of peace with us. For the Christian who is established in this truth, even the fear of death is vanquished because the threat of judgment no longer exists.

3 Imagine yourself ruling over a nation of five billion people. Word reaches you that a citizen has staged a one-man coup and is rampaging across the palace grounds. Instead of sending your armored tank division to stop the madman, you send the Prince. In the act of reaching out to the rebel, the Prince is murdered. How would you treat this citizen once he is captured?

- Banish him forever from your kingdom
- Roast him slowly over an open fire
- Hang him from the highest tree in the city
- Sentence him to life in solitary confinement
- Feed him to the royal boa constrictor
- Forgive him, embrace him, and adopt him as your son

Forgiveness of Sins

Meditate on Exodus

34:5-7. In light of all God's character qualities, do you find it significant that he chose to emphasize these traits when revealing himself to Moses?

Closely related to reconciliation and peace with God is the forgiveness of sins. I may be overreacting, but it seems to me this precious truth is in danger of being despised. When people lament, "I know I'm forgiven, but..." I can't help thinking, *You do not know you're forgiven! If you really understood forgiveness your problem wouldn't seem anywhere near as bad.* As Lloyd-Jones implies in his statement on page 63, man's greatest need is forgiveness. And if God has forgiven us, any other problem we have must be minor by comparison.

It is rare today to hear Christians rejoice in being forgiven by God. This is understandable in a culture that views low self-esteem as a greater problem than alienation from God. Yet our awareness of forgiveness directly affects our affection for God. That was the gist of our Lord's response to self-righteous Simon the Pharisee. "He who has been forgiven little loves little," Jesus told him (Lk 7:47). Conversely, those who have been forgiven much—or at least realize how much they have been forgiven—love much. Every one of us should be in that category.

Consider the following:

■ Pardon for sin comes to us only on the basis of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" (Eph 1:7).

■ God's motive for forgiveness is his great love. His forgiveness is a free and merciful work. "God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel" (Ac

5:31)—and to Gentiles as well.

■ Forgiveness of sins leads to a knowledge of salvation. Jesus came "to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins" (Lk 1:77).

■ Understanding forgiveness leads to a right fear of God. "If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared" (Ps 130:3-4).

■ God's forgiveness is thorough. "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more" (Isa 43:25).

4 Do any of these nagging doubts cause you to question God's forgiveness?

(Check all that apply)

- God can't keep forgiving me over and over for the same sin.
- I may be forgiven, but God hasn't forgotten.
- Nothing is free in life—God must expect some type of repayment.
- I'm guilty of the unforgivable sin.
- After sin #491 God will reject me (see Mt 18:22).

The following story, recounted by Becky Pippert in her book *Hope Has Its Reasons*, shows the power of forgiveness in one woman's life. It's worth quoting at length:

"Several years ago after I had finished speaking at a conference, a lovely woman came to the platform. She obviously wanted to speak to me and the moment I turned to her, tears welled up in her eyes. We made our way to a room where we could talk privately. It was clear from looking at her that she was sensitive but tortured. She sobbed as she told me the following story.

"Years before, she and her fiance (to whom she was now married) had been the youth workers at a large conservative church. They were a well-known couple and had

“ In relationship both to sin and to God, the determining factor of my existence is *no longer my past*. It is *Christ's past*.⁶

— Sinclair Ferguson ”

an extraordinary impact on the young people. Everyone looked up to them and admired them tremendously. A few months before they were to be married they began having sexual relations. That left them burdened enough with a sense

of guilt and hypocrisy. But then she discovered she was pregnant. 'You can't imagine what the implications would have been of admitting this to our church,' she said. 'To confess that we were preaching one thing and living another would have been intolerable. The congregation was so conservative and had never been touched by any scandal. We felt they wouldn't be able to handle knowing about our situation. Nor could we bear the humiliation.

'So we made the most excruciating decision I have ever made. I had an abortion. My wedding day was the worst day of my entire life. Everyone in the church was smiling at me, thinking me a bride beaming in innocence. But do you know what was going through my head as I walked down the aisle? All I could think to myself was, 'You're a murderer. You were so proud that you couldn't bear the shame and humiliation of being exposed for what you are. But I know what you are and so does God. You have murdered an innocent baby.'

"She was sobbing so deeply that she could not speak. As I put my arms around her a thought came to me very strongly. But I was afraid to say it. I knew if it was not from God that it could be very destructive. So I prayed silently for the wisdom to help her.

"She continued. 'I just can't believe that I could do something so horrible. How could I have murdered an

For Further Study:

Read Isaiah 59. How does God respond to our appalling lack of righteousness? (See verses 16 and 20)

innocent life? How is it possible I could do such a thing? I love my husband, we have four beautiful children. I know the Bible says that God forgives all of our sins. But I can't forgive myself! I've confessed this sin a thousand times and I still feel such shame and sorrow. The thought that haunts me the most is *how* could I murder an innocent life?

"I took a deep breath and said what I had been thinking. 'I don't know why you are so surprised. This isn't the first time your sin has led to death, it's the second.' She looked at me in utter amazement. 'My dear friend,' I continued, 'when you look at the Cross, all of us show up as crucifiers. Religious or nonreligious, good or bad, aborters or nonaborters—all of us are responsible for the death of the only innocent who ever lived. Jesus died for all of our sins—past, present, and future. Do you think there are any sins of yours that Jesus didn't have to die for? The very sin of pride that caused you to destroy your child is what killed Christ as well. It does not matter that you weren't there two thousand years ago. We all sent him there. Luther said that we carry his very nails in our pockets. So if you have done it before, then why couldn't you do it again?'

"She stopped crying. She looked me straight in the eyes and said, 'You're absolutely right. I have done something even worse than killing my baby. My sin is what drove Jesus to the Cross. It doesn't matter that I wasn't there pounding in the nails, I'm still responsible for his death. Do you realize the significance of what you are telling me, Becky? I came to you saying I had done the worst thing imaginable. And you tell me I have done something even worse than that.'

"I grimaced because I knew this was true. (I am not sure that my approach would qualify as one of the great

counseling techniques!) Then she said, 'But, Becky, if the Cross shows me that I am far worse than I had ever imagined, it also shows me that my evil has been absorbed and forgiven. If the worst thing any human can do is to kill God's son, and *that* can be forgiven, then how can anything else—even my abortion—not be forgiven?'

"I will never forget the look in her eyes as she sat back in awe and quietly said, 'Talk about amazing grace.' This time she wept not out of sorrow but

Meditate on Psalm

32:1-5. What happens when we keep our sins hidden? What happens when we confess them?

5 Do you find yourself burdened by guilt when you remember a specific sin (or sins) from the past? If so, seek out a mature Christian to whom you can confess and from whom you can receive encouragement about the extent of God's forgiveness. Put your intention in writing:

"Believing that God wants to release me from guilt, I will talk to _____ about this area of sin no later than _____."

from relief and gratitude. I saw a woman literally transformed by a proper understanding of the Cross.”⁷

Forgiveness of sins is a critical concern. The greatest of the English Puritan theologians, John Owen, wrote a treatise on the subject that still stands as a classic. This exposition of Psalm 130 is over three hundred pages long, although the psalm itself has only eight verses. The editor’s preface yields some insight into the circumstances surrounding the work. It seems that as a young man Owen had only a superficial awareness of God’s forgiveness, “until the Lord was pleased to visit me with a sore affliction, whereby I was brought to the mouth of the grave, and under which my soul was oppressed with hor-

““ When once you realize all that it cost God to forgive you, you will be held as in a vice, constrained by the love of God.”⁸ ”

— Oswald Chambers

ror and darkness; but God graciously relieved my spirit by a powerful application of Psalm 130:4 from whence I received special instruction, peace and comfort, in drawing near to God through the Mediator, and preached

thereupon immediately after my recovery.”⁹

Psalm 130:4, as we saw above, shows that fearing the Lord is the natural outgrowth of embracing his forgiveness. While we’re young and healthy other problems can seem so much more important. But when our eyes are opened to the affairs of eternity, knowing whether or not we are truly forgiven will make all other matters pale into insignificance.

Sanctification through Christ

Justification sets in motion the process called sanctification, by which we become more and more like Jesus. While justification leaves us forgiven and loved, it does nothing for our character. We’re still the same rascals we were before God saved us. It would be tragic if God were to leave us to ourselves. We would never grow, never change, never improve. Fortunately, although God loves us as we are, he loves us too much to leave us there.

Central to the doctrine of sanctification is the truth that we are united with Jesus Christ. In his book *Men Made New*, John Stott makes the following observation:

The great theme of Romans 6, and in particular of verses 1-11, is that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not only historical facts and significant doc-

trines, but personal experiences of the Christian believer. They are events in which we ourselves have come to share. All Christians have been united to Christ in his death and resurrection. Further, if this is true, if we have died with Christ and risen with Christ, it is inconceivable that we should go on living in sin.”¹⁰

Perhaps you did a double-take when you hit that word “inconceivable.” Most of us find it inconceivable that we could possibly go on living *outside* of sin! Is victory over sin actually possible?

For Further Study:

Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-58. Though this passage refers to the future, how can this truth strengthen you in your present battle against sin?

Here are two common answers. Some say Christians can expect a life of victory in the hereafter, but should set their sights low in the here and now. Others have had such dramatic deliverances from gross sin that they consider themselves practically immune to it. Both these extremes are way off target. While applying the lesson will require some spiritual effort, we have in the sixth chapter of Romans all the teaching we need to set us straight.

“What shall we say, then?” Paul asks (v.1). “Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?” He anticipates this question because a few verses earlier he said, “But where sin increased, grace increased all the more” (Ro 5:20). He knew that statement would lead some to reason as follows: “If God is glorified in forgiving sin and if grace increases in proportion to sin, why not sin all the more? Then there will be more grace and God will receive more glory!” What a self-serving and warped inference. That Paul even stated the matter this way indicates that his gospel had been subject to abuse. It’s worth noting, however, that Paul did not retract or reword the doctrine. If the gospel is rightly preached it will always be vulnerable to this misinterpretation.

Paul powerfully refutes his own suggestion that grace

“ In justification our own works have no place at all and simple faith in Christ is the one thing needful. In sanctification our own works are of vast importance, and God bids us fight and watch and pray and strive and take pains and labour.¹¹

”
— J.C. Ryle

leads to further sin: “May it never be! Seeing that we have died to sin, how shall we still live in it?” (Ro 6:2, Cranfield’s translation). Our death to sin, as Paul explains in the following verses, is wrapped up in our union with a crucified Christ.

When we believed on Jesus, we became united with him.

A faith transaction occurred in which we were forever to be counted as “in Christ,” that is, spiritually joined to

6 After reading this chapter, a young but sincere Christian comes to you for help. “Paul says my old self has died and is buried with Christ,” she says. “So why does it feel so alive every time my ex-boyfriend drops by?” How would you answer?

- “You must have a demon—let’s cast it out!”
- “I guess you weren’t really saved after all.”
- “Where’s your faith, sister?”
- “Maybe your old self was just in a temporary coma.”
- “Let’s look at the sixth and seventh chapters of Romans...”

Meditate on Romans

6:17-18. We’re no longer slaves to sin, but we’re still slaves. To what has your new master called you?

him. This union is symbolized by baptism. As Jesus died, was buried, and rose to live a new, empowered life, so we also died with him, were buried with him by baptism, and are raised up to live a new life in a new way.

The closest natural analogy of this union is marriage. My wife Clara and I have a shared identity (we both have the same last name) and are united in heart, mind, and body. We share our resources—everything I have is hers, and vice versa. As a result we are both enriched (though here’s where the analogy is weak—we gain a one-sided benefit in our union with Christ). Clara and I wear rings that symbolize the deeper truth of our oneness. But

just as my ring doesn’t make me married, so baptism doesn’t make me a Christian. It comes after the fact of the faith transaction.

What exactly does it mean to be dead to sin? I’m dead to sin in the sense that the guilt and penalty attached to sin (death) are no longer hanging over me. But beyond that, my relationship with sin has been radically changed. Before I was justified, I couldn’t help sinning. Now I am no longer under sin’s dominion. *The master-slave relationship that once existed has been forever ended.* Notice the language employed in Romans 6:12-14: “Do not let sin reign...Do not offer the parts of your body to sin...Sin shall not be your master.” This is the language of slavery and Paul says it no longer applies. Our obligation to sin has been ended—by death.

Our death to sin through our union with Christ has far-reaching implications. Any problems or habits or memories or hang-ups that currently influence your thoughts and behavior need not do so any longer. They can be successfully resisted. The person who was once dominated by them—your old self—has died. These sinful impulses are no longer your master.

Long before anyone popularized the claim that there are only two kinds of people in the world (for example, those who live in Oshkosh, Wisconsin and those who *wish* they lived there), John

““ It’s not that I’m not able to sin, but that I’m able not to sin.

”
— Arthur Wallis

Owen made his own classification. He distinguished between those who were under the dominion of sin and those who *thought* they were under its dominion. A pastor consequently had two primary responsibilities, as Owen expressed it in the language of his day:

1. To convince those in whom sin evidently hath the dominion that such indeed is their state and condition.

2. To satisfy some that sin hath not the dominion over them, notwithstanding its restless acting itself in them and warring against their souls; yet unless this can be done, it is impossible they should enjoy solid peace and comfort in this life.¹²

It has been my privilege more than once to see people overcome longstanding problems and defiling habits through the diligent study and application of Romans 6. We need not remain imprisoned saints any longer. Once we become aware that we have been united with Christ in his death and resurrection, we'll see he has opened wide the door of our deliverance. ■

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Think back to the opening illustration of the imprisoned saint. What does the jail symbolize? What is the key?
2. What inner conflict could have possibly held a slave back from responding to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation? What could hold back a Christian from seizing his liberty in Christ?
3. What's the greatest thing we will ever receive from God? (Page 61)
4. What emotions do you think Americans experienced when peace was announced at the end of World War II? Does your peace with God evoke similar emotions in you?
5. According to the author, what is man's greatest need?
6. Read the story of Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman in Luke 7:36-50. What's the main difference between these two? With which of them do you identify most in your attitude toward Jesus?
7. Were you affected by the story about the woman who had an abortion? How?

8. What attitudes or actions might indicate that someone has a superficial awareness of forgiveness?

9. What does it mean to be united with Christ in his death? What are the implications?

RECOMMENDED READING *Men Made New* by John R.W. Stott (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1966)

The Atonement by Leon Morris (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984)

The Glory of Christ by Peter Lewis (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1997)

NOTES

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2. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
3. John R.W. Stott, *Men Made New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1966, 1991), pp. 9–10.
4. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Assurance, Chapter Five* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), p. 10.
5. R.C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1985), p. 193.
6. Sinclair Ferguson, *Christian Spirituality (Reformed View)*, Donald Alexander, ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), p. 57.
7. Rebecca Pippert, *Hope Has Its Reasons* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1989), pp. 102–104.
8. Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1963), p. 325.
9. John Owen, *Works, Vol. VI* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), p. 324.
10. John R.W. Stott, *Men Made New*, p. 30.
11. J.C. Ryle, *Holiness* (Hertfordshire, England: Evangelical Press, 1879, 1979), p. 29.
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