***You are not under the Law, but under Grace  
RO75-01***

**© Berean Memorial Church of Irving, Texas, Inc. (1977)**

Please open your Bibles once more to Romans 6. We are dealing with the fact that the sin nature has been deposed, and we have come to verse 14. Should a Christian live under the sovereign controlling authority of the old sin nature? That is the question that the apostle Paul has been dealing with. Should a Christian live under the sovereign controlling authority of the sin nature?

The very question itself, Paul has indicated, ignores the fact that it is not possible for a believer in Christ to live under the sovereign controlling authority of the sin nature. In verse 2, he said, "How shall we that are dead to the sin nature live any longer in it," or under its authority? The Christian in Christ is dead to the authority of the old sin nature. He's now under the supreme authority of the Holy Spirit, who can never be deposed from that authority by the sin nature.

Paul's response, therefore, at the beginning of verse 2, in answer to this question which has been proposed, is, "God forbid." Perish the thought. It is totally unthinkable that a Christian should live under a condition where he commits the sin nature to have sovereign authority in his life so that the Christians cannot say "No" to the sin nature, and so that the Christian is helplessly under the domination of the sin nature. That cannot be. That is not the case with the Christian. The suggestion itself is a way of insulting the grace of God, and a complete misrepresentation of the status of the sin nature in the believer.

The truth of the matter is that God has removed the controlling authority of the sin nature over a Christian through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. The payment which God's character demanded to satisfy divine justice was made. Consequently, the sin nature's authority has been broken, and this is true of every Christian in the church age. Whether you are living as a good Christian or whether you are a very sorry Christian, the truth of the matter is that for you, because of what Christ did on the cross, the sin nature's authority has been terminated. The Christian himself can never again restore the sin nature to that place of sovereign authority in his life, though the Christian may be willing to listen to the appeals of the sin nature. But the issue of enthronement has been settled forever.

The old sin nature, however, likes to pretend that it is still the supreme ruler over the Christian's life. The average Christian in the average church congregation is not really certain of the fact that he is the complete master of the sin nature. The average Christian does not understand that he is master of his sin nature. He still operates under the delusion that somehow he's a slave to the sin nature, and that he is helpless in its presence. But that is no longer true.

For this reason, the apostle, in verses 12-14, which are a closing segment, Paul says that certain things should be recognized as being true, and as being our attitude mentally. And that is that our physical bodies are not to be used as instruments to promote the evil of the old sin nature. But our physical bodies are to be used as instruments to promote the absolute righteousness which is instigated by God the Holy Spirit within us. To suggest otherwise is to show ignorance of the doctrine of the status of the sin nature in a Christian.

Our bodies are not helpless instruments of evil, and Paul says, "Don't even think of yourself in that way. The Christian is no longer spiritually dead, but he is alive under the Holy Spirit, whose temple he is.

So verse 14 concludes Paul summary, which he began here in verses 12-14. We're on verse 14. Verses 12-14 is a summary in answer to the question which was proposed in verse 1: should a Christian live under the sovereign controlling authority of the sin nature? Now Paul has given details of why that cannot be. Now he summarizes the answer in verses 12-14, and we have come down here to verse 14.

The first part of14 reads, "For Sin shall not have dominion over you." Now that is a definitive, period, over-and-out statement. Sin shall not have dominion over you. The word "for" is the Greek word "gar." The word "gar" here introduces the basis for the mental attitude which is expressed in verses 12-13 of not indulging the sin nature. The word "gar" looks back to verses 12-13 to say, "Here is the basis upon which we have been telling you not to indulge the sin nature as if it had any controlling authority in your life.

The word indicates also that a final point of doctrine about sin nature is about to be made. The word "sin" is the Greek word "hamartia." This is the Greek word for "sin" in terms of "missing the mark." Well, the word "hamartia," however, is either in the singular, or in the plural. And we've already seen that when the Bible uses it in the singular, it generally refers to the nature of evil (the sin nature). When it is in the plural, it refers to specific acts of sin.

Now it's important to notice that in the Greek Bible it does not say "the" sin nature. Now back in Romans 5:12 through Romans 6:12-13, the Greek Bible has repeatedly said "*the* sin," indicating that he's talking about the nature. Now that is not the case here. This time it is simply the quality of the evil which flows from the sin nature which is in view rather than the sin nature itself. No act of sin, or of human good, is the culprit. The quality here is the quality of evil. And without the word "the," it's just simply the quality of evil that is being envisioned here that he's dealing with. And, of course, the quality of evil in the sin nature in the form of these individual acts of evil sins and of human good, which is also evil with God.

Then we have the word "not." Looking back to what he has said in verses 12-13, about how sin cannot reign as king in our bodies, and how we are not to permit our physical bodies to be used in this respect, he says, "I'll tell you why that's the case:" "For this reason" that the quality of evil shall not," and it's the word "ou," which is the strong negative in the Greek language, which means "definitely not:" "Shall not have dominion." The word "dominion" is the word "kurieuo." "Kurieuo" means "to be Lord of" or "to be master of." It is in the future tense.

There are certain things to understand. The future here does not mean that sometime in the future you will have freedom from the domination of evil within your life. Nor is this an exhortation to action. This is not telling us not to permit evil to have control in our lives.

Unfortunately, many times people who teach this passage fall into the trap of saying that it is one of these two. That does not fit with the context. That does not fit with the fact that this particular section of the book of Romans is talking about what God as judge has done for us – a decision that God has done. It is not talking about something in our personal actions or in our personal experience. He is not yet talking about experience or sanctification. He does not mean here that this is something in the future. He is talking about something which is true of us now on this earth in Christ.

So, the future tense here indicates one way that the future is used in the Greek language, and that is to indicate certainty. This is a way of expressing absolute certainty that we can live under a condition of freedom from the evil that flows from the sin nature, and freedom from being lorded over by this evil sewage that the sin nature puts out. The future tense actually expresses a joyful confidence on the part of the apostle Paul. It's a happy confidence to the fact that here is a permanent freedom from the absolute domination of the sin nature. The Christians future never holds a return to the pre-salvation state of helpless subjection to evil as it's incited by the sin nature. And that's a very happy thing to know. So, the future tense is certain, and it rings a note of joyful confidence.

The whole purpose, as you know, of the coming of Christ was to undo the works of the devil, and particularly as those words are expressed in the evil of the sin nature. Well, He succeeded. That's exactly what Jesus did. He did all the controlling effect of evil within the life of the believer.

So, the future tense is a great encouragement to us – not to something that's coming down the line, nor is it a great inspiration to us of something we should do. But it is a joyful encouragement of realizing that something is now the case: "I am not a slave of this evil quality within me. I am not a helpless victim of evil."

So, anytime somebody who is a believer tries to justify some evil action on his part and say, "Well, you know, that's just how I am," that is not how you are. The way you are is having freedom from the control of the Senate. That's what the Word of God has to say.

Also, it is active voice, and active voice means that this quality of evil never will be able to exercise active lordship. It's indicative mood. It's a statement of fact – a statement which is based upon the death of Christ, and about the fact that we have a position in Christ. And this statement of fact is the basis for the previous exhortation that we read in verses 12-13, about how we don't have to let the sin nature use our bodies for evil purposes. The reason for it is because we have a certainty of never being under its lordship or under its domination.

The word "over you" is the second-person personal pronoun "su." It comes from the personal pronoun "ego." It's in the second person plural, which indicates all Christians. This is true of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, what Paul says as a definitive, declarative statement in the first part of verse 14, in summarizing his answer to the question that was proposed in verse about letting the sin nature rule, says, "For the quality of evil shall not, under any condition whatsoever, lord it over you as master." It shall not dominate you in terms of being a controlling factor – period. The quality of evil, under no condition, shall be master of you Christians.

What's the reason for that? The rest of the verse gives us the reasons. It gives us first a positive reason. Here's the positive side coming up first. And it's introduced by the word "for." A little later, we'll have the negative, and it's also introduced by the word "for.:"

**Evil Will not be your Master**

"For you are not under Law. The word "for" is again the Greek conjunction "gar." This is an explanation of what he has just said in the first part of verse 14: "Evil will not be master of you Christians." Now how can you say that? He says, "I'll tell you how I can say that." And the word "for" here connotes "on the one hand," because when we get to the word "for" in that verse the second time, it's going to connote "on the other hand" quality: "For you are." The word "are" is "eimi." This is the verb for the status of a person – the status quo. It's present tense. This is the continual condition of Greek. Anytime the Greek uses present, that means continual condition. It's active. It's the actual status that you possess as a Christian in you're living. And it's indicative – a statement of fact.

**You are not under the Law**

Again, we have the word "not." That is the strong Greek word: "You are not." "Under is the preposition "hupo," which is a preposition indicating authority or control: "You are not under" what? "The law." This is the word "nomos." You already know that in the New Testament, the word "law" is used in a variety of ways. People who are not good students of the Bible, and who are not well-trained in the Bible, always think that when they see the word law on the pages of the Word of God, it automatically means the Mosaic Law. So, let's put it right up front here. Here, the apostle Paul uses the word "law," but he does not mean the Mosaic Law. This is not the Mosaic Law.

**The Mosaic Law**

Most people commonly think of it in terms of that Old Testament usage. But Paul here is writing to gentiles, and the Law of Moses was never applied to gentiles. So, that's the first point to observe. The Law of Moses was never applied to gentiles. You have vast numbers of Christian groups, many of them who have a sound doctrine of salvation, who have completely undermined the Word of God by getting themselves trapped into trying to bring the Old Testament legal system down in the New Testament times. They like to take Old Testament terminology, and they like to apply it to gentiles.

**Tithing**

They talk about the Christian Sabbath day, and they talk about Christmas and Easter as Christian holy days, like the Jews had holy days in the Old Testament, and so on. One of the places they love most is to take the tithing system, and they like to call that Christian giving. Well, tithing has nothing whatever to do with Christian giving. It was a religious income tax in the Old Testament. It didn't have anything to do with giving in the Old Testament either. When people gave, they had offerings. But when they paid their income tax, they felt about it the same way as you feel about income tax. It was a tax to support the religious system, and they paid it, and that was it, and nobody went around thinking that he was doing something wonderful by forking over 10% of his gross income to the Lord because he was required to do so. That was just a tax. He had to pay it, and he paid it. But when he wanted to give God something, then he brought his offerings.

So, the Old Testament speaks about people bringing both their tithes and their offerings. And there were several tides. There was not only one 10% tithe. There were actually three 10% tithes that a person had to pay in a year's time. None of that has anything to do with what we're talking about in the book of Romans. All of that is extraneous. All that is beside the point. It had nothing to do with the gentiles. It was never apply to a gentile. And any religious group that tries to talk about the Old Testament system of the Mosaic Law, or elements of that Mosaic Law, and bring it here and apply to Christians (including the Ten Commandments), then you know that that particular religious leader and that particular congregation is disoriented to the Word of God. And after you get through with your course of study in the Berean institute of biblical studies, you'll be able to spot that very easily. You'll know exactly why that's false, and you'll just have an instinct that will just leap up, and you'll see red flags that will fly in your mind as you see subtle violations of what the Word of God teaches.

So, Paul is speaking to gentiles, and he would not talk to them about being under Law. Furthermore, the Mosaic Law is never applied to Christians, and Paul is talking to Christians here. That's even worse – to apply it to Christians. In Galatians 3:23-25, Paul writes: "But before faith came, we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore, the Law (that is, the Mosaic Law) was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

Paul is saying that the system of the Law of Moses was strictly temporary. It was like a person who was leading a child down the street to the school that he was to attend because he was a child. When he gets to be grown, and he's capable in his own right, he doesn't have to have anybody leaving the school anymore. He gets there on his own, and he's in a totally different relationship. The Mosaic Law was not applied to gentiles. The Mosaic Law was not applied to Christians. It never had anything to do with Christians. It has nothing to do with Christianity. It is strictly a Jewish system.

Furthermore, the church-age Jews who are believers, they are not under the Mosaic Law either. So, when you talk about Jews today, if a Jew is a believer in Jesus Christ, he's not under that Mosaic Law. He has no relationship to it either. The Greek does not say "*the* law." It has again simply "law," without the definite article.

So, that indicates the quality of legalism. That in itself is our clue that he is not talking about the specific code of laws known as the Mosaic Law. He does not speak of "the" law as he would if you were referring to the Mosaic Law. He is therefore talking about the quality of legalism – some system of human doing, and some system of people keeping rules. That's the idea.

So, the Greek does not say "*the* law," but simply "law." It's not a reference to the specific Mosaic Law as a way of life. The Jews, who were under the Mosaic Law in the Old Testament, were also under grace. Please observe that. The Jews who were under the Mosaic Law also received the grace of God in God's dealing with them. And we have demonstrated that before. There were many dealings with God, with His people, in grace, even though they were under this Mosaic system. Furthermore, gentiles who were not under the Mosaic Law were not automatically under the grace of God. Gentiles were not under the grace of God. They were not under the Mosaic Law.

People think that either you're under the Mosaic Law or you're under grace. You come under the grace of God when you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But the book of Ephesians describes the gentiles as being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel (as being strangers – as being on the outside). They didn't have anything. They weren't under anything at all. The word "law" here does not refer to that law system, in this case, of the Mosaic system that was used in the Old Testament.

What it refers to instead is a system in general of human obedience to a set of divine rules in order to secure God's favor. And we have seen Paul use the word "law" previously in the book of Romans in this way – a system of human doing where a person tries to keep certain rules. Maybe they're rules of morality, or there are even rules that God has directed. And by keeping those rules, he hopes to achieve merit with God. That is what he is referring to – a system of law that achieves merit.

This kind of a system of human doing is man attempting to satisfy the demands of God's holiness by man's own efforts. Man's sin nature actually is so arrogant, and makes man so arrogant, that he actually thinks that he can earn merit with God, even though he is dominated by the sin nature. But God knows better. God never, never has given man a set of rules by which to secure righteousness. God has never, including the Mosaic Law, and including the Ten Commandments, given man a set of rules by which to achieve absolute righteousness, because God knows that man cannot do that.

Now, because people don't understand this doctrinal principle, they are forever creating religious systems which are based on appeasing God's justice through human rituals and through human good works. And there is religious system after religious system which is based upon the concept that man can do something to gain merit with God. Now get it straight from the Word of God – that is not possible. The prophet in the Old Testament put it like this: All of our human good are filthy rags in the sight of Almighty God, and nothing is excluded. Now all such systems of religion ensure that the sin nature will indeed rule over a person as Lord of the life of that person.

Just think for a moment about the nature of a system of divine rules, and of a human effort to keep divine rules. We find in the Word of God that anytime that God gives rules or laws, those rules give us commands (give us directives). They make demands, but they do not enable the person to fulfill what is required of him. Hebrews 7:19 reads, "For the Law made nothing perfect." No matter how many rules of God a person tries to keep, he can never achieve absolute righteousness. All the law did was to bring in a better hope. That's all. That better hope was the hope of grace.

Another thing characteristic about a system of rules for one to keep is that it pronounces approval and blessing only upon conformity to its demands. In other words, if you don't keep the rule, you are not commended. Only if you achieve it are you commended. Furthermore, it pronounces condemnation for every violation of the rules. On the one hand, you don't get any benefits if you don't keep the rule. On the other hand, you get lots of condemnation if you break it. Galatians 3:10 says, "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse. For it is written, 'Cursed is every one that does not continue with all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them." So, for every rule that you break, the law condemns. And if you break one rule, the whole system has been broken, and you are guilty of all.

Another thing about a system of keeping the code of rules is that it exposes a person's sins, and it puts him under conviction. And, of course, that's what the Mosaic Law was designed to do – to show people what sinners they were, and to bring conviction of sin. Romans 3:19, says, "Now we know that whatever things the Law says, it's says to them who are under the Law that every man may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." The Bible couldn't say it more clearly. The Bible never says that the law was given to help you to get to heaven. The Bible said that the Law of Moses was given in order to close your mouth about all that you may have to say about how good you are, and how much God should consider you for heaven, and to place you in a position where you're absolutely guilty before God, you know you're guilty, and you have no excuses that you try to bring up. So, that's characteristic of a system of keeping divine rules. It exposes the person's sin, and it convicts sin.

**Rules Incite Rebellion**

Furthermore, rules incite rebellion. This is one of the strangest things about the sin nature. In Romans 7:8, which we'll get to later, Paul says, "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of coveting. For apart from the Law, sin is dead." What Paul is saying here is that the very rules that God gave me, telling me not to do a certain thing, because it was morally wrong by God's essence and standards, are the things that then I wanted to do. And there are still people today who think that they can bring about morality by rules. There are still people who think that they can bring a law in, and prohibit something, and then people will stop doing something that's bad.

**Morality Training for Unbelievers**

For this reason, morality training for unbelievers is really a questionable thing. And our public schools are getting more and more into morality training, but morality training for unbelievers. The problem with morality training for unbelievers is that you are taught not to do something. You may not have even thought that something was wrong.

Sometimes we have this problem in our youth clubs. Somebody wants to come in and say, "Hey, these kids need to know about this sin. They need to know how to cope with this sin, and how to avoid the sin." So, some club leader gets up, and talks about some sin. And he tells the kids how bad it is, and he wants to train them in how they should not do this thing. And this little guy goes home, and he asks his mother and father, "What is this thing?" And he asks about this win. And the parents say, "Where did you hear about that?" And this kid never even thought about that sin. Now the club leader does open up a whole new world to him. He begins thinking about this, and he begins contemplating, and begins analyzing it: "Well, what happens when you do that? No kidding." That's what morality training for unbelievers does. It's a dangerous thing, because prohibiting something does not keep you from doing something. Prohibition against booze never stopped the flow of booze in the United States.

The sin nature uses moral training to do evil because the victims cannot resist. And it is foolish to think that a system of rules will ever be able to stop evil. All that a system of rules can do is to punish those who choose to do evil, but it will never stop evil. So, it is foolish to think that if I can have a code of rules, I can start obeying them, and then I will be able to act in such a way that God will approve me.

Well, when we look at these things about the Law system (the nature of rules), it makes demands without enabling any way to fulfill those demands. The only way you get approval is if you keep them. That's the only credit you get. You don't get credit in any other way. It pronounces condemnation upon every violation. It exposes you to just what you really are, and it convicts you of sin. Furthermore, it stirs up rebellion, so that you want to do the things you shouldn't do. The whole system of human achievement through keeping rules is devastatingly doomed. Consequently, there are certain things that such a system cannot do.

For one thing, as we've indicated, it cannot enable a person to obey the rules. In Acts 15:7, we read, "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said to them, 'Men and brethren, we know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that the gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the gospel and believe." This is a church council meeting in the city of Jerusalem of the leaders of the early church. They're discussing the question: should gentiles, who have now through the household of Cornelius, entered into the Christian church, and have been indicated as being part of the body of Christ – should gentiles have to obey the Mosaic Law system? "And God, who knows the hearts bore them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did to us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." A gentile was as much a member of the body of Christ as a Jew.

Verse 10: "Now, therefore, why put God to the test – to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Do you know what Peter saying? He's saying, "Now what kind of foolishness is this, that you want us to put upon these new gentile Christians, the keeping of the system of the Mosaic Law and the details of the Mosaic Law, when neither you keep it, nor did our forefathers before us keep it?” The whole Mosaic Law was a system that nobody could keep. It was a system that bestirred evil to have its expression.

Verse 11: "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they." And there Peter puts in that precious word that tells you what the solution is. It's God's grace coming into the picture to perform for us.

**Laws can never Enable Compliance**

So, laws prohibiting an evil can never enable compliance. Laws are not a deterrent to evildoing. The sin nature just ignores the rules. Laws provide only for the punishment of evildoers in order to protect others. The sin nature does not mind breaking rules. One thing a system of rules cannot do is to enable a person to obey the rules.

Another thing that a system of divine rules cannot do it to justify a sinner who has broken the divine rules. The idea is always there that if you keep the rules, all as well; but, once you break them, all is gone. Romans 3:27: "Therefore, by the deeds of law (a system of keeping rules), there shall no flesh be justified in His sight. For by law (a system of rule-keeping) is the knowledge of sin." That's very specific. Once you have broken the system, there is no way for you to be justified in the sight of God, and thus to go to heaven.

Galatians 3:21 says, "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law." And Paul says, "If God, incompatibility to His essence, could have come up with a system of keeping rules that would have achieved justification for you by keeping rules, He'd have done it that way. He would have not put His Son through the humiliation and the torture that He went through. But Paul says, "That could not be."

So, once a person is guilty under the system of human works, he remains guilty. No matter if the person never breaks any more rules, he's already guilty for breaking one. And there is no way to clear a guilty record with God under a law system. There is nothing with which the person can pay.

**Law cannot Release you from the Bondage of the Sin Nature**

There is a third thing that's true about the system of human beings trying to achieve merit through keeping laws, and that is that that kind of a system cannot release a person from the domination and bondage of the sin nature. It cannot perform the release the Paul has been reveling in, in Romans 6. The sin nature retains its lordship in the one who is trying to work for salvation. All systems of rule-keeping are impotent in securing freedom from the lordship of the sin nature. People are deceived by their human good into thinking that they've overcome the evil of the sin nature, but they have not. So, this system can never release you from sin nature control.

**Law cannot Give Peace**

There's a fourth thing. It cannot give the peace of release from the moral guilt that one senses before God. Law systems create frustration and depression. That's what it'll do for you, because of your evil. It will not bring you peace. It will not bring you relaxation within your soul. Discouragement in a person is a bad thing, because discouragement opens a person to more evil. When a person is discouraged, and when a person is depressed, he is willing to sin. He is willing to sin far more than when he is in control of himself.

So, "under law" here means in subjection to a system of human doing to gain God's favor. Under such a system, we remain helplessly under the lordship of the evil which is promoted by the sin nature. We are trying to live up to divine standards of righteousness and we are failing. This is a slave who is trying to escape divine punishment. We are trying to put ourself right with God, and we can't even get free of the sovereign control of the authority of the sin nature. A Christian is not in that kind of a helpless position. That is what Paul is saying.

**You are not under Law**

So, in Romans 6, when he says that, "Evil shall not dominate you, for you are not under the law," he says, "because you are not under a system of human doing in order to achieve merit and favor with God. You are not helplessly under that domination."

**You are under Grace**

On the other hand, here's what you are under. And now he comes to the other side. This time, he uses the word "but," which is the word "alla." This introduces a contrast of what really is the status of a Christian in Christ. This connotes, "On the other hand." Here is what is true of you. You are not under a system of human duty to achieve gain and merit and freedom with God. But you are "under." and the word "under" is the Greek word "hupo:" "You are under (indicating authority here) grace ("charis"). There is the great word. This is the system of God doing it all for a helpless sinner. Gratuitous justification is what we're talking about. God is satisfying His own justice in giving a believer the gift of regeneration. So, even when you break the rules of God, He still gives you His absolute righteousness, because He's not giving you that righteousness on the basis of what you do, but on the basis of what Christ has done.

**Grace has no External Demands**

The Christian now, because of grace, is placed under the lordship of the Holy Spirit within his soul. And he is under that lordship without any question or any threat to his justification status in the future. The sinner is not trying to be accepted by God on the basis of freedom from wrongdoing and works of merit. There is no external code of laws that he is operating on under grace. That's the point. Grace has no external demands.

Boy, does that ever shocked the legalists in the average church today – to hear that grace makes no rules demanding anything from you. God says, "There is a way of life which is compatible with My essence. For those of you who are in My family, I expect you to live up to those standards. If you do not, I will discipline. But as far as your going into heaven, and as far as your being under My favor, what you do has nothing to do with that.

Under the other system of rule-keeping (the law system) that has something do with you trying to attain these standards. You always fail, so, you're doomed. So, the sin nature continues to dominate. But under grace, God says, "I cut the legs off the sin nature. I remove it. I destroy its power. I destroy its authority. And now you are free from it. It can no longer exercise lordship over you, for you are not under the lordship of the sin nature, because you are not under a system of human doing to keep rules to achieve merit, but you are under a gift system – the grace of God." Grace is the sovereign will and the power of God exercised for us so that we are delivered from the lordship of sin nature. And the sin nature can never again lord it over a person who is in Christ.

Romans 5:20-21 said, "Moreover, the Law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, that as sin has reigned unto death, so My grace reigned through righteousness and to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. As on the one hand, the sin nature reigned unto death, now on the other hand, the grace of God, through absolute righteousness, rings unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." And that is the comparison. Grace position means that you are functioning on divine power and on a gift from God – not on human effort.

Several times the apostle Paul has emphasized that grace is a position of functioning on power from God, and not on power from yourself. Ephesians 3:20, for example, says, "Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us."

In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul says, "Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, worked out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Then add to that 2 Peter 1:3-4, where Peter says, "According as His divine power has given unto us all things pertain unto to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us to His glory and virtue, by which are given unto us exceedingly great and precious promises that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

All of these verses stress for us that grace means functioning on God's doing, not on our powers.

Now, Satan hates his principal. Satan hates this idea with a vengeance. Satan hates it because when people understand it, then they realize that grace has terminated the authority of the sin nature. People who think like the devil also hate grace. They feel that man can do at least a little for himself with God. And there's the zinger. People who do not understand this principle of grace, releasing us from the lordship of the sin nature, always think that man can do at least a little – there's something you can do that God will favor, and that God would welcome. And anyone trying to do this little bit, I can tell you right now, will ensure a destiny for himself in hell. That's the tragedy of it.

It's not that God is just going to say, "Well, I know you sincerely thought that you could do a little to help, so you threw your little bit in. I understand that. No, no. A little later in the book of Romans, Paul, before he finishes this book, in Romans 11:6, says, "I've got to button this down once more. If you do not understand this, you will take yourself into the lake of fire." Romans 11:6: "And if by grace, then it is no more of works. Otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works then it is no more grace. Otherwise, work is no more work." What that verse is saying is that you cannot help a little. If you try helping God a little to save you, you have undermined the principle of grace. And God steps back and says, "Now my grace cannot enter, because grace can only work where man is not involved."

When grace comes in, you and I are released from the horror of the sin nature. Grace is not the result of something in us. It is the result only of something which is in God. Grace is symbolic of making man right with God by divine activity apart from the human will or apart from human strength. And it is this grace that frees the believer from sin nature authority, and from sin nature evil. Grace does not merely help man to satisfy the divine demands. Grace doesn't just help. Grace, does it.

So, there are only two positions that a person can have in life. And Paul says, "Here's the answer to your question that we began with. Should we let the sin nature dominate the life of a Christian?"

**Under Law**

You have the position of being under law, and that is under a system of human doing; by human efforts; and, by human rituals to gain merit with God, and to satisfy the justice of God. If you are under law, you are also under the sin nature. The old sin nature is on the throne in that life. That's the system.

**Under Grace**

The second thing you can be under is grace. If you are under grace, then you're under the position of being justified in Christ, and you are under the control of the Holy Spirit, so that now the Holy Spirit is on the throne.

Those are the two positions that you have as a human being. If you are an unbeliever, you are under law; you're under a system of human doing; you're trying to weigh your good works against your bad works; and, you're throwing in your human good as your good works, and that's evil with God. And you are dominated by the sin nature, and you are enslaved.

If you are under grace, then you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. You are actually "in Christ." You are in the body of Christ. You are related to Christ in such a way that God the Holy Spirit now is a sovereign authority. He holds the throne. And He is the one that is functioning as the king in the life of the believer, and you are a servant of that Holy Spirit.

What Paul is trying to say is: "Get the two straight. If you are under law, then the sin nature is Lord of your life. If you are under grace, then the Holy Spirit is Lord of your life. You are not sometimes under law and sometimes under grace. You are one or the other." And the apostle Paul says, in the first part of verse 14: "For the quality of evil shall absolutely not be master over you. For this reason, you are not under a system of law (of human-effort keeping), in which case the sin nature does dominate you and is the king of your life. You are under grace where God has stepped in and done the job for you, and placed the Holy Spirit upon the throne of your life."

Now there indeed is the question of whom you are listening to, because while the old sin nature is deposed, he's standing right here, waiting to give you advice. But right now, Paul says, "I want you to know what God as judge has done for you. He has destroyed the power of the sin nature – its ruling authority in your life. He has enthroned the Holy Spirit as the authority in your life." That is the starting point of walking with God.

The devil hates grace and the devil's people, whether they're Christians or non-Christians who listen to the devil, all strike at grace. And one of the things they say is what the devil has told them: "Grace means you can sin. Grace means you can do any evil thing you want to do."

That's the question in verse 15, and that's the one we will take up next.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)