

**Gotta Serve Somebody**

*You're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed  
 You're gonna have to serve somebody.  
 Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord  
 But you're gonna have to serve somebody.*

Bob Dylan, copyright © 1979 Special Rider Music

Rarely would you read the lyrics of Bob Dylan for good theology, but this is an exception. This week we learn together that everyone is serving somebody or something. As we jump back into Romans, Paul's encouragement for each of us is to consider what you have become a slave to. May God use this study to deepen our devotion to him.

**Monday – By No Means**

*"When you entertain any temptation to sin, you do as wisely as he who takes those into his house whom he knows come on purpose to spoil him of what he esteems most precious."* Lancelot Addison

1. Please read Romans 6:15. What do the words "by no means!" convey to you?

**Text Insight:** Some translations render this phrase as "absolutely not!" or "of course not!"

2. This is the second time that this phrase appears in just a few sentences. See Romans 6:1, along with verses 11-14, and consider what Paul is saying about choosing how you live.
3. Have you ever fallen into the trap of playing down the seriousness of willful sin (that is, making a conscious choice to disobey God), rationalizing that it is not so bad since God offers grace and forgiveness?

**Making it Personal:** Imagine a conversation between you and Paul about a desire you may have to do something sinful (be specific, if you can). How do you think he would counsel you? How would you respond?

**Tuesday – In Human Terms**

*"Just as a servant knows that he must first obey his master in all things, so the surrender to an implicit and unquestionable obedience must become the essential characteristic of our lives."* Andrew Murray

1. Please read Romans 6:16-19. What does Paul say about obedience in the first part of verse 16? Who have you offered yourself to?
2. Look at the end of verse 16 in conjunction with verse 19. How does Paul connect obedience, righteousness and holiness?
3. In verse 17 and 18, Paul uses concepts such as obedience and slavery. What is his explanation in verse 19 for using these terms (which would have been quite familiar to his audience)? Why did he say he felt the need to use "human terms?"

**Digging Deeper:** Read Micah 7:18-20. How does this Old Testament declaration of the nature of God help you understand Paul's statements regarding our relationship to sin and responsibility to God?

**Wednesday – Freedom from Righteousness?**

*"One great power of sin is that it blinds men so that they do not recognize its true character."* Andrew Murray

1. Please read Romans 6:20-21. What can free you from the control of righteousness? Do you want that freedom? Why, or why not?
2. Have you any shame for sins you've committed (verse 21)? In what ways would this kind of shame be beneficial to you?
3. According to Romans 2:4, how does God treat us despite our sinfulness? Pray for God's gracious kindness to lead you into repentance.

**Text Insight:** The word repentance suggests a changing of one's mind as well as turning from one's actions.

**Making it Personal:** Let's take a look back at Romans 1:18-31 and remind ourselves of one of the points Paul made at the outset of this letter to the believers in Rome. Do any of the sins listed there sound familiar in your life: murder, sexual impurity, deceit, gossip, boastfulness, disobeying parents? Ask the Lord for the grace to turn away from those sins.

**Thursday – Benefits of Belonging to God**

*"Sin wouldn't be so attractive if the wages were paid immediately."* Anonymous

1. Please read Romans 6:22-23. What happens when you are freed from sin?
2. What do you think it means to be a slave to God?
3. Verse 23 says that death is earned. How do we obtain life? Is there any way to receive it apart from Jesus?

**Prayer Focus:** If you have already received God's gift, spend some time thanking him for all he's done for you. If you have not yet received the gift of eternal life, ask God to guide you into the life he offers freely.

**Friday – You're Going to End Up Serving Somebody, it's Just a Matter of Who it Will Be**

*"Human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and can't really get rid of it."* C.S. Lewis

1. Luke 16:13 records Jesus' words about serving two masters. What does he say about that possibility? In what areas do you need to turn over mastery of your life?
2. Colossians 3:5 identifies not only greed, but other pursuits that turn us from God. Paul goes so far as to call such practices idolatry. What idols do you struggle with?

**Digging Deeper:** Joshua 24:14-24 contains (at verse 15) one of the more famous Old Testament statements about choosing rightly. As you look at verses 16-18, consider why the Israelites chose to serve God. Now look at verse 23. What does Joshua tell them to do in light of their choice? Do you have any idols or false gods you need to throw away (literally or figuratively) as a result of your choice to follow God?

**For the Weekend:** Read Colossians 3:12-17 and Romans 2:4. What should you pursue as part of your new life in Christ? Spend time in prayer this weekend, asking for God to guide you into his righteousness, for his kindness to lead you in a new path.