

Responding to Objections

(ROMANS 6:1–23)

Before you begin ...

- *Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal truth and wisdom as you go through this lesson.*
- *Read Romans 6:1–23. This lesson references chapter 5 in Be Right. It will be helpful for you to have your Bible and a copy of the commentary available as you work through this lesson.*

Getting Started

From the Commentary

In Romans 6–8 Paul defended his doctrine of justification by faith. He anticipated three objections: (1) “If God’s grace abounds when we sin, then let’s continue sinning so we might experience more grace” (Rom. 6:1–14); (2) “If we are no longer under the law, then we are free to live as we please” (Rom. 6:15–7:6); and (3) “You have made God’s law sinful” (Rom. 7:7–25).

—Be Right, page 71

1. What are your thoughts about the objections listed in the excerpt? Do you agree these are worthy questions to ask about Paul's teaching? Why would these have been of particular importance to the audience Paul was addressing (the church in Rome)?

More to Consider: In Romans 3:21–5:21, Paul refers to “sins” and then in chapters 6–8, he starts talking about the principle of “sin.” What is significant about this shift?

2. Choose one verse or phrase from Romans 6:1–23 that stands out to you. This could be something you're intrigued by, something that makes you uncomfortable, something that puzzles you, something that resonates with you, or just something you want to examine further. Write that here. What strikes you about this verse?

Going Deeper

From the Commentary

The repetition of the word *know* in Romans 6:3, 6, and 9 indicates that Paul wanted us to understand a basic doctrine. Christian living

depends on Christian learning; duty is always founded on doctrine.
If Satan can keep a Christian ignorant, he can keep him impotent.

—Be Right, pages 71–72

3. Why does Christian living depend on learning? What sort of learning do you think Paul is referring to? Do you agree that an ignorant Christian is an impotent Christian? Explain.

From the Commentary

Historians agree that the mode of baptism in the early church was immersion. The believer was “buried” in the water and brought up again as a picture of death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism by immersion (which is the illustration Paul is using in Rom. 6) pictures the believer’s identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. It is an outward symbol of an inward experience. Paul is not saying that their immersion in water put them “into Jesus Christ,” for that was accomplished by the Spirit when they believed. Their immersion was a picture of what the Spirit did: the Holy Spirit identified them with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

—Be Right, page 73

4. What is your church's perspective on baptism? In what ways does it line up with what Paul writes? If baptism is merely a symbol, is it necessary for Christians? Why or why not? What happens at baptism?

From Today's World

Plenty of products today are being sold that promise to “change your life.” This includes everything from shampoo to a new car. Advertisements for these products can often seem unbelievable because of the spoken or implied claims. But in reality, there are few things that can truly, radically change a person's life.

5. When you think about the symbol of baptism and what it represents, how does this compare to the promises presented by the advertising world? Why can we, as Christians, count on the life-changing nature of justification by faith? How then should we live if we have been changed?

From the Commentary

Too many Christians are “betweeners”: they live between Egypt and Canaan, saved but never satisfied; or they live between Good Friday and Easter, believing in the cross but not entering into the

power and glory of the resurrection. Romans 6:5 indicates that our union with Christ assures our future resurrection should we die. But Romans 6:4 teaches that we share His resurrection power today.

—Be Right, page 74

6. What does it look like to be a “betweenner” in today’s church culture? Why is “being saved” enough for some people? What are ways Christians can share in Jesus’ resurrection power today?

More to Consider: What is Paul’s response to believers who claim that his theology leaves opportunity for believers to sin willingly since they have already been given their new lives?

From the Commentary

Sin is a terrible master, and it finds a willing servant in the human body. The body is not sinful; the body is neutral. It can be controlled either by sin or by God. But man’s fallen nature, which is not changed at conversion, gives sin a beachhead from which it can attack and then control. Paul expressed the problem: “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (Rom. 7:18).

—Be Right, page 75

7. What are your thoughts about Wiersbe's comment that "the body is neutral"? What are the "beachheads" that sin uses to attack us? How can we shore up defenses against sin's encroaching ways?

From the Commentary

There must be in the believer's life that final and complete surrender of the body to Jesus Christ. This does not mean there will be no further steps of surrender, because there will be. The longer we walk with Christ, the deeper the fellowship must become. But there can be no subsequent steps without that first step.

—Be Right, page 77

8. What is that "final and complete surrender of the body" Wiersbe describes in this excerpt? What does Paul say about this? If there is a "final surrender," how can there then be further steps of surrender?

More to Consider: Circle every time Paul uses the word yield in Romans 6:12–23 (KJV). Why do you think he uses this word so frequently?

From the Commentary

Before you were saved, you were the slave of sin. Now that you belong to Christ, you are freed from that old slavery and made the servant of Christ. Romans 6:19 suggests that the Christian ought to be as enthusiastic in yielding to the Lord as he was in yielding to sin. A friend once said to me, “I want to be as good a saint as I was a sinner!”

—Be Right, pages 78–79

9. Is it easy to be enthusiastic about yielding? Why or why not? What does it take to be “as good a saint as you were a sinner”?

From the Commentary

In the old life, we produced fruit that made us ashamed. In the new life in Christ, we produce fruit that glorifies God and brings joy to our lives.

—Be Right, page 79

10. What are some examples of fruit that makes us ashamed? Compare that to the fruit that glorifies God and brings joy. What is different about these types of fruit?

Looking Inward

Take a moment to reflect on all that you've explored thus far in this study of Romans 6:1–23. Review your notes and answers and think about how each of these things matters in your life today.

Tips for Small Groups: To get the most out of this section, form pairs or trios and have group members take turns answering these questions. Be honest and as open as you can in this discussion, but most of all, be encouraging and supportive of others. Be sensitive to those who are going through particularly difficult times and don't press for people to speak if they're uncomfortable doing so.

11. What are some ways you're learning so you can live a better Christian life? Are there some things you're not doing that you could be doing? List these, then make a plan to work on them in the coming week.

12. Have you been baptized? If no, why not? If yes, what does that baptism mean to you? If you were saved when you were justified by faith, why is your baptism still important?

13. How are you currently living a life yielded to God? What are some areas of your life where you aren't yielded to God? Why are these difficult areas for you? What would it take to yield them to God?

Going Forward

14. Think of one or two things that you have learned that you'd like to work on in the coming week. Remember that this is all about quality, not quantity. It's better to work on one specific area of life and do it well than to work on many and do poorly (or to be so overwhelmed that you simply don't try).

Do you need to spend more time studying so you won't be an impotent Christian? Do you need to work on yielding to God? Be specific. Go back through Romans 6:1–23 and put a star next to the phrase or verse that is most encouraging to you. Consider memorizing this verse.

Real-Life Application Ideas: If you haven't been baptized, talk with your pastor about what you need to do to consider baptism in your church. If you have been baptized, revisit that experience and take a few moments to reflect on the symbolism of that action and what it means to you. Then write out a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the

symbol and how it can help you know what it means to live a new life in Christ.

Seeking Help

15. Write a prayer below (or simply pray one in silence), inviting God to work on your mind and heart in those areas you've previously noted. Be honest about your desires and fears.

Notes for Small Groups:

- *Look for ways to put into practice the things you wrote in the "Going Forward" section in this lesson. Talk with other group members about your ideas and commit to being accountable to one another.*
- *During the coming week, ask the Holy Spirit to continue to reveal truth to you from what you've read and studied.*
- *Before you start the next lesson, read Romans 7:1–25. For more in-depth lesson preparation, read chapter 6, "Christians and the Law," in Be Right.*