

“Don’t Look Back”

Romans 6:1-7

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September 8, 2019

connect groups

PATH

Returning to a life of sin after becoming a Christian is like winning the lottery but choosing to continue to live in poverty. Pastor Nate Heitzig poses this question: Can one be a Christian and continually pursue a sinful lifestyle? In examining Romans 6:1-7, we find the biblical answer: No. Because of what God has done for the Christian, the Christian’s rightful response to God should be to pursue a transformed lifestyle.

I. Get Up (vv. 1-2)

II. Go Forward (vv. 3-5)

III. Never Go Back (vv. 6-7)

POINTS

Get Up (vv. 1-2)

- In Romans 6-8, Paul began to teach on the outcome of justification—the practical effects of salvation. Paul refuted the argument of the religious leaders of his day, who taught that man can work to earn salvation.
- The word *continue* in verse 1 carries the idea of habitual persistence, like a person living in the muck and mire of sin. Christians are not to continually live in sin (see v. 2).
- Before salvation, sin is an established way of life (see Ephesians 2:2). Paul told Christians to get up, out of the muddy mess of sin, and live for God and His glory.
- Paul did not teach that Christians will not be tempted or fall into occasional sin; he emphasized willfully and intentionally living in sin. In verse 12, Paul said, “Do not let sin reign in your mortal body.” Christians are not to let sin control the way they live.
- For the observant Jew, faithfulness meant keeping rules and regulations; but Paul saw the underlying issue: humanity’s sinful nature. The solution is justification through Christ and living a life of obedience in response to God’s work in Christ. Salvation will produce holy living, but holy living can’t produce salvation.

Go Forward (vv. 3-5)

- After salvation, the Christian must go forward, and the first step forward is baptism. In verse 3, Paul gave us a glimpse into the profound nature of baptism. Water baptism is an outward showing of an inward doing; it does not wash away sin, but is a symbol of identifying with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- Justification by faith isn’t a legal matter but a living relationship, so our response should be to identify with Jesus. This is God’s imputed righteousness in our life, and because of this living union with Jesus, Christians have a new relationship to sin; baptism symbolizes that we are dead to the old self and raised to new life in Christ. Paul put it this way: “Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin” (v. 11).
- Paul talked about “newness of life” in Christ (see v. 4b). He uses the same word in 2 Corinthians 5:17, to refer to a “new creation.” Newness of life is the outcome of God’s indwelling, giving us “a new heart” (Ezekiel 36:26), “a new song” (Psalm 40:3), and a “new man” (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Never Go Back (vv. 6-7)

- Once we get up to go forward, we should not go back to our old ways. In

verse 6, Paul states our old self was “crucified with Him...that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” The old self was crucified with Christ, so we need not be controlled by sin.

- The phrase “done away with” (v. 6) does not mean annihilated, but “rendered inactive, made of no effect.” Sin is out of business, and you can never go back to it in the same way.
- Many Christians are missing an essential truth of the spiritual life: Christ has won, therefore, you have. We don’t fight *for* victory, but *from* victory. We share in what Christ has done on our behalf. Satan was defeated at the cross; we should live as though this were the case. We can’t overcome sin on our own strength—only through Christ. God, in Christ, has paid our debt, opened the prison door, and set us free. We must recognize the victory to live a Christ-like life.
- How do we walk in victory? Paul gives the solution throughout his letters: “Walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16; see also 6:8 and Ephesians 5:8). We must allow the Spirit to conform us into the image of Christ—sanctifying us and producing fruit (see Galatians 5:22-23) and gifts for edification of the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

PRACTICE

Connect Up: The Christian life can be summarized in three overarching acts of God:

- **Calling:** God calls and convicts people of sin (see John 16:7-8). **Confirming:** God saves us and seals Christians with the Spirit, confirming we are His children (see John 14:16-17; Ephesians 1:13-14). **Conforming:** God emboldens Christians to be a witness in the world, conforming us into the image of Jesus and to live a Spirit-empowered life with fruit and gifts (see Acts 1:8, Romans 8:30; Galatians 5:22-23; and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

Throughout Romans, Paul shows how Christ procured our salvation (see

Romans 8:27-32). Jesus calls us (see John 15:16), confirms us (see John 12:44-47), and conforms us (see John 13:15). Discuss the role of the Spirit in all areas: calling, confirming, and conforming. How are both Jesus and the Spirit involved in getting Christians up, moving forward, and never looking back?

Connect In: How can Pastor Nate’s outline act as a guide for the local church? As an example, the church is to:

- Proclaim Christ (vv. 1-4): encouragement to *get up*; pursue a certain way of living (vv. 5-11) baptism, turning from sin, etc.: motivation to go

forward; proceed as Christians (vv. 12-14): caution to *never go back*. What other parallels can you find?

Connect Out: How can Pastor Nate’s points act as an outline for evangelism? Here are some thoughts to discuss:

- Get up: the need for salvation in Christ. Why does a person need Jesus? Go forward: What actions are required for a new believer? Never go back: What things should a new Christian continually do so he or she does not fall back into their old lifestyle?