

How To Live Like a King's Kid (Romans, Part 5)

It's hard to believe, but slavery in North America was socially acceptable only 140 years ago.

These precious people were born free in humble villages across Africa, but captured by wicked slave traders, herded onto ships and brought to North America. Packed in the hold like cargo, chained together so closely they could barely move, fed poorly and in despair because they had been stolen from their homes, many of these young men and women did not survive the six-week voyage across the Atlantic Ocean.

For those who did survive, far worse was yet to come in the new land. They were sold to plantation owners in the southern United States who used whips to force them to work from sunup to sundown. Some rebelled and ran off, but often starvation drove them back to the plantation. The brutal floggings they received as punishment were used to warn others against running away. Most slaves simply worked until they died under the lash or from disease and exhaustion. In the 250 years that slavery lasted, millions of people were sold into bondage just so that plantation owners could grow rich selling the crops grown by their captive laborers.

It took a civil war to break the yoke of slavery. It called for a courageous president named Abraham Lincoln to stand in the gap, to be misunderstood and maligned and ultimately assassinated for a cause that he believed was not only worth fighting for but worth dying for.

The Emancipation Proclamation was a presidential order announced on September 22, 1862 and enforced 100 days later on January 1, 1863 declaring the freedom of all slaves. It was not a law passed by a Congress but a proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln, based on the war powers given to the President by the Constitution. As his Union armies advanced into the southern states, thousands of slaves were liberated each day, until nearly all 4 million of them were set free by the summer of 1865.

The emancipation was made permanent by **the Thirteenth Amendment** which was ratified in December of 1865. But by then, Abraham Lincoln had paid with his life on April 14 of the same year. The Emancipation Proclamation was the crowning achievement of his administration and of his life. Though the document was never tested in court one way or the other, no court or legal scholar has ever questioned its validity.

Booker T. Washington, in "Up From Slavery," remembered that day in early 1865 as a boy of nine:

"As the great day drew nearer, there was more singing in the slave quarters than usual. It was bolder, had more ring, and lasted later into the night. Most of the verses of the plantation songs had some reference to freedom ... Some man who seemed to be a stranger (a United States officer, I presume) made a little speech and then read a rather long paper — the Emancipation Proclamation, I think. After the reading we were told that we were all free, and could go when and where we pleased. My mother, who was standing by my side, leaned over and kissed her children, while tears of joy ran down her cheeks. She explained to us what it all meant, that this was the day for which she had been so long praying, but fearing that she would never live to see."

Headlines on newspapers in virtually every state trumpeted the same message: "**SLAVERY LEGALLY ABOLISHED.**" And yet, something happened that many would have never expected. The vast majority of the slaves in the south who were legally freed continued to live on as slaves, as though nothing had happened.

What a tragedy! A war had been fought. A president had been assassinated. An amendment to the constitution had been signed into law. Once-enslaved men, women and children were now legally emancipated. Yet amazingly, many continued living in fear and squalor. In spite of hard-earned freedom, many slaves chose to remain slaves. Cruel and brutal though many of their owners were, black men and women chose to keep serving the same old master until they died. In many parts of the country you would never have known that slavery had been officially abolished. That's the way the plantation owners wanted it. They maintained the philosophy, "Keep them ignorant and you can keep them in the field." Unbelievable!

Shelby Foote, in "The Civil War," quotes an Alabama slave in 1864: "I don't know nothing 'bout Abraham Lincoln, 'cept they say he sot us free. And I don't know nothing 'bout that neither."

But here's a far greater tragedy: Even though our Great Emancipator Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price to overthrow sin's slavery once and for all, many Christians act like they're still held in bondage. Strange as it is, they seem to prefer the security of slavery to the "risks" of liberty. And our slave master, Satan, loves it when we are ignorant of our privileges.

Many of God's children live below their privileges as King's Kids. That's why we're studying the book of Romans – it tells us how to access the royalty that is already within us through the power of God's Spirit.

The book of Romans is our "EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION!" It is an absolute FACT that we are free, but we just need to ACT like it!

There is a **TRANSITION** at this point in the book of Romans:

Romans 3 & 4	Romans 5 & 6
Jesus died FOR me	Jesus died AS me
JUSTIFICATION	SANCTIFICATION
Righteousness IMPUTED	Righteousness IMPARTED
Jesus paid sin's PENALTY	Jesus broke sin's POWER
I am saved by His DEATH	I am saved by His LIFE

Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where **sin** abounded, **grace** did much more abound:

GRACE:

- God's unmerited favor, ruling out all human merit
- G.R.A.C.E. - God's Riches At Christ's Expense

The message of grace is so powerful that it tends to be abhorred by legalists and abused by libertarians.

Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in **sin**, that **grace** may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are **dead** to sin, live any longer therein?

God forbid! – This strongest Greek idiom for repudiating a statement, containing a sense of outrage that anyone would ever think the statement was true in the first place. It is used 14 times in Paul's epistles, and 10 times in Romans alone (3:4,6,31; 6:2,15; 7:7,13; 9:13; 11:1,11).

We obviously need to look a little further into the definition of grace ...

GRACE:

- 'charis' – divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life
- God's GIFT and our GRATITUDE
- free FROM sin, not free TO sin
- the power to change!

Because of extremists (on both sides) who would take advantage of the message of grace, Paul takes great pains in chapter six to define exactly how it works in our lives. **The whole point of grace is to live above sin, and Paul gives us a three-step process to do exactly that:**

KNOW

THAT WE DIED IN CHRIST ...

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

- "**old**" does not refer to something old in years but to something that is worn out and useless
- "**destroyed**" does not mean that it is annihilated, but rather that it is rendered inactive or ineffective

THAT WE LIVE IN CHRIST ...

Romans 6:9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

RECKON

Romans 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- "**reckon**" is used 41 times in the New Testament, 19 times in Romans alone
- "**reckon**" is an accounting term that means to calculate, enter it in the ledger, or simply to act like it is in the bank account
- "**reckon**" means to become in experience what you already are in position – not just claiming a promise, but actually acting on a fact

YIELD

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

- "**yield**" means to present yourself (same word in Romans 12:1)
- "**yield**" has a positive ("to God") and a negative ("not to sin") sense
- "**yield**" means that before sin can have power over a believer, it must first pass through his will

How we live depends totally on what Master we choose!

The loudest cry in modern society is the cry for freedom from restrictions of any kind. And yet, those who are crying the loudest are not really free! Psychological studies repeatedly show that they bear traumatic scars from their immoral behavior, and that the radicals among them are fixated on their cause to the point where their life becomes consumed by it. The militants and activists for “freedom” are in fact the most incarcerated people in the world. **What they call “freedom” is slavery!**

What they are really looking for is not freedom, but a new master!

The whole point of being a Christian is not to be set free from ANY master, but rather to CHANGE masters!

When we become a Christian, we exchange being a “servant of sin” for being a “servant of righteousness.” **There are still RESPONSIBILITIES, but the WAGES are different!**

Romans 6:17-18 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY NOT TO BE A SERVANT TO SIN, AND THAT IS TO BE A SERVANT TO JESUS CHRIST!

Exodus 21:5-6 And if the servant shall plainly say, **I love my master**, my wife, and my children; **I will not go out free**: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.

Reinhold Niebuhr: “You may be able to compel people to maintain certain minimum standards by stressing duty, but the highest moral and spiritual achievements depend not upon a push but a pull.”

ARE YOU “PUSHING” OR ARE YOU LETTING THE HOLY SPIRIT “PULL” YOU? IT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD!