

Lesson 15: The Strength of Grace II

Romans 6:15-23

Invitation and Objection

¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?

Short answer

May it never be!

Long answer (New Master)

¹⁶ Do you not know that when you **present** yourselves to someone *as* slaves for **obedience**, you are slaves of the one whom you **obey**, either of sin resulting in death, or of **obedience** resulting in righteousness?

Already true (New Heart)

¹⁷ But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became **obedient** from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.

In process (New Trajectory and New Process)

For just as you **presented** your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now **present** your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

(1) ²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.

(2) ²² But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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Part Two of Paul's Explanation for Why Grace Does Not Lead to an Increase of Sin

Paul is not yet done explaining the power of grace to produce righteous living. He gave us part 1 in the first half of chapter 6. He gives us part 2 in the second half. He also uses the same literary or rhetorical pattern.

So, we have an invitation, "What then?" Then we have an objection to grace, "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?" Then we have Paul's short answer, "May it never be!" There is no follow-up question to that statement like there was in 6:2. Paul moves from the emphatic short answer straight into the "Do you not know..." question which introduces his long answer. "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?"

Each time Paul answers an objection in chapters 6 and 7, he uses one primary illustration. In the first half of chapter 6, he used the experience of baptism to illustrate his point. Here he uses the analogy of slavery to illustrate his point.

So far Paul's argument that grace produces strength for life includes the New Perspective and the New Union of grace. Faith in Jesus is a new way of seeing the kingdom of Adam, man, and the kingdom of Jesus. We see our own behavior in a new light. We see God in a new light. We see Jesus in a new light. We see grace in a new light. Saving faith is a New Perspective. The non-believer sees grace as freedom to sin. The believer sees grace as freedom from sin.

Not only do we have a new perspective of Jesus, we also have a new union with Jesus. Spiritually united to Jesus, we have died to sin and been raised to new life. This is a spiritual reality that empowers the one who stands in grace. We have not experienced overwhelming transformation. We still struggle with sin. We still need to choose to consider what is true and to present ourselves to God. Our New Union with Jesus empowers us to enter into that struggle.

In the second half of chapter 6, Paul is going to further develop these ideas and then bring in some additional thought.

Let's read the whole passage and then walk through the argument step by step.

Read [Romans 6:15-23]

Invitation and Objection (6:15a)

We start with the invitation and the objection. ¹⁵ "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?"

Here Paul poses again the classic objection to the gospel. "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?" The difference between this version of the question and the version in 6:1 is that the previous version built on the explanation of the gospel in chapter 5. It talks about sinning so that grace may increase. Paul had restated the gospel in the universal terms of Adam and Jesus. There are two kingdoms, one of fallen man and one of restored man. Grace abundantly overcomes the universal problem of sin and death. Attacking this expression of the gospel, the objection in 6:1 asked, "Shall we sin so that grace may increase?"

Paul could have answered that question by falling back into a new Christian law. But he did not. He maintained his confidence in grace to produce righteousness. Law uses fear and insecurity to motivate. Paul did not threaten our status under grace. He did not say that if we sin we will lose our acceptance. In this sense, his opponents had heard him correctly. His argument truly is that grace overcomes sin and provides security in our relationship with God. The first question of covenant is answered radically. We are accepted 100% by grace. And future sin does not change that. Not only the first, but also the second question of covenant, "How then shall we live?", must be understood according to our new standing in the grace of Jesus. Paul really does argue that the new covenant of grace initiates a new way of living out our relationship with God.

We are no longer under law, not even a new Christian law. We are under grace. The objection here in 6:15 is picking up on that law/grace language. "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?"

Short answer (6:15b)

Paul is emphatic in his short answer. "May it never be!" This is clear to Paul. The right response to grace is not sin. Grace does not provide freedom or motivation or even logic to sin. So, we are clear, the answer is, "Certainly not!" Paul does not leave us with that. He is going to help us think about why not with a longer answer.

Listen again to the introductory question of that long answer. Along with bringing about a New Perspective and a New Union, Paul argues that grace places the believer under a New Master.

Long answer (6:16-22)

New Master and New Heart (6:16-19a)

1. Our New Master and the Reality of Authority

Verse 16, "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?"

Paul is making a statement about reality that we need to take a moment to consider. This may not be how people would like things to be. But this is how things are. Power and authority exist. We are under obedience to some source of power or some person of authority. We have a master, whether the master is sin, or the master is God, we cannot get out from having a master.

Paul is coming back in this verse to two ideas he introduced in the previous passage. There is the idea of slavery. He already said that the point of our being crucified with Christ is that we might be free from sin. The second idea is the idea of presentation. As the believer, the right action for you to take in response to your new reality in Jesus is to present yourselves to God.

A change here is that Paul claims that presenting yourself as a slave is not necessarily negative. There is a negative slavery and a positive slavery, depending on the one to whom you present yourself. In that Paul's language is a bit jolting, because we would rather not consider ourselves as slaves to anyone. We want to see ourselves as independent, free agents. Queen's 1984 hit "I Want to Break Free" echoes the human heart. I guess that is why it keeps playing on the radio. "I've got to break free. God knows, God knows I want to break free." God does know. God knows we want to break free.

Paul's slave language is the language of obedience. He asserts that regardless of whether you sin or whether you do good, either way, you are choosing to obey one principle or the other. You obey sin, or you obey righteousness. Human nature resists this, imagining an existence where we can break free from any authority.

The Christian, however, with our new perspective begins to see the world or sees the world in a different way. There is a Lord. He defines good and evil. He has authority. It is right and good to be under his authority. The centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant understood a universal hierarchy ordered by right and lawful authority. He told Jesus, "You do not need to come to my house. I am a man under authority. My word is obeyed. You have authority. Your word will be obeyed. Simply say the word and my servant will be healed." Right authority was part of the centurion's worldview. He understood what it was to be under a master. And he sensed that was good and right. It was the correct order of things.

The idea of authority over good and evil takes us all the way back to the garden of Eden. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not set in Eden to prevent Adam and Eve from knowing about good and evil. It was their job to rule the creation, judging right and wrong. That was part of the commission from God. They had to learn about good and evil. The tree created a dividing line of authority. Who defines what is good and evil? Do you taste it and decide for yourself? Or do you submit to God's word, trusting his definition.

So, there was some truth in Satan's charge that God does not want you to be like him. That is true. God does not give up his place as the one who defines good and evil. In fact, it would be evil for God to give up his responsibility as the one who is authority over morality. Right and wrong are defined out of his nature. He does not produce a standard of morality. He himself is the standard of morality.

When Adam and Eve chose the tree, in direct contradiction of God's authority, they proclaimed the right to determine good and evil for themselves. Rather than go to God to receive instruction, going to the tree they rejected God's claim to authority. This is the heart of the human impulse we call sin. It is a form of pride. It is a rejection of God as the source and definition of what is good.

And yet, to break free from God is to become something less than human. Here is Paul's argument from way back in chapter 1:18-32. Turning away from God does not leave a human being unaffected. We were created as beings who would thrive in a union with our creator. Relationship with him is a necessary component for human life. Paul described in chapter 1 a darkening of human desires and an effect on human thinking. Separated from God, heart and mind become clouded and begin to desire things that lead to death. God is life. Without God we become a shell. Even worse, we become slaves to desires that harm, dehumanize, corrupt, wound. We become slaves to sin.

We were designed for a certain existence. A diesel, powered car does not work when filled with gasoline. It just stops. Unfortunately, I know from personal experience. It's not a good thing. It's not the car's fault. It's not the manufacturer's fault. It was my fault for ignoring the essential design of the car. We have been designed as men and women to live in relationship with God who is our authority. We can only function as we are created to function when we are in right and loving relationship with the one who has authority. When we trust in Jesus, we are acknowledging God as the true judge and king. We present ourselves to him as individuals under authority. We acknowledge that he is the one who defines what is right and true; what is evil and degrading. He

decides. Not us. Presenting ourselves to God is presenting ourselves to obedience. We submit to his definition of good and evil.

You see, when we chose sin, we become a slave to the power of sin. We are in obedience to sin. When we chose God, we willingly place ourselves under his authority. We are in obedience to God. In the end, we are slaves to one or the other.

Paul's slavery illustration includes both that which is already true of the believer and that which is becoming true. There is a sense where we are already slaves. And there is a sense where we have to choose to present ourselves as slaves. There is both a starting point, and there is a process.

Verse 17 focuses on that which is already true. The starting point. Let's read that.

2. The Reality of the Believer's New Heart

Verse 17, "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

I believe Paul's reference here to "the form of teaching to which you were committed" is the apostolic proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ that the Romans had already heard from someone else. Paul writes the Roman believers not to introduce them to the gospel but to establish them more firmly in the gospel. Paul recognizes that they have been taught the gospel of Jesus Christ. This has been his assumption throughout. He will write later in 15:14 "[you are] filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another...I have written very boldly to you on some points so as to remind you again." He is reminding them. He is establishing them. Paul treats the Romans as Christians because they have already heard the message of grace and responded in faith to that form of teaching. Saving faith is not merely understanding. It is understanding that moves a person to trust in God, to become committed to the truth of the message. So, he describes it as the form of teaching to which you were committed. He further describes their commitment to that teaching as coming out of the heart. "You became obedient from the heart."

In John 14:21, the apostle records Jesus as teaching, "He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me." This is obedience out of the heart. A skeptical person could twist that around to make it sound like manipulation. "If you really love me then you will do what I want. If you love me, you will do _____." That is manipulation. And that is not what Jesus is saying. Jesus is making a statement of fact. If you really do love God, then you will express your love through obedience. You do not know and love God without wanting to obey him. This is not the way that a friend shows love to a friend. Unless maybe it is a friend who works at the shop of his friend. Then you have to obey him as your boss. Usually friends are not in an authority relationship. Obedience is not a natural requirement to the kind of love that friends have for one another. Obedience is a right response in a relationship of authority. A son obeys his father. A knight obeys his king. A person obeys his God. When that obedience comes out of a willing heart, then that obedience is a right expression of love. "Sure Daddy, I will do that...Command me my king...Your will be done my God!" That is loving obedience in right relationship.

There is a stark contrast between the slavery that comes from the power of the sin and the willing submission the believer offers from the heart to God. And it is similar to the contrast between human religion and relationship. Human religion can feel like manipulation in two directions. The god seeks to manipulate his follower by promising reward for obedience while the follower obeys to get what he wants. C. S. Lewis describes it as a mercenary approach. The religious person who seeks reward from obedience to God, is not in relationship to know God. God himself is not the reward. That person is in relationship for gain that is not inherent to the relationship. It is like a marriage for money. It is a pretend relationship acted out to acquire a reward that does not correspond naturally to the marriage. The believer who obeys God from the heart recognizes the fruit of relationship with God as the right reward of the relationship. Knowing God and the joy of knowing God and the peace of knowing God and sense of purpose that come from knowing God, that is the right fruit of

relationship. That is reward. But it is reward inherent to relationship. The religious mercenary wants other rewards from God, not God himself. God seeks from his followers a willing submission that comes out of a heart that loves God. And to love God, is to recognize him as he is, as the right authority, as Father, as King, as Lord, as Master. That is the heart of the worshiper.

Grace places us into relationship with a New Master in line with a New Heart of obedience. This New Heart is one of the things that is new about the new covenant. It is the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit Paul referred to in chapter 2:29. It is the promise made by Moses in Deuteronomy 30:6. It is the new heart of the new covenant promised in Jeremiah 31:33. And it is not something that will be true of the Romans. It is already true of the Romans. The believer who stands in grace has submitted to a New Master out of the obedience of a New Heart. Like our New Union with Jesus, the New Heart is a spiritual reality that comes with the gift of grace. This is already true of us.

3. The Appropriateness of the Language of Slavery

Now, considering the language of slavery, there is something about that language not appropriate to our new relationship with God. In 8:15 Paul is going to say, “You have not received a spirit of slavery.” He does not want to use the slave language in the context of chapter 8. Here Paul finds the language helpful or maybe even necessary to help us understand our reality. Still, he seems to regret having to use it.

In verse 19 he says, “¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.”

This is not an easy verse to interpret. When Paul says he is speaking in human terms, I believe that does point to his use of the slavery analogy. The institution of slavery in Paul’s day was a social reality familiar to everyone. It was not a pleasant reality. It was an accepted reality.

Paul says he uses the human terms of slavery because of “the weakness of our flesh.” The most natural understanding of the weakness of our flesh would be the sinful desires natural to human beings in their fallen state. That’s the weakness of our flesh. Our fleshly desires work so powerfully in us darkening our desires and confusing our thinking that we are by nature in a state of bondage to our passions and perceptions. The slavery analogy aptly describes the relationship between our will and our weakness. We cannot consistently will what is good. We are slaves.

On the God side of the analogy, slavery does not describe everything about our relationship with God. But the analogy of slavery does present us with a faith challenge on one essential point. Are we willing to acknowledge that God has all authority? Are you willing to acknowledge that? That God rightly commands every aspect of your life? He is your right authority in everything. Are you willing to submit to God in all things as a slave would to his master? The non-believer struggles to accept that reality that submission can be right and good. The non-believer mistrusts God’s power and God’s will. The New Perspective of faith in the believer recognizes God as the rightful Master and understands out of the New Heart how a servant can love his or her king with complete submission to his will.

We have received a New Heart and have yielded to a New Master. This is already true. The believer has also been set on a New Trajectory that initiates a New Process.

New Trajectory and New Process (19b-22)

Let’s consider the second half of verse 19, “For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.”

The second half of verse 19 repeats the exhortation to “present the members of your body” that Paul made in our previous passage in verse 13. You can see immediately this is not talking about what is already true but exhorting you to future action.

Just like before, Paul here refers to both the negative side of presenting and the positive side of presenting. He describes the negative presenting as presenting members to impurity and lawlessness. He describes the positive side as presenting your members to righteousness. What Paul

adds here in verse 19 are the results of the presenting. Before he just said, “Don’t present your members to sin and do present your members to God.” He just gave the command. Now he is telling us that we can expect an effect, either negatively or positively when we present ourselves. We do not remain neutral. We have to present ourselves one way or the other, and we are affected according to our choice.

1. The Old Trajectory versus the New

We’ll start with the negative side. Presenting the members of your body to impurity and lawlessness leads to further lawlessness. It is interesting that Paul describes the result of sin as lawlessness. In chapter 1, he described giving into impurity as leading to degrading passions and a depraved mind. He could have used that language again here. You know, that the result of our impurity is degrading passions and a depraved mind. Instead he uses a word here that points back to the objection, “Shall we sin since we are not under law, but under grace?” The word Paul uses here literally means without law, lawlessness. Lawlessness can include acting outside of civil law, but the emphasis here should be taken as acting outside of the moral law of God; to be unrestrained by God’s definition of good. Interestingly, it is the objection being made against grace. Grace leads to lawlessness. The claim is that we need law to keep people in the law. If people are set free from law by grace, then that freedom of grace will lead to lawlessness. Paul is telling us that it is the sinful desires of our own flesh pushing us towards moral lawlessness. That is the natural trajectory of the human heart. We are slaves to sin which leads to impurity which leads to lawlessness which leads to further lawlessness. Paul’s detractors have a point. If the forces in our flesh naturally take us down a road to lawlessness, then removing law, naturally leads to sin. What we have been saying, though, is that grace is not simply removing law. Grace makes a real change in us. So, for grace to not promote sin, grace must change our natural trajectory.

Grace has done that. Grace has set us on a New Trajectory. On April 11, 1970, NASA launched the Apollo 13 mission to send three astronauts to the moon. Fifty-six hours into the mission came the famous transmission, “Houston, we have a problem.” An oxygen tank had exploded. The explosion made a direct return to earth impossible. Apollo 13 was on a trajectory that would pass the moon and continue floating endlessly away from the earth. Ground control calculated course corrections that would take Apollo 13 into the moon’s gravitation pull, swinging the astronauts around the moon, setting them on a new trajectory; a trajectory home.

Human beings separated from their creator, slaves to sin, are on a trajectory away from home, hurtling into emptiness. As life support runs out, we continue floating forever in the direction of our rebellious heart, away from God. But when you place your faith in Jesus Christ and receive his grace, when you enter into his orbit, you are swung around to a new trajectory; a trajectory home.

Unlike Apollo 13, our trajectory is not a straight path home. The New Trajectory sets you on a path for home, but that path is neither straight nor automatic. It is a journey. Someone once said, “You step onto the road, and if you don’t keep your feet, there’s no knowing where you might be swept off to.” Entering into grace embarks the believer on a new journey. On this journey you can still be negatively affected by your choice to sin, but you can also be positively affected by your choice to do what is right.

2. The New Process of the New Trajectory

That comes out in Paul’s use of the imperative in the last part of verse 19. Just like he urged us in the previous passage to consider and present, he exhorts us here saying, “present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.”

Grace empowers us to present the members of our body to righteousness with the positive result of sanctification or holiness. To be holy carries with it two ideas, the idea of being set apart for special use and the idea of being purified or cleaned. A cup used in the Jewish temple was a special cup, used for a special purpose. It had to be kept clean of impurity in order to be fit for use. To be made holy is to be made fit for use in the kingdom of God; set apart, purified. We could also say that to be

made holy is to be made fit for heaven. We need a cleansing and realignment of our desires. I imagine that to experience heaven while still being dominated by my fleshly desire for sin would be like the Greek mythological figure Tantalus who was forced to stand under a fruit tree in a pool of water where the water always receded if he tried to drink, and the fruit always remained just out of reach. I could never be satisfied in heaven if my sinful desires were still with me because those sinful desires would want things that could not be obtained in heaven.

Heaven offers that which is real and good and pure and holy. If our hearts do not desire those things, then our hearts cannot enjoy heaven. As C. S. Lewis describes it in his book *The Great Divorce*, to be made holy is to be made fit for heaven and to be made fit for heaven is to be made more real. We already caught this idea in Romans 5 when Paul told us that our hope does not disappoint us because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. God has begun already to work in us to desire him. And desire for God is the primary desire of heaven. Being sanctified or made holy is not just some stuffy, religious kind of idea. It is a remolding of our desires and thoughts, so that we would desire that which is good and think that which is true.

To motivate us to participate in this process of our becoming more and more truly human, Paul elaborates in verses 20-22 the negative consequences of a trajectory away from God and the positive consequences of a trajectory towards God. Let's read that, verses 20-22.

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. ²² But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

We have a new perspective now on sin. Sin is that which brings about corruption and death. We are now ashamed that we embraced those things. Submitting into a relationship with God as our rightful and good master sets us on a trajectory of life. We begin to be made fit for life with God, to be made holy. The life that starts now in our relationship with Jesus continues on after death. It is true, spiritual life; eternal life.

If this is all true and we have already been set free from sin, why does Paul have to exhort us to live it out? That's the final question I want to address. It's an excellent question. It's a hard question to answer. If we have already been set free from sin, if we have already been giving a new heart, if we have already submitted to a new master, why do we struggle so much with living free?

There is a famous story about a slave from Alabama. In 1865, the Emancipation Proclamation set free America's slaves with the adoption of the 13th amendment to the United States Constitution. Newspaper headlines throughout the States proclaimed, "Slavery Legally Abolished." And yet, the majority of slaves in the South who were legally freed continued to live on as slaves. Asked by a reporter about his thoughts on President Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation an Alabama slave responded, "I don't know nothing about Abraham Lincoln, except they say he set us free. And I don't know nothing about that neither."

It is one thing to be set free. It is another thing to learn how to live free. To live in grace. It was the problem of the first generation of Israelites out of Egypt. They had powerful mental and emotional patterns of slavery. When we come to Christ, we have powerful mental and emotional patterns of slavery to sin. We do have something they did not have. We have a New Heart. But sometimes I wonder why God did not make the desires of the new heart stronger or more automatic.

What if we only desired healthy food? Imagine the effect on your body if you just wanted greens. Or what if we only desired things that we need? Imagine the effect on your bank account? What if we only ever desired our spouse? Imagine the removal of sexual tension from your mental life and relationships.

Whatever his wise reasons are, it is evident that God wants us to be in a process of growth. He takes us in wounded and prideful, set in our habits, unaware how deeply sin affects our thoughts and

desires. He takes us in with all kinds of baggage. And he does not remove the struggle for us. Instead, he calls us to embrace the struggle, to participate in becoming who we are created to be. He calls us to consider what has already become true of us and to present the members of our bodies to righteousness which results in sanctification with the outcome of eternal life. This is our New Process as we follow our New Trajectory home.

Reminder: Eternal Life is a Free Gift, not a Reward for our Effort in the Process of Sanctification (6:23)

Paul makes one last reminder in verse 23.

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We play a part in the journey home, but so we do not begin to think that our work in the process of sanctification is necessary to earn eternal life, Paul reminds us here that God is the one who brings us home. God is the one who brings about the life. “The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” It is still 100% grace. It is a free gift. The work we do is not to earn the gift. The work we do is to join in with what God is doing. Our New Perspective causes us to see sin and holiness differently. Our New Union with Jesus gives us power to engage in the struggle to live for God. Our New Heart is growing in the desire to obey our New Master who has established us in a New Process along a New Trajectory.

This is the power of the gospel to save. Not only power to save us from the guilt of sin, but to save us from the mastery of sin. Power that enables us to live. This is the righteousness of God revealed. Not only are we declared righteous by grace. We are also enabled to live righteously by grace. God is making his children fit to enjoy him forever. This is the strength of grace.

Reflection Questions

1. What stands out to you as interesting or important or strange or confusing in Romans 6:15-23? What are some questions that the text raises for you?
2. Does believing that you are under grace lead to increased sin? That is the charge. Paul develops his understanding of “being under grace” through the use of a slavery analogy which brings to light several realities.
 - a. New Master – What verse(s) indicate that grace puts the believer under a New Master? How do you feel about the slavery analogy being used in the case of both the old master and the new master? Does this analogy work for you or does it raise problems for you?
 - b. New Heart – What verse(s) indicate that grace provides the believer with a New Heart? How is the New Heart of the believer revealed in your experience?
 - c. New Trajectory – What verse(s) indicate that grace sets you on a new trajectory? What verses indicate the old trajectory? What is your new trajectory? How would you explain this idea?
 - d. New Process – What verse(s) indicate that grace sets you on a new process? What do you observe about the old process that is natural in human beings? What do you observe about the new process of the one who stands under grace?
3. What is your role in the New Process? What is God’s role? Which verses support your thoughts about your role and God’s role?
4. What in Paul’s answer to the objection to grace here in 6:15-23 fits with your personal experience as a believer under grace? Have you been living your Christian life with an awareness of these truths of grace or would you say that you have lived much of your Christian life out of obligation to fulfill a new Christian law? What here is new for you? Or a good reminder?