

Buried and Raised with Jesus

Week 5

His divine power has given to us all things that are necessary for life and godliness.—2 Peter 1:3



The Parable of the Glove

I have a little gardening glove, so cute, with little pink flowers on it. I love my glove and I want her to fulfill the purpose I have for her and become the greatest gardener there ever was. So how do I make this glove into a great gardener?

First, I tell her it is her destiny to be a great gardener, and I tell her the basics of gardening. She is to break up the soil, plant the seed, fertilize and water the plants, and keep the weeds out of the garden. My little glove nods and says she understands. So I set her in the garden and tell her to go do it. But she just lies there, and nothing happens.

Then I think maybe a good book on gardening will help. So I go down to my favorite bookstore, The Tattered Cover, and ask an expert to give me the best book on gardening. I bring it home and have her read it daily for weeks on end. Her knowledge of gardening is growing immensely. When I think she is ready, I put her in the garden again. But still, she can't seem to do it.

Hmmm. . . What about some positive reinforcement? Maybe I just need to explain the joys of gardening and motivate her to action. She seems to be very excited, and she's motivated to try harder to please me. But still, when she goes into the garden, she can't seem to do the job.

OK, maybe it's time for some tough love! Maybe it is time to explain to her that if she doesn't garden right, she will be sent to glove hell. My little glove is duly afraid, and tries even harder in order to avoid possible punishment. But she still can't garden!

That was hardly a success. Maybe a week-long gardening seminar will be the answer. Maybe she needs more concentrated attention on the subject, with all the principles of gardening presented in one week. So I send her to the best seminar I can find, welcome her home, and send her to the garden with great hope. But she still can't garden!

I'm nearing my wit's end. What about consistent weekly gardening meetings with gardening songs, announcements, and good speeches on gardening? I take her to a meeting. But still the little glove comes home limp and useless.

Aha! This surely will do it! I enroll her in an accountability group with other gardeners who "hold her feet (or her cute little fingers!) to the fire." It gets off to a promising start, but in the end, she still fails as a gardener.

All right then. What about a small group meeting of good gardeners to encourage her? At least she can see good examples of a garden at their homes and have a few good role models. She gets excited for a while, but again she fails.

Finally, I try the last hope: "Gardeners Anonymous." Her failure is so acute that it's time for her to confess and try again.

But this, too, fails! She still can't seem to be a good gardener.

Then one day, I decide that since I know how to garden, I will put my glove on my hand and do it myself. It works! On my hand, my glove responds as an excellent gardener. She has the strength of my arm. She has the knowledge of my mind. He has the motivation of my heart. She has my life. She has everything she needs to be a good gardener, because I am in her!

And so it is with us. We can't live, love, or walk like Jesus. In fact, Jesus says, *Apart from me you can do nothing* (John 15:5). He knows we are helpless to live supernaturally without Him. So He says we can invite Him to take up residence in us and be our life. Now we can have His strength, mind, heart, and life. We are in Him.

Paraphrased from *Living at His Place* by Jim May

Day 1 – Leaving the Past Behind

Read Romans 5:20–6:10 and respond below:

1. Describe in your own words the reasoning of the apostle Paul in Romans 6:1-4.

2. How does Paul’s reasoning relate to his logic as expressed in Romans 5:20–21? Do you see a connection?

3. In what ways is it easy to take God’s grace for granted?

Read Romans 6:5–6:10. In our union with Christ through His Spirit, something like His death and Resurrection has taken place within us. Because of our separation from God as Adam's descendants, we were formerly enslaved to sin with no possibility of pleasing God. But now in Christ our old hearts have been removed. We have been given new hearts, with a new capability to depend on and obey God. This is called *newness of life*.

4. How does it impact your attitude toward your present and your future to realize that the power of sin in your life has been broken?



5. When the power of sin over you is broken, you are a newly sanctified person. In what ways is sanctification an ongoing process and not a onetime event?

Have you worked outside the home? If you have, think of a job you had in the past. When you left that job, you no longer received the same benefits as the people who still worked there. In addition, you no longer had your old boss as your authority. Your old working relationship was, in effect, “dead.” If you took a new position elsewhere, you had a new boss, new benefits, and a new contract.

This illustration offers just a limited human model of our new relationship with our new Master. Think of it this way:



You have a New Covenant and a new Master with all the privileges and benefits thereunto appertaining, and you cannot be fired. That's security!

The problem comes when we go back to our old employer (sin, Satan), and try to reap the benefits. He doesn't tell us we are no longer employed — in reality, enslaved—and that we now belong to Christ. No, he tries to have authority over us by making our lives miserable.

Therefore choose to serve your new Master, Jesus Christ. He is the one who has bought (redeemed) you and raised you in newness of life.

6. Why do we tend to go back to our old employer? What bogus benefits do we gain from it? What fears keep us tied to our old master?

Besides the death of our old relationship with sin, something like Jesus' Resurrection also took place within us through our union with Christ. That is, we have been given a new life and power through the Holy Spirit.

Think back to that gardening glove. In its hand is a root. The root is Christ and the newness of life He brings. That root is the foundation of all that BLC stands for. It is the Exchanged Life—a name that embodies a concept so important that we chose it as the name of this module.

The starting point for our two-year journey already begun is the recognition that we have exchanged our old lives for new lives over which Christ reigns. Every module after this will require that you draw on the Resurrection power of Christ to live a dependent life. In and of ourselves, we are weak, but in this weakness God's strength is revealed through the Resurrection life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

7. Summarize in your own words the truths contained in Romans 6:1-10. What is so important about them?

Day 2 – The Decision is Ours

... Make every effort to add to your faith goodness.—2 Peter 1:5

We do have to do something. The instructive word *add* contains expected action on our part. We must not forget that we cannot do what God does, and that God will not do what we can do.

We cannot save or sanctify ourselves—God does that. He gives us newness of life through grace and not the work that we do to earn it. But God will not force us to walk correctly before Him. We must *work out our own salvation*—not earn it, but flesh out day by day the work He has accomplished in us (Philippians 2:12). In this sense the word *add* means that we must get into the habit of doing things, and in the initial stages that is difficult.

To take the initiative is to make a beginning—to instruct yourself in the way you must go.

Beware of the tendency to ask the way when you already know what it is. Take the initiative—don't hesitate—take the first step. Determine to act immediately in faith on God's leading, and be strong of purpose. If you hesitate when God leads you to do something, you are spurning the grace in which you stand. Take the initiative yourself, make a decision of your will right now, and do not allow yourself to go back.

Burn your bridges of doubt and hesitation behind you. Resolve, "I will write that letter," or "I will pay that debt." And then do it! Make your decision irrevocable.

When you cultivate the habit of carefully listening to God about everything, finding out what He is leading you to do, and then doing it, something remarkable will happen. That blessed day will come when a crisis arises and you find yourself turning instinctively to God. You'll know then that the habit of working out your salvation has been formed in you.

It starts now. We have to take the initiative **where we are**, not where we have not yet been.

Read Romans 6:11-14.

1. What is the decision we need to make according to verse 11?

2. What proactive actions do we need to take when we count ourselves alive to God? See verses 12-13.

3. Describe the role of human **choice** in living the Exchanged Life.

4. How does obedience fit in?

5. See John 14:15, 21. How is **affection** for God interrelated with both obedience and choice?

6. What parts of your body have you explicitly offered to God, and what parts have never been offered to God? Take time now to offer your whole life and body to Jesus. How does this action please God?

7. What does the change of ownership, according to Romans 6:14, mean to you in relation to your physical body?

Read Romans 6:15-18.

8. Why should we not take for granted the grace of God while pursuing our sinful desires?

9. What contrasting pictures does the apostle Paul present in verse 16 as an argument in favor of taking a proactive stance against sin?

10. What triggered the release of the Romans from the slavery of sin and freed them to righteousness (v 17)?

11. The “self life” does not die easily. Write some thoughts that you can share with your sisters in Christ about the areas where you find it especially hard.

12. What specific act or acts of obedience can you do each day to establish the habit of listening to God?

Day 3 – The Identity that Leads to a Victorious Life

Read Romans 6:19-23.

1. What does Paul contrast in verses 20-22?

2. What, according to verses 22 and 23, are the benefits and gifts of our union with Christ?

3. Do you remember what your attitude was like when you were a slave to sin? Describe some elements of it as a reminder.

4. What is it like to have changed ownership and become a slave to righteousness?

5. Look back over Romans Chapter 6 and record five basic truths about God, Jesus, sin, or humanity that you notice in the book along with their reference: (Example: All have sinned.—6:23)

➤ _____
➤ _____
➤ _____
➤ _____
➤ _____

6. How will the Holy Spirit empower you to choose to walk in righteousness?

Day 4 – Scripture Memory

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.
—Romans 8:28

1. What is the context surrounding this verse?

2. What words or thoughts stand out as you study this verse?

3. What do you think the verse means?

4. What is the application of this verse in your life?

5. Having practiced the verse, write it out from memory.

PRACTICE WORKSHEET

Practice with Romans 8:28

Thank God for being in control.



TRUST the outcome.



Ask the SPIRIT for power.



CHOOSE to obey/embrace.



Affirm that you BELIEVE the TRUTH

Affirm your AFFECTION for Jesus.





Write the Biblical TRUTH you want to obey and/or embrace.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.
-Romans 8:28



The One Thing

Not 101 things, not 55 things, not even a few things. . .as you look back over the Home Study and the book we read this week, what is the one thing that was most significant to you from your personal study?

Why do you think that one thing was particularly important to you?

What will you do in the power of the Holy Spirit about this one thing?

The Christian faith is meant to be lived moment by moment. It isn't some broad, general outline—it's a long walk with a real Person. Details count: passing thoughts, small sacrifices, a few encouraging words, little acts of kindness, brief victories over nagging sins.

—Joni Eareckson Tada, 2003

LEADER'S GUIDE

Buried and Raised with Jesus

Week 5

KICKOFF

(15 minutes)

Opening Prayer: Have a member of the group open in prayer, asking that God would make Himself known today.

Group: Have everyone recite the new memory verse. Have two or three women recite a verse from past weeks. Have prayer partners check each other's progress with the Home Study, new memory verse (Romans 8:28), and Quiet Times.

TODAY'S TAKEAWAY

We can choose by the power of the Spirit to live out what Christ accomplished by His death and resurrection.

MAIN POINTS

1. We died with Christ and rose with Him.
2. We must choose to walk in righteousness by the power of the Spirit and not walk in our old sinfulness.
3. In the process of sanctification we will not always choose to walk in the Spirit.
4. Our identity in Christ is TRUTH. Believe it, and live out who you are by His Spirit.

REFLECTIONS ON HOME STUDY

(40-45 minutes)

Group Discussion Questions

1. SISTERS, NEXT WEEK, DAY 2, QUESTION #8: THERE IS NEEDED WORK THAT I WANT YOU TO REALLY TAKE SERIOUSLY. HAVE THEM TURN TO THAT PAGE. THIS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.
2. Review questions on Romans 6:1-10 from the Home Study to discuss what it means to be dead to sin and alive to righteousness.
3. In BLC, we call this way of living the "Exchanged Life." Describe what this might look like at home or in the marketplace. How would the glove example fit in?
4. In Romans 6:11-14, Paul uses accounting terminology (count) to describe what has happened with us in Christ. Why is it so important for us to have a role in living the Christian life? How does this relate to John 14:15, 21?
5. Have some person share where she is in the process in questions 4 and 5 on Day 1. Leaders, set the pace by sharing first.

The Exchanged Life

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5:10

6. Discuss the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life.
7. Discuss the other questions from Day 2 on Romans 6:11-14.
8. Discuss the other verses remaining in Romans 6.

REVIEW THE READING

(40-45 minutes)

Discuss the questions in the back of the book for this week's chapter.

EMPOWERING PRAYER

(20 minutes)

Remember to keep the prayers focused on the women in your group and their issues. Don't let this prayer time become an intercessory prayer time for a general audience. Instead of just asking for prayer requests, ask the question in different ways: What are some areas that are challenging you in your daily lives? Where are you sensing anxiety in your life?