

Sonship

Set Free to Grow Up

October 4, 2026



Today we're learning how to suck it up and sink it down and grow up as God's sons.

Is sin dead to you? Or do you stay in touch – keeping it only mostly dead – checking in every now and then to make sure it's doing okay? I sure hope not.



For if you *live* according to the *sinful* nature, you *will* die; but if by the *Spirit* you put *to death* the misdeeds of the body, you will *live*, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [Men who aren't, aren't; and women who are; are] For you did *not* receive a *spirit* that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of Sonship. – Romans 8:13-15 NIV

I loved Noah's *sinking-ship* analogy. That's the *slave ship* (leading to death) on the left, and the *Sonship* (leading to life) on the right. And that *guy's* getting *baptized*! But once we *abandon* the *slave ship* for the *Spirit of Sonship*, and get on board with the Lord, **we gotta get our ships in shape.**

For our **citizenship** is [now] in *heaven* – Philippians 3:20 NKJ

Do you not know that **friendship** with the *world* is *hostility* toward *God*? – James 4:4 NAS

And truly our **fellowship** is with the *Father* and with His *Son* Jesus Christ. – 1 John 1:3 NKJ

For we are His **workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for *good works* – Ephesians 2:10 NKJ

You therefore *must* endure **hardship** as a *good soldier* of Jesus Christ. – 2 Timothy 2:3 NKJ

Because of your **partnership** in the Gospel [lit. Good News] – Philippians 1:5 NIV



Which *begins* with facing the *bad news*. **Both ships are sinking.** Clock's ticking. The **Titanic took 160 minutes to sink** into its icy grave. As an analogy for an **80-year lifespan**, that's *two minutes* per year. And since I'm 64, I had ChatGPT depict my 128-minute Titanic condition. That's me. Chat said, "It'd still look surprisingly ship-like, but the situation is deteriorating quickly ... and lifeboat operation is entering its desperate final stage." Yep. So, **bad news is, the rescue ship is also sinking. But the good news is, it's a submarine!** So, thank you Jesus for that Sonship!

For you are *all sons* of God through *faith in* Christ Jesus. For *as many* of you as were *baptized into* Christ [like a submarine] have put on Christ. [Like a life ring! And it's not exactly women and children first, cuz He's saving all His children, and] ... There is neither *male* nor *female*; for you are *all one* [Son] in [the body of] Christ ... and [therefore] heirs – Galatians 3:26-29 NKJ

You see, **only the sons could be heirs in Jesus' day**. So, He does the *unimaginable*. By calling His daughters "sons" **He grants all female believers equal rights, status, and standing as His heirs**.

And because you are **[all, equally considered as]** sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts ... Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. – Galatians 4:6-7 NKJ

Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. – Romans 6:18 NKJ

I *thought* we became sons. So *what* are you saying, Paul – **are we sons or slaves?**



What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the *whole* estate. ... But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son ... that we might receive the full rights of sons. ... So you are no longer a slave, [of sin] but a son [of God] – Galatians 4:1-7 NIV

Don't you *realize* that whatever you choose to obey becomes your *master*? You can choose *sin*, which *leads to death*, or you can *choose to obey God* – Romans 6:16-17 NLT

But, as Bob Dylan sang: **Gotta Serve Somebody**. Cuz, as with kids, **self-rule isn't an option, it's a delusion**. Which is why **Jesus died to free us from our suicidal dependency on sin**. Jesus never presents freedom as having *no master*. **He presents freedom as changing masters**. It's not: "No one tells me what to do!" It's all about **being delivered from a butcher to belong to a Savior**.

"I tell you the truth, *everyone* who *sins* is a slave to *sin*." – John 8:34 NIV

Enslaved **[by obedience]** to various *lusts* and *pleasures* – Titus 3:3 NAS

Enslaved by **[obedience to]** this *world's system* – Galatians 4:3 CEB

Slaves to *impurity* and to *ever-increasing wickedness* – Romans 6:19 NIV

[And therefore] Slaves to the *fear of dying*. – Hebrews 2:15 NLT

But *now* that you have been set free from sin **[as sons]** and have become slaves to God, **[as little children]** the *benefit* you reap [by sowing and growing] leads to holiness, and the *result* is **[the full inheritance of]** eternal life. – Romans 6:22 NIV

So, if *infant heirs* are those who *simply obey* God's commands like a slave, **how do we grow up?**

We will *speak* the truth in love. **[And by]** So **[doing]** we will grow up in every way to become the **[mature]** body of Christ. ... *Under the control of Christ* – Ephesians 4:15-16 NIR

[Because] A *tiny rudder* makes a *huge ship* turn ... even though the *winds* are *strong*. So *also*, the *tongue* is a *small thing*, but what enormous *damage* it can *do*. – James 3:4-5 NLT

[So] We will *no longer be babies* in the *faith* ... like ships tossed around by the waves ... *blown here and there* ... **[but]** we will speak the truth in love. – Ephesians 4:13-15 NIR

But to *speak* it and *mean* it, we gotta *know* it. And **to know it, we gotta receive it and own it**.

[So] “Let *all* My words sink deep into your own heart” [says the Lord] – Ezekiel 3:10 NLT

Because, **your ship will be tossed by waves of emotion till His Word sinks deep in your heart.** In other words, in order to live in the Spirit of Sonship, we must choose to die to self-worship.

For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit [of truth (Jn 14:17) and power and love (2 Tim 1:7), and grace (Heb 10:29) and wisdom (Eph 1:17) and life (Rom 8:2)] you put to death the misdeeds ... you will live – Romans 8:13 NIV



Dead is a funny word. A jury can be dead locked; a lock can have a dead bolt; and a bolt can be dead weight ... to a dead-beat. And **God's workmanship can come to a dead stop**, in a dead calm, in dead silence; **unless we're dead set on responding when He tugs at our heart** and bumps us dead center, so we're left not dead in the water.

His Spirit doesn't merely ride along with us; **He comes beside us and moves us by nudging us.**

[So] Woe to those who tug at guilt with cords of perversity ... who call evil good, and good evil, who change darkness into light, and light into darkness – Isaiah 5:18-20 NAB

The bonds of death encircled me; the currents of destruction tugged at me ... [But] [I called to] God for help. ... [And] He lifted me from the raging waters. – Psalm 18:4-16 VOICE

The waves grew quiet, and He led them to the harbor they desired. – Psalm 107:30 NET

How shall we who died to sin [when He died for sin] still live in [sin]? [Ongoing, unrepentant wrongdoing] ... Our old self was crucified with Him ... so that we would no longer [choose to] be [obedient] slaves to sin; for [only] he who has died [to sin] is freed from sin. – Romans 6:1-7 NAS

What's it mean to die to sin? Being free from sin can't mean we're free of sin, because:

If we claim to be without sin, we [continue to] deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. [But] If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and [then have the freedom to begin to] purify us from all unrighteousness. – 1 John 1:8-9 NIV



When we say, **“You're dead to me,”** it means we're cutting off all contact. Being dead to sin is like that. **When you die to sin, sin is dead to you.** You want nothing to do with it anymore. But, like a crazy ex, it'll still harass you, and call you, and pull you back in for a bit. But **you both know the relationship is over.** Cuz you've cut ties. Paul says:

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; [death by suicidal self-destruction] but those who live in accordance with the Spirit [of life] have their minds [dead] set on what the Spirit [of Sonship] desires. – Romans 8:5 NIV

Because, **dead to sin doesn't mean dead to temptation.** We've been set free to break free from the lure of temptation. **Jesus didn't die to take away our free-will.** So, expect your crazy-ex sin nature to keep showing up. But growing up and becoming like Christ is very becoming worship.

[So] Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in *slavery* to *impurity* ... *now* offer them in *slavery* to righteousness leading to holiness. – Romans 6:19 NIV



But, **don't expect victory if you don't want victory.** Because, to the *degree* we withhold *total submission* to God's Spirit, we remain *enslaved* to the *command* and *control* of *sin*.



They're both like power steering. It feels like we're in control, *till* it goes out. Then you *realize* how much *power* one had over you, and the *other* gives to you. **But neither power comes absent our choice and actions.**



Our problem is, we want God to *magically liposuction* our *sin* – **suck it out with minor pain and no exertion.** But He won't. And He *don't*. Because **He doesn't enable laziness, He empowers holiness.** Sure, He *forgives sin* faster than you can say *lipo*! But then we're called to **suck it up as living sacrifices and assist our Great Physician,** who *portrays* Himself *more* as a *physical therapist* and *personal trainer* than a mere *miracle worker*.



Liposuction makes us *look better*, but it doesn't make us *stronger* or *self-controller*. That comes through *healthy habits*, *hard work*, and *training*.

For *sin* shall *not* be your *master*, [that's not a *command*, it's a *promise*!] because you are not under law, but under grace. – Romans 6:14 NIV

Know the *difference*? Under *law* means **God's approval is a wage I earn by following rules** – simply *settling* for *obeying* Him like a *small child* or a *slave*. Under *grace* means **God's approval is a gift I receive and gladly grow into.** And you *definitely* want the *grace*, because:

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ – Romans 6:23 NIV

Two masters. One pays wages. One gives gifts. Wages we earn. Gifts we receive. But, hey:

Shall we *sin* because we are *not* under *law* but under *grace*? – Romans 6:15 NIV

Seeing grace as a license to sin means you're still enslaved to a master manipulator. To use *grace* as an *excuse* to *sin* makes your *deliverance* from the *slave ship* *impossible*. Because, bit by bit and bump by bump, **grace sets us free from sin's desire, by drawing us to the One who treasures us.** Which *causes* us to *treasure* Him. Which *causes* *sin* – that which *harms ourselves* and *others*, and *dishonors* Him – to become less and less *attractive* as His Word *sinks down* and we *grow up*.

[So] Count yourselves *dead* to *sin* but *alive* to God in Christ Jesus. ... [Offer yourselves] as those who have been brought from *death* to *life*; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of *righteousness*. For *sin* shall *not* be your *master* – Romans 6:3-14 NIV

Because, **true faith in Christ is a matter of desire, not willpower.** Because the *strength* of *grace* – *knowing* I was *given* the Spirit of Sonship as a *sinner* – will *easily*, *eventually* *break* the *back* of *guilt* and *shame* and *despair* and *death itself*. And of *that* we can be *dead certain*!

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.