

Small group optional guide: Romans series: How you fight and how you win

UP; we grow in our love for Jesus through the word & worship

WORD: Romans 6:12-23 How you fight and how you win

Paul moves us from what God has done for us in Christ (justification) to how that transforms how we live (sanctification). Many of us know the joy of confession and forgiveness, yet find ourselves returning to the same sins. Grace feels powerful on Sunday, but the fight resurfaces on Monday. Romans 6:12–23 is not theory; it shows us how Christians actually fight sin—and how we actually win.

The central truth of this passage is simple but confronting:

You don't defeat sin by willpower, but by changing masters and learning to live for your new master.

1. The Hope That Makes Fighting Possible: Before Paul gives commands, he gives hope. Without hope, commands crush us. Paul's vision of the Christian life is shaped by a coming reality where sin, death, and pain are gone, and God dwells fully with His people (Revelation 21). That future reshapes how we live now. When our hearts are anchored in what God is making new, sin loses its controlling power. We begin to ask honest questions: What would my life look like if these desires no longer ruled my decisions? Hope-filled vision fuels present obedience.

2. A Change of Masters, not a Change of Preferences: Paul frames the Christian life using the image of slavery and mastery. The issue is not whether we serve, but whom we serve. "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body" (Romans 6:12).

Sin is pictured as a rival master—an impersonator—seeking to reclaim authority it once held. "...so that you obey its desires" (v.12).

Desires act like internal servants, urging us toward obedience. Slavery is re-established incrementally through small acts of compliance.

"Present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life" (v.13). God is the rightful master. Christians do not belong to themselves; they belong to the One who raised them from the dead.

"For sin shall not be your master... but under grace" (v.14).

This is the foundation of victory. Grace does not excuse sin; it breaks sin's authority. Becoming a Christian is not like switching football teams. It is a change of ownership, a new household, a new allegiance. We once lived for sin; now we live for God with heart, soul, mind, and strength.

3. Fruit Reveals the True Master: Paul asks a piercing question: "What fruit were you getting at that time?" (v.21). Not "Did it feel good?" but "What did it produce?" Sin always overpromises and underdelivers. Whether lust, greed, gossip...

(...continued) or dishonesty, false masters promise freedom but produce shame, emptiness, and death.

By contrast: "The fruit you get leads to sanctification, and its end, eternal life" (v.22). Fruit tells the truth about who we are serving.

4. How We Actually Fight and Win: Paul gives a gospel-shaped strategy, not a self-help plan. Christ died for your sin (Romans 5:8–9), You died and rose with Christ (Romans 6:6), You are united with Christ (Romans 6:5).

Victory begins with what God has done, not what we resolve to do. "Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God" (v.11). This is not pretending—it is aligning our thinking with reality.

Only then do we learn to say no. Resistance flows from belonging. Saying no to sin is not grim grit; it is joyful allegiance to a better Master.

Discussion Questions:

Q) Where do you most feel the temptation to rely on willpower rather than living out of your identity as someone who belongs to Christ?

Q) How might God be leading you away from temptation before you face it?

Q) Paul says sin no longer has the right to rule, yet it still seeks to "reign." What does that look like practically in everyday decisions and habits?

Worship songs from Sunday:

King of kings / All hail king Jesus / Yet not I but through Christ in me / I surrender / No longer slaves

IN; we connect and learn to love one another

After discussing the questions what do you feel has to change? How will we take the ground back that we realise we have given to our old master? How can we encourage each other to keep taking ground back in our lives?

OUT; we reach out to show people outside of JCC that God loves them

After discussing the questions what do you feel As this half term comes to an end what will we plan to do in the run up to Easter to reach those around us with the love of Jesus? Ask the Spirit, pick one, pick a date and delegate leadership.

- Are there opportunities to arrange a couple of socials we could invite friends to?
- Is there a litter pick we could plan?
- Are there shops or local services around us that we could go, take flowers and chocolates and encouragement to?