

# Romans 6:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law,  
but under grace? God forbid.

## Analysis

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**What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid**—ti oun? hamartēsōmen hoti ouk esmen hypo nomon alla hypo charin? mē genoito (τί οὖν; ἀμαρτήσωμεν ὅτι οὐκ ἐσμὲν ὑπὸ νόμου ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν; μὴ γένοιτο). Paul anticipates a second antinomian objection, similar to v. 1 but focused specifically on freedom from law. The aorist subjunctive hamartēsōmen (ἀμαρτήσωμεν, shall we sin?) might suggest isolated acts rather than habitual lifestyle (v. 1's present tense implied continuous sinning). Either way, Paul's answer is the same emphatic negation: mē genoito (μὴ γένοιτο, "God forbid, may it never be!").

The objection reveals misunderstanding: if law-restraint is removed, won't sin increase? Paul's answer (vv. 16-23) shows that freedom from law doesn't mean moral autonomy but slavery transfer: from serving sin to serving righteousness. The question itself is absurd for those who understand grace: grace isn't merely forgiveness but transforming power. Those truly under grace cannot blithely continue in sin because grace changes the heart, producing love for God and hatred of sin. Freedom from law's condemnation brings Spirit-empowered freedom from sin's domination.

## Historical Context

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Paul likely faced this accusation regularly (Romans 3:8 confirms critics misrepresented his teaching). The charge that grace promotes licentiousness has

persisted throughout church history, often arising when the gospel is preached clearly. Jewish critics saw Paul's law-free gospel as undermining moral foundations. The tension between law and grace was central to first-century Jewish-Christian debate. Paul navigates carefully: affirming law's goodness while declaring its inability to produce righteousness, and proclaiming grace's power not only to forgive but to transform.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How would you explain to someone who claims 'freedom from law leads to lawlessness' that grace actually produces holiness?
2. In what areas might you be tempted to presume on grace—treating it as license rather than transforming power?
3. What evidence in your life demonstrates that you're 'under grace' and not under sin's dominion?

## Interlinear Text

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Tí	οὐν	ἀμαρτήσομεν,	ὅτι	οὐκ	ἐσμὲν	ὑπὸ	νόμον
What	then	shall we sin	because	not	we are	under	the law
G5101	G3767	G264	G3754	G3756	G2070	G5259	G3551
ἀλλ'	ὑπὸ	χάριν	μὴ	γένοιτο			
but	under	grace	God forbid		G1096		
G235	G5259	G5485	G3361				

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Corinthians 7:1** (References God): Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

**Jude 1:4** (Grace): For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

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