

“The Power Source” (Romans 8:1–17)

At the close of World War II, two pictures appeared in a magazine showing a soldier in conflict with a tank. The first showed a huge tank bearing down on a tiny soldier about to crush him. The picture was proportioned to show the odds involved when a foot soldier with a rifle faced a tank. The next picture showed what happened to that soldier's odds with a bazooka or rocket launcher in his hands. This time the tank appeared to be shrunken in size and the soldier at least equal in size, if not a little larger.

Without the power of God released in our lives, when in conflict with sin, we are like an infantry soldier in the presence of a tank. We cannot do a thing. But when we rely upon the Holy Spirit we have the greatest weapon at our disposal.¹

Romans chapter 8 is the greatest chapter in the Bible dealing with the Holy Spirit and the spiritual life. In the previous section (7:7–25), Paul vented his frustration with sin. Now in this new section, he expresses his confidence of victory because of the Holy Spirit. Named only three times before now,² the Holy Spirit is mentioned eighteen times in chapter 8. The theme of this chapter can be found in verse 37: We are “more than conquerors.” In Romans 8:1–17, Paul will exhort us to live out the conquering life by plugging into our power source. This power source, the Holy Spirit, can enable and empower us to experience three victories. The first victory is found in 8:1–4.

1. We can live above the Law (8:1–4). This section speaks of freedom. This passage begins in 8:1 with a foundational principle. This verse is considered by many to be the jewel of the entire Bible. So let's look at it carefully. The word “**Therefore**”³ looks back to Paul's struggle in chapter 7 and his thankful shout in 7:25. Paul now depicts the freedom of living in the Spirit. This verse speaks of the fact that we are no longer under the sentence of the Law, but empowered by the Spirit to live for Christ. The word translated “**condemnation**” (⁴) literally means “the punishment following a sentence.”⁵ Although this verse is often related to justification, it is better understood to relate to sanctification. It is important to note that this section no longer describes Christ's work for us (3:21–4:25), but the Spirit's work within us. Paul already made a similar point with regard to justification in 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” In this context, the word “condemnation” pictures the anguish of a life that desires God's will but is dominated by sinful power. Paul is saying that believers redeemed from the guilt of sin are no longer doomed to a life of bondage to it.

And notice two other things: (1) Paul writes that the believer is free from condemnation “**now**.” He does not have to wait until death or future glorification to have freedom from slavery to sin. (2) Paul also places the word translated “**no**”⁶ in the emphatic first slot of this great sentence. Paul does this to make the point that God will never, ever bring condemnation against us. Paul doesn't say there is no failure for those who are in Christ Jesus, or no fault, or no inconsistency, or no need for discipline. But he does say that there is no condemnation.

This means that God will not reject us. If we get caught up in the struggle with sin and find ourselves doing the very thing we don't want to do, God doesn't respond by kicking us out of His family. You don't reject your children when they misbehave, even consistently, over a long period of time, so why should you think God does it with His?

The reason that these realities are even possible is because we are now “in Christ Jesus.” This phrase occurs in each of Paul's thirteen epistles.⁷ It expresses the union the believer experiences with Christ when he is justified. We are now one with Jesus.

Paul begins 8:2 and 3 with the word **“For.”** The word “for” now explains why there is “no condemnation.” In this verse, Paul talks about two different laws. A law is a set pattern of how things happen; it is a rule. The law of gravity deems that a heavy slab of concrete will remain where it is placed. Thus, sidewalks stay in place. But we all have seen a sidewalk that is heaved up and twisted because once a small acorn fell between the slabs of the sidewalk and now has grown into a massive oak tree whose roots are powerful enough to move great weights.⁸ That is what is meant by the triumph of one law over another.

Or how about another example: When you stand beside a 747 jet on the runway, its massive weight and size makes it seem incapable of breaking the holds of gravity. But when the power of its engines combines with the laws of aerodynamics, the plane is able to lift itself to 35,000 feet and travel at 600 miles per hour. Gravity is still pulling on the plane, but as long as it obeys the laws of aerodynamics, it can break free from the bonds of earth.

What does all of this mean? It means we are no longer condemned because, through God’s provision, **“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”** Please notice this is an accomplished fact. Paul writes that the Holy Spirit **“has set [us] free”** from the law of sin and death. Although the law of sin and of death is certainly powerful, God is all-powerful.

8:2 mentions two laws. Illustration: the law of gravity and the law of aerodynamics. The law of gravity says that a large, heavy metal object in the sky must fall to the earth and crash (the airplane must crash!). But the law of aerodynamics is a higher law and overcomes the law of gravity and enables the heavy metal airplane to soar and fly and not crash. By the law of sin and death I fail and fall and crash (7:23-25) but by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus I am able to live a life that pleases God (8:2).⁹

In 8:3 Paul gives another reason why we are not condemned: “For what the Law could not do, weak¹⁰ as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned¹¹ sin in the flesh.” We are not condemned because Christ’s death not only delivered us from condemnation; it also delivered sin to condemnation. Jesus Christ was God manifested in human flesh. At the birth of our Lord, sinless humanity was added to His perfect deity. He was not sinful in His nature or deeds, but having taken on our sins, He must be described as being “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” Paul’s words are carefully chosen to maintain the sinlessness of our Lord who came in the flesh, and yet to reflect the fact that He took our sins upon Himself.

Notice how carefully Paul states these things. If he had said it in just a slightly different way it would have resulted in heresy (false teaching on the person of Christ). He did not say “in the likeness of flesh” because this would be saying that Christ was not really a man. Christ truly did come in the flesh and was a real Man (1 John 4:2-3). Paul did not say “in sinful flesh” because this would have made Christ a sinner! What is Paul saying? He is declaring that Christ was truly a man but not a sinful man!¹²

In 8:4 Paul cuts to the chase and tells us how we can live above the Law. Notice the purpose clause: **“So that the requirement¹³ of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”** Please notice “the requirement of the Law” may be fulfilled in us when we walk “according to the Spirit.” The “requirement of the Law” is singular—to love the Lord your God. . .and to love your neighbor as yourself.¹⁴ This has been perfectly and completely fulfilled in Christ. And since we are “in Christ,” the Law is fulfilled in us. Notice the Law is NOT fulfilled “by us” but “in us.” It is fulfilled in us through the work of Christ, referred to in verse 3. However, Paul is saying that the life of Jesus can be lived out in us because we are now indwelt with the Holy Spirit. This means that the Spirit empowers and enables us to obey the Law as we deny the flesh and “walk according to the Spirit.”

How can I fulfill what the law requires? How can I keep the law? The Person and Power of the Holy Spirit makes this possible. Note carefully that the verse does not say "**by us**", it says "**in us**"! This is something God does **IN ME** by His power and by His Working and by His Spirit!

Chapter 8:1–4 is critical to our understanding of the Christian life. It tells us that we are free in Christ. We can have confidence and assurance in Christ. There is a principle in law called double jeopardy which states that you can't be tried twice for the same crime. This law also applies in the spiritual realm. Jesus has already paid for your crime. He was condemned, sentenced, and put to death for your sin. And He rose from the dead to prove that His sacrifice was all-sufficient. So don't let Satan try you again. You have already been convicted, but Christ has satisfied the demands of a holy God. So now you and I are to walk in newness of life.

[Not only can we live above the Law, Paul informs us in 8:5–11 that . . .]

2. We can live beyond the flesh (8:5–11). This section speaks of fruitfulness. There seems to be a distinction between those who "walk according to the flesh" (which includes Christians), and those who "are according to the flesh" or are "in the flesh." The first category has to do with the way people live; the second category has to do with who people are. Verses 5–8, therefore, describe the unbeliever (though a Christian can live like an unbeliever). Verses 9–11 describe the believer.

In 8:5–8, Paul explains why it is impossible to please God by means of the flesh. In 8:5, Paul speaks about two different mindsets: one, "according to the flesh," the other "according to the Spirit." The concept of "setting [one's] mind"¹⁵ includes a person's will, thoughts, and emotions. It also includes assumptions, values, desires, and purposes. Setting the mind means being oriented to, or governed by, those things on which we focus.

Paul continues his contrast with this principle in 8:6: "**For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.**" The mind set on the flesh promotes sin and death; the mind set on the Spirit promotes the very opposite ("life and peace"). In this context, "life" cannot be physical life because all men have that. It cannot be the new life in Christ because all believers have that, by way of the new man. So it must be something that all believers have the potential for, but not all believers experience the reality of, and that is the spiritual life or that which comes from the new nature, which is empowered by the Holy Spirit, through faith. In this context, the term "peace" has the sense of wholeness and harmony. "Death," then is the opposite of "life and peace." It is a failure to experience the life and peace God intends.

In 8:7–8, Paul tells us two crucial truths about the flesh: (1) "**The flesh is hostile toward God.**" (2) **The flesh is powerless: "...it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**" Apart from the powerful work of the Spirit, the unbeliever or the believer who walks according to the flesh is in for a fruitless existence.

However, there is good news. Verses 9–11 explain why it is possible to please God by means of His Spirit. Three times in these three verses, Paul stresses the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Verse 9 informs us of the good news that we are not "**in the flesh but in the Spirit.**" We belong to Christ! Paul makes it crystal clear in 8:9 that if a person is without the Spirit he/she is not a Christian. In verse 10, the first word "**if**"¹⁶ is better translated "**since.**" "**Since Christ is in us, even though our body is dead because of sin...the spirit is alive because of righteousness.**"

"Ye" is emphatic ("YE" in contrast to those who are in the flesh). You (plural) are not in the flesh! You can please God!

In 8:11, Paul writes, **"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."** We can live a powerful, resurrected life. As the context shows, this resurrected life refers to a present resurrection. So great is the power of God's Spirit within us that He is able to overcome the spiritual "deadness" of our bodies so that we may live to God as those who are alive from the dead and can yield the members of our physical bodies to God, as instruments of righteousness.¹⁷ What an amazing truth! The same Spirit who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead dwells in us. And by His mighty power He can make our poor mortal bodies vessels for the expression of divine, supernatural life. Paul is saying what the Lord Jesus Christ acquired by His death, burial, and resurrection; the Holy Spirit applies through His indwelling ministry in the life of the Christian. What Christ has won for us positionally, the Holy Spirit works in us practically.

The sinful flesh operates like a jack-in-the-box with a suppressed spring. Anytime the spring is not suppressed, the toy figure pops out. And anytime Christians fail to depend upon the Spirit to keep the flesh suppressed, the flesh with its sinful deeds pops out. A Christian cannot through self-efforts suppress this in principle any more than he through self-effort can suppress a physical spring requiring a million pounds of pressure. One of the main purposes of the indwelling Spirit is to do the humanly impossible task for us—to suppress the flesh and to express His fruit.¹⁸

So how can sin be "done away with" or better translated "rendered powerless"? Consider the effect of gravity on a book. Gravity would cause an unsupported book to fall, but gravity can be rendered powerless against the book by simply placing a table under it. As long as the table is under the book, gravity cannot cause it to fall. Of course gravity has not really lost its power nor is it no longer present. It is just that the table is "stronger" than gravity's effect on the book. For the Christian, the Holy Spirit is like that table and our flesh is like gravity's pull. As long as we allow the Holy Spirit to hold us up, which places our dependence on His power to give us victory over sin, our sinful impulses have no power to pull us down.

This past summer, Joshua (13) was mowing the lawn for our neighbors while they were at work. While he was dumping the grass in the back of their yard, he drove the lawnmower over a small tree and was stuck. He spent forty-five minutes trying to fix his problem. He even got a hatchet and tried to cut away the tree. Finally, he came back home and called Lori who was out running errands. Lori said, "Joshua, did you ask your dad to help you?" He replied, "No." He probably didn't think I could do anything because I'm not mechanically inclined. It's also possible he didn't want to bother me because I was studying. In either case, Joshua came up into my office and shared his dilemma with me. I then walked over to our neighbor's house and lifted the lawnmower up over the tree. Problem solved! Joshua needed strength outside of his own. He needed strength beyond his own. He received it from his dad.

[We have seen that we can live above the law (8:1–4) and beyond the flesh (8:5–11), now we need to see that . . .]

3. We can live around the throne (8:12–17). This section speaks of favor. In 8:12–17, Paul applies the principles he has just taught in 8:1–11. The application to Paul's teaching is given in 8:12. Verses 13–17 provide the support for the application. In 8:12, Paul writes, **"So then,¹⁹ brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh."** Paul uses the word "obligation"²⁰ to remind us that we are obligated to serve Christ on account of all that He has accomplished for us. Note that 8:13, 14, and 15 all begin with "for," indicating that they explain the reason for Paul's statement in 8:12.

In 8:13, Paul writes, **“for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”** In this context, death does not refer to physical death, because those who live according to the Spirit also die physically. It refers to the experience of those who live their lives apart from God. If we, as Christians, live according to the dictates of our physical nature, we will experience the “death” that is in our body (cf. 8:10). That is, we will be cut off spiritually from the fellowship of God and from any vital realization of the eternal life within us. On the other hand, if we choose to depend upon the Holy Spirit so that the “deeds of the body” are put to death, our experience will be life by the resurrecting power of the Holy Spirit Himself. This will involve fellowship with God and fruitfulness in life.

Paul writes in 8:14, **“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”** In this context, “being led by the Spirit of God”²¹ is parallel to “walking according to the Spirit.” Although every believer in Jesus is a “son” or “daughter,” those who “walk according to the Spirit” demonstrate their sonship. We could say that we are sons indeed as we walk with the Lord, being led by Him.

In 8:15–17, Paul concludes this section: **“For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”**

The doctrine of justification is the primary and fundamental blessing for the Christian; it is not the highest blessing, the blessing of adoption is. In justification, we are declared innocent of sin and righteous, through the work of Christ. In adoption, we are constituted sons of God. If justification makes us the servants of God, adoption makes us sons. Suppose that I was a ruthless criminal, standing guilty before a judge. It would be one thing for the judge to pay my bail and then pronounce me innocent in the eyes of the law. But it would be something far greater for the judge to make me his own son and take me home to be a part of his family. The Holy Spirit is the source of our sanctification in that He is the Spirit of adoption.

Most people misread Romans 8:16 as though it read, “The Spirit Himself bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God.” Actually the text says that He “bears witness with”²² our spirit.” The Holy Spirit bears witness along with our human spirit that we are children of God. But to whom does He bear witness? The answer is clear in the context. Verse 15 indicates that we (i.e., our human spirits) cry out, “Abba, Father.”²³ In other words, our witness is to God the Father. If the Spirit is bearing witness with our human spirits, then He, too, must bear witness to God the Father. This conclusion is confirmed by 8:26, which asserts that whenever we pray the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. Clearly, the Person to whom He is interceding for us is God the Father. God the Father is the One to whom our human spirits, and the Holy Spirit, bear witness.

The Holy Spirit’s witness does not occur constantly. Rather, it happens as we pray. Whenever our human spirits cry out to God saying, “Abba, Father,” the Holy Spirit witnesses to God the Father that we are indeed His children. To call God our Father is a way of reminding Him that we are His children. Whenever that greeting is true, that is whenever a genuine child of God is praying, the Holy Spirit confirms its validity.

A final truth about adoption is that it involves an inheritance. This can be seen in 8:17, where we are described as heirs. In the final portion of 8:17, Paul describes the future of those who persevere in the spiritual battles we fight this side of heaven. He calls them “fellow heirs”²⁴ or “co-heirs.”²⁵ Those who share in the sufferings of Christ will also share in His glory. While all of God’s children have an

inheritance based upon their relationship to God, only those who suffer with Christ will experience the full extent of glory.²⁶

All Christians are κληρονομοὶ θεοῦ~ simply by faith. However to be συγκληρονομοὶ (*co-heirs or joint-heirs with*) Christ, is conditioned (εἰπερ) upon believers suffering with Christ.⁵⁹ Contextually only the mature sons of God who live righteously as they are led by the Spirit (8:13-15) attain co-heirship *with Christ*.⁶⁰ Four details indicate that co-heirship with Christ (cf. 2 Tim 2:11-13) is conditioned upon suffering with Him. (1) Two different Greek terms distinguish the heirship (κληρονομοὶ) obtained upon believing in Christ from the co-heirship (συγκληρονομοὶ) earned by suffering for Christ. This distinction is further seen by the use of the συν compound verbs συμπασχομεν (*suffer with*) that believers may also be συνδοχασθωμεν (lit. “to share in glory with”; cf. v 18 where the meaning of glory is further defined). (2) The first particle εἰ (if, that should be here translated *since*) differs from the second conditional particle εἰπερ (*if indeed*), which requires Christian suffering as an indispensable condition of ⁵⁹ Numerous commentators view the particle εἰπερ as a conditional admonition to be fulfilled or as a real warning to suffer with Christ to be glorified with Him. See Moo, *Romans*, 506 n. 50; Bernhard Weiss, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 9th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1899), 358; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman, vol. 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 502; James D. G. Dunn says, “Paul takes up the already established link between sonship and suffering in Jewish thought (as in Prov 3:12; Tob 13:4-5; Wisd Sol 3-5; Add Esth 16:14-16; *Pss. Sol.* 13:8-9; . . .) and adapts it to Christian eschatology. Here again a distinction between εἰ and εἰπερ is evident: in v 17a εἰ denotes a necessary and sufficient condition fulfilled = ‘since’; but εἰπερ denotes a condition not yet fulfilled and therefore a consequence dependent on fulfillment of the condition”^{1/3}να καὶ . . . συνδοχασθωμεν, ‘in order that we might be glorified with him.’ The final force of the ^{1/3}να should not be weakened. The implication is again clear: suffering with Christ is not an optional extra or a decline or lapse from the saving power of God. On the contrary, it is a necessary and indispensable part of that purpose. Without it future glory would not be attained” (*Romans 1-8*, WBC, ed. D. A. Hubbard, G. W. Barker, and Ralph P. Martin, vol. 38A [Waco, TX: Word Book Publisher, 1988], 456). These scholars see a condition but that condition is not optional for any believer, since in their views all believers will suffer. A condition that does not denote contingency appears to fall short of the point and does not do justice to conditionality of the εἰπερ particle or the ^{1/3}να purpose clause, as other commentators understand (see n. 64). ⁶⁰ Obviously, the Spirit does not automatically lead all believers. The Spirit’s leading depend on the believer’s choice, since Christians can grieve the Spirit and choose to ignore his leading (Gal 5:16-18, 22, 25; 6:8; Eph 4:30; 5:18). The reality of spiritual sonship comes with all of the elements necessary for one to mature as a son. Nevertheless, to become mature and live up to the status of sonship believers must allow the Spirit to lead them and to suffer for the Lord (8:17-39). The passive voice αἰχμαζονται regarding the Spirit’s leading in 8:14 refers to those who have chosen not “to live [ζη~τε, pres. active ind.] according to the flesh” but “to put to death [θανατου~τε, pres. act. ind.] the deeds of the body” in v 13. 188 future glory.⁶¹ The shift of particles then indicates a transition in thought, from an established fact to a condition that follows. (3) Two other important particles με . . . ν . . . δε . . . appear between *heirs of God* and *joint heirs with Christ* and indicate two contrasting heirships. ⁶² Not seen in most English translations,⁶³ the contrastive sense may be rendered as follows: “On the one hand” (με . . . ν) *heirs of God*, but “on the other hand” (δε/) *joint heirs with Christ*. Paul uses this same structure throughout Romans (2:7-8, 25; 5:16; 6:11; 7:25; 8:10, 17; 9:21; 11:22, 28; 14:2, 5; 16:19) always to indicate contrastive, but never conjunctive constructions.⁶⁴ (4) Scripture clearly supports this view in other places by ⁶¹ Wilhelm Michaelis, “συνπασχω,” in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans

Publishing Co., 1964), 925-26. Michaelis also sees συμπάσχω as indicative of genuine Christianity, fellowship with Christ, and the bestowal of divine sonship (ibid., 926). But nowhere in the context does it state unambiguously that all genuine believers will suffer. The assurance in Rom 8:31-39 refers to all believers. Yet, since suffering may cause believers to doubt God's favor, contextually Paul ends the chapter by affirming and applying 8:31-39 that God will never abandon those who suffer for Christ.⁶² This is not an innovative concept. As seen above (chaps 3-5), an inheritance may be obtained (unmeritoriously) as a gift and also contain stipulations to obtain further blessings (meritoriously).⁶³ Both the New Century Version and the New Living Translation employ the contrast by translating the second conjunction δε/ as "but." That most renderings do not reflect this correlative relationship between με. . . ν . . . δε/ argues for interpretive bias when translating this verse.⁶⁴ Paul's use of με. . . ν . . . δε/ in Rom 8:17 would have to be the exception to the rule to how he uses it in the rest of the epistle. While this is possible, the burden of proof lies on the one saying otherwise. Although most commentators today do not see this condition here, various contemporary interpreters do.

See Dillow, *Servant Kings*, 376; Zane C. Hodges, *The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension* (Dallas, TX: Redención Viva, 1981), 127, 129, 181; Robert N. Wilkin, "Christians Who Lose Their Legacy: Galatians 5:21," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 4 (Autumn 1991), 32. Earlier commentators have also affirmed this view: C. H. Mackintosh, "A Voice from the Past: Sonship and Heirship," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 10 (Spring 1997), 65-68; G. H. Lang, *Firstborn Sons, Their Rights and Risks: An Inquiry as to the Privileges and Perils of Members of the Church of God* (London: Oliphants, 1943; repr., Miami Springs, FL: Conley & Schoettle Publishing, 1984), 65, 120-21; Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament: with a Critical Revised Text: a Digest of Various Readings: Marginal References to Verbal and Idiomatic Usage: Prolegomena: and a Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 2 (London: Rivingtons, 1865), 69. Other commentators' views are akin to this author's, although they may

not draw the same conclusion since they hold to a reform persuasion that see Rom 8:17-30 as asserting that all Christians will suffer as part of the process for all Christians to be glorified with Christ: H. C. G. Moule, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, ed. J. J. S. Perowne (Cambridge: University Press, 1879), 148. Frederick L. Godet says, "Paul knows well that, the ambitious as we are of glory, we are equally ready to recoil from the necessary suffering. Now it is 189 showing that rewards are conditioned upon works or suffering (Matt 6:1; 25:14-30; Luke 11:19-27; 1 Cor 9:16-27; 2 Cor 5:10; Phil 3:8-11; 1 Pet 1:4; Col 3:24; 2 Tim 2:11-13; Heb 10:35; 11:26; Jas 1:12; 1 John 2:28; 2 John 8; Rev 2-3).⁶⁵ Thus, Paul teaches here that all believers upon regeneration become *heirs of God*, but only those who *suffer* will "be glorified with Him." This "glory" (δο&χα) "revealed in" the "sons of God" (vv 18-19)

refers to the faithful believers' participation in the glorious honor, prestige, and reward of co-reigning with Christ over creation (vv. 18-23; cf. Heb 1:8-9; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 2:26-28). When a king was crowned (for his faithfulness to the kingdom for which he served; cf. Heb 1:5-9), he was glorified. So believers (as His cabinet members who stay the course with Him) will also be crowned (1 Cor 9:25; Phil 4:1 1 Thess 2:19 2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 2:10; 3:11) and glorified (for their faithfulness) with many rewards. In this context especially, it appears that this glorification refers to the reward of exercising dominion over creation with Christ (8:18-23; cf. 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 2:26-27).⁶⁶ precisely in suffering that the bond between Christ and us, in virtue of which we shall be able to become His co-heirs, is closely drawn. We only enter into the possession of the common heritage of glory, by accepting our part in the common inheritance of suffering; επιπερ: 'if really, as we are called to it, we have the courage to' . . ." (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. A. Cusin [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1883; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan House, 1956], 311); John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction Exposition and Notes*, NICNT, ed. F. F. Bruce, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 299. ⁶⁵ See Harry Ashe Lane, "Paul's Use of the Root *Kleronomeo* in Relationship to the Believer's Inheritance in the Eternal Kingdom" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1978), 43-46; Hodges, *The Gospel Under Siege*, 127-30. A similar proverbial saying occurs in Sir 22:23. "Obtain the trust of your neighbor in his poverty, that you may rejoice with him in his prosperity;

stand by him in time of affliction, that you may share (κληρονομι/α) with him in by being a co-heir (συγκληρονομη&ση|φ).”⁶⁶ This “glory” should be distinguished from the “glory” that comes to all believers usually known as the third stage of salvation-glorification and that is guaranteed by one’s justification (Rom 8:30). For an expanded discussion on this subject, see López, *Romans Unlocked*, 173-82. Regarding δο&χα BDAG states, “In many of the passages in our lit. the OT and Gr-Rom. perceptions of dependence of fame and honor on extraordinary performance deserve further exploration.” BDAG also defines δο&χα as “honor as enhancement or recognition of status or performance, *fame, recognition, renown, honor, prestige reputation*” (*ibid.*, 256-57).

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Someone asked Roger Staubach, former quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys, about football injuries. “How do you keep on keeping on if you’re playing professional football?” Roger said something important: “If you’re not playing hurt, you’re not playing football.” It’s exactly the same way with the Christian faith. If you’re not living it hurt, you’re probably not living the Christian faith.²⁷

Since we live in a country where there is little true persecution, you may not feel that you suffer much. In fact, you may ask, am I even suffering? It may be that you are active in sharing your faith and you are labeled “preacher.” That is a form of suffering with Christ. Maybe you are a person of integrity and that prohibits you from advancing in your job—that can be suffering with Christ. You may have taken a stance for purity in your local junior high or high school and now your friends call you all kinds of names and you are ostracized. That is a form of suffering with Christ. These will not go unrewarded. Jesus will remember every act that is done in His name.²⁸

On September 2, 1945, the documents of surrender officially ending World War II were signed by the Japanese and designated representatives of allied nations. General Douglas MacArthur officiated the ceremony aboard the USS Missouri and was the last to sign on behalf of the United States. MacArthur, flanked by his military colleagues, took his Parker fountain pen and simply signed his first name “Douglas.” He then passed the pen to General Wainwright, who signed “Mac.” MacArthur then handed the pen to General Percival, who signed “Arthur.” This unusual procedure was MacArthur’s way of honoring the two United States generals who had suffered severe persecution as prisoners of war. They had persevered, and now they were allowed to share in the glory of victory.

You have probably had the experience of using jumper cables to jump-start a car with a dead battery. It’s a pretty simple procedure. You just connect one battery’s positive and negative poles to their counterparts on the other battery and rev the good battery’s engine. At that moment there is a power transfer. The power of the living battery is transferred to the dead battery, so that the dead battery becomes as alive as the living battery. Now this did not happen because the dead battery had any life in it. It got connected to another battery that had life.

I think you get the picture. Jesus died and rose from the dead, so He has all the power we will ever need. When we are connected to Him by the “jumper cables” of the Holy Spirit, we receive Christ’s life as our dead spirit comes alive. The Holy Spirit is there to empower you with the life of Christ, not to help you fool around trying to get the dead battery of your flesh going again on your own. The Spirit hooks you up to the living battery called Christ.

You say, “Wait a minute. If I am connected to the living and powerful Christ by the living and powerful Holy Spirit, how come I still seems so dead? Why am I so weak? How come I am losing, not winning, the battle?” Well, even with a living battery working for you, even when life is flowing from the living to the dead battery, a jumpstart doesn’t do any good until you turn on the ignition. In other words, there is

something you must do in order to authorize the benefits of the power and the authority that are being transferred to you by the Holy Spirit.²⁹

“Walk” is a favorite euphemism of Paul’s for our daily conduct, the way we live our lives.

If you pump fleshly impulses into your mind all day long, don't be surprised if your feet turn aside to fleshly activities. But if your mind is being pumped with spiritual reinforcement all day long, don't be surprised if your feet start following in spiritual activity.³⁰

Whoever controls the mind runs the show. Do you feel weak and run down spiritually? Have you been feeding your spirit or your flesh? If you are expecting a Sunday morning meal to keep you going all week, you are going to be in trouble. It's like expecting a diet cola to cancel out a huge buffet.

Fleshly desires are part of being a man or woman wrapped in flesh. Don't feel bad that your flesh wants to sin. Feel bad when you don't draw on the power and authority of the Spirit to say no to your flesh.³¹

Romans chapter 8 is one of the most blessed, encouraging and thrilling chapters in the Bible for the person who is "IN CHRIST JESUS" (compare verse 1, verse 39). The chapter begins with **NO CONDEMNATION** (v.1) and it ends with **NO SEPARATION** (verses 35-39). The key word, in the first part of this chapter, is the word "SPIRIT" (occurring 20 times in chapter 8 whereas it only appears 4 times in the first 7 chapters!).

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.^{32 2} For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin,³³ He condemned sin in the flesh,⁴ so that the requirement³⁴ of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.^{35 5} For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.⁹ ¶ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.¹⁰ If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.¹² ¶ So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh--^{36 13} for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!”¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.

Victorious Christian living is basically living out a daily resurrection.³⁷

“You will die” refers to broken intimacy with Christ; self-deception; loss of joy, peace, and spiritual productivity.³⁸

A great example of this is 1 Tim 5:6.

“you will live” refers to vibrant companionship and intimacy with Christ and the fruit of the spirit³⁹

See Stott 223 on setting your mind

“sons of God” Godet 309

“if we walk in the Spirit deliberately, we will fulfill the law accidentally.” Living by grace 207

The term Spirit/spirit is used 22 times

note the contrasts between 7:23/8:2 and 7:25b/8:4.

National Treasure 2004

Ben Franklin Gates, whose family believes in the legacy of a treasure hidden by the Founding Fathers of the U.S, but forgotten by all but a few, finally discovers the truth. Been discovers of the secret entrance to the treasure room is unlocked by a pipe he has been caring.

Can the dynamic of Christian living be as simple as relying on the power of the Spirit?⁴⁰

The Greek word *pneuma*, translated “S/spirit”, is found only 5x in chapters 1-7 and 8x in chapters 9-16, but it occurs 21x in chapter 8 alone, more often than in any other single chapter in the NT.

The connection probably goes back to 7:6. As Schreiner notes, “the reason believers are not under condemnation is because they have been freed from the tyranny of the law, for sin exercises dominion over those under the law” (398).

“It is altogether too narrow a view to see in this portion simply the antidote to the wretched state pictured in chapter 7. Actually the chapter gathers up various strands of thought from the entire discussion of both justification and sanctification and ties them together with the crowning knot of glorification.” Harrison

Pritchard goes on to add there are several reasons Romans 8 is the greatest chapter of the greatest book in the Bible: Number one, Romans 8 is uniquely the chapter of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is mentioned in Romans 8 no less than 19 different times. No other chapter in the New Testament contains as many direct references to the Holy Spirit. Number two, it's preeminently the chapter of Christian assurance. Godet said Romans 8 begins with "no condemnation" and ends with "no separation." You start with no condemnation, you end with no separation, and in between you find no defeat. William R. Newell calls Romans 8 "a wondrous comfort to the believer." I like to think of it this way. It is like a mighty river rushing down toward the ocean. As the river nears the ocean, other streams and other tributaries join into it so that as it nears its mouth where it empties into the ocean, you find that it carries with it everything else that has gone before it.

Romans 8 is the summation of chapters 1 through 7. All that Paul has been saying comes to a grand and glorious climax in this chapter. It is the one chapter in this book that you must know, you must read, and you must understand. ([Romans 8](#))

Paul uses Spirit/spirit 21x's. (At least 18 refer to the Holy Spirit). Thus more references here to the Spirit than in any of his writings.

8:1 This combination of "ara nun" is used numerous times in Romans ([Ro 5:18-note](#); [Ro 7:3-note](#), [Ro 7:25-note](#); [Ro 8:12-note](#); [Ro 9:16-note](#), [Ro 9:18-note](#); [Ro 14:12-note](#), [Ro 14:19-note](#)). The two particles together strengthen each other and indicate a conclusion drawn with immediate force from what has just been said. Paul is making a contrast between the life of the man dominated by his human nature and the life of the believer under the control of God's Spirit.

When the New Testament writers wanted to emphasize a particular word, they would put it at the first part of the sentence. That was their way of saying, "This is important. Notice this. Pay attention to it." In the Greek the first word is not "therefore." The first word is not "there." The first word is not "is." The first word is not "now." The first word in this verse in the Greek is the word "no." The fifth word in our translation is first in the original because Paul wants to emphasize in the strongest possible way that there is no condemnation. That's why he took the word "no" and moved it to the front.

Therefore" (αὐτάρ)⁴¹ introduces a conclusive statement,⁴² not based on what was said in 7:7-25, but what he said in the first part of chapter 7.⁴³

And it's not ou, but oude, which is an even stronger negation in the Greek language. There is therefore, no condemnation. You might translate it this way: "There is no condemnation—none whatsoever—for the believer in Christ Jesus...

“Condemnation” = punishment or doom. It is often used in Greek literature of penal servitude (those who were slaves in prison). This is referring to the believers’ Alcatraz! Paul already made this point with regard to hell in 5:1. In 8:1 he is referring to a believers experience. Condemnation = the anguish, impotence and guilt of a life that desires God’s will but is dominated by sinful power.

The word “condemnation” (katakrima)⁴⁴ occurs only three times in the NT at Rom 5:16, 18; and 8:1. It denotes “the punishment following sentence.”⁴⁵

In all these cases (6:16, 21, 23; 7:5, 9–11) “death” is the punishment for living according to the flesh, or following one’s sin nature.

F. F. Bruce paraphrases "there is no condemnation" as follows...There is no reason why those who are in Christ Jesus should go on doing penal servitude as though they had never been pardoned and liberated from the prison house of sin.

Barton has a practical note writing that many believers...feel condemned because Satan uses past guilt and present failures to make us question what Christ has done for us. Our assurance must be focused on Christ, not our performance.

Our own conscience reminds us of guilt.

Non-Christian friends will notice (and point out) our inconsistencies.

Past memories of how we lived can haunt us...

The perfection of the law will show how imperfect we are.

We can allow Christ's perfect example to discourage our efforts rather than encourage our trust.

Unhealthy comparisons with other believers will make us feel inadequate. ([Barton, B. B., et al. Life Application Bible Commentary. Romans: Tyndale House Publishers](#))

(Bruce, F F, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: Tyndale Press, 1966)

The Net Bible also adds this note: "The earliest and best witnesses of the Alexandrian and Western texts have no additional words for v1. Both the external evidence and the internal evidence are completely compelling for the shortest reading. The scribes were obviously motivated to add such qualifications (interpolated from v4), for otherwise Paul's gospel smelled too much of grace."

Paul uses the phrase "in Christ" or its equivalent 164 times in his writings.

Through Jesus we are set free! Ever hear in a testimony, "I felt like a heavy weight was lifted?"

8:2 Bruce writes, "It is no accident that with [the Spirit's] entry there is no further talk of defeat. The warfare between the two natures still goes on, but where the Holy Spirit is in control the old nature is compelled to give way."⁴⁶

Cf. 2 Cor 3:17; Gal 5:13.

We have all benefited from Botts' Dots.⁴⁷ Driving over them produces a ka-thump! ka-thump! ka-thump! That swiftly captures our attention when drifting out of our lane or off the highway. Well, the Holy Spirit works even better than Botts Dots when we start to do a mental lane change. He ka-thump ka-thump ka-thumps upon our heart, warning us to get back in our Spirit lane, when we start crossing over into the flesh lane!⁴⁸

What do we need to be set free from? (1) From the power of indwelling sin

Frustration or hopelessness = whenever sin feels inevitable or like we don't have a choice, we've lost sight of the HS. In the X life, trying your best is not enough. We must rely upon God's best. (2) From the fruitlessness of temporal realities, 6:21

Dissatisfaction—you were created for greater things than this. There is something aching within your heart for more. The Spirit of God will not let you rest (sports, education, clubs, etc. will not last). (3) From the misery of sin's consequences, 3:23

Guilt: false guilt is what Satan brings to us, the thought that we are unworthy. A true guilt is guilt unto life not death. Many of us feel guilty if we're not guilty. This guilt or shame is the acid of hell! It doesn't make us more humble. The only solution is the blood of Christ. (4) From the heaviness of unaided obedience, 7:17. Weariness: the weight of trying to do the will of God apart from the resources of God.

The "death" God liberated us from is, again, a death-like experience in this life. That is, an emptiness or void that fills a believer when he walks according to the flesh, which is his sin nature plus his fallen

humanity. Other characteristics are: Loss of capacity for life; loss of inner happiness, loss of direction and meaning to life. Inner tension and conflict.

“Nowhere in Scripture do we find a clearer indication that the Spirit enters a person’s life at the moment of conversion (cf. also 1 Cor 12:13). If the Spirit needed to wait for some subsequent commitment to holiness, it follows that he would be absent between conversion and that later point in time. But that cannot be because Paul clearly indicated that a person without the Spirit does not belong to Christ.” Mounce 178–79.

[Because of what God has done for us (8:1–11), believers have an obligation to respond appropriately.]

12-13 Why does Paul use the term “obligation?” Paul is a realist; he knows how the fleshly mind works. How often have you thought to yourself: I’ve been doing so well, I almost deserve a little sin? I can look at that porn. I can tell that lie. I can go that party. I can spend that money. Paul wants us to know that we’re not obligated to our death.

14-17 Paul believed that the believer who is aware of his or her secure position will be more effective in mortifying his or her flesh (cf. 6:1–11).

Cf. Heb 11:26:

8:2 “has set you free” (*eleutheroo*) is the same word as 6:18; cf. John 8:32, 36.

BDAG s.v. *sundoxazo* 2: “to honor together with, pass. *be glorified with someone, share in someone’s glory.*”

In the Hebrew economy the firstborn got a double-portion of the inheritance (cf. 8:29). we are all errors of God by virtue of being His children. But we are not all co-heirs with the Firstborn unless we live a life like His, namely a life that involves suffering. Elkins 112

8:13 you are to put to death the sinful deeds of the body, but you do so by the power of the Holy Spirit. The power is all His, but He does not act without our cooperation. The Holy Spirit will not levitate you to the church if you decide you don't want to get up next Sunday.

Scripture References

Romans 8:1–17

John 8:31–38

Galatians 2:20; 5:16–25

Galatians 6:8–10

Colossians 3:1–11

Matthew 6:24

James 4:1–10

Study Questions

1. How have I experienced a feeling of condemnation in my Christian experience (Romans 8:1)? How do I feel when I struggle against sin? Why does it unsettle me and make doubt God's grace? How have I been able to overcome these feelings and trust in God's unconditional love? How can I help a brother or sister experience assurance?
2. Can I share the victorious feeling in my struggle with a particular habit or sin when I realized I didn't have to do it anymore? Can I share a victory in my life that wasn't just about trying, but about trusting, too? What actions do I need to pay in order to put to death the deeds of the flesh?
3. What obligation does Paul imply that we have (8:12)? How are we to go about "putting to death the deeds of the body" (8:13)? How have I learned to set my mind on the things of the Spirit? What things do I think on? What is my spiritual mindset? How can I starve my flesh and feed my spirit?
4. How does the name "Abba" ("Daddy," "Papa") make me feel about God (8:15)? What kind of spirit do God's children have (8:15)? What are the benefits of being a child of God (8:15–17)? Am I currently experiencing the benefits of being a child of God?
5. How have I chosen to suffer voluntarily for Christ (Romans 8:17)? What are some ways that a spiritually-minded person might choose to suffer for Christ? How can the Christian combine suffering and joy? Are the people that I am spending time with encouraging me in my walk with Christ or are they working at cross purposes with me?

Notes

¹ Michael P. Green, *“Illustrations for Biblical Preaching”* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1989).

² See Rom 1:4; 5:5; 7:6.

³ Gk. *Ara* (cf. Rom 5:18; 7:3, 21, 25; 8:12; 9:16, 18; 10:17; 14:12, 19).

⁴ Gk. *katakrima* (cf. Rom 5:16, 18).

⁵ BAGD, 412a. “Condemnation” in Romans is not always an eternal judgment or eternal damnation. This is the assumed meaning in 8:1. But note Rom 14:23, “But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats . . .” This doesn’t mean “whoever has doubts is eternally damned if he eats.” Here “condemnation” is nothing more than an inner conviction of the believer who rightly senses God’s disapproval because he or she is not acting in faith. Paul concludes that in 14:23b, “whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.”

⁶ Gk. *Ouden*, “not at all, in no respect.”

⁷ Paul uses the phrase “in Christ” or its equivalent 164 times in his writings.

⁸ Michael P. Green, *“Illustrations for Biblical Preaching”* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1989).

⁹ www.middletownbiblechurch.org/romans/romans8.htm.

¹⁰ Romans 7 is that kind of experience—one in which we are sinning (although unwillingly) while trying to keep the law and are experiencing God’s disapproval (“condemnation”) because of our sin. This doesn’t have to be our experience if we walk in the Spirit and are not under law for sanctification (8:1–4). The combination of the words *adunatos* and *asthenē*?/*asthenē*?/*ma* found in Romans 8:3 are only found together elsewhere in 15:1, Paul’s discussion about the weak in faith and the strong in faith. So Paul alludes to the weak in faith when he states in 8:3, “For what the law was powerless [*adunatos*] to do in that it was weakened [*asthenē*?] by the sinful nature...” In Romans 15:1, Paul uses similar words that might be roughly translated, “Now we who are the powerful (*dunatos*) ought to bear with the weaknesses [*asthenē*?/*ma*] of those without power (*adunatos*).” So in my thinking, Rom 7 is a subtle encouragement to the weak in faith to become like Paul is now and walk by the Spirit.

¹¹ Gk. *katekrinen* (A form of this word is used in Rom 2:1; 8:34; 14:23; 1 Cor 11:32).

¹² www.middletownbiblechurch.org/romans/romans8.htm.

¹³ Gk. *dikaïoma* is used four other times in the NT (see Rom 1:32; 2:26; 5:16, 18).

¹⁴ See Rom 13:9; Luke 10:27.

¹⁵ Gk. *phronousin* (see Rom 8:7, 27).

¹⁶ The “if” (*ei*) in this type of construction presupposes the truth of the statement. It is not intended to raise doubt, as though to suggest that some of Paul’s readers might have to be excluded.

¹⁷ See Rom 6:11–14.

¹⁸ Henry Holloman, *The Forgotten Blessing* (Nashville: Word, 1999), 47–48.

¹⁹ Gk. *Ara* (Cf. Rom 8:1; refers back to all that Paul has said in the last 11 verses).

²⁰ Gk. *barbarois* (Rom 15:27; see also Rom 1:14; Gal 5:3).

²¹ Gal 5:16, 18.

²² Gk. *summartureo* conveys the meaning “bears witness along with.” It is a compound verb which has a preposition prefixed to it. The preposition clearly means “along with,” not “to.”

²³ Cf. Gal 4:6; Mark 14:36 (see also the Lord’s Prayer, Luke 11:2, “Our Father. . .”).

²⁴ See Eph 3:6.

²⁵ The New King James Version translates this word “joint heirs.”

²⁶ Numerous commentators view the particle *eiper* as a conditional admonition to be fulfilled or as a real warning to suffer with Christ to be glorified with Him. See Moo, *Romans*, 506 n. 50; Dunn 456.

²⁷ Steve Brown, “The Prime Principle,” *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 107.

²⁸ Matt 10:42.

²⁹ **Evans 180–81.**

³⁰ **Evans 184**

³¹ **Evans 185**

³² Rom 8 begins with “No Condemnation” (8:1) and concludes with “No Separation (8:38).”

³³ See ESV and NLT renderings.

³⁴ Some English versions make “requirement” plural.

³⁵ Paul sometimes makes distinctions between “in the flesh” and “according to the flesh.”

³⁶ Rom 8:12 clarifies who Paul is talking about in 8:4. Clearly, Christians can set their minds on the flesh (see Matt 16:23).

³⁷ Hart

³⁸ Hart

³⁹ Hart

⁴⁰ Hart

⁴¹ *Ara* “draws out the significance . . . of the paragraph 7:1-6 in which Paul took up and elucidated the statement he had made in 6:14, [*for you are not under law*]” (Cranfield 1:373).

⁴² *D&M*, p. 241.

⁴³ Cranfield 1:372-73.

⁴⁴ Cranfield (1:373) takes the term, as do most commentators, in a “positional” sense: “For those who are in Christ Jesus . . . there is no divine condemnation, since the condemnation which they deserve has already been fully borne for them by Him.”

⁴⁵ *BGD*, p. 412.

⁴⁶ Bruce, p. 160.

⁴⁷ Elbert Botts, a chemist who worked for Caltrans (California Department of Transportation).

⁴⁸ Brian Bell, “Spirit Livin!” (Rom 8:1–17):