

Lesson 8 --- No Condemnation

1. Read and reread Romans 8 focusing on verses 1-4. What stuck in your mind as you read?

2. The following questions are from a section entitled "How Does 'No Condemnation' Impact Sanctification?" (Ro. 8:2)
 - a. Discuss "if" believers can be enslaved to sin.

 - b. Explain how the Holy Spirit aids us in being free from the power of sin.

3. These next questions are from the portion "How Is 'No Condemnation' Possible?" (Ro. 8:3)
 - a. Share the important point the context of this verse makes.

 - b. Converse how God made no condemnation possible in both salvation and sanctification.

4. These final questions are taken from "For What Purpose? Why No Condemnation?" (Ro. 8:4)
 - a. Clarify the difference between—
 - 1) our position and practice in Christ -

2) justification and sanctification -

b. Put into your own words what it means to walk by the Spirit.

c. Present a case for the role of Bible study, prayer, and fellowship in your walk.

Notes for Lesson 8

Question 2 (“No Condemnation” Romans 8:1-4)

The law of sin that operates in the flesh is powerful and dominates all of mankind. It is even able to make believers feel as if they were bound in slavery. However, the law of the Holy Spirit is infinitely more powerful in the new self of the believer than the law of sin that works in the flesh. The law of the Holy Spirit has the power to set believers free from the law of sin at work in the flesh. They are free from the slavery to sin. They are no longer in bondage.

The law of sin working in the flesh would have you believe that you do not have a choice; this law would have you believe that you must obey sin. The nature of indwelling sin desires to drag us back into slavery to sin. We believers sometimes play into the problem, thinking that the flesh has the ability to command that we be enslaved to sin. However, what God is teaching us here is that we must realize that the power of the Holy Spirit is infinitely greater than the power of sin working in the flesh. Yes, we fail, but when we give in, it is our choice. The Spirit is always there ready to enable us to choose differently.

As powerful as the Holy Spirit is, we do not take advantage of Him as we ought. We do not walk by the Spirit's enabling through prayer and interaction with Christ through His Word.

Galatians 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

Galatians 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

We do not have to be enslaved to sin. If we are, it is a voluntary slavery. Yes, I know that at times it may feel as if you have no choice. Temptation may seem overwhelming. But in truth, you, as a believer, make choices when you allow sin to dominate. Sanctification involves learning to follow closely the Person of the Spirit of Christ. Our walking by the Spirit will grow stronger if we understand that the law of sin in our members attempts to deceive us into believing that indulging our flesh will be better than enjoying what Christ has already provided

for us.

Ask people overwhelmed by addiction to any sin if they love to be enslaved, and you will find that 100 percent of them would do anything to be released from the cycle of life-dominating sin. Do not believe the lie that what the world has to offer is better than what Christ has for you. *“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”*

The flesh desires that you live in fear of enslavement to sin. In contrast, the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to live in an atmosphere of fatherly care and of adoption where you have a close, intimate relationship with the sovereign God of the universe and with Christ the Savior of your soul Who lives within you through the Spirit of Christ.

Romans 8:15 *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!”* So Paul has assured us that there is no condemnation. The impact of “No Condemnation” is that we are no longer enslaved to sin. In His vast power, the Holy Spirit sets us free from the law of sin.

Question 3 (“No Condemnation” Romans 8:1-4)

Bear in mind the context of these first four verses of chapter 8, which is sanctification. Paul has explained that the Law could neither save nor sanctify. The reason that it cannot is the weakness of the flesh.

The Law is good and holy and right. The Law reveals the perfect nature of God. There is nothing wrong with the Law. But all the Law can do is reveal the depths of our sin. The Law cannot reform the flesh. So Paul highlighted the weakness of the Law to bring change. If there is going to be any change in the sinner, it has to be as a result of God initiating the avenue of change.

And that is exactly what Paul taught. *“For what the Law could not do . . . God did.”* He brought transformation in condemned sinners by sending His Son Jesus Christ to be a substitute offering for sin. Christ not only paid the penalty of sin for believers’ salvation, but He dethroned sin from its dominion over them so that they may grow into His image. The Law could not do that. Instead of believers being condemned by the law of sin, God condemned sin in the flesh.

God accomplished this act by *“sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.”* Here is an example of inspiration of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit to explain the incarnation precisely. The wording is vitally important. It says that Christ came in the flesh. We know that from 1 John 4:2, *“By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God.”*

But Paul qualified that statement by saying that Jesus came in the likeness of the flesh. Paul made sure to convey that Jesus did not have all of the qualities of the flesh. Christ did not have the domination of sin that is prevalent in the flesh.

Christ had to come in the flesh so that He could be a substitute. Hebrews 2:14-15 tells us, *“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all*

their lives.” Paul stated that the incarnation and the substitutionary death of Christ on our behalf enabled the Holy Spirit to free us from abject slavery to sin in the flesh. Sin was condemned in the flesh.

Question 4 (“No Condemnation” Romans 8:1-4)

This verse gets down to the crux of the matter for believers in sanctification. Positionally we are perfect law keepers because we are in Christ, and He kept the law perfectly. The requirement of the Law is fulfilled in us. That is our position. In our practice, Christ's death on the Cross enables us to grow in holiness and righteousness which reflects our position in Christ as perfect law keepers.

Another lesson that we learn from this portion of Scripture is that while justification and sanctification always go together, justification is not sanctification. Justification is being declared perfectly righteous. Christ's perfect life is given to the believer while the utterly sinful life of the believer is put upon Christ. We are positionally as righteous as Christ. That is justification.

Sanctification immediately follows justification in that believers begin the process of matching their daily walk with their position. Believers no longer are characterized by habitually walking in the flesh. That is why you see a drastic change in the lives of some people even the moment after they are saved. If they were living in the outward darkness of sin, they immediately turn their backs on sin and begin to walk the other way.

Zaccheus, in the Gospel of Luke, is just such an example. Immediately after being saved, he began to function on a different value system in his work as a chief tax collector. He told Jesus that he was going to give half of his possessions for the less fortunate and make amends to those he defrauded. Those people who are guilty of “respectable sins” also manifest change in their lives. They begin to strive to let the image of Christ emerge in their lives.

Christians no longer walk according to the flesh but according to the Holy Spirit; and as they do, they start to look more like Christ. Christ joyfully fulfilled all the requirements of the Law. It was His joy to do the will of the Father. Believers too begin to have that same attitude and goal.

Christ saved us, not on the basis of good works, so that we may be engaged in good works. That is what we learn in the well-known Ephesians 2:8-10, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”*

Romans 8:4a *“So that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us.”*

As I said, no condemnation refers to our salvation and our sanctification. The requirements of the Law were fulfilled in us because we are in Christ. We are saved because positionally the requirements of the Law are fulfilled in us. We are saved in order that we may be engaged in the process of sanctification, being conformed to the image of Christ. How do we engage in this process?

Romans 8:4b *“[We] do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”*

We will spend a few Sundays fleshing out what it means to walk by the Spirit. This is where we fail: we do not walk by the Spirit. Then when the consequences of not doing so set in, we question God, "Why doesn't this Christianity thing work for me?"

There are two irreplaceable, absolutely necessary pillars in the Christian life to which believers must be consistently chained if there is going to be any progress; namely, Bible study and prayer. I have explained that these are the two-way paths of communication between God and His people. He speaks to us through His Word, and we speak to Him in prayer. These two pillars securely support our walking by the Holy Spirit.