

ROMANS CHAPTER SIX : SIN'S POWER BROKEN

Read Romans chapter 6 in its entirety.

Similar to what we saw Paul do earlier in Romans chapter 3, we see Paul raising up several questions, which could very well be common questions that were raised by believers during that time. He answers his question(s) with other question(s) that points to spiritual truth.

While there are a total of 6 questions we observe in this chapter, there are 2 main questions that are considered, and both these questions have two follow-up questions for each of them. These two main questions also outline the main issues Paul is addressing in this chapter:

Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?

Here are the 6 questions, grouped together.

- Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? (vs 1)
- How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? (vs 2)
- Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? (vs 3)

- Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? (vs 15)
- Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? (vs 16)
- What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? (vs 21)

As Paul responds to these two main questions, he introduces us to the truth about **identification** and how that has set us free from the dominion of sin. Paul then presents **five actions** we must take to live free from sin, under grace. He also presents us with the truth that God's grace has made us free from sin, and in response to God's grace we willingly make ourselves slaves to God and slaves to righteousness, which results in holy living before God.

More Sin, More Grace?

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Romans 6:2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Romans 6:3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

Having presented to us the powerful truth of justification by faith, and that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound - the apostle Paul addresses an objection that people could raise. Shall we all just keep on sinning so that God can keep giving us more and more grace?

The answer is an emphatic 'no!'

The reason is that we are dead to sin. Dead people do not sin. Imagine an alcoholic, who dies. We can place his favorite liquor bottles around him, and he will not even move a little finger towards any of it.

When did we as believers die to sin?

In the mind of God, all of us were 'in Christ' even before we were physically born, in fact, even before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 4:3). So in the mind of God we were all identified with the death, burial, resurrection, ascension and seating of Christ Jesus. He was identified with us, and we were identified with Him. So, when Christ died, we died.

Now, in time, when we were born again, we became spiritually one with Him (1 Corinthians 6:17). The moment we came into spiritual union with Jesus Christ, our identification with Him in His death, burial and resurrection, becomes a personal reality positionally (Ephesians 2:1-6). God brought us into union with Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). The Holy Spirit baptized us, or immersed us spiritually into Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). This is a spiritual reality that became ours the moment we are born again. So every believer is indeed dead - dead to sin - in Christ.

In explaining the truth that we as believers have died to sin, the apostle Paul points to water baptism which is a powerful expression (and proclamation) of the spiritual truth of identification. So in vs 3, he states this powerful spiritual truth that "as many of us as were baptized (immersed) into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death". This is why Paul is stating that we as believers have died to sin. We have been identified with Christ in His death.

Identified With Christ

Romans 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

Not only have we been baptized (immersed) into His death, but we have also been buried with Him, as symbolized by going under the water. And, we were also raised with Him (symbolized by coming out of the water) to walk in a brand new life.

"...Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father..."

We know that Christ was raised by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:11).

Glory is 'doxa' in Greek and is often used to refer to the nature and works of God revealed to us, a manifestation of who God is and what He does, a demonstration of His power. So we understand that the Spirit of God causes the glory of the Father to be revealed.

"...we also should walk in newness of life....."

Our identification with Christ has given us a brand new life, the new creation life, to walk in.

Paul will address details of this new walk in daily life in Chapters 12-16.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Water baptism is an important and powerful proclamation of our identification with Jesus Christ and must not be treated lightly. It is very important for believers to be water baptized (immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ). Not only is water baptism our identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection - but it is our identification with Him entirely. We put on Christ, as it states in Galatians 3:27. Baptism is also an expression that we have responded with a good conscience toward God and are right with God, through Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:27

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

1 Peter 3:21

There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Old Man Crucified

Romans 6:6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Romans 6:7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

vs 6, The verse begins with 'knowing this'. Many believers do not know this truth. Without knowing or having revelation or spiritual understanding of this truth, we will not be able to walk in it. This is the reason we must continue in His Word, so that we know the truth and knowing the truth will set us free (John 8:31-32).

What part of me died, when I was crucified with Christ?

Paul answers that question here. The 'old man' was crucified with Christ. The old man is the old Adamic, sinful nature, that was in our spirit. The human spirit has a nature. By nature we mean who we are in essence, the constitution, disposition, the "DNA", the natural spontaneous inclinations and tendencies. The nature of the unregenerate human spirit is referred to as the 'old man' and is a sinful nature. The nature of the born-again human spirit is referred to as the 'new man'.

For the believer, the old man has been brought to an end. It is dead. The old man is no longer in the believer. The believer does not have an old man. The believer has a 'new man'. The new man is the born again man, born from above (John 3:3), who is born of God (1 John 5:1) with the seed (Greek 'sperma') of God (1 John 3:9), the nature of God (2 Peter 1:4), with the 'zoe' the life and nature of God (1 John 5:12).

The 'old man' is destroyed and "the body of sin" representing the power of sin has been done away with, destroyed and rendered inoperative. We no longer have a sinful nature in our inner person, exerting its influence inside out. The power of sin that once controlled the individual through the old man, through the old sinful nature, has been done away with. The power of sin has been broken. Hence we are no longer slaves of sin. God has set us free from the power of sin, when He crucified the old man and destroyed the body of sin.

This is what it means to be dead to sin. We are dead - the old man has gone, the power of sin broken - and we are free from sin.

This is a completed, present-tense spiritual reality, in Christ.

NOTE: In vs 7, the word 'freed' is 'dikaioo' meaning to be made righteous, to be justified. So this verse could also be rendered, he who has died has been justified from sin. In other words, sin no longer has claim over him and cannot inflict anything against him.

Important New Testament Terminology

It will be useful to present important New Testament terms that we will encounter as we progress in Romans and to understand these terms correctly, so that we are able to receive the revelation being presented to us in Scripture.

old man

The old man refers to the **sinful nature in the unsaved human spirit**. This is in contrast to the 'new man' we have become in Christ. The new man referring to the divine nature in us, is created in the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. Other than Romans 6:6 we see the term 'old man' used in Ephesians 4, and Colossians 3. From its usage in these places we understand that Paul is referring to the old sinful nature within us, in contrast to the 'new man' we have in Christ.

Ephesians 4:22-24

22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,

23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Colossians 3:9-10

**9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,
10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,**

flesh

Flesh can be used either of

(A) the person, the natural, physical body, the outer man. For instance, Acts 2:17 God said He will pour out His Spirit on all flesh - referring to all people. In 2 Corinthians 4:11 Paul writes about his 'mortal flesh' referring to his physical body.

(B) used to refer to what is natural, external, temporal. Example in John 8:15 'you judge after the flesh'. Romans 4:1 referring to natural ancestry. 1 Corinthians 1:26; 2 Corinthians 5:16. 2 Corinthians 11;18.

(C) used to refer to **the sinful evil desires, lusts, tendencies, and affections of the body and soul.** In Romans 7:5, Romans 8:13, Galatians 5:17,19,24; 1 Peter 2:11, flesh refers to the sinful evil desires and lusts of the body and soul.

So depending on the context, we have to interpret 'flesh' correctly.

Walking yielded to the flesh makes the believer 'carnal' or fleshly (Romans 8:5-10; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Galatians 5:16-24; James 4:1). Some people use the phrase 'carnal nature' referring to living according to the flesh, or being fleshly or carnal. The flesh is reminiscent of the old man at work in the body and soul. Hence the believer is told to "put off the old man" and the associated conduct, and instead put on the new man (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10). The body (fleshly deeds) needs to be crucified and the soul needs to be renewed, as we will see later in Romans 8 and 12.

body

The word body is used in the New Testament,

(A) literally to refer to the outer person, either the mortal physical body (Romans 4:19; Romans 6:12; 1 Corinthians 9:27), or the spiritual glorified body (1 Corinthians 15:44; Philippians 3:21)

(B) figuratively. The word 'body' is used figuratively in different ways, as

(1) to represent a collective entity, as in the 'body of Christ' (Romans 12:4-5)

(2) to represent the finished work of Christ on the Cross, as when we partake of the bread representing our communion in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 11:24).

(3) the expression, power, influence of something, as in the 'body of sin' (Romans 6:6), the 'body of death' (Romans 7:24), the 'body of sins' of the flesh (Colossians 2:11).

So depending on the context we must interpret 'body' correctly.

Hence in Romans 6:6 when Paul teaches us that the body of sin has been destroyed, he is referring to the expression, power and influence of sin through the old man (the sin nature) that resided in the unregenerate human spirit. For the believer, the old man has been crucified and the body of sin has been destroyed.

members

The word 'members' (Greek 'melos') refers to a limb or part of the body. So this would include all body parts: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, hands, feet, etc.

Dead And Alive - Once For All

Romans 6:8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

Romans 6:9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

Romans 6:10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

vs 8, Christ died and rose again. We have been raised with Him spiritually, and we also know that we will be raised up physically, from the dead to have our resurrected, glorified bodies to live with Him eternally.

vs 9-10, However the main point of emphasis is that what Christ died to, He died to once. And what He died to, no longer has any dominion over Him. This was a once for all, completed work. And what He overcame, will always remain under Him.

Five Actions To Live Free From Sin

Romans 6:11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Romans 6:13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

vs 11, Likewise you also.....

In a similar manner, just like what Jesus did, take a once for all, firm, resolute stand against sin and do not let sin ever have mastery over you.

Positional truth must become experiential reality

While the truth about identification is powerful spiritual reality, working it out and walking in it, in our everyday life is a process. What we will learn as we progress in Romans (and what we see

in the other Epistles as well) is that **we must work with God to make positional truth an experiential reality**. Having unveiled to us that the old man has been crucified and the power of sin has been broken, in the rest of chapter 6, and on till chapter 8, Paul reveals practical actions that need to be take for the believer to live victorious over sin.

Paul presents five actions we must take to live free from sin.

#1, reckon yourselves

#2, do not let sin reign

#3, do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness

#4, present yourselves to God

#5, present your members as instruments of righteousness

At this point it may seem that taking these five actions is very difficult, Paul will explain to us later in chapter 8, that we do this by the help of the Holy Spirit. So it is not by our own efforts that we are able to live these out, but rather with the empowering of the Spirit. *"For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."* (Romans 8:13). *"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."* (Galatians 5:16).

#1, Reckon yourselves

Romans 6:11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Having presented the revelation of our identification with Christ, Paul tells us that we must reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God.

The Greek word for "reckon" (Greek "logizomai", Strongs G3049) that Paul uses in Romans 6:11, is a word we have seen before in chapter 4, translated as accounted, counted, and imputed. This is a word having to do with financial/accounting calculation and it simply means to put down to one's account. **To count as a fact**. When something has been put to your account, it is there, and so you can take it to be so.

We must embrace the truth, accept it as a fact, announce and declare that we are dead to sin and alive to God. We are dead to sin, in that we have nothing to do with sin. We are alive to God, open, in connection, in relationship with God. We now live and move and have our being in Him.

#2, Do not let sin reign

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

God has set our will free from the power of sin, when he crucified the old man and destroyed the body of sin. So we can now make the choice.

Our spirit is born again and is free from the power of sin. But sin still seeks to reign in our mortal body wanting us to obey its lusts. However, we can and do have the choice to prevent sin from ruling over the desires of our natural body.

So we make our bold declaration: *"Sin has no place in me. Sin will not rule over my natural appetites, desires and affections. Sin will not reign over my mortal body."*

#3, Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness

Romans 6:13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

The word 'present' means to yield, to bring before, give, aid or assist.
The word 'instruments' also means utensils, tools or weapons.

Paul tells us to refuse to yield our bodily parts as instruments, tools or weapons of unrighteousness. So we must learn to say 'no'.

Refuse to yield your eyes as a tool of unrighteousness resulting in sin. Refuse to let your eyes gaze lustfully or look at pornography. Similarly we refuse to yield other members as instruments of unrighteousness.

#4, Present yourselves to God

Romans 6:13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

We yield ourselves to God as people who have been raised from the dead, made spiritually alive to God.

You make a choice to present every part of your being to God.

#5, Present your members as instruments of righteousness

Romans 6:13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

And we yield every member of our body to God, so that every member serves as an instrument of righteousness.

The reason why

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

The reason we can do the above five actions is because sin will not have dominion or mastery over us. God has set us free from the control of sin. We now can make the choice of what we wish to do with our members and who we wish to present ourselves to.

And not only that we are no longer under law but under grace. The law condemns and requires but does not empower. Grace liberates us, invites and empowers us. Under grace we are free from sin and empowered to overcome sin.

Applying truth by affirming truth

One of the best ways to apply truth is to first affirm it or declare the truth of God's Word over our own lives. When we affirm truth we bring our being in subjection to the truth we affirm. When we declare truth we are stretching out the sword of the Spirit against the powers of darkness and against every evil work. Bondages are broken. Unclean spirits withdraw their influence. Deliverance takes place.

Boldly declare:

In Jesus' name, I declare what the Word of God states about me. I am in Christ and have been identified with His death, burial, resurrection, ascension and seating at the right had of the Father. The old man has been crucified and the power of sin over my life has been destroyed. I count myself as someone who is completely dead to sin. I am alive to God. Sin has no place in me. Sin will not rule over my natural appetites, desires and affections. Sin will not reign over my mortal body. I consecrate every part of me to God. My eyes, ears, tongue, hands and feet - every part of me is consecrated to God. I consecrate my appetites, desires, affections and my will to God. I yield my entire being to God and all my members as instruments of righteousness.

Shall We Keep On Sinning...Under Grace?

Romans 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

Having given us revelation on how to live out of our identification in Christ to overcome sin, Paul reminded us that we are not under law, but under grace. This would lead to another set of

objections or questions. Since we are not under law, but under grace, should we continue in sin and keep on sinning?

This is an important question and needs to be emphasized.

The Church today sometimes seems to have an incorrect understanding of grace. Grace is used as a license to live in sin, doing ungodly things, and having no repentance and turning away from sin. This is an abuse of grace and is not what the New Testament teaches.

The following verses 16-23 is Paul's response to the question.

Slaves of God and Righteousness Under Grace

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Romans 6:18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Romans 6:19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

Romans 6:20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

Romans 6:21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

Romans 6:22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Slaves were present at the time Paul wrote this epistle to Romans. Many were slaves themselves and some may have had slaves working for them. So the concept of being a slave was a very familiar one to Paul's audience at that time.

The Greek word for **slave** is '**doulos**' meaning a **bondservant**, the same word Paul used to refer to himself in Romans 1:1 when he said he was a bondservant of Christ. A bondservant is one who has voluntarily chosen to be a slave completely surrendered to his master for life.

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

Notice how the choice is at our disposal. To whom you yield yourselves as slaves in obedience, you are that one's slaves. The choice is ours. So Paul is showing us that we can choose to be slaves of sin reaping the wages of sin which is death, or we can be slaves of obedience to God leading to righteousness.

That form of doctrine to which you were delivered

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Romans 6:18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

The doctrine delivered to them set them free from being slaves of sin and brought them in to become slaves of righteousness.

Here are two of the most profound verses that reveal the power of the ministry of teaching God's Word.

The word **form** in Greek is 'tupos' which means a die, a mould, a pattern. It is used as a metaphor, referring to the mould into which molten metal is poured so as to take on a specific shape and form.

The doctrine or teaching of God's Word acts as a mould into which peoples lives are being poured to take shape. When people obey from the heart the doctrine (teaching) presented to them, they are delivered, set free, healed, empowered and experience all that God has for them. Their lives are shaped into what God wants them to be, which is to become Christ-like.

NOTE: This is a very important revelation to us who minister the Word of God. Are we delivering sound doctrine? Are we delivering the whole doctrine of God? Are we delivering doctrine that will help believers grow up in all things to be like Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13)?

Slaves before, Slaves even now

Slaves of sin (vs 17) Slaves of uncleanness (vs 19) Slaves of lawlessness (vs 19)	Slaves of righteousness (vs 18,19) Slaves of God (vs 22)
---	---

Paul draws a comparison of what we were and what we have now been brought in to become. We were slaves of sin, uncleanness and lawlessness. We are now invited to become slaves of God and slaves of righteousness.

The apostle Paul will let us know in Romans 8:16-17, that we are also children of God, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. These capture various facets of our relationship with God. We are slaves, children, heirs, joint-heirs, all at the same time. Each describing a certain aspect of our relationship with God and our walk with God.

The weakness of your flesh

Romans 6:19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

Romans 6:20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

Paul is using language they can understand (talking about being slaves, etc.) because he recognizes the weakness of their flesh. Up until now they have continually presented their members as slaves of uncleanness (impurity) and lawlessness (wickedness, transgression, violation of law) leading to more lawlessness.

Paul recognizes that our flesh (body, outer-man) is weak. Our flesh has been so trained to continually yield to sin. This is a main issue Paul will address later on in chapters 7 and 8. How do we get rid of the weakness of our flesh, where sin has had a strong grip for a long time?

Present your members

All of this happens as an act of our will. He repeats the idea of willfully presenting or yielding ourselves as slaves:

"you present yourselves slaves to obey" (vs 16)

"you presented your members as slaves" (vs 19)

"now present your members as slaves" (vs 19)

The fruit of holiness

Paul reminds them that when they were in sin, the end of those things was death (vs 21). The wages of sin is always death (vs 23). However, when we yield ourselves as slaves to God and slaves to righteousness, we have the fruit of holiness (vs 19,22) leading to eternal life.

God's grace has made us free from sin, and in response to God's grace we willingly make ourselves slaves to God and slaves to righteousness, which results in holy living before God.

Reflection



Q1, The reason we do not continue in sin is because we are dead to sin. Discuss the truth about identification with Christ's death and what Paul presents to us as the reason for us being freed from sin.

Q2, In view of the positional truth that we are free from sin, discuss the actions Paul encourages us to take to walk free from sin. Consider how you can apply them on an ongoing basis in your life.

Q3, We are under grace and are still slaves! Not a message we were expecting to hear! Draw a comparison/contrast of being a slave to God and a slave to sin? How does being a slave to God differ from being a slave to sin?

ROMANS CHAPTER SEVEN : THE LAW AND THE DOMINION OF SIN

Read Romans chapter 7 in its entirety.

Paul continues from chapter 6 addressing how the believer is to live victorious over sin. We have been justified freely by the grace of God, made righteous in God's sight, and are in a standing of grace. A blessed state. But how then do we live victorious over sin? In chapter 6 Paul presented us with the truth of identification and that through our identification with Christ in His death, the old man has been crucified and the power of sin over our lives has been broken. We no longer have a sinful nature in our inner person, exerting its influence inside out. This is spiritual reality or what we refer to as "positional truth", that we have in Christ. In chapter 6, Paul went on to explain practical actions we have to take in order to walk experientially in this spiritual reality we have in Christ.

Then there are two more challenges to be dealt with, for the believer to walk victorious over sin.

- ✓ First, is **the law (the Law of Moses)**. This of course applies primarily to those born under the law, the Jewish believers. However, we can apply this to ourselves today as we make 'laws' or 'rules' for ourselves. So as we study this, let also think in how this would apply to us today, though we are not born under the Old Testament law.
- ✓ Second, is **the law (rule, dominion) of sin** that works in the flesh.

In this chapter Paul reveals that just as the believer is dead to sin, **the believer is also dead to the law, and is therefore free from the law**. However this does not mean that the law is sinful or evil in itself. The real problem is not the law, but sin that has dominated (ruled) the flesh and the members of our body. The law required people to do things in the strength of the flesh, which was impossible, because sin already dominated the flesh. So sin was accentuated by the law, and only further exposed the weakness of the flesh.

Paul then highlights the struggle we face in the flesh where sin has dominated for so long. The struggle described in chapter 7 is a very real one, which every believer can relate to. This prepares us for the truth revealed to us in chapter 8, on how we overcome "the law of sin and death" that works in our flesh, by the Holy Spirit.

Although we are getting ahead of ourselves, it is very important that we state this here. While it is useful to recognize the struggles in the flesh as described in chapter 7, it is not intended that we live permanently in struggles, weakness and defeat. Rather, God has the solution for all of us which is to **walk in the Spirit and with the help of the Spirit conquer sin that has dominated our flesh. We need to take a hold of the truth of identification presented in chapter 6, and the current, personal empowering of the Holy Spirit revealed to us in chapter 8, to overcome the struggles described in chapter 7.**

Dead To The Law, Married To Christ

Romans 7:1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?

Romans 7:2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

Romans 7:3 So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

Romans 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

Romans 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

Romans 7:6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Paul is speaking specifically to Jewish believers, those who are familiar with the law (the Law of Moses). He draws the analogy of marriage, and points to the fact that when the husband dies the wife is free to marry another man. And then he presents this truth that we have died to the law through our identification with Christ or our being in Christ. We are now married (spiritually united) to another, that is Jesus Christ. God brought about this spiritual union and brought us into Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 6:17).

vs 7, when we were living according to the flesh, and were trying to keep the law while living in the flesh, all that happened is that sinful passions were brought to light because of the law. These sinful passions were at work in our members and their only fruit or outcome was death.

vs 8, The law held on to us because we were born under the law. There was no way out. Until we came into Christ. In Christ we died to the law and have been delivered from the law.

NOTE: Very specifically in these verses the "us" and "we" being referred to are Jewish believers. But for the sake of explanation, we continue to use these as is. We can apply this to our context today with respect to man-made rules to guide our Christian walk or rules we make for ourselves in an attempt to please God by keeping these self-made rules.

Our being delivered from the law and being united to Christ should result in:

- ✓ bearing fruit to God - glorifying God through the fruit we bear (John 15:8)
- ✓ serving God in the newness of the Spirit - we serve God in a fresh new way, being led by the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, and not according to the old law of Moses.

Philippians 3:3

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

NOTE: We are not examining the subject of divorce and remarriage, but will make a few comments here. Remarriage is clearly permitted in the case of the death of the spouse. We must

also keep in mind that there are God-ordained grounds when a marriage can be dissolved, and in such situations the individuals are free to re-marry (Matthew 5:31-32; 1 Corinthians 7:15; Malachi 2:14-16). However, this is a subject we will not deviate into at this time.

Is The Law Bad?

Romans 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

Romans 7:8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

Romans 7:9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

Romans 7:10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.

Romans 7:11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

Romans 7:12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

Romans 7:13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

The law is good

So then, if God delivered us from the law, is the law in itself a bad thing? Is it a sinful thing? The answer is obviously 'no'. The law serves a purpose. It exposes sin and the sinful desires that are in the flesh (vs 7). The law is holy, just and good (vs 12). The law is spiritual, given by God (vs 14).

How sin leveraged the law

There are several times in Romans 7, that Paul refers to the interplay of sin and the law. Our flesh and members are the playground, if you will. Consider these:

Romans 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

Romans 7:8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

Romans 7:11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

Romans 7:13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

What can we deduce from these verses:

Rules (law) cannot curb sinful passions and desires. It seems to be human tendency that the more rules that are put to stop us from sinning, the more our desires are aroused, wanting to do that

which we are told not to do. We get deceived, either by thinking that we can never live by the law or thinking breaking the law will not really harm us at all. Sin deceives us, we yield to sin, and this only results in death. Hence sin seems to leverage rules that are good, to actually get the better of us, and produce death and destruction in us. This shows how terribly evil sin is.

This does not mean we must not have rules (law). Rules are good and necessary to keep us on track. However, all of the above verses shows how sin dominates our flesh, which is what Paul goes on to highlight in the rest of chapter 7. Therefore we need more than law (rules) to conquer sin. We need the power of the Holy Spirit, as Paul reveals in chapter 8.

Without the law, sin was dead

Romans 7:8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

Romans 7:9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

Having considered the interplay of sin and the law, we must also understand that without the law, sin would not have come with such force. Sin would not have been recognized if there were no written code of law. It would be as good as dead.

Paul makes a personal statement. When he did not pay attention to the law, he went along fine. It does not mean he was not sinning. He sinned, but sin was not "alive" in the sense that the sinner did not recognize sin as sin. But when he became conscious of the commandments, then sin "revived", meaning he now was aware of the wrong he was doing, and he came under condemnation and judgment ("I died"). Paul makes these statements to show how sin is accentuated because of the recognition of sin as a result of the law.

However, the problem is not the law. We are dead to the law and so are free from it. There is a bigger problem that really needs to be dealt with.

Our Problem - We Are Carnal, Sold Under Sin

Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Romans 7:15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.

Romans 7:16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.

Romans 7:17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

Romans 7:19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

Romans 7:20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Romans 7:21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.

Romans 7:22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

Romans 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

vs 14, the law is spiritual in that it is given to us by God who is Spirit and is intended for us to walk before God. However here is the problem. The problem is not the law. The problem is that we are carnal (fleshly, controlled by the flesh), and sold (entirely under the control of, as a slave) under sin.

The rest of these verses highlight the struggles of the carnal (flesh-ruled) man. This is true also of believers. We get saved. We discover the truth presented in Romans 6. We then become aware of our fleshly predispositions, sin dwelling in the flesh as described in Romans 7. But then we need to move to Romans 8, where we can walk victorious over these struggles.

Let's summarize what Paul states, from his own experience and spiritual journey:

The struggles

what I am doing, I do not understand (vs 17)

what I will to do, that I do not practice (vs 17)

what I hate, that I do (vs 17)

I want to do good, but I am unable to do it (vs 18)

the good that I will to do, I do not do (vs 19)

the evil I will not to do, that I practice (vs 19)

The problem

sin that dwells in me (vs 17)

in my flesh nothing good dwells (vs 18)

sin that dwells in me (vs 20)

evil is present with me (vs 21)

something ruling in my members, fighting against my mind, bringing me captive to sin (vs 23)

In vs 23 Paul mentions a fight against his mind. This is stated by Peter, when he writes that fleshly lusts war against the soul (our mind, will, emotions):

1 Peter 2:11

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,

NOTE: some of the habitual, overpowering, controlling sins of the flesh that keep people in bondage are not only the weaknesses of the flesh but often become occupied, energized and controlled by unclean spirits, that have a place in the soul (mind, will, emotions) and/or the body. So in dealing with such habitual, controlling sins we must expel and resist unclean spirit behind these sins, and then also deal with the flesh (soul and body) to cleanse it and submit it to God.

The inner man seeks to please God

While Paul describes his struggles and identifies the problem, he is clear that in his inner person, he desires to please God.

Romans 7:22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

Thank God! Jesus Christ Is Our Deliverer!

Romans 7:24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Romans 7:25 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

As we close this chapter, there is a cry of desperation - repulsed at the sin dwelling in his flesh, and a cry for deliverance from "this body of death", or death-doomed body, referring to sin at work in the body, so controlling the body and pulling it down to sin's final outcome, which is death.

God has an answer in Jesus Christ. While I know that in my mind I am submitted to God's rule, I am aware that there is the "law of sin" or rule and dominion of sin in my flesh. But God has an answer on how to get rid of the "law of sin" and the death it produces. This is presented to us in Romans 8.

Reflection



Q1, We are no longer under the law, but have been brought into Christ so that we can bear fruit unto God and serve Him with the freshness of the Spirit. Discuss how this would be practiced in our daily walk with God.

Q2, All of us have been through seasons or stages in our walk with God where we can identify with the struggles Paul describes in Romans 7. From what we have discovered thus far in Romans 5, 6 and 7, what do you think Paul is pointing us to, as the answer to overcome this struggle against sin? (Of course, we will discover more of this in Romans 8 and Romans 12).

ROMANS CHAPTER EIGHT : THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

Read Romans chapter 8 in its entirety.

Romans chapter 8 is a chapter of answers and of hope. It is like coming into the light at the end of the tunnel, like moving from darkness to light. We move from the depths of sin, human depravity, the burdensome law, the overpowering sin working in our members to now learning how to walk experientially in the wonderful grace, righteousness, new life and identification-truths we have in Jesus Christ. It is like a breath of fresh air, after being suffocated for a long time! Enjoy!

The main focus here is the answer God provides through Jesus Christ for our deliverance from the law of sin and death at work in our body. Paul points us to living according to the Spirit, to walking in the Spirit. Something that he has written about in other Epistles as well (Galatians 5, Ephesians 5, and Colossians 3). This is the key to being victorious over the flesh.

Subsequently, Paul addresses other topics of importance for the believer in this chapter:

- ✓ The Holy Spirit has made us children, heirs and joint-heirs of God and so we can have hope in the midst of the sufferings of this present time
- ✓ The Holy Spirit also helps us in our weaknesses through prayer
- ✓ A glimpse of the glorious hope awaiting all of creation, and for us as children of God
- ✓ A revelation of God's grand eternal purpose for people
- ✓ And the wonderful assurance that no one can be against us and nothing can separate us from the love that God has for us, in Jesus Christ.

Freedom From Sin As We Live According To The Spirit

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

Romans 8:4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Although our struggles with sin in the flesh is real, there is no condemnation held against in Jesus Christ. Because here is the answer.

law of the Spirit of life = 'law' is used figuratively to speak of the principle, rule, or dominion of the Spirit. Where the Spirit is allowed to exert His rule and reign

law of sin and death = what Paul has gone through describing for us in chapter 7, the control of sin over the flesh resulting in death

vs 2, provides the solution. The Holy Spirit sets us free from the control of sin over our flesh, provided we walk according to (in harmony with, in subjection to, yielded to) the Spirit.

vs 3, The law was powerless in helping us overcome sin. But God took care of it. He sent Jesus in a human body, who lived a sinless life in a body, who judged and destroyed sin on the Cross, broke its power and set us free.

vs 4, therefore we are now empowered by the Spirit to do more than what the law requires as we walk according to the Spirit.

The Carnal Versus The Spiritual

Romans 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Romans 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Romans 8:8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

The key is not to be carnally minded. Do not pay attention to the evil desires and demands of the flesh. These only lead to death. If we live to please the flesh, we will not please God.

Instead we must set our affection on the things of the Spirit which will produce life, peace and lead us according to what pleases God.

[To write: Carnal Christians....the problems of carnality in the church...]

Living In The Spirit Takes Care Of The Flesh

Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Romans 8:10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Romans 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

Romans 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

vs 9, As believers we do not walk according to the dictates of the flesh. Rather we walk according to the Spirit of God who is in us, because we are His. Christ is in us by His Spirit.

vs 10-11, Sin only ruins the body causing its decay. But the Holy Spirit quickens and gives life to our mortal bodies.

vs 12-13, We do not owe the flesh anything and hence we do not live according to the flesh, because we know this only results in death. But we by the empowering of the Holy Spirit bring an end to the sinful deeds of the body, and we walk in the fullness of the life God gives.

Crucify the flesh with the help of the Holy Spirit

vs 13, reveals the severity with which we deal with the flesh. We must put to death (crucify, kill) the sinful deeds of the body. This is a painful process.

The Lord Jesus described it as cutting off or plucking out what causes us to sin.

Matthew 5:29-30

29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

The apostle Peter referred to it as suffering in the flesh.

1 Peter 4:1-2

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

Paul expounds on the walk of the Spirit in Galatians 5, revealing that this is key to overcoming the works of the flesh. We quote a few verses from that passage to enhance our understanding of walking in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16,18,24,25

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

It is clear then that walking yielded to the Spirit is the answer to overcoming the lusts of the flesh.

Also, when we are led by the Spirit we no longer need to be under the law. We do not need the law, as we saw in Romans 7. The Holy Spirit will enable us to live pleasing to God. Instead of producing the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21), we produce the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). There is no law against bearing such wonderful fruit of the Spirit.

Of course in one sense crucifying the flesh is a life-long process. As long as we live in this body, we must continue to keep the flesh crucified. Keep it dead!

I Corinthians 9:27

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Bringing Romans 6-8 together

So now we must connect the dots, and bring the truths presented in Romans 6-8 all together. We know that our old man has been crucified and the power of sin over our lives has been broken, at the Cross. We are dead to sin. We know however that our flesh has problems because of the evil passions and desires of our soul and body. This is a weakness of our flesh and this is an area of struggle. However, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we present ourselves as slaves to God and our members as slaves to righteousness. With the help of the Holy Spirit we refuse to yield ourselves to sin or our members as instruments of sin. Now with the help of the Holy Spirit we begin to deal with the sinful deeds, the sinful passions and desires that have occupied their place in our soul and body for a long time. We put an end to these with the strength of the Spirit.

Later on in chapter 12, Paul refers to this as presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice. This is the final outcome of applying what God has done for us in Christ (identification truth) from Romans 6 combined with walking in the Spirit as revealed to us in Romans 8. We are able to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Applying these truths to overcome sin

Here are some practical things we can do:

- 1, Ask the Holy Spirit for strength to overcome specific weaknesses. Ask Him to help you. He is our Helper (John 14:26; John 15:26).
- 2, Stay in communion with Him throughout the day (2 Corinthians 13:14).
- 3, Walk filled with the Spirit, that is yielded to His influence, being led by Him, singing, worshipping, being thankful (Ephesians 5:18-21).
- 4, Meditate in God's Word. God's Word cleans out our lives (Psalm 119:9)
- 5, Resist evil thoughts, temptations by speaking God's Word the way Jesus did (Matthew 4:1-11).
- 6, Pray in tongues. Pray often (Matthew 26:41).
- 7, Submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7). Resist unclean spirits by the power of the Holy Spirit from specific areas of bondage and expel them out of your life, from areas of your soul (affections, desires, appetites, passions) and body where they may have been harbored for years

8, Be part of a good local church and receive sound Biblical teaching. Remember that the doctrine being delivered to you can set you free, heal, deliver and transform you (Romans 6:17-18).

9, Get others who are empowered by the Holy Spirit to pray over you to help bring deliverance from areas of bondage to sin. It is the anointing that breaks the yoke and removes burdens (Isaiah 10:27).

The Spirit Has Made Us Children, Heirs, Joint-Heirs

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

Romans 8:17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Paul share even more about what the Holy Spirit does for us. Life in the Spirit is not only about dealing with flesh and crucifying the sinful deeds of the body, but we can experience much more:

- ✓ We are led by the Spirit
- ✓ We receive adoption as children of God by the Spirit and hence call God "Father"
- ✓ We have the inner witness of the Spirit

And since we are adopted as children, and no one else has this privileged place, we are heirs of God and we are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. He has glorified us to this blessed and privileged place in His own family and kingdom. And there is great glory He has reserved for us, yet to be revealed.

Therefore we are not discouraged by the sufferings we have to go through in this present time.

[To write:...applying the leading and witness of the Spirit in daily life.....living as children, heirs and joint-heirs.....]

A Glorious Hope - Something To Look Forward To

Romans 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

Romans 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

Romans 8:21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

Romans 8:23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

Romans 8:24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

Romans 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

Here we see Paul revealing something we do not find revealed elsewhere in Scripture. This gives us an explanation into all the wrong we see in creation. Why are there deformities, abnormalities, corruption, decay, and all kinds of wrong things happening in the world that we say was created perfect by God? How did a perfect world end up in such a mess?

Creation was also given over to futility (depravity, perversity, frailty, inutility) and to the bondage of corruption (ruin, decay, destruction). This obviously happened at the Fall. So everything in creation also began to deviate from its state of perfection, going downhill into a state of ruin and decay.

However, God did not abandon creation. All this was done knowing that even creation will be delivered and brought into glorious liberty, just like the children of God.

So although we groan while we go through this, we have this hope, that our bodies will be redeemed, and we look forward with great expectation and endurance for this.

The Holy Spirit Helps Us Here And Now

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Romans 8:27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

vs 26, Likewise....meaning in a similar manner to all that the Spirit of God does in crucifying the flesh, in making us children, heirs and joint-heirs, in leading us, bearing witness with our spirits, in seeing us through the sufferings of this present time.....He also helps us in our weaknesses.

The word 'helps' is a big compound word in Greek which means 'to take hold of together with us against'. When the Holy Spirit helps us, He takes a hold of, together with us, in cooperation with us, assisting us, working together with us, against our weaknesses. What this weakness is, is not specified. It therefore is safe to take it, that the Holy Spirit will assist us against any and every weakness (feebleness of spirit, soul or body) that we need to contend with and overcome. When we are confronted with weakness, we do not know what to pray for as we should. The Holy Spirit helps us with this limitation in our prayer. We can also state that He would do this by taking hold of together with us against the weakness in prayer. That means we must pray and the Holy Spirit helps us to pray as we should, to overcome the weakness.

Praying with the Spirit

We can infer from what we know about the Early Church, about Paul, his ministry and his writings, that to pray with the Holy Spirit, involved praying in other tongues. When we pray in other tongues we are praying with the Spirit. We may find ourselves engaging in groanings that cannot be expressed in articulate speech. But as Paul reveals in vs 27, God who looks into our heart - the place where the prayer is being raised up - He understands what the Spirit is saying. When we pray with the Spirit we also pray for one another, and we pray perfectly according to God's will. [For more on this, please see APC's free publications on this subject available at apcwo.org/publications]

vs 28, And through all this, we have this wonderful assurance, that all things work together for good, for us who love Him and are called to His purposes. What an assurance! In the midst of the sufferings of this present time, in the midst of the corruption that is in the world, our struggles with our own weaknesses - in spite of all this - all things work together for good. We must just keep loving Him and walk according to His purpose.

And His purpose is for all of us to be conformed to the image of His Son.

God's Eternal Purpose

Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Romans 8:30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

These verses reveal God's eternal purpose which is to have a people who are in His image (the image of Jesus Christ) so that we could be His family.

All that took place happened on God prerogative and on His action alone. We were recipients and just responded by faith to His working.

God foreknew = to know beforehand, foresee. God saw through time and knew each of us even before the foundation of the world.

God predestined = to predetermine, to determine before, to ordain in advance. God's predetermined plan was for all of us to be conformed (fashioned like unto) to the image of His Son. This does not mean that God made the choice for us. Rather God knew in advance the choice we will make and hence predetermined that for all who will choose to follow Him, these people will have the privilege of being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

God called = call aloud, call forth. Then in time God called us. How and when His 'calling' touches our hearts and when and how we respond, differs in each of our lives.

God justified = made righteous. Those of us who respond to His call now have the joy of being made righteous. We have been justified in His sight and are in a standing in grace.

God glorified = made glorious. He shared His glory with us making us His own children, heirs and joint-heirs

So Who Can Be Against Us?

Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Romans 8:33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Romans 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

In view of all that we have considered thus far, what are we to say. One big shout - God is for us!

- 1, God is for us and no one can prevail against us.
- 2, God will freely give us all things.
- 3, No one can accuse us of the sins of the past. God has already justified us.
- 4, No one can condemn us of anything in the present or future. Jesus Christ paid the price and is at the right hand interceding for us.

As believers we need to have these four truths deep inside of us as our conviction. Something settled in our hearts. Something deep and personal that no one can shake.

NOTE: We must not misapply these Scriptures. Consider the following scenarios that are actually misapplications of the above four wonderful truths.

- 1, God is for me and no one can prevail against me - so I go against the president of my company, challenge him, and dare him to do anything against me.
- 2, God will freely give us all things - so I quit my job, stay at home and claim a big mansion, several luxury cars, and a plethora of other things.
- 3, No one can accuse us of the sins of the past. God has already justified us - so I do not take responsibility for my actions and make myself exempt from keeping the law of the land.
- 4, No one can condemn us of anything in the present or future. Jesus Christ paid the price and is at the right hand interceding for us - so I refuse to accept and receive any correction for my wrongdoing or mistakes and reject all attempts of others bringing correction to me as "condemnation".

Two Intercessors

It is interesting to note that in Romans 8, the apostle mentions the intercessory role of the Holy Spirit who dwells within the believer helping us pray to the Father (vs 26), and also the intercessory role of the Lord Jesus Christ who is representing us before the Father in heaven (vs 34). The Holy Spirit intercedes with us and for us to overcome weaknesses we face here on earth. The Lord Jesus intercedes for us to stand against any form of accusation, charge or condemnation brought against us by the adversary of our soul (Revelation 12:10-11).

What Can Separate Us From The Love of God?

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8:36 As it is written: "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE KILLED ALL DAY LONG; WE ARE ACCOUNTED AS SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER."

Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

Romans 8:39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There perhaps is no other passage of Scripture that captures so powerfully the intensity and faithfulness of God's love for us in Christ Jesus. No situation, no circumstance; nothing that man, angels or demons can do; nothing in heaven, earth or hell, can separate us from the love of God. And because of this great love, in everything, in every situation, we are more than conquerors. We are greater than the greatest conquerors the world has ever seen. We have more than victory. We have something that can never be taken away, destroyed or weakened. God's immeasurable love in Christ Jesus. This is something we must learn to rest ourselves in.

This chapter is a fitting "conclusion" in one sense. It is a finishing point, but it is also a starting point. It is an end to the journey out of sin and arriving at a place of victory over sin, a standing in grace and righteousness. It is also a starting point on how to live the Christian life. This we will get into, from Romans 12-16, after a few chapters (Romans 9-11) spent on another issue heavy on Paul's heart.

Reflection



Q1, Describe in your own words what it means to walk according to the Spirit? How do you conceptualize this and what would this look like in daily life?

Q2, Describe in your own words how you would go about crucifying the sinful deeds of the body by the Spirit. How do you conceptualize this and what would this look like in daily life?

Q3, Review Paul's grand summary in Romans 8:31-34. Reflect on the heart of God in the light of these verses. What aspects of God's heart towards us, do these verses reveal?