

**Romans 8:1-11**  
**March 22, 2015**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: How many of you wake up each day and think, “I am going to live victoriously in Christ today.” Let the day bring it!! [Let the class have some fun with this.]

Most of us probably don't live our lives with that frame of mind. In fact, most of us have probably fallen into the trap of going through life a bit in automatic pilot. But at least you and I know that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. We know that we have the Holy Spirit in us who empowers us to live our lives for Jesus. I'm thankful that we have the Spirit to help us.

But think about what your life was like before you knew Jesus, or even family members or friends who don't know Jesus. Do you remember what it was like to live a life apart from God? Can you imagine living a life void of God? It's hard to watch loved ones who are unsaved live with an emptiness in their hearts that only Christ can fill.

I wonder for those of us who are believers if we've taken for granted the power of the Holy Spirit who resides in us and enables us to do things we could never achieve in our own flesh. I wonder how often we live day by day trusting ourselves instead of the Spirit who empowers us to do God's will. If you're like me, it's too easy to gravitate toward trusting in my own flesh instead of giving everything over to the Lord and let Him empower me in ways I never imagined!

**Transition:** Today we are looking at the section of Paul's letter to the Romans who describes the spiritual freedoms we enjoy because of our union with Christ. In last week's lesson, Chp 7, he focused on the Law and how we continue to have an inner conflict between doing what the Spirit desires versus what we desire when we entertain sin. In chapter 8, you will see that the Spirit is mentioned 19 times because Paul wants us to really understand how the Spirit empowers us and works in us. As we go through chapter 8, I am proposing that:

Every born-again believer can live a victorious life in Christ by trusting all the **WAYS** that our Triune God works in us once we became His child. Let's pull out our binoculars and look for **WAYS** that our Triune God has given us. [Draw a triangle on the board and label each corner: God, Christ, Spirit]

**BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Rom 8:1-11]**

V.1:

- Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are **in Christ Jesus**,

V.2:

- because through Christ Jesus the law of the **Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.** [Therefore, the Law cannot claim you b/c you're free from the Law of sin...]

V.3:

- For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, [The Law cannot condemn you b/c Christ has already suffered that condemnation for us on the cross. The Law could not save, but only condemn]

V.4:

- in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. [The Law cannot control you b/c we live in the power of the Spirit.]
- **Note:** The legalist tries to obey God in his own strength and fails to measure up to the righteousness that God demands. The Spirit-led Christian, as he yields to the Lord, experiences the sanctifying work of the Spirit in his life. “For it is God that works in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13).

***Prep for v.5-8: Paul helps us see that the believer can live in victory by contrasting the saved and the unsaved.***

V.5:

- Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.
- **NOTE:** This does not mean that the unsaved person never does anything good, or that the believer never does anything bad. It means that the bent of their lives is different. The unsaved live for the flesh, while the believer lives for the Spirit.

V.6:

- The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; [The inner man is dead toward God and does not respond to the things of the Spirit. He may be moral, and even religious; but he lacks spiritual life.]

V.7:

- the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. [Rom 5:1 – Those who trust Christ have “peace with God,” but the unsaved are at war with God.]

V.8:

- Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. [Pleasing self vs pleasing God. To be unsaved without the Spirit is the lowest level of life.]

**You Have the Spirit:**

V.9:

- You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

V.10:

- But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

V.11:

- And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

**Process Observations/Questions:**

- Q: We are looking for WAYS that our Triune God works in us as God's children. Let's just go verse by verse and see if we can identify them. What ways do you see in these verses? [Review all highlighted phrases above and process them]

**LOOK:**

There is no need for the believer to be defeated. He can yield his body to the Spirit and by faith overcome the old nature. The Spirit of life will empower him. The Spirit of death will enable him to overcome the flesh. And the Spirit of adoption will enrich him and lead him into the will of God.

**Close in Prayer**

**Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 538–539). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

On January 6, 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt addressed Congress on the state of the war in Europe. Much of what he said that day has been forgotten. But at the close of his address, he said that he looked forward “to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.” He named them: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. These words are still remembered, even though their ideals have not yet been realized everywhere in the world.

Romans 8 is the Christian’s “Declaration of Freedom,” for in it Paul declares the four spiritual freedoms we enjoy because of our union with Jesus Christ. A study of this chapter shows the emphasis on the Holy Spirit, who is mentioned nineteen times. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17).

**Freedom from Judgment-No Condemnation (Rom. 8:1–4)**

Romans 3:20 shows the “therefore” of condemnation; but Romans 8:1 gives the “therefore” of *no* condemnation—a tremendous truth and the conclusion of a marvelous argument. (The words “who walk not ... etc.” do not belong here according to the best manuscripts. There are no conditions for us to meet.) The basis for this wonderful assurance is the phrase “in Christ Jesus.” In Adam, we were condemned. In Christ, there is no condemnation!

The verse does not say “no mistakes” or “no failures,” or even “no sins.” Christians *do* fail and make mistakes, and they do sin. Abraham lied about his wife; David committed adultery; Peter tried to kill a man with his sword. To be sure, they suffered consequences because of their sins, but they did not suffer condemnation.

The Law condemns; but the believer has a new relationship to the Law, and therefore he cannot be condemned. Paul made three statements about the believer and the Law, and together they add up to: *no condemnation*.

***The Law cannot claim you (v. 2).*** You have been made free from the law of sin and death. You now have life in the Spirit. You have moved into a whole new sphere of life in Christ. “The law of sin and death” is what Paul described in Romans 7:7–25. “The law of the Spirit of life” is described in Romans 8. The Law no longer has any jurisdiction over you: you are dead to the Law (Rom. 7:4) and free from the Law (Rom. 8:2).

***The Law cannot condemn you (v. 3).*** Why? Because Christ has already suffered that condemnation for you on the cross. The Law could not save; it can only condemn. But God sent His Son to save us and do what the Law could not do. Jesus did not come as an angel; He came as a man. He did not come “in sinful flesh,” for that would have made Him a sinner. He came *in the likeness* of sinful flesh, as a man. He bore our sins in His body on the cross.

The “law of double jeopardy” states that a man cannot be tried twice for the same crime. Since Jesus Christ paid the penalty for your sins, and since you are “in Christ,” God will not condemn you.

***The Law cannot control you (v. 4).*** The believer lives a righteous life, not in the power of the Law, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Law does not have the power to produce holiness; it can only reveal and condemn sin. But the indwelling Holy Spirit enables you to walk in obedience to God’s will. The righteousness that God demands in His Law is fulfilled in you

through the Spirit's power. In the Holy Spirit, you have life and liberty (Rom. 8:2) and "the pursuit of happiness" (Rom. 8:4).

The legalist tries to obey God in his own strength and fails to measure up to the righteousness that God demands. The Spirit-led Christian, as he yields to the Lord, experiences the sanctifying work of the Spirit in his life. "For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). It is this fact that leads to the second freedom we enjoy as Christians.

### **Freedom from Defeat-No Obligation (Rom. 8:5-17)**

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (Rom. 8:12). There is no obligation to the old nature. The believer can live in victory. In this section, Paul described life on three different levels; and he encouraged his readers to live on the highest level.

**"You have not the Spirit" (vv. 5-8).** Paul is not describing two kinds of Christians, one carnal and one spiritual. He is contrasting the saved and the unsaved. There are four contrasts.

*In the flesh—in the Spirit (v. 5).* The unsaved person does not have the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:9) and lives *in* the flesh and *for* the flesh. His mind is centered on the things that satisfy the flesh. But the Christian has the Spirit of God within and lives in an entirely new and different sphere. His mind is fixed on the things of the Spirit. This does not mean that the unsaved person never does anything good, or that the believer never does anything bad. It means that the bent of their lives is different. One lives for the flesh, the other lives for the Spirit.

*Death—life (v. 6).* The unsaved person is alive physically, but dead spiritually. The inner man is dead toward God and does not respond to the things of the Spirit. He may be moral, and even religious; but he lacks spiritual life. He needs "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2).

*War with God—peace with God (vv. 6-7).* In our study of Romans 7, we have seen that the old nature rebels against God and will not submit to God's Law. Those who have trusted Christ enjoy "peace with God" (Rom. 5:1), while the unsaved are at war with God. " 'There is no peace,' saith the Lord, 'unto the wicked' " (Isa. 48:22).

*Pleasing self—pleasing God (v. 8).* To be "in the flesh" means to be lost, outside Christ. The unsaved person lives to please himself and rarely if ever thinks about pleasing God. The root of sin is selfishness—"I will" and not "Thy will."

To be unsaved and not have the Spirit is the lowest level of life. But a person need not stay on that level. By faith in Christ he can move to the second level.

**"You have the Spirit" (vv. 9-11).** "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. 8:9). The evidence of conversion is the presence of the Holy Spirit within, witnessing that you are a child of God (Rom. 8:16). Your body becomes the very temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Even though the body is destined to die because of sin (unless, of course, the Lord returns), the Spirit gives life to that body today so that we may serve God. If we should die, the body will one day be raised from the dead, because the Holy Spirit has sealed each believer (Eph. 1:13-14).

What a difference it makes in your body when the Holy Spirit lives within. You experience new life, and even your physical faculties take on a new dimension of experience. When evangelist D.L. Moody described his conversion experience, he said: "I was in a new world. The next morning the sun shone brighter and the birds sang sweeter ... the old elms waved their branches for joy, and all nature was at peace." Life in Christ is abundant life.

**Witmer, J. A. (1985). Romans. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 469–470). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

*D. Power for sanctification (8:1–11).*

8:1. The question naturally arises, Must a believer spend his whole life on earth frustrated by ongoing defeats to indwelling sin? (7:21–25) Is there no power provided to achieve victory? The answer to the first question is no and to the second, yes. In chapter 8, Paul described the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God who is the source of divine power for sanctification and the secret for spiritual victory in daily living. But first Paul reminded his readers that **therefore**—since deliverance is “through Jesus Christ our Lord” (7:25)—**no condemnation** (*katakrima*, “punishment”) awaits **those who are in Christ Jesus**, as a result of their faith and identification with Him (cf. 6:13; John 5:24). They are justified, declared righteous, and therefore stand in His grace (Rom. 5:2) and not under His wrath (1:18), and possess eternal life (5:17–18, 21). Christ is the sphere of safety for all who are identified with Him by faith. In the better Greek manuscripts, 8:1 ends here. The words “who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit” were probably transcribed from verse 4.

8:2. The word **because** (*gar*, “for”), connects **through** (lit., “in”) **Christ Jesus** in this verse with the identical phrase “in Christ Jesus” in verse 1. (In the Gr. word order of the sentence in v. 2, “in Christ Jesus” follows **the law of the Spirit of life**.) If 7:7–25 is Paul’s testimony of his struggle as a believer with indwelling sin, then “the Spirit of life” is the Holy Spirit of God, not the spirit of the new nature each believer receives. The Holy Spirit is the Member of the Godhead who regenerates every believing individual (Titus 3:5) and bestows new life (John 3:5–8), the resurrection life of Christ (Rom. 6:4, 8, 11). Romans 8:2 has the second mention of the Holy Spirit since 5:5, but He is mentioned 18 more times through 8:27. This law (“principle”; cf. 7:23) **set me free** (the Gr. aorist tense suggests a once-for-all act of freedom at salvation) **from the law of sin and death**. That principle is called the principle “of sin and death” because sin, as Paul said repeatedly, produces death (5:15, 17, 21; 6:16, 21, 23; 7:10–11, 13; 8:6, 10, 13). As the principle of *sin* it contrasts with the Spirit; as the principle that brings *death* it also contrasts with the Spirit who gives life. For the pronoun translated **me** some Greek manuscripts read “us” and others “you” (sing.). The difference is incidental; the truth stated applies to every believer.

8:3–4. Having stated the fact of freedom, Paul then explained how it is achieved. He declared again the impossibility of attaining freedom over sin through **the** (Mosaic) **Law**. It **was powerless to** free from sin. Not that the Law was weak in itself (as many translations suggest), for it was good (7:12). But because of **sinful human nature**, the Law could not deliver from sin. The words “sinful nature” translate *sarx* (lit., “flesh”), which can mean either human sinful corruption or human weakness (cf. 7:5, 18, 25; 8:4–5, 8–9, 12–13).

**God** accomplished deliverance over sin, however, **by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man** (lit., “likeness of flesh of sin”). Jesus was sent not in sinful flesh but *in the likeness* of it. His human nature was protected and preserved from the indwelling principle of sin that has plagued all other human beings since Adam (cf. Luke 1:35). He was also sent, literally “concerning or for sin” (*peri harmartias*, not as the NIV has it, **to be a sin offering**). In other words He came to do something about sin. What He did was to condemn it; by His death on the cross, **He condemned sin** (*katekrinen*, “passed a judicial sentence on it”; cf. *katakrima*, “punishment,” Rom. 8:1) so that those in Christ are *not* condemned. The goal of this was so **that the righteous requirements of the Law**—a life of holiness (Lev. 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:7)—could

**be fully met** as believers **do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit**. The provision of deliverance from the power of sin is through the death of Jesus Christ, but experiencing it in one's daily conduct comes through the controlling power of the Holy Spirit.

8:5–8. In these verses Paul answered the implied question, What does it mean to **live according to the sinful nature** and according to the Spirit? He explained that the former means having **their minds set on** (*phronousin*, pres. tense, “keep on being mindful of or aspiring for”) **what that nature desires**. An unbeliever cares only for his sinful interests and has no regard for God. The exact opposite is true of **those who live according to the Spirit**. They aspire for or **have their minds set on what the Spirit desires**. The sinful nature and the indwelling Spirit are in conflict (Gal. 5:17).

But what difference does it make whether a person is mindful of the flesh or of the Spirit? Again Paul explained. **The mind** (*phronēma*, “mind-set, aspirations”; cf. Rom. 8:6b–7) **of sinful man** (*tēs sarkos*, “of the flesh”) **is death**, that is, it is equivalent to death, or it leads to death in all its forms (physical and spiritual). On the other hand **the mind** (*phronēma*, “mind-set, aspirations”) **controlled by the Spirit** (lit., “of the Spirit”) **is life** (eternal resurrection life) **and peace** immediately (5:1) and ultimately. In 8:7–8 Paul focused only on **the sinful mind** (*phronēma tēs sarkos*, “mind-set, aspirations of the sin nature”; cf. v. 6) to explain why he said (v. 6) that it ends up in death: (1) **It is hostile to God** (cf. 5:10); (2) **it does not submit** (pres. tense, “is not submitting”) **to God's Law**; and (3) **it cannot do so**. The result is that **those controlled by the sinful nature cannot** (pres. tense, “are not able to”) **please God**. The unsaved lead lives that are totally void of spiritual life and ability. A believer, then, who gives in to his sin nature is acting like the unsaved (cf. 1 Cor. 3:3).

8:9–11. After speaking objectively about the two types of persons, Paul now addressed his readers directly. **You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit** (lit., “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit”), **if** (*eiper*, “if, as is the fact”; cf. v. 17) **the Spirit of God lives** (pres. tense, “is dwelling”) **in you** (cf. v. 11). The indwelling Holy Spirit gives a believer a totally different life (2 Cor. 5:17). The opposite, however, is also true: **If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ** (lit., “this one is not of Him”). Since only the Holy Spirit gives spiritual life, a person cannot be related to Christ apart from the Spirit.

The interchange of the titles “Spirit of God” and “Spirit of Christ” argues for the deity of Jesus Christ. This statement also makes it clear that the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is the identifying mark of a believer in Jesus Christ (cf. 1 John 3:24; 4:13). Another significant fact is that Romans 8:10 equates the indwelling presence of Christ (**Christ is in you**) with the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (vv. 9, 11). This adds further support to the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. Verse 10, like verses 9b and 11, is a conditional statement in which in Greek the condition is assumed to be true; **if** can be understood as “since” or “because.” As a result of Christ's indwelling presence, **your body is dead** (or, “subject to death”; cf. 7:24) **because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness**. Because of God's imputed righteousness, a believer is alive spiritually. The eternal, spiritual life of God is implanted by the indwelling Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ here and now, even though a believer's body is mortal.

Then Paul wrote about an even better promise (8:11). Since God **raised Jesus from the dead** (lit., “out from dead ones”; cf. 4:24; 6:4), God promises believers in whom His **Spirit ... is living** (cf. 8:9) that He **will also give life to their mortal bodies through His Spirit**. In other words, God promises spiritual resurrection life now (6:4, 8, 11) for each believer's mortal body

and physical resurrection in the future for that mortal body (6:5; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:42, 53; 2 Cor. 4:14).

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (pp. 1691 – 1693). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**8:9** Paul identified the indispensable constituent of those in Christ: the Holy Spirit (vv. 15–17). There are no Spiritless Christians. They are no longer “in the flesh” but are freed from a merely human, powerless life. The Spirit grants spiritual life to believers at the point of salvation. The Spirit indwells believers (v. 11) and provides to believers the capacity to please God and to put to death the sinful behaviors opposed to the life of Christ (v. 13).

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