

Start your study here

February 17, 2008

Questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why, How. . .	Personal Application with 'SPECS?'
Repeated Alike Different Accentuated Related	Sin to be forsaken? Promises to be claimed? Examples to be followed? Commands to be obeyed? Stumbling block or hindrance to be avoided?

Romans 8:1-11

1 There is therefore
now

no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life
has set you free in Christ Jesus
from the law of sin and death.

3 For God has done
what the law,
weakened by the flesh,
could not do.

By sending his own Son
in the likeness of sinful flesh
and for sin,

4 he condemned sin in the flesh,
in order that the righteous requirement of the law
might be fulfilled in us,
who walk
not according to the flesh
but according to the Spirit.

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
set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death,
but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.
For the mind that is set on the flesh
is hostile to God,
for it does not submit to God's law;
indeed, it cannot.

8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit,
if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.
Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ
does not belong to him.

10 But if Christ is in you,
although the body is dead because of sin,
the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

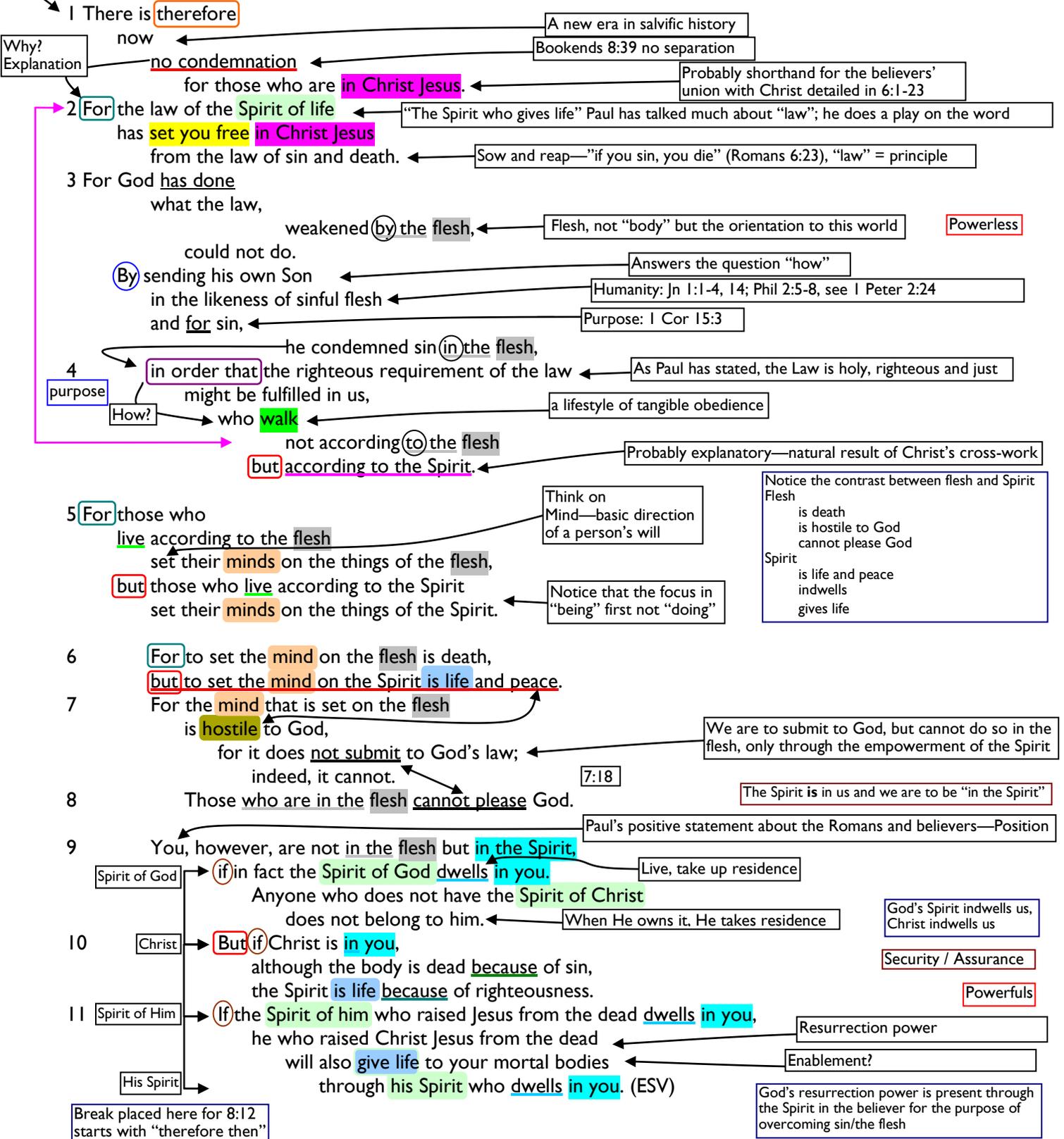
11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,
he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead
will also give life to your mortal bodies
through his Spirit who dwells in you. (ESV)

Review: Even though the believer has been identified with Christ, and is therefore free from the legal bondage of sin, the believer is helpless to obey God in (by) himself (through the Law or his own effort).
 Observations: 1) the Trinity 2) contrasts
 Key Question: How do we begin to be transformed?
 Encourage people to spend time dwelling on the wonderful truths of the whole chapter

"Spirit of" statements	
Spirit of life	8:2, 10
Spirit of God	8:9
Spirit of Him	8:11
Spirit of Christ	8:9
His Spirit	8:11

Question of context: ch 5 (because we are saved by grace) or 6:1-14 (because we are free from sin) or ch 7 (in spite of sins)?
 On the basis of justification (5:1-11) or on the basis of sanctification (8:1-2)?

Romans 8:1-11



Working Idea (this is to help you see how the main idea was developed)

We were saved in order that
the righteous requirements of the law (requirements of God's character)
might be fulfilled in us
who walk
not according to the flesh
but according to the Spirit

How do we walk?

By resurrection power—life giving power of the Spirit to our dead bodies.

Main idea:

We are saved to walk in the power of the Spirit.

Teaching idea:

Encourage your class over the next four weeks to read and meditate on the wonders of this chapter.

Free from condemnation
Indwelt by the Spirit
Adopted by God
Destined for glory

Help, Hope, Heading

It will be helpful to use this first lesson in Romans 8 to pull the thoughts of Romans 6-8 together.

In light of our union with Christ—in His death and resurrection—we have been transferred from the domain of sin to the domain of righteousness. We no longer are bound by sin, under its authority or obligated to its impulses.

But we are not neutral. We are freed from slavery to sin, in order to become slaves of God.

But we still struggle with sin.

Romans 8 provides the power source for the process of sanctification which enables those freed from sin, yet who still long to do what is right while feeling the pull of sin.

Chapters 6 and 7 create a tension between who we are (position, indicative) and what we do (practice, imperative). We need to appreciate this tension so that we can appreciate the solution. When we understand the struggle that is created, we can appreciate part of the solution—yielding control to the Spirit.

If we don't experience the struggle, our yielding—our surrender—may not be all it needs to be.

In chapter 8 we are told again who we are, Whose we are and how we can then walk accordingly even through difficulty.

Introduction

The struggle explained in Romans 7 may leave many of us wondering—are things hopeless? What we will learn from Romans 8 is that in contrast to the despair of chapter 7, the Christian life is not intended to be a life of defeat or of just barely winning—we are not saved to live mediocre lives.

Review

Even though the believer has been identified with Christ, and is therefore free from the legal bondage of sin, the believer is helpless to obey God in (by) himself (through the Law or his own effort).

As “much as we wish to live free from our old master, our fleshly nature still pulls us to do evil. The tug-of-war within our hearts rages, with the flesh too often gaining the upper hand. The Law can't help us gain victory over sin. And **we can't get victory ourselves.**”¹

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, *Classic Truths for Triumphant Living*, (Study Guide, Dallas: Word Pub, 1995) .p. 33.

“If in Romans 7 Paul had been preoccupied with the place of the law, in Romans 8 his preoccupation is with the **work of the Spirit**. . . . The essential contrast which Paul paints is between the weakness of the law and the power of the Spirit. For over against indwelling sin, which is the reason the law is unable to help us in our moral struggle (7:17, 20), Paul now sets the indwelling Spirit, who is both our *liberator* now from ‘the law of sin and death’ (8:2) and the *guarantee* of resurrection and eternal glory in the end (8:11, 17, 23). **Thus the Christian life is essentially life in the Spirit, that is to say, a life which is animates, sustained, directed and enriched by the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit true Christian discipleship would be inconceivable, indeed impossible.**”²

Section Preview

Overview³

- The necessity of sanctification -- Romans 6
- The impossibility of sanctification -- Romans 7
- The certainty of sanctification -- Romans 8

While this gives us a fair approximation of the flow of Paul’s argument, it is not as precise as it should be. Almost always, Paul provides us with clear structural clues to the way in which he has developed his argument. Such is the case here. The question, “**What shall we say, then?**,” appears three times in chapters 6-8 (6:1; 7:7; 8:31). In the first two instances, his question is a misconception of Christian doctrine and practice, based upon an abuse of the truths he has just taught. In both cases, Paul’s response is a strong and immediate, “**May it never be!**” (6:2; 7:7). In the third instance, however, Paul himself speaks out in response to the truths he has just laid down, showing us the proper response to the provisions which God has made for our sanctification. The structure of our text can thus be summarized in this way:

- The necessity of personal righteousness -- Romans 6:1--7:6
 - ♦ Proof from our “baptism” -- Romans 6:3-14
 - ♦ Proof from slavery -- Romans 6:15-23
 - ♦ Proof from marriage and death -- Romans 7:1-6
- The source of our problem and God’s Solution-- Romans 7:7--8:30
- The appropriate response to these things -- Romans 8:31-39

Thematic Correlations in Romans 6–8

Positive appeal of 6:1–7:6 to live godly corresponds with 8:1-17

Within the appeal of 8:1-4 corresponds to 6:19-22

Personal struggle in 7:7-25 correlates to the struggle (and adds a cosmic dimension) in 8:18-39

Passage Preview

Notice the book ends of the chapter

8:1 No Condemnation (Standing)

Middle section: No Defeat (State)

8:39 No Separation (Standing)

There are a number of ways to outline this chapter:

Thematic Outline: The fruits of God’s work of sanctification in the believer

1. Victory Today 8:1-17
 - Overcoming sin by the power of the Spirit
2. Glory to Come 8:18-30
 - In spite of suffering
3. Fellowship with God Forever 8:31-39

²Swindoll, p.33, quoting John Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News for the World*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994, p. 216. (italic added)

³Robert Deffinbaugh, ©1996 by Community Bible Chapel, 210 Abrams Road, Richardson, TX 75081, <http://www.bible.org>. Lesson 4

- 8:1-27 The ministry of the Holy Spirit
- 8:28-30 The ministry of the Sovereign God
- 8:31-39 The spontaneous praise of the secure saint

Now comes the good news: those who are organically connected with Christ are not only not condemned (8:1), but also are set free from the law which could only produce sin and death (8:2). How is this accomplished? By the Spirit of God who enables believers to gain progressive victory over sin (8:1-8), death (8:9-11), and slavery (8:12-17). The Spirit is not an external, objective, cold standard, but a warm, internal witness to our hearts that God is our Father (8:14-17)—proving that we are organically connected to God the Father, not just judiciously excused by God the Judge.⁴

Finally, Paul concludes this section by discussing the goal of sanctification (8:18-39), which is our future glory—based, as it is, both on forensic justification and organic union with Christ (8:28-30). This glory needs to be kept in mind especially during the present sufferings we face simply because the world is not a perfect place (8:18-27). But lest anyone give up, thinking that his participation in glory is in jeopardy, Paul concludes with a hymn of assurance (8:31-39).⁵

To overcome sin believers need the help of the Holy Spirit (8:1–17). He not only helps believers obey God but also gives special aid to those who suffer for Christ (8:18–30). However, since suffering may cause believers to doubt God’s favor, Paul ends the chapter by affirming those who suffer for Christ that God will never abandon them (8:31–39).⁶

Living by the Spirit 8:1-17	
8:1-4	The Holy Spirit, God’s Provision for (1) escape from condemnation, and (2) enablement to fulfill the Law
8:5-11	The necessity of walking in the Spirit, rather than walking in the flesh
8:5-8	Why walking in the flesh cannot please God
8:9-11	Why walking in the Spirit will please God
8:12-17	Paul’s words of application
8:14-17	Transition—The sons of God will suffer
8:18-27	Truths which sustain the suffering sons of God
8:18	The benefits of sonship outweigh its sufferings
8:19-22	Suffering is the experience of all creation
8:23-25	Suffering is a prerequisite to sonship
8:26-27	The Holy Spirit ministers to us in our suffering

This section will help us answer the questions—

In light of sin is the believer’s relationship with God secure?

Summary

Chapter 8 has 19 references to the Spirit—it is the Spirit that enables the believer to walk in a manner that pleases God.

Catch Phrase / Key Phrase:

“in Christ” “in the Spirit” “in you”

⁴ Paul here seems to be subtly indicating that the new covenant is now operative in believers, for we each know God through his Spirit. Thus the kingdom has been inaugurated in the present age. Further, in 8:16 *summarturevw* is used to describe the Spirit bearing witness to our spirit that we are God’s children. Although *sun-* prefixed verbs often carry the connotation of association, this particular verb is merely a strengthened form of *marturevw* (so BAGD), indicating that we, not God, are the recipients of his testimony (for further help, see my essay on Romans 8:16 and the Witness of the Spirit).

⁵ Daniel B. Wallace, *Romans: Introduction, Argument, and Outline*, bible.org

⁶ René A. Lopez, *Romans Unlocked Power to Deliver* (Springfield, Missouri: 21st Century, 2005). 158.

Outline

I. Doctrine: Justification—The Righteousness of God Revealed 1:18–11:36

God's Gracious Provision of Righteousness is Acquired by Faith in Jesus Christ

A. The Need of It 1:18–3:20 *What a Mess!*

*The Righteousness of God Revealed in Condemnation: The Universal Need of Righteousness
The Bad News: All condemned for sin—no exceptions*

B. What It Is 3:21–5:21

What a God—The Way of Salvation

Justification: The imputation of righteousness to all who believe

C. How It Affects Me 6:1–8:39

Sanctification: The Impartation of Righteousness

The Purpose of Salvation: Conformity to Christ's Image

	6:1 Principle	7:7 Practice	8:1 Power
Key Subject	Surrender	Self	Spirit

1. Believer and Sin 6:1-23
 - a. Believer's Freedom from Sin's Domination 6:1-14
 - b. Believer's Enslavement to God's Righteousness 6:15-23
2. Believer and the Law 7:1-25
 - a. Believer's Freedom from the Law 7:1-6
 - b. The Law's Relationship to Sin and Death 7:7-25
 - (1) Relationship between Sin and the Law 7:7-12
The Law being holy reveals the sinfulness of sin
 - (2) The Great Conflict: Struggle for Victory 7:12-25
The Law being good is not the cause of death but sin is
3. Believer and the Holy Spirit 8:1-39
The believer's relationship to the Holy Spirit gives assurance of victory in Christian life.⁷

To have victory over sin—you must live in the Spirit.

 - a. Victory Today: Living by the Spirit 8:1-17
 - (1) Believer's Freedom in Christ through the Spirit 8:1-11
 - (a) Life in the Spirit freed believers from condemnation 8:1-4
 - (b) Life in the Spirit contrasted to life in the flesh 8:5-11

Power over sin 8:1-8
Power over death 8:9-11

Exposition / Key Exegetical Issues to be aware of



Think about it



Talk about it

Potential Interactive Questions

What is the greatest truth of Christianity?

Emmanuel—God with us

Easter—the resurrection and eternal life

Salvation through faith alone

The character and attributes of God—Trinity, infinity, holiness, etc

Or

No Condemnation

No Separation

in spite our continual struggle with sin?

Why were we saved?

(See 8:4 “in order that”)

⁷Dr. Harold W. Hoehner's outline (DTS, Spring 1991, Exegesis of Romans 206, unpublished class notes)

8:1-33

ROMANS 8 HAS been called the “inner sanctuary within the cathedral of Christian faith.” It sets before us some of the most wonderful blessings we enjoy as believers: being **free** from God’s condemnation, **indwelt** by God’s own Spirit, **adopted** into his family, **destined** for resurrection and glory, and **full of hope** because of God’s love for us and because of his promise to bring good to us in every circumstance of life.⁸

Remember as we move into this section on living by the Spirit, that Paul in chapter 7 was showing the despair of an individual who was attempting to live godly (striving to keep the law) but was unable to. The individual in chapter 7 was not just “wishing” but was “working.”

8:1-11 Believer’s Freedom in Christ through the Spirit

The believer has been freed from the condemnation of sin (guilt and power) and death

Freedom from Guilt and Power of sin

“God not only frees the believer from sin through the work of Christ on the cross, but He helps the believer have victory over sin by the indwelling Holy Spirit.”⁹

8:1-4 Life in the Spirit freed believers from condemnation

In 3:21–5:21 Paul explained justification. How one could be declared righteous before a Holy God even though he was a sinner. In chapter 6 he said we are freed from the legal bonds of sin. In chapter 7, he shows the frustrations of living in a battle with sin. In 8:1-4 Paul answers the question: **What happens to the sins the believer commits after being declared righteous.**

Before Paul deals with living in the Spirit—he reviews what he has taught to this point, with three basic principles. (**Eternally Secure, Internally Freed, Positionally Perfect**)

The solution lies in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Christ’s work on the cross provides the basis for the **deliverance of believers from condemnation**, while the Holy Spirit supplies the **power for conquering sin** so that the law can now be kept (8:1–4). Verses 5–11 explain further why it is that believers are enabled to fulfill the law: they are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The natural proclivity of the flesh is to think on the things of the flesh and carry out its desires. Similarly, those who have the Spirit do what the Spirit desires. Paul is aware of the tension between the **already and not yet**; thus he reminds believers that the resurrection of the body is still future (8:10–11).¹⁰

8:1-2

No Condemnation (in relationship to the whole of salvation)

κατάκριμα (*katakrima*)

the punishment following sentence, *punishment, doom*¹¹

to judge someone as definitely guilty and thus subject to punishment—“to condemn, to render a verdict of guilt, condemnation.”^{10 12}

⁸ Douglas J. Moo, NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: *Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) 247.

⁹ Irving L. Jensen, *Romans: A Self-Study Guide*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1969, p. 73.

¹⁰ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998). 395.

¹¹ William Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, c1979). 412.

¹⁰ The series κατακρίνω, κατάκρισις, and κατάκριμα probably differs slightly in meaning from καταδικάζω and καταδίκη in that the first series focuses more upon the actual process of judging rather than upon the verdict, but it is not possible to determine this from existing NT contexts.

¹² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament : Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:555.

God and Jesus judge (Jn. 5:22, 29f. and often; Acts 6:10). They are called *krites*, judge (2 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 12:23; Jas. 4:12; 5:9; Acts 10:42), and God's word is called *kritikos*, a discerner (Heb. 4:12). When the passive form is used, the reference is similarly to the activity of the divine judge (Rev. 11:8). Christ judges the living and the dead (2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5f.), the secrets of men (Rom. 2:16), the world (Acts 17:31), every man according to his works (1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 20:12 f. cf. 2 Cor. 5:10). The noun *krima* is used in the same way: Jesus has come to bring judgment (Jn. 9:39); God's judgments are unsearchable (Rom. 11:33); his activity as a judge begins with the church (1 Pet. 4:17); future and eternal judgment is in his hands (Acts 24:25; Heb. 6:2). Divine judgment often includes punishment (Jn. 3:17f.; Rom. 2:12; 3:6; 1 Cor. 11:13f.; 2 Thess. 2:12; Heb. 10:30; 13:4; Jas. 5:9). God's condemnation is just (Rom. 2:2f.; 3:8) and swift (2 Pet. 2:3). The prince of this world is condemned (Jn. 16:11). Divine condemnation, issuing, as the word implies, in damnation, is expressed by *katakrima* (Rom. 5:16, 18; 8:1). Damnation is also expressed by the verb *katakrino*, which can have God, as well as men, for its subject: God condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3). He has turned Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes and condemned them (2 Pet. 2:6). When we are judged, we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world (1 Cor. 11:32); cf. also the passive in Mk. 16:16 and Rom. 14:23. *krisis* is frequently used synonymously with *krima*, judgment: the judgment of God or of Christ (Jn. 5:30; 2 Thess. 1:5); the day (hour) of judgment (Matt. 10:15 and often; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7; 1 Jn. 4:17; Jude 6; Rev. 14:7; 1 Tim. 5:24; Heb. 9:27). Divine judgment brings separation (Jn. 3:19) and destruction (Heb. 10:27). He who hears Jesus' word and believes him does not come into judgment (Jn. 5:24). The dead who have done evil will arise to judgment (Jn. 5:29).¹³

No condemnation

Legal

Because we are declared righteous 5:1-12

Positional

Because we are dead to sin and alive in Christ 6:1-14

Practical

In spite of

past sins 1:18-3:20

present sins 7:1-25

Position and Practice

For

Those who are in Christ Jesus 8:1

“freed from the law of sin and death”

Those in who the Spirit is 8:11

“to give life to mortal bodies”

The believer who trusts in Christ is justified, declared righteous, and therefore stand in God 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.¹⁴

Justification—Free from the guilt of sin

Guilt—penalty, justification frees you from the guilty verdict

Guilty feeling—how you feel about your sins (It has been dealt with, now live.)

Sanctification—Free from the enslaving power of sin

8:3-4

8:4

Verse 4 now conveys the purpose (*ἵνα, hina*, in order that) of the judicial work of Jesus; the intention was to produce fulfillment of the law. The logical relationship in verses 1–2 is as follows: There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ, *because* the Holy Spirit has set them free from the powers of sin and death. **The logic seems to be that a transformed life is evidence that believers are not guilty in God's law court.** So too, in verses 3–4 the judgment-bearing work of the Son on the cross in which he received God's penalty for sin was intended to bring about obedience to the law. The judicial work of Christ is the basis of the transformed life of his people. The forensic and transformative works of

¹³ *New International Dict of NT Theology*. Pradis CD-ROM:Articles Judgment, Judge, Deliver, Judgment Seat / *krivma*.

¹⁴ BKC

Christ should not be wrenched apart and played off against one another. The work of Christ on the cross freed believers from both the penalty and the power of sin.¹⁵

Walk according to the Spirit

Walking indicates a lifestyle of real obedience

Teachers: The next section discusses the issues of security and assurance raised by the statement in 8:1 “no condemnation” and seeks to deal with the topic within the context.

We will again deal with the issues of security and assurance at the end of chapter 8. There we will build on this material (review and repeat many of the concepts) and deal with, what for many, is the thorny question of “can someone choose to stop believing, choose to stop being a Christian?”

See also the appendix, which is included in this lesson for your benefit but will be more helpful with the lesson on Romans 8:31-39.

Theological Issue: Security and Assurance

Romans 8:1 “no condemnation” sees to refer to the whole of our salvation process. It includes justification and sanctification.

So it seems appropriate to deal with the issue of the security and assurance of the believer.

In Romans 5:1 Paul provided a great statement about the eternal security of the believer. Having been justified by God—having declared righteous by the redemptive substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus (3:21-26) an individual who responds in faith to God’s offer of salvation (4) is saved, has peace with God.

So when we see the great declaration of Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (ESV) we may assume he is included the truths of Romans 3:21-26, Romans 5:1ff. The “no condemnation” is related to removal of the penalty of sin (see previous uses in 2:1, 27; 3:7-8; 5:16-18 and following 8:34 [14:23 is a bit different]).

But in the context of Romans 8 (that is in the section on sanctification Romans 6-8 and particularly at this point in the argument), we must ask the question—is Paul stating that there is no condemnation to those who are “being sanctified”?

What follows is a section from a theological journal trying to do justice to the context of Romans 8:1

Why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ (Rom 8:1)? For card-carrying evangelicals the reflexive response is: because Christ died in their place and for their sins. Justification through the substitutionary atonement of Christ is one of the first precepts drummed into new believers, and Romans 8:1 is often the proof-text employed to establish the point.¹ Yet while the meaning of this verse may seem self-evident, commentators have considerable trouble with it.

The crux of the problem is that 8:1–2 appears to ground escape from condemnation not in the death of Christ as a substitute for sinners, but in the work of the Spirit in transforming sinners: “for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed you from the law of sin and death” (Rom 8:2).² At first blush, this seems to suggest that justification depends on sanctification.

¹⁵ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 404.

¹ E.g. L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1958) 514; M. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983–85) 953.

² There are three variants for the pronoun in 8:2, but most commentators adopt “you” as the more difficult reading and in view of its wide manuscript support (rather than “me” or “us”). For discussion, see C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, 1979) 1:376–377; B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (3d ed.; Stuttgart: United Bible Society, 1971) 516. Sanday and Headlam favor “me” (W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [ICC; 5th ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980] 191). Barrett appears to lean toward the omission of any pronoun, but sums up

Basically one of three approaches is taken to harmonize this passage with traditional Protestant doctrine.³ One interprets 8:2 as a reference to the death of Christ for sinners so that condemnation is averted through justification rather than through sanctification.⁴ The second solution accepts 8:2 as a reference to sanctification, but suggests that “condemnation” in 8:1 refers not to a judicial verdict but to “penal servitude.”⁵ The third approach accepts what is probably the most natural reading of the two clauses but reconfigures the relationship between them: the most popular suggestion is that sanctification is the consequence—rather than the grounds—of justification.⁶

Theologically, each of these propositions is flawless: that is what makes them feasible. Justification is grounded in the substitutionary atonement of Christ, not in transformational righteousness (Rom 3:21–26). Sin does lead to servitude (Rom 6:16). Sanctification is the outgrowth and evidence of justification (Rom 6:5–8). But that very theological legitimacy raises the specter of eisegesis: do these solutions arise from the text or do they impose the clarities of dogmatics onto the text?

Both the truth and the centrality of each of these tenets is assumed in what follows. But reading these doctrines into Romans 8:1–2 is an unnecessary and unhelpful expedient. The apparent meaning of this text must be sustained: “no condemnation” (8:1) retains its usual forensic sense; the liberation of 8:2 refers to transformational, rather than alien, righteousness; and, *gar* (“because” [NIV]; 8:2) grounds the former in the latter.⁷ **According to 8:1–2, Christians escape condemnation because they have been transformed by the Spirit; that is, because they now live in such a way that condemnation is no longer warranted.** All the same, this passage is amenable to historic Protestant theology.¹⁶

the issue admirably: “Fortunately the variation makes no difference whatever to the meaning of the sentence” (C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* [BNTC; rev. ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991] 144 n. 1).

³ Any attempt to categorize interpretations runs the risks of oversimplification and artificial harmonization, so these differentiations should be considered rough approximations. The perplexity created by this passage is evident from the fact that within the three approaches cited below, there are at least seven variations (even though the sample is far from exhaustive).

⁴ Barrett, *Romans* 145; D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans. Exposition of Chapters 7:1–8:4. The Law: Its Functions and Limits* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973) 269–270; J. MacArthur, Jr., *Security in the Spirit: Study Notes Romans 8* (Panorama City, CA: Word of Grace, 1985) 1. Moo speaks of realm transfer and finds 8:1–2 to provide the solution to the entire complex of problems described in Romans 6–7: nonetheless he remarks, “The condemnation that our sins deserve has been poured out on Christ, our sin-bearer; that is why ‘there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus’ (v. 1)” (D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996] 473, 477, 481).

⁵ F. F. Bruce paraphrases,

There is therefore no reason why they should go on in a life of penal servitude, bound to carry out the dictates of the tyrannical law of sin and death. Christ dwells in them by his Spirit, and his Spirit infuses into them a new principle—the law of life—which is stronger than indwelling sin and sets them free from its tyranny.

(*Romans* [TNTC; 2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985] 149; cf. B. C. Wintle, “Justification in Pauline Thought,” *Right with God: Justification in the Bible and the World* [ed. D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992] 68).

Often where this interpretation is adopted, it is an explicit solution to the perceived theological problem. Thus Murray explains:

In this context ... the apostle is not dealing with justification and the expiatory aspect of Christ’s work but with sanctification and with what God has done in Christ to deliver us from the power of sin. Hence what is thrust into the foreground in the terms of “no condemnation” is ... freedom from the enslaving power of sin.

That is, if 8:2 refers to sanctification, then *a priori* 8:1 cannot refer to justification, for the latter is not grounded in the former (J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* [NICNT; 2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968] 1:274–275).

⁶ Stott describes sanctification as the “fruit” of justification (J. Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News for the World* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994] 222). Cranfield couples this interpretation with the first, agreeing with this interpretation of 8:2, while arguing nonetheless that “no condemnation” in 8:1 is based on justification (*Romans*, 1:372, 374).

⁷ The NIV here takes *gar* in a causal sense, “because.” Grammatically this is possible but not necessary: *gar* is broadly explanatory, and only the context can indicate the specific connection between statement and explanation. Theologically a causal sense is decidedly awkward, at least in the strict sense of identifying the cause of salvation. To keep options open, then, the ambiguous translation “for” seems preferable, at least until exegesis of the passage indicates the nature of the connection established between 8:1 and 8:2.

¹⁶ Chuck Lowe *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 42* (The Evangelical Theological Society, 1999; 2002). 42:231–232.

Previous uses by Paul

Romans 2:1 eschatological judgment

Romans 5:16, 18 eschatological judgment (death)

So the condemnation of sin and justification through the alien righteousness of Christ are prominent themes in the first five chapters of Romans. Consequently it is no wonder that when *katakrima* recurs in 8:1–2, it is commonly read against the background of 5:12–21.¹² Yet the concepts of sin, judgment and vindication appear again in 6:1–23, although with distinctly different associations.¹⁷

In 2:1–16 and 5:12–21, condemnation is the result of sin and issues in death. While the word *katakrima* does not reappear in 6:1–7:6, the concept of condemnation does, with much of the same vocabulary, preeminently “sin” as the grounds for judgment (6:1, 2, 6–7, 10, 11–13) and “death” as its consequence (6:2, 3–4, 8–10, 11–13).

In the midst of these parallels, three significant differences emerge. First, the focus has shifted from non-Christians to Christians. Secondly, the means of averting judgment is personal righteousness, not the alien righteousness of Christ. Thirdly, the grounds of righteousness is no longer the death of Christ for sinners, but the death—and the resurrection—of Christians in and with Christ.¹⁸

While Lowe builds a good argument that in the context the “no condemnation” is based on sanctification, I believe he is separating something Paul did not intend to separate.

It is clear that Paul believes that justification is the grounds for an individual’s security of salvation. But Paul would never have us accept that we can simply “believe” and not be transformed.

Notice several aspects:

“those who are *in Christ Jesus*”

This seems to be Paul’s shorthand for what he taught in Romans 6 about our union with Christ in His death and resurrection which freed us from the dominion of sin.

So those “in Christ” are in union with Christ and are freed from the control of sin.

8:2-4 is about the enablement of the believer by the Spirit to overcome sin.

So the context points to “no condemnation” for those **being** sanctified (which is not possible without *being* justified).

Combine this with what Paul has already taught and we have a fuller picture. **Paul’s statement is probably looking at the whole salvation process.**

¹² Dunn, for example, comments: “κατάκριμα likewise recalls the thought to the great climax of 5:12–21, where the only other NT references occur” (*Romans 1–8* 415; cf. Moo, *Romans* 469; Barrett, *Romans* 145). This comes perilously close to the fallacy of “one word—one meaning” (see J. P. Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek* [Fortress: Philadelphia, 1982] 39–42; Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics* 115–121).

The most that these parallels show is that 8:1 may have—not that it must have or does have—a similar meaning. Moreover, given that the issue is the grounds, rather than the meaning, of *katakrima*, the recurrence of the word is of limited significance. What is crucial is the grounds given in 8:1–2. This can be established only by contextual exegesis, not by appeal to purported parallels.

¹⁷ Chuck Lowe, JETS 42:2 (June 1999) p. 235.

¹⁸ Chuck Lowe, JETS 42:2 (June 1999) p. 235.

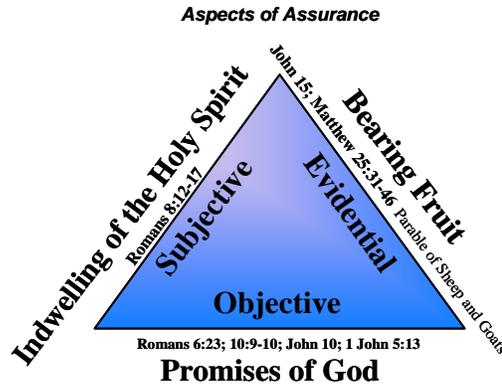
So what is the difference between the security of the believer and the assurance of salvation?

Perhaps we could state it this way:

Romans 5:1 teaches the security of salvation
 Romans 8:1 teaches the assurance of salvation

Security is what God provides
 Assurance is how we understand what God did
 And this includes a look at our lives, our “walk”

Assurance of Salvation



Additional Passages to Consider (all ESV)

Ephesians 1:4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that **we should be** holy and blameless before him. In love

Romans 8:29-30 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed** to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and **those whom he justified he also glorified.**

John 10:28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

Hebrews 7:25 Consequently, **he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him,** since he always lives to make intercession for them.

1 John 5:13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God **that you may know** that you have eternal life.

Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed **for the day of redemption.**

1 Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to **a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We will deal more with the subject of security and assurance at the end of Chapter 8.

8:5-11 Life in the Spirit contrasted to life in the flesh

Those who are in the Spirit instead of the flesh are under no obligation to the flesh. Indeed, if they succumb to the flesh, eternal death is the inevitable result. **For the sign and seal of being God's children is a new obedience in which God is experienced as one's Father.** The Spirit's witness that we are God's children cannot be separated from obedience to the Father. Those who are children are also heirs, but this inheritance is also conditioned upon obedience, upon the willingness to suffer. The emphasis on conditions does not detract at all from the main theme of chapter 8, which is the assurance belonging to believers. **The Spirit will overcome all obstacles and guarantees that believers meet all the necessary conditions, but for Paul this never means that the stating of conditions is unnecessary, for the Spirit does not work *despite* conditions but *through* them. The conditions are one means by which the promises are realized.**¹⁹

¹⁹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 395.

<i>Life According to the Flesh</i>		<i>Life According to the Spirit</i> ²⁰	
Flesh-oriented mind-set	8:5a	Spirit-oriented mind-set	8:5b
Deathlike existence	8:6a	Vital, Life-and-Peace Experience	8:6b
Hostility Toward God	8:7a	Spirit-indwelt Life	8:9
Rebellious Attitude	8:7b	Spiritually Alive	8:10
Inability to Obey or Please God	8:7b-8	Resurrection Power	8:11

The logical relationship between verse 4 and verses 5–11 is as follows: the reason (γάρ [for] in v. 5) believers fulfill the law is because they have the Spirit, and conversely unbelievers cannot keep the law precisely because they lack the Spirit. Verses 5–11 do not constitute an exhortation to live according to the Spirit or to fulfill the law. Rather, they describe what is necessarily the case for one who has the Spirit or is still in the flesh. The fulfillment of the law by believers is the result of the Spirit's work in their heart. New obedience is rooted in the transforming work of the Spirit, and thus is not a burden imposed from without but a delight embraced from within.²¹

What Paul communicates in verses 5–11 is that those who “walk” by the flesh or the Spirit do so because they “are” of the flesh or the Spirit. In other words, his argument is that behavior stems from the being or nature of a person. Incidentally, this is powerful evidence that “flesh” and “Spirit” involve the “nature” of human beings. These terms should certainly be interpreted in redemptive-historical categories, but redemptive history should not be pitted against ontology.²²

8:5-8

Contrast: the manner of life based on the way (orientation, mind-set, basic direction of a person's will) of thinking

- Lifestyle of the flesh
- Lifestyle of the Spirit

8:5

“set”

tn Grk “think on” or “are intent on” (twice in this verse). What is in view here is not primarily preoccupation, however, but worldview. Translations like “set their mind on” could be misunderstood by the typical English reader to refer exclusively to preoccupation.²³

“Mind” translates *phronema*, which can be rendered “mind-set”; it denotes the basic direction of a person's will (this noun occurs only in Romans 8 in the New Testament [vv. 6, 7, 27], though note the use of the cognate verb in Phil. 1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15, 19; 4:5). Romans 8:7 – 8 explains why “the mind of the flesh” brings death. The orientation of the will reflects the values of this world as “hostile to God,” revealed in the fact that people who have that will cannot obey God's law (v. 7). Thus, people who are “in the flesh [NIV controlled by the sinful nature] cannot please God” (v. 8).²⁴

8:6-8

Walk according to the Spirit / Set your mind on things of the Spirit—please God

Notice the dichotomy

Can't

--grow

--please God



with mind on
the flesh

²⁰ Charles R. Swindoll, *Classic Truths for Triumphant Living: Great Themes from Romans*, (Dallas: Word, 1996) p. 36.

²¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 409.

²² Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, p. 410.

²³ *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006; 2006). Ro 8:5.

²⁴ Douglas J. Moo, NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: *Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) 250.



Think about it



Talk about it

How does the challenge to “think” rightly. . .
 —work with “no condemnation”?
 —go along with the work of the Spirit?

Spirit will not work

- against our will
- alone, without our will

Spirit empowers our

- yielding—through thinking (see more at Romans 12:1-2)
- walking (behavior)—starts by changing our mind-set

As such, having the “mind-set” of the Spirit is the crucial “middle” step between existence in the sphere of the Spirit (v. 9) and living according to the Spirit (v. 4b). Cultivating a Spirit-led, Spirit-filled disposition of heart and mind is necessary if we are to live in a way that pleases God.

These verses, therefore, raise a fundamental question: How are we forming our “minds”? What are we putting in them? What are we exposing them to? Christians who read nothing but the latest novels, watch nothing but network television, and talk to nobody but unbelievers are never going to form the mind-set of the Spirit. All the input comes from one direction, reflecting the value system of the “flesh.” No wonder we so often think and act in “fleshly” ways!

If we are serious about progressing in the Christian life, we must seek every day to feed our minds with spiritual food. Too easily our “quiet times” can degenerate into routine exercises in which the mind is hardly involved. We read Scripture, but we don’t really seek to engage it by asking what it means or how it applies to us. We pray, but we follow the same pattern every day. Our daily times with the Lord can be one way in which we develop the mind-set of the Spirit, but only if the mind is really involved.²⁵

8:9-11

Paul again returns to his two spheres theology

The use of “in flesh” and “in Spirit” are intended to be figurative (metaphorical) as Moo puts it, “a way of indicating that people are dominated by one or the other of these forces.”²⁶

The main point of this section then is that those who are genuine believers are indwelt by the Spirit.

Switching Realms

Romans 6:1-14



Every Christian really is “in the Spirit” — under his domination and control. We may not always reflect that domination (see 8:12 – 13), but it is a fundamental fact of our Christian existence and the basis for a life of confidence and obedience to the Lord.

In an effort to maintain balance that is typical of Romans, Paul goes on to comment about a situation in which the Spirit’s dominance might not be so obvious: the believer’s continued existence in a physical body that is doomed to die and is still all too susceptible to the influence of sin. Yes, Paul says, even with Christ in us, our bodies are still “dead because of sin.” Physical death is a penalty for sin that must still be carried out. Yet the Christian can take confidence because “your spirit is alive because of righteousness.”²⁷

²⁵ Douglas J. Moo, NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: *Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) 257.

²⁶ Douglas J. Moo, NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: *Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) 251.

²⁷ Douglas J. Moo, NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: *Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) 251.

Summary / Key Point

A believer indwelt by the Spirit has the enablement to overcome sinful patterns. The starting point (as in chapter 6) is the realization of our present position—indwelt by the Spirit.

The next step is the forming of the mind through the Word.



What do we learn
About God?

He is triune

He is active—proactive in our lives



Act on it

How are we forming our minds in order to allow the Spirit to form our walk?

I am convinced that there are several spiritual disciplines that are necessary for transformation and most of those deal with the forming of the mind.

Key Habits and Disciplines

While all the spiritual disciplines/habits are helpful and at different times in our journey we may need to focus on certain disciplines, are there a couple of habits or disciplines without which we cannot hope to grow or change?

Interaction

Which habits or disciplines would you categorize as of absolute necessity?

Have different class members share the disciplines they use on a regular basis and how.

I would say: Worship and Prayer, Bible Study and Meditation, and Accountability.

Worship—seeking the glory of God, is our primary goal and the key motivation for spiritual transformation. And I'm sure you all are well versed in the need for prayer and Bible study, so I want to focus on the last of my “absolute” list—meditation/contemplation and fellowship.

The best resource I have read on biblical meditation is Doug McIntosh, *God Up Close*, but unfortunately it is now out of print (there are several copies on our library).

Meditate and Contemplate

In an age of “information overload” and constant activity, we must slow down long enough for God to make Himself known.

“Think time” – time to process what you are seeing, learning, and experiencing

“Meditation, when it is effective, engages the whole heart: intellect, intuition, will, affection, and moral sense.”²⁸

“Meditation, therefore, involves deep, repetitive reflection on eternal truth.”²⁹

Ponder the truth of God's Word until it becomes woven into the fabric of our everyday living. (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-2)

In order to have effective meditation there must be something to meditate on, so study and memorization of Scripture are parts of meditation. But many of us in ministry focus only on study because we have teaching deadlines and don't give enough attention to meditation.

²⁸ Bruce Demarest, *Satisfy your soul* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1999) p. 133.

²⁹ Bruce Demarest, *Satisfy your soul* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1999) p. 134.

Clarification

“Meditation investigates, contemplation wonders.”³⁰

“Meditation is the act of turning our attention from the things of the world to the things of God, but contemplation involves turning our attention from the things of God to attend to God himself.”³¹

Summary of the Process of Meditation³²

Meditation can be divided into essentially four steps:

REALIZE the content of God’s truth.

God’s truth is realized through reading and studying the Scriptures (and contemplating the works and ways of God that are observable).

RETAIN God’s truth.

Even though meditation can be done without memorizing the text, some memory work must be done if meditation is to be periodically engaged in throughout the day (Psa. 1:2). Meditation generally works best when dealing with small units of the text (a verse or two).

REFLECT on God’s truth.

“Ponder” is a good synonym for “meditate.” Consider the meaning of the text for those who lived during its composition, then how it affects (or ought to affect) you in your workaday existence. How does it touch on your relationships in the home, family, work, church, and community?

RESPOND to God’s truth.

The response involved ought to be dictated either by the direct content of the text or a logical extension of it. For example, if the text contains one of the items in the left column, the logical response is shown in the right column:

A command	A determination to obey, or an appeal to God for help in obeying
A description of a blessing, or of God’s greatness	An offering of praise and thanksgiving to God
A command that you have disobeyed, or a reminder of one	Confession of sin (1 John 1:9)
An example of godly living	An appeal to God for assistance in imitating that example
An example of disobedience or rebellion	An expression of your determination to stay away from such conduct, and an appeal for God’s grace in helping you do so

As you can see, meditation leads naturally to prayer. It is, in fact, the integration of Bible study and prayer: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

³⁰ Bruce Demarest, *Satisfy your soul* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1999) p. 164 quoting Richard of St. Victor.

³¹ Bruce Demarest, *Satisfy your soul* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1999) p. 164 quoting R. Paul Stevens.

³² Adapted from Doug McIntosh, *God Up Close*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998).

Appendix: Assurance and Security

Definition of Security

Eternal security is the theological term used to express the fact that true Christians saved by grace, regenerated through the work of the Holy Spirit, adopted as children of God, and baptized by the Holy Spirit into the family of God are kept in that salvation eternally through the power of God.

The concept of eternal security focuses on the work of God in keeping His true children eternally secure. It is a dynamic concept focusing on the power of God exercised by each of the members of the Trinity actively preserving our salvation (see under Calvinist view for individual works of the Trinity). It recognizes times of backsliding and recognizes the need for fruit in the life but also recognizes that continuance in salvation ultimately depends on the power of God.

Definition of Perseverance

Is the term used by Reformed writers

Perseverance is taken to mean that believers “can neither totally or finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.”³³

The doctrine of perseverance is that “continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart, is continued and brought to completion.”³⁴

The focus is on the believer who perseveres although by the decree and power of God.

Perseverance³⁵

The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is really the idea of sanctification taken through the whole of a person’s life. If God is the author of their salvation, he is also the finisher of it. As Paul says, he will bring to completion the good work he has begun in Christ (Phil 1:6). Since faith itself is a gift of God (Eph 2:8-9), God enables believers by the power of the Spirit to persevere in their trust and to continually move toward Christlikeness, even if for a long while they err in sin. God does not revoke his call, nor annul the justification he has put in place (Rom 11:32). Those whom he has called...he also glorified (Rom 8:30). He will never let his own perish (John 10:28-30).

Passages such as Hebrews 6:4-6 have often been used to deny the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. But these passages do not teach that people can lose their salvation (cf. Heb 6:9). Rather, the writer is drawing inferences based on the evidence (i.e., behavior of his audience) he sees. Like a good pastor he is warning people of the real consequences for those who live with knowing or unknowing contempt for Christ’s sacrifice. He does not know whether each and every one is saved, only that if they are going to withdraw from Christianity/persecution into the politically safe-haven of Judaism, then one may certainly question whether such a person knows Christ. Thus the writer warns them of the eternal consequences of life apart from Christ. The important point that these so-called warning passages demonstrate is that *one* of the means God uses to protect his saints and enable them to persevere is powerful preaching and his word of rebuke.

Finally, this doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, or as it is commonly called, the eternal security of believers (not exactly the same thing), does not lead to sluggish behavior or a lack of zeal in the Christian life. First of all, it includes severe warnings in this regard; we saw this above. Second, perseverance means that the Spirit is persevering with us in order to bring about the fruit of the Spirit in us. He has been doing this from the beginning since we were at one time dead in sin when he breathed regenerating life into us. Why would he stop after we’re saved? We are no more sinful now, than we were then. Third, our election is unto holiness and glorification and the Trinitarian plan cannot be thwarted (Eph 1:4; Rom 8:30). Fourth, to argue that believers can lose their salvation is to misunderstand many Biblical passages and to position the work of sanctification ultimately in the human will. This is unscriptural and contrary chiefly to the principle of grace. Finally, those who want to argue from Hebrews 6:4-6 that believers can lose their salvation if they don’t live properly, must also accept the truth that, once lost, it cannot be regained—as the passage clearly says. On the contrary, however, the Bible emphatically teaches the eternal security of the believer (Rom 8:38-39).

We must also note that not every one who claims to be a believer is a believer, and therefore to be saved. Thus the warnings by several scriptural writers. Many will say to Him on that day, “Lord, Lord,” and he will say to them, “Depart from me, for I never knew you” (Matt 7:21-23). Therefore, just because a person claims to believe in

³³ *Westminster Confession of Faith*, XVII:1.

³⁴ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p.546

³⁵ Greg Herrick, PhD., *In Introduction to Christian Belief: A Layman’s Guide*, Biblical Studies Foundation, Bible.org, Winter 2001.

Jesus does not mean that they do. The doctrine of eternal security refers only to those who are truly born-again and who therefore persevere to the end.

Difference between Eternal Security and Perseverance of the Saints

In common use, the two terms and concepts are used interchangeably.

Comparison

Both state that an individual who is regenerated will spend eternity with God

Both place an emphasis on what God has done

Contrast

Eternal security sees the issue from God's perspective. The salvation process from election to glorification is finished from God's perspective, so the individual will be kept by God.

Perseverance of the saints sees the issue from man's perspective. Faith in God will last, based on God's work in the regenerate individual.

The Theological Statement of Security

The concluding proof for the security of the believer is in his relationship to the Godhead.

Security through the Father: The believer is kept by the Father's. . .

Purpose (Eph 1:4)

Power (Eph 1:18-20; 1 Peter 1:3-9)

Love (Rom 5:7-10)

The work of the Father guarantees the security of the believer (Rom. 5:7-10; 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4-5; 1 Pet. 1:3-9)

Security through the Son: The believer is kept by the Son's. . .

Dying for sinners (Rom 8:34)

Rising again to be the believer's advocate (Col 3:1; 1 Jn 2:1-2; Heb 7:25).

The work of the Son guarantees the security of the believer (John 6:38-40; 17:24; Rom. 3:25; 5:1; Eph. 1:7; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 7:25)

Security through the Holy Spirit: The believer is kept by the Spirit

He is the agent in regeneration (Ti 3:5)

He indwells the believer, (Holy Spirit makes the believer His permanent dwelling place at the time of regeneration) (1 Cor 12:13; Jn 14:16-17; Rom.5:5; 8:9; 1 Cor.6:19)

He is the guarantee through the sealing of the Spirit (Eph 1:13; 4:30).

The work of the Holy Spirit guarantees the security of the believer (John 14:17; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:30; Titus 3:5)

Assurance

Assurance is the personal recognition that one has eternal life. It is the personal recognition of the promises of Scripture related to the permanence of salvation.

Lack of assurance comes from

Uncertainty regarding personal faith in Christ. "Did I really have faith?"

Uncertainty over personal victory over sin or lack of victory.

Uncertainty because of false additions to the Gospel

Was the "right" prayer prayed?

Should the second blessing be experienced?

Is there something else that needs to be done?

Uncertainty regarding the teaching of Scripture

A lack of faith

Basis for Assurance

Scripture: There is a proper basis for assurance given to the believer based on the teaching of security (see above).

Faith includes assurance and should lead to assurance (He. 11:1).

Specific verses related to assurance: 1 John 5:1-15 (esp. 10-13)

Questions

- 1) All that believe in Christ are saved and secure, but how does one know that he has truly believed?
- 2) What relationship does spiritual fruit have to assurance?
- 3) Does the belief that good works are necessary for assurance destroy the ground for assurance?

Answers

In the debate regarding assurance, security and assurance are typically confused. The issue is not the loss of salvation, but one's personal knowledge that they have indeed believed and are saved. Scripture is our final authority and the basis for our assurance, but it does not specifically state who has believed and who has not. How do I know I have truly believed?

First, do I have a love for God and a desire for intimacy with Him as given by the Holy Spirit? (Rom. 8:14-16, Gal. 4:6)

Second, is there Christian fruit in my life, evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in my heart? (Lk. 6:44; Mt. 7:16,33; Jn. 5:28,29; Rom. 8:1-11; Gal. 5:15-26; Jam. 2:14-26)

Third, do I believe the promises of God regarding the Gospel? (Jn. 3:16, Rom. 4:5)

Fourth, do I keep God's commandments (1 Jn. 2:3;) and love the brethren? (1 John 2:9-11; 3:14)

→ Thus, the ground of assurance is the objective promises of the Word of God, but also the subjective experience of the believer that they have indeed appropriated those promises.

Christian fruit, i.e., a changed life, is fundamental to assurance, rather than a destroyer of it. All who trust in Christ are saved and secure (security), and our personal knowledge that we have trusted Christ and appropriated the promises of salvation is our assurance. The lack of a changed life, perspective, direction, etc., would be evidence that I have not been born again and would be grounds for doubting that I have truly believed in Christ as the Bible describes belief, while the presence of fruit in my life would be an encouragement, even in times of my doubt (1 Cor. 5:17). I may lose a philosophical argument with an atheistic professor of philosophy, and even question the logical and historical validity of Christianity, but I know that God has changed my life, and I know that I love Jesus (2 Pet. 1:10). The subjective elements of assurance combine with the object promises of God to give me assurance.

Problem #1

How does one quantify works as a basis for assurance? When is one doing enough that he or she can feel confident that they have truly believed?

Response

The issue is not that someone must measure up to perfection in order to be assured of their salvation, rather, has there been a change in my life? The transition from death, darkness, blindness, and enmity toward God, to life, light, sight, and love for God is a significant transaction that will result in evident changes in my life. Nonetheless, to quantify the amount of fruit is difficult. It might be best to ask if there has been a change in direction, a reorientation in one's life (1 Thes. 1:9; Acts 9:35; 11:21). It also should be noted that fruit in one's life is not the only basis of assurance, as it is a significant ministry of the Holy Spirit to give assurance directly to the heart of believers (Heb. 10:15; Jn. 5:10).

Problem #2

Doesn't connecting works with assurance subtly introduce works as a basis of salvation?

Response

No, this is a confusion of evidence and merit, or cause and effect. Fruit is merely evidence of the reality of salvation, i.e., the new birth, not the cause or merit of it (Eph. 2:8-10).

Problem #3

Will not the emphasis on works for assurance cause people to focus upon themselves and lead to a legalistic lifestyle?

Response

An overemphasis on works for assurance may indeed lead to a legalistic lifestyle if one's focus is directed more toward self and one's works rather than upon the person and work of Jesus Christ. We are exhorted to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5), indeed, those in sin are told to fear, lest they fall short of God's rest (Heb. 4:1), but our focus is always to be outward and upon Jesus (Heb. 12:1-3). The heart of the problem is an improper emphasis, and not that works are a part of assurance.

Regarding interpretation, those who would deny that spiritual fruit has anything to do with assurance reject the interpretation that James 2 is referring to works as an evidence of salvation. Hodges, rather, holds that "dead faith" is true faith that is not being obedient, and that "dead faith" is unable to save one from physical death, not spiritual death. Additionally, 1 John is interpreted as dealing with the experience of fellowship with God, and not the marks of a true believer. Belief and reliance on the promises of God is considered the sole basis of assurance, and thus passages that treat works in connection with evidence of salvation are interpreted as referring to rewards.

Romans 8:1-11

1 There is therefore

now

no condemnation

for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life

has set you free in Christ Jesus

from the law of sin and death.

3 For God has done

what the law,

weakened by the flesh,

could not do.

By sending his own Son

in the likeness of sinful flesh

and for sin,

he condemned sin in the flesh,

4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law
might be fulfilled in us,

who walk

not according to the flesh

but according to the Spirit.

- 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
set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
- 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death,
but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.
For the mind that is set on the flesh
is hostile to God,
for it does not submit to God's law;
indeed, it cannot.
- 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
- 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit,
if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.
Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ
does not belong to him.
- 10 But if Christ is in you,
although the body is dead because of sin,
the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
- 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,
he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead
will also give life to your mortal bodies
through his Spirit who dwells in you. (ESV)

Assurance of Salvation

Aspects of Assurance

