

Romans 8:1-11 (NKJV)

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.

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

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,

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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.

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.

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

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- Ch. 7 of Romans is a miserable treatise on spiritual defeat and the deadening effects of legalism

- Like a thunderstorm ... concluding with a "thunderclap" crescendo:

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

- What desperation and defeat!

- Unfortunately, that is the way multitudes of Christians live, accepting it as normal, because so many have succumbed to defeat and legalism in some form

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- First century Phariseeism is merely one form of legalism – clinging to the Mosaic rituals, even after Christ has come, expecting those 613 OT commandments to sanctify and make one spiritual, which they do not

- Phariseeism is alive and well, even in the 21st century through the keeping of certain rules or standards or lists for a sanctified life

- Again, it doesn't work

- Legalism is deadening, regardless of the form it takes

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- Watchman Nee asks in his classic book, *The Normal Christian Life*, asks: “What is the normal Christian life? ... It is something very different from the life of the average Christian.”
- He sums up the normal Christian life in the biblical words of the apostle Paul in Gal. 2:20, “I live no longer, but Christ lives His life in me.” (Rom. 6-8 summed up in a sentence)
- If Paul’s emphasis in ch. 7 is how NOT to have victory over sinning, then his emphasis in ch. 8 is HOW to have victory in the Christian life – and THAT is the normal Christian life

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- 7:24 Who will deliver me from this body of death?
- Gr. word *hruomai*, translated *deliver*, (per Zane Hodges), “is a functional equivalent for the idea in the Greek word-group *sozo/soteria*, “to save,” “salvation.”
 - Thus, Paul’s heart-cry is, “Who will SAVE me from this wretchedness in my soul!”
 - Seeing that God had already saved his spirit when he was regenerated, Paul is obviously speaking of soul-salvation, which is the ongoing process of sanctification for those who cooperate with God (Phil. 2:12-13)

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- Jesus referred to it as entering the narrow gate and the difficult path that leads to life (Matt. 7:13-14; see also Matt. 16:24-27, cf. James 1:21)
 - What answer does Paul give to his question of desperation, “Who will save me?”
- 7:25a I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!
- JESUS is the answer to your ongoing problem of indwelling sin! HE can save you from spiritual deadness by enabling you for spiritual victory over sinning!

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- 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.
- The word *condemnation* can be confusing, for it conjures up a picture of Hell for most Bible readers
 - That is how tradition has trained us – which is incorrect
 - Adding to the confusion, the Alexandrian Greek manuscripts omit the latter half of v. 1 entirely

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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.

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Zane Hodges: Regrettably the words *who do not walk in relation to the flesh but in relation to the Spirit* (found in KJV, NKJV) are omitted by most modern translations (e.g., NIV, NASB, JB). This omission by modern translators is due to their reliance on a few older Greek manuscripts that differ from the Majority Text.

Bob Wilkin (note in Hodges’s Commentary): The vast majority of Greek manuscripts (undivided Majority Text and even codex Alexandrinus, a key Critical Text manuscript) support the longer reading. So does the context.

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- Keep in mind that Paul is speaking to believers, so this condemnation cannot be referring to HELL!

- What is this condemnation?

Zane Hodges: Contrary to the widely held opinion that in 8:1 Paul is discussing the truth of justification as the removal of all condemnation, Paul's statement has a quite different meaning.

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Bob Wilkin (note in Hodges's Commentary): Hodges is certainly understating the case to say that the result is "a quite different meaning." This meaning is the exact opposite of the traditional understanding.

- When we encountered this word *condemnation* in 5:16, 18, we shared the definition of Moulton and Milligan (as quoted in Hodges): "the punishment following a judicial sentence" or "penal servitude"

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Thus, Hodges translates Rom. 8:1 as:

8:1. Therefore there is now no servitude to sin for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk in relation to the flesh but in relation to the Spirit.

- This translation fits the context of ch. 7 perfectly, where Paul has been talking about his past experience of servitude to sin – as a believer
- He can't find victory and cries out for deliverance – the saving of his soul from continued sinning

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John Niemela (note in Hodges's Commentary):

Some may imagine that omitting the phrase, "who do not walk in relation to the flesh but in relation to the Spirit" ... would negate Hodges's exposition of v 1. It does not ... Pretend that the critical text's omission of walking by the Spirit were right. Would the verse then suggest that all believers would automatically escape penal servitude? No, both prior and following context teach that the escape is not automatic. It requires walking by the Spirit.

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John Niemela (cont'd):

Romans 7:13-25 described Paul as a believer making a futile effort to escape penal servitude by the flesh. Romans 8:1ff sets forth walking by the Spirit as the only way for believers to escape penal servitude.

- Thus, the simple answer to the dilemma of ch. 7 is to walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh
- Incidentally, *to walk* is to take reiterated steps – just one step at a time

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- There is freedom from sinning for those who walk in the Spirit – and here's why:

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

- Here we find yet another law (or principle) – the law of the Spirit of life in Christ – or simply, the Christ-life – what is this?
- As noted in 6:3-4, we died with Christ and rose with Him at the point of regeneration

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- Furthermore, we were baptized (i.e., placed) into Christ's body by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13)
- We were placed into Jesus, and He placed His Spirit in us
- The law of sin and death is now powerless to rule over us
- We now have the provision to yield our members to righteousness rather than to sinning and thereby live the Christ-life of victory
- The Holy Spirit is the divine catalyst

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- Victorious living is not automatic, of course, but those who choose to walk in the Spirit will experience victory through Christ
- Highly recommended book on the subject: *Victory in Christ* by Charles Trumbull
- Trumbull points out that one of our biggest mistakes is not taking God at His Word – we MUST believe what God says in Rom. 6-8!
- v. 2 is a marvelous statement of truth
- The only way we will ever experience victory is if we take this truth BY FAITH

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- God says, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" – the same Spirit who dwells within us – "has made me free from the law of sin and death!"
- Take it by faith, begin to walk in the Spirit and experience the deliverance from sin that Paul so desperately sought in ch. 7
- We understand "the law of sin and death" from ch. 7
- What, then, is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus?"

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- 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,
- 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.
- What a glorious thought! We CAN obey God; we CAN live righteously; we CAN fulfil the law's righteous requirements – how?
 - By walking in the Spirit

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- In v. 3 Paul makes the point that the law never helped anyone walk in victory – only God can do that
- He did it when He sent His Son Jesus to conquer sin by taking it upon Himself on the cross of Calvary
- And He did so for this purpose: so that God's children might have the ability through the Spirit to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law

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- The verb *condemned* in v. 3 has a slightly different meaning than the noun *condemnation* in 8:1 and in 5:16, 18
- condemned = "to pronounce a sentence on"
- The idea is that God sentenced sin through Jesus Christ IN HIS FLESH
- Ironically, the flesh was the very thing Paul struggled with in the previous chapter
- What Paul could not do IN HIS FLESH (for in his flesh "nothing good dwells," 7:18), Christ did IN HIS FLESH (for Jesus was without sin)

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- This seems to be a dual reference, not only to the incarnation of Christ and His physical death, but also to Christ's soul, which was pure and untainted by sin, unlike man's

Hodges: Thus the death of Christ is also a sentence of doom upon sin in the flesh, destroying its present power and presaging its final removal from the experience of the one who is "righteous by faith" (1:17).

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

- The term *righteous requirement* is the same Gr. word translated *righteous action* in 5:18

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Hodges: As Paul has already asserted, the Christian is "not under the law but under grace" (6:14). Thus Paul does not mean here that a Christian can operate under the law and carry out its "requirements," but rather that the righteous action which the law stipulated, but failed to produce (see 7:15-25), can be achieved under grace. Understood this way, the singular of *dikaiōma* ... occurs because Paul's statement is a statement of principle. What Paul is affirming is that the thing that couldn't be done by living under the law can in fact be achieved by walking in relation to the Spirit.

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- This is the very thing Paul could not do in his flesh!
- He could not fulfill the righteous actions of the law
- Instead, his flesh kept driving him to continue sinning
- But now, through the Spirit of Christ, he realizes that he – and we, by extension – have the PROVISION to obey and live righteously
- No more defeat and deadness

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- We can now live in victory and vibrancy of life, pleasing God

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.

- "might be fulfilled" is in the subjunctive mood, which is the Gr. mood of potential
- It's not guaranteed to happen; it will happen only if the condition is met
- The condition is: walking in the Spirit rather than the flesh

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- How does one walk in the Spirit?
- It involves SURRENDER of your will to the Spirit's will in everyday living (Eph. 5:18)
- And FAITH, believing that God will enable you through the Spirit to live righteously (Gal. 2:20)

- But there is one more thing that is essential to walking in the Spirit

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.

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- Notice how important it is to have your mind predisposed to walking in the Spirit – Hodges uses the word “oriented”
- Your spiritual orientation must be aligned with walking in the Spirit rather than the flesh

Col 3:2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

- *mind* = the same Gr. word used for *mind* in Rom. 8:5

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- The point is that a believer who is focused on worldly or fleshly things is never going to find victory

- Because their mind is not predisposed or oriented to spiritual things
- Paul then distinguishes between the two ways of thinking about spiritual matters

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

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

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- Notice the distinction between the carnal and the spiritual mind
- The NASB refers to this as *the mind set on the flesh vs. the mind set on the Spirit*
- Keep in mind, “the flesh” does not necessarily refer to the body
- The problem is not the *body*, per se, it is the *soul*, specifically indwelling sin
- A fleshly soul is self-seeking, having sinful desires, worldly pursuits, and enjoying material pleasures

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- Fleshly behaviors often are carried out in the body, but they are rooted in the soul, so it’s not the body, per se, that is evil
- It is the FLESH, or indwelling sin, which Paul refers to as “carnality” in these verses
- A carnal or fleshly mindset produces spiritual deadness
- But a spiritual mindset produces life and peace – here’s why:
- Those believers who have a carnal mindset are at enmity with God

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- Fellowship with Him has been severed; the relationship is strained
- There is a need for confession and forgiveness and reconciliation with God
- A believer is not subject to God’s moral law and can’t be, as long as their mindset is carnal
- This explains why so many believers are defeated rather than victorious
- It also explains how believers can live in a perpetual state of disobedience to God

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- Their spiritual orientation is not given over to God
- As long as a child of God remains focused on worldly pleasures, they are doomed to fail
- I dread to think of the consequences at the Judgment Seat of Christ for a life lived in this manner!
- In the next two verses, Paul shares the difference between believers and unbelievers, to demonstrate the marvelous PROVISION we have *in Christ*

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

- Paul is speaking of our position as being “in the Spirit” because we have believed on Jesus for eternal life, as opposed to being “in the flesh” (like unbelievers, who are perpetually in the flesh) – Unbelievers don’t have the Spirit of Christ thus, cannot please God

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Bob Wilkin: When Paul speaks of being *in the flesh*, he is speaking of being in that state in one’s position. He is not speaking of walking in that state in one’s experience ... Believers are *in the Spirit*, but may walk *according to the Spirit* or *according to the flesh*. Unbelievers are *in the flesh* and only walk *according to the flesh*.

- Why does Paul mention this? The answer is found in v. 10:

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

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- He wants the believers at Rome to realize the marvelous PROVISION they have “in Christ,” a provision that is spiritually priceless
- Yes, the body remains spiritually dead because of sin
- But we have the glorious benefit of the Spirit of life dwelling within our spiritually “dead” bodies
- He breathes spiritual life into us when we choose to walk in the Spirit, thereby producing righteousness

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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.

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Zane Hodges: Although Christians live in physically mortal bodies that are already spiritually dead because of sin (v 10), the Spirit can impart to these mortal bodies an experience of life. In its context here, this statement must not be taken as referring to our future resurrection. Instead, it refers to the life and peace produced by the mind-set of the Spirit (v 6b). Thus the Spirit can overcome the death that characterizes the fallen state of our present mortal bodies (v 10) and can make them vehicles for expressing the divine life within us.

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- The same God who raised Jesus from the dead, will breathe life into our mortal bodies when we are appropriating our provision, drawing upon the Spirit’s enabling power
- The result will be a righteous lifestyle, a reflection of Christ’s image to others around us, and a soul that is being saved, on the pathway to becoming a son to glory
- Are YOU on that pathway?

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