

Romans Chapter 6:1—7:6

THE PERFECT MEANS FOR TRUE SPIRITUAL LIVING

The perfect message, God's power for salvation, 1:16-17, to clean up the perfect mess, the universal guilt and chaos of man's sin, 1:18—3:20, required the perfect man, Jesus, 3:21—5:21, who, through obedience to God's plan reversed the curse of sin and death, 5:12-21. Thus, having presented justification, reconciliation, and the reign of grace through Christ (5:21), Paul now explains our new position (vantage point or connection) from which we, free from the law of sin and death through Christ, may begin to experience the reality of eternal life under grace. In chapter six we discover that through our connection/union with Christ's death we can claim our freedom from sin's right to reign over us (under the law). Secondly, we discover our union with the resurrected Christ by which we can live for God. No longer under law (how sin rules) but alive through Christ, the believer discovers grace, God's new operating system for righteousness (true spiritual living) apart from law.

A. We have been united with Christ's death and resurrection freeing us from sin's dominion/rule and granting us life through Christ, 6:1-7.

Text with grammatical notations

1 What, therefore, will we say^{fai}? [Should we say] 'Let us persist^{pasubj} in sin in order that grace might increase^{aasubj}? **2** May it never be!^{amopt} We who died^{aai} to sin, how will we still live^{fai} in it? **3** Or do you not know^{pai} that as many as have been immersed^{api} into Christ Jesus have been immersed^{api} into His death? **4** Therefore we have been buried^{api} with Him through the immersion into this death, so that¹ just as Christ has been raised^{api} from the dead through the Father's glory, so also, we, in life's newness, might walk^{aasubj}. **5** For if² we have become^{pfai} united³ in the likeness of His death, [then] certainly we will be^{fai} of the resurrection; **6** knowing^{paptc} this, that our old man has been crucified^{api} together with [Christ], in order that the body of sin might be set aside^{apsubj}, of which you are no longer slaves to sin. **7** For the one who has died^{aaptc} has been justified^{pfpi} from the sin.

Observations from the text

V1 Under the law sin increases transgressions, 5:20. Yet, as Paul assures us, where transgressions increase grace abounds even more, 5:20. Because of this assurance Paul asks this obvious question, ARE WE TO CONTINUE IN SIN SO THAT GRACE MAY INCREASE? As Paul answers this question the letter to the Romans introduces us to the subject of sanctification, or, the possibility of experiencing God's righteousness in everyday life.

V2 MAY IT NEVER BE! HOW SHALL WE WHO DIED TO SIN STILL LIVE IN IT? – To answer the question posed in verse one, Paul explains how God's abundance and reign of grace is the

¹ἵνα— indicating purpose or result.

²First class condition.

³Σύμφυτοι -- *grown together, united*, Ep.Rom.6.5; of qualities in relation to matter.

very means by which we may live a righteous life. Now the Apostle introduces an entirely new concept, our “death” to the presence of sin through the death of Christ. This section (6:1—7:6) informs us about the “death” the justified have experienced through their identity/union with Christ. Verse two identifies the believer as WE WHO DIED TO SIN. Now we will learn that this death-to-sin-connection is because the believer has died to the law and, consequently, has died to the agent that sin employs to kill. Because of our death to the law through Christ sin will no longer have the final say over the Christian. The collapse of sin’s reign does not mean the righteous will live sinlessly, without flesh patterns. Rather, as sin’s reign leading to death used the law, our union with Christ’s death ended the possibility sin’s reign would result in eternal death. Sin cannot reign leading to death. Sin cannot and will never lead those in Christ to condemnation and death (it needs law), as mentioned in 2:5-9. Because the believer is not under law, sin cannot abound leading to condemnation. Subsequently, the justified should not continue in sin. Grace already abounds and is already the governing factor (operating system) for Christian spirituality, 6:14.

V3 ALL OF US WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST JESUS— Paul has raised many questions about the reign of grace and practical Christian living. To answer his questions, Paul introduces his readers to the idea of a believer’s death to sin (and the law) through their identification and union with Christ’s death, 6:1-4. To illustrate his point, however, Paul uses baptism. Here we might ask, ‘Why would Paul use baptism to explain a believer’s position in Christ?’ Does baptism effect this change? Is Paul telling the reader that baptism is necessary for spiritual growth? Before we focus upon answering our questions about baptism, let’s settle our secondary question about the necessity for baptism and the spiritual life.

First, it is important to understand that Paul, in all his letters, identifies salvation and sanctification as entirely accomplished by God, Ephesians 2:10. Through the mediatorial work of Christ and the administrative work of the Holy Spirit, God has done everything necessary for spiritual life.⁴ Paul understood, however, that certain outward rites or practices communicated/illustrated certain spiritual realities. For example, while directing the Galatians away from circumcision, Galatians 5:2-6, Paul understood from the Old Testament that physical circumcision had been instituted as a sign (reminder) and a seal (authentication) of one’s faith-allegiance regarding the Abrahamic promises, consider Romans 4:9-11 with Genesis 17:9-14. More importantly, however, Paul also knew, from the Old Testament, that physical circumcision served to illustrate the spiritual reality of regeneration, consider Romans 2:28-29 with Deuteronomy 30:6. Certainly Paul knew that circumcision did not accomplish regeneration, Galatians 5:6. The Apostle did understand, however, that physical circumcision symbolized the change accomplished in a person’s life through regeneration through the removal of the flesh, Colossians 2:11; Philippians 3:3. The same could be said about water baptism.

Water baptism, while strategic in a believer’s spiritual journey, did not complete a person’s salvation or initiate spiritual life. Baptism was commanded by the Lord as a sign and seal of faith already present, Matthew 28:19-20. While not necessary for salvation,

⁴Too numerous to discuss in detail, some of these passages presenting the sufficiency of Christ and the work of the Spirit are, Romans 3:21—5:21; 8:2-39; 1 Corinthians 12; 2 Corinthians 3—5; 12; Galatians 2:16—4:7; 5:5-25; Ephesians 1:3—2:10; 4:11-16; 5:18-21; 6:10-18; Colossians 2:10—3:9, etc.

water baptism does communicate the existence of a spiritual reality. Water baptism speaks of identification,⁵ an identification with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well as an identification with other believers, Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12:13. This visual sign and seal, however, does not initiate or cause this identification in the believer. Water baptism visualizes and reminds disciples about their connection. Christ's baptism, namely Christ immersing a believer in/with the Holy Spirit), Luke 3:16, 1 Corinthians 12:13, unites the believer to Christ and His body. This spiritual union occurs when a person believes the message about Christ. Accordingly, faith in Christ was then followed by water baptism (see Acts 2:41; 8:38; 16:31-33) which served as the sign of the authenticity and seal of identification which the Christian had already received through Christ. So, just Paul referred to and used the language of circumcision to communicate spiritual truth about regeneration, Paul now uses the language of water baptism to communicate truth about a believer's benefits through Christ's Spirit-baptism.

In summary, while water baptism does not effectuate the union Paul is about to discuss, the reality of this connection with Christ is best pictured by the language of baptism. So, while the baptism mentioned in 6:3-4 seems best understood as a reference to water baptism (Paul does not formally mention the Spirit in this text), the spiritual realities depicted through water baptism, namely, our identification with Christ by faith, are realized only through the baptism with the Spirit performed by Christ the moment we believed.

V3 HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH – The spiritual reality, pictured through water baptism, is an identification/ real organic connection with Christ's death. As mentioned above, baptism does not bring about this identification/connection, but it serves as a sign that this reality has taken place. This union/identity/connection with Christ's death is essential for our freedom from the dominion of sin because Christ's death under the law is our death to the law. Take away the law through Christ's death, and sin no longer has the power to rule and kill, 7:7-13; 1 Corinthians 15:56.

V4 THEREFORE WE HAVE BEEN BURIED WITH HIM THROUGH BAPTISM INTO DEATH—A body buried is a final symbol that a death has taken place. This burial has happened and is symbolized in Paul's use of BAPTISM. Through the immersion/identity into Christ's death we were buried with Christ signifying our death to the law.

V4 SO THAT – Our union with Christ's death, while ending the dominion of sin through the law, has a greater purpose/result. This greater purpose/result has to do with Christ's resurrected life. We who have died with Christ live because of Christ. AS CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD WE TOO MIGHT WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. God's spiritual provision of righteousness apart from the law is the very life of Christ. Our union/identity with Christ includes a new life through the resurrected Christ. Because Christ lives, we have life through His ongoing ministry at the Father's right hand. The abounding grace is Christ alive in us by the Holy Spirit, Galatians 2:20.

⁵Robert L. Saucy, *The Church in God's Program* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1972), 193-96.

V5 WE HAVE BECOME UNITED WITH HIM IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS DEATH – Paul repeats the idea of having been crucified with Christ (see 6:6) to emphasize the new life we have through Christ.

V5 CERTAINLY WE SHALL ALSO BE—Is our union with Christ’s life immediate, or does Paul refer to the eschatological event of our future resurrection? I believe the answer resides in the phrase, ‘already but not yet’. The believer’s ultimate freedom and final salvation, see 13:11, occurs with the resurrection when the body of this death, the body of sin, is replaced. Elsewhere, Paul still talks about a present sense in which this body/flesh is still “sold into bondage of sin,” 7:14. So, it seems best to understand the future tense here in verse five stresses our future life, 8:17-18, when we receive the full adoption as sons, 8:23. At this time, however, we might live free from the penalty warranted by sin/sins committed in the flesh. Our union with Christ’s death frees/acquits us from sin, and so we live free/acquitted, 6:7, 14. Additionally, we are able to live through our union with the living Christ, see 6:11, 8:10, Galatians 2:20. There is a sense of “If...then.” If a person is united with Christ (in His death), then he will be united in the likeness of His resurrection. Yet as Christ is alive from the dead, so the believer united with Christ shares in Christ’s resurrected life, Galatians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 4:10-11, through not yet resurrected.

V5 IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS RESURRECTION—Christ’s resurrection serves as the singular essential piece of Christ’s atonement. Without the resurrection Christ’s death is admirable but ineffectual, see 1 Corinthians 15:17. There is no forgiveness. There is no high priest mediating the new covenant. There is no offering being presented before the heavenly altar to finish the sacrifice, Hebrews 9:23-24. There is no life for the believer. Because of the resurrection, however, we will ultimately experience a resurrection like Christ’s, 1 Corinthians 15:20-21, and we are currently alive through this association with Christ, 6:11; 8:11-13. We experience the life of Christ by the Spirit, 7:6, Who, together, become the means by which we live for God, consider 8:13; Galatians 2:20; 5:16.

V6 KNOWING THIS – The present active participle “knowing” serves to reenforce the confidence we should have about the present Christian life. We know THAT OUR OLD SELF WAS CRUCIFIED. We know that our union with Christ’s death has put to death our legal relationship with Adam. Our old legal relationship with Adam is what is meant by the phrase OLD SELF (literally, “old man”). The hold/reign that sin and death had over us through our Adamic relationship is over. We are no longer “in Adam.” His sin and the effects of that sin are no longer our master. We are in Christ. The grace that is Christ has replaced the sin that ruled the flesh inherited from Adam, consider 1 Corinthians 15:22.

V6 IN ORDER THAT – These words signify first purpose/result in our union with Christ’s death. The purpose/result of our old self being crucified is that OUR BODY OF SIN MIGHT BE DONE AWAY WITH. The BODY OF SIN most likely refers to our mortal Adamic self (see 6:12). Who we were in the flesh, that is, who we were when sin ruled over us, has been put to death through Christ’s death. We are no longer under sin’s rule. We are no longer in the flesh/Adam, consider 7:4-6; 8:9. While sin can and does influence and impact a believer’s present experience, sin cannot bring about a final spiritual death. It’s reign/rule/dominion upon those in Christ is over.

V6 SO THAT – The final/ultimate result of our union with Christ’s death is that WE WOULD NO LONGER BE SLAVES TO SIN. This freedom from sin does not refer to our experience or progress in godliness (our progress depends upon our cooperation with the indwelling Holy Spirit, see Galatians 5:16), but, rather, the very real position/status of the believer with God. Because of the gift of grace through Christ the believer is no longer and will never again be under sin’s rule.

V7 FOR – The ultimate reason for not being under sin’s rule is now given. And the reason focuses upon our connection with Christ’s death, namely, HE WHO HAS DIED IS FREED FROM SIN. Those who have been united with Christ’s death, namely HE WHO HAS DIED, has been set free/acquitted/ declared righteous from all wrong. The word for FREED takes us all the way back through chapters 3:21—5:21. This word is the same for justification/acquittal, 3:24; 5:1. Those who have died with Christ are those who have been acquitted/justified. This justification is expressed in the perfect passive. The perfect tense signifies a past act with continued impact. The passive voice indicates that the subject (the believer) has been acted upon (in this instance, by God). Thus, the one who has died (historical fact) has been and remains justified/acquitted from sin (past act with permanent results) by God’s declaration. Our freedom refers to the freedom from sin’s rule/reign in death, 5:21. Through our faith-identification (signified through baptism) with Christ’s death who we were in Adam was put to death and, as a result, we are free (free from the final penalty of sin). The grace in Christ has triumphed (referring to 5:18-21), see also 8:37. This idea will be repeated throughout 6:11—7:6.

Summary of the text

Rather than sinning so that God’s grace may abound, we are informed that grace already abounds. Sin’s lordship over us through exacting death has ended because of our union with Christ’s death. Through Christ’s death we are released from the dominion/reign of sin and death and set free/acquitted so that we might live in our freedom through the resurrected Christ. This is an exchanged life. My old self has been exchanged for Christ’s resurrected life. The new operating system, grace through Christ by the Spirit, rules. Grace already abounds. Through justification the believer is free.

B. As Christ is alive from the dead living for God so we should consider ourselves, under grace, alive from the dead and able to live for God, 6:8-14.

The text with grammatical notations

8 Now if⁶ we have died^{aai} with Christ [then] we also believe that we will live together^{fai} with Him, **9** knowing^{pfaptc} that Christ, having been raised^{apptc} from the dead, no longer dies^{dai}; death no longer rules^{dai} him. **10** For the one who died^{aai}, died^{aai} to sin once; and the who lives^{dai}, lives^{dai} to God. **11** So also you consider^{7 pmimp} yourselves [to be^{painf}]⁸ dead to sin, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, living^{paptc} to God in Christ Jesus. **12** Therefore, do not let sin reign^{paimp} in your mortal body

⁶ First class condition assuming the reality of the condition stated.

⁷ λογίζεσθε without reference to numbers, *take into account, calculate, consider*; c. inf. also, *count, or reckon upon doing, calculate or expect that; count upon; conclude by reasoning, infer that.* from Liddell and Scott

⁸ The verb translated “to be” is in brackets in the Greek text but is an acceptable reading.

in order to obey⁹ ^{painf} its desires, **13** [and] no longer present¹⁰ ^{paimp} your members tools of unrighteousness to sin, but present^{aaimp} yourselves to God as living^{paptc} from dead, and your members as tools of righteousness to God. **14** For sin will not lord^{fai} over you¹¹, for you are not under Law but under grace.

Observations from the text

V8 NOW IF WE HAVE DIED WITH CHRIST— Here Paul begins to introduce practical benefit of our life-connection with Christ. The first-class condition IF indicates the reality about which Paul is about to write. If there are those who have died with Christ, and there are, then those who have died with Christ SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM. Our faith in the death of Christ warrants the same trust, WE BELIEVE, in the life of Christ. This reality of life becomes the basis for everyday spiritual living.

VV9-10 KNOWING THAT CHRIST, HAVING BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, IS NEVER TO DIE AGAIN— With an confidence, KNOWING, verses nine and ten refer to Christ’s death and resurrected life. The correlation will then be made to the believer’s opportunity to live for God. As Christ’s one-time death was sufficient (see Hebrews 9:23ff.), so we, united with His death, do not have to face the death of condemnation for our sin. Christ will NEVER DIE AGAIN with the result that DEATH NO LONGER IS MASTER OVER HIM. The death Christ died “destroyed death,” consider Hebrews 2:14-15. In fact, Christ DIED (historic reality) TO SIN (with respect to), so that death no longer has any jurisdiction over Him. Christ, the sinless One, has served the sentence due sinners. Christ was born under the law that He might experience the curse of the law, Galatians 3:10-13. Christ has served the condemnation of sin and sinners, under the law ONCE. While the words “for all” do not appear in the original text, Paul’s comments in this context support the direction about the practicality of being united to this death. As we are united with the sufficiency of Christ’s death, we are united with the reality of His resurrection, though our experience of this resurrection is yet future, 8:18-25. Now, having been raised from the dead, Christ lives for God, i.e., THE LIFE HE LIVES, HE LIVES TO GOD. And while the probable focus of this phrase could be Christ’s ongoing ministry for our salvation (He continually serves at the Father’s right hand as our High Priest making intercession for us, 8:34; also Acts 2:33-36; Hebrews 10:12-14), a more immediate application for this present life is about to be made.

V11 EVEN SO CONSIDER YOURSELVES TO BE DEAD TO SIN—Having just presented Christ as the One who lives to God, Paul, EVEN SO/ ‘in the same way’, now encourages the believer to do the same as Christ. God, through Christ, provides the believer the opportunity to CONSIDER [ourselves] YOURSELVES DEAD TO SIN and ALIVE TO GOD IN CHRIST JESUS. The idea of considering/reckoning is in the imperative. Our reckoning is based upon the gospel reality revealed in 3:21—6:10. We have been justified. We have been reconciled. We are united with Christ. We are released from the dominion of sin through the death of Christ because Christ has served the Father’s required sacrifice for sin. No longer under the law we

⁹ εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν -- εἰς τὸ + infinitive = purpose or result.

¹⁰ “present” from the word παριστάνετε I. *cause to stand, place beside*, II. *set before the mind, present*, that they may *put this into your minds*, Id.18.1; *arouse, inspire, put it into his head* to Liddell and Scott.

¹¹ The genitive shows position. Literally sin will not rule of you. The idea of position is “over.”

are now identified with the living Christ, we are, by immersing us in Christ's death, alive to God IN CHRIST. Because He lives and serves God on our behalf, we are able to live for God, that is, Christ living in us through us. While our bodily resurrection for us is yet future, Christ's life in us is God's new spiritual operating system, see 2 Corinthians 4:10; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 3:10; Colossians 3:4.

V12 THEREFORE SO NOT LET SIN REIGN—It is because of the marvelous provisions of the gospel, of our release from death, and our new life toward God in and through Christ, that we, the acquitted, do not have to LET SIN REIGN IN YOUR [our] MORTAL BODY. Though sin remains with our mortal selves, the body of this death, 7:24, the dominion of sin has been destroyed and Christ has delivered us from the body of this death, 7:25. The phrase mortal body (probably also referred to as 'body of sin' 6:6) should not be limited to the physical body. Our mortality involves the entire realm of our fleshly inheritance from Adam. Thus, sin continues its attempt to exercise powerful sway over our minds, hearts, wills, souls, and bodies. While sin's rule/ dominion/kingdom has been destroyed through Christ's dying to sin, sin's presence has not yet been removed. The justified, in their privileged organic association with Christ, have the opportunity and responsibility to employ God's grace (Christ's life) over sin's "dread sway" as sin still attempts to make the believer OBEY ITS LUSTS. This employment of the presence of Christ in us is through faith that Christ will live through us as presented in Scripture, see Galatians 2:20; 5:16.

V13 The imperative here is simple yet profound. Because of our freedom from sin's dominion we, the acquitted, should NOT GO ON PRESENTING THE MEMBERS OF OUR BODY TO SIN. our mind/thoughts, emotions, will, soul/life, and bodily members (its appetites) should not be used AS INSTRUMENTS OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS by sin. The thoughts, feelings, choices, life, and physical drives that were characteristic under Adam's curse should not be given the opportunity to rule over us. We should not present ourselves to sin. The flesh patterns developed through sin in the flesh can and need to be replaced with the spiritual patterns by the enlivening of the Spirit, 7:6; 8:4. In contrast, BUT, to yielding to sin, we need to PRESENT ourselves TO GOD. We should present our thought life, emotions, will/choices, soul-life, and physical bodily appetites to God. To allow the Holy Spirit opportunity to mortify the deeds of the flesh and to create the life of Christ within is God's pattern for healthy spiritual progress and God's way to experience life and peace, 8:6; Galatians 6:8. We do this AS THOSE ALIVE FROM THE DEAD. Though our life from the dead, the resurrection, is yet future, we are united with Christ and He is alive from the dead. In Christ we can experience His life by faith though we are not yet resurrected.

V14 FOR introduces the reason behind our decision to present ourselves to God summarizes 5:20—6:8. SIN SHALL NOT BE MASTER OVER YOU. Because sin's kingdom has been crushed by Christ's death, and because we have been united with Christ's death, sin SHALL NOT (ever again, now or in the future) BE MASTER (exact its death and condemnation) OVER YOU, the acquitted. The reason FOR sin cannot ever again exert its finished work over the believer is YOU, the believer, ARE NOT UNDER LAW. Rather, we are UNDER GRACE. Through the death of Christ we are released from law. Now sin cannot take opportunity through the law the exact its death. This abounding grace, 5:20, has been the means of everything God has

accomplished on behalf. Anchored in the promises made to Abraham, 4:16, and accomplished through the righteous obedience of Jesus Christ, 3:21; 5:20-21, grace, rather than being an abstract concept depicting a quality expressed within the Godhead, is a now God's spiritual 'operating system' rescuing (saved by grace, Ephesians 2:4-10) and transforming (I am what I am by grace, 1 Corinthians 15:10). God's grace, through the irrevocable promises made to Abraham and the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, forgives, justifies, reconciles, unites us to Christ, provides the Holy Spirit, and enlivens us. This grace comes to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, John 1:17.

Summary of the text

As Christ is alive from the dead and lives for God so we, the justified, through our union with Christ, should consider ourselves dead to sin and alive from the dead with Christ. Considering this so, we present ourselves to God as those now governed by grace.

C. Bound to Christ's righteousness grace leads us away from sin and to righteousness resulting in our sanctification, 6:15-23.

The text with grammatical notations

15 What then? Might we sin^{aasubj} because we are not under Law but under grace? May it never be!^{amopt} **16** Do you not know^{pfai} that to whom you are presenting^{pai} yourselves a servant for obedience, you are^{pai} servants to whom you are obeying^{pai}, whether of sin for death or of obedience for righteousness. **17** But thanks¹² to God that you were^{ipfai} sin's slaves, but you obeyed^{aai} from the heart unto which pattern of teaching you have been entrusted^{api} **18** and having been freed^{apptc} from the sin, you have been enslaved^{api} to the righteousness.

19 I am speaking^{pai} as a human¹³ because of the weakness of your flesh; for just as you presented^{aai} your members slaves to uncleanness and to lawlessness for lawlessness, so now present^{aaimp} your members slaves to righteousness for sanctification.¹⁴ **20** For when you were^{ipfai} sin's slaves, you were^{ipfai} free regarding righteousness¹⁵. **21** Therefore, what fruit were you possessing^{ipfai} then? On the basis of which [fruit] you are now ashamed^{pmi}, because the end of those things [is] death. **22** But now having been set free from the sin and having been enslaved to God, you have your fruit for sanctification, and the end [is] eternal life. **23** Because sin's compensation [is] death, but God's gift [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Observations from the text

V15 WHAT THEN? SHALL WE SIN BECAUSE WE ARE NOT UNDER LAW...?—More than repeating his question from 6:1, Paul now addresses the nature of grace itself, and the complaint often heard from those who do not understand their position in Christ's life. Logically one might think, "If grace abounds where sin reigned then I am free to live as I please." If this is true then it must be the nature of grace to foster sin. In other words, 'We can sin as we please now that we are under grace.' The answer to these conclusions is "no," MAY IT NEVER BE. Sin in the flesh will sin. Grace, however, does not foster sin/sinning. Grace

¹² Same word usually translated "grace," χάρις.

¹³ Humanly is a translation of Ἀνθρώπινον. The adjectival ending -inos probably stresses the quality of the word being used. Hence, as a human; in human terms; humanly.

¹⁴ ἁγιασμόν sanctification or consecration.

¹⁵ Dative case= with regard to.

is God's new operating system in and through Christ enlivening the believer to put death the Adamic flesh patterns while developing Christ-life patterns of thought and behavior. To continue to sin is to remain a slave to the flesh.

V16 DO YOU NOT KNOW – Perhaps the Romans Christians have not realized the depth dynamic of God's grace through Christ. So, Paul begins his discussion with DO YOU NOT KNOW. Then, with this, the Apostle illustrates our new relationship with righteousness through grace employing an analogy that would be very familiar to anyone living in Rome at this time in history. This analogy is the relationship of a slave to his master. The Romans Christians know that WHEN YOU PRESENT YOURSELVES TO SOMEONE AS SLAVES FOR OBEDIENCE YOU ARE SLAVES OF THE ONE WHOM YOU OBEY. In the first century many of the slaves in the Roman empire were slaves by choice, willingly submitting to slavery to meet their daily needs. It would not be uncommon for someone to present themselves to a person with means for service. Therefore, a person who submits themselves to another as a slave place themselves under that person's authority. Using the present tense, Paul uses stresses an ongoing relationship giving a sense of immediacy to his illustration. Paul writes, , in other words, in this context, a person is EITHER a slave OF SIN RESULTING IN DEATH, that is, if we are presenting ourselves to sin leading to death willingly under law, or a slave in OBEDIENCE RESULTING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS living under the rule of grace. Under law sin leads to death (see 7:7-23). Conversely, as slaves of righteousness, 6:18, grace leads to righteousness. Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, Titus 2:11-12. And, while it is implicit by virtue of the commands in 6:11-13, 19 that we may fail to move toward righteousness, grace, nonetheless, ever prompts the acquitted toward righteousness resulting in transformation/sanctification. These principles coincide with Paul's instruction in Galatians 5:1-4. Those attempting to be justified by law have fallen from grace. Those apart from Christ obey sin. Thus, the justified, placing themselves under the law for righteousness (where sin abounds) have inadvertently fallen from grace (i.e., have left the divine operating system of Christ's resurrected life for the old system of self-sufficiency). They are trying to do for themselves through enslavement what only the life of Christ could accomplish. With even the best intentions Christ is the only divine means for godly living. As Jesus taught us, "apart from Me you can do nothing," John 15:5.

V17 BUT THANKS BE TO GOD THAT THOUGH YOU WERE SLAVES OF SIN—Paul now distinguishes between those who are not justified being separated from God's grace in Christ and those who are justified and joined to Christ. Those who are not justified/declared righteous through faith in Christ are SLAVES OF SIN. By using the imperfect tense, WERE SLAVES, Paul describes the spiritual status of the Roman Christians prior to their justification. The imperfect tense tells us that an unbeliever's enslavement to sin is an ongoing condition. The Christian, however, BECAME OBEDIENT FROM THE HEART TO THAT FORM OF TEACHING, that is, the gospel. The difference between the righteous and the unrighteous centers around a person's heart-obedience to the message of the gospel. This obedience is not one of works but the inner response (FROM THE HEART) of faith (like that of Abraham), consider 1:5; 16:26. Faith's obedient response focuses upon the message of the gospel, namely, God's instruction, FORM/pattern/ OF TEACHING for righteousness apart

from the law. By faith the justified have submitted themselves to a new master, righteousness.

V18 HAVING BEEN FREED FROM SIN—Our obedience to the gospel, namely, to believe God’s message about Christ, sets us free (“to cause someone to be set at liberty from another’s dominion” BDAG) from sin. This phrase summarizes the entire discussion in 6:1-7. The tense (aorist) presents this truth as a historical fact while the passive voice indicates that the recipient of this freedom, the believer, was acted upon by Someone other than themselves, namely God. The Christian, while still beset with the presence of sin in the flesh, is free from the eternal consequence of sin. No longer under the old master, those turning to Christ BECAME SLAVES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. In contrast to being under sin’s dominion the justified are now enslaved (in this context, “under the dominion and mastery) to righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is our new master. The reign/rule of grace, 6:14, does not lead to more sin. Rather, grace, as our master, binds /obligates/enslaves us to righteousness. Paul reiterates the importance of his instruction found in 6:11-13.

V19 SO NOW PRESENT YOUR MEMBERS AS SLAVES TO RIGHTEOUSNESS – Rather than assuming obedience to grace is irresistible Paul repeats the expected response to the standard of the teaching we have received, 6:17. Because of the nature of the reign of grace, namely, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, Titus 2:11-12, grace divinely instructs and enlivens, and the expected response is to present our members (see 6:13) as slaves obligated, 8:12-13, to righteousness. The aorist tense of the imperative stresses the ‘snapshot’/whole picture of this presentation rather than the ongoing process of the presentation. The reality of being bound to righteousness also provides a measure of solace, we belong to God’s righteousness in Christ.

V19 RESULTING IN SANCTIFICATION – It is through our obedience to the enlivening of grace, the life of Christ within, that we experience SANCTIFICATION. This transformation is God’s work of ethical renewal in our lives.¹⁶ The work of grace in a believer’s life leads to transformation. This grace, while training the believer in godliness, moves us forward, away from sin and its flesh patterns, and toward Christ as we present ourselves to righteousness. Our transformation is truly the fruit of the Holy Spirit and represents the heart of sanctification, see chapter 8:2-14.

Taking a closer look

SANCTIFICATION¹⁷

Sanctification speaks to the holiness or moral lifestyle of the justified. Generally, we understand sanctification through three categories, positional, progressive, and final.

Words used for sanctification

¹⁶ C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans*, vol 1, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1975), 327. Cranfield states, “The noun ἁγιασμός occurs in the NT nine other times (v. 22; 1 Cor 1.30; 1 Th 4.3, 4,7; 2 Th 2.13; 1 Tim 2.15; Heb 12.14 1 Pet 1.2)...in spite of some opinions to the contrary, the word, as used by Paul, indicates a process rather than a state...” Ibid.

¹⁷ Some of the information used for this closer look has been adapted from Brace Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, in *The Foundations of Evangelical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), 385-429. Any allusion or citation will be marked with a page reference.

Holiness is central to the idea of sanctification. The OT concept of holiness [vb. *qadash*; n. *qodesh*; adj. *qadosh*] describe persons/beings, places, and ceremonies that are ‘set apart’ (devoted) from the mundane. With respect to this separation/devotedness the OT also hints at a moral aspect to holiness.

The NT, while referring to this separation/devotion when referencing OT institutions (e.g., the Temple, Matthew 24:15, the covenant, Luke 1:72, Jerusalem, Matthew 4:5; and the Scriptures, Romans 1:2), uses words that stress moral devotion and godly ethics. Words such as *hosiotes*; *hieros*, *hosios*, *hagiasmos*, *hagiosyne*, *hagiazō*, and *hagios* reflect the inner piety, freedom from evil thoughts and attitudes, Ephesians 5:27; the abstinence from immoral acts, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, the positive commitment to good, Colossians 3:12-14 [406-7], and general consecration. These are the NT terms associated with ‘holiness’ or sanctification. “Holiness, in a word, is Christlikeness daily manifested in the midst of a godless world” [407].

The categories of sanctification

As mentioned, sanctification is usually discussed in three specific categories.

Positional. Positional sanctification refers to the ‘holiness’ that is true of every believer, 1 Corinthians 6:11. This holiness/consecration is ours through our union with Jesus Christ. First Corinthians 1:30 tells us that Christ is our sanctification. Romans six tells us that we are identified with Christ’s death and His life, separated from the condemnation of the law, and separated to the life of Christ with God. We are called “saints” or holy ones, Romans 1:7. Positional sanctification, then, refers to the status of holiness or consecration that is gifted to every believer the moment we respond with faith to the message about Christ, consider Hebrews 2:11.

Progressive. Progressive sanctification refers to the gradual movement toward Christlikeness as the righteous follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. The NT refers to the righteous as “being sanctified,” Hebrews 10:14. As God trains the followers of Christ, the Christian gradually partakes of His holiness, Hebrews 12:10. By presenting our members to God for righteousness we experience “sanctification/ holiness,” Romans 6:19.

Final. Final or ultimate sanctification refers to the glorified state awaiting every believer at the return of Christ. First John tells us that “that when He appears we shall be like him. Because we shall see Him as He is,” 1 John 3:2. This likeness includes having an immortal, resurrected body, 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; Philippians 3:20-21. This likeness includes the complete removal and ‘forgetting of sin’ as promised in the new covenant, Hebrews 8:12-13. Finally, this ultimate sanctification includes our share as heirs in the glorious kingdom of God’s Son, Romans 8:15-17, on the restored earth, Romans 8:18-23.

Definition of sanctification. Sanctification, then, refers to the status (already set apart), progression in life (being set apart), and ultimate destiny of those justified by faith in Christ Jesus as being morally consecrated/set apart through and in Christ, by the Spirit, and, at the appearing of Christ.

V20 FOR WHEN YOU WERE SLAVES OF SIN—Those who are acquitted are released from sin’s lordship/mastery. Those who are justified are no longer slaves of sin. This is a positional fact. Note the imperfect tense of the verb WERE. The imperfect tense depicts an ongoing condition in the past. The point here is that this condition is no longer true of those justified through faith in Christ. This has nothing to do with the experience a believer may have with repeated sins.

V20 YOU WERE FREE IN REGARD TO RIGHTEOUSNESS— First, we should understand that the unbeliever (those without the indwelling presence of Christ by the Spirit) cannot produce God’s required righteousness (the righteousness apart from law). Those attempting to please God through self-effort cannot achieve God’s righteousness. Second, the idea of being free regarding righteousness also communicates the idea that we cannot be slaves to both sin and righteousness. If a person is a slave to sin, then that person is free from righteousness. Even their righteous acts produced from self are sin, see Isaiah 64:6. On the

other hand, if a person is freed from sin, 6:7, they are bound to the righteousness of Christ. The reality of this new relationship serves as a divine guarantee.

V21 BUT WHAT BENEFIT WERE YOU DERIVING FROM THE THINGS OF WHICH YOU ARE NOW ASHAMED? – The question now being asked leads the reader to consider the BENEFIT in being slaves to sin. Considering the ultimate produce, that is, “fruit”, was death, Paul’s question is rhetorical. Further, the life previously lived consisted of intentions and activities about THE THINGS OF WHICH WE ARE NOW ASHAMED.

V22 BUT NOW—The new message of the gospel and the new life possible in Christ once again is set apart with the words BUT NOW (remember 3:21). Life in Christ is a new era. Under the Law a person was encouraged to get help. BUT NOW that help is here. NOW the believer has BEEN FREED FROM SIN. Taking us back to 6:1-4, Paul sets our freedom from sin (through our union with the death of Christ). BUT NOW we are God’s property/slave, that is, ENSLAVED TO GOD, consider 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Paul stays with his illustration of slavery to communicate the depth of our previous bondage to sin and the depth of our new relationship with God. While this analogy would be clearly understood by anyone in the Rome whose population has been estimated to be made of slaves by as much as half, Paul later tells us that our new relationship is “not of slavery leading to fear again, but [of] adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!”, 8:15. Furthermore, this new relationship has the BENEFIT RESULTING IN SANCTIFICATION. Instead of the fear of death, 6:21, our new relationship with God bears fruit/results that leads to sanctification/consecration/a transformed life. As we present our members (mind, heart, will, life, and body) to God as instruments for righteousness, God’s enlivening grace transforms us. The Christian life is truly Christ in us, through us, as us, and, as Paul will tell us, this reality is by the Spirit of Life in Christ, 8:2-17. If these benefits weren’t enough the ultimate OUTCOME, is ETERNAL LIFE. The goal of our transformation is the experience of eternal life. Now we know the full, behind the scenes, explanation of 5:21 which reads, “grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This “life” has already been granted, now God’s triumphant, super abounding grace in Christ leads us to and reigns unto transformation leading our experience the already gifted eternal life, 8:6b; Galatians 6:8b, the abundance of Christ in us.

V23 FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH – Sin offers death as its payment BUT THE FREE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD. Sin pays its servants with death. God freely gives eternal life. Eternal life refers to the objective/result of our acquittal (3—4), our reconciliation (5), and our union with Christ (6). Eternal life refers to what we already possess and increasingly experience (consider John 6:47; Galatians 6:8). Eternal life also refers to what we anticipate at the resurrection.

Summary of the text

Rather than encouraging the Christian to sin so that grace may abound, Paul instructs those trusting Christ to yield themselves to the enlivening grace of God. Only through the grace of Christ can our spiritual lives experience the presence of Christ and the reality of eternal life. Grace is the divine gift that, apart from any merit other than Christ, leads and enables the justified to bear fruit for God leading to (not granting) eternal life. While we were once

enslaved to sin leading to death, we are now free from sin's deadly work and free to experience God's enlivening grace leading us to experience the gift of eternal life, namely Christ Himself.

D. With Christ we are dead to the law and alive by the Spirit, 7:1-6.

The text with grammatical notations

Chapter seven 1 Or do you not know^{pai}, fellow Christians¹⁸, because I am speaking to those knowing^{aaptc} law, that the Law rules^{pai} over a person¹⁹ during²⁰ whatever time he lives^{pai}? **2** For a married woman is bound^{pai} by law to the living^{paptc} husband, but if²¹ the husband might die^{aasubj}, she has been discharged^{pfpai} from the law of the husband. **3** As a result then, while²² the husband is living^{paptc} she will be called^{fai} an adulteress if²³ she belongs^{amsbj} to another man, yet if²⁴ the man might die^{aasubj} [then] she is free from law; with reference to this [woman]²⁵ she is not to be^{painf} an adulteress having belonged^{daptc} to another man. **4** So then, my fellow Christians, you have been put to death^{api} to the Law through the body of Christ, so that²⁶ you might belong^{aminf} to another, to the One who has been raised^{apptc} from the dead, in order that you might bear fruit^{aasubj} to God. **5** For when we were^{ipfai} in the flesh, the sin's passion that through the Law were energized^{ipfmi} in our members, resulted²⁷ in bearing fruit^{aainf} to death; **6** But now having been released^{api} from the Law having died^{aaptc} in which we were being confined^{ipfpi}, so that we are to be enslaved^{painf} in Spirit's newness and not in Letter's oldness.

Observations from the text

V1 OR DO YOU NOT KNOW — Anticipating that his readers may not have been taught certain important truths about the Christian life, Paul turns his attention to a basic issue governing true spirituality and our sanctification. The issue is the believer's relationship with the law. In Romans 7:1—8:4 the Apostle answers a very specific spiritual life question, “Does our ongoing spiritual vitality depend upon works of the law, or is our spiritual transformation through another means?”

Since Romans 3:21, Paul has built the foundational understanding that the gospel, God's perfect message, reveals and offers God's righteousness apart from law. The reason for this necessity, we discovered, was that everyone is a law breaker and that through the law comes the knowledge of sin and God's judgment, 3:19-20. We have been shown that righteousness must be granted apart from the law through the principle of faith in Christ's righteousness, chapters 3:21—4:6, and that God's love, 5:8, and grace, 5:18-21, through Christ are the only means for eternal life and eternal living. What we must now understand

¹⁸ Fellow Christians is a paraphrase of the Greek word for “brothers”.

¹⁹ Genitive depicting position of relationship “over.”

²⁰ Temporal aspect of ἐφ’ ὅσον. For, on, = during

²¹ Third class condition. The illustration is not a reference to an actual person but is referring to a hypothetical situation (which would be true if and when it occurs).

²² Temporal aspect of the genitive absolute ζῶντος τοῦ ἀνδρὸς

²³ Third class condition indicates what would be true if the situation mentioned actually existed.

²⁴ Third class condition

²⁵ There is simply a genitive definitive article “of this one” introducing the entire last phrase. I have rendered it a genitive of reference, i.e., “with reference to this woman...”

²⁶ εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς construction denotes result or purpose.

²⁷ εἰς τὸ καρποφορῆσαι construction denotes result (since it is clearly in the past).

is that sin derives its power to kill through the law and that the acquitted/justified needed to be released from the law in order to experience Christ's life. That is what 6:1—7:6 presents. Up until now, however, Paul has stressed our freedom from sin's dominion through our union with Christ's death and resurrection. Now the apostle connects our union with Christ's death and our freedom from sin to our freedom from the law. Now, Paul introduces a new Person involved with our transformation, the Holy Spirit. To inform his readers of this simple but essential truth, Paul begins with a basic principle, **THE LAW HAS JURISDICTION OVER A PERSON AS LONG AS HE LIVES.**

VV 2-3 Using the analogy of marriage, as typically understood by the law, Paul then establishes a comparison that will illustrate what has taken place in our spiritual relationship with God. Generally speaking (I say generally in that the law itself gave certain exceptions to the laws of the husband and wife, consider Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Matthew 19:3-9) the law insisted that marriage was binding for life. Accordingly, the only natural means for dissolving the marriage vow was through the death of a spouse. The marriage union was no longer binding after a death had occurred.

V4 THEREFORE – Now Paul makes his spiritual application. **THEREFORE**, this is, in the same way, as with the law of the husband and wife, **YOU ALSO WERE MADE TO DIE TO THE LAW THROUGH THE BODY OF CHRIST.** Through our union with Christ's death, we died to the law and, subsequently, to the dominion/rule of sin and death, 6:1-7. The underlying legal grounds for sin's reign of death over us was the law, 3:19-20. To abolish sin's reign God had to legally remove sin's authority to kill. Salvation had to include the sentence of the law, 3:25-31. The believe has died **TO THE LAW THROUGH THE BODY OF CHRIST.** Our union with Christ's death under the law released us from the law (in the same way the death of a spouse releases the other to be married to another without violation of God's moral standards). The purpose for this arrangement was **THAT YOU MIGHT BE JOINED TO ANOTHER.** Having died to/been released from the law frees us to be legally bound to another (as with marriage). This "other" is the resurrected Christ, the perfect human and the head of a recreated/resurrected humanity, consider 1 Corinthians 15:45. The ultimate purpose for this new union is **IN ORDER THAT** we might live a spiritually transformed life, consider the discussion in 6:15-21. Paul describes the result of this new "marriage" with the clause **THAT WE MIGHT BEAR FRUIT FOR GOD.** It is only through our new relationship with Christ that true spirituality takes place. Self-effort is reformation. Our union with Christ by the Spirit produces transformation.

V5 FOR WHILE WE WERE IN THE FLESH— Further explanation, **FOR**, involves understanding the relational change that took place when we placed our faith in Christ. Related to Adam we **WERE IN THE FLESH.** In Adam we were free from righteousness and bound to sin, remember 6:17-22. The idea of being in the flesh takes into consideration everything understood in the phrase "old man"/ former self, 6:6. The flesh refers to everything **WE WERE** in Adam. We **WERE** under sin's dominion. We **WERE** subject to death. We **WERE** slaves to unrighteousness. We **WERE** held captive to sins passions and desires and held captive to the futility of our own temporal existence. Finally, we **WERE** weak and helpless, 5:6. Notice, however, the imperfect tense **WERE.** This refers to a past, not present, condition, (regarding the flesh, see also 8:9).

V5 THE SINFUL PASSIONS WHICH WERE AROUSED BY THE LAW – Embedded in the flesh are self-centered and self-authenticating passions/desires. Our thoughts, our will, our emotions, and our physical appetites were all bent toward self-authentication, self-sufficiency, and self-preservation. Because these ‘natural’ passions are centered in self rather than Christ, they are, by their very character, sinful. Everything about the flesh occurs as sin is AROUSED/energized BY THE LAW. In a few verses, Paul will give a detailed illustration of this principle, 7:7-14. Also, Paul will tell us shortly how attempting to keep the law only fails due to sin in the flesh which inevitably produces transgressions, that is, the actual violation of the law, 7:15-23.

V5 WERE AT WORK IN THE MEMBERS OF OUR BODY—Our members include everything mortal, see discussion in 6:11-13. Sinful passions reside in our mortal, made-of-flesh, self, consider 7:14. The flesh cannot and will not produce righteousness, see 8:5-8 (also Jesus’ words, John 6:63). The sinful passions in the flesh aroused by the law can only BEAR FRUIT FOR DEATH. The produce of the flesh is death. This death, ironically, is through our attempts to keep God’s law.

V6 BUT NOW – Once again Paul uses the phrase BUT NOW. But now the gospel has changed everything. The change? WE HAVE BEEN RELEASED FROM THE LAW. Those who are justified by faith in God’s promise through the faith/faithfulness of Christ have been released (aorist passive tells us it’s a fact! God did this to us!) from the law as the means for spiritual living. The legal system empowering our flesh-embedded sinful passions no longer binds us.

V6 HAVING DIED TO THAT BY WHICH WE WERE BOUND— Our previous bondage to sin, 6:17, was due to our relationship to God through the Law. This relationship resulted in a death sentence, 3:19-20. A death had to occur. Much the same as stated in Galatians 2:15-21, we learn that our union with Christ’s death (according to and under the law) released us from the law, 7:1. We have died to the law with the result that sin can no longer lay claim to us, Sin cannot lead to our death, see 1 Corinthians 15:56. Through our association with Christ’s death we are no longer held by the condemnation which was our sentence under the law. Sin has lost its power to kill, and the law has lost its position/authority to condemn. The death that had to occur was the death of Christ. Christ’s death is the basis for our freedom from law. The purpose of our freedom, SO THAT, is the new life through the gospel, namely, the revelation of God’s righteousness apart from the law produced, not by the efforts of the flesh attempting to keep God’s ordinances, but by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, 8:9, given according to the promise, Galatians 3:14. The Spirit of life in Christ runs the new operating system, grace, 6:14, producing the life of Christ in us. The law of Spirit of the Life of Christ has set us free from the law of sin and death, 8:2. Our lives (the believer) are enlivened by God Himself. The Christian life is not lived by our self-sustained effort to be everything we believe God wants us to be. Rather, the Christian life is a faith-response to the indwelling presence of God’s Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, 8:9, who leads us to sow and reap eternal life, 8:14; Galatians 6:8. Now we are to SERVE IN THE NEWNESS OF THE SPIRIT. Those who seek to please God are to live in a new way. We are to live IN THE NEWNESS OF THE SPIRIT, consider John 6:63 (“it is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no help at all,” ESV), NOT IN OLDNESS OF THE LETTER, 2 Corinthians 3:6. The oldness of the letter refers back to an era

in which God's people attempted to keep God's law in the energy of the flesh (their humanness). As noble as this notion of self-effort seems, there has been a dramatic change with the coming of the Son. The law, which governed the people of God, has been replaced by God Himself. Christ's resurrected life is the Law of the Spirit of Life, 8:2. As planned and gifted by the Father, as mediated by the Son, so now we are to learn to live by the life force of God's gifted salvation as administered by the Holy Spirit.

Summary of the text

As a spouse is free from the marriage bonds through death so the believer is free from the law of sin and death, 8:2, through our union with Christ's death. This freedom exists so that we might be joined to another, the resurrected Christ, making possible a new way of living, namely, life by the Spirit.

E. The law is holy, righteous, and good, but sin uses the law producing death, 7:7-12.

The text with grammatical notations

7 What then will we say^{fai}? [Is] the Law sin? May it never be!^{amopt} But I did not know^{aa} sin except through Law; for I might not know^{plpfai} desiring except the Law was saying^{ipfai}, **“you will not desire.”**^{fai} 8 But sin having taken^{aaptc} an opportunity through the commandment produced^{ami} in me every desire; For apart from law sin [is] dead. 9 Now I was living^{ipfai} at that time apart from law, but when²⁸ the commandment came^{aaptc} sin came to life^{aa} 10 then I died^{aa} and the commandment which [was] for the purpose of life was found^{api} to me, the same [was] for death. 11 and sin having taken^{aaptc} opportunity through the commandment, thoroughly deceived^{aa} me, and through it [i.e., the commandment] killed^{aa} [me]. 12 So then indeed the Law [is] holy and the commandment [is] holy, righteous, and good.

Observations from the text

V7 IS THE LAW SIN? – Since the law has now been associated with sin's deadly work the question arises, IS THE LAW SIN? The answer, of course is, MAY IT NEVER BE. To further explain his response, however, Paul, however, provides an inside look at the relationship between sin and the law. To explain the connection between the law and sin Paul points out that he WOULD NOT HAVE COME TO KNOW SIN EXCEPT THROUGH THE LAW. While sin existed and did its work before the law was given, 5:13ff., with the giving of the law, the self-seeking, deadly work of sin became obvious. The voice of God through the Law shouted “guilty!” The possibility of life through good works was seen to be impossible. To be specific Paul states, I WOULD NOT HAVE KNOWN ABOUT COVETING IF THE LAW HAD NOT SAID **“YOU SHALL NOT COVET.”** Here Paul selects the one command that speaks directly to the issues of the heart, covetousness, or desiring what is not yours. Covetousness represents the singular command in the decalogue that cannot be objectified. Covetousness is an invisible condition of the heart. Additionally, covetousness is at the heart of the idolatry first mentioned in Romans 1:18-23, consider Colossians 3:5. Finally, covetousness brings us back to the first commandment in the law, namely, not having any other gods ahead of the true and living God. Covetousness, that is, our self-worship and want, is the *sine qua non* regarding our guilt before God. Covetousness speaks to the essence of sin, our self-

²⁸ Temporal aspect of genitive absolute ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς ἐντολῆς

authentication and self-dependence, the self-worship (idolatry), which was at the heart of Adam's disobedience.

V8 Rather, BUT, than the law being the culprit, Paul singles out sin as the reason for our demise. It is SIN TAKING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH THE COMMANDMENT that produces sin. Sin embedded in the flesh seizes the law and uses the law to display and produce itself (sinning). Consider Paul's connection in 1 Corinthians 15:56." The power [*dunamis*= might, strength, force, capability, the ability to carry out something," BDAG] of sin is the law." Apart from God's Law sin has no power to condemn. Under the Law, however, sin PRODUCED IN ME COVETING OF EVERY KIND. Taking this discussion a step further Paul writes, FOR APART FROM THE LAW, SIN IS DEAD. Without "law" (there is no definite article in the Greek text) sin is as good as dead/powerless. Without a commandment there is no judgment. Even at the fall of humanity in the Garden there was a command. Without that singular command sin had no opportunity to operate and kill. With the coming of the Mosaic Law sin now has every opportunity to kill. Furthermore, to attempt spiritual life by keeping a law-based relationship with God only produces failure and guilt, or, as we will see in Romans 9:31-32, sin blinds through our attempts to produce a flesh righteousness by keeping commands/ religious traditions, 9:31-32.

V9 The fact remains that without law there would be no condemnation. Paul writes I WAS ONCE ALIVE APART FROM THE LAW. There are a variety of opinions about the meaning of these words. Was Paul referencing his childhood, namely, before being recognized as a responsible adult? Was Paul referring to a time of ignorance about the law? Was Paul making a reference to humanity in general before the giving of the Law at Sinai? It appears Paul is either referring to the time of innocence before adult consciousness, or Paul was illustrating his point through Adam's disobedience, that without "law" we, the human race, would have not died, we would be alive (for there is no transgression because sin is dead). Regardless of one's view on this matter Paul tells us that sin is what killed humanity, and it uses the commandment to do it. Without a commandment we would have remained alive.

V9 BUT WHEN THE COMMANDMENT CAME SIN CAME ALIVE AND I DIED—With commandment sin comes alive. Adam's fall was facilitated with a commandment. Empowered by the commandment, sin, with its power of death, played to the weakness of human flesh and humanity died. Paul uses the first-person singular as a representation of humanity. While death was through one man Adam, death is both universal, and it most certainly is personal.

V10 AND THIS COMMANDMENT, WHICH WAS TO RESULT IN LIFE—While the commandment itself could not give life, consider Galatians 3:21, the commandment of God, if kept, held the promise for life, Deuteronomy 30:15. Had Adam kept the command in the Garden God would have given him life in paradise. Had Israel kept the Mosaic Law they would have experienced God's blessing (life) in the land, consider Deuteronomy 30:15-20. But rather than give life the commandment PROVED TO RESULT IN DEATH FOR ME. To be clear, the Law did not kill. The Law, however, proved to be the vehicle by which sin killed. The Law exposed and empowered sin in the flesh, and sin, when it has accomplished its work, brings forth death, see James 1:15.

V11 Paul now explains (FOR) how sin uses the law to kill those attempting to keep the law. We see that SIN TAKING AN OPPORTUNITY THROUGH THE COMANDMENT deceives and through this deception kills. This deadly relationship between sin and the commandment is quite the opposite most would expect. Sincere attempts at godly living through a commandment-based spirituality only provides AN OPPORTUNITY for sin. The more rules governing our spiritual efforts the more opportunity there is for failure and despair or pride and contempt. The reality remains, through the commandment sin DECEIVED ME AND THROUGH IT (i.e., the commandment) KILLED ME. Just like its spiritual father, the devil, who is a liar, sin deceives the human heart. Sin uses the commandment, which is both good and held the promise of life, to deceive us. In the original language the verbs are all past tense. Paul is referring to what sin has done to humanity. Without law sin had no power to kill. With law sin deceived us and killed us. Furthermore, sin deceives through the commandment in many ways. Sin may impress us that the commands do not matter. Sin may delude us that we are able to keep the commands. Sin may coax us to cover up our past failures by renewing our efforts to keep the commands. For Israel, as we will see in Romans 9:30, sin used their passion to keep of the Law to blind Israel causing the nation to stumble over the stumbling stone of faith in Messiah. Similarly, many are blind to the gospel because of their impression and determination to be good enough, all while covering a naked conscience with metaphorical fig leaves. Sin's deceptions are numerous.

V12 SO THEN, THE LAW IS HOLY...HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS AND GOOD – To answer the question raised in 7:7, “Is the Law sin? Paul insists, “No!” With his answer Paul has explained, and will soon illustrate, how sin uses law to bring death. With Paul’s threefold description of the Law Paul isolates the real culprit regarding the difficulty we have with spiritual living. It is the weakness of human flesh still embedded with sin coupled with our constant attempts to keep God’s law as the way to righteousness and righteous living that that has proved to be impossible.

Summary of the text

The law is not sin/sinful. Law does not kill. Sin, however, uses law to deceive the human heart and through the deception brings about death. The law, holding the promise of life (if kept), is holy, righteous, and good. The law, however, becomes the instrument sin wields to kill.

F. Sin in us, through the commandment, produces behavior contradicting our best intentions, 7:13-25.

The text with Grammatical notations

13 Did, therefore, the good thing for me become^{ami} death? May it never be!^{amopt} But the sin, in order that sin might be revealed^{apsubj}, through that good thing for me is producing^{pmptc} death, in order that sin might become^{amsbj} utterly sinful through the commandment. **14** For we know^{pfai} that the Law is^{pai} spiritual, but I am^{pai} made of flesh having been sold^{pfpi} under sin. **15** For I am working^{pmi} what I do not know^{pai}, for that which I do not desire^{pai} I practice^{pai}, but that which I hate^{pai} I do^{pai}. **16** Now if²⁹ what I do not desire^{pai} that which I do^{pai}, I am agreeing^{pai} with Law that it [is] good. **17** Now it

²⁹ First class condition.

[is] no longer I producing^{pmi} this [contradiction], but sin dwelling^{paptc} in me.³⁰ **18** For I know^{pfai} that good does not dwell^{pai} in me, that is^{pai} in my flesh; for the³¹ willingness^{painf} is present^{pmi} with me, but not the ability to accomplish^{pmi} the good; **19**³² for I am not wanting^{pai} that I am doing^{pai} good, rather I am not wanting^{pai} that I am practicing^{pai} evil.³³ **20** Now if³⁴ what I am not wanting^{pai} I am doing^{pai}, I am no longer accomplishing^{pmi} this but the sin dwelling^{paptc} in me. **21** Consequently, I am finding^{pai} the principle,³⁵ [namely that] for the one wanting^{paptc} to do good, that in me the evil is present^{pmi} **22** For I am delighting^{pai} in God's Law according to the inner man, **23** yet I am seeing^{pai} another law in my members strategizing war^{pmptc} toward the law of my mind while taking me captive^{paptc} in the law of the sin which is^{paptc} in my members. **24** O I [am] a suffering and distressed³⁶ man; who will rescue^{fai} me from the body of this death? **25** Thanks [be] to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently therefore, on one hand, I myself am serving^{pai} God's Law with mind, yet on the other hand, with the flesh [I am serving] sin's law.

Observations from the text

V13 THEREFORE, DID THAT WHICH IS GOOD BECOME A CAUSE OF DEATH FOR ME? – A logical question arises about the law. Again, the answer to this question is MAY IT NEVER BE. The law does not kill. Rather, IT WAS SIN. Sin residing in every human being in Adam kills. The self-promoting, self-surviving, independent disposition that controls thoughts, desires, feelings, and actions remains in every person EFFECTING MY DEATH. Not only is a person born dead (i.e., estranged from God) in trespasses and sin, Ephesians 2:1-3, but sin continues to produce this death IN ME. God, however, in His mercy, gave Law in order IN ORDER THAT IT [sin] MIGHT BE SHOWN TO BE SIN. God's commandments became the vehicle exposing sin to be what is truly is. We now know sin because of the law. But the law, intended for the unrighteous, 1 Timothy 1:9, is God's merciful voice calling the estranged sinner to Christ. This principle is in accord with the gospel, 1 Timothy 1:11. Through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. Through the impossibility of keeping Law we understand that no flesh shall be justified in God's sight. Through the Law the whole world becomes accountable to God, 3:19-20. Through the law we should hear God's voice telling us to seek mercy and live, that is, to trust Christ. And so, Paul writes 7:14—8:4 to remind us about the sufficiency of Christ. It is God's purpose and plan that THROUGH THE COMMANDMENT/law SIN WOULD BECOME UTTERLY SINFUL. Subsequently, as sin increased, 5:20, those who hear the voice of the God through the law are drawn to seek help outside themselves. Those

³⁰ Notice Paul is using only the present tense for this portion of the text. Throughout this letter when Paul wants to indicate a present state of affairs he uses the present tense (no historical presents, etc). Therefore, I conclude that the best option for understanding this passage is to understand this to describe the Christian battle with indwelling sin.

³¹ The articular infinitive serves as the subject of the verb.

³² Beginning with verse 19 I have translated the present tense verbs to stress the on-going nature of the dilemma Paul is discussing.

³³ οὐ γὰρ ὃ θέλω ποιῶ ἀγαθόν, ἀλλ' ὃ οὐ θέλω κακὸν τοῦτο πράσσω. This awkward sentence (for English) should simply be translated "For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want."

³⁴ First class condition.

³⁵ The idea of law in this instance should be understood as 'principle,' like the 'law of gravity.' It's fixed and certain, but it is not a written law, rather it is an operating principle.

³⁶ Ταλαίπωρος the word has the idea of distressed, suffering, and miserable.

exasperated by the futility of death produced by sin (7:15-24) seek deliverance... we should seek and trust God's righteousness apart from the law.

V14 WE KNOW THAT THE LAW IS SPIRITUAL – Why should we seek God's mercy? Because, through our failure to keep the law, **WE KNOW THAT THE LAW IS SPIRITUAL**, and we discover that **I AM OF THE FLESH**. The problem with the law is not the law, the problem is us..., that is, I am made of flesh weak as it is, see Matthew 26:41b; John 6:63; Romans 8:3. The adjective used here for "flesh" emphasizes the constitution or make-up, namely we are "composed of flesh." This adjective stand in contrast to another similar form which emphasizes characterize or determined by, see 1 Corinthians 3:1,3. Paul is emphasizing what he is made of...he is made of flesh. Our flesh is the old Adamic hardware. The flesh failed in the garden, failed in the wilderness, throughout Israel's history, and it fails today. A human being, in his own strength, cannot overcome the power of sin embedded in the flesh to achieve God's righteousness, consider 8:6-13. This inability will not change until the resurrection (see 6:5; 8:23). The flesh, our humanness, is **SOLD INTO BONDAGE TO SIN**. The flesh, our humanness, is owned, as a slave to its master, by sin. The flesh will be replaced with a new creation at the resurrection. Remember, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Corinthians 15:50. God's plan does not include the reformation of the flesh. God's plan calls for the re-creation of humanity through the new creation. Any attempt to achieve spiritual transformation through keeping God's law goes backward and leads to spiritual exasperation, 7:24. And rather than continually attempting to keep the rules, this exasperation should move us to realize God's gift through Christ, 7:25.

V15 FOR WHAT I AM DOING, I DO NOT UNDERSTAND; – Now Paul explains the futility of attempting to attain righteousness by keeping commandments.³⁷ The control sin has over our flesh leads to a life of contradiction. This contradiction is never more obvious than when we attempt to live a spiritual life by keeping commandments. When we attempt to do so we truly cannot **UNDERSTAND** our own inconsistencies. Christian and non-Christian alike puzzle and frustrate over their inability to achieve the standards their minds desire to accomplish. Attempting to keep law we discover that **I AM NOT PRACTICING WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO DO. BUT I AM DOING WHAT I HATE**. Whether is the secular realm of our daily schedule and resolutions or, as here, seeking to please God with behavioral changes, we must agree with Paul.

V16 BUT IF DO THE VERY THING I DO NOT WANT...I AGREE WITH THE LAW, CONFESSING THAT THE LAW IS GOOD—Paul addresses an earlier question, "is the law sin?" Here, by

³⁷There has been an ongoing debate about the individual Paul portrays in Romans 7:15ff. Is this the non-Christian attempting to please God through the commandments? Is this the normal experience of the Christian in his battle against sin? The context (i.e., Christ's righteousness, progressive sanctification, our positional death to the law, sin's use of the law to kill) leads to an understanding that this passage as an illustration depicting any person regardless of salvific status who attempts to achieve godliness/righteousness through keeping commandments. Unfortunately, most Christians continue to attempt to please God through a personalized system of rules. It is as though we are saved by grace but sanctified by works (of the law...God's law or laws of our own religious understanding). Paul tells us in this passage (and chapter eight) that sanctification, as with salvation, cannot be achieved by works of law. We will repeatedly violate rules and regulations regardless of our best intentions. Our transformation must be born of and produced by the Spirit, 8:2-4.

virtue of our own conscience, we admit that the law is good. Further, there are those who in attempting to keep law and achieve its righteousness discover the ultimate purpose for God's law. The spiritual principle is simple. If I cannot achieve God's righteousness by my own efforts, I am agreeing that the law is good both in its moral rightness and as to its purpose, namely, to expose sin for what it is. Here we discover that it is through this process of failure and acknowledgement that I concede my dilemma. My failure is not about my intentions. Rather, **V17**, NO LONGER AM I THE ONE DOING IT BUT SIN THAT DWELLS IN ME produces the moral failure. The identity of sin being the culprit does not exonerate me, rather it indicts me as the vessel through whom sin expresses itself. Further, to those who hear the voice of God through our attempts to keep law we come to KNOW (whether Christian or non-Christian) **v18** THAT NOTHING GOOD DWELLS IN ME, THAT IS, IN MY FLESH. By my failures to attain God's righteousness I learn that in my flesh nothing good dwells, consider John 6:63. My humanness (this mortal self) is under the bondage of sin, 7:14. Even my best efforts are couched in self. The best I can do, even under God's direction, passes through the flesh. Furthermore, even though THE WILLING IS PRESENT IN ME, BUT THE DOING OF THE GOOD IS NOT. In this life I cannot escape sin's ever-present assault. Though forgiven and free from its ultimate purpose, I cannot master the power of sin. This mastery comes only with the likeness of Christ's resurrection, when the new software (the new creation) is joined with the new hardware (the resurrected body, 8:23). **V19** For now, in my own strength, I PRACTICE THE VERY EVIL THAT I DO NOT WANT. I may address and readdress my failures but they continue and remain. My mind may want to keep God's law. But because of sin in the flesh, I am unable to rid myself of my self-authentication, self-dependence, and self-gratification that accompanies every action.

V20 Now we begin arriving at the divinely desired conclusion. IF I AM DOING THE VERY THING I DO NOT WANT, I AM NO LONGER THE ONE DOING IT. The self-orientation, that is, the flesh patterns I experience, are produced by SIN WHICH DWELLS IN ME. Even the self-driven attempts to keep God's commands are attempted through the grid of SIN/self.

V21 So Paul concludes that at this present time there are other laws at work within. He concedes I FIND THEN A PRINCIPLE THAT EVIL IS PRESENT IN ME, THE ONE WHO WANTS TO DO GOOD. The use of the word PRINCIPLE is the same word for 'law.' The word for law is sometimes used to signify a natural law/principle/rule. In the spiritual world there is, at this present time, a spiritual principle/law about sin/evil. In this life evil is always present.

V22 Even though I may JOYFULLY CONCUR WITH THE LAW OF GOD IN THE INNER MAN there is another law/principle/norm/rule. **V23** There is something else at work. Paul tells us I SEE A DIFFERENT LAW IN THE MEMBERS OF MY BODY. This 'other' law in my members WAGING WAR AGAINST THE LAW OF MY MIND is the law of the presence of evil within. The outcome of this war is that I am held captive to that which I do not want to do, consider Paul's succinct statement in Galatians 5:17. Sin in the flesh, 7:14, is MAKING ME A PRISONER OF THE LAW OF SIN WHICH IS IN MY MEMBERS. The one who attempts to keep God's law can only come to the realization that, in this life, obedience through the energy of the flesh is an impossible task. Through attempting to keep the law we can only come to despair.

V24 The person attempting spirituality through works of the law will cry out, **WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM! WHO WILL SET ME FREE FROM THE BODY OF THIS DEATH.** The despair of heart with even our most valiant attempt to please God by keeping His law is the despair of realizing the depth of sin's wretched presence. The Greek word here reflects a person who is suffering and miserable (see grammatical footnote). Perhaps this miserable suffering experienced within explains why so many revert to a comfortable and culturally acceptable form of spiritual living. God's laws may be more desirable than gold, or sweeter than honey, Psalm 19:10, but the constant failure to attain this gold or taste this sweetness becomes distressful and the distress of repeatedly coming up short leads to despair. Further, sin takes God's laws and deceives the doer either by creating a sense of pride in doing some good things, or a sense of failure and hopelessness. The law has rendered even those with the best intentions hopeless. This hopeless misery, however, should lead to God's answer. Rather than surrender our desire for God to ordinary expressions of religious activity we should allow our 'failure' in attaining God's righteousness to lead us back to Christ. God's grace through our failed law-keeping efforts moves those who hear God's voice through the law proclaiming the gospel. God, through Christ faithfulness, has delivered us **FROM THE BODY OF THIS DEATH**, i.e., 'the body of sin', 6:6.

V25 **THANKS BE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD!** – God's answer to man's misery under law of sin and death is Christ. God's answer for those who attempt to please God by keeping His law is Christ. God through Christ has provided righteousness apart from the law, 3:21. Christ is the end/completion of the law for righteousness, 10:4. Christ has died to sin so that sin in the flesh would be condemned, 8:3. While sin remains in the flesh, the bondage of the flesh to sin's presence has already been dealt with by God in Christ, see 8:3. The righteousness of the law has been fulfilled in the lives of those who are living in the Spirit, 7:4-6; 8:4,9, and will ultimately be addressed at the resurrection when we are finally found in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, 6:5. Now Paul draws a conclusion to the dilemma of sin and the law. **SO THEN**, Paul tells us, **ON THE ONE HAND I MYSELF WITH MY MIND AM SERVING THE LAW OF GOD.** The reality of the Christian life is that we can serve the righteous requirements of the law, see 13:8, with our minds by setting our minds on the things of the Spirit, 8:5-6, all the while being mindful that **WITH MY FLESH**, I am and can only serve **THE LAW OF SIN.** The flesh (our humanness) can only serve sin/self, 7:14. The Adamic "hardware" is held under the corrupting power of sin, consider 8:7-8. The old Adamic 'hardware cannot run the new creation software. The flesh may get more religious, i.e., adept at keeping man's ideas of righteousness, but the flesh never gets better. Sin, using God's law, leads to death/corruption, consider Galatians 6:8. The flesh can only serve the principle of sin and death. What is needed for a righteous lifestyle is an exchanged life, that is, Christ living in me, through me, as me, Philippians 1:21a; Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:14. As Jesus said, "apart from Me you can do nothing," John 15:5.

Summary of the text

Because my flesh is under sin's control, attempting to keep law leads only to despair. It is through this despair, however, that we can discover the reality of Christ. The gift of God is Christ who provides God's righteousness apart from the law. This righteousness not only

secures our standing with God (justification), but Christ's righteousness also provides the perfect means to please God. To live is Christ.

G. In Christ God has condemned sin in the flesh and provided the Spirit of life to fulfill the righteousness required by the law, 8:1-4.

The text with grammatical notations

Chapter Eight 1 Consequently, [there is] no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. **2** For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has set you free^{aai} from the law of the sin and the death. **3** For the impossibility of the Law while³⁸ being weak^{impfai} through the flesh, God, having sent^{aaptc} His own Son in the likeness of sinful³⁹ flesh and concerning sin, condemned^{aai} the sin in the flesh **4** in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled^{apsubj} in us the ones who are not walking^{pai} according to the flesh but according to Spirit.

Observations from the text

V1 THEREFORE — From the ultimate despair in attempting to keep law, God intends for those so exasperated to discover Christ. In Christ God offers full and final deliverance. THERE IS NOW NO CONDEMNATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS. In Christ justice has been served, sin in the flesh has been judged, and divine life bestowed. Those who have turned to Christ have died to the law and been joined to the resurrected Savior. Where there is no law there is no transgression. Condemnation is an impossibility. Having been justified we will be saved from God's wrath, 5:9. Our righteousness is from God apart from the law. This is the gospel. This is the message of Romans.

V2 FOR THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST – FOR provides further explanation. But what is meant by the phrase, THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE? Certainly, this is another principle/law for living and this principle/law, according to context, includes the Holy Spirit. This reference, however, is called a "law/principle" and it is located ("in" taken as locative) in Christ. More than just the Holy Spirit; more than just being in Christ; Paul seems to be referring to an entirely new operating system. This system involves everything God through Christ has accomplished, namely, our redemption, Christ's high priestly mediation, and the inner administrative presence of the Holy Spirit which Christ initiated, Acts 2:33. Combined, Paul tells us that there is a new law/principle at work in the believer. The new 'software' 'downloaded' into the Christian is the regulating principle/law of divine Life by the Spirit in Christ. As the flesh profits nothing and the Spirit gives life, John 6:63; 2 Corinthians 3:6, we have this Life by the Spirit. This life comes apart from the Law, see Galatians 3:21-22, and this life is Christ in us.

V2 Furthermore, this life principle HAS SET YOU FREE. Answering his question in 7:24, Paul tells us that the Christian's freedom for spiritual living is through the operating system of the life-giving Holy Spirit. This freedom is in Christ. The word order in the original text has IN CHRIST following immediately behind the phrase "Spirit of Life" emphasizing the ultimate

³⁸ ἐν ᾧ – this construction may reflect a temporal sense.

³⁹ The use of the genitive as being attributive...describing the flesh... The flesh (humanness) is infused with sin and, because of its own weaknesses, develops a variety lifestyle expressions/flesh patterns that are without God and, consequently, sinful.

source/location of this life. Equally important to Paul's argument, however, is that the operating system of the Spirit in Christ frees the Christian FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH. This last phrase is more than a reference to the Mosaic Law. Paul is gathering the deadly combination of sin, flesh, and law operating together leading to death. Paul tells us that to overcome the inner pressure of sin through the flesh the Christian may now rely upon the indwelling presence of God the Spirit, consider 8:13. We are not to rebuild a law leading to righteousness, consider Galatians 2:18. As mentioned earlier when anyone attempts to keep the law for righteousness, they experience the condemning combination of sin in the flesh using the commandment to deceive, and subsequently leading to death. Now, through Christ, being united with His death, dying to the law (ch. 6) and, subsequently, to sin (7:4-6) we, untied with Christ by the Spirit, can experience an entirely new 'operating system' for spiritual living. Now the Holy Spirit is our enlivening "capability/power" to lead and enable us to live pleasing to God. Through the Spirit it is Christ who lives in us, Galatians 2:20; we are alive in Christ, 6:11. To please God from our own rule keeping efforts is to go back under the law and the domain of sin and death, see Galatians 2:18-19. Again, citing Galatians 5:18, "if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."

V3 The basis/explanation, FOR, regarding our freedom from the law of sin and death summarizes the divine power of the gospel. WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO WEAK AS IT WAS THROUGH THE FLESH, GOD DID. Regarding this new life, God has already accomplished what we, in our flesh/humanness, could not do. The law is holy righteous and good, 7:12, but it is only as strong as the flesh attempting to keep it. The remedy for this failed relationship is discovered in what GOD DID. GOD...SENDING HIS OWN SON IN THE LIKENESS OF SINFUL FLESH AND AS AN OFFERING FOR SIN, CONDEMNED SIN IN THE FLESH. Christ took the sin of Adam, the curse of death, and the judgment due our sins and as a result sin has been judged. The bondage of sin experienced in the flesh can no longer kill those who are joined to Christ. Nothing can now separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, 8:37-39.

V4 The ultimate practical purpose/result in this divine act of judgment, SO THAT, is that now through Christ THE REQUIREMENT OF THE LAW would be fulfilled (notice the aorist passive tense and voice) in us by the enlivening ministry of the Holy Spirit. The righteous requirement of the Law is nothing less than God's own righteousness. This righteousness had to originate from someone other than the sons of Adam. So, God the Son became the Son of God, the last Adam, through His flawless character and obedience, John 8:28-29, did what first Adam could not do. Jesus fulfilled God's Law, John 13:34-35; Romans 13:8; 1 Corinthians 13:1-8; Philippians 2:5-8; Ephesians 5:1-2. Now the Christian life is lived out knowing that that sin has already been judged and God's righteous requirement has already been met. Now, by following the leading of the Spirit and allowing Him to accomplish God's transforming will through us, we enjoy the freedom from judgment and the freedom to please God through sonship, consider 8:14; Galatians 5:18. We cannot experience God's righteousness (7:15ff.). Christ has satisfied the Father's righteous demands, and the Holy Spirit administers this accomplishment through us. As Paul writes, the righteousness of God MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN US by walking in the Spirit. The Spirit of life leads the Christian to express Christ's

righteousness through life. By the Spirit we mortify the already condemned flesh-patterns, 8:13, and express God's fulfilled moral law through our intentions, words, and deeds. By doing so, we experience the fulfilled intentions behind any other command that God may have required, 13:8-10. This new life in Christ by the Spirit is what was meant when Jesus said He came to fulfill the Law. Christ fulfilled the law with His own faithfulness, 3:22, He fulfilled the righteousness of the law through His death (sin was judged) and now fulfills the law in us through the presence of the Holy Spirit. The issue of sin in the flesh is judged, 6:1-10; 8:3. The issue of sins of the flesh has been satisfied, propitiated, 3:25. The need for righteousness is met. The Spirit enlivens this righteousness (the life of Christ) as we follow the Spirit's lead.

V4 And who fulfills this righteousness? Not those attempting to keep God's rules in the power of the flesh. Rather it is those WHO DO NOT WALK ACCORDING TO THE FLESH BUT ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT. The idea of "walk" is the idea of 'live.' ACCORDING TO indicates the "norm or standard." The Christian is to live his life to the norm/standard of the Spirit. As we shall see in the next paragraph, to set our minds on the flesh is to revert to living under the corruption of sin/death but to set our minds on the Spirit is to experience the life and peace already accomplished on our behalf and which we already possess.

Taking a closer look

HOLY SPIRIT (in Romans):

The New Testament gives us the only picture regarding the third Person of the Godhead. An entire set of notes would be required to treat the subject adequately. We will limit this closer look to the book of Romans.

With the exception the brief mention of the Spirit in Romans 2:29 and 5:5, the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit is introduced in 7:4-6 and discussed fully in Romans 8:2—30.

First, Romans affirms that the Holy Spirit is a personal being capable of intelligent actions and supernatural power equal to that of God, 5:5; 8:13-14, 26-27. Passages indicating the Holy Spirit's access to our spirit, 8:16, and His knowledge of God's will, 8:26-27 are activities requiring both the Spirit's personhood and deity. In relationship to Christ and the believer there are other affirmations in the book of Romans that reveal much about God the Holy Spirit. For the sake of brevity these are listed below.

- The Holy Spirit is responsible for new life through regeneration, 2:29
- The Holy Spirit is how believers are inwardly assured of God's love, 5:5.
- The Holy Spirit is how the believer can bear fruit for God, 7:4-6.
- The Holy Spirit is the One who gives life, 8:2.
- The Holy Spirit has been given to every believer, 8:9.
- The Holy Spirit represents the new vantage point from which all Christians live, 8:9.
- The Holy Spirit will personally grant resurrection life to the followers of Christ, 8:11.
- The Holy Spirit is the One by whom the believer can put to death the deeds of the flesh, 8:13.
- The Holy Spirit is the authenticating mark of sonship, 8:14.
- The Holy Spirit is the One who leads the Christian, 8:14.
- The Holy Spirit is the One who enables us to have a personal relationship with the Father, 8:15.
- The Holy Spirit is the inner assurance of sonship, 8:16
- The Holy Spirit intercedes on our behalf guaranteeing the final glorification of the believer, 8:26-30.
- The Holy Spirit administers God's hope to the Christian, 15:13.

Though Paul sets aside the OT Law as the means for attaining righteousness leading either to justification, or sanctification/transformation, the Apostle does not advocate abandoning the pursuit of righteous living. By virtue of the Holy Spirit Christian spirituality is an internal enlivening by the Holy Spirit as He leads and enables

the believer to mortify the passions of sin in the flesh, 8:13, while fulfilling the law of Christ, divine love, as the rule of life, 13:8-10.

Summary of the text

God has, through Christ, provided the freedom necessary to live. The believer is free from the condemnation of the daily presence of sin. The Christian has been set free from the ultimate work of sin in the flesh. In instead of our best efforts, the Spirit of life (the Holy Spirit) has set in place the righteous requirements of the law in the Person of Christ through Whom God condemned sin in the flesh and enables believers to live for God. To live is Christ.

H. Those in the flesh cannot please God while those in the Spirit are God's sons, 8:5-14.

The text with grammatical notations

5 For the ones who are^{paptc} according to the flesh are thinking^{pai} things of the flesh, but the ones according to Spirit [are thinking] things of the Spirit. **6** For the thought-purpose of the flesh [is] death, but the thought-purpose of the Spirit [is] life and peace, **7** because the thought-purpose of the flesh [is] enmity toward God, for it cannot be subordinated^{ppi} to God's Law, neither is it able^{pai} **8** and the ones who are^{paptc} in the flesh are not able^{pai} to please^{ainf} God. **9** Now you are not^{pai} in flesh but in Spirit, if indeed God's Spirit dwells^{pai} in you. And if anyone does not have^{pai} Christ's Spirit, this one is^{pai} not His. **10** Now if⁴⁰ Christ [is] in you, on one hand the body [is] dead because of sin, but on the other hand, the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness. **11** Now if⁴¹ the Spirit of the One who raised^{aaptc} Jesus from the dead dwells^{pai} in you, the One who raised^{aaptc} Christ from the dead will also make alive^{fai} your mortal bodies through His Spirit who is at home^{paptc} in you. **12** Consequently then, fellow Christians, you are^{pai} not obligated to the flesh to live^{painf} according to the flesh,⁴² **13** For if⁴³ you are living^{pai} according to the flesh you are about^{pai} to die^{painf44}; but if⁴⁵ by the Spirit you are putting to death^{pai} the deeds of the body, you will live^{fmi}. **14** For as many as are being led^{ppi} by God's Spirit, these are God's sons.

Observations from the text

V5 FOR THOSE WHO ARE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH— Without any explanation Paul introduces the idea that some people are ACCORDING TO THE FLESH. Who are these? Are they Christians or are they unbelievers? This description is certainly true of those who are not united with Christ, the unbeliever, see 8:9. The unrighteous, regardless of their intentions, can only live/operate by the standards of their human capacities which are captive to self-authentication, Adam's sin. A believer, however, could be yield and be controlled by the flesh, as is often implied throughout chapters 6 and 7. So, while no longer in the flesh (a believer's new vantage point with Christ), 8:9, the Christian can live "ACCORDING TO the standards of the flesh." How can this happen? Sadly, Christians can SET THEIR MINDS ON THE THINGS OF THE FLESH. The mind (not the brain) refers to the

⁴⁰ First class condition. The circumstances mentioned are assumed to be actual circumstances

⁴¹ First class condition

⁴² κατὰ σάρκα precedes ζῆν for emphasis.

⁴³ First class condition

⁴⁴ μέλλετε ἀποθνήσκειν the verb mello + the present active infinitive indicates strong probability in the present, hence "you are about to..."

⁴⁵ First class condition

capacities of and processes of thought. Flesh patterns both in emotion, intellect, and choice can captivate the Christian. Those who are according to the flesh have their thoughts captivated and set upon what the flesh desires, which is self-authentication and self-reliance, remember Paul's own assessment 7:25, "with my flesh [I serve] the law of sin," see also 1 Corinthians 3:1,3.

V5 BUT THOSE WHO ARE ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT – In contrast to being according to the flesh are those who are ACCORDING to the standard of the Holy Spirit. Their capacities are enlivened by the Holy Spirit. Only those united with Christ qualify. Those belonging to Christ by faith can set their minds/think THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT. When the Holy Spirit enlivens us, we focus on God's priorities, namely, living/expressing the Law of Christ which has already been fulfilled in us, John 13:34-35; Romans 13:8; Galatians 6:2; 1 John 3:23.

V6 Unfortunately there are consequences for setting our thoughts on the flesh. THE MIND SET ON THE FLESH IS DEATH. Paul summarizes these consequences/fruit as DEATH. In Galatians 6:8 Paul tells his readers that sowing to the flesh reaps corruption. Here Paul tells us that the mind/thoughts of the flesh dwell in "death." This does not mean the person will die spiritually. The idea here is that if a person thinks/focuses upon what the flesh desires then that person is setting their mind upon those things from the realm of sin and death. Like it or not the flesh functions in and from the realm of death. The flesh, empowered by sin/self can only serve self. Notice that Paul later says, "the body is dead because of sin," 8:10. To set our minds/thoughts/intents on the ways of the flesh is to dwell in the place of death.

V6 BUT THE MIND SET ON THE SPIRIT IS LIFE AND PEACE – In contrast to setting our minds on the flesh (those things in the realm of death) we are told that the mind-set of the Spirit is life and peace. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life. To be thinking about, concerned about, the that which the Spirit desires (consider Galatians 5:17) is to experience the life of Christ (the life of the Vine, John 15:1-6). This is the life and the peace we already possess in Christ, consider Galatians 6:8b; Colossians 3:1-4. To experience Christ is to experience eternal life.

V7 BECAUSE THE MIND SET ON THE FLESH IS HOSTILE TOWARD GOD – As stated earlier, 7:18, there is nothing good in the flesh. Jesus said, "The flesh profits nothing," John 6:63. James tells us that "friendship with the world means hostility toward God" (NET). Paul tells us that the mind/ the thought-purposes of the flesh are HOSTILE TOWARD GOD. The flesh, sold into the bondage of sin, 7:14, is at odds with God. The flesh wants what it wants, namely, self (the true expression of the idolatry introduced in Genesis 3 and 1:18-23). The flesh is embedded with sin's self-authentication, self-reliance, and self-originating energy. The flesh does not want to submit to anything but its own desires, even regarding religious zeal (consider Galatians 5:20, "dissensions, factions/heresies"). The reason FOR is systemic. IT DOES NOT SUBJECT ITSELF TO THE LAW OF GOD, FOR IT IS NOT EVEN ABLE. The mind-purposes of the flesh do not and cannot submit to God's law. God's Law, greater in scope and intent than the Mosaic covenant, is the moral law expressed in the Messiah's command to love one another as He loved us, John 13:34-35; 13:8. The focus of the flesh can never be upon this selfless principle/law of spiritual life. The focus of the flesh is always self...self-preservation, self-authentication, and self-sufficiency.

V8 AND THOSE WHO ARE IN THE FLESH CANNOT PLEASE GOD – To be “in the flesh” is categorically different than being according to the flesh, v5. **THOSE WHO ARE IN THE FLESH** in this context are unbelievers/unregenerate. Those who are not united with Christ by the Spirit cannot please God. While those without Christ can “do” righteous “things,” consider Matthew 5:46, the flesh operates from a different set of motives and is still under the authority of the self-authenticating, self-serving presence of sin. Even one’s righteous deeds fall short of God’s standard, 3:23.

V9 HOWEVER, YOU ARE NOT IN THE FLESH BUT IN THE SPIRIT – The Christian, however, has been transferred from the realm of the flesh to the realm of the Spirit, consider 6:17,14-22; 7:4-6. We live life from an entirely new vantage point. The difference being that **THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLS IN YOU**. The presence of the Holy Spirit changes everything. In fact, Paul goes on to say that **IF ANYONE DOES NOT HAVE THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE DOES NOT BELONG TO HIM**. The presence of the Holy Spirit is the qualifying and identifying mark of the child of God. The righteousness that pleases God is the righteousness of His Son, Jesus. This can only be produced through the enlivening of the Holy Spirit.

Hence, **V10, IF CHRIST IS IN YOU**, you are alive. First, notice that to have the Holy Spirit within is essentially the same as having Christ within. The Holy Spirit is the advocate who is of the ‘same kind’ as the Son, John 14:16-17. The Son and the Spirit are not the same Person, but they are the same essential nature. Thus, the life that the Spirit produces in us is the life of the Son. This essential unity of the Godhead was referenced by Christ in John’s gospel when we stated that “I and the Father are one,” John 10:30. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from *the* Lord who is the Spirit.” That said, Paul now tells us about the significance of the Spirit’s presence, and this significance is the core for spiritual living. To begin with, **THE BODY IS DEAD**. Certainly, our bodies have physical life. Regarding spirituality, however, this death is most likely a reference to its spiritual incapability. The reason is **BECAUSE OF SIN**. The flesh, inherited from Adam, is embedded with sin. The Adamic flesh is the old spiritual hardware. In God’s plan to rescue sinful humanity, our flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Corinthians 15:50. This body, our present earthly house, however, remains the vehicle/hardware for the new creation (also called the new man which is our union with the Spirit of life in Christ). Thus, this new operating system, our union with Christ by the Spirit, is running through old, outdated hardware, the flesh. Though this is our current condition, **THE SPIRIT IS ALIVE BECAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**. Here, this contrast between life and death is best understood as the difference between our natural self and the life-giving Holy Spirit. Rather than this being a reference to the human spirit, Paul is probably referring to the Spirit of life, the Holy Spirit (note that both v 9 and v 11 support the idea that spirit refers to the Holy Spirit). So, Paul tells us that the body is dead because of sin. **YET**, despite this, **THE SPIRIT (the Holy Spirit) IS LIFE BECAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**. Because of God’s righteousness through Christ (full acquittal) the Holy Spirit confers divine life to the believer. This life is for our spiritual lives (Paul is still addressing the question raised in 6:1).

V11 BUT IF THE SPIRIT OF HIM WHO RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD DWELLS IN YOU— The Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of the Father God. As the Father gave resurrection life to the Son, the Spirit of the God who did this now dwells in the acquitted. The spiritual significance is that God, through the indwelling Spirit, will give spiritual life to our bodies. Thus, HE WHO RAISED CHRIST JESUS FROM THE DEAD WILL ALSO GIVE LIFE TO YOUR MORTAL BODIES. God, the Father will give those in Christ life. Our lives, now and in the future, are the production of the presence of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The life we now live is THROUGH HIS SPIRIT WHO DWELLS IN YOU. The Holy Spirit DWELLS (is at home) in the Christian. The Holy Spirit is the One who enlivens our mortal bodies and supplies the grace of life so that the Christian can live above the law of sin, 7:25; Galatians 5:16.

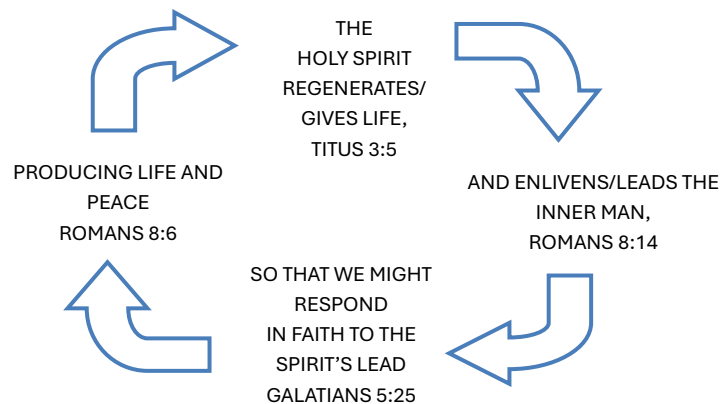
V12 Referring back to the discussion which began in Romans 6:1, Paul concludes that we are obligated to live for God by the Spirit, united to the resurrected Christ. Negatively, WE ARE UNDER OBLIGATION, NOT TO THE FLESH, TO LIVE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH. Because of our new relationship with God in Christ by the Spirit, we are no longer indebted (obligated) to the flesh (and the enslaving presence of sin under the law). As we have noted earlier, the dominion of sin with the power of death has been defeated. The Adamic curse has been reversed. God's righteous requirements are already apart of who we are in Christ. The Spirit is given to produce Christ's righteousness in and through us. This union and living co-op between our regenerate spirit and God by the Spirit is now downloaded and operational, 2 Corinthians 5:17. We owe the flesh nothing.

V13 FOR IF YOU ARE LIVING ACCORDING TO THE FLESH YOU MUST DIE; -- The tense of the construction (see footnote n. 44) is in the present tense. A better rendering would stress the present and impending state "you are about to die." Those who live according to the flesh are living in the domain of death and are heading toward a certain end, spiritual deadness, remember 8:5-6. This does not refer to the loss of salvation. Rather, Paul refers to the direction and domain of the lifestyle in which a person is living. A person will experience the qualities of death when living according to the flesh. In contrast we discover God's alternative. BUT IF BY THE SPIRIT YOU ARE PUTTING TO DEATH THE DEEDS OF THE BODY, YOU WILL LIVE. On one hand those who live according to the flesh will experience death/corruption, Galatians 6:8. On the other hand, those who are in the Spirit and present themselves to enlivening of the Spirit, that is, following/getting in step with the Spirit, Galatians 5:25, mortify/PUT TO DEATH the deeds of the body. Following the Spirit down the path of life, produces life. The ultimate result of the Spirit enlivening the Christian is life. While it is plausible that the contrast between death and life in this passage may be a reference to eternal death and eternal life, it is more likely that the context of Romans six, seven, and eight lends itself to understand that those acquitted by faith in Christ (the righteous) who live according to the flesh and, in turn, are missing the present experience of the life by the Spirit. Thus, Paul is informing us that to allow our body to remain controlled by sin in the flesh (flesh patterns) leads to the death-characteristics of the flesh, but to allow the Holy Spirit to put to death our flesh patterns will lead to the experience of life., see again Galatians 6:8.

V14 FOR ALL WHO ARE BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD – To settle any confusion Paul now qualifies the difference between the religious and the righteous. Without debate, all who are led by the Spirit ARE SONS OF GOD. The unregenerate cannot be led by the Spirit. The recognizable mark of God’s heirs/SONS are those who operate by the Spirit. Those who are in the Spirit have this vantage point and the opportunity for living by the Spirit. Leading the regenerate is the Spirit’s ministry. The Spirit leads the Christian regarding their feelings, desires, thoughts, values, and actions. Used elsewhere we learn that as many as are led by the Spirit are not under the law, Galatians 5:18. The Spirit’s ministry within the believer is the entirely different operating system which has replaced and contrasts those attempting to please God through the flesh or keep the law for righteousness. The Spirit leads the justified to fulfill Christ’s command to live redemptively, with the result being the experience of the life of Christ within.

Summary of the text

The Christian is no longer living in the flesh though we can live according to the flesh. To live according to the flesh is to live in the throes of sin and death. Those who live according to the Spirit are though who experience life and peace. Those who live by the Spirit anticipate the resurrection from the dead and the experience of sonship.



I. Our sonship includes our intimacy with God and an inheritance with Christ, 8:15-18

The text with grammatical notations

15 For you did not receive^{aai} a spirit of slavery again unto fear, but rather you received^{aai} a Spirit of adoption by whom we are crying out^{pai}, “Daddy! Father!” **16** The self-same Spirit is bearing witness together^{pai} with our spirit that we are^{pai} God’s children. **17** Now if⁴⁶ children, [then] also heirs; on one hand God’s heirs, and on the other hand Christ’s fellow heirs, if indeed we are suffering together^{pai} in order that also we might be glorified together^{apsubj}. **18** For I consider^{pmi} that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy toward the glory about to be^{paptc} revealed.^{apinf}

Observations from the text

V15 FOR YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED A SPIRIT OF SLAVERY LEADING TO FEAR AGAIN– The law (of conscience or of Torah) was an instrument sin used to enslave humanity (consider 6:19-20; 7:7-14). Salvation through Christ set the captives free, 6:7; 8:2; Luke 4:18;

⁴⁶ First class condition, i.e., an assumed reality.

Ephesians 4:8. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is freedom, 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 4:23—5:1; 5:13,18. The Holy Spirit is not a “spirit” of slavery. With God’s righteousness already gifted, His ministry in the believer is one of supervision and enablement to experience the freedom of divine life. Rather than enslavement to a new religion YOU HAVE RECEIVED A SPIRIT OF ADOPTION AS SONS, consider also Galatians 4:1-7. The Holy Spirit is mark of sonship not enslavement. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee/down payment of our future adoption as sons of God at the resurrection, 8:23. The Law served as a guardian over children until faith/Christ arrived, Galatians 3:23-26. Now, rather than life under a child tutor, though we await the full experience of our ‘sonship’ at our resurrection, we have full adult status with God. As experienced by Christ with His resurrection, Romans 1:3; Acts 13:33; Psalm 2:7, there will be a day when we will be recognized with the outward expression of full adult status, 8:19-23. Though not yet presented as fully adopted WE CRY OUT “ABBA! FATHER!”. Though our adoption has not taken place, 8:23, we can experience the Spirit leading us to call out to God as FATHER or, as in the Aramaic language, “Dad/Daddy.”

Taking a closer look

ADOPTION

The idea of adoption in the New Testament needs a closer look. Key passages are Romans 8:15-25; Galatians 4:5; and Ephesians 1:5.

The definition of adoption

Adoption, exclusively mentioned in Paul’s letters, refers to the individual moving from the status of a child to being regarded as an adult heir. The precise cultural ritual Paul had in mind is impossible to ascertain. In the first century many cultures practiced an initiation rite (legal adoption rite) whereby a child would be declared to have adult status and would be recognized as an heir to the family’s estate.

Roman culture: (between the ages of 14-17). The son was legally recognized as heir and granted full Roman citizenship (certain Roman ceremonies had the boys offer their toys as a sacrifice to the gods. The girls would offer their dolls (cp. 1 Corinthians 13).

Greek Culture: At the age of 18 boys would go through a ceremony at the festival called *apatouria* in which the boy’s hair would be cut off and offered to Apollo.

Jewish Culture: The *bar mitzvah* took place on the first Sabbath after the twelfth birthday. The boy would pray, “O my God and God of my father, on this solemn and sacred day which marks my passage from boyhood to manhood, I humbly raise my eyes unto You and declare with sincerity and truth that henceforth I will keep Your commandments and undertake to bear the responsibility of my actions toward You.”

The effects of adoption in the Christian life

- Parent/child relationship, Romans 8:15-16... The child moves into adulthood (no longer under a guardian, Galatians 3) and now exercises a father/son relationship reflecting adult status.
- Present disciplines and benefits, Romans 8:14-16...as an adult there is a sense of responsibility and privilege that children do not experience. For the Christian this includes the enlivening presence of God’s Spirit. Under the law there was no such enlivening.
- Future glories, 8:18-25...As an heir the sonship of the believer guarantees sharing in the inheritance of Christ, God’s unique Son.

Adoption and the Christian life

Under the law Paul understood spirituality as being synonymous with childhood. Passages such as “do not taste, do not touch,” Colossians 2:21; “When I was a child...when I became a man...”, 1 Corinthians 13:11; and Paul’s references to ‘adoption’ and life by the Spirit, in contrast to life under law suggest that spiritual life is categorically different with the New Covenant than with the Old.

Spirituality is not an enslavement to a new form a legalism which results in condemnation (as under the law). Christian spirituality is an exchanged life, which is Christ, by the Spirit, living in us, through us, as us. The believer, acquitted of wrongdoing, 3:21—5:21, united with Christ, 6:1—7:6, and enlivened by the Spirit, 8:2-30, lives free from the dreadful restrictions of childhood and is now free to express, by God's Spirit, God's redemptive love in everything we do, 1 Corinthians 16:14; Galatians 5:6, 13.

V16 Now, though not yet resurrected, THE SPIRIT HIMSELF TESTIFIES WITH OUR SPIRIT. The Holy Spirit provides an inner witness THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD. The seal and down payment of our sonship, Ephesians 1:13-14, serves as a living guarantee, a divine presence, that we are alive in Christ and belong to God. While it is difficult to quantify and qualify what this inner witness is like, perhaps it is best to describe the Spirit's witness as an existential awareness of belonging and being in a personal relationship with God.

V17 Furthermore, our relational sonship includes an inheritance. Paul writes, IF CHILDREN, HEIRS ALSO. Though still awaiting our adoption at the resurrection, we are presently considered HEIRS. The justified are HEIRS OF GOD. God has reserved an inheritance for those who have followed Christ. God has granted His kingdom to His Son and those whom He has given to Christ, consider Luke 12:32. God has prepared unspoken glory and honor for those who are His, 2:6; 1 Corinthians 2:9. This glory is in accordance with the glory given to Christ, John 17:5, and which Christ shares with His own, John 17:22. Those who believe God according to the promise are FELLOW HEIRS WITH CHRIST. As Christ is and heir of the Abrahamic promise, Galatians 3:16, and has been given the glory of the Father because of His obedience so we and heirs of Abraham, Galatians 3:29, will share in Christ's glory. The Apostles receive a designated share, Luke 22:29, and those who faithfully follow Christ are rewarded for their faithfulness, Matthew 19:29; Philippians 3:21; 2 Corinthians 5:10. Our faith in Christ results in righteousness, our faithfulness to Christ results in honor and glory. Thus, Paul writes IF INDEED WE SUFFER WITH HIM. The Greek text is best understood as saying "in that" we are suffering with Him. Some would undergo persecution. Some remain in this fallen world surrounded by sin and death. Struggling with sin and forward looking to physical death is also suffering the realities that Jesus suffered while on earth. Jesus also struggled with sin. Christ's struggle included being tested in every way as are we, Hebrews 2:10, 18; 4:15, yet, because of His divine nature, having to endure testing to its limits without giving in. Jesus also endured suffering that developed His godly character, Hebrews 5:8. Further, Jesus' suffering was compounded by the sins, unbelief, and brokenness of those around Him. Because of our participation in Christ's suffering, our momentary light affliction is producing for us and eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 2 Corinthians 4:17. The purpose of our present daily 'suffering' is THAT WE MAY ALSO BE GLORIFIED WITH HIM. As we persevere through the suffering, we discover the purpose/result that God has in mind, namely, that WE MAY ALSO BE GLORIFIED WITH HIM.

V18 THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME— This present age is a time of suffering. To be in a body of death; to experience the constant presence of sin; to endure disease; to carry on with broken relationships at every level; this is our present life, 2 Corinthians 4:16-17. But these present pains ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY THAT IS TO BE REVEALED TO US. As will be discussed in the verses following, Paul reminds us that we will be clothed with immortality and the curse upon creation which still inflicts us will be lifted.

Everything happening now works in God's plan for the redeemed being completed, and those selected by God to be glorified, 8:28-30, 37-39.

Summary of the text

With a new position in life (in the Spirit) the believer now has the adult privilege and responsibility to follow the Spirit. The Spirit, rather than enslaving us again to fear (as under the law), gives us the guaranteed hope of the status of God's sons. In this new relationship we cry with joy, "Father!" Finally, as sons/children, we are considered heirs of God (to receive and participate in His perfect and imperishable life and plan for all creation). This inheritance is a part of the glory granted to God's beloved Son, Jesus, making us and fellow heirs with Christ in glory.

J. God's sons, along with all creation, eagerly await the completion of redemption, 8:19-25

The text with grammatical notations

19 For the eager expectation of the creation is eagerly awaiting^{pmi} the revelation of God's Sons. **20** For the creation had been subjected^{api} to the purposelessness, not willingly but through the One who subordinated^{aaptc}, in hope **21** that this same creation will be set free^{fpi} from this corruption unto the freedom of glory of God's children. **22** For we know^{pfai} that all creation is groaning together^{pai} and is suffering agony together^{pai} until now; **23** but not only [this], but also those having the first fruits of the Spirit, we ourselves also within ourselves groan^{pai} while eagerly awaiting^{pmptc} adoption, our body's redemption. **24** For in hope we have been saved^{api}; but hope being seen^{ppptc} is^{pai} not hope; For why are we hoping^{pai} for what we see^{pai}? **25** But if⁴⁷ what we are not seeing^{pai} we are hoping^{pai} [for], [then] through perseverance we are eagerly awaiting^{pmi}.

Observations from the text

V19 FOR THE ANXIOUS LONGING OF THE CREATION WAITS EAGERLY – Personifying creation Paul connects the complete renovation of creation and with the final glorification of the redeemed. This final glorification is a great unveiling. This is THE REVEALING OF THE SONS OF GOD which refers to the time when the redeemed are finally established through the resurrection. At that time those who have trusted Christ will share in His glory and exaltation, consider Ephesians 2:7 and Philippians 3:21. Jesus referred to this time as the "regeneration," Matthew 19:20. Luke refers to this time as the "restoring of all things," Acts 3:21.

V20 FOR THE CREATION WAS SUBJECTED TO FUTILITY – From the moment Adam sinned all creation WAS SUBJECT TO FUTILITY. The curse was placed upon it by God, Genesis 3:17-19. The idea of FUTILITY communicates purposelessness. This futility not only indicates that creation has been subject to disorder and absurdity of its existence because of sin and death, but also that creation has not achieved the ultimate purpose for which it was made, namely, to be the paradisiacal habitation for those created in the image (representation) of God. Creation, like humanity, has, to this point in time, failed to achieve God's ultimate purpose. Creation's participation in Adam's sin, however, was NOT WILLINGLY, BUT

⁴⁷ First class condition. The first-class condition assumes there are those hoping through perseverance.

BECAUSE OF HIM WHO SUBJECTED IT. Creation's failure to realize God's ultimate purpose was because of God's plan. As redeemed humanity will glorify God forever, consider Ephesians 2:4-7, so a restored creation will glorify God. Sin has given God the opportunity to display the redemptive qualities of His love through the restoration of creation. Apart from sin and death we could never have known mercy and grace (expressions of God's goodness and love). But with the subjection of creation to the futility of Adam's disobedience, there was always hope. God subjected creation to the curse IN HOPE THAT CREATION ITSELF WILL BE SET FREE. Hope regarding God's plan is always concrete, that is, hope is a sure thing that has not yet been realized (not 'I hope so' as in our colloquial use of the word). As the redeemed will fully experience the freedom which is theirs through Christ (see Romans 6:7) so creation will experience "liberty" FROM ITS SLAVERY TO CORRUPTION INTO THE FREEDOM OF THE GLORY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD. The same immortality to be enjoyed by the redeemed will also be characteristic of creation. While the next phase of creation's redemption and restoration will be associated with the time when Jesus will sit upon His glorious throne, Matthew 19:20; 25:31, the final phase will be the 'incorruptible new heaven and new earth', Revelation 21:1.

V22 FOR WE KNOW THAT THE WHOLE CREATION GROANS AND SUFFERS THE PAINS OF CHILDBIRTH—To emphasize the scope of God's redemption, Paul now provides further insight. THE WHOLE OF CREATION GROANS AND SUFFERS as if it is about to give birth to something new. Since the entry of sin and death creation has been under a curse. As a result of the curse, creation has been suffering. Likened to a mother (Eve was placed under the curse of pain through childbirth) whose child is due to be born, creation longs for this present age to end.

V23 Furthermore creation does not suffer alone. AND NOT ONLY THIS, BUT ALSO, WE OURSELVES, EVEN WE GROAN WITHIN OURSELVES. The purpose and anticipation of creation is vitally connected to the redeemed 'sons of God.' Those born again HAVING THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, that is, those who have experienced the beginnings of what the Holy Spirit will accomplish in the new creation, e.g., regeneration, are WAITING EAGERLY FOR OUR ADOPTION AS SONS, THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY. Being born from above, given new life, is only the beginning. There is a resurrection and universal renewal ahead. This redemption of the body is accomplished by the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead, 8:11. This redemption refers to the salvation that is nearer than when we first believed, 13:11. The FIRST FRUITS (represented by the first fruits festival known as Pentecost) is just the beginning of the harvest.

V24 FOR IN HOPE WE HAVE BEEN SAVED—Paul now connects the hope of creation, 8:20 and the hope of the believer (consider this discussion and Abraham's faith, 4:18---5:3-5). Our tribulation (suffering in this life) works perseverance, 8:25, and our perseverance produces hope, 5:3-5. The struggles experienced in our lives to believe against all circumstances is precisely what distinguished Abraham from others. God has made promises (our hope), but we haven't realized THIS HOPE. Through our present suffering God moves us from the idolatry of self, 1:18-23, to the longing for full redemption. We have been saved (aorist passive), but our final and eternal status is yet ahead. In other letters Paul uses

concepts such as ‘down payment’/guarantee, Ephesians 1:14, and seal, 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 4:30, to assure us of this hope. As with Abraham (4:18), in hope we believe, against hope seen in our daily circumstances, that God can/will do what He promised, 4:21.

V24 BUT HOPE THAT IS SEEN IS NOT HOPE – The very nature of hope is that those ‘hoping’ haven’t experienced that for which they hope. We have not yet been glorified. Creation has not yet been released from the curse. With the confidence that the hope which tribulation and resulting perseverance produces, those in Christ move forward, 5:3-5. The hope to which we have been saved is certain. We will not experience disappointment leading to embarrassment/shame. God’s plan for us cannot fail, consider 15:13.

V25 WITH PERSEVERANCE WE WAIT EAGERLY FOR IT – PERSEVERANCE, 5:3-5; James 1:5 is produced through the crisis of trials, namely, the struggles we have in this life. The struggles of this present life foster, by the Spirit, the longing for God’s promises. The struggles of relationships, work, aging, and physical death, all included with this life after the Fall, are factors within God’s plan to nurture and produce hope.

Summary of the text

Those in Christ have been given the Holy Spirit as the first-fruits gift of a hope for the glorious redemption of creation associated with our adoption. This future has already begun (regeneration) but it is not yet realized. The glory of Christ, the earthly kingdom of God, the immortality of a resurrected body, the absence of sin and the curse; these collectively represent a measure of the hope to which we have been saved.

K. While God’s sons wait for the completion of our guaranteed redemption the Holy Spirit assists our struggles through intercession which further secures the hope that God’s plan will be implemented, 8:26-30

The text with grammatical notations

26 Now likewise also the Spirit is rendering assistance^{pmi} to our weakness; for we do not know^{pfai} ⁴⁸ how we should pray^{aasubj} as it is necessary; but this same Spirit is interceding^{pai} with wordless groanings; **27** And the One who examines^{paptc} the heart knows^{pfai} what the Spirit’s thought-purpose [is], because⁴⁹ He is interceding^{pai} according to God on behalf of the holy ones. **28** And we know^{pfai} that to the ones loving^{paptc} God all things are working together^{pai} for good, to those being^{paptc} called according to plan. **29** For whom He knew beforehand^{aai}, and forordained^{aai} conformed to the image of His Son, with the result that He, [namely Jesus], might be^{painf} first-born [heir] among many brothers [and sisters]; **30** and whom He predestined^{aai}, these also He called^{aai}, and whom He called^{aai}, these also He declared righteous^{aai}, and whom He declared righteous^{aai}, these also He glorified^{aai}.

⁴⁸ The phrase οὐκ οἶδαμεν is at the end of this clause. Paul’s emphasis is on the “prayer”. The Spirit’s intercession connects our persevering through this present time, 8:18-25, and all things working together for the good (i.e., our glory to be revealed), 8:28ff.

⁴⁹ Oti may reflect content (epexegetical) “that” or cause/reason “because.” The Spirit prays according to God’s plan ensuring that the saints will experience the glory God has prepared for them through Christ.

Observations from the text

V26 IN THE SAME WAY – As we are anxiously waiting for and anticipate/hope for God’s plan to be accomplished, and as we struggle with the sufferings of this age, the Holy Spirit also perseveres with us. Indeed, The Holy Spirit perseveres aiding our struggles through communication with God, and so, **THE SPIRIT ALSO HELPS OUR WEAKNESS**. Our weakness manifests itself through the struggles with this fallen world, the presence of sin, and the constant death to which we are subject. Our weakness is our limitations. We are insufficient to understand these things. We are insufficient to endure these things. Even our approach to God is deficient as **FOR WE DO NOT KNOW HOW TO PRAY AS WE SHOULD**. We do not know why, and we do not know what would be best for God’s plan to come to fruition. **BUT THE SPIRIT HIMSELF INTERCEDES FOR US**. Within the eternal fellowship of the godhead, the Holy Spirit prays for us. This praying is not a special type of praying believers practice, rather, it is intercession between the Spirit, Son, and Father.

V27 AND HE WHO SEARCHES THE HEARTS KNOWS WHAT THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT IS – God is the One who searches the hearts, consider Jeremiah 17:10. God knows the mind of the Holy Spirit. The prayers of the Spirit are the mind of God, and the mind of God knows the intercessions of the Spirit. Consider 1 Corinthians 2:10-11. The Spirit knows God’s mind. The Spirit **INTERCEDES FOR THE SAINTS ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD**. We may not know what God is doing or why He is doing it, but the Spirit knows, and the prayers of the Spirit are according to the plan God has for the redeemed. While God’s plan has only been revealed to us in part, the Spirit, fully knowing God’s mind and plan, intercedes accordingly.

V28 AND WE KNOW – The result of the Spirit’s intercession is the confident knowledge **THAT GOD CAUSES ALL THINGS TO WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD**. This **GOOD**, however, is not our own perceived benefits or wishes. This **GOOD** is the plan God has ordained for the universe. Consider Psalm 33:11; Isaiah 46:9-10; Ephesians 1:11. Everything in every way moves according to the divine plan. Of course, this plan results in our glory, 8:30. God good is especially for **THOSE WHO LOVE GOD, TO THOSE WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE**. The redeemed are referred to as those called/ invited/summonsed, according to God’s purpose/plan. In God’s eternal council God decreed everything that will come to pass. This decree became His foreknowledge. Foreknowledge, with reference to God, refers to more than simply knowing beforehand. Foreknowledge, resulting from God’s choice/plan, is also that which determined creation and its circumstances resulting in a certain conclusion, consider Acts 2:23.

V29 FOR WHOM HE FOREKNEW – In particular, foreknowledge refers God’s knowledge regarding those who would, in the circumstances of God’s determined plan, choose Christ. The redeemed are the foreknown. Through the selection of His plan, God selected those, who, through God’s providential grace, would choose Christ. Further, those who would choose Christ **HE ALSO PREDESTINED**. God’s plan also includes the outcome. As has been the focus of Paul’s discussion, the outcome of our faith is the final destiny of the redeemed, namely, **TO BECOME CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON**. The redeemed will be without sin, in a glorious resurrection body. The redeemed will finally experience the full work of the Holy Spirit. The redeemed will, without the obstacles of self-dependence and self-

authentication, experience the life Christ experienced with the Father. In the way, with a redeemed and glorified humanity, Christ will experience one of the ultimate purposes of the Father's plan, SO THAT HE WOULD BE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BROTHERS. As first-born, Christ is the primary heir. As first-born Christ is the highest rank. As His brothers, we will share in His glory.

Taking a closer look

FOREKNOWLEDGE/PREDESTINATION

Having discussed foreknowledge and predestination in passing it would be important to take a closer look into these topics. In doing so it would be tempting to insert a complete treatment of sovereignty and freewill. Considering the intent of Romans only summary about foreknowledge and predestination would be in order.

Foreknowledge: Romans 8:29; 11:2.

Foreknowledge speaks to the fact that God has chosen/decreed the end from the beginning. The details of that plan are referred to as "foreknowledge." Consider these points:

- All knowledge (everything knowable) eternally exists with God. This knowledge is His comprehensive omniscience), Isaiah 46:10.
- From the knowledge of all things possible, God made, before the foundations of the world, a single decree/plan as to which world would come to pass, Psalm 33:10; Isaiah 46:9-10; Ephesians 1:3-4.
- Foreknowledge refers to God's knowing ahead of time. This knowledge, however, is due to His predetermined counsel and decree/plan regarding creation, this world, and the ages to come.
- Thus, God's foreknowledge is referred to as the causal factor/the acting subject (that which acts) ultimately responsible for bringing about the events taking place, Acts 2:23.
- In the Bible, however, foreknowledge primarily refers to and is applied to those who, because of God's plan, are known to believe and are, as such, chosen and predestined for eternal glory, 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 8:29; 11:2. Specifically then, foreknowledge refers to the knowledge God has about redemption and the redeemed which actively guarantees salvation.

Predestination: Ephesians 1:5; 1:11; Romans 8:29-30.

The word "predestine" is translated from the Greek word meaning "to set in order beforehand," "to appoint beforehand," "to determine beforehand." Of the six uses in the NT all have God as the subject (the One doing the action). Every use of God's predetermination depicts some aspect of the salvation of humanity. For example:

- The execution of Jesus was according to God's predetermined plan, Acts 4:28
- The mystery of the wisdom of God's salvation revealed through the cross, 1 Corinthians 2:7.
- The elect being predetermined to become sons of God through adoption, Ephesians 1:5
- The saints receiving an inheritance according to the predetermined purpose of God, Ephesians 1:11.
- The heirs of salvation being predestined to be conformed into the image of Christ, Romans 8:29,30.

Thus, predestination, while often used in theological discussions to speak about everything ordained by God, strictly relates to the act of God in setting beforehand the means for and the final destiny of those who will be saved.

In Conclusion

It is important to keep in mind that in the many passages communicating God's sovereign control over all events, e.g., Ephesians 1:11, the Bible rarely (if ever) tells us how He controls things. My preference as to how God controls all things is through His eternal knowledge of the free acts of all creatures including all consequences of that which was created, so known and subsequently chosen by God before the worlds began. Thus, the future is certain (God's decree) but God's creatures and creation become the instruments by which God has ordained this future to occur. While God is sovereign our choices are free and remain our responsibility.

V30 AND THESE WHOM HE PREDESTINED, HE ALSO CALLED...HE ALSO JUSTIFIED...HE ALSO GLORIFIED. – The end of all things has been made certain by God. We know who receives the prize. God has PREDESTINED, that is, ‘set in order beforehand’ (before the foundation of the world), certain ones who would, under the influences of God’s plan, freely choose Christ when drawn/invited CALLED to faith, John 6:44. Those called/invited/summonsed to faith are now acquitted/JUSTIFIED, 3:21-4:25. And, as to the end, those acquitted are GLORIFIED,’ see Paul’s discussion in 8:18-25. Notice the past tense. God has already secured those justified by faith their resurrection and inheritance in the kingdom of His Son. Our final destiny could be likened to watching a replay of our favorite team’s championship victory. The future is certain.

Summary of the text

The Holy Spirit, knowing the will/plan of the Father intercedes on our behalf according to this plan ensuring that everything works together for the good (that plan) of those who have believed the message about Christ. This work of the Spirit adds a further guarantee and hope about the outcome of our faith, the/our final glorification.

L. With the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit bringing everything to completion, God’s sons have the assurance of eternal life, 8:31-39

The text with grammatical notations

31 What will we say^{fai} to these things? If⁵⁰ God [is] on our behalf, who [could be] against us? **32** He who did not spare^{aai} His own Son, but rather on behalf of us all delivered Him up^{aai}, how will he not also together with Him freely give^{fai} us everything? **33** Who will bring a charge^{fai} against God’s chosen? God is He who justifies.^{paptc} **34** Who is he who condemns?^{paptc} Christ Jesus is He who died^{aaptc}, and rather [is] He who has been raised^{japptc} who is in God’s right [hand], and who is making intercession^{pai} on our behalf. **35** Who will separate^{fai} us from the love of Christ?⁵¹ [Will] tribulation or distress or persecution or hunger or nakedness or danger or sword [separate us from Christ]? **36** Just as it stands written^{pfpi} that, **Because of You we are being put to death^{ppi} the whole day, we have been considered^{api} as slaughtered⁵² sheep.**⁵³ **37** But rather in all these we are more than prevailing^{pai} through the One who has loved^{aaptc} us. **38** For I have been persuaded^{pfpi} that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor present things impending^{pfaptc} nor things about to be^{paptc} nor powers **39** nor height [the world above] nor depth [the world below] nor any other created thing will be able^{fmi} to separate^{aainf} us from God’s love which [is] in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Observations from the text:

V31 WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY TO THESE THINGS? — Paul begins a summary, not only of the immediate verses but of the entire first eight chapters of Romans. In his summary the Apostle includes God’s judgment, the gift of the Son, the justification of believers, the trials of this life, and the final assurance of victory. Paul does this summary as if in a court room in

⁵⁰ First class condition

⁵¹ I rendered the genitive in its undefined state “of” because there are so many options that could apply (e.g., subjective, objective, reference, descriptive).

⁵² “slaughtered” is genitive, literally “sheep of slaughter.”

⁵³ Psalm 44:22.

which God is the judge and the Son is the mediating lawyer. Once again, Paul uses a series of questions as a marker for another transition in this letter.

V31 IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO IS AGAINST US? – The gospel demonstrates that God is thoroughly committed to the redemption of those whom God has foreknown. If the judge is on our side, who can be against us? Nobody/nothing can be against what God has planned to accomplish. We are safe in God's plan. The first-class condition assumes the conditions described are actual.

V32 HE WHO DID NOT SPARE HIS OWN SON BUT DELIVERED HIM OVER FOR US ALL – God, the Judge, has provided the ultimate sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ, a truly innocent human being. The Creator and Judge of the universe has provided the means for our deliverance. If that be the case **HOW WILL HE NOT ALSO WITH HIM FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?** – **ALL THINGS** refers to God's eternal provisions and guarantees. God's provisions for eternity are guaranteed on the premise that in association with Christ God has provided all things necessary for life and godliness, See Ephesians 1:3-5 and 2 Peter 1:3-4. There is nothing that God's child will lack regarding God's plan for eternity.

V33 WHO WILL BRING A CHARGE AGAINST GOD'S ELECT? — Standing before the courtroom Paul challenges anyone to come forward who has a legitimate accusation against God's chosen, **WHO WILL BRING A CHARGE AGAINST GOD'S ELECT/chosen?** While many would dare to charge God's chosen (elect) with inconsistencies and hypocrisies there is only one court of law. In this universe, **GOD IS THE ONE WHO JUSTIFIES.** God acquits the believing sinner. God is the One who has gifted the believer with the righteous life of the faithful man, Jesus of Nazareth. No other charge matters. There will be no other case brought against the redeemed. No charge can stick; therefore, no sentence of condemnation can be announced. The justice required by law has been met. There is no valid charge that can be made against God's chosen.

V34 WHO IS THE ONE WHO CONDEMNS? — Taking the court room scenario further, we discover that there can be no judgment against the redeemed. The believer has been acquitted and the One who has died and been raised from the dead (for our justification, 4:25), is the defense against any such condemnation. **JESUS CHRIST IS HE WHO DIED, YES RATHER WHO WAS RAISED,** and He now serves as our mediator **AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,** consider Acts 2:32-33. Our high priest intercedes on our behalf. In this highest of courts, Christ is the defense attorney. As the OT priest mediated the law through the services of the tabernacle, Christ mediates the new covenant (a better covenant) in the heavenlies at the right hand of the Father, consider Hebrews 9—10, in a Tabernacle made without hands, Hebrews 9:11. Christ's resurrected presence **INTERCEDES FOR US.** He Himself sits as the mediation of our acquittal as sons. He sits, His atoning service finished, as our intercession. To condemn the redeemed is to deny the heavenly presence of the resurrected Savior.

V35 WHO WILL SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST? — A final and ultimate question speaks to our security and assurance. Can the corruption inherent in this life tear us apart from God's plan for redemption and restoration? Paul's answer is that nothing can ruin God's plan. **WILL TRIBULATION, OR DISTRESS, OR PERSECUTION, OR FAMINE, OR NAKEDNESS,**

OR PERIL, OR SWORD tear us away from God or spoil God's plan? The answer is unquestionably, "No!" All the troubles/sufferings of this age are designed to produce in us a further weight of glory, 2 Corinthians 4:17, producing in us the perseverance and hope that will never leave us embarrassed, Romans 5:3-5. As stated earlier, the troubles of this age are not worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed, 8:18. Trials cannot undo what God has done. Rather, the troubles of this life serve as the means to solidify the grace and mercies of God through Christ.

V36 FOR YOUR SAKE— And so Paul cites Psalm 44:22 in which we read of the faithful being subject to the sufferings of this age for the sake of God's plan. The sufferings of this age, 8:18, are how God prepares His people for their eternal destiny. As we faithfully endure these trials in steadfast pursuit of God, God responds with reward, consider Hebrews 11:6. Our trials are for God's glory, His SAKE.

V37 BUT IN ALL THESE THINGS WE OVERWHELMINGLY CONQUER—Through all our trials we are proven to be those who do not merely prevail, but, rather, triumph. The original word signifies "super-victor." WE OVERWHELMINGLY CONQUER. Through the perfect man the believer triumphs. We, ourselves could never prevail, but our triumph already exists THROUGH HIM WHO LOVED US. Who is the One who loved us? God! The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father sent the Son, and both have sent the Spirit into our hearts. Our super victory (implied in the Greek term used) is by God who loved us through Christ, 5:8, and who has given to us the Spirit so that we might experience this love, 5:5 and begin cultivating our eternal relationship with the Father.

V38 FOR I AM CONVINCED— As courtroom lawyer giving his final arguments, Paul exudes confidence. God, through the Apostle, assures us that NEITHER DEATH NOR LIFE, NOR ANGELS NOR PRINCIPALITIES, NOR THINGS PRESENT, NOR THINGS TO COME, NOR POWERS, NOR HEIGHT NOR DEPTH, NOR ANY OTHER CREATED THING can prevail against God's plan. Paul does not leave anything out of this list. He includes angelic beings, demonic forces (rulers and powers), life/death, and then simply says height and depth (consider Ephesians 3:18) as a way of including everything in between. Nothing can thwart God's plan for life in the Son.

V39 WILL BE ABLE TO SEPARATE US – From 3:21 until now Paul has demonstrated the height and the depth that God's love has reached in order to forever secure those He has called according to His plan, consider John 6:38-40; 10:28. God's plan cannot fail...nothing can separate us FROM THE LOVE OF GOD, WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD.

Summary of the text

Paul summarizes the first eight chapters of Romans with a series of questions that apply the reality of our salvation. The answers given address the questions of life. God is the One who has saved us. He has done everything to care for us. We cannot be charged with a crime and, therefore, are free from condemnation. And, finally, even though we suffer in this age while we await the completion of our salvation, we are more than conquerors. Nothing can thwart God's plan on our behalf. Our lives are secure in Christ.

The Perfect Means for true Spiritual living

The perfect message, 1:16-17, centered upon the perfect man, 3:21—5:2, includes the perfect means to live above and beyond the perfect mess of sin and death. The gospel, God's perfect solution to the chaos of life, not only includes total acquittal from the guilt and penalty of all sin associated with Adam, but also includes a union with Christ freeing us from the power sin and death have over Adam's flesh. God, through Christ has united us with the power of the resurrected life of Christ by the Spirit. United with Christ in His death, the believer is crucified with Christ to the Law. Free from condemnation with Christ's righteousness, we now discover that the gospel includes a union with Christ's death freeing the believer from the Law through which sin gets its power to kill. Free from sin and death, the believer is given the indwelling presence of Christ by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Now the Holy Spirit uniting the righteous with the living Christ becomes the source of divine power enabling the Christian to live a life pleasing to God. In and through Christ by the Spirit God has provided the perfect means to live. Now longer dependent upon the flesh, the Spirit gives life (regeneration), leads the redeemed to fulfill the law of Christ, and imparts the life needed to live as we await the resurrection and our completed adoption as heirs of the promise. This provision of the Spirit of life in Christ is both the guarantee and guarantees that, through Christ our mediator, nothing can prevail against this perfect gospel, this perfect man, or God's perfect means for life.