

## 22. Learning Why Christians Do Not Face Condemnation

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn why we have “I” trouble. We saw that when we, as Christians, try to live our Christian lives in our own strength, we will experience failure and frustration. We will feel guilt because we fail and do the things that we will not do. We also feel guilt when we are unable to do the things that we know are right. Today, we are going to start a series of several topics that will help us learn how to help our children learn to experience more and more victory in their lives.

In Romans 8:1-2, we read, “*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*” The phrase “no condemnation” is a key phrase in this verse because it summarizes what has been taught in the last seven chapters. The word “condemnation” is only used in two other verses. Those two places are in Romans 5:16-18 where we read, “*And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.*” In these verses, we see that condemnation is a word that is used in a court setting.

Because of the one sin of Adam, in verse 16 we see that he experienced immediate spiritual death (separation from God) and later experienced physical death. In verse 18, we see that all people stand condemned, because of the sin that entered the world through Adam and was passed on to all of us. In contrast, we also see in verse 18 that the righteous act of Christ made the free gift of eternal life available to all people. As a result, all those who place their faith in Christ are made just or righteous. Here, in Romans 8:1, we see this means that we no longer face condemnation. We will never have to worry about being condemned again. This is due to the fact that we are in Christ Jesus and He paid our penalty and satisfied the requirements of the law for us.

We see that a new law has now taken effect in our lives at the moment of salvation. This is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus or the law of faith. Romans 3:27 says, “*Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.*” Because Christ is the One who made faith possible, we have nothing in ourselves about which to boast. We came to faith in Christ because He gave us that faith. This new law is in effect even in that period of time when we are experiencing the frustration and failure that we see in Romans 7:15-25. This new law has set us free from the law of sin and death. We saw in the last topic that the law of God is good and holy because God is holy. We could not keep that law and so that law condemned us. Now because of the death of Christ in our place to pay for our sin, the law of faith (law of the Spirit of life) has made us free from the law of sin and death.

A key thing to notice before we go any further is the fact that the Holy Spirit was mentioned only

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once in the first seven chapters of Romans. We are going to see that the Holy Spirit is mentioned a total of nineteen times in Romans 8. We saw that Romans 7:15-25 concluded with the words “I”, “me”, “my” and “myself” being used about 37 times (depending on which translation you read). In contrast, we will see in the concluding verses of chapter eight, the words “we” and “us” are frequently used. Due to the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian, no Christian has to depend on his or her strength to live the Christian life. Instead, at each moment that we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, we have the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives which makes it possible for the love of Christ to flow through our lives to others.

Romans 8:3-4 says, “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” We saw that the Old Testament law could not make us do right. It only showed that we were guilty and facing death as the result. In contrast, God sent Christ to this earth as the God-man. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Christ took on human flesh like we have. He was tempted just like we are tempted. However, Christ had victory over temptation and did not sin. Then, Christ took our sin on Him as He hung on the cross. As a result, He took our condemnation. That is why we no longer face any condemnation once we place our faith in Christ.

The payment of Christ for our sin fulfilled the righteous requirement of God that sin must be judged. The Father showed that He was satisfied with that payment by raising Christ from the dead. As a result, at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ, we were set free from the penalty of the law. At that moment of faith, Christ also placed the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is the Holy Spirit that now gives us the power to walk according to the Spirit, instead of walking according to the flesh. As Galatians 5:16 says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” At every moment that we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, we will have victory over the sinful desires of the flesh. In contrast, when we walk in our own strength we will fail.

Romans 8:5-8 describes what our condition was like before we became Christians. Those verses say, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Before we became Christians, we set our minds on the things of the flesh and we continually practiced the sins of the flesh. That carnal or fleshly mind only produced death. That is due to the fact that the carnal mind is totally opposed to God and lives in continual rebellion. As a result, those who lack faith and are still living in the flesh cannot please God.

We also see that these verses contain some contrasts. When we have been given life according to the Spirit, we are now free to set our minds on the things of the Spirit. That is why Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for

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the flesh, but through love serve one another.” We have been set free from our bondage to the flesh. That freedom now gives us the opportunity to serve one another in love. A second contrast is also given. The carnal (fleshly) mind is totally in conflict with God. In contrast, the mind that is yielded to the Holy Spirit is spiritually minded. We see that as we learn to enjoy that blessing of being spiritually minded, we begin to experience a life that is filled with the peace of God.

Romans 8:9 goes on to give all Christians a great reminder, “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” At the moment we became a Christian, we died to the law. Romans 6:3-4 says, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” At the moment we placed our faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit came into our lives. As a result, we are now in the Spirit instead of being in the flesh. We saw later in that chapter that we are now able to yield our lives to God and He will give us the desire and the power to do those things that are pleasing to Him.

In chapter seven, we had another illustration. The law was compared to the marriage of a wife and a husband. At the time the husband dies, the wife is no longer under the law of her husband because he is dead. She is now free to be married to another husband. In the same way, at the moment we placed our faith in Christ, we were no longer under the law of sin and death. Instead, we see here in Romans 8 that we are now under the law of the Spirit of life because Christ has set us free from the law of sin and death. We were given the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation as our down payment and guarantee of our eternal life. Ephesians 1:13-14 says, “In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” As a result, every Christian has the Holy Spirit take up residence and dwell in our lives beginning at the moment of salvation.

In fact, the last part of Romans 8:9 says that any person who does not have the Holy Spirit is not yet a Christian. Once our children place their faith in Christ, we want to begin teaching them that the Holy Spirit has come into their lives. We want to help them understand that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives them the power to do those things that are right and pleasing to God. We want to help them learn that at each moment they are yielding their human spirit to the Holy Spirit, they will experience the peace of God in their lives. We want to help them understand that they no longer have to fear condemnation. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your physical and spiritual children learn to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.