

## **Romans 8**

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Now we get to some really great news! We have studied about our salvation being totally of God and we have seen how we have an earthly struggle waiting for us as long as we live on this earth. At the end of Chapter 7 we saw that the answer to our struggles is the same as the answer for our salvation: Jesus Christ. Now comes the great news referring back to John 3:36

*John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

The wrath of God used to abide over me and over you, but now we have some really great news.

**Rom 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."**

Before we were able to believe that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the Christ, we had the wrath of God on us and were under complete condemnation. Now that we are born again, spiritually present in Heaven, and living out our sanctification here on earth, we have no condemnation. This is a great verse to sing every morning!

There are two Greek words that are translated into the English word "in". One is "eis" and literally means "into". We can think about the proper use of this word as if we were standing outside of the gates to Jerusalem and we said that we were going to go into Jerusalem through the gates. We would then use the Greek word "eis". The other Greek word is "en" and when that word is used it means that you have really arrived in the city of Jerusalem by passing through the gates. Guess which word Paul uses here? I am sure that you guessed "en" and you are exactly correct. Paul is saying that there is now no condemnation for those who are truly "inside Jesus", which is the mystical union that we Christians have with our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore there is now no condemnation for us because the Father sees Jesus when He looks at us for we are mystically joined with Jesus Christ – we are "en" Christ Jesus.

The next verse gives again the reason for the lifting of the condemnation from our life.

**Rom 8:2 "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."**

**Rom 8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,**

**Rom 8:4 in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."**

Since we could not obey the Law, God send Jesus in the likeness of our flesh to live in total obedience to the Law and to die for our sins. Therefore the total requirements of the Law are indeed fulfilled in all of His children. Verse 8:4 does not negate the trials of walking in this world as Paul discussed in the previous chapter, but we now are led by the Holy Spirit and not guided by our flesh. We will still fail as we have discussed a lot, but our direction of total holiness is set in our heart and protected by the Third Person of the Holy Trinity.

**Rom 8:5 “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.**

**Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,**

**Rom 8:7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so;**

**Rom 8:8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”**

Many people teach that man is basically good and we hear such statements a lot in the world. Some sociologists think that if man is just put into the proper surroundings that he will be a good person and that it is the surroundings that influence people into being law breakers. I would think that there have been enough failed experiments with such a theory that nobody would still consider such a theory plausible. Jesus told us the true source of all evil in the world:

*Matt 15:18 “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.”*

Verses seven and eight certainly teach us that man is totally depraved. Remember that totally depraved does not mean utterly depraved. A person being totally depraved means that every aspect of his being is affected by the sin nature. People who set their minds totally on the fleshly aspects of themselves have 100% Adam nature and zero % Christ nature (remember our diagram of the last chapter). A person whose mind is totally set on the sin nature is totally separated from God and at war with God. There is no way for a person who has not been born again to please God. The acts of double imputation are necessary and sufficient actions for us to be totally at peace with God. But then for the rest of our lives we will be working out our salvation in our worldly being until we are glorified.

**Rom 8:9 “However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.**

**Rom 8:10 And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.**

**Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.”**

Verse nine certainly puts to death the idea taught by some that a person can be saved and later the person can have a separate experience when the Spirit of God comes into that person. If the Holy Spirit does not inhabit a person then he is not a Christian. Paul was writing to Christians so he knew that they indeed were not in the flesh but in the Spirit. Hopefully everyone reading this is also “in the Spirit” meaning that they have been born again, accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and publicly stated that Jesus Christ is Lord. We will all have to go through death at the appointed end of our lives because of the sin nature that will still be alive to some extent. The only exceptions to this rule have been Enoch and Elijah. So our body is dead because of sin, but our spirit is alive because of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

What a wonderful promise in verse eleven! If we indeed have been born again then the Holy Spirit works in our lives now and He will raise us from the dead later in the same way that He raised Jesus from the dead.

**Rom 8:12 “So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh--**

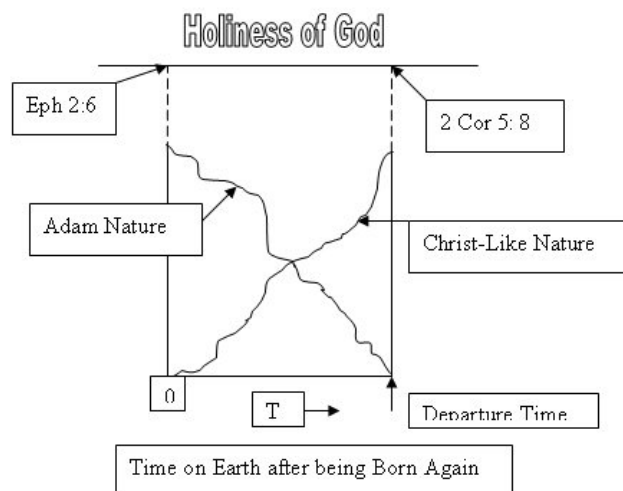
**Rom 8:13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**

**Rom 8:14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”**

Paul then concludes this section by telling us about our obligation to God because of what He has done for us. We are under no obligation to the flesh but we are under obligation to God to work out our salvation here with fear and trembling.

*Phil 2:12 “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;”*

I think that we need to keep in our minds the diagram that I have dwelt upon so much:



We must always remember this diagram and force our minds to “make it so” as we put to death our Adam nature and strengthen our New Life, both with the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

*1Cor 6:19 “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”*

We who have this driving desire to put to death the Adam nature and to strengthen the New Life will live forever in the wonderful presence of Holy God. Those who don’t have this driving nature will die and be forever separate from Holy God. If there is a desire in your heart to obey God then you have been born again by the power of God working first in your heart and now you can believe the truths of God. Praise God if this is true in your heart.

Now Paul moves on to a truly amazing teaching as he tell us that we are the adopted sons of God!

**Rom 8:14 “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.  
Rom 8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"  
Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,  
Rom 8:17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”**

When I first became aware of this teaching I was so amazed that I had to write about it and that writing is published on my web site <http://livingtheology.com/Adoption.htm>. I hope that you all will read that article for more details about this wonderful teaching. The Bible does not teach the universal fatherhood of God or the universal brotherhood of man as some teach today. Rather only those who are Christians are God’s children:

*John 1:12 “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,  
John 1:13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

God could not have stated this fact of selective fatherhood and selective brotherhood any clearer, and it is God Who does the selecting! Note that we are also fellow heirs with Jesus Christ if we suffer with Him. One day we will all be glorified with Jesus and we will then be able to really see our vast inheritance. What a day that will be! Such thinking leads us naturally to the next sentence written by Paul:

**Rom 8:18 “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”**

The sufferings of this age are not worthy of comparison to the glory that God will reveal to us as we in our glorified bodies see God and our heavenly inheritance. Paul also talked about this consideration in his second letter to the church at Corinth.

*2Cor 4:16 “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.*

*2Cor 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,*

*2Cor 4:18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

*2Cor 5:1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

*2Cor 5:2 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven;*

*2Cor 5:3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, shall not be found naked.*

*2Cor 5:4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.*

*2Cor 5:5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.*

*2Cor 5:6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord--*

*2Cor 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight--*

*2Cor 5:8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.*

*2Cor 5:9 Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.”*

It is hard to stop quoting this wonderful section for it just gets better and better. The problem that we have is that our perspective is so limited. We just don't naturally think so long term as God requests us to do. We need to think about our time here as just a little dot on a line that goes on forever. What happens at that dot determines where we spend forever, but otherwise it is of no meaning. Glory is a concept that carries with it the understanding of extreme weight so that whatever we are enduring here during our dot of time does not even perturb in the least the balance with glory on one end. We have to struggle to make our only ambition to be pleasing to God because of that ole' battle that we have discussed so often regarding the death of the Adam nature and the maturing God-nature. We have to develop a vision that during every second of every day has as its focus Jesus Christ.

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is an excellent chapter to read concerning God's people who endured so much on earth because their eyes were fixed on the glory of Jesus that was coming to them later. This chapter is also called "heroes of the faith", but look at some of the terrible things that happened to some of God's people in a time period before the coming of Jesus. We live after the coming of Jesus and it should be easier for us, but

we are still fighting the spiritual war. People in many parts of the world are still enduring some of the same awful physical sufferings as described in that chapter of Hebrews. We here endure snide remarks and some more terrible discriminations such as possibly the director of cheerleading at UGA and faculty members at other universities who have suffered terrible acts of discriminations. But not many of us will be called to be burned alive for the cause of Christ, at least not yet. We must spend time praying for those suffering people and giving thanks to God for His mercy on us.

We Christians must work on our understanding of reality. Remember the 2 Cor 4:18 verse above that really defines reality for us. It can also be coupled with Col 3:1,2:

*Col 3:1* "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

*Col 3:2* Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."

There are two kinds of reality for us Christians: positional and functional reality. Our functional reality is as described above in that what is real is what lasts forever. Our time here is not significant time-wise with all of eternity, but our being separated here as children of God is what affects all of our eternity. Our positional reality is that we still have to live here and obey our Father in this surrounding. There is only one way to do that:

*Heb 12:1* "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

*Heb 12:2* fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

We must fix our eyes on Jesus. We must not let our eyes wander away from Jesus, but remain focused on our Lord and Savior and use Him as our hero and as our example. The expression "what would Jesus do?" is rather trite, but we do always have to have Him as our perfect example. We are promised suffering and we can only suffer properly if we keep our perspective of what is real and fix our eyes on Jesus.

But the suffering in the world is not limited to humans.

**Rom 8:19** "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

**Rom 8:20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

**Rom 8:21** that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

**Rom 8:22** For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now."

The entire creation groans as a result of the fall and eagerly awaits the judgment of God and the new creation that is to come. The thorns are a result of the fall. The movement of the plates resulting in earthquakes must be a result of the fall. Tornadoes, hurricanes, cyclones, the birth and death of stars in the heavens, the colliding of galaxies in the heavens, and so many other “natural” events must also be a result of the fall. Everything is eagerly waiting for the sons of God to be revealed to the entire creation including the people who are not children of God as well as all of “nature”. Futility means existing without meaning and that is what the creation is doing now because God subjected it to such an existence until the set time when all that is now subject to slavery to corruption will be renewed into a new creation when God’s children will be revealed in all of their glory. Until that time comes it is as though all of the creation is undergoing the painful process of childbirth waiting for the time of total fulfillment when God’s perfect creation and perfect children will exist in the glory of God.

*2Peter 3:13 “But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”*

*Revelation 21:1 “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.”*

Praise the Lord! What a wonderful time that will be. What glory will be revealed before all of creation in a beauty and perfection that was not even present at the original creation! For at that time all of the process of purification will be complete as all the effects of the fall are eliminated and God and His children will coexist in this wonderful state forever.

**Rom 8:23 “And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.**

**Rom 8:24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one also hope for what he sees?**

**Rom 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.”**

*Col 3:3 “For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

*Col 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”*

The above concerns the fulfillment of Rom 8:19 and Rom 8:23 as the revelation of Jesus Christ will also be revealed to us and to all creation as it will be forever. The groaning of all creation will cease when Jesus Christ comes again and at that time all of us will also be revealed to the world in the glory of God. What a promise! If we could just really hang onto these promises all of the time that we are here, our life here would be so much more filled with joy and peace!

Verses 8:24 and 8:25 explain the non-worldly concept of hope for us Christians. Our hope is based upon the promises of God and so even though we also do not yet physically

see the return of Jesus and the glory of ourselves, we wait with perseverance because our hope is a surety based upon the promises of God. We see that we have been saved so we don't hope for that. But we do not see our glorified bodies and the return of Jesus so we base our second hope upon the fulfilled first hope – our salvation.

**Rom 8:26 “And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;**

**Rom 8:27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”**

In the same way that the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead and raised us from the spiritually dead and lives within us now, He also will help us in all of our weaknesses. We don't even know for what to pray because we do not know the perfect will of the Father. We don't know what is really best for ourselves or for others. We cannot say that if event X happens to Joe that his life would be better or worse if event Y happens to Joe instead of event X. It might be overall better for Joe to lose his job that he thought was the perfect job for God may have something much better in mind for Joe. But the Holy Spirit knows the will of the Father and so He can intercede for us before the Father.

We now have progressed to the wonderful promise of verse 8:28:

**Rom 8:28 “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**

This verse is one to hang onto for all time. It is a promise that Joseph knew well:

*Gen 50:20 “And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”*

Look back over the life of Joseph and see all the “bad” things that happened to him. But those “bad” things were not really bad at all in the eye of God because all of Joseph's life led to the preservation of God's people. We need to have that same confidence in God as we go through a world where “bad” things happen to “good” people all the time. But for the children of God we can relax knowing that “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose”. God says that ALL things are caused by Him to work together for good for us.

Our study should have educated us so that we should not compare any events here to the glory to come (Rom 8:18) and we should praise God for every event in our life because we know that ALL events will be CAUSED BY GOD to work together for our good (Rom 8:28). What, me worry! Now we should completely understand:

*Phil 4:6 “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”*



We can also better understand why Jesus tells us many times in Matthew chapter six to be anxious for nothing such as He said in:

*Matt 6:25 "For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing?"*

I also ask that you read my little paper on anxiety that is on my web page concerning Living Theology (<http://livingtheology.com/Anxiety.htm>). Anxiety has nothing but negative affects on our lives and demonstrates that we do not trust God. So when we feel anxious about something, we must learn to instinctively just turn it to God in prayer and relax in the knowledge that God will cause all things to work together for our best.

**Rom 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;**

**Rom 8:30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."**

**Rom 8:31 "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?**

**Rom 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?**

**Rom 8:33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;**

**Rom 8:34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."**

The "for" in verse 29 relates back to the wonderful verse 28. Paul is reminding us that it was God Who foreknew us, predestined us for conformation to the image of Jesus, called us for His purpose, justified us for worthiness as His children, and then glorified us. God did all of that before the foundation of the world and the then works in our lives for our good in doing his purposes. Since God has done all of this for us, who could possibly be against us? God delivered Jesus as the recipient of His wrath for all of our sins. Since He did that for us who could doubt that He would then show us His grace in all things? After the resurrection, Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us whenever any accusation is brought against us. With Jesus as the One Who paid our sin debt for us and Who then knows us perfectly there is nobody who can condemn us. Since God is the One Who justified us there is nobody capable of condemning us. What peace we should then have as people who have been justified by God! If someone less holy than God had justified us then He would be able to set aside that justification. But since the Holy God has justified us there is nobody who is capable of condemning us. Remember this when doubts inter your mind. Indeed Jesus left us with supreme peace!

**Rom 8:35 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**

**Rom 8:36 Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."**

**Rom 8:37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.”**

Since there is nobody who can condemn us, Paul then asks if there is anyone or anything that can remove us from the state of justification applied to us by God. All the things mentioned in verse 35 we are going to face in this life and indeed these are promised to us. Paul quotes (verse 36) from the following to remind us that suffering has always been the way for God’s people so the people to whom Paul is writing are not peculiar in this regard.

*Psalm 44:22 “But for Thy sake we are killed all day long; We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

But such sufferings will not separate us from the love of God and we will even conquer all of these things as we serve Him here and as we work with Him. When His goals are our goals and our ambition is only to serve Him then we will be the conquerors. We are particularly blessed to live on this side of the cross. People of Old Testament times were often perplexed about their suffering but we can trace our sufferings back to identification with Jesus Christ.

*Rom 8:17 “and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”*

*Phil 1:29 “For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,”*

*Rev 2:10 “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*

**Rom 8:38 “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, Rom 8:39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

What a wonderful way to end a chapter of this wonderful book! When we have these verses as our life verses we should never be anxious about anything. Death will lead us directly into the presence of God. The problems of life can be very severe but Paul has already addressed such and concluded that we will indeed be conquerors of such and thus should never fear what life brings. Angels are very powerful beings but they serve God and certainly cannot and would not try to separate us from God. The evil angels might want to separate us from God but God is all powerful and easily thwarts their efforts. Powers are probably the evil forces in the world under the influence of Satan and of course God is over all of them. Principalities are probably the ruling people in the world who might want to separate us from God but God will not allow that to happen. Nothing that exists now or that will exist in the future is able to separate us from God. God is the Creator and creation cannot overcome the Creator!

## References

1. All Bible quotations are from the New American Standard Bible, Moody Press, 1975.
2. James Montgomery Boice, "Romans, Volume II, The Reign of Grace, Romans 5-8, Baker Book House, 1992.