

The Solution to Sin in Our Lives

Romans 8:1-11

Romans 8:1-11 - *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. ¹⁰ And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."*

Background Notes

Romans 8 is one of the great chapters in the Bible! If Romans 3 is the gospel (good news) for the sinner, then Romans 8 is the gospel or good news for the saint. In Romans 3 we learned about God's wonderful plan of salvation for the unsaved sinner, but in Romans 8 we learn about God's wonderful plan of sanctification for the saved sinner. Back in Romans 6 we were told that because of our union with Christ, we have died to sin and are alive in Christ. This is our spiritual position. Because Christ died for sin and we are united with Christ, the power of sin over us has been broken. Now realizing this truth and reckoning or counting it to be true --and then living in the good of it -- this is the first step in gaining victory over sin.

Romans 6:14 says, *"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace"* and verse 12 says: *"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts."* But this great truth of Romans 6 doesn't mean that sin is no longer a problem for us. The problem of indwelling sin is still very real. Even though we have a new nature that automatically serves the law of God, we still have the sinful nature ("the flesh") that serves the law of sin. Roman 7:25: *"So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."* So we need more than the new nature -- we need **power** to live this new life that we have in Christ.

Well, guess what? There **is** power -- and it's available to us! God has provided His Holy Spirit to enable and empower this new life. This is the very same power that raised our Lord from the dead, as verse 11 says: *"But if the Spirit of Him*

who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

Every believer has new life in Christ, and the Holy Spirit indwells every believer. Look at the end of verse 9: “*Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*” In other words, everyone who is a believer **does** have the Holy Spirit – the Holy Spirit lives in every believer. The Holy Spirit empowers our new life as we “walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh,” as verse 4 says. This is the solution to overcoming the law of sin: the new divine life, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Doctrinal Points

1. The power of the Spirit overcomes the law of sin and death.

Verse 2: “*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*” People and birds are both subject to the law of gravity, right? Well why can birds fly, and people can’t? Answer: There is “another law at work” in the case of the birds – let’s call it the law of flight. The law of flight doesn’t **eliminate** the law of gravity, but it **overcomes** the law of gravity.

In the same way, the law of the Spirit doesn’t eliminate the law of sin and death, but it **overcomes** it! The law of sin and death is still at work in our mortal bodies because of indwelling sin, as we’ve seen. As Christians we are born again -- we have new life in Christ -- but this new life from God can’t overcome the law of sin without **power**, and that’s where the Holy Spirit comes in. The Holy Spirit **enables and empowers the new life** that we have in Christ. That’s the way it works, folks. The power of the Spirit overcomes the law of sin and death.

2. The power of the Spirit fulfills the requirements of the law.

Verse 4: “*...that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*” The Law of God is good and it shows God’s standards, but the Ten Commandments don’t give us power over sin. However, the Son of God became Man so that He could go to the cross and die for sin. Notice what verse 3 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...*” The idea here is not that Jesus Christ had sin – no way! The Son of God became fully Man; he was one hundred percent God and one hundred percent Man, but without sin. He was made in the **likeness** of sinful flesh to die for our sins.

The Lord Jesus not only died for our sins, but for our sin. Notice the end of verse 3: “*He condemned sin in the flesh...*” Notice that the sinful nature is **condemned**, not forgiven. Our sins are forgiven, but our sinful natures are condemned. So the work of Christ on the cross took care of what we’ve done, our sins, and it also took care of what we are – our sinful natures were taken care of. So now, even though we’ll have the sinful nature until we get our resurrected bodies, until

that time the Holy Spirit is free to come in and empower the new life -- and He will, if we walk “after the Spirit and not after the flesh” (v4).

Notice, it is a **walk** -- **not a work**! If we walk after the Spirit, the Spirit will do the work in our lives. How do we “walk after the Spirit”? Answer: We get involved in the things that the Spirit of God is involved in, as verse 5 says. So get involved in the study of Scripture, prayer, Christian fellowship, Christian service, living out the fruits of the Spirit -- that’s walking after the Spirit. In summary, walking after the Spirit means being more occupied with Christ and living lives that are pleasing to Him.

Verse 4 gives us the result: The righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in believers who don’t walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And notice that it’s fulfilled **in** us, not **by** us. In other words, what we couldn’t do in our own strength by trying as hard as we can to follow the Law of God, is now automatically fulfilled in us if we walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. The power of the Spirit fulfills the requirements of the law.

Of course no Christian walks after the Spirit 100% of the time, but I think that you can see the principle. The power of the Spirit fulfills the requirements of the law.

3. The power of the Spirit gives life and peace.

Verses 6: “*For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*” And verse 10: “*And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*” Believers are not in the flesh, as we see from verse 9, but because believers still have the sinful nature in this lifetime it’s possible for a Christian to walk after the flesh and not after the Spirit. In terms of Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3, walking after the flesh means to “put on the old man” and not “put on the new man.”

To walk after the flesh, or to set your mind on the things of the flesh, is to be on the path of death (v9). Death means separation! For the unbeliever, walking after the flesh means eternal separation from God. When a Christian walks after the flesh, there’s a separation from God – not in relationship, but in fellowship. Why? Because the carnal mind, or sinful mind, or mind of the flesh, or mind set on the desires of the flesh is actually **hostile** towards God (v7)! A carnal mind can’t please God (v8). But if we walk after the Spirit we have life and peace. We not only have eternal life when we die, and not only a have a resurrected body when this mortal body with the sinful nature is gone, but we also have life and peace now. Remember, our Lord Jesus said in John 10:10, “*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*”

Do you want to experience the abundant life? Do you want to know the peace of God in your life? It can happen in your life as a Christian. I have seen some of my Bible College students begin, for the first time, to experience the abundant life that Christ offers and to really experience the rest and peace of mind and heart that’s available. How did it come about? They began to walk more “according to the spirit,” and less “according to the flesh.” They began to get more involved in the things of the Lord and become more occupied with Christ.

During Spring Break this year we sent a student team to Mexico. By getting involved in the work of the Lord there, some of these kids came back transformed. They had begun to know what the abundant life is all about, and what true peace of mind and heart is all about. The power of the Spirit gives life and peace.

Practical Application

Feed the new and starve the old!

Suppose we had two flowering plants. What would we do if we wanted one plant to continue to grow and thrive, and we wanted the other one to not grow, but to wither away? Well, it's pretty obvious: we would water one plant, fertilize it, and put in a sunny spot, etc. But we wouldn't do anything to the other one -- we would leave it alone.

I think that you already see the point of the illustration. Let's label the plants "the new nature" and "the old nature." Continue to feed the new nature with good teaching and Christian fellowship, continuing to walk according to the Spirit, and becoming more involved in the things of the Lord -- and the new nature will thrive and grow. On the other hand, don't water the flesh -- let it wither! Starve the old nature! Don't feed it, because if you do, the sinful nature will thrive.

Feed the new and starve the old. That's the key to true victory in the Christian life!