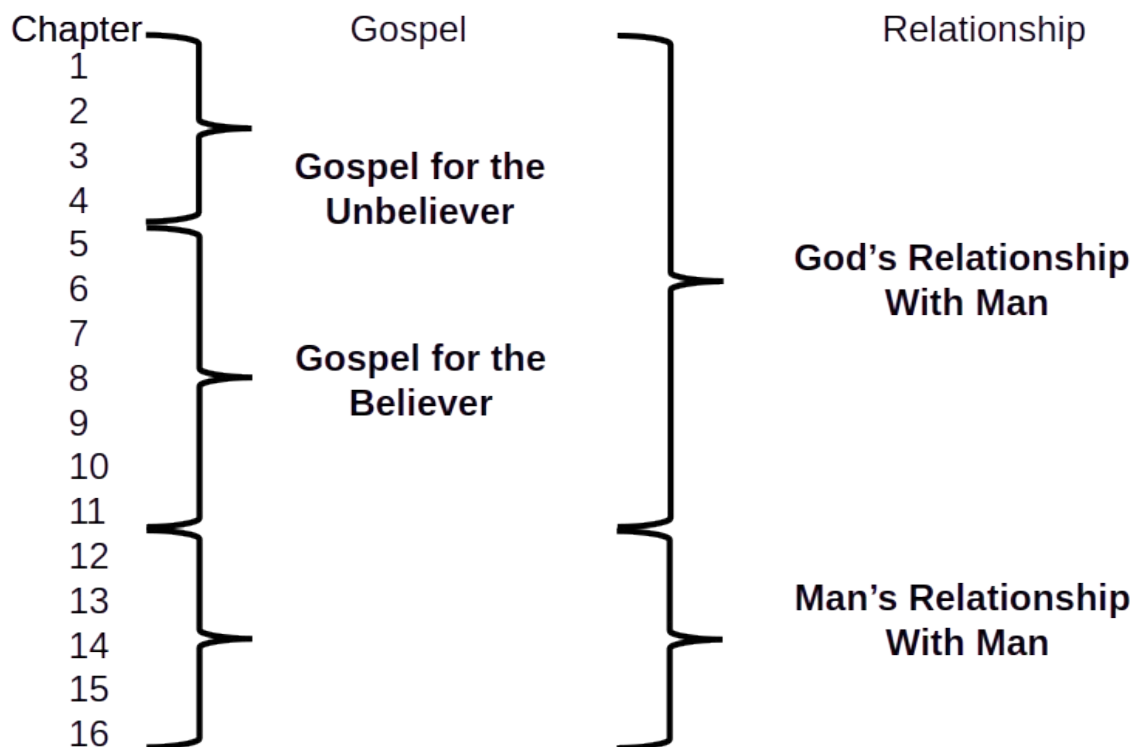


Walk According to the Spirit
Romans 8:1-4

Walk According to the Spirit

As we try to move forward into Romans chapter 8, there is one observation that I am repeating again and again. Romans chapters 6-8 are explaining issues related to the believer's spiritual life: walking by means of the flesh or walking by means of the Holy Spirit. There are many Christian teachers who do not see this. They want to emphasize that the believer has a less effective sin nature and that the Holy Spirit automatically makes the believer a better person. But as emphasized here, this section deals with believer versus unbeliever. Context. Context. Context.

Again, the outline from Herman of the book of Romans shows us the overall contexts included in the Book of Romans:



The early chapters of Romans argue for the need for salvation and the solution by faith in Jesus Christ. The middle chapters, 6-8 in particular

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are the good news/gospel for the believer. Chapter 5 is a transition to the Christian life.

Romans 5:1-2 summarizes the conclusion of the gospel to the unbeliever presented in chapters 1-4. Once a person believes in Jesus the Messiah, they are saved. Paul calls this justification.

A note on grammar: Whenever Herman used “their” to refer to a singular person I would always “correct it” to he/she. Now I find Herman was correct and I was wrong.

“The use of the singular pronoun 'their' to refer to a single person has evolved over time as language adapts to meet the needs of communication. This usage, although grammatically unconventional, has gained acceptance in contemporary English.¹”

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Romans 5:2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Having been justified. Paul uses this to transition from a confirmed doctrine of salvation to the foundation for the Christian spiritual life. *Aorist passive participle.* A done deal.

Also remember Romans 5:1 as the verse in which the textual issue would suggest a subjunctive “let us have peace” instead of “we have peace.” But the internal evidence forces us to accept an alternately supported textual variant, “we (continue) to have peace.” Similar reasoning is used

¹ https://www.grammar.com/the_singular_'their'

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in Romans 8:1 here, but not by many commentators. I emphasize this here because some go with internal evidence for Romans 5:1 but then go with external textual evidence for Romans 8:1. Their theology depends upon the “shorter” version of the text.

Paul delves into the reasons the sin nature should not be allowed to dominate the lives of those who have been justified. As believers, the “Old Man” is dead and we now live in the “New Man.” We are to avoid sin.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

Romans 6:2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

The obvious observation is that we have “died” to sin, being separated from the domination of the sin nature. We still have a choice to live in it. Choice.

Chapter 7 deals with the Mosaic Law.

Romans 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

In order that we might bear fruit for God. In chapter 6 we are to no longer allow sin to reign in our lives. In chapter 7, the Mosaic Law is no longer the standard of the Christian spiritual life. The gem in this verse is that we now have a purpose in our lives. “In order that” indicates purpose. Might bear fruit. This is one word in the Greek. In the

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subjunctive. Maybe we will, maybe we won't. Choice. There is that word again.

But there is something interesting about the Law. What is the greatest commandment of the Mosaic Law?

Matthew 22:34 But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together.

The Pharisees were the conservatives. They believed there was a resurrection. The Sadducees were the liberals and did not believe in a resurrection. In spite of their differences they worked together in the Sanhedrin to govern (?control?) the Jews.

Matthew 22:35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him *a question*, testing Him,

Testing. From the root of the word used for Satan when he tested Jesus in the wilderness.

Matthew 22:36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”

Matthew 22:37 And He said to him, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ (Deuteronomy 6:5)

Matthew 22:38 This is the great and foremost commandment.

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Matthew 22:39 The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' (Leviticus 19:18)

Matthew 22:40 On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

The Law and the Prophets depend on love. Jesus said that.

Romans 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,

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

The requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk according to the Spirit. As we read, the Law depends upon love. Jesus emphasized that again.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

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The point of the new commandment is that Christians love one another, not just neighbors.

Also as a side note, understand that the Holy Spirit was not given as an indwelling in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit does not appear as part of the believer's spiritual life in the Old Testament. It is given not "in" but "on" specific believers to enable them to perform specific tasks. In most cases it was a temporary endowment (given/infused). What we have in the Dispensation of the Church is way beyond what Moses and David and other believers in the Old Testament had. Yet, how many Christians today depend upon the Holy Spirit or even know the power of the Holy Spirit available to us today?

So, even though the Mosaic Law does not apply to Christians, there are principles that still apply. By faith dependence on the Holy Spirit, believers produce love and as a result fulfill the intent of the Law.

Galatians 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

We can fulfill the intent of the Law by love. Paul says that. He is quoting the same passage in the Old Testament that Jesus quoted. Jesus said that. But that love comes as a choice. The choice is to depend on the Holy Spirit. Faith.

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Galatians 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

Galatians 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

By the Spirit. One word in the instrumental. By means of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

Galatians 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

Note the contrast. There is no middle ground. You are either led by the Spirit, by your own choice, or you are led by the sin nature/flesh. Choice.

Galatians 5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

Galatians 5:20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

Galatians 5:21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you,

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that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul turns up the contrast. The deeds of the flesh (sin nature) are contrasted to the fruit of the Spirit. Two absolutes. No middle ground. These are principles from the Mosaic Law that apply in the Christian life. Paul says so.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Galatians 5:23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians was written by Paul on his first missionary journey, before Romans was written. In some respects it is more compact. But the topics are similar addressing the walk of the Christian by faith. This fruit of the Holy Spirit is new to the dispensation of the Church. The filling of the Holy Spirit was not given in the Old Testament.

A word on faith. We do not employ “blind” faith. There must be an object for faith. Remember “doubting Thomas.”

John 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

John 20:25 So the other disciples were saying to him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of

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the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

John 20:26 After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus *came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace *be* with you.”

John 20:27 Then He *said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but *believing*.”

John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

John 20:29 Jesus *said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? *Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.*”

In the movie, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Indiana says he is using blind faith in one of the challenges. However, it was not blind. He was guided by notes in a book that had led him to his destination. It had been right so far. He believed in the book. So we too believe in THE BOOK.

We do not have to “see” physically to believe. But we have information that we use for our belief. Michael Rydelnik, a Jew, believed because he studied the Bible. Let me read from his book, “The Messianic Hope” in which he gives his testimony. He was an orthodox Jew who believed in a coming Messiah. But he did not accept that Jesus was the Messiah until he studied the Scriptures.

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Romans 8:1 (NASB) Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (The short version)

Romans 8:1 (Revised/Corrected Translation) Therefore there is now no punishment (discipline) for those who are in Christ Jesus who walk not according to *the* flesh but according to *the* (Holy) Spirit. (The long version)

As a reminder, there are two issues we dealt with in this verse.

The first was the textual issue. The long version includes the phrase “who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” This is supported by some of the manuscripts while the short version without this phrase are supported by others. The context as I have tried to emphasize in the first part of this lesson is the spiritual life of the believer, not the fact of eternal security/assurance. Eternal security is part of chapter 8, but the flow of the context is the believers life in the Spirit. Getting this wrong leads to a theology that downplays the believer’s need to depend upon the Spirit in the life.

The second issue is the word “condemnation.” It is the difference in the Greek between *krima* and *katakrima*. The first is condemnation or judgment. The second is the result of that judgment—punishment or divine discipline.

In chapter 7, Paul laments his life outside of the Holy Spirit. The sin nature leads us into areas we do not want to be in which can result in divine discipline.

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Romans 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.

Pay attention to the word “death.” There are seven different kinds of death. Seven categories.

This is not spiritual death that leads to eternal residence in the Lake of Fire. No, this is operational death. Without the Spirit, the believer cannot fulfill the Law of Christ, the code of conduct, love.

Law. The law of sin and of death refers to the Old Man. The new law which elsewhere is called the Law of Christ but here is called the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus breaks the domination of the sin nature over the believer.

Romans 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,

The Law could not do... Here is the verse that documents that the Law in itself did not have the power to comply with the Law. This raises questions concerning the faith heroes of the Old Testament. They didn't have the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. They didn't have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They didn't have the filling of the Holy Spirit. Then how could they please God? I don't have the answers. The focus here is on what we as Christians have. The focus is on the superabundance of spiritual blessings we have.

God did. We must never forget that God provided salvation. He had to do it through sinless Jesus.

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John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

God did it.

He condemned sin in the flesh. The word “condemned” here is the verb form of the word found in Romans 8:1. It is not the judgment but the punishment resultant from the judgment. Jesus received the punishment for all the sins of the world.

Offering for sin. The English translation makes it sound like there is a word relating to the Levitical offerings. It is just a preposition that means “concerning.” It can mean “on behalf” of when used with the genitive as here.

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

Requirement. NO! The word is “righteousness.” While the word “requirement” may impart the intent of the verse, the word is righteousness.

The “righteousness” of the Law might be fulfilled in us. We produce righteousness when we are walking in accordance with the Holy Spirit. That is what this verse is saying. Righteousness. When does this happen. Now when we are controlled by “the flesh” or sin nature. It happens when we walk according to (Greek: *kata*) the Holy Spirit. The walking phrase is repeated from verse 1. It is important. There are two kinds of

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walking in the Christian life: according to the flesh and according to the Spirit. Two choices. Only two choices. Choice.

Romans 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.

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

Romans 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,

Romans 8:8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.