

Pleasing God

Last week, the lesson ended on Paul's anguished plea for relief from death caused by the sin nature in his life.

Romans 7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

He starts to point the way in the next verse.

Romans 7:25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Two choices: the Law of God or the Law of Sin. Choice.

The real answer is embedded in Romans 8:1, the long version.

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 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

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supported by some of the ancient manuscripts while the short version without this phrase is supported by others.

Another part of this issue is the context. This deals with 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 believer's life in the Spirit. Getting this wrong leads to a theology that downplays the believer's need to depend upon the Holy Spirit in life.

The second issue is the word "condemnation." It is the difference in the Greek between *krima* and *katakrima*. The first word is condemnation or judgment. The second word is the result of that judgment—punishment or divine discipline. The second word is the one found in Romans 8:1, *katakrima*. Punishment or as it applies to the believer out of fellowship, divine discipline.

I have repeated this research of Robby Dean a number of times because it is important to understand. Not only understand but be able to know the rationale for why it should be translated with the extra phrase. Many people go with the NIV or NASB translation. But knowing the rationale, you know why you believe what you believe. You can explain it to others.

I remember listening to tapes by R. B. Thieme. His method of teaching was very helpful. But at the same time, it concerned me when he said you should believe what I say because I said it and I did all the study etc. Not sure I got the wording on that correct. My style of teaching is to show you why something is true. To give you references so you can look it up for yourself. There were times when Thieme taught something that others were not teaching. I would sometimes find a Greek lexicon or other source and look up to verify what he said was true. I want to give you that opportunity.

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The point of Romans 8:1 is expressed through a negative. You are not disciplined if you are walking by the Spirit. Walking by the Spirit is the answer to the question of who will free me from the body of death. The Holy Spirit frees us from the sin nature while the believer is depending upon the Holy Spirit. Remember that “depending” means trusting or believing.

Now, Paul starts a series of statements glued together with the Greek conjunction *gar* which can mean “for” as to explain something that has just been stated. This is the first *gar* statement.

Romans 8:2 For (#1 *gar*) the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Here is the reason for being set free. The question in Romans 7:24 was “who will set me free from the body of this death?” Romans 8:2 explains the answer. “Christ Jesus set you free from the law of sin and death.” This happened at the point of salvation. We are not by default dominated by the sin nature which results in death, operational death. You can walk in the Spirit because Christ Jesus broke the bond between the sin nature and the believer. By faith walking in the Spirit we have life.

Pay attention to the word “death.” We will take a short detour to emphasize, like Paul, that sin is wrong and leads to death.

Sin causes death.

There is a principle in the spiritual life related to this chapter. Sin causes death. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were promised they would die.

Genesis 2:16 The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

Genesis 2:17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.

You will surely die. In the Hebrew, this verb is what it called *infinitive absolute*. It is a way of emphasizing the stated action. But in most cases it is combined with a second verb of the same root. Translated literally, this would be “dying you will die.” Many Hebrew experts say this is just a way of emphasizing the fact that they would die. However, we know that immediately Adam and Eve died spiritually. They did not immediately die physically. But both deaths were the result of their sin of disobedience toward God. Death is the result of sin.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul was talking about the Christian spiritual life. He is expressing the two extremes: sin causes death in the Christian life; fellowship with God through the Holy Spirit is life. My understanding is that once a person believes in Jesus Christ, they have life, eternal life. While in fellowship you are in that eternal life. On this side of physical death, that life earns rewards on the other side of physical death at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Romans 7:8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin *is* dead.

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Romans 7:9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;

Romans 7:10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

Romans 7:11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

When Christians sin, they die an operational death. They are out of fellowship and can not produce God's righteousness. Death is the result of sin. In Romans chapters 6-7 Paul teaches that sin takes us out of fellowship and operational death is the result.

Phase	Justification	Sanctification	Glorification
Tense	Past	Present	Future
Sin	Saved from Penalty of sin Eph 2:8-9 Titus 3:5	Saved from Power of sin Phil 2:12	Saved from Presence of sin Heb 9:28
Righteousness	Imputation of +R	Production of +R Rom 8:4	Receiving awards
Life	Imputation of eternal life	Walking by the Holy Spirit Romans 6:8, 8:6	Reigning with Christ

We are focused on phase 2 salvation/sanctification.

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Moving on in our review of Romans chapter 8.

Listen to Kenneth Wuest's translation of verses 3-4:

Romans 8:3-4 (Wuest) “For (#2 *gar*) that which is an impossibility for the law, because it was weak through the flesh, God having sent His Son in likeness of flesh of sin, and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law may be brought to completion in us who, not as dominated by the flesh are ordering our behavior, but as dominated by the Spirit.”

Here is the second *gar* statement in verse 3.

God provided the solution to sin. Not only was sin condemned from the perspective of salvation but it also removes it as an issue in the Christian life for those who are dependent upon the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:1). We cannot produce righteousness from our sin nature. It can only be produced through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. Verse 4 provides an expanded reason by giving a purpose: righteousness. This righteousness is the result of the Holy Spirit. Now be aware that the word “righteousness” is not found in the text. But a form of it is. This form means requirement. But let me emphasize again: this word is derived from the word for righteousness. Wuest translates it as righteous requirement to show that this requirement is related to righteousness.

Romans 8:5 For (#3 *gar*) 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.

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Here is the third *gar* statement.

Set their minds on. This is not a bad translation. But, it obscures the force of the verb. The verb is *present active indicative* for thinking. Let me translate this a little more literally.

Romans 8:5 (Literal) For those according to the flesh being, the things of the flesh (they) are constantly thinking; those however according to the Spirit, spiritual (things they are constantly thinking).

Romans 8:6 For (#4 *gar*) the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

Here is the fourth *gar* statement.

Oh look → PEACE. Where have I seen this before in Paul's writings? Love, joy, peace...!!!

Paul sneaked in the fruit of the Spirit! He is saying almost the same thing again from the previous verse. But here Paul takes this a step further. In verse 5 those who are walking by the Spirit are thinking in the realm of divine spiritual thought. In verse 6 that means we are living our eternal life. We are fulfilling the righteous requirement. We are producing the fruit of the Spirit. We are fulfilling our code of conduct (Galatians 5:22-23).

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.**

But why did Paul use “peace” instead of “love.” He has used love in other passages. Why use “peace” here. Because he wants to contrast what walking by the Spirit produces with what the flesh/sin nature produces—hostility! That is the opposite of peace.

So far, Paul has given us righteousness, life and peace as results from walking according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for (#5 *gar*) it does not subject itself to the law of God, for (#6 *gar*) it is not even able *to do so*,

Here are the fifth and sixth *gar* statements.

Paul is telling us the uniqueness of the filling of the Spirit. The work done, the righteous requirement cannot be fulfilled by the “flesh” or sin nature. They are opposites. There are two choices in the Christian life. Two choices you have to make repeatedly during the day. Walking according to the Spirit or walk according to the flesh/sin nature. Choice.

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

Here is the goal of the Christian life, walking by the Spirit: Pleasing God.

Please God. There is a standard or set of criteria that has been met. There is a standard which we can only meet while our thinking is dominated by the Holy Spirit. That standard is righteousness which the Holy Spirit produces in us (Romans 8:4).

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Note that Paul has led to this point by repeatedly stressing that everything happens in our thinking. We do not please God by what we do. We please God by what we think. An unbeliever can do things that look spiritual. But if they are done in the power of the sin nature they are not pleasing to God (Isaiah 64:6).

In Romans 8:8 the negative is stated. It is not possible for a believer out of fellowship (not walking according to the Spirit) to please God. The implication is that those walking by the Spirit do please God since they fulfill the righteous requirement of the Law. In this case, not the Law of Moses but the superseding one, the Law of Christ.

The following chart attempts to summarize this argument.

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Paul's Contrasts in Romans 8:1-8			
Verse	Negative (Flesh/Sin Nature)	Positive (Holy Spirit)	Keywords
1	Flesh	Spirit	<u>Walking</u> by Spirit: No Punishment
2	(Flesh)	Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus	<u>Freedom</u> from Law of sin & death
3 & 4	Law & Sin	God punished sin in the flesh	Positive Purpose: Righteous Requirement fulfilled
5	Flesh	Spirit	Thinking: Flesh → Flesh Spirit → Spirit
6	Flesh	Spirit	Flesh → death Spirit → life & peace
7&8	Flesh		Negative Conclusion: (Warning):Not able to please God by flesh