

Life with a New Husband

Christ: The Basis of Our Freedom

Therefore

Paul just finished talking about his miserable fight with sin. So why does he suddenly move to “no condemnation”? **Rom 8:1** *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.* He broke into praise already in 7:25, but he is also referring to his earlier arguments:

- Romans 5:1: *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- Romans 7:4–6: we are widows to the Law, which has no power to condemn, since we are now “married” to the living Christ, our final and true husband.

In Christ, Free from the Law

Some would argue that the “who do not walk according to the flesh” means that only those who “walk according to the Spirit” will escape condemnation. But this is legalism at its worst! No one can meet that standard, so it is only as we are *in Christ* that we *can and do* “walk...according to the Spirit.”

Three attitudes to the law: “Legalists *fear the law* and are in bondage to it; antinomians *hate the law* and repudiate it; law-abiding free people *love the law* and fulfill it” (Stott, 192).

Through Christ, Fulfilling the Law

- We are free from the law of sin and death by the Spirit of life (8:1)
 - Christ’s perfect obedience accomplishes for us what none of us could accomplish—a life perfectly pleasing to God from the moment of our conception to our last breath.
 - Jesus becomes a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor 15:45)
 - Death holds no power over those in Christ.

1 Cor 15:54–56 *“Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.*

- The law is powerless over sin but God is not (8:3)
 - The Law has no power to save, only to condemn
 - God writes a new law in our hearts by his Spirit

Rom 8:3–4 *By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us*

This doesn’t mean Jesus is sinful, but that he was fully human, submitted to all physical ailments, fatigue and temptations that we know. In spite of all these temptations, Jesus accomplished the will of the Father!

Isa 53:10 *Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*

Heb 10:17–22 "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

- We fulfill righteousness in the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Christ, righteousness impersonated. We are given the righteousness of Christ in the place of our filthy rags, but we are also then enabled by the Holy Spirit to accomplish the righteous work of Christ.

1 Pet 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

Titus 3:5–7 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

The Natural Mind and the Spiritual Mind

The Mind of Sinful Man

Given Over to Sinful Desires

Jude 1:16 These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

Rebellious and Proud

Jude 1:10 these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively

Without the Spirit, we have no power to submit to God. It takes power to submit!

Hostile to God

Jude 1:12–13 These are blemishes on your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, looking after themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.

Jude 1:18–19 the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ... said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.

Futile in their Thinking

Eph 4:17–19 *Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.*

Isa 28:15 *you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have an agreement, when the overwhelming whip passes through it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter"*

Unable to Please God

God describes the leaders of Israel:

Isa 59:13–60:1 *transgressing, and denying the LORD, and turning back from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words. Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. ¹⁶ He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD. "And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the LORD, "from this time forth and forevermore."*

The Mind of the Spirit

"The Spirit battles against and conquers the hostility and power of the flesh, rescues the believer from captivity to sin and death, both 'spiritual' and 'physical,' and, accomplishing what the law itself could not do, enables the law, for the first time, to be 'fulfilled'." (Moo, 473)

Free in the Spirit

We have true freedom. When we were married to the "law-husband," we are slaves to that law yet unable to keep it. Now that the law-husband is dead to those who live by the Spirit, we serve a new husband— Jesus, who, by his Spirit has written the law on our hearts! Our eternal husband is ours forever. For now, we have the deposit of the Spirit to guide us until we break through into the presence of Christ himself.

Alive in the Spirit

Christ is raised and lives in us by the Spirit – looking forward to our resurrection

Rom 8:11 *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 dwells in you.*

At Peace in the Spirit

Rom 8:6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

We cannot NOT please God

In Communion with the Spirit

He leads us into righteousness

Gal 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Gal 5:22–26 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

He testifies with our Spirit that we are children of God

He is the Spirit of adoption, assuring us of our place in the family

The Obligation of the Spirit

Be Controlled by the Spirit of Christ

Eph 5:17–21 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Submit Your Minds to the Spirit of Christ

Eph 4:20– 5:1 But that is not the way you learned Christ!- assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Kill the Desires of the Flesh

Jam 1:12–15 Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Assurance

The devil loves to shake our assurance. Paul, in defending himself against accusers, says a curious thing:

1 Cor 4:2–5 *it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.*

How to know if you are of God, led by the Spirit?

Assurance is not just praying for God to show you whom to marry or what job to take. Of course, God will lead you in his providence in such things. Being led by the Spirit involves a *life direction*. Here are some questions you can ask yourself to know if you are “in Christ”:

- Does your heart sing when you see a beautiful sunset? Do you immediately recognize God’s power and glory?
- Are you shaken by the Scriptures? Encouraged by them?
- Are you filled with compassion for those who don’t know Christ?
- Do you readily seek forgiveness from those you have hurt?
- Do you “run to Christ” even in the middle of your day, seeking his guidance and asking his blessing on your work?
- Are you able to understand another person’s point of view and leave the judging to God?
- Do you seek wisdom through the Word, sing with joy and thanksgiving, join with God’s people to praise him?
- Do you long to honor Christ in all you do and say?

These are *evidences* that the Spirit is truly living in you and stirring you to loving obedience rather than leaving you in a state of hostile rebellion. This is the Spirit testifying to your spirit that you are a child of God. But we are not to get assurance from our own reactions and feelings. There are at least three aspects to our assurance: Theological, Behavioral and Experiential. All are wrapped up in God’s Word.

“When the Spirit communicates to God’s people, he communicates to them by the Word, with the Word, through the Word, and never against the Word...The testimony we receive from the Holy Spirit comes in and through the Word.” (Sproul, 265).

In this year, remember that if you are in Christ, you are full sons of God, heirs of eternal life, grateful slaves of Christ. Let’s keep calling out to our Father in heaven, who, through the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, invites us to run our race with confidence, calling the fearful Judge of all the earth by the tender name he allows us to use: *Abba*, Papa!

Keller, *Romans 8–16 for You* (The GoodBook, 2015)

Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Eerdmans, 1996)

Sproul, *The Righteous Shall Live by Faith* (Crossway, 2009)

Stott, *The Message of Romans* (IVP, 1994)