

SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

January 2017

Romans 7 and 8 are well loved chapters, especially chapter 8 – where Paul explain the doctrine of eternal security. The beginning of chapter 8 “There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus...” points to the pivot in the story of redemption where Jesus sacrificed himself for his own.

These studies present how we should **live with the commandments**, freedom from the law due to “death”, specifically the death of Christ. When we look at the law, we know our lives don’t measure up, even if we were to try to comply with it, it is but **paying lip service**, it doesn’t work. However, when we get to know Christ, accept Him as Lord and Saviour, we now **know whom we belong to**. The journey sanctification will lead us to **the joy of maturity**. Finally, being assured of our salvation, we are persuaded to **the assurance of everlasting love**. These truths not just set us free, they set us flying into loving arms whenever we contemplate them.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Passage</i>
1 Jan	Living with the Commandments	Romans 7:1-12
8 Jan	Paying Lip Service	Romans 7:13 - 8:4
15 Jan	Know Whom You Belong To	Romans 8:5-17
22 Jan	The Joy of Maturity	Romans 8:18-30
29 Jan	The Assurance of Everlasting Love	Romans 8:31-39

1st January 2017
Living with the Commandments
Romans 7:1-12

Introduction

If we are saved by grace, can we simply ignore God's law as given to the people of God? Paul answered partially in the previous chapter and here he gives us the rest of his perspective. The word law is used more than twenty times and shows how important a right understanding of it from God's perspective will enable us to better deal with it. It is another way of looking at winning over the flesh by practice as opposed to becoming more spiritual by godly behaviour. Is obeying the laws simply legalism? Is spirituality simply a list of dos and don'ts? Is weakness of legalism seen as sinning? Do we judge the outward signs and not the inward attainment? These are but some of the issues we face when we try to understand the Commandments and its place in our spiritual lives today.

For Study and Discussion

- 1) We have died to the law! (Rom 7:1-6)
 - a) The Law has authority over somebody while he is? (7:1)

 - b) Paul gives the example of a married women: (7:2-3)
 - i) If she has sexual relationship with another when her husband is alive, she is a?

 - ii) But if her husband dies - what is her status? Can she be guilty of? Can she marry somebody else? Why the change?

 - c) Paul now applies this to the Christian
 - i) What is the Christian's status as far as a law is concern? How did this happen? (7:4-5; 8:1-4; Col 1:21-23; etc.)

 - ii) Instead of the law, we now belong? (7:4b, 6)

 - iii) So instead of bearing fruits for, we now bear fruits for? (7:4c,5b,6b)

 - iv) What does it mean to live by the Spirit? (7:6) Galatians 5:13-26 gives us an answer
(1) How do we fulfil the law? (Gal 5:14; Mk.12:29-31) Are we doing this?

(2) What does the “Parable of the Good Samaritan” tell us about who it is we should be applying this to? (Lk 10:29-37)

1. What acts are we not to do as they are the acts of our former life? (Gal 5:19-21)

2. Instead of doing/not doing things so that we can be right before God (We can never be justified by our actions), we should instead seek after the fruits of the Spirit. What are they (notice they are not actions but attitudes)? Do we show these fruits in our lives? (Gal 5:22-23)

2) The Law is certainly not sinful! (7:7-12). Paul now goes on to the question - Since the Law resulted in an increase in sin (5:20; 7:5), is the Law itself sinful?

a) What is Paul’s answer? Is the Law sinful? (7:7)

b) Why does Paul answer this way? (7:7-12)

i) What did the law do with regard to sin? (7:7)

ii) What was the effect of sin on us when we knew the law? This results in our? (7:8-9)

iii) So the purpose of the law was to bring but instead (because of sin), it brought (7:10-11)

iv) Therefore, the law is not (the problem is with us) but it is (7:12)

Discipleship Pointers

Godliness is not a set of do and don'ts. Our status before God is not dependent on our obedience or not of the Law. Instead what important is our status in Christ. So...

- Have we died to the Law through the body of Jesus Christ? (7:4)
- Have we been raised to new life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ? (7:4)

Are we serving in the new way of the Spirit or are we still living in the old way of the Law? (7:6) Are we...

- still doing the acts of our sinful nature? (Gal 5:19-21)
- or do we show the fruits of the Spirit? (Gal 5:22-23)

“Those who belong to Christ has crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal 5:24-25)

Family/Group Moments

- Are there areas in our lives where we need to deal with, where our actions aligned to this? Discuss in our group about how we could support and pray for each other specifically. Take accountability actions to change.

8th January 2017
Paying Lip Service
Romans 7:13-8:4

Introduction

When we read God's law properly, and when we look at our own lives honestly, we can only conclude that we are "wretched." Without accepting this, we will never grasp the glory of the gospel. We will never truly appreciate the gospel of received righteousness. Only if our hearts truly cry at our wretchedness can we then know the hope and liberation of looking away from ourselves, to what God has done. Who will rescue us? "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!".

For Study and Discussion

- 1) The Wretched Man
 - a) Rom 7:13 The Law exposes sin and magnifies sin. In what ways, does it do that? (Rom 7:7b, 8) What great need does the law reveal in us?
 - b) What did Paul allude to in v14 with regards to the Law and his relationship to it?
 - c) In your own words, articulate how Paul described his struggles and the sense of helplessness in v15-19.
 - d) There is much debate as to whether Paul is speaking in these verses (v14-25) of an unbeliever's struggle with sin or is he talking about a believer's struggle with sin? Share your perspective and substantiate your interpretation with evidences from the biblical text.
 - i) Unbeliever? (7:14b, 15, 18, 19, 25b)
 - ii) Believer? (7:22, 8:7)
- 2) The Implications
 - a) From your own personal experiences as a believer, which aspects of Paul's description do you find true of yourself in your Christian life?

b) How can a person's anguish and frustration with sin be beneficial (vv. 24-25)?

c) Why is it of utmost importance to understand that only Christ can rescue you from the power of your sin?

3) The Gospel - Words of Life (Rom 8:1-4)

a) The first verse of Romans 8 is the theme of the chapter and possibly the entire bible, from which everything else flows. It speaks of the very heart of the gospel. How would you tell of the gospel succinctly using the 4 key words: therefore, now, no, condemnation?

c) According to v1-2, what two great benefits have been given to us who are in Christ Jesus? According to v3-4, how were they accomplished?

Discipleship Pointers

- The main purpose of the law is to show us the depravity of sin. It defines sin for us and reveals sin in us.
- The law cannot save us, but it shows us our great need to be saved! Unless the law does its work, we won't have any desire for Christ. We will be in denial about the depth and nature of our sin. The law convicts us of sin, so that we can see our need for or have a desire for the grace of God in Christ. The spiritual law cannot restrain a carnal man. The law reveals my sinfulness but is powerless in sanctification.
- The Christian is not two-man fighting against each other. He does not have two natures. He is united to Christ and is one new creation in Christ.
- In Christ, all of the demands of the law has been met. In Christ, we have been justified and are being sanctified.

Family/Group Moments

- Our hearts know where we are paying lip service, our behaviour just to show our neighbours. Reflect and ask for group support in terms of accountability, actions and prayers.

3) The Spirit assures us (8:12-17)

- a) Why do you think Paul says, "... *by the Spirit*, ... put to death the misdeeds of the body"? What assurances is Paul giving here about the Holy Spirit?

- b) Write down some practical ways in which you can "put to death" a particular sin pattern.

- c) What does it mean to be "co-heirs" with Christ? Write down your answers in terms of "privileges" and "responsibilities".

Discipleship Pointers

- We are to set our minds (to be pre-occupied) with our standing in Christ. To keep in step with the Spirit means that we never forget our privileged standing. We never forget that we are loved by God.
- Keeping in step with the Spirit involves the daily killing of our sinful nature with the Spirit. Our reward is true spiritual life.

Family/Group Moments

- Discuss: What does your mind go to, most naturally and freely, when there is nothing else to distract it? In other words, what tends to pre-occupy your mind?
- What do your speech and actions show to others around you (home, work, leisure) that as a Christian, you are controlled by the Spirit?

22nd January 2017
Romans 8:18-30
The Joy of Maturity

The ultimate glory that believers will receive is so wonderful that everything else, including all the sufferings that we are going through now in this life pale in comparison. The resurrection of the body and the new entity of the new heaven and new earth will be our glorious future. This reality is reserved only for those who are God’s sons (and daughters). We will be taken through this process and will eventually reach the inexplicable joy of full maturity through the completion of justification in Christ Jesus.

For Study and Discussion

1) Rom 8:18- 21: Nature Groans

a) What are some ‘present sufferings’ that you are groaning as you perceive to have suffered, are suffering or going to suffer? Tick them where they apply.

Health	Wealth	Job	Business	Policies
Family	Kids	Parents	In-laws	Elitism
Bosses	Clients	Government	Threat	Sins
Terrorism	Prejudices	Biasness	Social Status	Looks
Self-Esteem	Security	Church people	Contempt	Others

b) According to v18, Paul considers “our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

i) What ‘authority’ does Paul have to make such a claim (2 Cor. 11:23-33)?

ii) What ‘future glory’ and confidence can we assume from this claim? (8:21, 23, 26-27)?

iii) Would your perception of suffering as deem in Q1a. be changed in view of Q1b?

- c) In verse 20, how has the creation being 'subjected to frustration, not by its own choice' (Gen 3:17-19)? In our modern society, how have we also subjected the creation to frustration? What ought we to do about it?
- 2) Rom 8: 22- 25: Humans Groan
- a) What are we groaning about as seen in (v23)? What is the hope that we have (v24)?
- b) In view of this hope of 'adoption as sons' that we have, how should our attitude be according to 2 John 3:2-3, 6, 8-10?
- 3) Rom 8:26-30: Spirit Groans for our Sanctification
- a) In what ways does the verse 26, "...We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" **not** mean that we should not pray but leave praying to the Spirit? (See Matt 6:6-15, and observe how important prayer is in transforming us to Christlikeness). Similarly, see Phil 4:6-7.
- b) Verse 28-29
- i) What does it mean in verse 28, to 'love him (God), who have been called according to his purpose" (Matt 19:16-30; 22:37-40)?
- ii) Why does God choose us (Eph. 1:4)? In verse 29, what does it mean to conform to the likeness of his Son (Rom 12:2; 1 John 3:15-17)?
- c) In question 1a, often we suffer because we are not happy how things turn out, especially not in accordance to our expectations. Yet being 'happy' is not the goal of God for us. His will is that we conform to Christlikeness, i.e. holy, whole, complete.
- i) In 1 Pet. 4:1, 12; James 1:2-4, list down how much blessing suffering can do to those who love Him?
- ii) Meditate upon Phil. 3:7-14. How does Paul see suffering to knowing Christ as his Lord? How do you see suffering as knowing Christ as your Lord?

Discipleship Pointers

(Abstract from 'The Daily Devotion Commentary' by Lawrence O. Richard. Victor Books, SP Publications, Inc. 1990. p305-6)

One character in the Bible who suffered much is Job. God permitted Satan to take Job's wealth, his family, and his health (Job 1:1-2:10). Yet in his suffering, his reverent awe for God and his decision to shun evil are keys to his character.

What shock us is that terrible trouble could strike such a godly man. We feel that if Job is vulnerable, surely each of us is.

This is one of the importance messages of Job. Relationship with God does not guarantee an easy life. Our relationship with God is more significant than that!

One reason that God permits Christians to suffer is to display the reality of relationship with the Lord. Believers suffer when hurt, as other human beings do. But our continuing faith in God's goodness testifies to all that God does make a difference. God is glorified as Christians continue to hope in the Lord despite suffering. Like Christ, Job "entrusted himself to Him who judges justly" (1 Pet 2:23)

- Question: How much of your suffering glorify God?

Family/Group Moments

- How is your walk with the Lord at the moment? Are there areas where you are struggling and / or suffering? Put them before the Lord, get the group to pray in support of each other's needs.

(Optional Reading:

Title: The Agony and the Ecstasy

Author: Ray C. Stedman

Series: From Guilt to Glory – Explained

Date: October 31, 1976

<http://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/romans/the-agony-and-the-ecstasy>

Verse	Your answer:
31 What then shall we say to these things?	
32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?	
33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?	
34 Who is to condemn?	

g) What is the conclusion of this chapter? Why is it important?

Discipleship Pointers

- What are the truths in this chapter that will help us be beacons of light for others around us?
- Paul is convinced nothing to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus vv38-39. There must be traces of its consequences in our lives. Are we reflecting on them to guide our heart and change our habits?

Family/Group Moments

- What are the warnings in this chapter? Discuss how some of these warnings could be addressed.

Daily Prayer Guide

Sunday: The Church

- Church members & families
- Visitors
- Pastor & church leaders
- Sunday School teachers
- Worship leaders
- Small group leaders
- Other churches
- Outreach efforts

Monday: The Workplace

- Supervisor
- Co-workers
- Subordinates
- Customers & suppliers
- Difficult situations
- Work attitude
- Work performance

Tuesday: Acquaintances

- Mentors & mentorees
- Accountability partners
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Merchants
- Public servants
- Teachers & other school Workers
- Children's friends & their families

Wednesday: My Country

- Public officials - executive, legislative, & judicial
- Armed forces
- Public morality
- The media
- The economy

Thursday: The World

- International peace & understanding
- Missions and missionaries
- Persecuted churches
- Hunger, sickness, & disaster relief

Friday: My Spiritual Growth

- Maturity
- Understanding
- Faith
- Love toward God
- Love toward others
- Servanthood

Saturday: My Family

- Spouse
- Children
- Grandchildren
- Parents
- Brothers & sisters
- Extended family
- Unsaved loved ones

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."-Jeremiah 33:3

Little Steps To Great Learning!

Preparation:

- Attempt all questions in the relevant Bible study before your group meeting.
- Expect spiritual growth by thoughtfully working on the Bible study questions (and the suggested reading, if any) throughout the week.
- Seek the Holy Spirit's insight and guidance by praying daily in reflection of what you have learned through the Bible study.

Group Time:

- On the following Sunday, take notes during sermon to assist in focusing your thoughts.
- Be punctual for your group meeting.
- Share the insight gained through the sermon with your group.
- Be frank in sharing your response to the questions in the discipleship pointers.
- Encourage others by attesting to God's goodness and reality by sharing to the group (and others) how the Word has changed your thinking and action in response to your study in the past week.
- Using the front sheet, summarise how the lessons have helped you to understand God's revelation in the Bible through Jesus Christ, and your response to the revelation.

THE BIBLE is to be...

Read through...

Reflected in...

Lived out...

Given away...