

Facilitator Notes for *Set Free!* – A Study in Romans
Lesson 11 ~ Under New Management Romans 8:1-17

**PLEASE DON'T READ THESE NOTES UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR LESSON.
HEARING GOD FOR YOURSELF IS WAY BETTER THAN MY COMMENTS!**

Questions

Read **Romans 8:1-11**.

- By beginning **Romans 8** with the transitional word *therefore* (or *so now*), Paul is linking this verse to previous verses. Review **Romans 7:14-25**. Why might a genuine Christ-follower feel condemned? We want to do right, but we don't do it. Instead, we often do the very thing we hate. It seems a fact of life, that when we want to do what is right, we inevitably do what is wrong. In the sinful nature, we are a slave to sin. So, we don't practice what we preach or can always do what we desire to do in our hearts, we are tempted to think that God condemns us for the dilemma and our behavior. |
- What does *condemn* or *condemnation* mean? You might want to look up these words in a dictionary. Express complete disapproval of, typically in public; find (someone) guilty of a criminal act or wrong; sentence (someone) to a particular punishment; officially declare something to be unfit for use; criticize, denounce, revile, blame, chastise, berate, reprimand, rebuke, reprove, take to task, find fault with . . .
 - ♥ When do you sometimes feel condemned by yourself, others or God?
 - ♥ What is the opposite of condemnation? **Praise or acquit**. **Why** do we need to know that we are not condemned by God? **It is hard to have a loving relationship with someone who condemns you; we would be stuck in a cycle of condemnation, guilt, confession, try harder and would not progress or grow spiritually.**
- What are the reasons why we will never again be condemned, not in this life or the next (**8:2-4**)? The power of the life-giving Spirit has set us free from condemnation. God put into effect a different plan to save us; He sent Jesus in a human body to pay the penalty for our sins. Jesus met the righteous requirements of the law and through the Holy Spirit, that righteousness is credited to us. In God's eyes, we have the righteousness of Christ so we will never be condemned. We have been delivered from the humiliating situation in Romans 7.
 - ♥ If you belong to Jesus, what does it mean to you that God will never condemn you no matter what you do, think or feel? What difference can knowing this make in your everyday life?
 - ♥ What should you do when you feel condemned by God, others or yourself?
 - ♥ God does not condemn us, but what does he condemn (**8:3**)? **Through Jesus, God condemned sin and overthrew it's power**. What is the difference between condemning sin and condemning a person who sins? **God truly does something we find hard to do: He hates the sin but loves the sinner.** Why is this an important distinction? **He never condemns us as a person. If he did, it would be very detrimental to any kind of loving relationship. He also understands our hearts and motives. He understands WHY we sin. He never excuses our sin – but he does not condemn. He convicts us so that we will turn back to him. He is always drawing us to himself; he is never driving us away.**
- How was **Romans 8:3-4a** accomplished (**Colossians 2:13-15**)?
We had a debt we could not pay and a code we could not live up to. Colossians pictures what Jesus did on the cross as a legal transaction. It was if the cross wrote "Debt paid in full" across the penalty for our sin. Jesus not only paid the debt, but he actually disarmed the enemy and took away his power over us as well as sin's power over us. The imagery in Col. 2:15 is of a victorious general leading his captives home in a victory procession in which their defeat would be proclaimed publicly. The captives would be stripped of clothes and weapons and would have no power or authority over the victors any longer.

- ♥ When was the first time in your life that you really felt “alive with Christ” (**Colossians 2:13**)? Do you feel that way now? Why or why not?
- ♥ In what area(s) of your life have you been set free from the law of sin and death by the power of the life-giving Spirit (**Romans 8:2**)? In what areas do you still need to be set free? Do you want to be set free? Is this possible? Why or why not?
- ♥ In **Romans 8:2**, the *Spirit*, *sin* and *death* are regarded as powers exercising authority. Which is the strongest authority? How do you know? Obviously, the power that sets us free from another power is the strongest power. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of life (life-giving Spirit) and was present at creation. He is the origin of all life and he is the power behind the rebirth of every Christian. How do you sense the conflict between these powers in your life? Which is the strongest authority? How do you know?

5. What are some of the righteous requirements of God's law (**Exodus 20:1-17; Roman 13:9-10**)? Can you keep these requirements? How, then, are they "fully met in us" or "fully accomplished for us" (**8:4**)?

We cannot keep God's law perfectly, and even if we could keep it outwardly, our heart motives would condemn us. The requirement of the law is holiness, but the law is powerless to make us holy because of our inborn sinful nature.

However, the Holy Spirit can help us keep God's law or fulfill the righteous requirements of the law. He provides the power internally to help us do what the law required of us externally. He grows and produces His fruit in our lives – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. When we live according to or in the power of the Holy Spirit, we actually do meet the requirements of the law.

- ♥ How are all three persons of the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit) involved in our being set free from the power of sin (**8:2-4**)? What does this reveal about God?

God the Father is behind the plan of salvation and he sent Jesus to become human and die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins so that our relationship with the Father could be restored. It is important to see that God did not send Jesus just because sin's debt had to be paid. He sent Jesus – and Jesus willingly came – out of love. It was the only way that our love relationship with God could be restored. God would stop at nothing in order to restore us to himself. Not price was too high to pay. Jesus paid sin's debt in the power of the Holy Spirit and we now live our new life in the same power of the Holy Spirit. God is One in purpose and unity – but he is three persons that all have their particular function.

6. In **Romans 8:5-11**, Paul divides all humanity into two groups: those who live according to the sinful nature and those who live according to the Spirit. How is each group described?

Life Controlled by the Sinful Nature	Life Controlled by the Spirit
8:5 think about sinful things; have their minds set on what the sinful nature desires	8:5 have their minds set on what the Spirit desires; think about things that please the Spirit
8:6 the mind controlled by the sinful nature is death (separation from God)	8:6 the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace
8:7 the sinful mind is hostile to God; it CANNOT submit to God's law; it will never obey God	8:9 controlled by the Holy Spirit and not our sinful nature
8:8 cannot ever please God	8:10 spirit is alive because we have been made right with God
8:9 does not belong to Christ; are not Christ-followers	8:11 Spirit lives in us – and even though our bodies will die because of sin, the Spirit will someday resurrect them

- ♥ In what group would you place yourself? Why?
- ♥ How would you explain to someone what it means to live *according to* or *controlled by* the Holy Spirit?

7. The word *mind* in 8:5-8 could be translated *mindset*, meaning *the established set of attitudes that someone holds*. What connection do you see between *mindset* and *behavior* for both groups of people (8:5-8)? We cannot separate our mindset from our behavior and our mindset and our behavior will always be in agreement.

Does our **nature** (sin-controlled or Spirit-controlled) determine our **mindset** or does our **mindset** determine our **nature**? What is the difference and why might this be an important distinction?

This question is a little bit like what comes first, the chicken or the egg. But basically, we think like we do because of our nature. A Spirit-controlled person WILL have their mind set on what the Spirit desires. One who controlled by the sinful nature is NOT ABLE to have their mind set on what the Spirit desires. Even though thoughts are important, we don't become Spirit-controlled by just thinking the right things. We become Spirit controlled by entering a intimate relationship with the Spirit and by yielding ourselves to Him. As a result, our actions and our thoughts become Spirit controlled.

- ♥ What occupies your thoughts most of the time? What fills your time? Your conversation? Are your thoughts, actions and words in harmony with what you say you believe? Why or why not?
 - ♥ Does "living according to the Spirit" mean you are under his control 100% of the time? Why or why not? If you belong to Jesus, what assurance do you find in 8:9? We try for perfection, God is more concerned about growth and consistency and relationship.
8. How would you describe the basic difference between the what the **Holy Spirit** desires and what the **sinful nature** desires (Galatians 5: 16-23)?

The Holy Spirit desires things that are like God and his character. Everyone agrees that love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are good things, whether or not they have those qualities in their life. The sinful nature desires things that are unlike God and his character. These are activities that hurt ourselves and others and offend God. This acts of the sinful nature reflect Satan and his character.

- ♥ When did you first realize you needed to turn control of your life over to the Holy Spirit? What happened? What evidence do you see of your life being controlled by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)?
- ♥ How can you cooperate with the Holy Spirit in growing his fruit in your life? How can you hinder? If we try to do the "right things" out of rules and willpower, we will hinder the Holy Spirit's influence in our lives because we are in control, not Him. If we enter into a relationship with the Spirit, communicating with him (speaking and listening), asking for His power to help us obey and waiting for him to do his work in our hearts, we can cooperate with what he is doing. Willpower focuses on changing our behavior; Spirit-power changes our hearts and thoughts from which our behavior flows. A relationship with the Holy Spirit is "supernatural." Something happens that cannot ever happen "naturally."

Read **Romans 8:12-17**.

9. **Obligation (8:12)** means *an act or course of action to which a person is morally or legally bound; a duty or commitment; a debt owed*. Why are we obligated to live a certain way? To whom are we obligated? First, we can see we do NOT have an obligation to our sinful nature – to live according to it. It has no claim on us; we owe it nothing. Our obligation is rather to the Spirit, to live according to his desires and dictates. The Spirit who lives in us gives us life and living by the sinful nature leads to death. Our obligation is to the Spirit and to life and our outward life needs to be consistent with life-giving Spirit who lives in us. We do this by putting to death everything which is compatible with the Spirit. Our obligation is also to God who has provided salvation and to Jesus who is the means of salvation.

- ♥ Does obligation hold a positive or negative connotation for you? How do you feel about being obligated to another person? To God?
- ♥ What privileges come with this obligation (8:14-17)? Is this worth the obligation? Why or why not?

Our *obligation* to live according to the Spirit and our continuing battle with the sinful nature was never meant to be done in our own strength. God the Father and God the Son sent the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts, to be our supernatural Helper. The Holy Spirit makes the difference between those who live according to the sinful nature and those who live according to the Spirit. If you compare **Romans 7** with **Romans 8**, you will see the difference!

10. The Holy Spirit is God, not an impersonal power. He is a real person with his own personality, with whom we interact in a personal relationship. In the chart below, write the phrase from each verse that indicates a person-to-person interaction with the Holy Spirit.

8:13 if <u>by the Spirit (his power)</u> you put to death the misdeeds of the body	8:14 <u>led by the Spirit</u>
8:15 (NIV) <u>by the Spirit</u> we call God, "Abba Father"	8:16 the Spirit testifies with our spirit (speaks deep in our hearts) that we are God's children

- ♥ Do you think of the Holy Spirit as a real person who lives in you? How do you interact with the Holy Spirit and by what means to you communicate?
- ♥ How does the Spirit lead you (8:14)? How do you recognize his voice when he "speaks to us deep in our hearts" (8:16 NLT)? What can you do to develop your relationship with him?
- ♥ What specific advantages would a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit give you (8:13-16)?
The ability to put to death sin in our lives; the gift of being spiritually alive; the gift of being led (guided) by the Spirit as we live life; the Spirit takes away any fear we have of God and what he might do to us (because of our sin) and replaces it with a spirit of freedom of being God's children; through our relationship with the Holy Spirit, we have a very intimate relationship with God the Father (even calling him "Daddy or Papa." The Spirit lets us know that we are in God's family and are God's children – with all the family rights and blessings.

11. What is the life that leads to death and the death that leads to life (8:13; Galatians 6:8)?

The life that leads to death is living by (following) our sinful nature, which leads to spiritual deadness. The death that leads to life is putting to death (in the power of the Spirit turning from) the misdeeds of the body, we will be spiritually alive. Gal. 6:8 confirms this truth – "Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful desires will harvest the consequences of decay and death. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit."

- ♥ What are the "misdeeds of the body" (8:13 NIV)? Actions and attitudes of our sinful nature. Who is responsible for putting them to death (8:13; Galatians 5:24)? How is this accomplished? (See Response.) What successes and failures have you had?
- ♥ "Put to death" is in the present tense and indicates continuous action in the original language. What does this reveal about our battle with sin? The battle with sin is not a momentary event, no matter how sincere, but a lifetime commitment. The Spirit is not a promise to those who succeed in overcoming sin, but God's abiding presence in the midst of the flesh or sinful nature. The ability to sustain warfare against sin signals the Spirit's presence. The Spirit will set us free, but it is a process. Does this encourage or discourage you? Why?
- ♥ What is the difference between *willpower* and *Holy Spirit power* in putting to death our misdeeds? All the difference in the world! Willpower is trying to do what God wants us to do in our own strength (I will . . .). Holy Spirit power is depending on His strength to carry out decisions or choices of the will. It involves asking him for his power, a ceasing of trying to do it on our own and waiting for the Holy Spirit to show himself and empower us. It also involves the admission that we CAN'T do it on our own and telling Him that if he doesn't show up to help, it won't get done. The Holy Spirit is delighted with this kind of dependence and will meet us right where we are.

12. In what ways does the Holy Spirit transform our relationship with God the Father (8:14-7)?

It is through the Holy Spirit who lives in us that we experience an intimate Father-child relationship with God. It is important to note that God is a perfect Father. He is everyone's "dream of a Father." Earthly fathers can fall far short of this ideal, but we are not to put our "father wounds" on to God. Rather, we are to learn and experience what good and wonderful Father God is. Because we are God's children, we are also God's heirs and everything God gives to Jesus is ours too.

♥ Of all the privileges given in **8:14-17**, which is most meaningful to you? Why?

Response

Putting to death our sinful habits and behaviors by the power of the Holy Spirit is very different from using willpower. Often, we get stuck in a cycle of **Sin, Guilt, Vow** (I'll never do it again!) and **Try Harder**. But, sooner or later, we blow it and the cycle begins again. This is living under law (trying to keep its righteous requirements) and it will never work for very long. However, transformation is possible through the Holy Spirit working in us. It is often a slow process (or so it seems to us) but real change is possible if we cooperate with the Holy Spirit and let him work in us. Perhaps the following suggestions will help you if you are struggling with a particular "misdeed of the body."

Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of this sin. Name the sin, look at it for what it is, declare it wrong and make no excuses. Confess it to God as sin. State your willingness to die to it. Ask the Holy Spirit to put it to death and ask if there is anything you need to do to help in this death. Listen for his leading. Make a decision of the will to depend on the Spirit's power and not willpower. Die to trying harder, trying to fix it yourself or resisting in your own strength. Stay in this place of "death" (ceasing to strive) and wait for the Holy Spirit to work, supernaturally transforming your heart, changing your desires and giving you strength. Expect this to be a process that you may have to repeat more than once. Expect life experiences that will test and teach you in this area. And -- expect to change! You will be transformed from the inside out through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in you. You will be set free!

BELOW IS THE SUPPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURE FOR THIS LESSON THAT CAN BE PRINTED OUT FOR SMALL GROUP TIME.

NIV

Colossians 2:13-15 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, **14** having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. **15** And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Romans 13:9-10 The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” **10** Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Galatians 5:16-23 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. **17** For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. **18** But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; **20** idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions **21** and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 6:8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Galatians 5:24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

NLT

Colossians 2:13-15 You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. **14** He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. **15** In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross of Christ.

Romans 13:9-10 For the commandments against adultery and murder and stealing and coveting—and any other commandment—are all summed up in this one commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” **10** Love does no wrong to anyone, so love satisfies all of God's requirements.

Galatians 5:16-23 So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. **17** The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict. **18** But when you are directed by the Holy Spirit, you are no longer subject to the law. **19** When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, your lives will produce these evil results: sexual immorality, impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, **20** idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, **21** envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other kinds of sin. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. **22** But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, and self-control. Here there is no conflict with the law.

Galatians 6:8 Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful desires will harvest the consequences of decay and death. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.

Galatians 5:24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there.