



## Lesson 11 ~ Under New Management!

Romans 8:1-17

### Discussion Starter

- When in your life have you ever felt the freest? Why?

### Introduction

**Romans 8** is probably the most well-known and best-loved chapters of the Bible. It has been said that, "if Romans is the 'jewel' of scripture, then **Romans 8** is the 'gleam' on the jewel." The reason for this is the prominence of the Holy Spirit in this chapter. Whereas the law is weak in helping us live holy lives, the power of the Holy Spirit sets us free to live lives of joy and love in Jesus.

The Christian life is essentially life in the Spirit - life that is directed, sustained, enriched, invigorated and empowered by the Spirit. In vivid contrast to **Romans 7** and the failed attempt

to find righteousness through law-keeping, **Romans 8: 1-17** lays out the believer's new life of freedom from the law. Instead of succumbing to the power of indwelling sin, we are able to live out the power of the Holy Spirit within us. Without the Holy Spirit, true Christian discipleship is inconceivable and impossible.

Before this chapter in Romans, the Holy Spirit is mentioned five times and after this chapter, he is mentioned nine times. But in chapter 8, the Spirit is referred to twenty-one times - a record for any chapter in the New Testament.

### Preparation

1. Before you read **Romans 8:1-17**, ask God to open your eyes so that you may see wonderful truths in his Word (**Psalm 119:18**). You may want to make the following prayer your own:

#### *Triune God - Father, Son and Spirit,*

*I admit that I cannot understand the truth found in God's Word with only my mind.*

*I agree that spiritual truth has to be understood with my heart as well as my head.*

*So I ask You to give me spiritual understanding as I do this lesson.*

*I pray that You would enable me to see, hear and understand,*

*with my spirit, all that You want to teach me.*

*I ask this in the powerful name of Father, Son and Spirit.*

*Amen*

2. Read **Romans 8:1-17** slowly and thoughtfully. As you read and reread, *underline or highlight* any verses, phrases or words that are meaningful to you. Put a *question mark* beside anything you don't understand. Put a ✓ beside anything you would like more information about.

**You may also want to read the Scripture in another translation.** The Scripture handouts for these lessons contain the *New International Version (NIV)* and the *New Living Translation (NLT)*. The questions are phrased to be answered from **either** of these versions. Other translations and paraphrases should only be used as supplementary texts to help your understanding.

3. Sum up the Scripture passage for this lesson in a short sentence, phrase or title.

## Questions

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

1. 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?
2. What does *condemn* or *condemnation* mean? You might want to look up these words in a dictionary.
  - ♥ When do you sometimes feel condemned by yourself, others or God?
  - ♥ What is the opposite of condemnation? **Why** do we need to know that we are not condemned by God?
3. What are the reasons why we will never again be condemned, not in this life or the next (**8:2-4**)?
  - ♥ 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**)? What is the difference between condemning sin and condemning a person who sins? Why is this an important distinction?
4. How was **Romans 8:3-4a** accomplished (**Colossians 2:13-15**)?
  - ♥ 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? 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**)?
  - ♥ 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?

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	8:5
8:6	8:6
8:7	8:9
8:8	8:10
8:9	8:11

- ♥ 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**)?

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?

- ♥ 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**?
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**)?

- ♥ 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?

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?

- ♥ 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	8:14
8:15 (NIV)	8:16

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

- ♥ What are the “misdeeds of the body” (8:13 NIV)? Who is responsible for putting them to death (8:13; Galatians 5:24)? How is this accomplished? 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? Does this encourage or discourage you? Why?
  - ♥ What is the difference between *willpower* and *Holy Spirit power* in putting to death our misdeeds?
12. In what ways does the Holy Spirit transform our relationship with God the Father (8:14-7)?

- ♥ 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!