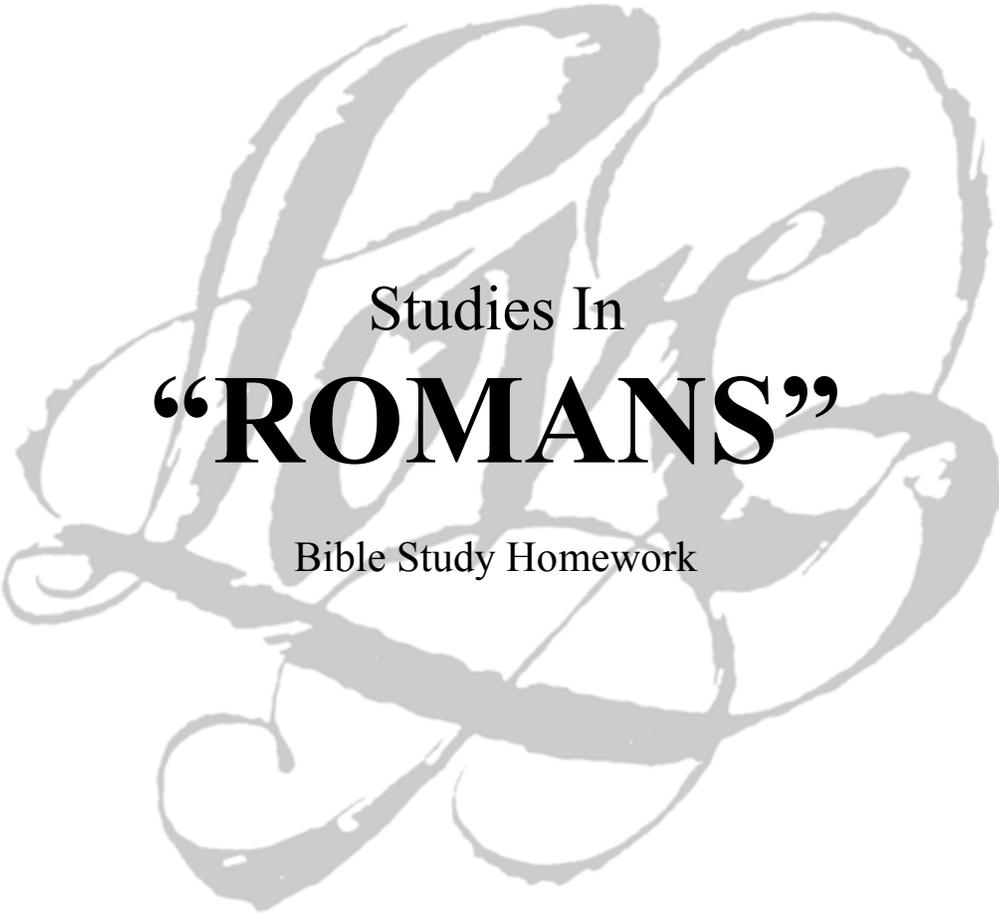


The Most Excellent Way

*The Christian Solution to Chemical Dependency:
“Becoming GOD-Dependent”*



Studies In
“ROMANS”

Bible Study Homework

Studies in ROMANS

BIBLE STUDY HOMEWORK

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RESOURCES:

“Life Application Bible” (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.)

“Lesson Maker” (NavPress Software)

Study No. One
“Faith Brings Joy”

◆ **ROMANS 5:1-11 NKJV**

Faith Triumphs in Trouble

Therefore, having been justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
²through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand,
and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
³And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations,
knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;
⁴and perseverance, character; and character, hope.
⁵Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Christ in Our Place

⁶For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die;
yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.
⁸But God demonstrates His own love toward us,
in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
⁹Much more then, having now been justified by His blood,
we shall be saved from wrath through Him.
¹⁰For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son,
much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
¹¹And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. What circumstances can turn two people into enemies?

2. How do most people treat their enemies?

3. What results can difficult circumstances have in a person's life?

◆ **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

4. What is the basis for our justification with God? (5:1)
5. What is your relationship with God if you have been justified by faith? (5:1)

You now have peace WITH God, which may differ from peaceful feelings such as calmness and tranquility. Peace with God means that you have been reconciled with Him. There is no more hostility between you, no sin blocking your relationship with Him. Peace with God is possible because Jesus paid the price for your sins.

6. How does Jesus Christ change your standing with God? (5:2)

You stand in a place of highest privilege (this grace in which you now stand). Not only has God declared you not guilty; He has drawn you close to Him. Instead of an enemy, you have become His friend -- in fact, His child.

7. For what reasons can you, as a Christian, rejoice? (5:2-3)
8. What good things can result from suffering? (5:3-5)

For first-century Christians, suffering was the rule rather than the exception. Paul tells us that in the future we will BECOME, but until then we must OVERCOME. This means we will experience difficulties that help us grow. Rejoice in our sufferings" ("glory in tribulations," KJV) means rejoicing in suffering. We rejoice in suffering not because we like pain or deny its tragedy, but because we know God is using life's difficulties and Satan's attacks to build our character. Problems we run into will develop our patience —

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which in turn will strengthen our character, deepen our trust in God, and give us greater confidence about the future. You probably find your patience tested in some way every day. Thank God for these opportunities to grow and deal with them in His strength.

- *JAMES 1:2-4 NIV — "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you now that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*

9. Why does hope not disappoint us? (5:5)

All three persons of the Trinity are involved in salvation. The Father loves us so much that He sent His Son to bridge the gap between us (John 3:16). The Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit to fill our lives with love and to enable us to live by His power (Acts 1:8). With all this loving care, how can we do less than serve Him completely! 1 Corinthians 13:13 states that faith, hope and love are at the heart of the Christian life. Our relationship with God begins with FAITH, which helps us realize that we are delivered from our past by Christ's death. HOPE grows as we learn all that God has in mind for us; it gives us the promise of the future. And God's LOVE fills our lives and gives us the ability to reach out to others.

10. How has God demonstrated His love for you? (5:6-8)

We were powerless because we could do nothing on our own to save ourselves. Someone had to come and rescue us. Not only did Christ come at a good time in history; He came at exactly the right time — according to God's own schedule. God controls all history and He controlled the time, methods, and results in Jesus' death.

11. What comparisons can be made between people giving their lives for others and Christ's death for all people? (5:7-8)

12. What was our relationship to God when Christ came to die for us? (5:8)

WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS — these are amazing words. God sent Jesus Christ to die for us, not because we were good enough, but because He loved us so much. Whenever you feel uncertain about God's love for you, remember that He loved you even before you

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turned to Him. If God loved you when you were a rebel, he can surely strengthen you now that you love Him in return.

13. What aspect of Christ's death justifies you in God's sight? (5:9)

14. How did God act to remove the barrier between Himself and you? (5:9-10)

15. If God has manifested His love toward you through Jesus' death, what can we expect concerning our future relationship with God? (5:10)

The love that caused Christ to die is the same love that sends the Holy Spirit to live in us and guide us every day. The power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power that saved you and is available to you in your daily life. Be assured that having begun a life with Christ, you have a reserve of power and love to call upon each day for help to meet every challenge or trial. Just as you can pray for forgiveness, you can pray for God's power and love as you need it.

16. For what reasons can you, as a Christian, rejoice? (5:11)

God is holy, and He will not be associated with sin. All people are sinful, and all sin deserves punishment. Instead of punishing us with the death we deserve, however, Christ took our sins upon Himself and paid the price for them with His own death. Now we can "rejoice in God." Through faith in HIS work, we become His friends rather than enemies and outcasts.

◆ UNDERSTANDING THE WORD

17. How is peace with God different from peace of mind?

18. What does it mean to be justified?

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19. How were you formerly God's enemy?

20. What are the benefits of being justified with God?

21. What is the connection between suffering and hope?

22. How should Christian hope affect your attitude toward your current circumstances or goals?

23. What is hope?

24. What keeps you from being full of joy and hope in the middle of difficult circumstances?

25. In what ways does suffering produce endurance?

26. How can suffering produce positive rather than negative results?

27. How did Jesus' death affect your security in God's love?

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◆ DOING GOD'S WORD

28. In what difficult circumstances do you need to stop grumbling and stay focused on joy in Christ?
29. Who in your life needs to hear that through Jesus Christ they are no longer enemies with God?

30. Write a Thank You note to the Lord:



May God richly bless you as you grow in Jesus!

Study No. Two
“Death Through Adam ... Life Through Christ”

◆ **ROMANS 5:12-21 NKJV**

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned —

¹³(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

¹⁴Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

¹⁵But the free gift is not like the offense.

For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

¹⁶And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned.

For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.

¹⁷For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

¹⁸Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

¹⁹For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

²⁰Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound.

But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

²¹so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. What advantages and experiences have you had that many others in the world have not?

2. In what ways can the decisions of a few leaders change the lives of millions of people?

3. What experiences have you had with death?

◆ **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

4. What did Adam introduce into the world and pass on to his descendants? (5:12)

5. What is the root cause of death? (5:12)

How can we be declared guilty for something Adam did thousands of years ago? Many feel it isn't right for God to judge us because of Adam's sin, yet each of us confirms our solidarity with Adam by our sins. We are made of the same stuff, prone to rebel, and we are judged for the sins WE commit. Because we are sinners, it isn't fairness we need — it's mercy.

6. How did the coming of God's law affect the presence of sin in the world? (5:13)

7. How did the coming of God's law affect our understanding of what sin is? (5:13)

Paul has shown that keeping the Law does not bring salvation. Now he adds that breaking the Law is not what brings death. Death is the result of Adam's sin and of the sins we all commit, even if they don't resemble Adam's. For thousands of years, the Law had not yet been explicitly given, and yet people died. The Law was added (5:20) to help people see their sinfulness, to show them the seriousness of their offenses, and to drive them to God for mercy and pardon. This was true in Moses' day, and it is still true today. Sin is a deep rupture between who we are and who we were created to be.

The Law points out our sin and places the responsibility for it squarely on our shoulders, but it offers no remedy. When we're convicted of sin, we must turn to Jesus Christ for

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healing. (Adam is a "figure" or "pattern." Adam is the counterpart of Christ. Just as Adam was a representative of first humanity, Christ is the first representative of a new "spiritual" humanity.)

8. What came into the world through Jesus Christ? (5:15)

We were all born into Adam's physical family — the family line that leads to certain death. All of us reap the results of Adam's sin. We have inherited his guilt, the tendency to sin, and God's punishment. Because of Jesus, however, we can trade judgment for forgiveness. We can trade our sin for Jesus' goodness. Jesus offers us the opportunity to be born into His spiritual family -- the family line that begins with forgiveness and leads to eternal life. If we do nothing, we have death through Adam; but if we come to God by faith, we have life through Christ. Which family line do you now belong to?

9. What is God's solution to the inevitable problem of sin and death? (5:16-17)

What a promise to those who love Christ! We can reign over sin's power, over death's threats, and over Satan's attacks. Eternal life is ours now and forever. In the power and protection of Jesus Christ, we can overcome temptation.

10. In what ways are the acts of Jesus and Adam similar? (5:18-19)

11. What is the relationship between the amount of sin and grace in the world? (5:20)

12. What effect did God's righteous law have on rebellious people? (5:20)

As a sinner, separated from God, you see His Law from below, as a ladder to be climbed to get to God. Perhaps you have repeatedly tried to climb it, only to fall to the ground every time you have advanced one or two rungs. Or perhaps the sheer height of the ladder is so overwhelming that you have never even started up. In either case, what relief you should feel to see Jesus offering with open arms to lift you above the ladder of the Law, to take you directly to God! ►

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Once Jesus lifts you into God's presence, you are free to obey — out of love, not necessity; through God's power, not your own. You know that if you stumble, you will fall back to the ground. Instead, you will be caught and held in Jesus' loving arms.

13. What does sin in this world produce? (5:21)

14. What does grace given by God to this world produce? (5:21)

◆ **UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD**

15. In what ways are all people the same?

16. What fears or anticipation do you have about death?

17. What effect did Christ's death on the cross have on your life?

18. At what point in your life did you realize you were guilty of sin?

19. When in your life did you realize God's love for you?

20. How can God justly judge us for Adam's sin?

21. How can you have your sins forgiven by God?

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22. What makes Jesus' action more powerful than Adam's?
23. How can knowing you are forgiven and righteous before God through Jesus affect your attitudes and actions?

◆ **DOING GOD'S WORD**

24. Write a prayer of thanksgiving to God today for the grace He has bestowed on you?
25. What will you do this week for an unsaved loved one or friend still suffering from the consequences of sin?

| WHAT YOU ARE AS A ... | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ... Child of Adam | ... Child of God |
| Ruined (5:9) | Rescued (5:8) |
| Sinners (5:12, 15, 21) | Righteous (5:18) |
| Dead (5:12, 16, 21) | Eternally Alive (5:17-21) |
| Separated from God (5:18) | Related to God (5:11,19) |
| Disobedient (5:12, 19) | Obedient (5:19) |
| Judged (5:18) | Delivered (5:10-11) |
| Under the Law (5:20) | Under Grace (5:20) |

May God richly bless you as you grow in Jesus!

Study No. Three
“Dead to Sin ... Alive in Christ”

“SANCTIFICATION BEGINS”

◆ **ROMANS 6:1-14 NKJV**

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin.

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more.

Death no longer has dominion over Him.

¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. What would most people like to change about their lives?

2. What is one thing you'd like to change about your life?
3. What motivates people to make major changes in their lives?

◆ **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

4. Why should a forgiven, justified person make a strong effort not to sin? (6:1-2)

If God loves to forgive, why not give Him more to forgive? If forgiveness is guaranteed, do we have the freedom to sin as much as we want? The answer is a forceful NO! Such an attitude -- deciding ahead of time to take advantage of God — shows that a person does not understand the seriousness of sin. God's forgiveness does not make sin less serious; His Son's death for sin shows us the dreadful seriousness of Sin. Jesus paid with His life so we could be forgiven. The availability of God's mercy must not become an excuse for careless living and moral laxness.

5. For what reason would a person not want to live in sin any longer? (6:2)
6. What does baptism symbolize about our relationship to Christ? (6:2-4)
7. What makes it possible for a person to live a new life? (6:4)

In the early church, immersion was the usual form of baptism -- that is, new Christians were completely "buried" in water. They understood this form of baptism to symbolize the death and burial of the old way of life. Coming up out of the water symbolized resurrection to new life in Christ. If we think of our old, sinful life as dead and buried, we have a powerful motive to resist sin. We can consciously choose to treat the desires and temptations of the old nature as if they were dead. Then we can continue to enjoy our wonderful new life with Jesus (see Galatians 3:27 and Colossians 3:1-4 for more on this concept). ►

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We can enjoy our new in Christ because we are united ("united") with Him in His death and resurrection. Our evil desires, our bondage to sin, and our love of sin dies with Him. Now united by faith with Him in His resurrection life, we have unbroken fellowship with God and freedom from sin. For more on the difference on the difference between our new life in Christ and our old sinful nature, read Ephesians 4:21-24 and Colossians 3:3-15.

8. Before being united to Christ, to what is a person a slave? (6:6)

The power and penalty of sin died with Christ on the cross. Our "old man," our sinful nature, died once and for all, and we are freed from its power. The "body of sin" is not the human body, but our rebellious sin-loving nature inherited from Adam. Though our body willingly cooperates with our sinful nature, we must not regard the body as evil. It is the power of sin at work in our body that is defeated. Paul has already stated that through faith in Christ we stand acquitted, "not guilty" before God. Here Paul emphasis that we no longer live under sin's power. God does not take us out of the world or make us robots — we will still feel like sinning and sometimes we will sin. The difference: before we were saved, we were slaves to our sinful nature; now we can choose to live for Christ.

GALATIANS 2:20 — "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

How have I been crucified with Christ?

- a. LEGALLY, God looks at me as if I had died with Christ. Because my sins died with Him, I am no longer condemned (See Colossians 2:13-15). LEGALLY, I have been reconciled with God (2 Corinthians 5:19) and I am free to grow into Christ's likeness (Romans 8:29).
- B. RELATIONALLY, I have become one with Christ, and His experiences are mine. My Christian life began when, in unity with Him, I died to my old life. IN DAILY LIFE, I must regularly crucify sinful desires that keep me from following Christ. This too is a kind of dying with Him (see Luke 9:23-25). And yet the focus of Christianity is not dying, but living. Because I've been crucified with Christ, I have also been raised with Him (6.5). And IN MY DAILY LIFE, I have Christ's resurrection power as I continue to fight sin (see Ephesians 1:19-20).

CHRIST LIVES IN ME — this is my reason for living and my hope for the future (see Colossians 1:27).

9. How does being united with Christ through His death change your relationship to sin? (6:7)

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10. After Christ died and was raised, why did neither sin nor death have any power over Him? (6:7, 9-10)

11. How will uniting with Christ in His death change the future of our lives? (6:8-10)

Because of Christ's death and resurrection, His followers need never fear death. This frees us to fellowship with Him and do His will. This will affect all our activities — work and worship, play and Bible study, quiet times and times caring for others. When we know we need not fear death, we are free to experience a new vigor in life.

12. In a person's new relationship with God, what is his or her relationship to sin supposed to be? (6:11-12)

13. What change in attitude and action toward God happens in a person who follows Christ? (6:11-13)

Count or reckon yourselves dead to sin means we should regard our old sin nature as dead and unresponsive to sin. We are fully fenced off — because of our union and identification with Christ — from all the old ways of believing and behaving. We are no longer answerable to those motives, desires, and goals. Let us consider ourselves to be what God has made us. We have a new start. The Holy Spirit helps us become in our daily experience what Christ has declared us to be.

14. Under whose control does a Christian live? (6:14)

15. How does being under grace change a person? (6:14)

◆ **UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD**

16. What does this passage tell you about God and Christ?

17. What does this passage tell you about all people and their relationship to God?

18. What kind of changes does God want to make in your life when you become a Christian?

19. Why should you want to sinning even though you know God has forgiven and will forgive those sins?

20. How does God help you discard old habits and tendencies?

21. How does God give a person a new self?

22. What are the symptoms of a person in slavery to sin?

23. How would you describe the character of someone who is alive to God in Christ?

24. What does it mean to live a new life for God?

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25. In what practical sense is sin no longer the master of you, as a Christian, even though you might still commit specific sins?

26. In what ways is a Christian truly free?

◆ **DOING GOD'S WORD**

27. How can you actively resist the tendency to sin in your everyday life? What sins tend to affect your attitude?

28. How can you offer yourself as an instrument of righteousness to God and to others this week?



May God richly bless you as you grow in Jesus!

Study No. Four
"Slaves to Sin Become Slaves to Righteousness"

◆ **"Free to Choose"**

You are free to choose between two masters, but you are not free to adjust the consequences of your choice. Each of the two masters pays with his own kind of currency. The currency of sin is death. That is all you can expect or hope for in life without God. Christ's currency is eternal life — new life with God that begins on earth and continues forever with God. What choice have you made?

◆ **ROMANS 6:15-23 NKJV**

From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

¹⁶ Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

¹⁷ But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

¹⁹ I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.

For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness,

so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

²¹ What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

²² But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

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

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. What bad habits can control and damage a person's life?

2. If you had to forfeit your personal freedom to become a slave, whom would you want to be your master?

◆ **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

3. Why shouldn't a Christian continue to sin willingly? (6:15-18)

If we're no longer under the Law but under grace, are we now free to sin and disregard the Ten Commandments? Paul says, "God forbid" (KJV). When we were under the Law, sin was our master — the Law does not justify us or help us overcome sin. But now that we are bound to Christ, He is our Master, and He gives us power to do good rather than evil.

4. Who or what determines the things that dominate or control a person? (6:16)

5. How does sin dominate a person's life? (6:16-18)

In certain skilled crafts, an apprentice works under a *master*, who trains, shapes, and molds his apprentice in the finer points of his craft. All people choose a master and pattern themselves after him. Without Jesus, we would have no choice — we would have to apprentice ourselves to sin, and the results would be guilt, suffering, and separation from God. Thanks to Jesus, we can now choose God as our Master. We can enjoy new life and learn to work for Him. Are you still serving your first master, sin? Or have you apprenticed yourself to God?

6. What results follow from being a slave to obedience to God? (6:16, 19, 22)

7. What is the result of being a slave to sin? (6:16, 21, 23)

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8. With what attitude do believers obey their new master, righteousness? (6:17)

To obey from the heart means to give yourself fully to God, to love Him "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37, KJV). And yet so often our efforts to know and obey God's commands can best be described as "halfhearted." How do you rate your heart's obedience? God wants to give you the power to obey Him with all your heart. The "form of doctrine" delivered to them is the Good News that Jesus died for their sins and was raised to give them new life.

9. What change has happened to people who have put their trust in Christ? (6:17-18)

10. What is the result of being a slave to righteousness? (6:19, 22)

It is impossible to be neutral? Every person has a master — either God or sin. You are not someone who cannot sin, but someone who is no longer a slave to sin. You belong to God.

11. What are the wages of sin? (6:23)

12. What is the gift of God? (6:23)

◆ **UNDERSTANDING THE WORD**

13. What attitude should a Christian have toward sin?

14. What causes a person to be a slave to sin?

15. What benefits and pleasures do you think you gain from sinful, selfish living?

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16. Before knowing Christ, when did you feel regret for the selfish things you had done?

17. How does sin destroy your life?

18. What are the benefits and pleasures of righteous living?

19. Why can't you be your own master, enslaved to neither God nor sin?

20. In what ways is our relationship to God not like slavery?

21. To what degree are you responsible for your sinful or righteous living?

◆ **DOING GOD'S WORD**

22. How can you show your wholehearted obedience to God this week?

23. In what areas of your life do you need God's help to loosen the grip of certain sins?

May God richly bless you as you grow in Jesus!

◆ **ROMANS 6 SUMMARY**

JUSTICE is getting what you deserve.

MERCY is not getting what you deserve.

GRACE is getting what you don't deserve.

GOD HAS GIVEN YOU ...

... NEW LIFE:

- ◆ **Sin's power is broken.** (6:2-3)
- ◆ **Sin-loving nature is buried.** (6:4)
- ◆ **You are no longer under sin's control.** (6:6)

Importance: We can be certain sin's power is broken.

... NEW NATURE:

- ◆ **Now you share His new life.** (6:5)
- ◆ **Look upon your old sin nature as dead and unresponsive, and instead be alive to God.** (6:11)

Importance: We can see ourselves as unresponsive to the old power and alive to the new.

... NEW FREEDOM:

- ◆ **Do not let sin control you.** (6:12)
- ◆ **Give yourself complete to God.** (6:13)
- ◆ **You are free.** (6:14)
- ◆ **You can choose you own master.** (6:16)

Importance: We can commit ourselves to obey Christ in perfect freedom.



Study No. Five
“The Law is Powerless to Save You”

In Chapter 7, Paul shows that the Law is powerless to save the sinner (7-14), the law-keeper (15-22), and even the man with a new nature (23-25). The sinner is condemned by the Law; the law-keeper can't live up to the Law; and the man with the new nature finds his obedience to the Law is sabotaged by the effects of his old nature. Once again, Paul declares that salvation cannot be found by obeying the Law. No matter who we are, only Jesus Christ can set us free.

◆ **ROMANS 7:1-6 NKJV**

Freed from the Law ~ “An Illustration of Life from Marriage”

**Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law),
that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?**

**²For the woman who has a husband is bound
by the law to her husband as long as he lives.**

But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

**³So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man,
she will be called an adulteress;**

**but if her husband dies, she is free from that law,
so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.**

**⁴Therefore, my brethren,
you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ,
that you may be married to another — to Him who was raised from the dead,
that we should bear fruit to God.**

**⁵For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused
by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.**

**⁶But now we have been delivered from the law,
having died to what we were held by,
so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit
and not in the oldness of the letter.**

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. What were some of the basic rules of behavior you were taught as a child?

2. How do your present values differ from the ones you were taught as a child?

◆ **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

3. What illustration did Paul use to explain a Christian's relationship to the written Law? (7:1-3)
4. Whom does the husband represent in Paul's illustration? (7:2-3)
5. Whom does the married woman represent in Paul's illustration? (7:2-3)
6. To what did Paul compare the death of a woman's husband? (7:2-5) Why?
7. What is the purpose or goal of a Christian's new life? (7:4)

When a person "dies" to the old life "that you might belong to another" ("married to Christ," KJV) a new life begins. An unbeliever's mindset is centered on his own personal gratification. His source of power is his own self-determination. By contrast, the center of a Christian's life is God. God supplies the power for the Christian's daily living. Believers find that their whole way of looking at the world changes when they come to Christ.

8. What changes a person's relationship to the Law? (7:4-6)
9. What are the primary differences between the old life under the Law and new life in the Spirit? (7:4-6)

10. What controlled you before you became Christian? (7:5)

“Controlled by the sinful nature” (“in the flesh” KJV) does not mean in our skin and bones, but in the mindset of the “old man” (see 6:6). Our “sinful passions” are aroused by the Law. When the Law says, “Thou shalt not,” our old nature rebelled and desired to do that very thing.

11. How are you released from being bound by the Law? (7:6)

12. How does your new life compare with you old life? (7:6)

Paul uses marriage to illustrate our relationship to the Law. When a spouse dies, the law of marriage is no longer applies. Because we have died with Christ, the Law can no longer condemn us. We “rose again” when Christ was resurrected and, as new people, are “married” to Christ. His Spirit enables us to produce good fruit for God. We now serve not by obeying a set of rules, but out of renewed hearts and minds that overflow with love for God.

Some people try to earn their way to God by keeping a set of rules (i.e, 12-step programs, obeying the Ten Commandments, attending church faithfully, or doing good works), but all they earn for their efforts is frustration and discouragement. However, because of Christ’s sacrifice, the way to God is already open, and we can become His children simply by putting our faith in Him. No longer trying to reach God by keeping rules, we can become more and more like Jesus as we live with, and in, Him day by day.

Let the Holy Spirit turn your eyes away from your own performance (“recovery program”) and toward Jesus. He will free you to serve Him out of love and gratitude. This is living “in newness of spirit.”

Keeping the rules, laws, traditions and customs of Christianity (and “Christianized secular recovery rules”) will not give us freedom. Even if we could keep our actions pure, we would still be doomed because our hearts and minds are perverse and rebellious. Like Paul, we can find no relief in the synagogue or church until we look to Jesus Christ Himself for our salvation and peace — which He gives us freely. When we do come to Jesus, we are flooded with relief and gratitude. Will we keep the rules any better? Most likely, but we will be motivated by love and gratitude, not by the desire of God’s approval. We will not be merely submitting to an external code, but willingly and lovingly seeking to do God’s will by His Spirit.

◆ **UNDERSTANDING THE WORD OF GOD**

13. What role should God's written Law play in your Life?

14. What keeps you from sinning if the penalties of the Law have been forgiven by God?

15. How can strict adherence to God's Law affect you negatively?

16. What does it mean to be a new person in Christ?

17. How can the Spirit help you please God in a way that following the Law cannot?

18. How did your attitudes and outlook on life change when you came to Christ?

19. How can knowing that God loves you unconditionally through Christ change your attitudes and behavior?

20. What is the difference between keeping programs and religious laws and following the Spirit of Christ?

◆ **DOING GOD'S WORD**

21. What old ideas about pleasing God through religious activity do you need to discard?

22. What can you do to build your living relationship with Christ instead of merely following "recovery" steps?

23. Write a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord, praising Him for the gift of His grace toward you through Jesus.



IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS!

Study No. Six
“Struggling with Sin”

◆ **ROMANS 7:7-25 NKJV**

Sin's Advantage in the Law

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not!
On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law.
For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said,
“You shall not covet.”
⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment,
produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.
⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came,
sin revived and I died.
¹⁰ And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.
¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.
¹² Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

Law Cannot Save from Sin

¹³ Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not!
But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good,
so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.
¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.
¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand.
For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.
¹⁶ If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.
¹⁷ But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.
¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells;
for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.
¹⁹ For the good that I will to do, I do not do;
but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.
²⁰ Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.
²¹ I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.
²² For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.
²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind,
and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
²⁵ I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!
So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God,
but with the flesh the law of sin.

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. As a child, how did you respond to the commands given to you by your parents.
2. How do you tend to respond to authority?
3. What sort of bad habits are hardest to break?

◆ **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

4. What is the purpose of the Law? (7:7-8)
5. What bad effect does knowing the Law have on you? (7:7-8)
6. If you have no knowledge of the Law, what becomes of sin? (7:9)

Where there is no law, there is no sin, for people cannot know their actions are sinful unless a law forbids those actions. God's Law makes people realize that they are sinners, doomed to die, yet it offers no help. Sin is real, and it is dangerous. Imagine a sunny day at the beach — you plunge into the surf; then you notice a sign on the pier: "No swimming. Sharks in water." Your day is ruined. Is it the sign's fault? Are you angry with the people who put it up? The Law is like the sign. It is essential, and we are grateful for it — but it doesn't get rid of the sharks.

7. How does knowing the Law bring the possibility of death to a person? (7:9-11)

8. How does the Law put a person to death? (7:11)

Sin deceives people by misusing the Law. In the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), the serpent deceived Eve by taking her focus off the freedom she had and putting on the one restriction God had made. Ever since then, we have all been rebels. Sin looks good to us precisely because God has said it is wrong. Instead of paying attention to His warnings, we use them as a “to do” list. When we are tempted to rebel, we need to look at the Law from a wider perspective — in the light of God’s grace and mercy. If we focus on His great love for us, we will understand that He only restricts us from actions and attitudes that ultimately will harm us.

9. What are the characteristics of the Law and the commandments? (7:12)

10. What did Paul share about his own attempts to follow the Law? (7:14-16)

This is more than a cry of one desperate man (v. 15) — it describes the experience of any Christian struggling against sin or trying to please God by keeping rules and laws without the Spirit’s help. We must never underestimate the power of sin. We must never attempt to fight in our own strength. Satan is a crafty tempter, and we have a great ability to make excuses for our fleshly desires. Instead of trying to overcome sin with human willpower or 12-step structure, we must take hold of the tremendous power of Christ that is available to us with His Spirit and His Word. These are God’s provisions for victory over sin — the Holy Spirit is sent to live in us and give us power. And when we fall, He lovingly reaches out to help us up.

Paul gives three lessons he learned in trying to deal with his old sinful desires:

- (1) **KNOWLEDGE IS NOT THE ANSWER (7:9).** Paul felt content as long as he did not understand what the Law demanded. When he learned the truth, he knew he was doomed.
- (2) **SELF-DETERMINATION (struggling in his own strength) DOES NOT BRING VICTORY (7:15).** Paul found himself sinning in ways that were not even attractive to him.
- (3) **BECOMING A CHRISTIAN DOES NOT STAMP OUT ALL SIN AND TEMPTATION FROM OUR LIVES (7:22-25).** We have a body of flesh and the flesh has its own desires.

11. What or who did Paul blame for his continuing failure to do good? (7:17:20) ►

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“The devil made me do it.” “I didn’t do it — the sin in me did it.” These sound like good excuses, yet if we consent to sin’s pleading, we are the ones who are sinning. We must never use the power of sin or Satan as excuses for sinning, for they are defeated enemies. Without Christ’s help, sin is stronger than we are, and sometimes we are unable to defend ourselves against its attacks. That is why we should never stand up to sin all alone. Jesus Christ conquered sin once and for all, and He promises to intercede on our behalf. If we look to Him, we will not easily give in to temptation.

12. How did Paul describe his own struggle to do what was right? (7:21-23)

13. How did Paul describe himself and his situation? (7:24)

14. To whom did Paul turn for rescue from his agonizing situation? (7:24)

15. What division did Paul acknowledge in his own mind and nature? (7:24)

The sin deep within us is sometimes called the “flesh” or the “law in our members.” This is our vulnerability to sin — it refers to everything within us that is more loyal to our old way of selfish living than to God. This inward struggle with sin was as real for Paul as it is for us. From Paul we learn what to do about it. Whenever he felt powerless, he would return to the beginning of his spiritual life — remembering that he had already been freed by Jesus Christ.

When you are confused and overwhelmed by sin’s appeal, follow Paul’s example. Thank God that He has given you freedom through Jesus Christ. Let the reality of Christ’s power lift you up to real victory over sin.

◆ UNDERSTANDING GOD’S WORD

16. What are some of the various ways people respond to God’s Law?

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17. How will reading and understanding God's Law be discouraging to you?
18. How will you continue to commit sins even though Jesus is your master?
19. How have you experienced a struggle with sin similar to what Paul describes?
20. What hope do you have of deliverance from sin here on earth?
21. How will you take hold of the power of Christ to have victory over sin?
22. What should you do when you become discouraged and confused in your Christian life?
23. How will knowing that Jesus has achieved the ultimate victory over sin affect your prayers, thoughts and attitudes?

◆ **DOING GOD'S WORD**

24. How will you remind yourself each day of Jesus' victory over sin?
25. What recent struggle with sin's temptation do you need to hand over to Jesus today?



May God richly bless you as you grow in the image of Jesus Christ!

Study No. 7

“The Holy Spirit Frees Us from Sin”

“No Condemnation In Christ”

◆ ROMANS 8:1-17 NKJV

Free from Indwelling Sin

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

³For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

⁴that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

⁶For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

⁷Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

⁸So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

¹⁰And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

¹¹But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Sonship Through the Spirit

¹²Therefore, brethren, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

¹³For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

¹⁷and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,

if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. If you were released from a three-year captivity as a hostage, what would you do during your first week of freedom?

2. What impact can a good father or a bad father have on a person's life?

◆ **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

3. What is the status of a person who trusts in Jesus Christ? (8:1)

“Not guilty; let him go free” — what would those words mean to you if you were on death row? The fact is that the whole human race IS on death row, justly condemned for repeated breaking God's holy Law. Without Jesus we would have no hope at all. But thank God! He has declared us not guilty and has offered us freedom from sin and given us the power to do His will.

4. How is a person set free from the law of sin and death? (8:2)

This Spirit of life is the Holy Spirit. He was present at the creation of the World (Genesis 1:2), and He is the power behind the rebirth of every Christian. He gives us the power we need to live the Christian life.

5. What did God do that the Law was powerless to do? (8:3-5)

God gave His Son. Jesus gave himself as a SACRIFICE for our sins. In Old Testament times, animal sacrifices were continually offered at the Temple. The sacrifices showed the Israelites the seriousness of sin — blood had to be shed before sins could be pardoned (see Leviticus 17:11). But animal blood could not really remove sins (Hebrews 10:4). The

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sacrifices could only point to Jesus' sacrifice, which paid the penalty for all sins.

6. What is the difference between those who live according to their sinful nature and those who live according to the Spirit? (8:5-8)

Paul divides people into two categories — those who let themselves be controlled by their sinful natures (to be “carnally minded,” KJV, is to have a mindset controlled by the sinful nature), and those who follow after the Holy Spirit. All of us would be in the first category if Jesus hadn't offered us a way out. Once we have said yes to Jesus, we will want to continue following Him, because His way brings life and peace. Daily we must consciously choose to center our lives on God. Use the Bible to discover God's guidelines, and then follow them. In every perplexing situation ask yourself, “What would Jesus want me to do?” When the Holy Spirit points out what is right, do it eagerly. For more about our lower natures versus our new life in Christ, see Romans 6:6-8, Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:3-15.

7. How can you know if you are controlled by the sinful nature or by the Spirit? (8:9)

Have you ever worried about whether or not you really are a Christian? A Christian is anyone who has the Spirit of God living in Him. If you have sincerely trusted Christ for your salvation and acknowledged Him as Lord, then the Holy Spirit has come into your life, and you are a Christian. You won't know the Holy Spirit has come if you are waiting for a certain feeling; you will know He has come because Jesus promised He would. When the Holy Spirit is working with you, you will believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son and that eternal life comes through Him (1 John 5:5); you will begin to act as Christ directs (Romans 8:5, Galatians 5:22-23); you will find help in your daily problems in your praying (Romans 8:26-27); you will be empowered to serve God and do His will (Acts 1:8; Romans 12:6); and you will become part of God's plan to build up His Church (Ephesians 4:12-13).

8. What promise is given if you're living in the Spirit? (8:11)

The Holy Spirit is God's promise or guarantee of eternal life for those who believe in Him. He is in us now by faith, and by faith we are certain to live with Christ forever. (See Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:14.)

9. What kind of obligation do Christians have? (8:12-14)

10. What happens to the person who lives according to the sinful nature? (8:13)

11. By what means can a person find life? (8:13)

12. What is true of people who are led by God's Spirit (8:14)

13. What kind of spirit do God's children have? (8:15)

14. What are the benefits of being a child of God? (8:15-17)

Paul uses adoption to illustrate the believer's new relationship with God. In Roman culture, the adopted person lost all rights in his old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate child in his new family. He became a full heir to his new father's estate. Likewise, when a person becomes a Christian, he gains all the privileges and responsibilities of a child in God's family. One of these outstanding privileges in being led by the Spirit (see Galatians 4:5-6).

We may not always feel like we belong to God, but the Holy Spirit is our witness. His inward presence reminds us of who we are and encourages us with His love (5:5). We are no longer cringing and fearful slaves; instead, we are the Master's children. What a privilege!

Because we are God's children, we share in great treasures as joint-heirs. God has already given us His best gifts: His Son, forgiveness, and eternal life; and He encourages us to ask Him for whatever we need. There is a price for being identified with Jesus. Along with the great treasures, Paul mentions the suffering that Christians must face. We will pay a price for following Jesus. To live as Jesus did — serving others, giving up our own rights, resisting pressures to conform to the world — always exacts a price. Nothing we suffer, however, can compare to the great price Jesus paid to save us.

◆ **UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD**

15. What feelings of condemnation and rejection may Christians feel?

16. In what ways does knowing Christ set you free?

17. How does living for Christ change the desires of your heart?

18. What have you seen the Spirit of God do in your life?

19. What does unchecked sin and selfishness produce in a person's life?

20. How does seeing and experiencing God as a loving Father change your understanding of what it means to live as a Christian?

21. What benefits does God give to you, His child?

◆ **DOING GOD'S WORD** (WRITE YOUR ANSWERS ON BACK)

22. What area of your life do you need to turn over to God's mighty power?

23. What changes have you been resisting in your life that you are now willing to allow your loving heavenly Father to complete?



May God richly bless you as you live as a child of Almighty God!

Study No. 8
“Having An Eternal Perspective”

◆ **ROMANS 8:18-27 NKJV**

From Suffering to Glory

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

²¹because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

²²For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

²³Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

²⁴For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

²⁶Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses.

For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

²⁷Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. What type of sacrifices do people commonly make for the sake of a future reward?
2. Why is it hard for some people to pray?

◆ **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

3. How did Paul describe the difference between his present and his future? (8:18)

4. What is the world waiting to see? (8:19)

5. For what reason has the world been forced to wait? (8:20-21)

6. To what human experience did Paul compare his waiting? (8:22-23)

By saying we live in a “fallen” world, we mean that sin has caused all creation to fall from the perfect state in which it was created by God. It is subject to futility and bondage by God so that it cannot fulfill its intended purpose. One day it will be transformed. Until that time, creation looks forward to the resurrection of God’s children. Christians see the world as it is — physically decaying and spiritually infected with sin. But Christians do not need to be pessimistic, for they have hope. We look forward to the new heaven and new earth God has promised, and we wait for God’s new order that will free the world of sin, sickness, evil and death. In the meantime, we go with Christ into the world where we to share the Gospel and fight the evil effects of sin.

7. For what are the children of God waiting? (8:23)

We will be resurrected with bodies, but they will be glorified bodies like the body Christ now has in heaven (see 1 Corinthians 15:25-58). We have the “firstfruits,” the first installment or down payment of the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our resurrection life (see 2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5; Ephesians 1:14).

8. What is and is not genuine hope? (8:24-25)

9. What causes us to wait patiently? (8:25)

It is natural for children to trust their parents, even though parents sometimes fail to keep their promises. Our heavenly Father, however, never makes promises He won't keep. Nevertheless, His plan may take more time than we expect. Rather than acting like impatient children as we wait for His will to unfold, we should place our confidence in God's goodness and wisdom.

10. How does the Spirit help us in our weakness? (8:26)

11. For whom does the Spirit intercede? (8:27)

12. What is the relationship between God and Spirit of God? (8:27)

Believers are not left to their own resources to cope with problems. Even when you don't know the right words to pray, the Holy Spirit prays with and for you, and God, the Father, answers. With God helping you pray, you don't need to be afraid to come before Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to plead for you "according to the will of God." Then, when you bring your requests to God, trust that He will always do what is best!

◆ **UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD**

13. What are some of the sufferings you, as a Christian, may experience?

14. What does God promise you that can make any suffering bearable?

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15. How does suffering affect your relationship with God?

16. What hinders you from being what intends you to be?

17. In what ways do you, as a Christ, live in glorious freedom and victory?

18. What frustrations do you experience as you wait for Christ to return?

19. What counsel would you give a Christian who has grown weary waiting for Christ's return?

20. What is real hope?

21. In what circumstances do you find it hard to pray?

22. What do we learn about God's love for us when we realize that the Holy Spirit helps us even when we cannot pray?

◆ **DOING GOD'S WORD**

23. In what circumstances of your life do you need to wait patiently for God to act?
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24. For what can you ask the Holy Spirit's help today?

25. Will you allow God's Word to change your perspective on life? How?

26. Write a pray of thanksgiving to God for the hope He gives you through Jesus Christ.



May God richly bless you as you grow into the image of Jesus!

Study No. 9
“We Are More Than Conquerors”

◆ **ROMANS 8:28-39 NKJV**

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

²⁹For whom He foreknew,

He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

³⁰Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

God’s Everlasting Love

³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

³²He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

³³Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

³⁴Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

³⁶ s it is written:

“For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”

³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life,

nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing,

shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. How do you explain why bad things happen to nice people?

2. What causes people to lose their faith in God?

◆ **STUDYING GOD'S WORD**

3. How does God work in all the situations and events of a person's life? (8:28)
4. For whom does God promise to work all things for good? (8:28)

God works out all things — not just isolated incidents — for our good. This does not mean that all that happens to us is good. Evil is prevalent in our fallen world, but God is able to turn it around for our long-range good. Note that God is not working to make us happy, but to fulfill His purpose. Not also that this promise is not for everybody. It can be claimed only by those who God and are fitting into God's plans. Those who are "called" are those the Holy Spirit convinces and enables to receive Christ. Such people have a new perspective, a new mindset on life. They trust in God, not life's treasures; they look to their security in heaven, not on earth; they learn to accept, not resent, pain and persecution because God is with them.

5. Who is our ultimate example? (8:29)
6. How does God seek to change His people? (8:29)
7. What does God want each person to become? (8:29)

God's ultimate goal for us is to make us like Christ (1 John 3:2). As we become more and more like Him, we discover our true selves, the persons we were created to be. How can we be conformed to His image? By reading and heeding His Word, by studying His life on earth through the Gospels, by being filled His Spirit, and by doing His work in the world.

8. What has God done to make you into what He wants you to be? (8:30)

Some believe these verses mean that before the beginning of the world, God chose of His own free will certain people to receive His gift of salvation. They point to verses like Ephesians 1:11 which says we are "*predestined according the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will*" (KJV). Others believe that God "foreknew" those who would respond to Him and upon those He set His mark (predestined). What is clear is that God's "purpose" for man was not an afterthought — it was settled before the foundation of the world. Mankind is to serve and honor God. If you have believed in Him, you can rejoice in the fact that God has always known you. His love is eternal. His wisdom and power are supreme. He will guide and protect you until you one day stand in His presence.

9. What made Paul confident that God takes care of His people? (8:31-32)

10. Why should we feel confident that God is not against us or condemning us? (8:31-34)

Do you ever think that because you aren't good enough for God, He will not save you? Do you ever feel as if salvation is for everyone else but you? Then these verses are especially for you. If God gave His Son for you, He isn't going to hold back the gift of salvation! If Christ gave His life for you, He isn't going to turn around and condemn you! He will not withhold anything you need to live for Him. The book of Romans is more than a theological explanation of God's redeeming grace — it is a letter of comfort and confidence addressed to you.

11. Where is Jesus Christ right now? (8:34)

Paul says that Jesus is interceding for us in heaven. God has acquitted us and removed our sin and guilt, so it is Satan, not God, who accuses us. When He does, Jesus, the advocate for our defense, stands at God's right hand to present our case. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are -- yet was without sin" (Hebrews. 4:15).

Jesus is like us because He experienced a full range of temptations as a human being throughout His life. We can be comforted that He faced temptation so He can sympathize with us, and we can be inspired that He faced temptation without the desire to sin. He

shows us that we do not have to sin when facing the seductive lure of temptation. Jesus is the only human who has ever lived without committing sin. Now in heaven, He completely understands our weaknesses, so He can give us strength to overcome and forgiveness when we fail.

12. What possible tragedies or hardships are unable to separate us from the love of Christ? (8:35-39)

13. What kind of persecutions have God's people often faced? (8:36)

These words were written to a church that would under-go terrible persecution. In just a few years, Paul's hypothetical situations would turn into painful realities. This passage reaffirms God's profound love for His people. No matter what happens to us or where we are, we can never be lost to His love. When suffering comes, it should not drive us away from God, but helps us to identify with Him further and allow His love to reach us and heal us.

14. How are God's people to respond to persecutions and tragedies? (8:37)

15. What gives God's people the ability to respond in triumph to persecution? (8:37)

These verses (35-39) contain one of the most comforting promises in all Scripture. Believers have always had to face hardships in many forms: persecution, illness, imprisonment, even death. These could cause them to fear that they have been abandoned by Christ. But Paul exclaims that it is IMPOSSIBLE to be separated from Christ. His death for us is proof of His unconquerable love. Nothing can stop His constant presence with us. God tells us how great His love is so that we will feel totally secure in Him. If we believe these overwhelming assurance, we will not be afraid.

"Demons" ("principalities" and "powers," KJV) are unseen forces of evil in the universe. These are Satan and his fallen angels (see Ephesians 6:12). We are super-conquerors in Christ, and His love will protect us from any such forces.



◆ **UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORD**

16. How can God produce good results out of bad situations?

17. What is God's intention and plan for you?

18. In what practical ways can you be like Christ?

19. How can you be sure God really loves you?

20. What can you expect God to do for you?

21. How important should the opinions of others be to you?

22. How can you be sure that bad times aren't a signal of God's displeasure with you?

23. What gives Christians confidence as they go through hard times?

24. In what situations do you need God's conquering power?

25. How have you experienced God's never-ending love in your life?

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◆ **DOING GOD'S WORD**

26. How will you commit your difficult circumstances to God this week?

27. How will you show trust in God to work out your circumstances for good?



May God richly bless you as grow in Jesus?

Study No. 10

“Transformed by a Renewed Mind”

“Christians Are Living Sacrifices to God”

◆ **ROMANS 12:1-2 NKJV**

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,
that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,
which is your reasonable service.

²And do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. What skills or qualities are necessary to play a team sport well?
2. What influences have significantly shaped you life?

◆ **STUDYING GOD’S WORD**

3. How do people properly worship God? (12:1)

When sacrificing an animal according to God’s Law, a priest killed the animal, cut it in pieces, and placed it on the altar. Sacrifice was important, but even in the Old Testament God made it clear that obedience from the heart is much more important (see 1 Samuel 15:22; Psalms 40:6; Amos 5:21-24).

Because of God’s great compassion on both Jews and Gentiles in offering salvation through Christ, Paul urges believers to please God in their daily lives. The evil world is full of temptation and sin. Paul helps believers understand how they can live for God.

4. What is the most reasonable response to God's great mercy? (12:1-2)

God has good, pleasing, and perfect plans for His children. He wants us to be new people with renewed minds, living to honor and obey Him. Since He wants only what is best for us, and since He gave His Son to make our new lives possible, we should joyfully volunteer as living sacrifices for His service. Our Christianity is not based on pride in what we can do, but entirely on God's mercy to forgive us.

5. Why does Paul tell us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices?

Paul had already told the Roman believers, *"Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness" (6:13).*

Our bodies are all we have to offer — we live in our bodies. The body enfolds our emotions, our mind, our thoughts, our desires, and our plans. Thus, the body represents the total person; it is the instrument by which all our service is given to God. In order to live for God, we must offer Him all that we are, represented by our body. The word offer has also been translated "give," "yield," or "present." If our body is at God's disposal, He will have our free time, our pleasures, and all our behavior.

God wants us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices — daily laying aside our own desires to follow Him, putting all our energy and resources at His disposal, and trusting Him to guide us.

- ◆ *Hebrews 13:15-16 NIV — Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*
- ◆ *1 Peter 2:4-5 NIV — ... As you come to Him, the living Stone — rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him — you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

Our new life is a thank-offering to God. Offering our body as a living sacrifice is holy and pleasing to God. To be a holy sacrifice is to be completely set apart for God and dedicated to His service. Those who are dedicated to God are pleasing to God because they can participate in His service. If we are not set apart from our old life, we will not be useful to God.

THIS IS YOUR SPIRITUAL ACT OF WORSHIP. The Greek word for "worship" (LATREIAN) here refers to any act done for God, such as work that priests and Levites performed. Spiritual

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(LOGIKEN) can also mean “reasonable” (NKJV). To serve God is the only reasonable way to respond to His mercy.

◆ SACRIFICES COMPARED

For the OLD sacrifices:

An altar was required
Animals were slain
Sacrifices were cut up
Sacrifices were burned up
It was based on a legal obligation
Death was not defeated

But for the NEW sacrifice:

There is no altar
The sacrifice lives
The sacrifice is whole
The sacrifice serves
It is based on mercy and gratitude
Eternal life is celebrated

6. How should the mind of a Christian be changed? (12:2)

7. What must happen for a Believer to discern and agree with the will of God? (12:2)

When believers offer their entire self to God, a change will happen in their relationship to the world. Christians are called to a different life-style than what the world offers with its behavior and customs, programs and traditions, which are usually selfish and often corrupting:

- *Galatians 1:3-5 NIV — Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

- *1 Peter 1:3-4 NIV — Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade — kept in heaven for you, ...*

Christians are to live as citizens of a future world. There will be pressure to conform, to continue living according to the script written by the world, but believers are forbidden to give in to that pressure.

Many Christians wisely decide that much worldly behavior is off limits for them. After all, it is not our objective to find out just how much like the world we can become yet still maintain our distinctions. We cannot continue in manmade recovery programs — being conformed to man’s philosophies — and simultaneously be a living sacrifice to God.

Refusing to conform to this world’s values must go even deeper than the level of behavior and customs — it must be firmly planted in our minds — be transformed by the renewing of your minds. The world’s philosophies may help us to overcome addictive behavior, but the world’s philosophies are only helpful to the flesh in breaking bad habits. What once

may have worked for us, does not promise eternal life.

The Greek word for “transformed” (METAMORPHOUS) is the root for the English word METAMORPHOSIS. Believers are to experience a complete transformation from the inside out. And the change must begin in the mind, where all thoughts and actions begin. Paul wrote:

- *Ephesians 4:22-24 NIV — “You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”*

One of the keys, then, to the Christian life is to be involved in activities that renew the mind. Renewing (ANAKAINOSEI) refers to a new way of thinking, a mind desiring to be conformed to God rather than to the world. We will never be truly transformed without this renewing of our mind.

Much of the transforming work is done by God’s Spirit within us, and the tool most frequently used is God’s Word. The Bible claims the ability to judge “the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12 NIV). As we memorize and meditate upon God’s Word, our way of thinking changes. Our minds become first informed, and then conformed to the pattern of God, the pattern for which we were originally designed.

**The main problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar.
— Anonymous**

When we have had our minds transformed, and are becoming more like Christ, we will want God’s will for our lives — not our own will. And only as we are being transformed will we be able to know, do, and enjoy what God desires for us.

Knowing God’s will isn’t always easy, and even less so when it is not defined in every aspect by a set of laws and regulations. But it is possible if we willingly submit to and depend on God. Only then can we know it — only then can we begin the even more difficult task of doing it.

His good, pleasing and perfect will. In the Greek text the three adjectives GOOD, PLEASING, and PERFECT are used as nouns. God’s will is what is good, what is pleasing (to God), and what is perfect for each believer. Believers who are being transformed, who know and do God’s will, also discover that what God plans for them is good, pleasing to God, and perfect for them.

DO NOT CONFORM

What causes us to conform to the world's patterns?

- ◆ We believe that the world is more likely to allow us pleasure than God is.
- ◆ We find a certain exhilaration in rushing along with the world.
- ◆ We are afraid of what might happen if we really think about life and change.
- ◆ We are crippled by pride or a negative self-image and believe there really isn't an alternative.
- ◆ We reject the life of service and humility necessary to conform ourselves to God's pattern.
- ◆ We are ignorant of God's good purpose for us because we are ignorant of the Scriptures.
- ◆ We do not believe that Jesus is the only way to eternal life.
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____

Conforming to the world's pattern will involve the following WRONG ways of thinking — and ultimately it leads to following the devil, the prince of this world:

- ◆ We have a right to have all our desires fulfilled:
 - *Romans 8:5-8 NIV* — *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.*
 - *1 Peter 4:3-4 NIV* — *For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.*
- ◆ We have a right to pursue and use power:
 - *Mark 10:42 NIV* — *Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them."*
- ◆ We have a right to abuse people:
 - *Luke 11:43 NIV* — *Jesus said: "Woe to you Pharisees, because you love the most important seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces."*
 - *Luke 11:46, 52 NIV* — *Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them. ⁵²"Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering."*

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- ◆ We have a right to accumulate wealth for purely selfish reasons:
 - *Matthew 16:26-27 NIV* — *Jesus said: “What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”*
- ◆ We have a right to use personal abilities and wisdom for self advancement rather than for serving others:
 - *1 Corinthians NIV 3:19* — *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written: “He catches the wise in their craftiness.”*
- ◆ We have a right to ignore or even hate God:
 - *James 4:4-6 NIV* — *You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ... “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

*Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould,
but let God re-mould your minds from within,
so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good,
meets all His demands, and moves towards the goal of true maturity.
—J. B. Phillips*

◆ **UNDERSTANDING GOD’S WORD**

8. What right does God have to ask you for a full-life commitment to Him?
9. What makes offering your body as a living sacrifice an act of worship?
10. To what worldly life-styles or values do you typically conform?
11. What are the patterns of the world that tempt you to conform? (Consider “recovery” programs you may be loyal to.)

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12. How will you, as a Christian, renew your mind? Be specific:

◆ **DOING GOD'S WORD**

13. What is one step you will take this week toward eliminating habits that merely conform to the world's pattern. Be specific:

14. What is the first step you can take this week toward allowing God to transform and renew your mind? Be specific:



May the Lord richly bless you with a renewed heart and mind as you seek to please Him!
