

Steps Forward with Grace and into Real Progress in Christlikeness in Real Life
Renovaré Series Video #3 - Part 3 – The Gospel in Romans 8
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The attention now turns to the Gospel according to Romans 8. (There is not an outline because Dallas simply does a verse-by-verse study.)

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

It's common to hear that being "in Christ" is merely positional, but "in" means joint action. You and I have been invited to learn to live with God in his acting.

What is the "condemnation" referred to 8:1? It goes back to Romans 7. Unfortunately, our chapter divisions tend to make each chapter a different subject, but look at the full context.

7:18 For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20 But if I do the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me. 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully agree with the law of God in the inner person, 23 but I see a different law in the parts of my body waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, the law which is in [x]my body's parts. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8 is the consummation of Romans 1-7. The condemnation is not being able to do the things you want to do and being unable to stop the things you can't.

Many presentations of the Gospel make the only issue heaven or hell, but not everything in the Bible is about going to heaven or going to hell. Jesus taught us to build our house upon the rock. Most of his teaching was about life in the present and how we can have a "with God life."

Ro. 8:4 ...so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk (live our lives) according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Ro. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

One aspect of the fruit of Spirit is self-control. Self-control is "ego cratic" or self-governing. You are freed from the domination of "the law of sin and death."

When I am tempted to do something, I know that I am not going to miss out if I don't do it. The thing about temptation is that it never hits me immediately. It almost always develops gradually. Dallas asks, "What am I going to do if I don't do what I want? Well, do what's good!" We have a freedom to choose the good.

Philippians 4: 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 As for the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.



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Ro. 8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.

Grace is God acting in our lives to accomplish what we can't accomplish on our own. When we say grace is unmerited favor, it's true, but it doesn't help you much. Grace can become something that happens as a transaction in heaven rather than God's action in your life. Grace changes you. You don't have to give in to temptation and moreover, you realize that if you did, it would ruin your life.

Romans 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh...

Ro. 8:5b but those who are according to the Spirit, mind the things of the Spirit.

Notice the importance of where we put our minds and thinking.

Romans 8: 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or trouble, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 Just as it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long;

We were regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

How did Paul and the early Christians learn that nothing could separate them from the love of Christ? They learned by experiencing great difficulty that God himself is enough.

In the Old Testament, Habakkuk has come to the same conclusion.

3: Even if the fig tree does not blossom,

And there is no fruit on the vines,

If the yield of the olive fails,

And the fields produce no food,

Even if the flock disappears from the fold,

And there are no cattle in the stalls,

18 Yet I will triumph in the Lord,

I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.

19 The Lord God is my strength,

And He has made my feet like deer's feet,

And has me walk on my high places.

This is not just happy talk or a positive confession. He has experienced God's life. His weak feet have been strengthened and he now has "hinds feet" and is able to climb the obstacles because he has made "the Lord my portion." (Psalms 16:5; 73:26; 119:57; 142:5; Lam 3:24)

Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ means the provision of Christ for us.



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Christ is my portion. That is provision.

Q&A – A student asks, “How do we do this? How do we live our lives in union with his life?”

Many people think that discipleship means living Jesus’ life, but that is not what we have been called to do as disciples. As Jesus’ disciple, I am learning from him how to live my life as he would live my life, if he were I. I’m not trying to live his life. I have to take him with me into school and into committee meetings. I have to ask him how he would teach philosophy, drive on the freeway, be a husband or wife, go shopping, be a police officer or soldier, and much more. This is challenging because he did not do many of the things I have to do. We can read the Gospels and see how he lived his life, but how can I do all things in the name of Jesus when he didn’t do many of the things I have to do? A pastor once said, “God does not give you a map, he gives you a Guide.”

Q&A – A student asks how we reconcile a loving Christ with the brutality of the Old Testament, specifically, the Book of Joshua where his army wipes out entire communities?

Dallas gives a fairly long answer, but his short answer is, “When you are reading the Bible you want to go for the things that are clearly taught on the whole, not for what individual passages might teach. Hold on to basic things and don’t believe anything bad about God.”

QUESTIONS

1. In the context of Romans 7-8, what does Romans 8:1 mean? *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
2. Dallas says, “When I am tempted to do something, I know that I am not going to miss out if I don’t do it.” Can you identify a temptation in your own life where you have arrived at this same conclusion?
3. *Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.* This was no platitude, but something Paul learned through experiencing suffering, challenges, emotional hardship and spiritual warfare. How you get to the place where the Lord becomes your portion?

Notes, outline and summary are by Bill Dwyer.

