

No Condemnation; No Separation

**“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”** (Romans 8:1)

There is widespread misunderstanding among Christians of the last half of this often-quoted verse of Scripture. Many believe that this last phrase means one who is “in Christ” can lose their salvation (fall under condemnation), if they start walking “after the flesh.” They would characterize one who “walks after the flesh” as anyone who, after having trusted Christ for salvation, “continues in sin,” (as in Romans 6:1), or “falls away” (as in Hebrews 6:6)

This use of scripture is a prime example of the failure to distinguish between the spiritual (Godly) and the carnal (fleshly). The entirety of the preceding chapter (7) is about this distinction. From verses 14 through 21 Paul (the writer of the letter to the Romans) speaks to his carnal condition, but changes gears in verse 22, speaking of something he calls “the inward man.” This is identified in the next verse as **“the law of my mind,”** which he says in verse 22 **“delights after the law of God,”** and in verse 25, that this “man” serves the law of God. Verse 2 of chapter 8 further defines this as **“the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,”** which he says, **“hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”**

1

This spiritual surety had already been established in chapter 6, verses 7 and 22:

**“For he that is dead is freed from sin....But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”**

Does this mean, as many believe, that this eradicates the believer of the presence of sin? No, that’s not what the verses say. They say, from the law of sin and death, i.e., from the penalty (wages) of sin. Paul had already written, in the letter to the Galatians, that it was not his flesh that was his true life, but **“Christ in me”** that lived (Gal. 2:20), which is, I trust, the very same thing as **“the Spirit of life in Christ.”** This is the spiritual reality which all believers should lay hold of: that once one is “in Christ,” God sees only Christ in them, **“if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.”**(Romans 8:9)

This is how God knows **“them that are his.”**(2 Tim. 2:19)—by the Spirit, not the flesh. The question is how do we know we are his? **“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”**(Romans 8:16) We know that we are the children of God, not because we are perfected (even partially) in our flesh, but because at some point in time, we recognized our sinful condition and our inability to make it right, and simply trusted Christ and what he did in his flesh on our behalf (1 Cor. 15:3,4)as the “once and for all” remedy.

2

He “gave himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:6), which took care of God’s demand for sin(s). Therefore:

**“What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** (Romans 8:31-39)

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