

Romans 8:1-14 Verse-by-Verse

By Karl Kemp; October, 2013

INTRODUCTION. Romans 8:1-14 is one of the most important passages in the Bible, along with Romans chapter 6, which shows that Christians are called, enabled, and required to walk with the victory over all sin. This is good news, very good news! My goal for this present article is to discuss these verses in a rather thorough verse-by-verse manner, but to minimize the details and make this a rather short article. I discussed these verses in some detail in Article #s 6-8 in my "Twenty-Eight Articles on Holiness and Victory Over Sin" on my internet site (karlkempteachingministries.com); these articles are available individually on this Christian article site (click on my name for a listing of my articles). These verses are also discussed on pages 116-123 of my book, "Holiness and Victory Over Sin: Full Salvation Through the Atoning Death of the Lord Jesus Christ."

I am using the New American Standard Bible, 1995 edition. Sometimes I make comments in the middle of quotations using brackets [] or double brackets [[]] to make them more obvious. I am using double parentheses (()) instead of footnotes in this paper, since the format here doesn't permit footnotes. I suggest you skip the double parentheses the first time through. They all deal with cross-references to my other writings for further study on those passages.

ROMANS 8:1. "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Christians have been forgiven through the all-important atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, including being forgiven for any sins they have committed after becoming born-again Christians, when they repented. But, as verses 2-14 demonstrate (along with much that the apostle Paul has said in Romans chapters 1-7), all the emphasis here is on the super-important fact that born-again Christians have been set free from their former state of being spiritually dead and in bondage to sin, and they have been called and enabled to fulfill the requirements of God's moral law in their daily lives. Or, to put it in different words, they are called and enabled to walk in the righteousness of God - to be enslaved to God and His righteousness (see Romans 6:12-22, for example). In the ideal case we would never sin again after we become born-again children of God, but see under verse 2. Note that the word "For" at the beginning of verses 2, 3, 5, and 6, which is there in the Greek, strongly ties these verses together.

ROMANS 8:2. "For the law [or, governing principle] of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law [or, governing principle] of sin and death."

Those who are united with Christ Jesus by faith have the Spirit of life (and of righteousness and holiness) dwelling in them (see Romans 8:9, for example). The Spirit of life (and of righteousness and holiness) sets us free from our former

state of being in bondage to sin in the realm/kingdom of spiritual death. The victory over sin is far from being automatic though. The world, the flesh (the old man who wants to continue in sin), and the devil and his hosts are against us, but God's powerful saving grace of God in Christ is far greater than those against us. We must understand the gospel and be committed, by grace through faith, to walk by the Righteous, Holy Spirit on a continuous basis, in accordance with the gospel of new-covenant salvation spelled out in the New Testament.

Like the apostle Paul said in Galatians 5:16, "walk by the Spirit and you [most certainly] will not carry out the [sinful] desire of the flesh [of the old man]." In other words, we will walk in the truth, righteousness, and holiness of God, by grace through faith. ((Galatians 5:16-25 are discussed on pages 195-200 of my book "Holiness and Victory Over Sin" and in Article #s 1-3 in my paper "Twenty-Eight Articles on Holiness and Victory Over Sin" on my internet site; these articles are available individually on this Christian article site.))

ROMANS 8:3. "For what the Law [the Mosaic Law, which was the foundation for the old covenant] could not do [The old covenant did not have the authority or power to dethrone spiritual death and bondage to sin.], weak as it was through the flesh [[Man in "the flesh," without the all-powerful indwelling Spirit of life (and of righteousness and holiness) is spiritually dead and in bondage to sin. Even though the Mosaic Law was from God and was good, it was not designed to solve the spiritual death bondage to sin problem. The combination of the Mosaic Law and man in the flesh was too "weak" to dethrone spiritual death and bondage to sin. God always planned to dethrone spiritual death and sin through the Lord Jesus and His atoning death and resurrection [see Genesis 3:15; Isaiah chapter 53; Romans chapter 6; 1 Peter 1:18-20; and 2:24, for example].], God *did*, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh [He condemned and dethroned sin, which had been reigning over mankind since the rebellion of Adam and Eve]."

When Jesus bore our sins with the guilt and the penalties, He stripped sin (and spiritual death and Satan) of the authority they have had over mankind since the fall, for all who submit (in faith) to God's new-covenant salvation. Sin, spiritual death, and Satan gained that authority over man through the rebellion of man (see Genesis 2:17; 3:22-24; and Romans 5:12-21, for example). ((Genesis chapters 1-3 are discussed in a paper on my internet site; Romans chapter 5 is discussed on pages 89-96 of my book "Holiness and Victory Over Sin" and in Article #11 in "Twenty-Eight Articles on Holiness and Victory Over Sin"; the article is available individually on this Christian article site.))

ROMANS 8:4. "so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

The requirement of the Law is fulfilled in us when we fulfill the requirements of God's moral law in our daily lives, which is the same thing as walking in the

righteousness of God, by grace through faith. In some ways Christians are not under the Mosaic Law (see Romans 6:14; 7:1-6; and Galatians 5:18, for example), but we are required to keep God's moral law and walk in His righteousness and holiness. God hates sin, and He paid an infinite price to set us free from sin.

In Romans 2:26, 27 the apostle spoke of born-again Christians keeping the requirement of God's Law (the Mosaic Law). In context he was speaking of uncircumcised (Gentile) Christians keeping the Law, but the same thing applies to circumcised (Jewish) Christians. The fact that uncircumcised Christians were keeping the Law demonstrates that the apostle was speaking of the moral law; the ceremonial law, which included circumcision, wasn't included (also see Colossians 2:16, for example). In 1 Corinthians 7:19 Paul said, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but *what matters* is the keeping of the commandments of God. ((Romans 2:26-29 are discussed on page 74 of my book "Holiness and Victory Over Sin" and in my article "The Christian, the Law, and Legalism, Part 2" on this Christian article site.))

Jeremiah 31:31-34 is a prophecy of key importance. God prophesied through Jeremiah that in new-covenant salvation He would put His Law into the hearts of His people, with the end result being that we are enabled to keep His (moral) Law. (See Hebrews 8:6-13; 10:14-18.) ((Jeremiah 31:31-34 are discussed in my paper on Jeremiah, which is on my internet site. Hebrews 8:8-13 are discussed on pages 159, 160 of my book and Hebrews 10:8-18 on pages 156-163; Hebrews 8:8-18 are discussed in Article #s 24, 25 of my paper "Twenty-Eight Articles on Holiness and Victory Over Sin" on my internet site; these articles are available individually on this Christian article site.))

I'll quote Ezekiel 36:27, which is a very important prophetic verse dealing with new-covenant salvation: "I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT WITHIN YOU and CAUSE YOU TO WALK IN MY STATUTES, AND YOU WILL BE CAREFUL TO OBSERVE MY ORDINANCES [my capitalization for emphasis]." Also see Ezekiel 36:25, 26.

After we are born again by the Spirit of life (and of righteousness and holiness), we are enabled, and required, to walk by the Spirit on a continuous basis (see Galatians 5:16, 24, 25, 6:8, for example). However, the New Testament makes it very clear that walking by the Spirit does not take place automatically because we have been born again (see Romans 8:12-14; Galatians 5:17, for example). To walk by the Spirit on a continuous basis, we must understand the gospel and we must walk in agreement with the gospel on a continuous basis, by grace through faith. This includes resisting all temptation, very much including the temptation to doubt God's Word in our hearts.

ROMANS 8:5. "For those who are according to the flesh [The apostle is speaking of those who have not yet become born-again Christians; they have not received

the Spirit of life (and of righteousness and holiness); they are still in the flesh.] set their minds on the things of the flesh [[I prefer, "think the ways of the flesh"; thinking the ways of the flesh includes having wrong ideas about God, wrong attitudes, motives, and priorities; if we think the ways of the flesh, we will not love God or walk in His truth, righteousness and holiness. We need to understand that our primary thinking takes place in our hearts, not in our heads.]], but those who are according to the Spirit, the things [or, the ways] of the Spirit." Born again Christians are enabled, by the indwelling Spirit of God (and the Word of God) to think right in their hearts. This is an extremely important aspect of our salvation! The Holy Spirit will enable us to think in line with God, His truth, His righteousness, and His holiness being top priority.

ROMANS 8:6. "For the mind set on the flesh [I prefer "the way of thinking of the flesh"] is death [Thinking the way of the flesh yields (a life of) sin, and sin brings "death"], but the mind set on the Spirit [I prefer, the way of thinking of the Spirit] is life [[Greek "zoe," with the emphasis on spiritual life] and peace [starting with having peace with God; we cannot have peace with God while we are rebelling against Him and are "hostile toward God" (Romans 8:7; also see verse 8 and Romans 5:1, for example).]."

ROMANS 8:7, 8. "because the mind set on the flesh [I prefer, "the way of thinking of the flesh] is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*, (8) and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." We cannot have peace with God or please Him while we are hostile toward Him, His law, and His righteousness. The fact that we were "not even able *to do so*" demonstrates that we were in bondage to sin and desperately needed the Savior (from sin).

All of these verses (Romans 8:1-8) and Romans 8:9-14 (along with all of Romans chapter 6 and many other passages) deal with the apostle Paul's emphasis on Christians being set free from bondage to sin and being enabled (and required), through the atoning death and resurrection of Christ, by the indwelling Spirit of life, righteousness, and holiness, by grace through faith, to walk in the righteousness and holiness of God, on a continuous basis, with the victory over sin (all sin). It will not work to put most of the emphasis on forgiveness and right standing with God (positional, legal righteousness), as it often happens in our day. We must cooperate with God's saving grace through faith on a continuous basis, as we work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12, 13), but God must receive all the glory for our salvation. We appropriate salvation by faith; we do not earn salvation by faith.

ROMANS 8:9. "However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. [We were "in the flesh" before we became born-again Christians. To be "in the flesh" here, and often in the New Testament, means to be spiritually dead, without the SPIRIT of life. The only way to get beyond being "in the flesh" is to be born of, and subsequently indwelt by, the SPIRIT of life.]

But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ [The "Spirit of Christ" here refers to the Holy Spirit (compare Acts 16:7; Galatians 4:6; Philippians 1:19; and 1 Peter 1:11).], He does not belong to Him."

ROMANS 8:10. "If Christ is in you [compare, for example, 2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:17; and Colossians 1:27; Christ indwells us by the Holy Spirit], though the body is dead because of sin [[In Romans 6:12 the apostle spoke of our "mortal body" and in 8:23 he said we are "waiting eagerly for *our* adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." Paul's point is that while we live in this world, we still have the all-to-real potential to walk by the flesh (by the old man who still wants to live in sin) and to not walk by the Holy Spirit. Note how the apostle uses the word "body" in Romans 8:13 (see under Romans 8:12, 13).

The apostle Paul's writings make it very clear that, even though born-again Christians are called, enabled, and required to walk by the Holy Spirit on a continuous basis, we still have the all-to-real potential to walk in the flesh and to sin (see Romans 8:12-14 and Galatians 5:16-25, for example) ((Galatians 5:16-25 are discussed on pages 195-200 of my book "Holiness and Victory Over Sin" and in Article #s 1-3 in my paper "Twenty-Eight Articles on Holiness and Victory Over Sin"; these articles are available individually on this Christian article site.))), yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness."

I don't believe it is possible to understand what the apostle Paul said here with the translation of the NASB for the last words of this verse ("yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness"). For one thing, there is a note in the margin of the NASB that informs us that the literal translation for the Greek noun ("zoe") used here would be "life" instead of "alive." I believe the KJV and NKJV give us the intended meaning: "but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Even though we haven't been fully redeemed yet, when we walk by the Spirit of life (and of righteousness and holiness) on a continuous basis, by faith, which we are called, enabled, and required to do, we will walk in the righteousness and holiness of God, with the victory over all sin.

We still need to discuss the words "because of sin" and "because of righteousness" that were used in this verse. Romans 5:18 enables us to understand these words: "So then through one transgression [Adam's] there resulted condemnation [[as Romans 5:12-21 show, "condemnation" here includes spiritual death and bondage to sin ((Romans chapter 5 is discussed on pages 89-96 of my book "Holiness and Victory Over Sin" and in Article #11 in "Twenty-Eight Articles on Holiness and Victory Over Sin"; the article is available individually on this Christian article site.))] to all men, even so through one act of righteousness [which refers to Christ's one act of righteousness in dying in our place as the precious Lamb of God] there resulted justification OF LIFE [my emphasis; the spiritual "life" we have now through the indwelling Spirit of life (and of righteousness and holiness)] to all men." So, the words "because of sin" refer to Adam's transgression and "because of righteousness" refer to the Lord Jesus'

"one act of righteousness" (Romans 5:18) that fully solves the sin/spiritual death problem and ultimately takes us (believers) to a place much higher than what Adam had before the fall. (For one thing, Adam was created with a flesh and blood body; we will have glorified bodies and will be reigning in new Jerusalem forever.)

ROMANS 8:11. "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you [and Romans 8:9 shows that the Holy Spirit dwells in all born-again Christians], He [God the Father] who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." After we are glorified at the end of this age, we will no longer have "mortal bodies" or the all-too-real potential to walk by the flesh and to sin.

ROMANS 8:12. "So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh [We are obligated (this isn't optional) to always walk by the Spirit, which includes walking in the righteousness of God, in accordance with His Word, by grace through faith, with the victory over all sin. "To live according to the flesh" is to do the sinful "works [or, deeds] of the flesh" of Galatians 5:19-21] - "

ROMANS 8:13. "for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die [die spiritually; go back into spiritual death]; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the [sinful] deeds [or "works"] of the body, you will live." Paul tells these "brethren" (Romans 8:12), who had been made alive by the indwelling Spirit of life (and of righteousness and holiness), that if they turn from Christ to live in/for sin "according to the flesh," they "must die [die spiritually]." On the other hand, if they "are putting to death the [sinful] deeds [works] of the body," which is required of all Christians, they "will live"; they will continue to dwell in God's kingdom of life.

To put to death the sinful deeds/works of the body means to refrain from sinning, and it is important to see that the sinful deeds/works of the BODY here is the equivalent of the "deeds/works of the FLESH" of Galatians 5:19-21. In Galatians 5:21 Paul said that those who are living according to the flesh, doing sinful "works of the flesh," instead of walking by the Spirit of God, "will not inherit the kingdom of God." They will inherit the fullness of eternal death instead (Revelation 20:14, 15).

ROMANS 8:14. "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." In this context the apostle is speaking of our being led by the Spirit of God to put to death the works/deeds of the body and to live for God in His righteousness and holiness, in accordance with His Word. Those who are NOT being led by the Spirit of God, who are NOT walking in/by/after the Spirit of God on a continuous basis, which is required of all Christians, are NOT children of God.

As is typical for the apostle Paul, he doesn't discuss the gray (in-between) area of those who are walking by the Spirit part of the time and walking by the flesh part of the time. We are called, enabled, and required to be led by the Spirit on a continuous basis. To the extent we walk according to the flesh, our hearts and consciences will never be satisfied, and (as these verses show) we are in danger of forfeiting salvation. God is not looking for an opportunity to get rid of us; quite the contrary; but let us make it top priority to learn how to, and then to live, in the center of His will at all times, by His sufficient grace through faith. And, of course, we must be quick to repent if we should sin.

May God's will be fully accomplished through this article and His people be blessed to the fullest extent possible!

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