

The Seven Graces of Justification by Faith – The Victory

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How do we reconcile our new status as children of God where it is said that we are a new species – literally and the struggle we studied in Romans 7? I have to admit that after all these years this is a question I *still* struggle with. I think Paul's continuation in chapter 8 of this question goes a long way in answering the question:

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:1-2 (NIV).

And this *is* a continuation of Paul's personal spiritual struggle in chapter 7. This is God's struggling plan for those who are in Christ. We need to understand that this spiritual reality is a matter of first, a relationship and two, a maturation. That is to say the first reality we need to understand is that as His children we are not condemned *under any circumstances*. Later in this chapter we see that: **"...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."**¹ All things? Yes. All things including our struggles. This a very hard, especially for those whose consciences are driven by personal self-condemnation.² What we need to understand at the beginning of this chapter is that God has allowed for this duality within the believer where there is a struggle between the sin-nature and that which is born from above – the child of God in Christ.³

The important thing to understand here is that our *position in Christ* is different as forgiven, justified in Him believers. We are no longer prisoner or slaves of the law (principle) of sin and death. Rather, we are forever in intimate relation to Christ and because of this we operate in the law (principle) of the Spirit of life. The distinction is clear – before, we were condemned – already dead – now we are accepted and are free from our former status of condemnation.⁴

Let's Talk about What Happened to Our Condemnation.

It's not that God just changed His mind about whether or not to condemn us. No. God does not vacillate. Sin had to be revealed for its horrible nature. This was demonstrated by Christ becoming Sin for us.

¹ [Romans 8:37](#) (NIV)

² For more on this see my previous lesson: [Our Struggle -- The Sovereign work of God with our Conscience.](#)

³ See the last lesson: [God's Struggling Plan - The Realization](#), page 4, Lenski's comment.

⁴ Please read the following passages: [Romans 8:31-39](#); [Heb 2:5-8, 14-18](#); [1 John 3:19-21](#)

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³ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: ⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:3-4 (King James Version).

The whole point of this passage is to show, indeed, reveal the who issue of God's condemnation – Sin in the flesh. I like Lenski's commentary on this: *"It was not the law itself that made this liberating work possible, but it was God's use of a far higher means, the sending of his own Son by whom he condemned the sin power itself in the very place where it exerts its full power, in the flesh, so that we no longer need to live according to flesh."*⁵ So this sin power is what is condemned. How man gets in the way of this condemnation is *by rejecting God's plan of redemption*. We need to get this point straight – God loves man unconditionally.⁶ **Man** puts himself in the crosshairs when he rejects God's plan of redemption and replaces his inadequate self-righteousness for the righteousness that God provides through His Son. This is very important: not only did God put His love on display on the cross,⁷ He put His condemnation of the sin power in the flesh on display. So, can we get by this condemnation issue and get on with how God provides for victory over Sin *in this life*?

⁵ For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not

subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Romans 8:5-7 (King James Version).

Let's jump ahead to verse 7 – Vincent provides an interesting word study on the phrase "...**for it is not subject to the law of God...**" Interesting picture – Paul definitely has this in mind. Sin *cannot* align itself under the law of God. It simply is unable to nor is there the slightest inclination to do so. Now. Let's go back to

Romans 8:7

Is not subject (οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται)

See on [James 4:7](#). Originally *to arrange under*.

Possibly with a shade of military meaning

suggested by *enmity*. It is *marshaled* under a hostile banner.

—Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament

⁵ —Lenski New Testament Commentary. Underline my emphasis.

⁶ [John 3:16](#)

⁷ [Romans 5:8](#)

verse 5 and see that not only is there no alignment under the banner of God's law the very mind-set is not there. If one is without Christ there is not the slightest inclination to think the way Christ thinks. This is important for us to realize – without Christ – the very thought process is at enmity with God and His law. Paul states very clearly that this state of being carnally minded *is* death – note the emphasis. Not results in death but *is* death. So, this condemnation is clear Sinful condition *is* death. God condemns Sin. Man has been provided for regarding this horrible condition and that provision is that man is to be redeemed from the slave market of sin. There is no other escape from this state other than what is provided by our Lord. But the escape is complete – we become a new species redeemed ones with new minds and an inclination and ability to live after the spirit not the flesh.

“...It is significant that Paul does not say that the mind set on the flesh leads to death, but that it is death. The unsaved person is already dead spiritually. The apostle is stating a spiritual equation, not a spiritual consequence. The consequence involved in this relationship is the reverse: that is, because unredeemed men are already spiritually dead, their minds are inevitably set on the flesh...” John MacArthur

It's All about Who We Now Are – Children of God.

But you, you are not in flesh but in spirit... —Lenski New Testament Commentary translation Romans 8:9.

This really captures the whole idea of where we are and why we are not condemned. We are His children. When a baby is born everything he comes from his parents. The same is true of the believer. I like the way Lenski captures this in his translation. There is no article in the original – really – we are no longer in the sphere of flesh but of spirit. True, we may be immature. We may have a *lot* of growing up to do but nonetheless we are now capable of growing up as spiritual not as fleshly. Paul captures this idea in another of his epistles where he says we have the *mind* of Christ.⁸ So, this is the way we think as His children. True, there is a lot of struggling between the old and the new. But the point is that we now have been given the capability to think spiritually. But wait, there is more. Let's continue with Lenski's translation.

“...if, indeed, God's Spirit dwells in you.⁹ But if anyone has not Christ's Spirit, he is not his. But if Christ (is) in you, the body (is) dead because of sin, but the spirit (is) life because of righteousness. Moreover, if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he that raised Christ Jesus from the dead will make alive also your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who dwells in you.—Lenski New Testament Commentary translation, Romans 8:9b-11

⁸ [1 Cor 2:16](#). The idea here is that we may receive instruction from the Lord because we think like Him.

⁹ First class conditional, assumed to be true. This is my footnote.

“If, indeed..” is first class conditional – assumed to be true. We can look at this two ways. First, Paul is granting that the Roman believers are in this glorious state and second, it is a statement of reality – all who are in spirit not flesh have the

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indwelling of God’s Spirit. Period. This is not a condition where we have a second work of grace where we must seek a special, second grace from the Lord. No. We who believe in Christ do have the indwelling of the Spirit. That being the case then all the benefits that come from this indwelling apply to us! So, we have this same power that raised Christ from the grave indwelling us empowering us to fulfill His will. So, it is true that we not only have the capacity to but do please God.¹⁰

Living in our Spirituality.

¹⁰ **And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.** ¹¹ **But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.** Romans 8:10-11 (King James Version).

Hope of the Resurrection Is Evidence of Our Spirituality. So, we have on one hand Sin trying to exert influence on us but on the other hand we have Christ within us. The fact of the matter is that our sinful bodies will not survive physical death. This is at once the struggle and also the victory. The evidence of our salvation is the fact that we now have this hope – that we yearn for that resurrection day when we will shed this mortality and take on immortality. We love His appearing¹¹ – that is our assurance that He indwells us and that we have the indwelling / power of the Holy Spirit.

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Paul’s own testimony. Yet another reality in Paul’s own life. What with all the struggling Paul had he knew that he was in Christ and had the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. His one goal in life had been to please his Lord. Before, he did not have the power to do so. But now he did. This is really Paul’s new course in life. Now he could

¹⁰ Reread [Romans 8:8-9](#)

¹¹ [2 Tim 4:8](#)

please the Lord. For the first time in his life he did not have to prove to himself and others that he was serving the Lord. He knew this to be true. Verse 10 says it all: **“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”** The original really sets up the contrast ¹[Endnote](#) The strength of this reality comes from the two Greek words *men* (the body *is indeed* dead) and *de* (but the spirit¹² is life. So we come full circle – we have received the imputed righteousness of Christ through faith – along with this new state we have the assurance that we are spiritually alive. So Lenski said that *“...When we look at our poor body we see something "dead," marked by "the death power" (7:24), mortality (6:12) written all over it. Every ache and pain, every touch of sickness and weakness is evidence to this effect. Look at the graves of Christians in the cemeteries...”*¹³ But when we look at Christ in us we see: *“...But when we look at Christ in us, there we see "life" indeed, not the spark of physical animation (ψυχή) which flickers for a while and then goes out but a new-created inner nature (τὸ πνεῦμα) which is itself ζω, "life" never to end but to pass into glory.”*

The Final Word from Paul’s Testimony.

¹⁶ **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:** ¹⁷ **And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.** Romans 8:16-17 (King James Version).

This is the spiritual heart of Paul beating. There was this witness pounding in his chest – the witness of the Spirit within. Since he had this witness he knew that he was a child of God. Since he was a child of God he knew he had an eternal future and victory over sin was his through his new spiritual life that dwelt within. This is also our testimony. We know we are his because of the witness of the Spirit of God within. We know that we are his because we love Him. We know we love Him because he first loved us.¹⁴ Amen.

¹² The spiritual life – Lenski.

¹³ —Lenski New Testament Commentary

¹⁴ [1 John 4:19](#) and context.

Endnotes begin here

1. Μέν and δέ present the two sides. With Christ in us, "the spirit is life because of righteousness." This is not the Holy Spirit (A. V.) because he cannot be made the opposite of our "body"; it is our spirit, our spiritual nature as this is made new and living in us. And now the predication is even stronger than saying that the body is *dead*; for it is not merely that the spirit is *alive* but that the spirit is *life*, ζωή, the very life principle itself, life spiritual to continue as life eternal. When we look at our poor body we see something "dead," marked by "the death power" ([7:24](#)), mortality ([6:12](#)) written all over it. Every ache and pain, every touch of sickness and weakness is evidence to this effect. Look at the graves of Christians in the cemeteries. But when we look at Christ in us, there we see "life" indeed, not the spark of physical animation (ψυχή) which flickers for a while and then goes out but a new-created inner nature (τὸ πνεῦμα) which is itself ζωή, "life" never to end but to pass into glory. |—Lenski New Testament Commentary