

1. **Introduction:** In chapter 7 Paul wrote about believers' righteousness apart from the Law which released them from the necessity of perfect personal obedience to the Law. He wrote on the relationship of Law and sin, and the rightful place of the Law in a believer's life. The following is a brief summary of chapter 7 and an introduction to chapter 8.

- Neither justification or sanctification is possible by obeying the Law.
- God's moral Law, of which the Ten Commandments are a part, retains its rightful place in a believer's life and is to be obeyed.
- Justification eliminates the eternal penalty due believers' sins (past, present, and future), but does not eliminate the believer's sin nature.
- Reducing the sin nature's control and ultimately eliminating it entirely requires the transforming work of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- A believer's new redeemed nature is inclined toward righteousness, but must constantly battle with the old sin nature.
- The Holy Spirit's sanctifying work of transforming a believer into a moral likeness of Christ reduces the sin nature's control providing some relief.
- The Spirit's work of transformation begins at justification and is not completed until glorification at mortal death or when Jesus comes again.
- The life interval between justification and glorification is a time of becoming increasingly like Christ in the face of continuous battle with the sin nature.
- Paul vividly describes his personal battle of striving to do the right he knew he should do and avoid doing the wrong his sin nature tempted him to do.
- He recognized only Christ Jesus through the indwelling Holy Spirit could save him from his sin-nature. That is just what the Spirit does for every believer.
- In chapter 8 Paul expands that idea. He focuses on the power of the Holy Spirit to bring people to Christ and sustain them and ultimately make them holy and righteous as Christ is holy and righteous.
- Christian life is life "in the Spirit." That is, the Christian life is sustained, directed, and enriched by the Holy Spirit.

- Without the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the sin nature's unopposed pressure to sin would make Christian discipleship impossible.
- The redeemed life is life in union with Christ. It is a new relationship with God nurtured by the Holy Spirit as He works to transform believers into a moral likeness of Christ.
- Chapter 8 primarily deals with the changes in a believer's life caused by the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

2. **Romans 8:1-4**: *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”*

- Paul begins with a wonderful summary statement about a believer's new status in Christ. What an incredible change!
- *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
- Before regeneration and justification, people are condemned by their sins, but now, after regeneration, condemnation for a believer is a thing of the past.
- Paul begins verse 1 with “therefore” to remind readers he is summing up and drawing conclusions from all he has said in the first 7 chapters.
- Paul highlights two of the many blessings God's salvation brings to a believer.
- First, he stresses the blessing of “no condemnation” which is the true status of those born again, justified apart from the Law. Believers have perfect, eternal security in Christ, freed from all condemnation both now and forever.
- Justification is bestowed on believers by the Father apart from personal obedience to the Law through grace by faith in Jesus and His salvation work. Even the necessary faith is a gift of God.
- Another blessing is that believers' sanctification is through the work of the indwelling Spirit and not be obedience to the Law.

- Obedience to the Law cannot lead to either justification or sanctification, not because of any defect in the Law, but because of indwelling human sin nature.
- No part of the Law or the whole of the Law can of itself overcome the power of indwelling sin.
- For that reason, God intervened by sending His Son to accomplish what humans under the Law could not do.
- Jesus lived the perfect life required under the Law and earned righteousness on behalf of those who would believe in Him.
- Based on Jesus' accomplishment as believers' legal representative, the Father justly declares "righteousness apart from the Law" for those "in Christ."
- Further, Jesus' died on the cross on behalf of believers to pay the penalty due their sins, a penalty which included death and separation from the Father.
- Based on Jesus' sacrifice, the Father, without violating His Law, pardons the sin-penalties due those who believe in Jesus and His salvation work.
- Jesus' life and death provided the "legal" basis for salvation. His resurrection and ascension authenticated all He had done.
- After Jesus' resurrection and glorification when He ascended to the Father's side, He sent the Holy Spirit to sanctify those who believe in Him.
- The Spirit indwells believers and transforms them into a moral likeness of Christ, ultimately making them holy and righteous like God.
- The Gospel truth sets believers free from the Law and its curse. The Spirit sets believers free from slavery to sin and death as He works directly in their lives.
- Thus, God justifies believers by judicial declaration based on the salvation work of His Son. He sanctifies believers by the work of His indwelling Spirit.
- Was the primary purpose of the incarnation and atonement simply justification through grace by faith? No!
- God's purpose is the realization of a holy people. Justification is but one necessary step in realizing that purpose.
- Justification provides freedom from condemnation for disobeying the Law. Becoming holy provides ability to fulfill the Law's just requirements.

- As pointed out, the indwelling Holy Spirit ultimately makes believers holy and righteous, able to fulfill the moral Law. Why is this so important?
- Paul has said believers are not under Law but under grace. What he means is that the **ground** for believers' justification is not obedience to the Law.
- The ground for believers' justification is provided through grace by faith in Christ and His salvation work.
- Jesus, on behalf of all who will believe in Him, met all the requirements of the Law, making their personal obedience to the Law unnecessary to obtain justification.
- Obedience to God's moral Law is a necessary result (or fruit) of justification which is a first step toward the end result of becoming holy and righteous.
- Obedience to God's moral Law is embedded in the very meaning of becoming holy and righteous. The route to becoming holy and righteous is by transformation into a moral likeness of Christ who always obeys God's Law.
- The moral Law defines the right relationship between people and God (love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind).
- The moral Law also defines the right relationship between people and other people (love your neighbor as yourself).
- Becoming holy means becoming like Christ who fulfilled the righteousness of the Law.
- It is impossible for anyone to become holy apart from being drawn by the Father. It is impossible apart from the redeeming work of the Son, and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.
- In chapter 7 Paul said the indwelling sin nature of both believers and unbelievers makes it impossible for anyone to keep the Law.
- In Romans 8:4 Paul says that having received the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, believers both are able and expected to keep the moral Law.
- Freedom from the Law means freedom from required personal obedience to the Law as the way to achieve justification and sanctification.
- People's obedience to the moral Law is so important to God that, in order to secure it, He sent His Son into the world to die on behalf of believers.

- Believers can become holy only through Trinitarian grace – the Father sending His Son into the world and His Spirit into believers’ hearts.
- Only people who live according to the Spirit and do not routinely yield to the demands of their self-centered sin nature can move toward fulfilling God’s moral Law. When glorified, then they can perfectly obey the moral Law.

3. **Romans 8:5-8**: *“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”*

- In these verses flesh refers to “sin nature” and “Spirit” is the Holy Spirit.
- Paul focuses his attention on “mindset” or “attitude.”
- The mindset Paul is concerned with is an expression of a person’s underlying nature as either a believer or a non-believer.
- Mindset can be focused or it can be only somewhat focused or even fuzzy. The terms mindset and attitude are often used interchangeably.
- Believers have one type of mindset and unbelievers have a very different type of mindset. It is the condition of the spiritual heart that determines mindset.
- Mindset, as an unbeliever, does not determine whether or not one can become a believer. But mindset is radically impacted by becoming a believer. Why?
- Becoming a “born again” believer changes the status of a person’s sin nature in their overall nature. The sin nature ceases to be dominant and the indwelling Holy Spirit becomes dominant.
- A believer has fundamentally different attitudes than a non-believer.
- The details of both a believer’s and an unbeliever’s mindset will vary as circumstances change.
- But in general, people fall into three groups. (1.) Desire to be God-honoring. (2.) Have no desire to honor God. (3.) Desire to oppose God.
- If there is no God-honoring desire, people will set their minds on what their sin-nature desires.

- Living by the Spirit reflects a desire to be God-honoring. The mindset is to follow the Spirit’s promptings even though it is difficult.
- A mindset or attitude means having a set of desires that dominate a person’s being to the point where realizing those desires is the primary object of thought, interest, affection, and purpose.
- If the dominant attitude is controlled by the sin-nature, the desires determining how decisions are made, will pander to ungodly self-centeredness.
- Such a “fleshy” mindset is hostile to God and will not submit to God’s Law.
- If the dominant attitude is controlled by the Spirit, the desires determining how decisions are made will be pleasing to the Spirit and glorifying to God.
- It is important that each of us ask “what dominates me in those times when I am free to choose what I do?”
- What is it that determines how we spend our time, energy, and other resources?
- Is what we think about, talk about, and actively implement God-honoring?
- In Philippians 4:8 Paul says “*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*”
- Very good advice!
- In summary, like the psalmist in Psalm 1, Paul speaks of two categories of people: (1.) The unregenerate who are “in the flesh,” that is dominated by their sin nature. (2.) The regenerate who are dominated by the Spirit.
- These two categories of people have different perspectives or mindsets – the mind of the flesh on one case and the mind of the Spirit in the other case.
- The different mindsets lead to different patterns of conduct (living according to the sin nature or living according to the Spirit).
- The result is two different spiritual states (one leading to death and enmity, the other leading to life and peace).
- Paul says our mind (that is, the mindset we choose and the way we occupy our mind and time) determines our present earthly conduct and our final destiny.

- Thank God for freeing us from condemnation and putting us on a path that prepares us to live forever in His presence!

4. **Romans 8:9-11**: ***“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. “***

- In verse 9 Paul shifts from third person plural pronouns to the second person.
- In this way he applies the truth he is writing about directly to his readers.
- This is a particularly important verse. It teaches that the authenticating mark of a believer is possession of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- Earlier (7:17, 20) Paul emphasized that indwelling sin is the sad but true reality for all children of Adam.
- The great privilege of believers is to have the indwelling Holy Spirit live in them combating and ultimately eliminating their sin nature.
- In John 14:17 Jesus says of the Holy Spirit, ***“You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”***
- Jesus fulfills this promise to every believer. Every true believer receives the indwelling Spirit. As Paul says in 1Corinthians 6:19, a believers’ body becomes a Temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells.
- The indwelling Spirit is God’s “seal” authenticating that the recipient is a justified true believer.
- His presence is a “sign” pointing to the still future but sure outcome that the believer will be transformed into a likeness of Christ (glorified).
- The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is proof of belonging to Christ. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ.
- God’s gift of His Spirit is an initial, universal blessing to believers taking place at the time they are regenerated, repent, and believe in Christ and His salvation work.

- Though there may be a special anointing of the Spirit for special tasks, the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the privilege of every believer.
- To have Christ is to have the Spirit. Several synonyms are used. To be “in the Spirit” is a synonym of having the “Spirit of God dwell in you” (v.9a).
- The “Spirit of God” is the same as the “Spirit of Christ” (v.9a, 9b).
- To have the Spirit of Christ in us (v.9b) is to have Christ in us (v.10a).
- Persons of the Trinity are eternally distinct in their personal modes of being and in the work they do external to the Godhead.
- But as these synonyms suggest, they share the same divine essence and attributes and mutually indwell one another. Where One is, All are.
- After affirming that Christ’s people are distinguished by having the indwelling Spirit, Paul points out two major consequences of the Spirit’s indwelling.
- Both verses 10 and 11 begin with an “if” clause related to the indwelling Spirit, and both affirm that the Spirit brings “life,” meaning life that is spiritually alive and becoming morally like Christ.
- In verse 10 the expression “*the body is dead because of sin*” appears to refer to the fact that our bodies are mortal, subject to death and destined to it.
- Yet in the midst of our mortality, our spirit has been made eternally alive “in Christ” (6:11, 13, 23).
- This reference to a “dying body” and a “living spirit” reminds us that our bodies became mortal because of Adam’s sin, but our spirits are alive because of Jesus’ righteous sacrifice (5:15-18, 21).
- Because of what Jesus did, it is a believer’s destiny to become “like Christ.”
- After his reference to our mortal body, in verse 11 Paul reminds believers that the ultimate destiny of their bodies is not death, but resurrection.
- Believers do not end up forever in the grave. In mortal life, their bodies are not yet redeemed, but they will be. All believers eagerly await that event.
- What is the basis of a believers’ sure hope in their resurrection? Believers hope because of the nature of the indwelling Holy Spirit’s work.
- He works to transform us into a moral likeness of Christ, He is the Spirit of life, and also the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead.

- He, who raised Christ from the dead, will also give life to believers' mortal bodies through His Spirit who lives in them (v.11).
- The resurrecting Father, the resurrected Son, and Spirit of resurrection are the three persons of the Holy Trinity.
- Christ's resurrection is both the pledge and pattern of the resurrection each believer is to expect. We will be raised by the same Spirit who raised Jesus.
- At resurrection that Spirit who gives life to our spirits (v.10) will give life to our bodies (v.11). How great is that!
- Resurrection includes transformation. Our bodies will be raised and changed into a glorious body fit for our glorified personality.
- The resurrection body will be freed from all frailty, disease, pain, and death. No more tears!
- The Greeks yearned for the liberation of their spirits from their bodies.
- But believers know the Holy Spirit will give them new resurrection life which includes a new body.
- In mortal life we express our personality through our body, especially through speech and "body language."
- At times in mortal life we communicate well and other times not so good.
- The language of our resurrection body will have perfect correspondence between what we want to communicate and how we do so.
- Our resurrection body will be perfect for our redeemed personality.
- Paul begins in verse 12 to draw conclusions from these powerful statements.

5. **What is Next:** Romans 8:12 and following.