

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Living in the Spirit

Lesson 5: Set Free by the Spirit

Bible Text

Romans 8:1-4

Memory Verse

“Christ made us free. Stay that way. Do not get chained all over again in the Law and its kind of religious worship.” (Galatians 5:1)

Word List

consequence: result, something that follows from an action or condition

experience: (noun) something you have done or that has happened to you

experience: (verb) to have something happen to you

guilty: responsible for something wrong, deserving punishment

transform: to change completely, in a good way

Imagine that you constantly chose to do wrong. You grew more and more evil every day. You were arrested and tried in court. The jury found you **guilty**. The judge said that you were not fit to live among people anymore. You should live the rest of your life in prison. You should die in prison. But someone who

had never done a crime came forward. He went to prison in your place. He set you free.

Now you have a choice. You can refuse this free gift and go to prison because you know you did wrong. Or you can choose to take this gift of freedom and live for good from now on.

All of us have had this **experience**. We have two forces pulling at us – sin and freedom in Christ. We all live under the pull of sin. It pulls us to choose to live for ourselves and not for God. We feel like we are in chains to sin. Then we meet Jesus.

Experience Freedom

(Romans 8:1-2)

1 Now, because of this, those who belong to Christ will not suffer the punishment of sin.

2 The power of the Holy Spirit has made me free from the power of sin and death. This power is mine because I belong to Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:1 begins, “Now, because of this....” Because of what? Paul is continuing a thought he had started in Romans 7:22-25. In these verses, he explains that there are two laws pulling at us. The Law of God leads to life, and the law of sin leads to death. He says that he agrees with the law of God in his mind. But the power of sin pulls at him to go

against God's law. The law is like an arrow pointing to the right way. The arrow shows the way, but it cannot make us choose to go there. We all want to choose our own way even when we know the right way.

But the power of the Holy Spirit makes Paul overflow with joy as he ends chapter 7. "I thank God I can be free through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:25). Paul knows this joy because he has **experienced** being rescued by Christ Jesus. Then he continues in Romans 8:1, "Those who belong to Christ will not suffer the punishment of sin." Praise God! We are set free and can never be taken back to those chains of sin!

This does not mean we will not suffer the **consequences** of our sin here on earth. When we abuse our bodies, we will get sick. When we sin, we will pay a price in this life. But Christ came to rescue us from the worst consequence of sin. Sin can never come into the presence of God. It makes us unfit to be with God. This separation from God lasts forever! After our bodies die, we cannot change our minds and say we want a relationship with Him. We have to make that choice here in this life. Separation from God is death to our spirits that lasts forever.

God sent His Son to die on the cross and rise again so that we could be rescued from the punishment for our sin. In Christ, God welcomes us into His kingdom. He sees

us as fit to come into His presence. So, we do not have to stay locked in a prison of sin and guilt. If we accept Christ's gift of freedom, our hearts and minds are set free from the power of sin.

Experience Being Transformed (Romans 8:3)

3 The Law could not make me free from the power of sin and death. It was weak because it had to work with weak human beings. But God sent His own Son. He came to earth in a body of flesh which could be tempted to sin as we in our bodies can be. He gave Himself to take away sin. By doing that, He took away the power sin had over us.

God's Spirit **transforms** us. He cleans our hearts and minds and gives us the power to better understand God. His Holy Spirit is the constant power of God in us. We carry Him everywhere we go if we belong to Christ. Our lives are changed. Our habits become His ways. Our minds and hearts seek to understand and know Christ. The old life of selfish desires and pride is gone. The new life is under the power of the Holy Spirit. He forms new desires in our hearts.

God gave the Law to Moses for His people. Think of these laws as lines that connect us to God. Leaders of the Jews added

many more rules and ways of thinking about God. They taught these new laws to the people as if they had come from God. All these manmade laws made it hard for the people to find God. The leaders did not follow the laws to draw closer to God. They followed these laws to make themselves look more important. Paul had tried to live by all those laws. He said that no one could say anything bad about the way he kept the law. (See Philippians 3:2-8.) Yet all that law-keeping had not set him free from sin.

Paul's transformed heart and mind taught him that the law can point to God, but it cannot draw us to Him. All people are pulled away from God into sin. The law cannot change our hearts. But God's Spirit can. So, God sent His only Son to be one of us. Jesus can understand our struggle against sin because He experienced it Himself. But Christ never gave into sin. And now His Spirit gives us the power to defeat sin, too.

Things to Think About

1. How is life *near* the Spirit different from life *in* the Spirit?
2. What has Christ rescued you from? How joyful and thankful are you for His saving grace?
3. How has Christ transformed you? How do you think and act differently today than you did before meeting Christ?
4. If you have not experienced the change and peace of Christ, what is holding you back from trusting Him now so that you can be set free?

In Jeremiah 31:33-34, God promised to write His law in our hearts and minds. This makes it possible for us to want what God wants. God promised that no one would have to teach us His law because it is written on our hearts by His Spirit.

Experience Growing in Christ

(Romans 8:4)

4 In that way, Jesus did for us what the Law said had to be done. We do not do what our sinful old selves tell us to do anymore. Now we do what the Holy Spirit wants us to do.

The Law demanded blood to cover sin. God wanted the Jews to see that we pay a high price for our sin. The Jews offered the blood of animals for their sin. But they had to do this over and over again because they kept sinning. The blood of animals gave them no power over sin.

Jesus paid the high price for our sin when He died one time for all our sin. He puts the Holy Spirit in us to set us free from the power of sin. His Spirit in us gives us the power to experience and better understand God's ways.

But God always gives us a choice. He never forces His ways on us. We can choose to walk in sin. Or we can choose to walk with the Holy Spirit. When we do, we find the freedom to enjoy a growing relationship with

God. We learn to trust Him more and more. When we trust Him, we do things that please Him. We grow more like Christ Jesus as we live in the Spirit and practice His ways. His ways grow stronger in us the longer we walk with Him.

Things to Remember

This passage teaches us three things.

1. We can be set free from sin by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. We know that only God can save us.
2. We can be transformed by the Holy Spirit. We learn to walk in step with Him. He helps us understand God's ways and His purpose for our lives.
3. And we can grow to be more like Christ as the years go by. We rejoice because we are not forced to stay the way He found us. We grow over time as we follow Him. This growth will bring overflowing joy and Christ-like ways as we live our lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:1-4

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Jeremiah 31:33-34

33 "This is the New Way of Worship that I will give to the Jews. When that day comes," says the Lord, "I will put My Law into their minds. And I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people.

34 No one will need to teach his neighbor or his brother to know the Lord. All of them will already know Me from the least to the greatest," says the Lord. "I will forgive their sins. I will remember their sins no more."