

2:42LifeGroups

GROWING TOGETHER IN THE GOSPEL

Life Group Study Guide

No Condemnation

Introduction and Overview

Imagine that the book of Romans is a mansion, and the Apostle Paul is giving us a tour. He has taken us through the first two wings of the mansion, where we have seen our need for righteousness (1:18-3:20) and the fact that God's righteousness is available to anyone who believes in Christ (3:21-4:25). Now we leave those halls and approach a tall archway marking the beginning of a third wing of the mansion. Over the archway is a plaque inscribed with these words: "Since we have been justified by faith. . ." This means that each room in this wing will feature something about what it means to be "justified by faith"—specifically the assurances we have because of the gospel. Passing through the corridors of chapters five through seven, we arrive at the great hall of Romans 8, where we hear this comforting declaration: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ."

And what do we find in this great hall? We discover the ultimate assurance of our salvation—the Holy Spirit. In fact, from verse 1 to 27, Paul mentions the Spirit nineteen times.

Today's message focuses on the first two verses in Chapter 8, which may be outlined as follows:

1. The ruin we faced: condemnation (8:1)
2. The reason we're free (8:2)
 - a. The sphere of our freedom: "in Christ" (8:1b, 2)
 - b. The agent of our freedom: "The Spirit of life" (8:2).

The central point of this message is that we no longer face condemnation because the Spirit has set us free in Christ from sin and death. Specifically, because God's Spirit give us new life, we will never face the ultimate consequences of our sin.

Discussion

1. Many people reject the idea that humans are under God's condemnation. What would you say to persuade a person to agree with this teaching?

2. Paul mentions the “law of sin and death” in 8:2. This phrase could be understood as “the binding authority of sin that leads to death.” In what ways do we see this “binding authority” at work in the world around us? What kinds of things do people do to free themselves from it?

3. We know from Romans 5:1 that people who believe in Christ are righteous in God’s sight. But let’s be honest. We don’t always *feel* righteous, and often we still *feel* condemned. Otherwise, we wouldn’t have Romans 8:1 in our Bible. What kinds of thoughts and circumstances sometimes make us *feel* like we are still under condemnation? Describe the *attitude* of a person who feels under condemnation.

4. Those who are free from condemnation are those “in Christ.” Read Romans 6:3-8, and discuss the things that we did “in” or “with” Christ. Because we never *actually* did any of those things, it is easy to forget that they are true. What can we do to remind ourselves—and each other—of what we are *in Christ*? If we do a better job remembering these things, what are some ways our attitudes or actions might change?

5. The law of sin and death guarantees that we will never fulfill God’s righteous demands. However, the Spirit frees us to fulfill that law in a “new” way (see Romans 7:6 and 8:4). Suppose someone thinks that the Spirit frees them to do whatever they want. What would that person’s life look like? On the other hand, suppose a person rightly understands that the Spirit frees him “to serve in the new way of the Spirit” (7:6). What would *that* person’s life look like?