

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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OF
THE SPIRIT
IN OUR SPIRIT

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Living Stream Ministry

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THE FREEDOM OF THE SPIRIT IN OUR SPIRIT

Romans 8 is a sharp contrast to Romans 7. In Romans 7 we see the bondage of the law in our flesh, and in Romans 8 we see the freedom of the Spirit in our spirit. As we come to chapter eight, we turn from bondage in the flesh to freedom in the Spirit.

NO CONDEMNATION

At the end of Romans 7 Paul cried out, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?” (v. 24). Paul opened chapter eight by saying, “There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (v. 1). In the book of Romans there are two kinds of condemnation: the outward, objective condemnation and the inward, subjective condemnation. The outward condemnation comes from God, and the inward condemnation comes from ourselves. We see the objective condemnation of God in the early chapters of Romans, for example in 3:19 which says, “That every mouth may be stopped and all the world

may become subject to the judgment of God.” Hence, objective condemnation results from being under the righteous judgment of God. This type of condemnation is completely solved by the redeeming blood of Christ. Christ’s redeeming blood has saved us from the judgment of God.

Outside of Christ

The inward, subjective condemnation is found in [chapter seven](#). When Paul lamented, “Wretched man that I am,” he was not experiencing the condemnation of God, but the condemnation that came from himself, the self-condemnation of one who tries to keep the law. This condemnation comes from the person himself, not from God. The more you attempt to be good and fulfill the law, the more inward condemnation you will have. If you are a careless person, never trying to be good, you will not experience inward condemnation. However, if you say, “I must be right and perfect,” you will be condemned by yourself. The more you try to improve yourself, the more self-condemnation you will be under. The condemnation in [Romans 7](#) is that of a person outside of Christ, although it is experienced by many Christians who attempt to fulfill the law

after they are saved. This condemnation does not come from God. Many Christians, having solved the problem of objective condemnation, have created for themselves the problem of inward condemnation. Some have been so condemned that they could not eat or sleep properly. Some brothers condemned themselves severely for not loving their wives, and certain sisters judged themselves for not being kind to their husbands. Eventually, the sense of subjective condemnation became so extreme they developed mental problems. Such people are under a tremendous weight of self-condemnation.

In Christ

Paul, after his cry of wretchedness at the end of [chapter seven](#), declared in a victorious way, “Now then no condemnation...in Christ Jesus.” This means that what he experienced in [Romans 7](#) was not an experience in Christ. Without Christ, or outside of Christ, he struggled according to the law in his mind to keep the law of God in order that he might please God, but he was totally defeated by the law of sin. That occurred when he was without Christ. Thus Paul condemned himself. He had a deep conviction of this inward, subjective condemnation.

But “now...in Christ Jesus” there is no longer this kind of condemnation. Paul had “no condemnation” because in Christ he did not need to keep the law of God by himself, an effort which produced self-condemnation; “no condemnation” because in Christ he had the law of the Spirit of life which is more powerful than the law of sin and which set him free from the law of sin; “now no condemnation” not because of the redeeming blood of Christ which removed the objective condemnation of God, but because of the law of the Spirit of life which brought in the freedom of the Spirit in his spirit and which broke through all his subjective condemnation; and “no condemnation” because he was freed from both the law of God and the law of sin.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

In [Romans 8](#) Paul does not say, “There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus because the blood of Jesus has cleansed me.” This kind of condemnation is not dealt with by the blood. We are freed from subjective condemnation, not because of the blood which cleanses us, but because of the law which liberates us. There is a law which sets us free from inward condemnation. This law that releases us has the greatest potential of any law.

Although we have the law of God outside of us demanding, the law of good in our mind agreeing with the law of God, and the law of sin in our body warring against and defeating the law of good, we must nevertheless praise the Lord that in our spirit is the law of the Spirit of life. No law can prevail against this law. Who can defeat the Spirit of life? Nobody and nothing can defeat the Spirit of life. This law of the Spirit of life is the spontaneous power of the Spirit of life. It is the most powerful law in the universe; it is in us, and it sets us free.

How does the law of the Spirit of life set us free? It frees us in a “super” way. If, according to the ancient method of warfare, some soldiers were surrounded by enemy troops, they would have had to fight their way through. However, in modern warfare there is no such need. If we are surrounded by the enemy, we need not fight through—we have a way up. We have an upward way. We just say, “Praise the Lord,” and we are in the third heaven. Satan and his attacking army are under our feet, and we are free.

Suppose we have a sister who wants to submit to her husband according to [Ephesians 5](#). She says, “I love this word. It is so sweet and holy. I want to submit myself to my husband.” This is

simply the exercise of her mind as it attempts to fulfill the commandment given in [Ephesians 5](#). However, when she determines to practice this, something strange happens. It seems that her surroundings change, and the very opposite of submission occurs. Her husband, who is always nice and gentle with her, on the very morning that she determines to submit to him, is quite mean. Much to her disappointment, she fails to fulfill the commandment. Satan comes up against her, surrounds her, and attacks her. The more she tries to suppress her irritation with her husband's behavior, the more angry she becomes, until she finally loses control of her temper. Her struggle, her attempt, was vain. The sister was defeated because she used the wrong strategy. Whenever we are surrounded by the enemy we should forget about every attempt of fighting through and say, "Praise the Lord! Amen!" Immediately we will be transcendent. Every enemy, including the people who aggravate us, will be under our feet. If you do not believe this, I ask you to try it. This strategy works; it is the most "modern," most prevailing weapon against the enemy. Instead of condemnation there is praise. Why is there praise and release instead of condemnation? Because

the law of the Spirit of life frees us from the law of sin and death.

For the two types of condemnation we have two different remedies. The blood of the crucified Christ is the remedy for objective condemnation, and the Spirit of life—Christ processed to be the life-giving Spirit—within our spirit is the remedy for subjective condemnation. When we experience subjective condemnation, all we need to do is praise the Lord and we will be transcendent. Do not pray at such a time, for the more you pray, the more condemnation you will experience. Neither should you say, “Lord, I apply Your blood.” This is not the remedy for this kind of situation. When we are under subjective condemnation we need the Spirit of life.

In Christ

This is not an experience outside of Christ, but an experience absolutely in Christ. In Christ, not in Adam nor in ourselves, do we have the Spirit of life, who is Christ Himself as the life-giving Spirit, in our spirit. In Christ our spirit has been made alive with Christ as life. Because we are in Christ, the Spirit of life, who is Christ Himself, dwells in our spirit and mingles Himself with our spirit as one spirit. In Christ we

have our quickened spirit, the divine life, and the Spirit of life. In Christ these three—our spirit, the divine life, and the Spirit of life—are all mingled as one unit. In Christ, with this unit, there is the spontaneous power, which is the law of the Spirit of life, that continually sets us free from the law of sin and death as we walk according to the mingled spirit.

Daily

This experience is not once for all; it must be a continuous daily experience. Day after day, moment after moment, we need to live in the mingled spirit, walk according to this spirit, and have our minds set on this wonderful spirit, forgetting our attempts of keeping the law of God and of doing good in order to please God. For once we drift back to our old, habitual way of trying to do good, we are insulated immediately from the powerful law of the Spirit of life. We must look to the Lord that we may abide in our spirit always so that we may enjoy the freedom of the law of the Spirit of life.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF THE LAW

Romans 8:3 says, “For what is impossible to the law, in that it was weak through the flesh,

God sending His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” This verse says that there is an impossibility related to the law, referring not to the law of the Spirit of life, with which there is no impossibility, but to the law of God outside of us. There is an impossibility associated with the law of God because that law is weak through the flesh. The flesh is the factor of weakness, producing the impossibility mentioned in [8:3](#).

The subject of [8:3](#) is God. God sent His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin, and condemned sin in the flesh. This verse, the deepest verse in [Romans 8](#), is very difficult to understand.

The “flesh of sin” in [8:3](#) corresponds to the term “the body of sin” in [6:6](#), where we are told that our old man has been crucified with Christ that “the body of sin” might be made of none effect. Why is our body called “the body of sin” and the “flesh of sin”? Because, as we see from [Romans 7](#), sin dwells in our body. Since our body is the dwelling place of sin, it is called “the body of sin.” Since our body has become a fallen body, it is also called the “flesh,” that is, the “flesh of sin.”

Our weakness in keeping the law of God is

with our body of sin. Our body is weak to the uttermost in keeping the law of God. Although our mind wants to keep the law of God, our body does not have the strength to do it. It is weakened and paralyzed by sin. Sin is like the polio that paralyzes and cripples children's bodies. Likewise, our human bodies have been paralyzed by sin. This body of sin is the basic factor of weakness in keeping the law of God. [Romans 8:3](#) says that the law of God was weak through the flesh. The law of God makes its demands, but the bodies of sinners cannot fulfill them because within the body is sin as the weakening factor.

Although the body of sin or the flesh of sin is exceedingly weak in keeping the law of God, it is powerful in committing sin. Unless you have the Lord's mercy and grace, it is difficult for you to sit through the church meetings. As you consider attending a prayer meeting you may say, "I didn't sleep well last night, and I have a headache. I'm too tired to go to the meeting." However, if someone invites you to go to the movie theater, the body of sin is energetic and powerful.

SIN CONDEMNED

Since the law is weak through the body of sin, what did God do about it? What has God done

with this situation? The law of God makes its demands, but it has been weakened through the flesh.

The problem is not with the law itself; the difficulty is with sin and the flesh of sin. Sin is the transgressor, and the flesh of sin is the helper. The two of them work together. If God was to solve the problem, He would have had to deal with both sin and the flesh. Although sin, not the flesh, is the foremost problem, God must deal with them both.

How did He do it? God did it in a marvelous way, in a way that is beyond human words to explain adequately. God solved the problem by sending His own Son “in the likeness of the flesh of sin.” God was wise. He knew that He should not send His Son to be the flesh of sin, for if He did that, His Son would have been involved with sin. Therefore, He sent His Son “in the likeness of the flesh of sin,” as typified by the brass serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness ([Num. 21:9](#)) and mentioned by the Lord Jesus Himself. In [John 3:14](#) Jesus said, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,” indicating that the brass serpent was a type of Himself on the cross in our stead. When He was on the cross, Jesus was in

the form of the serpent in the eyes of God. When God looked upon Jesus as He was nailed to the cross, He saw Him in the *form* of the serpent. Who is the serpent? Satan. What is the sin that was injected into man's body, transmuting it into the flesh of sin? The nature of Satan. Hence, the flesh of sin actually means the flesh with the nature of Satan. The Bible says that Jesus, the Son of God, became flesh ([John 1:14](#)). However, this absolutely does not mean that Jesus became the flesh with the nature of Satan, because [Romans 8:3](#) says that He was sent in "the *likeness* of the flesh of sin," thereby indicating that Jesus assumed only "the *likeness* of the flesh," not the sinful nature of the flesh. Furthermore, [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) says, "Him Who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf." Although this verse says clearly that Christ was made sin, it does not mean that He was sinful in nature. He was made only "in the *likeness* of the flesh of sin." The brass serpent had the serpentine form of the serpent, but it did not have the poison of the serpent. It had the serpentine form without the serpentine nature. Christ was made sin in form. Within Him there was no sin ([2 Cor. 5:21](#); [Heb. 4:15](#)); He had nothing to do with the nature of sin. He

was only made in the *form* of the serpent, “in the *likeness* of the flesh of sin” for us.

[John 12:31](#) says, “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.” When the Lord Jesus uttered these words He was speaking about His coming death on the cross. The Lord was saying that the time of His crucifixion would be the time of Satan’s judgment, for Satan is the prince of this world whose judgment was announced in [John 12:31](#). It was Jesus who hung on the cross, but in the eyes of God, Satan was judged there. Therefore, [Hebrews 2:14](#) says that through death Christ destroyed him that had the power of death, the Devil, Satan. Christ destroyed Satan by His death in the flesh on the cross. On the cross Christ “in the likeness of the flesh of sin” was not only a substitute for sinners, taking away all their sin; He was also crucified in the form of the serpent, completely destroying Satan, the Devil.

Due to the flesh of sin, the law of God was weak. Therefore, God had to deal with both the flesh and sin. He sent His Son “in the likeness of the flesh of sin,” that is, in the form of the serpent. Christ brought this flesh to the cross and crucified it there. All of the beings in the spiritual world, the angels and the evil spirits, know

the significance of this. Satan was bruised, destroyed through the very flesh that Christ put on Himself, because that flesh was in the form of the serpent. When that flesh was crucified on the cross, Satan was bruised and destroyed.

Romans 8:3 not only says that God sent His Son “in the likeness of the flesh of sin,” but also that He sent Him “concerning sin.” Some versions render “concerning sin” as “as an offering for sin,” taking the word sin here to be a reference to the sin offering. Although this interpretation is not wrong, it does not fully convey the thought. Paul’s thought is that God sent His Son, not only “in the likeness of the flesh of sin,” but also “concerning sin,” that is, for everything related to sin, that He might condemn sin and everything related to it. Everything associated with sin was condemned in the flesh of Christ on the cross.

Satan was eager and happy to enter into man’s body, which became the flesh after he entered it. Regardless of how wise Satan is, he can never surpass God. God is much wiser. God sent His Son in the likeness of this flesh in which Satan was and condemned it on the cross. We may use the illustration of a mouse trap. It is difficult to catch a mouse because the mouse always runs

away. However, we may use a mouse trap with some bait. The mouse comes into the trap, intrigued with the prospect of having the bait in his possession. Then he gets trapped, and a man can easily crush him. Likewise, Satan has been trapped and bruised in the flesh of Christ on the cross. In doing this God solved two problems at once: He has solved the problem of sin, the nature and source of which is Satan, and the problem of the flesh.

THE LAW FULFILLED

Romans 8:4 says, “That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to spirit.” The fact that **8:3** ends with a comma indicates that what was accomplished in that verse is for the following verse. God condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us. There was an impossibility related to the law of God due to the flesh. Therefore, God sent His Son “in the likeness of the flesh of sin” and condemned sin, solving the dual problem of sin and the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us. The “us” refers to those “who do not walk according to flesh, but according

to spirit.” Paul’s writing is marvelous. In 8:2 he mentions the Holy Spirit and in 8:4 he refers not only to the Holy Spirit, but even the more to the human spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life, and the human spirit indwelt by and mingled with the Holy Spirit is the very spirit according to which we walk. The Holy Spirit of life is in our human spirit. If we walk according to this mingled spirit, all the righteous requirements of the law will be fulfilled spontaneously. There is no need for us to keep the law. The requirements of the law are fulfilled spontaneously by the law of the Spirit of life.

THE MIND AS THE KEY

The next verse offers some further explanation. “For those who are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to spirit, the things of the Spirit.” After mentioning the Spirit of life and the human spirit mingled with the Holy Spirit, Paul comes to the mind. Paul has mentioned the mind previously in 7:25, which says, “With the mind I myself serve as a slave the law of God...” The phrase “with the mind I myself” indicates that the mind in 7:25 was independent. The mind in chapter eight is different; it is a mind set upon

the things of the Spirit. In [Romans 7](#) the mind goes out to act independently; in [Romans 8](#) the mind returns to rely upon the spirit, no longer acting on its own.

The mind has the position of a wife. The wisest way for a wife to live is not to act independently, but to come to her husband. If the wife has a difficulty, she should not deal with it on her own. She should refer it to her husband. [Romans 7 and 8](#) show us that the same mind may have two different actions. In [chapter seven](#) the mind acts independently in a wrong, self-assuming position as the husband. In [chapter eight](#) the mind becomes the proper wife, maintaining her rightful position and returning to rely upon her husband, the spirit.

We conclude with [8:6](#). “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.” From this verse we can see that even the mind can be life. The independent mind cannot keep the law of God, but the mind set upon the spirit is life and peace. Such a mind is full of enjoyment and rest. Peace is for rest and life is for enjoyment. When the mind is set on the spirit, there is no defeat, condemnation, or negative feelings—only life and peace, enjoyment and rest. The very mind that, in itself, is

unable to keep the law of God can be a mind of life and peace by being set on the spirit.

Paul did not write [Romans 8](#) according to theory, but according to his experience. It is easy for the law to be fulfilled spontaneously. In fact, we do not even need to do it ourselves, for the law will be fulfilled in us spontaneously and subconsciously. Even though we have no intention of fulfilling the law, we find that it is fulfilled. You may have no intention of loving your wife, yet you love her unconsciously. You may have no awareness of submitting to your husband, yet you are entirely submissive without realizing it. This is the spontaneous, automatic fulfillment of the requirement of the law by having the mind set upon the spirit.

In both [Romans 7:25](#) and [8:6](#), the mind, whether it is independent of or dependent upon the spirit, represents the person himself. So, when the mind is independent of the spirit it means that the person acts on his own, not relying upon the spirit. But when the mind is dependent on the spirit the person does not act on his own; he relies on the spirit. As Christ now is the life-giving Spirit indwelling our spirit as our life and our everything, we should no longer act on our own according to our independent

mind. We must keep our mind one with our spirit and act, walk, and have our being according to the spirit that we might be freed from the law of sin and from the flesh and that we might spontaneously fulfill the righteous requirement of the law of God. This is to be set free from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ. This is also to enjoy the indwelling Christ as our life and life-supply.

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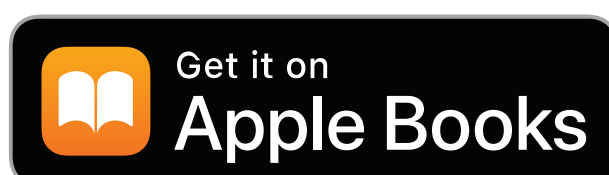
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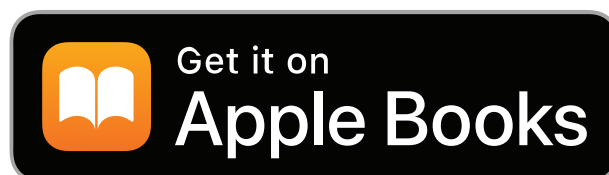
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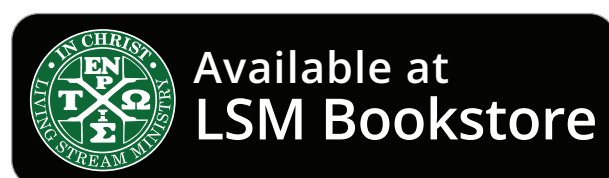
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