

GOD'S WORD IS LIFE
THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Session Six: Study Outline for Romans 8:1-39

Introduction: Life in the Spirit Through Christ

In Romans 8, Paul presents a triumphant view of the believer's life in Christ. Following the struggles of Romans 7, Romans 8 promises assurance that those who belong to Christ are no longer condemned. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, believers experience freedom from sin and the freedom to live in the obedience of faith. This chapter outlines how life in the Spirit contrasts with life in the flesh and promises hope for believers through God's faithfulness.

Purpose:

Paul emphasizes the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Through the Spirit, we are not only free from the condemnation of the law but also empowered to live as children of God, with the promise of ultimate glory.

Themes:

- Freedom from condemnation
- Life in the Spirit
- Adoption as God's children
- The assurance of God's love and victory
- Future glory despite present suffering

Objective:

To understand how Paul describes the new life believers experience through the Holy Spirit and how this contrasts with life lived in the flesh. Believers are justified and sanctified.

In Romans 8, Paul is proclaiming a complete change in the condition of human beings. He moves from the struggle of Romans 7, where we are bound to the law and trapped in our sinful flesh, to a new reality. The key point is that, in Christ, the law no longer has any say over us. We are no longer condemned. This is not just an improvement but a resurrection—a total death and new life. The difference between life in the Spirit and life in the flesh is not about degrees of moral effort. It's a matter of life and death, the difference between being condemned by the law and being freed by Christ.

Purpose:

Paul is driving home one main point: the power of the Holy Spirit creates faith that frees us from the law. Once freed, we don't return to the law for sanctification or proof of our righteousness. Instead, we live as children of God, heirs of an inheritance that includes not just glory, but also suffering.

Themes:

- The end of condemnation
- Life by the Spirit, not the flesh
- Adoption as sons and daughters of God
- The certainty of God's love and faithfulness
- Present suffering versus future glory

Objective:

Paul wants us to grasp that the life in Christ through the Spirit is total, not partial. It's not just that we're justified and then slowly sanctified—no, it's that the Holy Spirit kills and makes alive, justifies, and sanctifies all at once, pulling us out of death and into life.

I. Freedom from Condemnation (Romans 8:1-4)

There's no condemnation because the law has nothing more to say to you in Christ.

- **Verses 1-2:** Paul begins with the announcement: no condemnation! We're no longer bound by the law's condemnation because Christ has freed us. This is total freedom, not dependent on anything we do.
- **Verses 3-4:** The law was incapable of making us righteous because it only exposes sin. But God does what the law cannot do—He sends His Son to deal with sin in the flesh, so now the law is fulfilled in us. This isn't our doing but the work of the Spirit who gives us faith.

II. Living in the Spirit vs. Living in the Flesh (Romans 8:5-13)

The flesh always brings death; the Spirit brings life.

- **Verses 5-8:** Paul contrasts the mind set on the flesh with the mind set on the Spirit. The mind of the flesh is obsessed with sin and death, always turned inward, hostile to God, and incapable of pleasing Him. The mind of the Spirit, given in baptism, on the other hand, brings peace and life—not through works, but because the Spirit makes us new.

- **Verses 9-11:** Believers are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. This isn't about a gradual improvement of your moral life but about a total new existence—resurrection. The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead will also give life to our mortal bodies.
- **Verses 12-13:** We no longer live according to the flesh. Living by the Spirit is about putting to death the deeds of the body—not through our effort, but through the Spirit's work of faith in us.

III. Adoption as Sons and Daughters (Romans 8:14-17)

We are God's children, not by nature but by adoption—an adoption that comes with suffering and glory. We are not born children of God. We are reborn children of God in baptism's promise.

- **Verses 14-15:** If we are led by the Spirit, we are sons and daughters of God. But this isn't some metaphor—it's a legal and real adoption. We call God "Abba, Father" because we are truly His children, not by law but by promise.
- **Verses 16-17:** The Spirit testifies, confirms that we are God's children, co-heirs with Christ. This inheritance involves sharing in Christ's suffering, but the glory that follows far outweighs the suffering.

IV. Future Glory Amidst Present Suffering (Romans 8:18-25)

Although it can feel like it, present suffering is not the final word. Glory is coming.

- **Verses 18-21:** Paul points to the future glory that will be revealed. The present suffering is nothing compared to this future. Even creation itself is groaning, waiting for its own liberation from decay—a liberation that will be tied to the revealing of the sons of God.
- **Verses 22-25:** We, too, groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies. We already have the Spirit, the first fruits, but we live in hope. This hope is not based on what we see, but on the promise of resurrection.

V. The Intercession of the Spirit (Romans 8:26-30)

Even in our weakness, the Spirit prays for us.

- **Verses 26-27:** We are weak, but the Spirit intercedes for us. We don't even know how to pray properly, but the Spirit steps in, aligning our prayers with God's will. This isn't about perfecting our prayers—it's about trusting that the Spirit has already perfected them for us.
- **Verses 28-30:** God works all things for the good of those who love Him. This is a declaration of God's sovereign will, not a platitude for positive thinking. It's rooted in God's eternal plan, from predestination, election, to glorification.

VI. God's Unshakeable Love (Romans 8:31-39)

Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ—this is the final word.

- **Verses 31-34:** “If God is for us, who can be against us?” This is not a rhetorical question. Paul answers it by pointing to Christ—God’s own Son—who has already been given for us. Who will condemn us when God has justified us? The answer: no one. The highest authority has spoken.
- **Verses 35-39:** Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ—not hardship, persecution, danger, death, or any other power. In Christ, we are more than conquerors. God’s love is the final word, and it is not conditioned by anything we think, say or do. The love of God is given fully and freely in Christ – for you.