

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this Bible study series two teachers will do Bible study from ROMANS 8:1-17.

In Romans chapters 1-5 Paul explained the state of justification and made it clear that the law cannot secure justification. In Romans chapter 6-7 he explained the state of holiness and the process of sanctification and made it clear that the law can also not produce sanctification. In Romans chapter 8 Paul explains the security and the assurance of the salvation of Christians.

(S) **STEP 1. READ**

Let us read Romans 8:1-17 together. When you are two or more people, take turns to read one verse each until you have completed the reading. Due to shortage of time, please read Romans 8:1-17 for yourself.

(T) **STEP 2. DISCOVER**

Let us discover and discuss some important truths in Romans 8:1-17. "Which truth in this passage is important for you?" or "Which truth in this passage touches your mind or heart?" Think and write your answer in your notebook. After a few minutes take turns to share your discoveries with one another.

(S) An important truth for me is from Romans 8:1-4 Christians are secure, because they are delivered from the dominating and controlling power of their sinful nature. While John 5:24 promises that Christians will *not be condemned* in the final judgement day, Romans 8:1 promises that Christians will *not be doomed or punished with eternal destruction* (cf. Mt 25:46)! This is because God has already *doomed the sinful nature*, its overwhelming guilt and its dominating power in Christ's weakened human nature (8:3). The Holy Spirit has set Christians free from the absolute dominating and controlling power of their sinful nature (8:2). The law is God's absolute requirement for justification or salvation and God's absolute rule of duty for living as it is expressed in God's moral laws or the Ten Commandments. What God could not do through his law because the sinful nature of man made that impossible, he did through Jesus Christ by dooming sin and its power in the body of Jesus Christ on the cross (cf. 1 Pet 2:24)(8:3). *In this way, not only justification, but also sanctification becomes a possibility and a reality.* The righteous requirements of the law with respect to justification and sanctification is nothing less than 100% obedience to God and his will and 100% perfection in their personal lives! No descendant of Adam could ever fulfil such requirements! But Jesus Christ has fulfilled those requirements in the place of everyone who believes in him! People proof that they are genuine believers by no longer living out of their sinful natures, but living out of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of life functions as the new power in the lives of believers. The obedience to Christ and consequent sanctification begins at regeneration (cf. Acts 5:32; 1 Pet 1:2) and is perfected only at the time believers see Christ face to face (cf. 1 Jn 3:1-3). The Spirit will continue to sanctify believers until they are finally set free from their present bodies in which the sinful nature and death causes so much ravage (cf. 7:24-25; 1 Cor 15:54-57)(8:4).

(T) An important truth for me is from Romans 8:5-13. Christians are secure, because their salvation has actually begun in the regeneration and sanctification of their hearts and lives by the Holy Spirit.

Because Christians are delivered from the absolute dominating and controlling power of their sinful nature, they live their lives no longer in accordance with their sinful nature, but in accordance with the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16-26). Christians have the Holy Spirit, live under the government of the Holy Spirit and consequently have the mind of the Spirit. *The mind of the Spirit* is the way of thinking or mind-set of the Spirit. It means that Christians have the thoughts and attitudes of the Spirit; they have the same view of things as the Spirit; they have the same goals, aspirations and strivings that the Spirit has! Christians set their minds to the things of the Spirit, that is, they direct their interests and goals again and again to things, which the Spirit proposes and approves and which glorifies God. The mind of the Spirit results in life, which is to know and fellowship with God (cf. Jn 17:3). It also results in peace, which is the inner assurance that past sins are forgiven, that present evils are overruled for good (8:28) and that no future event will be able to separate them from God's love for them (8:31-39)(8:5-8)!

Non-Christians do not have the Spirit, they live continually under the government of their sinful and depraved nature and direct their interests and goals to corrupt and worldly things. It is spiritually, morally and psychologically impossible for non-Christians to subject themselves to God and God's will, because their way of thinking, view of the world and attitude is completely hostile to God. They do not and cannot subject themselves to God. They cannot please God. This results in death, which is alienation from God, even continued hostility against God, powerlessness against the unholiness and unrighteousness of their lives and finally eternal misery (8:5-8). People that do not have the Holy Spirit are dominated and controlled by their sinful nature. Such people cannot be Christians! However, people that have

the Holy Spirit are dominated and controlled by the Holy Spirit. Such people have the Spirit of the living God or the Spirit of Christ living in them. Or to put this truth in another way, such people have Jesus Christ living in them and belong to Jesus Christ (8:9-10a)!

In spite of the disintegrating power of their sinful nature that is still at work in them, Christians are distinguished by the indwelling Spirit. Because the sinful nature is still active in the physical body, the physical body of Christians is doomed to die. But because Christians have been justified by faith, the human spirit of Christians is already alive. Their human spirit is alive, because the Holy Spirit lives in them (cf. Jn 3:3-5)! To have the Holy Spirit living in their heart and life is the condition and the initial stage of their salvation! To have the Holy Spirit living in their heart and life is also the guarantee that their mortal body will be resurrected and their salvation will be 100% completed (8:10b-11)!

Therefore Christians have an obligation towards God. They no longer have an obligation towards their sinful nature and live according to their sinful nature. If people, who think that they are Christians, nevertheless live according to their sinful nature, they will certainly die. However, genuine Christians are governed by the Holy Spirit and will put the misdeeds of their sinful nature working in the members of their body to death. Genuine Christians *can do this, should do this and will do this!* Again and again they can, should and will put to death the sinful desires, motives, affections, purposes, etc. through the power of the indwelling Spirit (8:12-13).

(S) An important truth for me is from Romans 8:14-17. Christians are secure, because they are God's adopted children and heirs of future glory. Christians that are actively led by the indwelling Spirit are the sons of the living God! Before they became Christians, they possessed *a spirit of slavery*, that is, the spirit that slaves have. They feared their masters, they feared punishment and they feared rejection. However, after they have become Christians, they possess *the Spirit of adoption* (NIV sonship), that is, the Spirit that changes them from slaves into sons of the household! Instead of fear, the Holy Spirit creates love in their hearts for God and continually creates the characteristics of God's children in them. They are confident that God has accepted them completely. And they have a personal and intimate relationship with God as their heavenly Father.

The fatherhood of God has no relationship to fatherhood on earth, where fathers beget physical children. The fatherhood of God is a complete spiritual concept. He regenerates people spiritually and relates to them spiritually!

The Holy Spirit continually testifies together with their human spirit that they are genuinely spiritual children of God and that they are joined heirs with Jesus Christ of the future perfect world. The Holy Spirit provides the subjective assurance of salvation (cf. 5:5; 8:16). The revelation of God in the Bible provides the objective assurance of salvation (cf. 16:25-26). The present sufferings of Christians in this world are the unavoidable way towards this future glory!

(T) STEP 3. QUESTION

Let us try to understand all the truths in Romans 8:1-17 and ask our questions about the things we still do not understand. "Which question about anything in this passage would you like to ask to the group?" Think and write your question in your notebook. Then discuss the questions and try to find answers.

1st Question. (8:1-4). Does "condemnation" (NIV) refer to the deliverance of the guilt of sin only, or to the deliverance of both the guilt and the power of sin?

(S) Verse one refers to the immediate context, Romans 6:1 - 7:25 and particularly Romans 7:14-25. Paul is thinking of the deliverance from both *the guilt of sin and the power of sin* and deliverance from the doom or punishment, which both bring. Paul concludes that *there can be no justification without sanctification!* Doom means the execution of the sentence that has been pronounced. In this context, the word "doom" does not mean *pronouncing judgement* on the guilt of sin, but rather *executing judgement* on the power of sin by overthrowing the power of sin! In other places in the Bible (Rom 5:18, 1 Cor 11:32, 2 Pet 2:6) the same term has the sense of doom or punishment of the sinful world and the ungodly. This doom has already been pronounced and its execution has already begun! The execution of destruction will be finally completed at the second coming of Christ. This renders the ultimate victory of Christians over the sinful world and the ungodly people certain! Likewise in Romans 8:1 a person in Jesus Christ is not doomed – he will not be consigned to eternal destruction! But the power of the sinful or depraved nature in the believer has once for all been doomed – its destruction has already begun! The execution of destruction will be finally completed at the second coming of Christ, when also the physical bodies of Christians will be resurrected. This renders the Christians' present "state of holiness", that is, their "devotion and ability to live the new and holy life", certain!

2nd Question. (8:1-4). To what do "the law of the Spirit" and "the law of sin and death" refer?

(T) One. Two opposing laws in a Christian. On the basis of Romans 7:21,23,25, the best interpretation is that the word *law* means *the dominating power or the absolute governing principle*. The law of the Spirit means that *the Holy Spirit is the absolute governing principle* in Christians. Likewise, the law of sin and death means that *the sinful nature*

is the absolute governing principle in non-Christians and it is still a powerful principle or force in the old nature of Christians. The sinful nature is called *the law of sin and death*, because it is the dominating force behind every kind of sin in people and the ground for everything that leads to death.

In the non-Christian there is only one dominating and controlling force, namely his sinful nature and it produces every kind of fruit for death (cf. Gal 5:19-21). An unbeliever cannot but obey its demands. In the Christian there are two opposing forces: the law of sin and death or his sinful nature and the law of the Spirit of life or the Holy Spirit himself. The Christian's sinful nature is still a *ravaging power* (7:14-25) and a *terrible opposing power* (Gal 5:17). But in principle his sinful nature is already a *defeated power* and a *temporary power*, which will plague him only until his physical death (1 Cor 15:54-57).

Two. Christians *should, can* and will live the new and holy life. Like in Romans 6:7, Romans 8:3-4 refers to the legal basis of sanctification. The power of the sinful nature has once for all been doomed to be destroyed by Christ's completed work of salvation. The execution of this destruction has already begun by the work of the Holy Spirit living in the Christian. If the regenerated Christian could and would completely and perfectly obey the Holy Spirit, he also could and would be completely and perfectly free from the power of sin and the pollution of sin! However, because every Christian continues to have a sinful nature until his physical death, no Christian on earth can or will be completely and perfectly free from the power of sin or the pollution of sin. Only after his physical death will a Christian be absolutely free from the power, pollution and even presence of sin! Nevertheless, because Christ's death once for all delivered the Christian from this absolute power of sin (6:2,7) and because the Holy Spirit is applying this reality to his life (8:2), the Christian *can, should and will* walk after the Spirit and no more after the sinful nature (flesh)(8:4)! A Christian may not be victorious over sin all the time, but he will certainly not be defeated by sin all the time. The Christian *can, should and will* again and again put to death the misdeeds of the body (8:13) and he *can, should and will* again and again set his mind on what the Holy Spirit desires (8:5).

3rd Question. (8:12-14). In Romans 8:13, Paul says, "If you live according to the sinful nature, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live." Is this a threat that Christians can lose their eternal security or an exhortation to exercise responsibility?

(S) This is an exhortation that the sinful nature must be destroyed. Christians are people under obligation! They have a very important responsibility and that is not to live according to their sinful nature, but to live according to the indwelling Holy Spirit. Christians must not *tolerate* their sinful nature! Christians must not try to *change* their sinful nature! Christians must *put to death* the misdeeds of their sinful nature! These misdeeds are expressed in their physical bodies! They must again and again root out and destroy all kind of sins, which uses the body to express itself (6:13,19). Christians can do this and will do this when they live according to the Holy Spirit. Or to put it in another way, when Christians allow Jesus Christ through his Spirit to live in and through them, Christ will root these sins out of their lives.

By these statements, Paul does not neutralise the security of Christians. He emphasises that the only way Christians can *be subjectively sure* of their eternal salvation, is when they live according to the Holy Spirit! A person who lives according to his sinful nature cannot and will not have any assurance of salvation!

4th Question. (8:14-16). What gives Christians the assurance that they are God's children?

(T) Two things give Christians the assurance that they are really God's children:

One. The feelings of love towards God prove that Christians are children of God. Before people become believers, they possess a spirit of slavery or bondage. The spirit of slavery is the spirit that slaves have. It is a spirit of anxious fear for their masters, for future punishment and a fear that society has rejected them. But when people become believers, they receive the Holy Spirit, which is called the Spirit of adoption. The Spirit of adoption is the spirit that sons of the house have. It is a spirit of love for God, a spirit of a personal and intimate relationship with God as Father and a deep realisation that God has accepted them as his own children! The Holy Spirit creates in believers feelings of love for God, a childlike confidence that they belong to God's family and the characteristics of the children of God (cf. Eph 1:5,14).

Two. The witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart of Christians proves that they are children of God. The Holy Spirit himself testifies again and again with the human spirit of Christians that they are in fact children of God. He continually confirms and assures Christians in their inner self or regenerated conscience, heart and mind that they are in fact children of God. The Holy Spirit constantly reminds the Christians of God's promises in the Bible and he generates in them a deep assurance that God himself loves them as his children (cf. 8:39).

5th Question. (8:17). In which respect are Christians “co-heirs” with Christ?

(S) In God’s eternal plan, Christians must first suffer with Christ before they inherit with Christ. Christians will not share in Christ’s glory unless they first share in his sufferings! The sufferings of Christians are called the sufferings of Christ (Col 1:24), but not in the sense of Christ’s redemptive suffering on the cross for sins.

One. Christians share in *the general sufferings, afflictions and sorrows of life*, which Jesus as “the man of sorrows” suffered while he was on earth. Christians have a share in the general weakness, sickness, disability, disasters and wars, results of crime and sins of others, difficulties of circumstances, broken relationships, disappointment, unemployment, poverty, frustration, etc. in this world. In short, Christians have a share in *the sufferings of the fallen and broken world*, into which also Christ was born.

Two. Christians also share in *the particular sufferings or persecutions against Christ and the Christian faith*. Christians suffer for the name of Christ and for the cause of Christ (cf. Mk 8:43-38). The purpose of God with the suffering of Christians is not to satisfy the demands of his justice. It is to train their character and to refine them as a preparation to share in Christ’s glory. Christ’s glorious inheritance consists of nothing less than the new heaven and the new earth.

(T) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Join a house fellowship that does Bible study. Use “the five steps” Bible study method to prepare Romans 8:18-39.

Second. workbooks “Go and preach God’s Kingdom” and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to “Discipleship training on the air”.