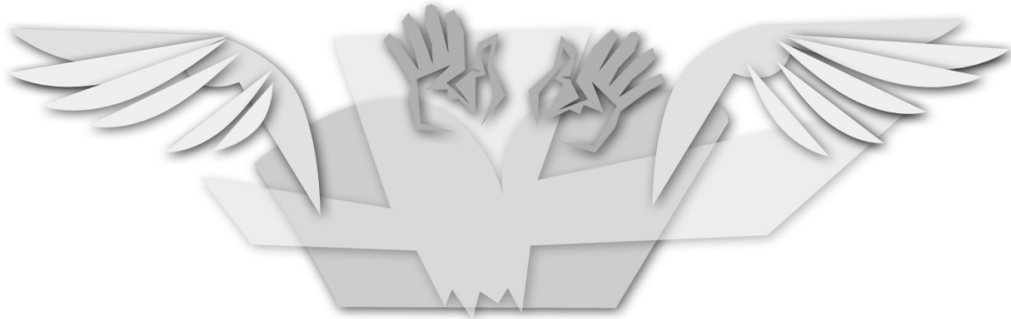


# Freedom in Christ



## SABBATH—AUGUST 21

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Romans 8:1–17.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Those who belong to Christ Jesus are no longer under God’s sentence. I am now controlled by the law of the Holy Spirit. That law gives me life because of what Jesus Christ has done. It has set me free from the law of sin that brings death” (Romans 8:1, 2, Nlrv).

**ROMANS 8 IS PAUL’S ANSWER TO ROMANS 7.** In Romans 7, Paul talks about feeling upset by roadblocks to success. He also talks about failure and condemnation.<sup>1</sup> In Romans 8, the condemnation is gone. It is replaced with freedom and victory through Jesus Christ.

Paul was saying in Romans 7 that if you refuse to accept Jesus Christ, then you will have to go through the terrible experience of Romans 7. You will be slaves to sin. You will not be able to do what you want to do. In Romans 8, Paul says that Christ Jesus offers you freedom from sin and the freedom to do the good that you want to do even if your flesh will not allow it.

Paul continues to explain that this freedom was purchased at such a great cost that it cannot be measured or counted. Christ the Son of God took on human form.<sup>2</sup> This is the only way He could fully understand us, could be our perfect Example, and die in our place. He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (verse 3). As a result, the righteous (holy) things that the law asks us to do can be fulfilled in us (verse 4). In other words, Christ won the battle over sin. He also fulfilled the law.

Due to limited space, we will cover only the first 17 verses of Romans 8. When you have time, read the rest of the chapter, which is filled with wonderful assurances (promises) of God’s love. These verses powerfully point us to “Christ, who has loved us” (verse 37, Nlrv). Out of that love, “God did not spare [hold back; protect] his own Son. He gave him up for us all” (verse 32, Nlrv).

1. condemnation—judgment of guilt.

2. human form—having the body of a human being (person).

**SUNDAY—AUGUST 22****FREEDOM FROM CONDEMNATION  
(Romans 8:1)**

**What does “no condemnation” mean in Romans 8:1? No condemnation from what? And why is this such good news?**

“In Christ Jesus” is a common saying in Paul’s writings. For a person to be “in” Christ Jesus means that he or she has accepted Christ as his or her Savior. The person trusts Christ fully and has decided to live a life that follows Jesus’ way of life. The result is a close personal union<sup>3</sup> with Christ.

“In Christ Jesus” is different from “in the flesh.” It also is different from the experience described in chapter 7. In chapter 7, Paul describes a person as carnal<sup>4</sup> before his or her surrender<sup>5</sup> to Christ. Being carnal means that he or she is a slave to sin. The person is under condemnation of death (verses 11, 13, 24). He or she serves the “law of sin” (verses 23, 25). This person is in a terrible state of wretchedness<sup>6</sup> (verse 24).

But then the person surrenders to Jesus. His or her relationship with God changes right away. He or she was condemned (judged guilty) as a lawbreaker. But now that person stands perfect in the sight of God. It is as if he or she had never sinned. They are covered by the righteousness of

Jesus Christ. There is no more condemnation. This is not because the person is faultless, sinless, or worthy of eternal (forever; without end) life. He or she is not. Instead, this is because the perfect life record of Jesus stands in the person’s place. So, there is no condemnation.

But the good news does not end there.

**According to Romans 8:2, what frees a person from slavery to sin?**

“The law of the Spirit of life” means Christ’s plan for saving humans [men, women, and children]. It is different from “the law of sin and death,” which leads to death as we learned in chapter 7. It was the law that led to death. But Christ’s law brings life and freedom instead.

“Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom. But he is in the worst kind of slavery. . . . He may think that he is following his own conscience<sup>7</sup> and judgment. But he really obeys the prince of darkness. Christ came to break the chains of sin-slavery from the soul.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 466.

**Are you a slave, or are you free in Christ? How can you know for sure?**

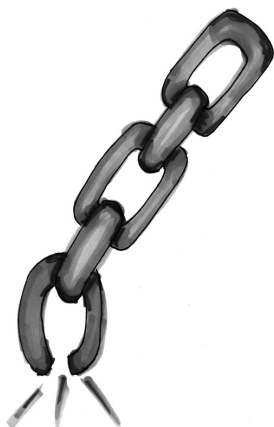
3. union—an act of joining two or more things together.

4. carnal—worldly, not spiritual (godly).

5. surrender—giving one’s whole life to Jesus to love, serve, and obey Him.

6. wretchedness—feeling the terrible condition of sin; feeling miserable.

7. conscience—a sense or knowledge of right and wrong.



Christ came to break the chains of sin-slavery from the soul.

### MONDAY—AUGUST 23

#### WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO (Romans 8:3, 4)

The “law” (the ceremonial law,<sup>8</sup> God’s law, or even both) is good. But it cannot do for us the thing we need the most. That is, to offer the way of salvation.<sup>9</sup> We need saving from the condemnation and death that sin brings. For that, we need Jesus.

**According to Romans 8:3, 4, what did Christ do that the law cannot do?**

God answered the problem of sin by “sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.” He “condemned sin in the flesh.” Christ freely chose to become a human. This choice was an important step in the plan of salvation. It is proper to think highly of the

Cross. But in working out the plan of salvation, Christ’s life “in the likeness of sinful flesh” was very important too.

God has done His part in sending Christ. For that reason it is now possible for us to keep the law. This means doing the right things that the law asks us to do. “Under the law” (Romans 6:14), this obedience was impossible. But “in Christ” it is now possible.

We must remember that doing what the law requires does not mean that obeying the law will earn us salvation. That is never a choice for us. It simply means living the life that God helps us to live. It means a life of obedience. In this obedient life we have “crucified [put to death] the flesh with its passions and desires” (Galatians 5:24, NKJV). This kind of life shows the character of Christ.<sup>10</sup>



**To obey means to crucify (put to death) the flesh with its passions and desires.**

8. ceremonial law—the law dealing with the sanctuary (the house where God was worshiped by the Jews in Bible times). The sanctuary services helped the Jews to better understand God’s plan for saving them from sin.

9. salvation—God’s plan for saving sinners from eternal (without end) death; the gift of eternal life; being saved from sin or evil.

10. character of Christ—who Jesus is; having and understanding the character of Jesus is the same as being kind, loving, gentle, honest, patient, and so on. God’s law (Ten Commandments) shows us Jesus’ character.

“Walk” in verse 4 means “the way a person acts or behaves.” The word *flesh* here shows the person full of sin, whether before or after he or she accepts Christ. To walk after the flesh means to let selfish desires control us.

In contrast, to walk after the Spirit means obeying the law. Only through the help of the Holy Spirit can we meet the demands of the law. Only in Christ Jesus do we have freedom to do what the law requires. Without Christ, there is no such freedom. The one who is a slave to sin finds it impossible to do the good he or she chooses to do (read Romans 7:15, 18).

**How well are you keeping the law? Have you let go of the idea of earning salvation by the law? Is your life a good example of obeying the “righteousness [holiness] of the law”? If not, why not? What kind of excuses are you using for your wrong actions?**

## TUESDAY—AUGUST 24

### FLESH VERSUS SPIRIT (Romans 8:5, 6)

**Think about Romans 8:5, 6. What basic message comes to you from these verses? What do they say to you about how you are living your life?**

“After” (KJV) has almost the same meaning as “according to” (Greek *kata*). “Mind” here means “to set the

mind on.”<sup>11</sup> One group of people sets its mind on fulfilling natural desires. The other group of people sets its mind on the things of the Spirit and follows His leading. Because the mind determines actions, the two groups live and act differently.

**According to Romans 8:7, 8, what is the carnal mind not able to do?**

To have one’s mind set on fulfilling the desires of the flesh really means to be an enemy of God. A person who has this mind-set does not worry about doing the will (plan) of God. He or she even may be in rebellion (war) against Him. He or she may be openly challenging God’s law.

Paul wishes to point out that without Christ it is impossible to keep the law of God. Again and again, Paul returns to this theme (idea; topic). Paul says that no matter how hard a person tries, without Christ, he or she truly cannot obey the law.

Paul’s special purpose was to help the Jews believe that they needed more than their “Torah” (law). Their actions showed that they knew of God’s will, but they were guilty of the same sins that the Gentiles (non-Jews) were guilty of (Romans 2). The lesson of all this was that they needed the Messiah (chosen One). Without Him they would be slaves to sin, and they could not escape its control.

This was the answer Paul gave to the Jews. They could not understand why the laws God had given them in

11. to set the mind on—to decide to do something.

the Old Testament were not enough for salvation anymore. Paul admitted that what they had been doing was good. But he said they also needed to accept the Messiah who had now come.

**Think about your life in the past 24 hours. Were your actions of the Spirit or of the flesh? What does your answer tell you about yourself? If your actions were of the flesh, what changes must you make, and how can you make them?**

### WEDNESDAY—AUGUST 25

#### THE SPIRIT IN US (Romans 8:9–14)

Paul continues to talk about his theme. He shows the difference between the two possibilities that people face in how they live. We live either according to the Holy Spirit of God, or according to our sinful and carnal nature.<sup>12</sup> One leads to eternal life. The other leads to eternal death. There is no middle ground.

**What is promised in Romans 8:9–14 to those who surrender themselves fully to Christ?**

Life “in the flesh” is very different from life “in the Spirit.” Life “in the Spirit” is controlled by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8, He

is called the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit is a representative<sup>13</sup> of Christ. And through Him, Christ lives in the believer (verses 9, 10).

In these verses, Paul returns to a symbol (example) he used in Romans 6:1–11: baptism.<sup>14</sup> In baptism “the body of sin,” or the body that served sin, is destroyed. The “old man is crucified with him” (verse 6). But in baptism there is a burial and a resurrection<sup>15</sup> too. In the same way, the person who is baptized<sup>16</sup> rises to walk in the newness of life. This means that the person lets his or her old self and way of being die. This is a choice that we have to make day by day, moment by moment. God does not destroy human freedom. Even after the old man of sin is destroyed, it still is possible to sin.



**We must choose to put to death the old self every day.**

Even after conversion,<sup>17</sup> we still will

12. nature—the particular aspect or quality of something that makes the thing what it is; the heart and mind.

13. representative—someone who is chosen to act or speak for someone else.

14. baptism—the act of putting a person completely under water and then bringing him or her back up out of it. This means that Jesus has forgiven this person’s sins and has given him or her new life.

15. resurrection—being raised from the grave to life.

16. baptized—to be put completely under water and brought back up out of it. This shows that Jesus has forgiven this person’s sins and has given him or her a new life.

17. conversion—a process that changes a person from a hardened sinner to a faithful follower of Christ.

struggle against sin. The difference for the person with the Spirit is that he or she now has God's power for victory.<sup>18</sup> Now that the person has been freed from the terrible slave master of sin, he or she is called by God to never serve sin again.

**Think about this idea that the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from death, is the same one living in us, if we let Him do so. Think about the power that is there for us! What keeps us from taking advantage of<sup>19</sup> it as we should?**

### THURSDAY—AUGUST 26

#### ADOPTION<sup>20</sup> VERSUS SLAVERY (Romans 8:15)

**How does Paul describe the new relationship in Christ in Romans 8:15? What hope is found in this promise for us? How do we make it real in our own lives?**

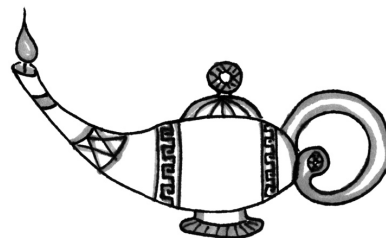
This new relationship means freedom from fear. A slave is in slavery. He always lives in fear of his master. His long years of slavery will get him nothing.

But this is not true with the person who accepts Jesus Christ. First, this person freely gives service. Second, he or she serves without fear because "perfect love drives fear away" (1 John

4:18, NIV). Third, adopted<sup>21</sup> as a son or daughter, the saved person becomes heir<sup>22</sup> to an inheritance (gift) of unlimited worth.

**According to Romans 8:16, what gives us the assurance (promise) that God has really accepted us as children?**

The life of the Spirit within us shows our acceptance. We should be aware that it is not best to go by feeling alone. But those who have followed the light of the Word will hear God's voice inside themselves, telling them that they have been accepted as children of God.



**Those who follow the light of the Word (Bible) will hear God's voice inside their hearts.**

Romans 8:17 tells us that we are heirs of God's promise. We are part of the family of God, as children and heirs. We receive a wonderful inheritance (gift) from our Father. It is not something we earn. It is given to us because we have accepted Jesus and become

18. victory—success in defeating (overcoming; winning the battle against) an enemy.

19. taking advantage of—to make full use of or to gain as much as possible from.

20. adoption—the act of God calling us and making us His children.

21. adopted—to have accepted God as our Father.

22. heir—the person who receives the possessions of someone who has died.

His children. This position is given to us through His grace and through the death of Jesus in our place.

**How close are you to the Lord? Do you really know Him, or do you just know about Him? What changes must you make in your life in order to have a closer walk with your Creator and Savior? What stops you? And why?**

### FRIDAY—AUGUST 27

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Ellen G. White, “Later English Reformers,”<sup>23</sup> pages 253–256, in *The Great Controversy [War Between Christ and Satan]*; “The Baptism,” page 113; “At Capernaum,” pages 253–256; “‘Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled,’” pages 671, 672, in *The Desire of Ages*; “Like Unto Leaven,”<sup>24</sup> pages 95–98, in *Christ’s Object Lessons*; “Letters to Physicians [Doctors],” pages 126–129, in *Testimonies*<sup>25</sup> for the Church, volume 8.

“The Son of God came from heaven to this world to put on human form as our leader. Jesus’ sacrifice<sup>26</sup> shows the fallen angels and the people of the unfallen worlds that with God’s help everyone may walk in the path of obedience to God’s commands. . . .

“Our price has been paid by our Savior. No one need be enslaved by Satan. Christ stands before us as our all-powerful helper.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 309.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Read again the quotes from Ellen G. White in Friday’s study. What hope can we take from these quotes for ourselves? More important, how can we make these promises of victory real in our own lives? Christ has given us so much. So, why do we keep falling into sin?
- ② What are useful, daily ways you can have your mind “set . . . on the things of the Spirit” (Romans 8:5, RSV)? What does that mean? What does the Spirit desire? What do you watch, read, or think about that makes this goal difficult to reach in your life?
- ③ Think more about this idea that we are either on one side or the other in the great war between Christ and Satan. There is no middle ground. What does this cold, hard fact tell us? How should this important truth influence<sup>27</sup> us in how we live and in the choices we make, even in the “small” things?

23. Reformers—people who make changes and improvements.

24. leaven—yeast or something added to dough to make it rise.

25. *Testimonies*—the writings of Ellen G. White.

26. sacrifice—Jesus’ death for us on the cross.

27. influence—to have power, or an effect, over persons or things.