

Real Change
Romans 8:1-13
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The story of the book of Romans, like the story of humanity, from nearly the beginning, is the story of the scourge of sin and death and God's remedy. Paul delivers a sustained and convincing case that everyone is both sinful and stands liable to the wrath of God. The good news, the gospel, is the story of God's remedy for our sin problem. But God's goal is not just to free us from the eternal consequences of sin; his goal is a people who live differently. God's objective is not only justification but also reclamation – reclaiming what is rightfully his, and restoring us to the true life he intended when he created us – a life in relationship with him and each other. But “how?” we ask. “How can I live the way the way Jesus wants me to live?” As we saw in chapter 7, you do not have to be a Christian long before you realize that becoming a Christian does not end the struggle with sin.

I believe it is 8:13 that summarizes the thesis of this section of Paul's letter: “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...” This chapter is describing sanctification, not justification; not how we become Christians but how we grow to be more like Christ.

First: The basis of holy living is justification; 8:1 The chapter begins with “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...” We belong to a holy God and are being prepared to reflect his character and will.

Second: I am motivated by the love of God and for God; 8:5 “Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.” God has placed within me a new set of desires – a mind set on the Spirit. God has given us a new nature.

Third: The power for holy living is the Spirit of God in us. 8:9 “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit...” The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the power that is now available and working in us.

Fourth: The responsibility for holy living is ours. 8:12-13 “Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.¹³ For 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...” God grants the basis, the motivation and the power but we must act.

Fifth: The result of holy living is eventual glory (as in 8:10-11 “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you.” The journey may be difficult but the destination is divine.

Based on what God has already done for us through Christ and by the empowering of the Holy Spirit we can increasingly live the life Jesus saved us to live.