

## **VICTORY OVER SIN – Romans 8:1-39 (Part-twelve of a sixteen-part study)**

It should come as no surprise to any of us that Paul begins Romans chapter eight by repeating our no condemnation status before God by simply saying this in v1 – **“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”** His purpose for doing this in Romans 7:1-6 is to mitigate the high expectations that a chapter like Romans 6 would generate. Paul knew that a Romans 6 lifestyle would not result in sinless perfection. And when our most sincere attempts at victorious Christian living, in harmony with Romans 6, will at times end in failure, it is good to know that our eternal/positional status before God, as a result of our justification through faith in Christ, is one of **“NO CONDEMNATION.”** Paul repeats that blessed truth in Romans 8:1, as well as in 8:31-34, in order to alleviate some of his personal frustration with his own mortality; knowing that he would not be alone among those reading this epistle throughout Church history.

When viewing Romans chapter eight as a whole, in its context with chapters six and seven, it would seem that the apostle is seeking to incorporate the truths that have been revealed thus far, in both of those previous chapters. The first half of Romans 8 (vv1-17a), emphasizes the glorious victory that can be ours, as we seek to employ the principles of Romans 6, empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit. As we learned earlier, the primary factor in the superiority of the New Covenant is that the Spirit of God indwells every believer at the very moment of our conversion to Christ. Paul actually crushes the foolish notion that this might not be the case, by writing this in v9 – **“However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”**

Speaking of crushing foolish notions, there is no passage of Scripture, anywhere in the Word of God, that completely obliterates the health/wealth gospel, like Romans 8:17b-39; where Paul provides us with the reminder that victorious Christian living does not in any way guarantee a trouble-free life (8:35-39). He indicates this at the very outset in 8:17b. If we are fellow heirs with Christ, we will experience a measure of suffering with Him here and now, in preparing us for being glorified with Him, hereafter (1 Peter 4:12-13). Yet, even in those frustrating struggles of life, the *“potential”* for victory over sin, in our union with Christ, will always be available to us.

Can the Christian disciplines which we practice have a role in fulfilling a Romans 6-8 lifestyle? Yes! But they must be viewed as *“supplements to,”* and NEVER as *“substitutes for”* living in harmony with what Paul has been seeking to teach us in this powerful and profound section of Romans. This bears repeating. **VICTORY OVER SIN CANNOT AND WILL NOT BE ACHIEVED IN ANY OTHER WAY, THAN BY THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE PRINCIPLES FOUND IN ROMANS CHAPTERS SIX THROUGH EIGHT.** Otherwise, we can easily run the risk of becoming a self-righteous Pharisee, relying on self-discipline rather than the power available to us in our union with Christ. For example, Psalm 119:11 confirms to us that memorization plays a role in resisting the temptation to commit sin (cf. Matthew 4:1-11), supplementing and dovetailing perfectly with the truths of Romans 6:1-11. This is why I would encourage every Christian to memorize Galatians 2:20 –

**“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”**

Memorizing and reciting this verse can become a significant factor in not only establishing but maintaining a Romans 6-8 lifestyle. It can serve as a reminder, when we may need it the most, that we are indeed dead to sin and alive to God through our union with Christ, in His death, burial and resurrection on our behalf. *Because of our union with Him, His victory over sin can be ours.*