



Helping Our Children Learn to Share the Gospel of God Part 1

**Growing Godly Families Series
Manual 10**

By

Duane L. Anderson

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**American Indian Bible Institute
Box 511
Norwalk, CA 90651-0511
www.aibi.org**

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Growing Godly Families Series

The “Growing Godly Families Series” is the result of weekly topics which were prepared and e-mailed over a period of years. This series is especially designed for those who are already Christian leaders; to give them Biblical principles for the development of additional godly spiritual leaders. Because they give Biblical principles for growth in spiritual leadership, they are also helpful for Christians that want to grow and become godly spiritual leaders.

Mark 10:43-45 says, “Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” In these verses, Christ taught that godly spiritual leaders do not have the attitudes of leaders in the world. Worldly leadership is based on power and authority and is designed to benefit the leader and place him above others. In contrast, godly spiritual leadership is designed to help every Christian reach their full potential in Christ. The following three statements give a summary of three styles of leadership.

If we drive people, we will drive them until they can get out of our way.

If we lead people, we will be able to lead them as far as we have gone ourselves.

If we serve people, we will help each person develop their full God-given potential and equip each person for the ministry that Christ has prepared for every Christian.

In the world, people often measure success by the amount of things that they accumulate before they die. However, they are unable to take any of those things with them when they die. Mark 8:36-37 says, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Success produces rewards until we die, but it produces nothing for eternity.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by our faithfulness and obedience. Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Effectiveness produces eternal rewards. Mark 10:29-30 says, “So Jesus answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time--houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life.’” 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” The Growing Godly Families Series is designed to make your life count for eternity by bringing glory to God.

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1.

Learning Why We Are Called Saints

Today, we are beginning a new series of topics about some of the key Biblical principles that we want to teach our physical and spiritual children from the book of Romans. Although Paul had not visited the city of Rome at the time that he wrote this letter to the Christians in that city, Paul knew many Christians who were living in the city of Rome. Many of these had probably been led to Christ by Paul in other cities and had later moved to the city of Rome. As a result, Paul had some key principles that he wanted to teach his spiritual children that lived in that city. In the same way, we also want to help our physical and spiritual children to learn, understand and apply these principles.

In Romans 1:1-6, we read, “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, *and* declared *to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ.” Paul began this letter with a very important lesson that we want to help our children to understand by the way we apply it in our own lives. We see that Paul called himself a bondservant of Jesus Christ. The word that is translated “bondservant” is the word that was used in the Roman Empire to describe a slave who was under the total control of his master.

However, the Bible gives the word a much fuller meaning. In Exodus 21:5-6, we read, “But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.” Here, we see that among the Jews a person could choose to become a slave of his master. Such a person was willingly making a choice to become a love slave and serve a master for whom he had a great love and respect. We want to show our children by our own example that we view our relationship to Christ as that of a love slave and that we want to serve the Lord for the rest of our lives because of the great love and respect that we have for Christ.

Paul also said that he had been called by Christ to be an apostle. The word that is translated “called” is used eleven times in the New Testament and three of those times are in these first seven verses in Romans one. In verses six and seven, we see that we are called by Christ to salvation and we are called to be saints. The word means to be called by Christ to salvation or to be divinely appointed to serve the Lord. In verses six and seven, we see that the Christians in Rome had received both kinds of calls. As Christians, we also have received both kinds of calls. We want to help our children understand that we have been called by Christ to salvation. In addition, we are divinely called to be saints. Paul said that he had been set apart or appointed by God to share the Gospel. We also want to help our children understand that we have been given this same appointment.

We see that the Gospel of God was promised in the Old Testament through the men that God had appointed as His prophets. The message of the Gospel is the message of Jesus Christ our Lord who has saved us from our sins. In Matthew 1:20-21, an angel told Joseph, “But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His

name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” Jesus was the One from the family of David that fulfilled the promise of God and has saved us from our sins.

We see that Christ was declared to be the Son of God with power. The word that is translated “declared” means *to define or determine*. In Romans 1:4, we see that God clearly defined that Christ was different from every other human by His resurrection. God said at the beginning of the ministry of Christ in Matthew 3:17, “And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” Then, God verified this statement by raising Christ from the dead after His crucifixion.

We also see that Christ showed His submission to the Father by carrying out His ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is also important to help our children understand as we help them grow in their understanding of how to serve the Lord effectively. Just as Christ showed His submission to the Father, we want to show our children what it means for us to be in submission to Christ. As we are in submission to Christ, He is able to work through our lives in the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 says, “‘But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.’” When we are in submission to Christ so that we minister in the power of the Holy Spirit, we see in Acts 4:31 that we will be able to speak the Word of God with boldness.

Paul said that it was through God that we have received grace. Ephesians 2:8-10 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” It is the grace of God that has provided our salvation. God is the One who gave us the faith to believe and our salvation had nothing to do with our own works. In addition, God also created us in Christ for good works. God prepared in advance the good works that He has for every single Christian. In the case of Paul, God had made the plan that Paul would be the apostle to the Gentiles. The appointment of Paul as the apostle of the Gentiles has resulted in making faith available to all nations because Paul was obedient in carrying out the ministry that the Lord had prepared for him.

In the same way, we see that we are also called of Jesus Christ. First, God has called each one of us to salvation through Christ. Second, God has prepared the good works that He has for each one of us as Christians. We want to help our children understand the fact that God called them both to salvation and to the good works that God has prepared for them once they place their faith in Christ. As physical or spiritual parents, we want to show them how to carry out the ministry that God has prepared for them. Ephesians 4:15-16 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” We see several key lessons that we want to share with our children as we show them how to put these verses in practice in their daily lives.

We want to help our children learn to speak the truth of the Word of God. We want to show them how to share the truth of the Word of God in love. We want to show them by our example what it means when it says that Christ is the head. We want to help them learn to function as a part of body of Christ. We want to help them understand that every Christian has something to supply to the rest of the body of Christ. We want to show them how to serve the Lord effectively. We want to help them understand that the body functions effectively when each person learns to do his or her share. We also see that such ministry by each Christian will cause the growth of the body because every person in the body is learning to edify or build up

the other parts of the body in love.

In order for our children to learn to function effectively in the body of Christ, Romans 1:7 says, “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” In this verse, we see that Paul mentioned two things about the Christians in Rome that are also true of our children once they become Christians. First, we see that every child of God is called the “beloved of God”. When we get to Romans 8, we will see that nothing can separate a Christian from the love of God. That chapter concludes in Romans 8:38-39 by saying, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” We want to help our children understand that no created thing can separate them from the love of God because they are the beloved of God.

Second, we see that every child of God is called to be a saint. Here, we see that all Christians are called by God to be saints. We are called by God to salvation. We are called by God to serve Him. Here, we see that we are called by God to be saints. The word “saint” means *to be set apart from sin and made holy*. Christ has forgiven all of our sins: past, present and future. 1 Peter 2:9 says, “But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” God has chosen us and called us His own special people. He tells us what He has called and chosen us to do.

He says that we are called to proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Here, we see that we are called to be saints so that we can share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others so that they can also be called out of the darkness of sin into the marvelous light of Christ. As we show our children how to share the Gospel with others, they also learn to proclaim the praises of Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn why we have been called saints.

Learning Why Paul Said He Was a Debtor

In our last topic, we saw that God has called us to be saints. We saw that we are to show our physical and spiritual children by our example that each Christian has been chosen to proclaim the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. In our topic today, we see that Paul points out that because of what Christ had done in his life, he was a debtor to Christ to share the message of the Gospel with others. In the same way, because we have also been called out of darkness into His marvelous light, we are also debtors to Christ to share the message of the Gospel with others. This is an important lesson that we want to share with our children by our example.

In Romans 1:8-10, we see that Paul prayed regularly for the Christians in Rome even though he had never been to Rome. Those verses say, “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you.” As Paul prayed for the Christians in Rome, the first thing that he did was give thanks for them. In particular, Paul gave thanks for the fact that the faith of the Christians in the city of Rome was being talked about throughout the Roman Empire.

One key lesson that we want to teach and model for our children is the importance of praying for Christians in other places. That is one of the things that will help them to begin to realize that the body of Christ is scattered throughout the world. Paul said that he prayed for the Christians in the city of Rome without ceasing. The word that is translated “without ceasing” means *to do something continually* and is used four times in the New Testament. The other three times are all in the book of 1 Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 says, “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.” Paul continually thanked God for the way that the Thessalonians had received the Word of God. Then, 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Pray without ceasing.” Here, we see that Paul urged the Thessalonians as new Christians to pray continually. We want to help our children learn to pray continually for Christians in other places.

As Paul prayed for the Christians in Rome, he also prayed continually that the Lord would give him the opportunity to visit the Christians in Rome. His prayer to God was to ask that if it was the will of God, God would open the way for him to go and visit the Christians in Rome. Paul explained why he wanted to come to Rome in Romans 1:11-12 where we read, “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established--that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.” Here, we see that Paul had two reasons why he wanted to visit the Christians in Rome. First, he wanted to share with them to help them be established. The word that is translated “established” means *to be strengthened*. Paul enjoyed the privilege of strengthening other Christians in whatever city they lived. Second, Paul looked forward to the fact that he and the Christians in Rome could be a mutual encouragement to each other. Here, we see that Paul also recognized that they would minister to him in his spiritual life.

Paul went on to explain why the Lord had not allowed him to visit the church in the city of Rome already. Romans 1:13-15 says, “Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among

you also, just as among the other Gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.” We see that Paul had actually planned to visit the city of Rome many times. However, he had been hindered or forbidden by the Lord. The same word is used in Acts 16:6 where we read, “Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.” Here, we see that God had hindered him from going to Asia at that time even though he later spent three years in Asia. In the same way, he had been prevented from going to Roman although he later spent two years there.

Paul explained the reason why he wanted to visit the city of Rome. Paul wanted to share the Gospel and see the Lord produce fruit there just as the Lord had done in each of the other cities where Paul had taken the Gospel. “Fruit” can talk about the fruit of the Spirit as in Galatians 5:22-23; it can talk about godly actions as it does in Romans 6:22. However, in this verse, it is talking about a third kind of fruit. Here, we see that Paul wanted to have the privilege of sharing the Gospel in the city of Rome and seeing others become Christians. That is the way that this word is used in Romans 16:5 where we read, “Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ.” Here, we see that Epaenetus was among the first to become a Christian when Paul preached the Gospel in Corinth and the surrounding area.

This is clearly explained in the next two verses. Paul said he was a debtor. He was a debtor to the Greeks and those who had accepted the Greek culture and its emphasis on worldly wisdom and education. He was also a debtor to those who knew nothing of the Greek language or culture. The Greeks called those who did not speak their language and learn their knowledge barbarians. Today, we would be saying a similar thing if we said that we were a debtor to those who had a great worldly education from well-known universities and to those who had never had any formal education. As a result, Paul said that he was a debtor both to those who followed Greek learning and to those who had never heard of Greek wisdom. Since Rome was the largest city in the Roman Empire, Paul was eager to go to that city to share the Gospel because he knew that there were many there who had not yet heard the Gospel.

Paul had a reason why he said that he was a debtor. When the Lord first sent Ananias to speak to Paul after the Lord had blinded him on the road to Damascus, Acts 9:15-16 says, “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.’” Here, we see that God had called Paul to take the Gospel to the Gentiles, to kings and also to the Jews. We also want to show our children by our example that we also all have the same debt as Paul. Matthew 28:19-20 says, “‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’ Amen.” We want to show our children that we also have a debt to share the Gospel with people of every nation and ethnic group.

Paul went on to say in Romans 1:16-17, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” Here, we see that Paul was not ashamed to share the Gospel of Christ wherever he went. He realized that Christ had not been ashamed of him even though he had persecuted the Christians. Hebrews 2:11 says, “For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Here, we are reminded that Christ is not ashamed of any Christian. Instead, Christ is eager to call all Christians his brethren.

Paul realized that the Gospel of Christ shows the power of God because it gives spiritual life to every person who believes. Ephesians 2:1-2 says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.” Each one of us that have become Christians was at one time spiritually dead. As a result, we all followed the actions of the world and participated in those actions. It was at that time that God showed the power of the Gospel by giving us spiritual life at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ. We see that the Gospel has the power to save both Jews and Gentiles.

The Gospel also reveals the righteousness of God. God is a holy God and cannot look at sin with approval. At the same time, He is a loving God that does not want any person to perish. 1 Peter 2:24 says, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.” Because the Gospel is the message of the death and resurrection of Christ, it shows that Christ had our sins placed on Himself as He hung on the cross. That is what makes it possible for God to be righteous when He forgives our sin because the penalty was paid in full by Christ. As 1 John 2:2 says, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The word “propitiation” means *that which satisfies*. When Satan accuses a Christian of sin, Christ as our Advocate says that He paid for our sin by shedding His blood on the cross. He says that we accepted His payment by repenting of our sin of unbelief and placing our faith in the payment made by Christ for our sin. God says, “I’m satisfied with the payment. Case dismissed!”

The fact that Christ paid our penalty made us just or righteous in the sight of the Father. Because we are saved by faith, we also live by faith. That is why we are told that “The just shall live by faith.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that we are now free to serve the Lord by faith. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to live by faith as you show others the love of Christ.

3.

Learn How Man Defiled His Spirit

In our last topic, we saw that Paul said that we want to show our physical and spiritual children that we are a debtor to share the Gospel, because of the fact that Christ has shown His love to us by choosing us to be His children. This great privilege to be chosen by Christ gives us the opportunity to be a love slave for Christ and show His love to others as we share the message of the Gospel. The world around us greatly needs that message because we are going to see in this topic and the following topics that all mankind is defiled by sin. In this topic, we will see how every person defiles his or her human spirit.

Romans 1:18-19 says, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them.” The word that is translated “wrath” in this verse speaks about the anger of God against sin. That anger is shown in several different ways. The greatest example of the wrath of God is given in Romans 5:9 where we read, “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” Here, we see that all of us who have placed our faith in Christ have been saved from the wrath of God by the payment that Christ made for sin with His blood.

God chose to send Christ to pay for sin so that all those who repent of their sin and place their faith in the death and resurrection of Christ will have their sins forgiven because Christ experienced the anger of God against sin on the cross for us. God sent Christ to make that payment for us because God has a great anger against sin but He loves the sinner. By sending Christ to make the payment for sin, God can be both holy and just. He is holy so sin must be judged. He is just because He is satisfied with the payment that Christ made for our sins and in our place. Here, in Romans one, though, we see a different way that God shows His anger against sin. In this chapter, we see that God shows His anger against sin by allowing mankind the freedom to let people see the consequences of their sins by giving them the freedom to violate every part of their human spirit.

God continues to reveal this form of wrath against sin by allowing mankind to continue to rebel and sin against Him. Isaiah 53:6 says, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” As a result, mankind continues to practice ungodliness by showing no reverence for God. Mankind does this by suppressing the truth and practicing every form of sin and unrighteousness. God has chosen to place within every person certain things so that we can know that God exists and is concerned about each one of us in our lives.

Romans 1:20 says, “For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Here, we see that every person from the time of the creation of the world has at least two ways they could know that God exists. Although these two things are not visible, they can be clearly understood by looking at God’s creation. First, by looking at the things that God has created, every person can know the eternal power of God. God showed His power when He created the universe. He continues to show His eternal power by causing the universe to function without destroying itself.

Second, by looking at the things that God has created, every person can recognize the Godhead. Paul told the people of Lystra in Acts 14:16-17, “Who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in

that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” Even though the nations have walked in their sinful ways, God continues to show His divine nature by doing good and providing the sun needed to produce crops that supply us with food and gladness. As a result, all people are without excuse because God is continually revealing Himself to all of us.

God has put in our human spirit five ways that we can know about God. First, as we have seen in the previous verses. He has given us natural light. We can know that God exists from His creation. However, most people choose to ignore the natural light that causes us to know that God exists. We will see in the following verses that mankind has also chosen to reject the other ways that our human spirit can know God. In addition to natural light, God also gave us a conscience, wisdom, sensitivity and creativity. Notice how the following verses show that mankind has also violated every other part of our human spirit.

Second, we have rejected our conscience. Romans 1:21 says, “Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” God placed a conscience within every human spirit so that we can know right and wrong. Instead of being thankful and giving glory to God for this conscience, God said that people become futile in their thoughts. The word that is translated “futile” means *empty, vain or foolish in their thoughts*. In 1 Timothy 4:2 we read, “Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.” As people begin to think empty, foolish thoughts, they reject their conscience until their sins no longer bother them.

Third, we have rejected the wisdom of God by turning from godly wisdom to worldly wisdom. Romans 1:22 says, “Professing to be wise, they became fools.” A fool is defined in Psalm 14:1 as one who says that there is no God. James 3:14-17 shows the difference between worldly wisdom and godly wisdom when those verses say, “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” The choice to turn from godly wisdom to worldly wisdom is the reason why people experience much confusion and many conflicts in their lives.

Fourth, we have replaced the sensitivity to God with sensitivity to self. Romans 1:23 says, “And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.” Instead of worshiping God any longer, mankind began to worship images of people, birds, animals and creeping things. Here, we see that when people reject the glory of God, they begin to create idols or other things that they begin to worship instead of the Creator. We want to help our children understand that the reason that people have created various things to worship is due to the fact that their human spirit feels the need to worship something. When the Creator is rejected, this causes people to substitute some other object to worship.

Instead of remembering that we are created in the image of God, such individuals try to create a new god in their own image. This leads these people to develop a false religion that pleases them. Paul explained this to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 where we read, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” Here, we see people look for false teaching that will let them continue to practice their own desires.

Fifth, we have replaced the creativity that God gave us to worship Him and serve others with

creativity that is self-centered, because it is now used to try and get our own needs met. Romans 1:24-25 says, “Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” Because of the rebellion of mankind against God, we see that God gave mankind up to uncleanness.

The word that is translated “uncleanness” is used to speak of sinful lusts that drive a person to commit sinful actions. Galatians 5:19-21 says, “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Here, we see the actions a person commits when their spirit is controlled by uncleanness.

When a person is controlled by uncleanness, that person will follow his or her own lusts. They will bring shame on themselves by the way that they mistreat their bodies. Here, we see that instead of using their creativity to serve the Lord, they use their creativity to think up new ways to sin and dishonor their bodies. They worship and serve themselves and their own evil desires. As a result, we see that because mankind turned away from God, the lives of people became filled with evil.

We want to help our children understand how people became so sinful in order that they understand the necessity of praying for people so that God will work in their hearts to turn them from sin and turn them back to God. We want to help our children realize that God will work in the hearts of others as we continually pray for them. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand how mankind defiled his spirit.

Learning Why Mankind Is Worthy of Judgment

In our last topic, we saw that every person has a human spirit, which includes five things that God has given to us to bring glory to Him. We see that mankind has violated all five parts of the human spirit: natural light, conscience, wisdom, sensitivity and creativity. We saw that we want to help our children understand how mankind violated each part. This will help our physical and spiritual children to understand why each person is worthy of judgment if that person continues to reject Christ until he or she dies. In our topic today, we are going to see why every person faces judgment.

Because of the rebellion against God by mankind, Romans 1:26-27 says, “For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.” The phrase “God gave them up” speaks of the fact that God has allowed people to commit the sins that they have chosen to commit. The word that is translated “vile” speaks of passions that are dishonorable. Then, the verses describe how both women and men have turned to dishonorable passions.

First, we see that women exchanged the natural passions for what is against nature. The word that is translated “passions” can speak either of good or sinful desires or emotions. In the New Testament, the word is only used three times and all three times in an evil sense. Colossians 3:5 uses the word when it says, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” The other use in 1 Thessalonians 4:5 says, “Not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God.” In each of these uses, we see that the word speaks of evil sexual passions.

Then, in verse 27, we see that throughout history men have turned from the natural desire for women to the unnatural desire for other men. God says that the result among men has been that they have committed unnatural acts with other men and commit that which is shameful. Here, we see that both women and men will choose to commit unnatural acts when they choose to fulfill the evil desires of their sin nature. Genesis 6:5-6 says, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.” The flood was the judgment that God brought on mankind in the days of Noah.

However, unnatural acts also produce their own consequences. The last phrase of verse 27 says, “Receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.” Here, we see that every choice has consequences. God gave Israel a promise in Exodus 15:26 which reads, “And said, ‘If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you.’” Good choices produce good consequences. God promised to protect from the diseases of Egypt for obedience. Evil choices produce evil consequences. Galatians 6:7-8 says, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” God will not be mocked. He will allow people to reap the consequences of their choices. We want to help our children learn to explain to others that their choices will always produce consequences.

We see that mankind in its sin and rebellion went on to make further choices. Romans 1:28 says, “And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.” The word that is translated “knowledge” in this verse is used in the New Testament to speak of things that are right and pleasing in the sight of God. Philippians 1:9-11 says, “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” Those who follow the Lord are encouraged to continue to grow in their knowledge of what is pleasing to God. In contrast, here we see God said that throughout history people have made the choice to reject any knowledge of things that are right in the sight of God.

As a result of the choices of mankind, verse 28 says that, “God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.” The word that is translated “debased or reprobate” means *a mind that does not stand the test*. It was often used to describe metals that were worthless because they had so many impurities. Titus 1:16 says, “They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.” Here, we see that a debased or reprobate mind is disqualified for every good work.

When God gives people over to a debased mind, they do things that are not fitting. Here, we see why the evil thoughts in the mind of a person without Christ will eventually become evil actions. God allows them the freedom to think evil thoughts. Then, God allows them the freedom to carry out those evil thoughts by the actions that they commit. This helps us to explain to our children why people commit such evil actions. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “‘The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?’” Without Christ, every person has a heart that is controlled by a sin nature. As a result, their thoughts are evil. As they continue to think those thoughts, their thoughts will begin to cause them to carry out the things that they are thinking.

We see the results in Romans 1:29-31 where we read, “Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful.” Here, we see the full results of a debased mind as we look at this list of sins that people commit because of their evil thoughts.

First, we see a whole list of sins that they commit against other people. These things include both things that they do against others and also things that they say against others. One of the things that we notice is that people also become haters of God as they commit these evil actions. That is why the first phrase in verse 28 said that they do not even like to retain God in their knowledge. They hate God and reject His Word because God clearly explains the meaning of sin many times in the Bible. For that reason, they become haters of God because of the fact that God says that these things are sin and people do not like to be confronted with their sin.

When people reject God in their thinking, they then become their own god and do the things that they do to please themselves. Two characteristics of this self-centered attitude are pride and boasting. This attitude of pride and boasting is clearly seen back in Genesis 4:23 where we read, “Then Lamech said to his wives: ‘Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me.’” Here, we see that Lamech was proud of the fact that he got even with a person who had hurt him. He boasted about the fact that he had gotten even by killing a young man.

When people reject God from their thinking, they quickly begin to reject any other person who has authority over them. As a result, we see that mankind quickly becomes disobedient to parents. Then, we see five common characteristics of people that have rejected authority. First, they become undiscerning. The word “undiscerning” means that they are *without understanding and lack wisdom*. Romans 1:21 says, “Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” We saw in our study of that verse that their foolish heart was talking about their conscience.

Second, we see that those who reject authority become untrustworthy. This means that their word means nothing because they do not keep the promises that they make. Third, we see that they become unloving. The word that is translated “unloving” can also be translated *unsociable or inhuman*. Such a person has no concern for others but his only desire is to please himself. The only other place that this word is used is in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 where we see that this will be a characteristic of many people in the last days. Fourth, we see that those who reject authority become unforgiving. They continue to hold the sins of others against them. Fifth, they show no mercy to others.

Romans 1:32 says, “Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.” Here, we see that man in rebellion against God gives approval to the people who are committing any or all of the sins mentioned in these past several verses. This helps us to understand why mankind is worthy of judgment because God must judge all sin. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others why judgment must come to all those who reject the payment that Christ made on the cross for their sins. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children grow in the understanding of how to explain the necessity of judgment to others.

Learning Why God Does Not Respect Persons

In our last topic, we saw why mankind deserves judgment. When people totally turn away from God, God will allow them to carry out the evil desires of their hearts. Many who turn to the evil desires of their hearts reach the point where they also give approval to others who are doing the same thing. We saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain why it is necessary for God to bring judgment on all those who have chosen to carry out the evil desires of their hearts. However, there are some people that try to say that they have lived a good life. We are going to see in our topic today that they also commit sin and so they also face the judgment of God.

Romans 2:1-2 says, “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.” Here, we see that God now begins to speak to those who think they are good enough that they can judge others for their evil. The word that is translated “inexcusable” means *without defense or excuse*. The only other place it is used in the New Testament is in Romans 1:20 where we read, “For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Here, we see that those who judge others are themselves without excuse.

The next phrase explains why those who judge others are without excuse. God says that people who judge others are actually condemning themselves. The reason why this is true is due to the fact that they also practice the same things. Christ gave an illustration in Luke 18:10-14 where we read, “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, “God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.” And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Although the Pharisee might not have outwardly committed the same sins as the tax collector, his self-righteous attitude was just as sinful as the sins that the tax collector had practiced.

We see that God is the One who will judge according to truth. God will judge very evil persons for their sins. However, God will also judge self-righteous persons for their pride because God always judges according to truth. Pride is no less a sin than the worst sin mentioned in chapter one. In fact, James 2:9-10 says, “But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all.” The person who has an attitude of pride is just as guilty as a person who has lived a total life of sin.

That is why Romans 2:3-5 says, “And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” Any person who is guilty of even one sin will not escape the judgment of God. God told Adam in Genesis 2:17, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you

shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” It only took one sin to bring immediate spiritual death.

God also says that those who judge others are rejecting the goodness of God. The word that is translated “goodness” speaks of moral goodness or integrity. The word that is translated “forbearance” means *to wait to give a person what he or she deserves*. This means that God waits a lifetime to bring judgment instead of judging sin immediately. The word that is translated “longsuffering” means *patience or slowness in judging sin*. In 1 Peter 3:20, we read, “Who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.” Here, we see that God waited the entire time that Noah was building the ark before He brought judgment on the sins of the people of that day even though the thoughts of their hearts were evil continually.

God shows this goodness to give people time to come to repentance. Those who do not repent show that they despise the goodness of God. However, those whose hearts are controlled by hardness and an attitude of unrepentance are actually gathering up the anger that God has against sin; they will receive the anger that God has against sin when the day of judgment comes and they experience the righteous judgment of God. They will receive that judgment in the day of judgment because they have rejected the payment that Christ made for their sins by His death on the cross.

When the day of judgment comes, Romans 2:6-9 says, “who *will render to each one according to his deeds*’: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.” Here, we see that we will all stand before God for judgment. However, the judgment of Christians and the judgment of unbelievers will be very different.

In 1 Corinthians 3:11-13, we see that the works of Christians will be tested to see if they have eternal value or not. Those verses say, “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.” As Christians, we have already been promised eternal life. Our works that have no eternal value will be burned up like wood, hay and stubble because they cannot be rewarded. However, our works that have eternal value will be like gold, silver and precious stones and they will be purified by that fire so that they produce eternal rewards for each of us as Christians.

In contrast, all those who have failed to repent of their sins because they were self-seeking and chose not to obey the truth will be judged by their works. Revelation 20:12-15 says, “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Here, we see that every person who does evil and does not repent will experience eternal judgment. It will not matter whether a person is Jew or Gentile. It will not matter whether a person has committed many sins or few sins. They will all experience the eternal judgment of God against sin.

Luke 6:45 says, ““A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”” The person who has not repented of sin cannot do good works that have eternal benefit. In contrast, each one who has repented of their sin has a good treasure in his or her heart because every Christian has been given the Holy Spirit as the down payment and guarantee of our salvation. As a result, as we yield our lives to the Holy Spirit, every Christian is able to bring forth good works.

We also read more about the rewards that God has promised to all of us who have repented of our sin of unbelief and placed our faith in Christ. Romans 2:10-11 says, “But glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.” God is anxious to reward every person who has repented of their sin and placed their faith Christ. It does not matter if that person is a Jew or a Gentile. God will reward each one who works what is good. The word that is translated “good” means *that which is good in its character and beneficial in its effects*. That is why our good works have eternal value.

We see that God promises three things to those who allow the Holy Spirit to work through their lives to produce works of eternal value. First, God promises to give us glory. The word “glory” means *the honor resulting from a good opinion*. Today, we are to give glory to God. When we are rewarded, God is going to give glory to us. Second, we see that God will also give us honor. Honor means that God places great value on the things that the Holy Spirit does through our lives as we yield to Him. Third, we will experience peace throughout all eternity.

We also see that the Jews will be judged first so the Jews will also be rewarded first because they were the first to receive the Word and promises of God. However, all believers can look forward to that time of rewards because there is no partiality with God. He is going to reward every believing Jew and Gentile according to our works because there is no partiality with God. We want to help both our physical and spiritual children understand that there is no partiality with God. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why God does not respect any person over another.

Learning Why All People Have the Law Written in Their Hearts

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that there is no partiality with God. Those who have rejected the salvation that Christ provided for us will all be judged by their sins whether they are Jews or Gentiles. In contrast, all those who have repented of their sin of unbelief and placed their faith in Christ will be rewarded for all of their works that have eternal value. Both Jewish and Gentile believers will be rewarded according to their works. Today, we are going to see that all people have the law written in their hearts.

Romans 2:12 says, “For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law.” Many people ask the question, what will happen to those people who have never heard the Word of God and do not know the law of God? That is an important question that is answered in these verses. God says that those who have never heard the law will perish even though they have never heard the law. Those who have heard the law and committed sin by breaking the law will be judged by the law. Here, we see that all people will be judged for their sins whether they have heard the law of God or not.

The reason why all will be judged whether they have heard the law of God or not is explained in the following verses. Romans 2:13-15 says, “(for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*).” First, we see that God talks about those who have heard the law of God.

Verse 13 says that hearing the law will never justify any person in the sight of God. James 1:22-24 says, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.” Many of the people who hear the Word of God every Sunday have no idea how to put the Word of God into practice in their daily lives Monday through Saturday. For part of these people, this is due to the fact that they are spiritually dead and have no spiritual life in them. Here, we see that James says such people are like a person who looks at himself in a mirror and then as he walks away from the mirror immediately forgets what kind of a man he was. Such a person has no desire to be changed by the Word of God.

In order for a person to have a desire to be obedient to the Word of God, they must have spiritual life. Ephesians 2:1 says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” The person who is still dead in their trespasses and sins is totally unable to have a real desire to obey the Word of God. When a person becomes a Christian, this verse says that they now have spiritual life. Once a person has spiritual life, only then will that person begin to have a desire to be obedient to the Word of God. However, even those who have spiritual life need to be helped to understand that they will only have the power to be obedient to the Word of God as they learn to yield to the Holy Spirit. That is the only way that anyone can be obedient to the Word of God.

However, many Gentiles have not even heard the Word of God. In spite of the fact that many Gentiles have never heard the Word of God, we see that by nature people try to carry out certain

parts of the law. Here, we see that within every person is a sense of right and wrong. As a result, even cultures that have never heard the Word of God usually develop laws against such things as stealing and murder. They also have positive values in their cultures such as being people of their word or having a sense of justice. As a result, God says that they are a law unto themselves.

Verse 15 says that such people show the work of the law written in their hearts. Judges 21:25 says, "In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes." Of course, some people did much evil when they did what was right in their own eyes. However, there were others who tried to do what was right; because they were not being taught the Word of God, they tried to do what was right in their own eyes. This showed that people have the work of the law written in their hearts even when they have never heard the Word of God.

In addition to having the law written in their hearts, people who have never heard the Word of God also have a conscience that bears witness to them when they do things that are wrong. This is easily seen in a young child. Even though they have never been taught that certain things are wrong, they will try to hide from others when they do those things. Then, when someone questions them about what they have done, they will suddenly begin to look down instead of looking the person in the eye, because of their guilt.

However, as children grow older and continue to do the things that they know are wrong, they reach a point where their consciences bother them less and less. That is why 1 Timothy 4:1-2 says, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron." Here, we see that many people reach a point where their consciences no longer bother them. However, all people have a conscience that bothers them when they do certain things when they are younger.

Verses 15 also points out the fact that the thoughts of all people either accuse them or excuse them. The word that is translated "thoughts" in this verse is only used one other place in the New Testament. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says, "Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." In this verse, the word is translated "arguments". The word means *a judgment or a decision that the conscience passes*. Here, we see that the conscience tells a person that the person is guilty. The person may try to ignore these thoughts. However, these thoughts continue to accuse or excuse the person.

Here, we see that past choices to sin are not completely erased from the mind. Instead, those sins continue to come back to the mind. When the person tries to reject or excuse those thoughts, their thoughts seek ways to justify the sinful choices that they have made. As a result, their thoughts are actually trying to tell their conscience that they are not guilty. This is why some people reach a point where their conscience no longer bothers them. As we saw in a previous paragraph, they have seared their conscience so that they no longer feel guilt. Such a person is following the pattern of Pharaoh in the time of Moses when he continued to harden his heart.

However, for many people, the thoughts of a person continue to accuse him or her. When this happens, such people often make a second choice. Proverbs 31:6-7 says, "Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those who are bitter of heart. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." Such people may turn to alcohol or some other pain killer to help them forget their accusing thoughts. Proverbs 15:13 says, "A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken." Proverbs 17:22

says, “A merry heart does good, *like* medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones.” Then, Proverbs 18:14 adds, “The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?” Here, we see that a person develops a broken or smitten spirit that continues to accuse the person for years. Such people often turn to an addiction to try and help them forget.

As a result, when I am working with a person who has an addiction, I often tell them, “When you would like to talk about the thing that you are trying to forget, I will be glad to listen.” Often, such people will tell me at a later time that they are ready to talk about the thing or things they are trying to forget. This has provided many opportunities to lead people to Christ. When talking with such people, I often begin with Genesis 2:16-17, where we read, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” Then, I ask the question, “Did Adam die that day?” That provides the opportunity to explain that spiritual death is separation from God. Then, I use passages like Ephesians 2:1, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins,” to point out that the only way to heal wounds to the spirit is to receive spiritual life because wounds can never heal in a dead person.

Romans 2:16 says, “In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.” This verse points out the fact that at the final judgment God will judge those secret thoughts of the heart for those who have rejected the payment of Christ for sin. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to share the Gospel both with those who are excusing their thoughts and also those who are having their thoughts accuse them. When people that are not Christians begin to realize that their thoughts are not hidden from God, this will often cause them to become open to the Father as He draws them to Christ. It is a great joy to help our children see how the Lord works through their lives as they share the Gospel with people to whom the Lord is bringing conviction. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand that all people have the law written in their hearts.

Learning Why the Jews Thought They Were Right With God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn why all people have the law written in their hearts. We saw that when people have a conscience that accuses them that that they do one of two things. Some may continue to reject their conscience until they sear the conscience and no longer feel guilt. Many will have their conscience continue to accuse them and may turn to a painkiller to try and forget the guilt that they feel. Today, we are going to see that many of the Jews living in the time of the New Testament thought that they were right with God. We are going to see that God also showed that they were guilty of sin.

Romans 2:17-20 says, “Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.” In the time of the New Testament, many Gentiles came to the Jewish synagogues to hear the Jews teach from the Old Testament. This caused the Jews to think that they were living good lives because they knew the Word of God in the Old Testament.

We see several key things that help us to understand the Jews in that day. First, we see that the Jews rested in the law. Many of them thought that they were keeping the law of God. They were like the rich young ruler that asked Christ in Luke 18:18, “...Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Here, we see that he thought that it was his right to inherit eternal life because he worked hard to do what was right and keep the law. In fact, he thought that he had successfully kept the law. Such Jews would boast about their relationship with God.

Because the Jews knew about God, they thought that they knew the will of God. They gave their approval to the things that they had learned from the Word of God. They felt that they had been fully instructed by others so that they understood the law. That is why James later wrote to the Jews in James 1:22, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” Many of the Jews had deceived themselves. That is why Christ told Nicodemus in John 3:3, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” Christ knew that Nicodemus needed to understand how to have spiritual life.

In fact, many of the Jews thought that they were helping the Gentiles as they taught them the law and encouraged them to follow the law. They were persuaded and convinced within themselves that they were actually serving as guides to the blind Gentiles. They thought that they were bringing spiritual light into the darkened hearts of the Gentiles by teaching them the law. They felt that they could teach those who lacked knowledge of the Word of God. In fact, they thought that they were effective instructors as they taught those that they thought were like infants. They really thought that they had perfect knowledge of God and could teach the truth that was in the law.

However, Romans 2:21-23 says, “You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?” It was true that the Jews knew the Old Testament law and were able to teach it to others. Christ said in Matthew 23:3-4, “Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do

according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.” They thought that knowledge of the law was sufficient. They did not think about the fact that they were not obeying the very things that they were teaching others.

The Jews were teaching others that it was wrong to steal while at the same time they were quick to steal from the widows and others who were unable to defend themselves. Matthew 23:14 says, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.” They thought that they were smart businessmen when they stole the house of a widow and then prayed a long prayer for the widow asking the Lord to help the widow find a place to live. In John 8, the scribes and Pharisees were accusing a woman who they said they had caught in the very act of adultery. Since they only brought the woman, the one who committed the adultery with her was probably standing there and pointing an accusing finger at the woman. They would say that the reason they looted the temples of idols was due to the fact that the worship of idols was sin, even though they kept what they took from those temples for themselves. In fact, they were guilty of dishonoring God by the various ways that they were breaking the law.

We see how the actions of the Jews caused many of the Gentiles to respond. Romans 2:24-27 says, “For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,’ as it is written. For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, *even with your* written *code* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law?” The fact that the Jews taught the law and then broke the law themselves caused many of the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of God.

The Jews thought that they were right with God because of the fact that they were circumcised. God said that circumcision was profitable to those who had their trust in the Lord and were keeping the law as a result. However, for those who did not trust in the Lord and continued to disobey the Word of God, we see that their circumcision meant nothing. In contrast, Paul wrote that a Gentile that had his trust in the Lord so that he had the Holy Spirit to give him the strength to be obedient to the Lord would be counted as circumcised by the Lord even though he had not been physically circumcised. He said that the person who had his or her trust in the Lord would judge those who were circumcised but continued to break the Old Testament law. Here, we are reminded of the fact that God had given the Jews some great blessings, but those blessings meant nothing to those who continued to live in their sins.

That is why Romans 2:28-29 says, “For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.” Here, we see that God wanted every person to understand the real source of blessing. In Genesis 17:10-11, God told Abraham, “This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.” God had given Abraham some very special promises that were both physical and spiritual. God wanted the descendents of Abraham to enjoy these promises.

However, we see here that the outward circumcision was to really be a picture of the obedience to God in the heart. God spoke to Samuel in 1 Samuel 16:7 and said, “But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused

him. For *the Lord does not see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” Here, we see that the Lord looks at the heart of each person and not at outward circumcision.

The Jews, as a nation, have enjoyed some of the physical blessings of being the covenant people of God but no one can enjoy spiritual blessings unless that person has his or her sins forgiven. That is why Romans 10:9-10 says, “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” All people must believe the promises of God from their hearts in order to enjoy the spiritual blessings that God has promised. This inward belief is the circumcision of the heart.

We also see that the circumcision of the heart comes from the Holy Spirit and not from just knowing the law of God. At the moment we repent and place our faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit comes into our human spirit. Romans 8:16 says, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” The Jews considered themselves the children of God because they were descendents of Abraham and Abraham had received the promises of God. However, when we place our faith in Christ we become true children of God. Someone once said, “God has many children but no grandchildren.” The Jews did not become the children of God just because of the fact that they were descendents of Abraham. Each Jew needed to come to God by faith in Christ.

We also see that all those who come to God through Christ will receive the praise of God. This is due to the fact that God declares each person who comes to Him through Christ to be righteous, because He places the righteousness of Christ on each one of us when we come to Him in repentance and faith. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain to all people how to become right with God.

8.

Learning What Advantages the Jews Have

In our last topic, we saw that in the time of the New Testament, many of the Jews thought they were right with God because they taught the law of God to others even though they did not obey it themselves. Some people today do the same thing. They think that they are right with God because they teach the Word of God to others even though they have never repented of their sin of unbelief and placed their faith in the fact that Christ died for their sin and the Father showed that He was satisfied with the payment that Christ made by raising Christ from the dead. Today, we are going to see that God has blessed the Jews with many blessings because He originally gave them the Word of God.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the advantages that God gave to the Jews by giving them the Word of God. Romans 3:1-2 says, “What advantage then has the Jew, or what *is* the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.” We see that God gave Abraham the sign of circumcision in Genesis 17. In Genesis 17:10, God said, ““This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised...”” Then, in Genesis 17:14, God said, ““And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”” Circumcision was and is a sign to all Jews that God would keep the covenant that He made with Abraham.

The most important blessing that the Jews received was the fact that God committed to them the oracles of God. The word that is translated “oracles” means *a divine utterance from God*. The word is used four times in the New Testament and each time it speaks of the Word of God that was given in the Old Testament. In Acts 7:38, it refers to the law that was given to Moses at Mount Sinai. That verse says, ““This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and *with* our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us...”” The writer of the book of Hebrews said in Hebrews 5:12, “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.” The Jewish Christians had grown up with the Old Testament but they had not grown to spiritual maturity and needed someone to explain the first principles of the Word of God.

Finally, Peter wrote in 1 Peter 4:10-11, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” Here, we see that if God has given us a speaking gift, we are to speak the Word of God. If God has given us a serving gift, we are to serve in the strength or ability that God supplies.

The fourth use of the word “oracles” is here in Romans 3:2. In this verse, we see that God gave the Jews the Old Testament. This gave them a great advantage over every other nation on the earth. As a result of having the Old Testament, they knew exactly what God said is right and exactly what God said is sin. As a result, they had the will of God explained clearly to them. They could see that they were to come to God by faith. They could understand that God said that they could show their faith by offering sacrifices as a covering for sin until Christ came to take away sin by His death and resurrection.

Even though some of the Jews did not believe, they at least knew what was right and what was wrong. Romans 3:3-4 says, “For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: ‘That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged.’” Some of the Jews did not believe what God said in the Old Testament. Their unbelief did not make the faithfulness of God useless. Instead, the Old Testament showed the faithfulness of God. The Word of God showed that God always spoke the truth.

At the same time, the Old Testament showed that every person was a liar. Psalm 51:4 says, “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in Your sight--That You may be found just when You speak, *and* blameless when You judge.” David realized that his sin with Bathsheba was really sin against God. The Word of God showed that God is just. The Word of God showed that God is blameless when He judges. Since the Jews had the Old Testament to help them know what was right and wrong, none of them could say they did not know what God said about sin. Instead, they could know that they were condemned by the Word of God because they knew what was right and what was wrong.

Romans 3:5-6 says, “But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?” The fact that every one of the Jews had broken the commandments in the Old Testament showed that they were not right with God. The fact that the law showed that every Jew had broken the commandments of God also showed that God was righteous when He brought judgment on sin. Once a person knows what is right and what is wrong and the consequences of those choices, no one can say that God is unjust when He brings those consequences.

This is illustrated with the very first sin in the Bible. Genesis 2:16-17 says, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” Adam was told that the only sin that he could commit was to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He was also told the consequence of that sin would be that he would die the very day he ate that fruit. Physical death is the separation of the body from the soul and the spirit. Spiritual death is the separation of man from God.

Genesis 3:7-8 makes it clear that Adam and Eve immediately experienced spiritual death or separation from God the very day that they sinned even though Adam did not experience physical death until 930 years later. Those verses say, “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.” First, Adam and Eve tried to cover their shame before God. When that did not work, they tried to hide from God. This provided clear evidence that they experienced immediate spiritual death as soon as they sinned. God was certainly not unjust to bring the judgment that He promised.

Here, we see Paul answered the charge that he knew some people would try to make. Romans 3:7-8 says, “For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? And *why* not say, ‘Let us do evil that good may come’?--as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.” Paul said that some would say that the truth of God would be clearly revealed if Paul told a lie. It is true that his lie would certainly have shown that God told the truth.

However, Paul went on to point out that God would certainly be righteous to judge him as a

sinner and condemn him for his lie. His lie would make him guilty before God and it would be right for God to judge him. Paul had to say this because of the false charges that were being made against him by some of the false teachers. Romans 5:20-6:2 says, "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" Paul made it very clear that Christians should not continue in sin because of the grace of God. Instead, as Christians, we are to realize that we are dead to the power of sin over our lives.

Paul said that the false teachers who were changing the statements of Paul to provide an excuse for their own sins were facing a just judgment. The Old Testament made it clear that Jewish teachers that taught such teachings were guilty before God. They had no excuse for their sin because the law said in Exodus 20:16, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Moses had reminded all of the people of that law when he reviewed the law forty years later. Deuteronomy 5:20 says, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." No Jew could say he did not know the law.

We want to help our children understand why God said that the Jews had a great advantage over the Gentiles during the time of the Old Testament. They had the written law of God so that they knew exactly what was right and what was wrong. They also knew the consequences for breaking the law. However, they chose to break the law in spite of that knowledge. As a result, we want to show our children how to explain that every person is guilty before God even if they had the written law of God.

Learning Why We Are All Guilty Before God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why God said that the Jews had a great advantage over the Gentiles in the time of the Old Testament. They had the written Word of God to help them know exactly what is right and what is wrong. As a result, they could not say that they did not know what God said is sin or what God said about the consequences of sin. In our topic today, we are going to see that God summarizes all that has been covered in the first part of Romans by showing that all are guilty because all have sinned against God.

Romans 3:9-12 says, “What then? Are we better *than they*? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.’” Paul also wanted to make it clear that even those who have become Christians were not better than the people who are still living in sin and rebellion against God. We were not better than those who have not yet believed. We have seen clearly that all people, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, are guilty in the sight of God. We were just as guilty until we received the forgiveness of our sins by placing our faith in the fact that Christ paid for those sins.

Verses 10 through 12 are actually taken from Psalm 14:1-3 where we read, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘*There is no God.*’ They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, There is none who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; *there is none who does good, No, not one.*” Here, we have a great description of the character of man.

First, we see that there is not a single righteous person. Second, we see that no person understands. Matthew 13:13-15 said that Isaiah had predicted this lack of understanding. ““Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.’”” There has been no human in history that has understood the salvation that God has provided without God giving that understanding.

Third, we see that there is no person who seeks after God. Romans 1:21-23 says, “Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.” Here, we see the same thing that was written in Psalm 14. Instead of seeking God, mankind immediately chose to turn aside from God and create a false god in the image of sinful man or in the image of a bird, animal or creeping thing. That is why God said that all people have become unprofitable. That is why God said there is not a single person who seeks the good which God has made available through the salvation provided by Christ through His death and resurrection.

Instead of man seeking God, John 6:44 tells us that no one will come to Christ unless the Father

draws him. That verse says, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” Instead, the character of man is described in Isaiah 53:6 where we read, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” This describes the true character of mankind.

Next, we are given a description of the talk or conversation of man. Romans 3:13-14 says, “Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” These verses are quoted from Psalm 5:9, Psalm 140:3 and Psalm 10:7. Here, we see that people show the evil in their hearts by what they speak. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” Proverbs 15:28 says, “The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.” The mouth of the wicked pours out evil because the heart is evil. The words that evil people speak are like poison. These words are full of cursing and bitterness. They show what is in their heart by what they say.

Then, Romans 3:15-17 shows us the actions or conduct of people without Christ. Those verses say, “Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known.” These verses are taken from Isaiah 59:7-8 where we read, “Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths. The way of peace they have not known, and *there is* no justice in their ways; they have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace.” Verse 15 points out the fact that people are quick to get even by hurting and destroying other people.

Verse 16 says that destruction and misery are in their ways. Here, we see that because people seek to satisfy themselves, they do not even think about the fact that they are causing pain and suffering to others. Verse 17 says that because all people turned away from God it was impossible for anyone to find peace without God. As a result, it is impossible for people without Christ to experience the peace of God in their lives since no one can know God until that person comes to God through Christ.

Because the character, the talk and the actions of people are against God, Romans 3:18 says, “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” In Psalm 36:1, we read, “An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked: *there is* no fear of God before his eyes.” David made it clear a thousand years before Christ came to this earth that there is no fear of God in the eyes and hearts of people. This lack of reverence or fear of God shows that people try to leave God out of their lives until the Father works in their lives to draw people to Christ.

That is why Romans 3:19 says, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” Here, we see that the law is designed to show that every person without Christ is guilty before God and has broken the law of God. That is why it is important to understand the purpose of the law. Galatians 3:24-25 says, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” The purpose of the law is to cause all people to realize that they are guilty before God so that they can come to the Father through Christ. Once we come to Christ and place our faith in Him, we are justified by faith. As a result, from that moment on we are no longer under the law.

The law causes every mouth to be stopped. This means that no person can deny that he or she has sinned. The rich young ruler was one who tried to make such a claim. Christ first asked him about the second part of the law that deals with man’s relationship to other people. The

rich young ruler answered in Luke 18:21, “And he said, ‘All these things I have kept from my youth.’” We read what happened next in Luke 18:22-23, “So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, ‘You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.” Christ knew that the money of the young ruler was his god. As a result, when Christ asked him to turn from his god of money to Christ, the rich young ruler went away sad. The law showed that the rich young ruler was guilty and he could say nothing more.

Romans 3:20 says, “Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” This verse makes it clear that it is impossible for any person to be made just in the sight of God by keeping the law because it is impossible for any person to keep the law. All are guilty of breaking the law of God. As a result, all people who have rejected Christ will be without excuse when they stand before God at the judgment.

The purpose of the law is again summarized in this verse as it says that by the law is the knowledge of sin. One day all those who reject Christ will stand before God to be judged for their works. Revelation 20:12-13 says, “And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.” Their works will show that they are all guilty of breaking the law of God. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain to others why every person who has rejected the salvation provided by Christ will be guilty before God when they are judged by their works. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn how to explain why all are guilty before God.

Learning What Justification Means

In our last topic, we saw the summary of the first three chapters of the book of Romans. In that summary, we saw that every person is guilty before God because all have sinned. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand and be able to explain why all people are guilty before God. In our topic today, we are going to see that once people understand that they are guilty before God then we can begin to explain to them how to be made right with God. We begin by helping them to understand what justification means.

Romans 3:21-22a says, “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.” We have seen that the law shows that every person has sinned and is guilty before God. That means that the law cannot show the righteousness of God. Instead, the righteousness of God has to be revealed in some other way. However, God does show us that He is righteous because He has no sin. The righteousness of God is revealed throughout the Law and the Prophets in the Old Testament.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses wrote a song that includes a strong statement about the righteousness of God. Deuteronomy 32:4 says, “*He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.*” God is the solid Rock that will always stand. The reason why this is true is due to the fact that all of His works are perfect. All of the ways are God are just and right. God is a God of truth. There is no injustice in any of the works of God. God is the One who is Righteous. God is the One who is upright. Throughout the Old Testament, we see that all of the works of God are just and right.

God chose to make that righteousness available to every person who would place their faith in Christ and the payment that He made for our sin on the cross. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” In this verse, we see that God placed all of our sins on Christ as Christ hung on the cross. In fact, for three hours there was darkness over the whole land because God cannot look on sin with favor. Mark 15:34 says, “And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” God is righteous and had to forsake Christ during the time that our sin was placed on Him. That is what made it possible for the Father to place the righteousness of Christ on us at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ.

Romans 3:22b-26 says, “For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” There is no difference between one person and another because one has committed many sins and another fewer sins. The key thing is that all have sinned and because of that sin all have come short of the glory of God.

That is why it was necessary for the Father to be able to declare us righteous by His grace and not through our works. The Father is able to declare us righteous because of the fact that we were redeemed by Christ. Redemption has three parts. Christ bought us back from the penalty of sin. Second, Christ set us free. Third, Christ removed us from further sale so that we could

not be sold back into the bondage of sin again. The word “propitiation” means *that which satisfies*. The form of the word that is used here is only used one other place in the New Testament. Hebrews 9:5 says, “And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.” In this verse, it is translated “mercy seat”. In the Old Testament, the high priest once a year placed blood on the mercy seat first as a covering for his own sins and then more blood as a covering for the sins of the people. Christ presented His blood to the Father and His blood took away sin once for all instead of just covering sin. That is why our sins were blotted out at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ.

The Father demonstrated His righteousness by accepting the blood of Christ as the payment for our sin. The forbearance of God meant that God could wait to judge the sins of those who came to God by faith in the Old Testament. God demonstrated His righteousness by waiting until Christ had paid the penalty for sin by His blood before God judged the sin of those who had shown faith in God in the Old Testament. At the present time, God demonstrates His righteousness by accepting and being satisfied with the payment that Christ has already made for our sins. As a result, God is just. That means that the penalty for sin must be paid. God is able to accept the payment by Christ for our sin and in our place when we place our faith in Christ. God also declares us justified or made righteous because He places the righteousness of Christ on us at the moment that we place our faith in Christ.

Romans 3:27-28 says, “Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.” Here, we see that no Christian can boast about the salvation he has received, because it is based entirely on what Christ and the Father have chosen to do. Not a single person can boast and say that he or she has kept the law of God. Not a single person can say that they have worked to earn their salvation. Boasting is totally excluded. Instead of being saved by keeping the law or by good works, we must be saved totally by faith. In fact, Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Here, we see that even our faith to believe was given to us as a gift by God.

This means that we are justified or declared righteous in the sight of God totally apart from the law or anything that we might do. We want to help our children clearly understand what this means so that they can explain to others that our salvation is totally by faith. Neither keeping the law nor trying to do good works had anything to do with our salvation. We can only come to the conclusion that we are saved by faith and that the works of the law had nothing to do with that salvation.

That is why Romans 3:29-31 says, “Or *is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since *there is* one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.” The fact that salvation is totally by faith means that God is the God of both the Jews and the Gentiles. All people who come to God must come to God by faith in Christ and the sacrifice that He made for our sin and in our place.

The law included circumcision for the Jews. However, all Jews must come to the Father through Christ by faith. Those of us who are Gentiles also come to the Father through faith in Christ. God declares both Jews and Gentiles righteous because of faith and not through the law. This immediately raises a very important question. Does the law have any purpose? The answer to that question is given in Galatians 3:24-25 where we read, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we

are no longer under a tutor.” In these verses, we see that the law had a very great purpose. The law was what showed that everyone was guilty before God and needed to come to God by faith in Christ. A key thing to remember about any law is that the law in itself does not make people do what is right. Instead, the law shows when people have done wrong.

We see that we do not make the law void through faith. Instead, we see that we establish the law. This is explained in more detail in Romans 8:3-4 where we read, “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” The law shows instead why it was necessary for the Father to send Christ to pay the penalty for sin. Christ became a man and lived among us. In all three areas where Adam and Eve failed and sinned, Christ was victorious over sin. When Satan tempted Adam and Eve with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, Adam and Eve sinned. When Satan tempted Christ in these same three areas, Christ answered Satan each time from the Word of God.

As Christians, we no longer walk in the flesh and try to keep the law in our own strength. Instead we walk according to the Spirit. As we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, the Lord gives us His strength so that we do not carry out the lusts of the flesh. As we help both our physical and spiritual children to understand these key principles, we are helping them to understand why it is important for them to learn to yield their human spirit to the Holy Spirit so that they can walk in the Spirit. We are also equipping them to help others so that other Christians can also learn to walk in the Spirit. As people learn to walk in the Spirit, their lives will begin to bear the fruit of the Spirit given in Galatians 5:22-23. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to understand what justification means to them in their own lives and in their ministry.

Learning Why Abraham and David Were Justified

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain what justification means. We saw that the Father declared us righteous at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ. At that moment, the righteousness of Christ was placed on us. As a result, as the Father looks at each Christian, the Father sees the righteousness of Christ instead of our sins. In fact, our sins have been blotted out and the Father has promised that He will remember them no more. In our topic today, we will see how to help our children understand why Abraham and David were justified and made righteous in the sight of the Father.

Romans 4:1-4 says, “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.” In these verses, we learn some very important lessons about the reason that Abraham was justified.

Abraham gives us an example of a man who was justified totally by faith and not by works. He was the father of the nation of Israel. However, he is also the father of faith for both Jews and Gentiles because of the fact that his life provided a model of faith for all people through the Word of God. The faith of Abraham is described in detail in Hebrews 11:8-19. In Hebrews 11:8, we read, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.” Here, we see that Abraham responded to the call of God by faith, even though he did not know where he was going.

Hebrews 11:9-10 gives us a second example of the faith of Abraham. Those verses say, “By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.” Even though Abraham lived in the land that God had promised to Abraham and his descendents, Abraham did not have his focus on that land. Instead, these verses tell us that Abraham was waiting for that eternal city, “which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God”. Here, we see that the faith of Abraham was based on an eternal focus, instead of a worldly focus. We also want to help our children develop an eternal focus instead of a worldly focus.

In addition to the faith of Abraham, we also see the faith of his wife. Hebrews 11:11-12 says, “By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.” God blessed the faith of Abraham and Sarah by giving them a son long past the time of childbearing because they believed the promise of God. God caused that son to become the father of an innumerable number of descendents.

Another example of the faith of Abraham is given in Hebrews 11:13-16 where we read, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed

to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.” The faith of Abraham caused him to realize that he was just a stranger and pilgrim while he was on this earth because of the fact that his real home was an eternal home.

One final example of the faith of Abraham in Hebrews is given in Hebrews 11:17-19 where we read, “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called,’ concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.” Abraham showed his faith when he was willing to offer Isaac to the Lord as a sacrifice because he had confidence that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. All of these examples of faith made it clear that Abraham did what he did because of faith in the promises of God.

That faith is important to understand because Romans 4:2 says, “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God.” Abraham did not boast. Instead, he believed God. Genesis 15:6 says, “And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” The word that is translated “accounted” means *to put something to the account of another*. It is used in nine verses in Romans 4. Because Abraham believed the promises of God, God chose to put righteousness to the account of Abraham.

This meant that Abraham had righteousness put to his account apart from any works. If Abraham would have worked to receive that righteousness, that righteousness would have been the wages for his works. However, Abraham did not do any works. Instead, Abraham just believed the promises of God and God chose to put that faith to the account of Abraham as righteousness.

In the same way, all of us have righteousness put to our account by the Lord. Romans 4:5 says, “But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.” We all realize that we were ungodly. We left God out of our lives and thinking until the day came when the Father drew us to Christ. Before that time, we had done no works that were pleasing to God because of the fact that we were separated from God. When the Father drew us to Christ and we placed our faith in the fact that Christ had paid the penalty for our sins, the Father justified us. He put that faith to our account as righteousness and placed the righteousness of Christ on us.

God also did the same thing for David in the Old Testament. Romans 4:6-8 says, “Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.’” David knew the awfulness of the sin in his own life. In 2 Samuel 11, we read how David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband killed on the battlefield to try and cover his own sin. In Psalm 51, we see that when David repented of his sins, he confessed his sin to the Lord and asked the Lord to wash him thoroughly from his sin. Then, in Psalm 32, David wrote about the blessing of being forgiven by the Lord.

Psalm 32:1-2 says, “Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven, *whose* sin *is* covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no deceit.” These are the verses that are quoted here in Romans 4. David knew the awfulness of his sin but he experienced the blessing that comes when those sins are forgiven. David knew that he had committed sin and that his sin should have been put to his account. Instead, because he had come to God in repentance, the Lord put righteousness to his account instead. David knew that he did not deserve that righteousness on his account because he knew that his works were very sinful.

David knew that his deeds or actions were lawless actions and violated the commandments of God. However, in Psalm 51 David prayed and asked the Lord to forgive him for his lawless deeds. As a result, when David later wrote Psalm 32, he was very thankful for the fact that the Lord had forgiven his lawless deeds. David fully understood that his sins were covered by God. Here, we see that he understood the fact that God covered sin until Christ would come to take away sin. David knew and understood the blessing of forgiveness.

At the same time, David also knew and understood the blessing of not having his sins put to his account. He also understood the blessing of a human spirit that was in a right relationship to the Holy Spirit. From the moment that David had sinned, he knew that he was guilty. One part of our human spirit is our conscience. In Psalm 32:3-4, David tells how he felt within himself when he knew that he had unconfessed sin. Those verses say, "When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah." Here, we see that David experienced several months of total misery in his spirit, because of the sin that was in his life. However, when David confessed his sin, his human spirit was once again able to enjoy true fellowship with the Holy Spirit because there was no deceit in his life that made that fellowship impossible.

God used what had to be one of the worst experiences in the life of David to point out the fact that David knew that he had been justified and declared righteous in the sight of God in spite of his sinful works. God wants us to understand that He puts righteousness to our account without any works on our part. He wants us to help our children understand this same thing. As we help our children understand God recognized the faith of both Abraham and David and put that faith to their accounts as righteousness, it will help our children understand that there are no works that anyone can do to even try to earn their salvation. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children realize that we are justified by faith and that God has put righteousness to our accounts because of His love.

Learning the Purpose of Circumcision and the Law

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand how Abraham and David were justified and made right in the sight of God. We saw that they both had righteousness put to their accounts totally apart from their works. In fact, we saw that God put righteousness to the account of David at the time that he confessed his sin to the Lord. However, Abraham and David were both circumcised as a sign of the covenant that God had made with Abraham. Today, we are going to see that Abraham had faith put to his account as righteousness long before he was circumcised. This is important for all Gentiles to understand so we want to help our children understand it clearly so that they can help others.

In Romans 4:9-10, we read, “*Does* this blessedness then *come* upon the circumcised *only*, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.” We see that these verses raise an important question, especially since most of the Christians in Rome were Gentiles and had not been circumcised. As a result, Paul asked the question, Can this blessedness come only on those people who have been circumcised? He followed this with a second question, Can this blessedness also come on the uncircumcised? The answer to this question was very important for the Christians in Rome to understand since most of them were Gentiles. The same is true for our children today.

In our last topic, we saw that Paul quoted Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4:3. Genesis 15:6 says, “And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” As we look at that whole chapter in Genesis, we see that God put righteousness to the account of Abraham because Abraham believed the promise that God would multiply his descendents like the stars of heaven. That promise came to Abraham at a time when he did not even have any children. Now, we learn another important lesson. We see that this was at least 14 years before Abraham was circumcised because Ishmael had not even been conceived yet. Genesis 17:24-25 tell us, “Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.” As a result, Abraham had not been circumcised at the time that faith was put to his account as righteousness.

This is why Romans 4:11-12 says, “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised.” God had purposely put the faith of Abraham to his account as righteousness many years before Abraham was circumcised so that Abraham could be the father of all those who believe.

As a result, Abraham is called the father of all those who believe whether they are Jews or Gentiles. God did this so that we would all understand that God puts faith to the accounts of Gentiles who are not circumcised just as he puts faith to the account of Jews who are circumcised. God wanted to make it very clear that circumcision had nothing to do with the fact that God places righteousness to the account of every person as a result of faith and has nothing to do with circumcision.

This is a key lesson that we want to help our children understand because of the fact that Abraham is called the father of faith. In our last topic, we saw that one of the times that Abraham demonstrated his faith was when he left his father to go to the land that God had promised to him. Genesis 12:4 tells us, “So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him. and Lot went with him. And Abram *was* seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.” Here, we see that this example of faith happened twenty-four years before Abraham was circumcised. As a result, Abraham had shown his faith in God for many years by the time that he was circumcised.

This is important to understand since we see that we also walk in the steps of the faith which Abraham had while still uncircumcised. Hebrews 11:8-10 says, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.” We want to help our children understand this example so that they can learn to walk by faith. 1 Peter 2:11 says, “Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” When our children understand that we are also strangers and pilgrims on this earth, they realize the importance of abstaining from fleshly lusts because their vision is on the future promise.

Romans 4:13 says, “For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.” In Genesis 12:3, we read, “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” This last statement, that in Abraham all of the families of the earth shall be blessed, was the promise to Abraham that Christ would come through the family of Abraham. That is why it says that the promise was made to his “seed”, a particular descendent, and not to “seeds”, which would refer to all of the descendents of Abraham.

God wanted to make it clear that the promise that Christ would be the descendent of Abraham that would provide salvation was made before Abraham received circumcision. This also meant that Christ was promised to Abraham several hundred years before the Law was given to Moses. This will help our children to understand why Abraham is called the father of faith. Abraham showed his faith in the promises of God long before his descendents received the Law. Abraham also showed this faith many years before he received the covenant of circumcision. As a result, we can help our children understand why Abraham is the father of faith. He believed the promises of God and God put that belief to his account as righteousness. In the same way, when we as Gentiles place our faith in Christ, the Father places that to our account as righteousness.

That is why Romans 4:14-15 goes on to say, “For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.” The rich young ruler thought that he could inherit eternal life because he had kept the law. Luke 18:18 tells us the statement that he made to Christ. That verse says, “Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’” Here, we see that he wanted to know if there were any other good works that he needed to do to earn eternal life. Christ asked him if he had kept the commandments that talk about the relationship of man to other people. In Luke 18:21, we read, “And he said, ‘All these things I have kept from my youth.’” However, when Christ told him to get rid of his idol (money) and come and follow Christ the rich young ruler went away sorrowful.

If that young man could have kept the law perfectly, then he would not have needed faith.

However, it was impossible for him to keep the law. In fact, if any person other than Christ could have kept the law perfectly, it would have been unnecessary for God to give the promise to Abraham and put righteousness to the account of Abraham. The rich young ruler showed that he lacked faith by choosing to turn away from Christ, because his riches were more important to him than faith in Christ.

Instead of perfectly keeping the law, the law showed the rich young ruler that he was facing the wrath of God. The part of the law that Christ first mentioned to the rich young ruler was the part of the law that talked about the relationship of man to other people. The young man actually thought that he had kept that part of the law. However, when Christ asked him to get rid of his idol and follow Christ instead, he immediately turned away from Christ. John 3:18 says, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” The rich young man showed that he was condemned already because he was not ready to believe in Christ.

The purpose of the law is to show that mankind is guilty before God. The word that is translated “transgression” means *to disregard or to violate the law*. If there would have been no law, it would be impossible to disregard or violate the law. However, the law was given. It shows that all are guilty because they have disregarded and violated the law. That is why Romans 3:19-20 said, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” No person can be justified or declared righteous before God by their own efforts, because no one has kept the law perfectly. We each have to realize that we are guilty before God.

We want to show our children how to clearly explain that the purpose of circumcision and the purpose of the law were not to make a person righteous before God. We want to help them learn to explain to every person that the only way to be righteous is to have God put righteousness to our account when we place our faith in Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to lead people to faith in Christ.

Learning How Abraham Showed His Faith

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why Abraham is called the father of faith. We saw that Abraham placed his faith in the promises of God several hundred years before the Law was given to Moses. We also saw that Abraham placed his faith in the promises of God many years before he was circumcised. In our topic today, we are going to see how Abraham showed that faith in the promises of God.

One of the ways that Abraham showed his faith in the promises of God was by believing God when God promised him that he would be the father of many nations. Romans 4:16-18 says, "Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, 'I have made you a father of many nations') in the presence of Him whom he believed--God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, 'So shall your descendants be.'" Since faith does not come by any works, God tells us here that faith is according to His grace.

The word that is translated "grace" speaks of the kindness of God by which He turns us to Christ and then helps us to grow in our Christian faith. Ephesians 2:8-10 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Here, we see that God showed His kindness to us by giving us faith as a gift so that we could receive salvation. His grace is also shown by the fact that He created us so that when we placed our faith in Christ, we would be able to do the good works that God prepared for us.

The fact that salvation is provided by the grace of God shows that God wanted to make it certain that the promise was for every person including the Jews who had been given the law and the Gentiles who showed faith just as Abraham showed faith. God said that Abraham is the father of many nations. This was true both physically and spiritually. In addition to the nation of Israel, many other nations came through the descendents of Ishmael and the other children of Abraham that were given birth by Keturah. Additional nations also came through Esau, the brother of Israel (Jacob). However, these verses speak especially about the spiritual descendents who have showed the same faith that Abraham showed. The spiritual descendents of Abraham include people of all nations.

God chose to give spiritual life to each person at the moment one places his or her faith in Christ. Ephesians 2:1-6 says, "And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus." Every person who has been given this spiritual life has become a spiritual descendent of Abraham by faith. God gave us that spiritual life. God chose to give us that spiritual life by placing the righteousness of Christ on us. This is what actually fulfills the promise that God made to Abraham.

Abraham was given this promise before Isaac was even conceived. That is why Romans 4:19-22 says, “And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore ‘it was accounted to him for righteousness.’” One of the times that Abraham showed his faith in the promises of God was the time when God gave him the promise that Isaac would be born.

In Genesis 18:10-11, God promised Abraham, “And He said, ‘I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son.’ (Sarah was listening in the tent door which *was* behind him.) Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; *and* Sarah had passed the age of childbearing.” When Sarah heard the promise of God she laughed. Then, God said in Genesis 18:14, “‘Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.’” God kept His promise to Abraham and Sarah. Hebrews 11:11 says, “By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.” Here, we read that Sarah as well as Abraham had faith that God would keep His promises.

That is why Abraham could give glory to God without wavering. As verse Romans 4:21 says, “And being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.” Abraham and Sarah showed their faith in the promises of God because they were convinced that God would do exactly as God had promised them. Here, we see another example of the reason why God put faith to the account of Abraham. Here, we see a key lesson that we want to model for our children. We will show them that they can trust the promises of God as we show that we believe God will keep His promises. That will only happen as we are also convinced that God will do exactly what He has promised us. That is why it is so important to have our own faith in the promises of God if we want to help our children develop that faith.

That is why Romans 4:23-25 goes on to say, “Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.” The word that is translated “imputed” is used eleven times in this chapter. As we have mentioned, it means *to put something to the account of a person*. God says that the promise given to Abraham that God put righteousness to the account of Abraham was not just written for his sake. God said that He also caused this to be written for our sakes.

God wanted to make it very clear to every Christian that at the moment that we place our faith in Christ and trust Him for forgiveness of our sin that God puts that faith to our account as righteousness. That is why every Christian has been given the righteousness of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ did not have any sin. This verse tells us that the Father placed our sin on Christ. As a result, at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ, the Father placed the righteousness of Christ on us. That is why we are now able to stand before God. As He looks at us, He sees the righteousness of Christ instead of seeing our sin. This is explained more fully in these last two verses of Romans 4.

That righteousness is imputed to us (placed on our account) at the moment that we believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Here, we see a key point that we want to help our children understand so that they can explain it to others. We want to help our children understand that the message that we have is not just about the death of Christ. The message is also about the fact that the Father was satisfied with the payment that Christ made for our sins and He showed that He was satisfied by raising Christ from the dead. That righteousness can

only be placed to the account of any person when they believe in the Father who raised Christ from the dead.

Christ was delivered up to death because of our offenses. Galatians 3:13-14 says, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Christ bought us back from the curse of the law because He became a curse for us. As a result of what Christ did, we see that the Father promised us two things in these verses. First, the blessing of Abraham came on the Gentiles through Christ. Second, we see that we received the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith.

In addition to being delivered up because of our offenses, we also see that Christ was raised up because of our justification. In 1 John 2:1-2, we read, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The word “propitiation” means *that which satisfies*. The Father was satisfied with the payment that Christ made for our sins and showed it by raising Christ from the dead. This reminds us of the fact that it is important to help our children learn to teach the importance of the resurrection because of the fact that the Father raised Christ from the dead to prove that He accepted the payment of Christ for our sins. As we help our children learn to understand that Abraham showed his faith by being convinced that God would keep His promises, we help them to explain to others why they can rely on the promises of God. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain to others that God will keep all of His promises.

Learning the Results of Justification

In our last topic, we saw how to help our physical and spiritual children understand how Abraham showed his faith. We saw that Abraham showed his faith in the promises of God in many different ways. In the same way, we want to help our children learn to show their faith in the Lord in many different ways as we show them how to serve the Lord. In our topic today, we are going to learn the results of justification.

In Romans 5:1-2, we read, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” We have seen in other topics that to be justified means to be made righteous in the sight of God because of the fact that our sins were placed on Christ and the righteousness of Christ was placed on us. In this chapter, we see that the first result of being justified is that we have peace with God.

Our condition before we placed our faith in Christ is described in Ephesians 2:2-3 where we read, “In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.” Because we were following Satan, we were at enmity with God and were facing judgment. That was totally changed at the moment of salvation. Hebrews 4:15-16 tells us the results of this peace with God when it says, “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Peace with God means that we can now come boldly to God because we have access to the Father through Christ. We are also able to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Hope is the confident assurance that we will one day be with the Lord. However, we can also rejoice and experience the glory of God in our lives in the present. Romans 5:3-5 says, “And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Tribulations are the difficult times that we go through in our lives. Here, we see that we can have a good outlook and be filled with joy even when we are going through difficult times, because God is using those difficult things that we face in our lives to develop godly strength in our lives.

We see that difficult times develop perseverance. Perseverance is the ability to endure and stand firm even when we are going through very difficult times. James 1:2-3 says, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” This in turn develops godly character in our lives. This same word is used in Philippians 2:22 where Paul describes Timothy by saying, “But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel.” The result of developing perseverance and godly character is that we have a confident hope as we look toward the future.

We are also reminded that the hope that God gives us does not disappoint. Instead, our hope is based on the fact that God has poured out His love into our hearts by giving us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps us first to know the love of God and then to show the love of God.

1 John 4:18-19 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.” In these verses, we see that as we grow to know the love of God, His love removes the fear in our lives. This makes it possible for us to respond to His love by loving Him.

Then, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to show the love of God to others. In John 13:34-35, Christ said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” We cannot carry out this new commandment in our own strength. However, Romans 6:16 says, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?” At all times that we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to carry out the new commandment. We are able to show the love of God to others because God has given us the Holy Spirit to have the power to show that love in our lives.

This is further explained in Romans 5:6-8 where we read, “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” God showed His love to us when we were yet without strength. At that time, we had no desire to love as God loves and no power to love as God loves. That is why God sent Christ to die for the ungodly.

The word that is translated “without strength” means *to be feeble and totally helpless*. It was at that very time that God showed His love to us by sending Christ to die for our sins. Most people would not even consider dying for a righteous man. Very few would ever consider dying for a good man. In contrast, God showed His love for us by sending Christ to die for us at the time when we were sinners and spiritually dead. 1 Peter 3:18 says, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.” Christ suffered and died for us when we were unjust. Ephesians 2:1 says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” God sent Christ to die for our sins when we were spiritually dead. He wanted to show His love for us by making it possible for us to receive spiritual life.

As a result of what Christ did for us, Romans 5:9-11 says, “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.” In these verses, we see several things that happened that showed the love of God for us. We want to help our children clearly understand each of these things.

First, we see that we were justified by the blood of Christ. The word “justified” means *to declare us righteous*. Romans 8:1 says, “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” Here, we see that justification means we have been pardoned from our sins and no longer face judgment for them. We saw in the previous topics from Romans 4 that the righteousness of Christ was put to our account. As a result, we are able to stand before God with the righteousness of Christ because He paid for our sin with His blood.

Second, we see that we shall be saved from wrath through Christ. Wrath speaks of the vengeance of God against sin. Ephesians 5:6 says, “Let no one deceive you with empty words,

for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” Here, we see that the wrath of God will come on all those who continue to live in disobedience. John 3:36 says, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” Here, we see that we were facing the wrath of God against sin until the moment we placed our faith in Christ. At that moment, we received everlasting life.

Third, we see that we have been reconciled to God through the death of His Son. To “reconcile” means *to be returned to favor with God*. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 says, “Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.” We have been brought back into favor with God through the sacrifice of Christ as the payment for our sins. In addition, we see that God has now given each of us the privilege of sharing with others how they also can be reconciled to God.

Fourth, we see that we are saved by the life of Christ. Romans 8:37-39 says, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” No created thing can ever separate us from the love of God which we have received through Jesus Christ our Lord. We want to help our physical and spiritual children gain a full understanding of what this means to them in their lives so that they can help others gain this same understanding. We want to help them realize that we can rejoice in God because of what He has done for us through Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the results of justification.

Learning Why Justification Is Necessary

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the results of justification. We saw that justification is what makes it possible for people to have peace with God. We saw that peace makes it possible for us to come boldly to the Father because we are able to come to the Father through Christ. In this topic, we will see that we want to help our children understand why justification is necessary.

In Romans 5:12-14, we read, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.” When God created Adam, God gave Adam freedom to do everything except one thing. Genesis 2:16-17 says, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” God explained both the sin and the consequence of that sin.

God said that Adam would die the very day that he ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Although Adam did not die physically for 930 years, Adam and Eve did die spiritually the day that they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, Genesis 3:7-8 says, “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.” Physical death is the separation of the body from the soul and the spirit. Spiritual death is the separation of man from God. As soon as Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to cover themselves. Then, they tried to hide from God because they had separated themselves from God by sin.

Here, we see that spiritual (and physical) death spread to all men. The fact that Adam had a sin nature meant that all of his descendants were born with a sin nature that separated them from God. As a result, death spread to all people because all have sinned. Here, we see the great impact of the sin of Adam. It affected all of the people that would live on the earth. This was true even before the law was given to Moses. Until the law was given, people did not have a list of specific sins. However, all people experienced death because they all had a sin nature. That was true even though they could not commit the same sin that Adam committed. The sin that Adam committed was to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Since Adam was removed from the Garden of Eden, no other person could commit that particular sin. However, death was passed on to all people because the descendants of Adam all had a sin nature. Adam was a type of Christ because his action affected many people just as the free gift of Christ would affect many people but in a very different way.

That was why it was necessary for a second person to come that did not have a sin nature. Romans 5:15-17 says, “But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift *is* not like *that which came* through the one who sinned. For the judgment *which came* from one *offense resulted* in condemnation, but the free gift *which came* from many offenses *resulted* in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of

righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)” The free gift that Christ brought is not like the judgment that Adam brought by his sin. The judgment that Adam brought was death.

In contrast to the judgment that Adam brought, the grace of God and the gift provided by that grace came through one Man, Jesus Christ. We see that the free gift that came through grace came to reverse the effects of the sin of Adam. Adam committed just one sin and that sin brought condemnation on the whole human race and separated man from God. As a result, justification was necessary because of the offenses of many people. In contrast, the free gift that Christ brought was justification. Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The separation from God that was brought by the sin of Adam is replaced by the peace with God that is received by all who receive justification by faith.

Adam committed one sin and that sin brought death to all people. In contrast, we see that all those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through Christ. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The gift that Christ offers is eternal life. Christ said in John 5:24, “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” Here, we see that Christ promised that His gift does three things for all those who believe in Him. We receive eternal life. We no longer face judgment. We have been passed from death into life.

As a result, Romans 5:18-21 says, “Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In these verses, we see some additional contrasts between what Adam did and what Christ did.

The sin of Adam brought judgment on all people. This judgment meant that all people were condemned. Romans 3:19-20 says, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” Here, we see that the entire world stands guilty before God because of the sin that entered the world through Adam. The previous verses in that chapter show that there is not a righteous human on the earth.

In contrast to the sin of Adam, we read that Christ committed a righteous act. That righteous act is what makes possible the free gift. That righteous act is described in 1 Peter 2:24 where we read, “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.” Here, we see that the righteous act of Christ was to have our sins placed on Him as He hung on the cross. As a result, we are no longer slaves to sin. Instead, we are able to live for righteousness as we yield to the Holy Spirit so that we are living in His strength and not our own human strength. Christ took our payment so that we could be healed and set free from the control of sin. That is why we stand before God in the righteousness of Christ.

We also see that the law entered so that sin might abound. Romans 7:8 says, “But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead.” Here, we see that the law helps people to know how to show their rebellion.

When people are given a law that tells them that they are not to commit certain acts because they are sin, that law causes many people to have a desire to do those very things. As a result, the law stirs up the sinful desires of the flesh.

However, we see that when sin increases, grace also increases. Here, we see that the sinful heart of mankind produces more opportunities for God to show His grace to those who are living in sin and rebellion. At the very time that Saul (Paul) was arresting and imprisoning Christians, God chose to show His grace to Saul. Later, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:10, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me.” Paul certainly knew in his own life that God had shown His grace to him in abundance.

The sin of Adam caused death to rule in the lives of people. In fact, the fear of death keeps all people in bondage. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Here, we see the consequences of the sin of Adam.

In contrast, the grace of God makes it possible for all those who place their faith in Christ to have the righteousness of Christ placed on them. Philippians 3:9 says, “And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.” In this verse, Paul made it clear that it was not his own righteousness but the righteousness of God that was at work in his life. That righteousness was given by grace. We want to help our children understand that Christ has shown his grace to each of us. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children grow in their understanding of the grace of God.

Learning What Happens to Our Old Man

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why justification is necessary. We saw that the sin of Adam brought death upon all people. In contrast, the righteous act of Christ made it possible for God to show His grace to many people. Today, we are going to begin a study of the lessons that we want to teach our children so that they can understand how to develop godly righteousness in their daily lives once they place their faith in Christ. They will also equip them to help others learn these same important principles for spiritual growth.

Romans 6:1-2 asks some very important questions when those verses say, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” We have seen in several topics that Christ placed His righteousness on us at the moment we placed our faith in Christ. As a result, Paul knew that some people might say that they should continue to sin so that God can show His grace in even greater ways. Paul answered that question with the strongest possible statement. In fact, he used the phrase “Certainly not!” ten times in the book of Romans and a total of 14 times in the books that he wrote to make it clear that the things mentioned were certainly not the things that he was teaching. This helps us to understand that many false teachers were trying to twist the words of Paul to fit their own teachings.

This leads to his next question, how shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? When our sins were placed on Christ and Christ died in our place and for our sin we died to sin. As a result, we are now dead to sin. We have been set free from the law. Galatians 5:1 says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” That is why Paul asked whether we should continue to live in sin even though we are no longer slaves to sin. Instead of continuing to live in sin, Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” In this verse, we see that this liberty that we have been given has now set us free to serve one another in love. Paul is going to explain how to enjoy this liberty.

Romans 6:3-4 says, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Here, we see that when we placed our faith in Christ, we shared in His death. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me.” Since we have been baptized into the death of Christ, we were also buried with Him. As a result, we have now been raised to a new life. We see that we are now able to live by faith in the Son of God.

Since we have died with Christ, been buried with Him and raised to newness of life (the new life that we have because Christ is in us), we are now able to walk in newness of life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” All things have become new because of the fact that we are able to walk in fellowship with Christ instead of walking in the darkness of sin. 1 John 1:3 says, “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” As we walk in fellowship with Christ, we are able to enjoy the newness of life that we have in

Christ.

This change that has happened in our lives is explained more fully in Romans 6:5-7 where we read, “For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin.” Here, we see that we are in the likeness of His resurrection. This means that we have been given spiritual life. Christ told Nicodemus in John 3:6-7, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’” We have been born of the Spirit because the Holy Spirit came into our human spirit at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ.

At the moment of salvation, our old man was crucified with Christ. The old man was our old sinful self. Before we became Christians, we were sinners. The moment we placed our faith in Christ, He made us saints because our sin was placed on Christ and buried with Him. Before Adam sinned, he had the freedom and power to do what was right or he had the freedom to sin. Once he sinned, he immediately became a slave to sin. Because our sin was buried with Christ, we are no longer a slave to sin. Our sin was removed as far as the east is from the west; it was buried in the depths of the sea; it was blotted out and God promises to remember it no more. This means that we are now free to choose to do right or choose to sin. This will be explained in more detail in our next topic on Romans 6:11-16.

Because we have died with Christ and have been raised with Him, we have now been freed from our slavery to sin. Before we placed our faith in Christ, Satan held us in fear and bondage. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Christ became a man so that through death He could destroy him who had the power of death. Of course, that is Satan. That death made it possible for Christ to release us from our bondage to sin at the moment that we placed our faith in Him. This release also set us free from the fear of death.

The fact that we have been freed from sin does not mean that we no longer sin. Instead, it means that we are no longer under the control of sin. We realize that we sin every day. That is why 1 John 1:8-9 says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” We would actually be deceiving ourselves if we thought that we could now live a sinless life. Instead, we are reminded of the need to confess our sins to maintain our fellowship with Christ. Christ is faithful. He will always forgive and cleanse us. Christ is just. He has the right to forgive and cleanse us because He paid the penalty with His blood on the cross.

Romans 6:8-10 goes on to say, “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.” The fact that we died with Christ means that we can now enjoy life with Him both on this earth and for all eternity. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 says, “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” While we live here on this earth, we are to live together with Christ. When the Lord takes us to heaven, we will continue to live with Him for all eternity.

Christ died once for all. As a result, He will never die again because death no longer has dominion over Him. The word that is translated “dominion over” means *to have power over or to rule over*. Death will never again rule over Christ. Since we are in Christ, we no longer need to let sin rule over our lives. That is why Romans 6:12 tells us, “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.” This is a key principle to help our children fully understand. We are dead to sin. Sin has lost its control over our lives. Therefore, we are not to let sin rule in our earthly body any longer. We do not need to obey the sinful lusts of our earthly body any longer.

Christ died to sin once for all. This is important to us for two reasons. First, Christ died to pay our penalty for our sin. That is why Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The penalty is paid and we have received eternal life as a free gift. However, there is also a second reason why it is important that Christ died for sin once for all. That second reason is that Christ broke the power of sin over our lives at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ. Romans 6:17-18 says, “But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” The fact that Christ set us free from the power of sin at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ means that we now have the power to do what is right as we yield ourselves to righteousness.

Christ chose to do the will of the Father. In the same way, we are now able to “live to God” by living to bring glory to God. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand clearly what this means to their lives. They are now free to choose to do the will of God. As we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to carry out the will of God. In Romans 7:15-25, we see what happens when we yield to sin as Christians. In Romans 8:1-39, we see what happens when we yield to righteousness as Christians. We want to help our children both understand and learn to explain to others the results of learning to yield to God. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to understand that their old man has been crucified with Christ.

Learning Why We Are Free to Yield to God

In our last topic, we saw how to help our physical and spiritual children understand what happens to our old man at the time we come to Christ in repentance and faith. We saw that we are no longer slaves to sin. That means that we are either free to yield to sin or to yield to righteousness. In our topic today, we are also going to see how to help our children understand why we are free to yield to God. We will also see how to help them understand the blessing that comes from learning to yield to God so that He can give us the power to do what is right.

In Romans 6:11, we read, “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The word that is translated “reckon, impute, or count” means *to put something to your account or to act on something that has been put to your account*. In Romans 4, we saw that chapter used this word eleven times to point out the fact that God put righteousness to our account at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ. In this verse, we see that we are told to take action based on the fact that God put righteousness to our account.

In this verse, we see that we are to take two kinds of action. First, we are to begin to act as those who are indeed dead to sin. James 1:13-15 says, “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” We can choose to yield to sinful desires or we can choose to yield to God and He will give us His power to carry out those things that are pleasing to God. Our verse in Romans reminds us that we are now able to act on the fact that we are no longer a slave to sin. Instead, we are dead to the control of sin and do not have to obey its evil desires any longer.

Second, we see that we can act on the fact that we are alive to God because of the fact that we are in Christ Jesus our Lord. 1 John 1:5-7 says, “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” God is light and because we are alive in Christ we are now able to walk in the light. Psalm 119:130 says, “The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” As we meditate on the Word of God and ask the Holy Spirit to give us His strength to obey the Word, we experience fellowship with the Lord and other Christians. We also know that the blood of Christ is continually cleansing us from sin.

Romans 6:12-14 goes on to say, “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” Since we are dead to the control of sin, we are not to let sin continue to rule in our physical body.

There are three lusts that will try to control our body even though we are dead to the control of those lusts. In 1 John 2:16, we read, “For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.” Adam and Eve were free to choose either right or wrong before they sinned. Satan used these three lusts to tempt

them. Genesis 3:6 says, “So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.” When we choose to yield to our physical desires, we will be tempted and we will yield to sin.

That is why Romans 6:13 warns us not to present the members of our body as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. The word that is translated “present” speaks about making a decision in our will. That is why James 1:14-15 says, “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” When we have a desire to commit a particular sin, we will be enticed by temptation. As soon as Eve had a desire to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, her will gave her permission to satisfy her sinful desire and she sinned. Adam had that same desire and he also sinned when Eve offered him the fruit. That is why we must yield our will to the Lord if we want to have victory over sin.

That is why the second part of Romans 6:13 tells us to present ourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead. Christ gave us the perfect example of presenting our will to God when He said in Matthew 26:39, “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’” Here, we see that Christ prayed and presented His will to the will of the Father. As we pray and ask the Father for the strength to carry out His will, we are presenting our lives as tools to God to carry out His will. The Holy Spirit will then give us the power to do the will of God.

That is why verse 14 tells us that sin will not have dominion and exercise the control over us when we present our will to the Father and ask for the strength to carry out His will. In verse nine, we saw that death no longer has dominion over us because of the fact that Christ rose from the dead. When we placed our faith in Christ, He gave us spiritual life. That meant that spiritual death no longer had dominion over us. Here, we see that also means sin no longer has dominion over us. We have been set free from the law and are no longer under the law because we are dead to the law. We are now under grace. Titus 2:11-12 says, “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.” Every time we choose to yield to God and refuse the sinful desires that the world offers, the Lord will give us victory because we are under grace. Satan will try to tempt us many times every day with sinful desires. As a result, we must choose to yield our will to the Father many times throughout the day if we want to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present age.

That is why Romans 6:15-16 says, “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?” Paul asks the question; shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? We saw that Paul used a similar question in Romans 6:1 and answered that question the same way he does here. In Romans 6:2, we saw that Paul wanted to make it very clear that was certainly not the thing that he was teaching. Paul wanted to make sure that no false teachers would try to twist what he taught.

Since Christians are under grace and not under the law, Christians are able to choose to whom they are going to present themselves as slaves to obey. We can either choose to present ourselves to the sinful desires of our physical body or we can choose to present ourselves to God for obedience. Romans 12:1 says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.” Here, we see that Paul begs us to present our bodies to God as a living

sacrifice. We want to encourage our physical and spiritual children to also present their bodies as living sacrifices. However, we must provide the example by our own lives if we want our children to present their bodies to God.

We also see the results of presenting our lives. As Christians, we can choose to present ourselves as slaves to sin or to God. Even though a Christian is dead to sin, if that Christian presents or yields his or her physical body to sin, we see that the result is death. This can be an emotional death because the person is controlled by fear, guilt and shame. Romans 7:24 says, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" A Christian can also experience physical sickness and death. 1 Corinthians 11:29-32 says, "For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." Here, we see that presenting our physical bodies to sin can lead to the chastening of the Lord even though we will not be condemned with the world.

In contrast, as Christians, we can choose to present ourselves to God as a living sacrifice who desires to be obedient to God and do His will. As we make that choice, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to carry out the will of God. The result is that our lives demonstrate the righteousness of God. That does not mean that we are sinless but it does mean that we quickly confess our sins when we realize that we have sinned. That is what makes it possible for our lives to bear the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23 where we read, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." We want to show our children by our example the blessing of presenting our lives to the Lord so that the Holy Spirit can bear that fruit in our lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to present their lives to God for obedience.

Learning Why We Are Free From the Control of Sin

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the blessing of yielding or presenting our lives to the Lord so that the Holy Spirit can cause our lives to bear the fruit of the Spirit. We saw that once we become Christians, we can either present ourselves to sin and experience an emotional and possibly a physical death or we can present ourselves to God and He will give us the power to practice righteousness. In our topic today, we are going to learn why we are free from the control of sin and can yield to God so that we practice righteousness.

Romans 6:17-18 says, “But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” In these verses, we are reminded of our former condition before we placed our faith in Christ. We see that we were slaves to sin. Because we were controlled by a sin nature, we had no desire to do the things that pleased God. We were in bondage to sin and could not escape that bondage.

However, when we repented of our sin and placed our faith in Christ, we made a decision that changed our heart. Romans 10:9-10 says, “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” At the moment we made that decision, the Holy Spirit came into our human spirit and gave us spiritual life. As a result, we were given a new nature with new desires. We see that one of those new desires was to obey from the heart that form of doctrine to which we were delivered. The word that is translated “form” speaks of a pattern or example. We see that we have a desire from the heart to follow the example or pattern that was given to us by the life and the teachings of Christ. Those teachings of Christ have been passed on to us in the New Testament.

Since the decision in our heart to place our faith in Christ changed our hearts, we were instantly set free from our slavery to sin. We made the choice that we wanted to be the slaves of righteousness instead of the slaves of sin. That is why we suddenly had new desires. However, we also need the power to carry out those new desires. Christ told the disciples in Luke 24:49, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Now, we receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of our salvation so that we have the power to carry out those new desires. Romans 8:9 says, “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” At the moment of salvation, we are no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit because the Holy Spirit has been given to us as the down payment and guarantee of our salvation according to Ephesians 1:13-14.

Paul goes on in Romans 6:19-20 to say, “I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading to more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.” Here, we see that Paul chose to explain the new life that we have in Christ in human terms due to the weakness in our flesh. The word that is translated “weakness” means *lack of strength*. That word is used in Romans 8:26 where we read, “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Before we placed our faith in

Christ, we did not have the Holy Spirit making intercession for us.

As a result, we had no power to change. Instead, we presented the parts of our physical body as slaves to uncleanness or lustful and sinful living. This only caused us to become more and more sinful as we continued to break the law. Romans 7:7-8 says, “What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead.” Without Christ, the law only stirs up more sinful desires and causes a person to commit more sin.

In contrast, we are now free to present ourselves as slaves of righteousness for holiness. This means that we now have the power to live a changed life as we learn to yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit. When we were slaves to sin, we had no power in our lives to practice righteousness. Now, with a new nature that desires righteousness, we have the power to practice that righteousness during every moment we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 says, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” At all of those times when we are yielding to the Holy Spirit, we are filled with the Holy Spirit. This is why it is important for us to help our children understand what it means to yield to the Holy Spirit moment-by-moment.

We go on to read in Romans 6:21-22, “What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.” Before we placed our faith in Christ, our lives did produce fruit. However, that fruit was the works of the flesh. Galatians 5:19-21 says, “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” As we think about our past before we placed our faith in Christ, we are ashamed of the works that our lives produced. That is why we are so thankful that the Lord blotted out our sins of the past at the moment that we placed our faith in Him. We also see that the works of the flesh produced death.

In contrast, at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ, we see that we were set free from the control of sin. Romans 6:2 says, “Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?” In this verse, we see that we became dead to sin. We see that at the moment we placed our faith in Christ, we died to sin. Christ died in our place and for our sin. As a result, we are counted dead to sin in the sight of God because we are in Christ. That is why we are able to practice righteousness at every moment that we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit.

When we were set free from sin, we became the slaves of God. A slave is one who carries out the will of his or her master. Once we become a Christian, we have a desire to do the things that are right and pleasing to God. The fact that we have become slaves of God means that we now have the power to carry out the will of God in our lives at every moment that we are yielding to Him. That is why Romans 13:14 says, “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.” Here, we are reminded that Christ gives us His power so that we do not have to let sinful thoughts and ideas stay in our minds. Christ will give us His power to replace those sinful thoughts with His thoughts as we pray and ask Him to help us meditate on His Word instead.

Philippians 4:6-9 tells us how that helps us to replace sinful thoughts with His thoughts as we yield to Him. Those verses say, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.” Here, we see that we bring our own thoughts to the Lord. We request Him to take those thoughts. Then, we ask Him to help us meditate on His thoughts. As a result, we experience the peace of God in our lives instead of continuing to think about sinful thoughts and ideas. This makes it possible for our lives to bear the fruit of holiness and eternal life.

Once we become Christians, Romans 6:23 reminds us, “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Here, we see that as Christians we do not need to worry about receiving the wages of sin any longer. Romans 8:1 says, “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” Instead, we can look forward to the gift of God which is eternal life.

That gift of God is described in 1 John 5:11-13 where we read, “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.” We want to help both our physical and our spiritual children know that they have eternal life. That equips them to share with other Christians how they can know that they have eternal life also. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why it is so important that we have been set free from the control of sin.

Learning What It Means to be United With Christ

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand what it means to be set free from the control of sin because they are no longer under the law. We saw that we want to help them understand that they are no longer under the control of the law. In our topic today, we are going to see that Paul illustrated this principle by the marriage relationship. As we help our children to understand this illustration, it will make it much easier for them to explain to others what it means to be set free from the control of the law.

Romans 7:1-2 says, “Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband.” Most of the Christians in Rome were Gentiles. However, because many Gentiles had attended Jewish synagogues to learn the moral values of the Old Testament, they were familiar with the law even though they were Gentiles. In addition, all of the Jewish Christians had learned the Old Testament law in the synagogues before they became Christians. As a result, Paul said that he was speaking to those who knew the law. In addition, all countries have a code of laws which has power over the people of that country.

According to the Old Testament law, the law had dominion over a person as long as that person lived. The word translated “dominion” was used twice in Romans 6. There we saw that “dominion” means *to have power over someone*. In Romans 6:9, we saw that death did not have dominion over Christ any longer once He rose from the dead. Then, in Romans 6:14, we saw that sin no longer has dominion over Christians because we are no longer under the law. Instead, we are under grace. Here, we see this principle illustrated by the law of marriage.

When a couple marries, they are bound together by the law of their country. This is due to the fact that laws regarding marriage for any country have their roots in the principle given in Genesis 2:24. That verse says, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” This universal law of marriage means that a couple is bound together by the law as long as both partners live. A woman is bound to her husband as long as her husband lives. However, once the husband dies, the wife is no longer under that law, because the husband has died. When the husband dies, that woman is released from the law of her husband.

The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ. Galatians 3:24-25 says, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” Here, we see that the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ but once we come to Christ we are no longer under the law. That is why Romans 6:14 says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.” Once we died to sin and were raised to new life in Christ, we are no longer under the law of sin. As a result, we are no longer controlled by a sin nature because we have been given a new nature. We can still choose to sin but we are no longer slaves to the sin nature.

Romans 7:3 illustrates this further when it says, “So then if, while *her* husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.” A woman who marries a second husband while her husband is still living is called an adulteress. In the same way, a man who marries a second wife while his wife is still living is called an adulterer. In fact, if either of them have sexual relations with another person while their partner is still alive,

they are guilty of committing adultery. In contrast, if the husband dies, a woman is now free to marry another man. In the same way, if a wife dies, a man is now free to marry another woman. They are both dead to the law of their partner because the partner has died.

In the same way, as Christians, we have been set free from the law of sin because we are dead to it. Galatians 5:1 says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” Christ set us free from the law of sin. If we choose to get entangled in the law of sin, we are actually bringing ourselves into a yoke of bondage. That is why Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Here, we see that we have been set free from the law of sin and are now able to serve one another in love.

That is why Romans 7:4 says, “Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.” As Christians, we have become dead to the law through the body of Christ so that we can be married to another. In John 3:29, John the Baptist described himself as the friend of the bridegroom. That verse says, “He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.” John the Baptist was filled with joy because people were turning to Christ who is the bridegroom. Then, Ephesians 5:23 says, “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” Christ is the head of the church and the Savior of the body because the church is the bride of Christ.

That is why Romans 7:4 says that we have been married to another—to Him who has been raised from the dead. As the bride of Christ, we are dead to the law of sin and alive to Christ who was raised from the dead. That is why we no longer have to yield our lives to sin because we are dead to sin. Instead, we are now free to present ourselves to Christ. We have also been given the power to live this new life in Christ, because we have been raised up together with Christ. Ephesians 2:4-6 says, “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.” We are made alive through Christ and He has given us the Holy Spirit to give us the power to live a righteous life as we yield to the Holy Spirit.

The last phrase of verse 4 says that we are now able to bear fruit to God. Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” The Holy Spirit causes our lives to bear this fruit as we yield to Him. No law has ever been written that says it is illegal to bear this fruit.

Romans 7:5-6 says, “For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter.” Before we became a Christian, we were walking in the flesh instead of walking in the Spirit. At that time, the sinful passions that were a part of the sin nature caused us to choose to do what the law said was sin. The law never caused us to do what was right. It only stirred up our desire to live to satisfy ourselves. As a result, we used our physical bodies to satisfy the desires of the flesh. As a result, we chose to satisfy the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. In satisfying our sinful desires, we showed that we were spiritually dead.

In contrast, we have now been delivered from the law. Just as a woman is no longer under the

law of her husband when he dies, we are no longer under the law of sin. As Romans 6:13 says, “And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.” We are now able to present ourselves to God because of the fact that we have been made spiritually alive. As Ephesians 2:1 says, “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” We have been given new life so that we can bear fruit to God.

This new life that we have been given makes it possible for us to serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. It is important to help our children understand what it means to serve in the newness of the Spirit. Galatians 5:25 says, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Since we now live in the Spirit, we see that we are now able to walk in the Spirit. That has a powerful impact in our lives. Galatians 5:16 says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” As we show our children how to walk in the Spirit, we will show them that as we walk in the Spirit, our lives do not fulfill the sinful desires of the flesh.

Then, Galatians 5:18 says, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit also leads us so that we know the things that are pleasing to God. One of the key things that we want to help our children understand is that we are now led by the Spirit instead of being driven by the sin that controlled our lives for so long. The Spirit leads us in love and 1 John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” We want to help our children see that as we walk in the Spirit, He will lead us in love. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children fully understand what it means to be united with Christ.

Learning Why the Law Does Not Make Us Holy

In our last topic, we saw that we want to illustrate to our physical and spiritual children the fact that we are united with Christ. We saw that the law of sin is like a husband that has died. As a result, the wife is no longer under the law of her dead husband. Instead, she is free to marry a new husband. We saw that in the same way we are now dead to the law of sin and are able to enjoy the freedom that Christ gives as He leads us by His love. In this topic, we are going to see why the law cannot make any person holy.

Romans 7:7-8 says, “What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For apart from the law sin *was* dead.” The law shows the character of God and so it is good. As a result, the law is not sin. Instead, the law helps us to know the things that are sin. Before we became Christians, we were slaves to sin. Now, we have been set free from sin and are free to choose to do those things that are pleasing to God.

What we see here is that the law helped us to know the things that are sin. One of the Ten Commandments is “You shall not covet.” Before we became a Christian, that statement caused us to covet because of the fact that we had a sin nature that was in rebellion against God. The very fact that the law was there caused us to begin to covet many things because of our rebellion against God. Those evil desires arose because our sin nature showed us that these were some specific ways that we could rebel against God. In contrast, we are now dead to the law of sin and alive to Christ. We have a new nature that desires to please Christ and the Holy Spirit gives us the power to please Christ as we yield to Him.

However, the law can also cause true Christians to covet. When we look at the world around us instead of looking at Christ, we open our lives to coveting because we are still tempted by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. That is why 1 Timothy 6:6-8 says, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” As we ask the Lord to give us His strength to live godly lives, the Lord gives us the things that we need. As we grow in love and in our desire to serve others, the Lord helps us to learn to be content.

Romans 7:9-12 goes on to say, “I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*. Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.” Before we started to think about fellowship with God, we thought that we were enjoying life. We satisfied our sinful desires and thought nothing of it. In fact, Paul thought that he lived a very good life without Christ. Philippians 3:4-6 says, “Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” Paul thought that he could depend on his own efforts to be right with God.

Then, Paul was stopped by Christ on the road to Damascus. Suddenly, he had to look at the commandments of God from the viewpoint of God instead of from the viewpoint of a Pharisee.

He suddenly saw himself as a sinner. 1 Timothy 1:15 says, “This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” In addition, as Paul sat in darkness for three days, he also realized that he was spiritually dead. As a result, he was prepared when Ananias came to visit him. Acts 9:17-18 says, “And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.” Paul realized that only Christ could give him spiritual life.

Paul had thought that the commandments in the law were the source that gave him life. The reason he thought this was because he thought that he was keeping the law perfectly. In his case, he had been deceived by his own pride. He was like the rich young ruler who after Christ reminded him of the commandments that deal with man’s relationship to man said in Luke 18:21, “And he said, ‘All these things I have kept from my youth.’” Like the rich young ruler, Paul thought that he could earn eternal life by keeping the law. That would have been true if he really could have kept the law perfectly. However, when Christ spoke to him on the road to Damascus, Paul realized that he was sinning against God. As a result, he found that the law actually brought death because the law showed that he was guilty of sin.

In fact, Paul realized that he had been deceived by his own sin. The fact that Paul thought that he had kept the commandments showed the pride that was controlling his life. That caused him to realize the true nature of sin in his life. 1 Timothy 1:12-13 says, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.” When Paul saw the law from the viewpoint of God, he realized that he was a blasphemer, a persecutor and an insolent man. This caused him to realize that he was spiritually dead. As we begin to understand the true nature of sin, we all realize that we are guilty before God.

That is why the law is not sin. In fact, we see here that the law is holy. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:16, “Because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’” That is a quotation from Leviticus 11:44. First, the law is holy because it shows that God is holy. Second, the law is holy because it shows that all have sinned and are guilty before God. As a result, the commandment is holy. Paul also points out the fact that because the law is holy, it is also just and good. The law is just because it requires that the penalty for sin be paid. The law is good because it is upright and honorable. That is why 1 John 1:9 is so important for every Christian to understand when that verse says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The fact that Christ paid our penalty and the Father is satisfied makes God both just and merciful and makes us righteous in the sight of God.

Romans 7:13-14 goes on to say, “Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.” The law is good but Paul said that it had become death to him. That is a reminder of the fact that sin separated all of us from God and that is spiritual death. When we came to the point where we repented our sin and placed our faith in Christ, we were given spiritual life.

However, we saw in Romans 6:13 and 6:16 that we can still choose to yield to sin even though we are dead to sin. When we choose to yield to sin, it produces a different kind of death. Romans 7:24 says, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” The word that is translated “wretched” means *a life that is filled with toils and troubles*. Here,

we see that a Christian that is trying to live the Christian life in his or her own strength will experience toils and troubles in his or her life. John 15:5 says, “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” Many Christians experience the life described in Romans 7:14-25, because they are trying to live the Christian life in their own strength.

The law reflects the character of God because it is spiritual. In contrast, a Christian that is trying to live the Christian life in his own strength is carnal. A carnal Christian is described in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 where we read, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere men*?” In many ways, carnal Christians live and act like those who are not even Christians.

In contrast, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to walk in the Spirit because Galatians 5:16 says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” As we show our children how to walk in the Spirit by our example, we are showing them what it means to yield to God instead of yielding to sin. We help them to realize that when we depend on our own strength, we make the natural response and yield to sin. We show them that when we yield to God, we are making the supernatural response and the Lord gives us the power to carry out the will of God. Philippians 2:12-13 says, “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.” We show them that when we yield to God, He is able to carry out His will through our lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children the importance of yielding to God moment by moment.

Learning Why Christians Have “I” Trouble

In our last topics, we have seen that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that the law is good and holy. We have also seen that the law cannot make a person either good or holy. All that the law does is show people when they are guilty of sin. That is why Paul pointed out the fact in Galatians 3:24-25 that we are no longer under the law when we come to Christ. However, there are many Christians who think that they will grow in their spiritual lives by trying to keep the law in their own strength. Instead of experiencing spiritual growth, they experience a life of frustration and failure instead. We will see that explained in more detail in our topic today.

In Romans 7:15-17, we read, “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good. But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.” As Paul wrote this section of Scripture about his own life, he explained something that is common for all Christians when we depend on our own strength. When we are depending on our own strength, we cannot understand why we do the things that we do. We determine that we are going to make a change in our lives and begin to do a certain thing that we know is right. However, we fail to carry out that thing and continue to practice the thing that we determined not to do. Perhaps, we determine to pray more each day. We do pray more for a few days and then we go back to our old pattern of life and neglect to pray as much as we had determined that we would.

In contrast, there are some things that we determine we will not do again, because we know they are wrong due to the fact that they are sin. Perhaps, we decide that we are going to stop worrying and start turning our problems over to the Lord. That works fine for a few hours and then we suddenly find ourselves worrying again even though we had determined that we were going to start turning our problems over to the Lord. We forget that Christ said in John 15:5, “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” Whether we fail to do what we had determined to practice, or fail to start doing something new and different in our lives, we feel like a failure. Here, we see that Paul also experienced these feelings in his own life as he was growing in the Lord.

When we do what we had determined not to do, we realize that we are not in control because we do not have the strength in ourselves to keep the law fully. We realize that sin is still present in our lives because we are still in our physical bodies (the flesh). That is why Romans 7:18-20 says, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.” Here, we see that there will be a great difference between what we will to do and what we actually practice when we try to change in our own strength.

That is why 1 John 2:15-17 says, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” Even though we are dead to the control of sin over our lives, we see that we can still be tempted by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. In the previous verses, 1 John 2:12-14, we read about three levels of spiritual maturity: little children, young men and fathers.

The child knows that his sins are forgiven and knows the Father. However, by the time a person becomes a spiritual young man we read that he is strong, the Word of God abides in him and he has overcome the wicked one. It takes time for spiritual children to grow and become spiritual young men, because we only learn slowly to yield our bodies as instruments of righteousness.

Romans 7:18 said that we will do what is good. However, we have not been shown how to carry out the things that are good. The fact that we will do good shows that we have placed our faith in Christ because we did not have that desire before we placed our faith in Christ. We will see in Romans 8 that as we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is the One who gives us the power to do what is good. Before we are shown how to walk in the Spirit, verse 19 says that the evil we will not do will be the very thing that we practice. Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” In this verse, we see that we need to renew our minds and then be shown how to carry out the things that are good and acceptable.

Only as we are transforming our minds are we learning to think Biblically instead of thinking the way that the world thinks. Our minds will not be perfectly transformed until we get to heaven; but, as they are being transformed, we are learning how to become more like Christ. The fact that we do what we will not do is a reminder to us that we need to continue to grow in the area of yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit. That is why Romans 7:21 says, “I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.” Our new nature that we receive at the moment of salvation gives us the desire to do what is good and pleasing to the Lord. We are not happy when we see that evil is still present in our lives. In fact, as Christians, we have a great desire to see our lives completely changed. However, we learn best how to make changes in our lives as we are able to see the example of godly Christians who are usually yielding their human spirit to the Holy Spirit.

As we grow as Christians, we grow first in our knowledge of the Word of God. As a result, Romans 7:22-23 says, “For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Here, we see that this growth in knowledge causes us to be filled with delight as we learn what is good and pleasing to God. In fact, Psalm 119:97-100 says, “Oh, how I love Your law! It *is* my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they *are* ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies *are* my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts.” At the same time that we delight in what we are learning from the Word of God, we begin to realize that there is another law at work in our bodies. We are still tempted by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life and these things cause a war in our mind. We know that we want to do what the Word of God says but we have no idea how to practice what we are learning from the Word.

That is due to the fact that knowledge is just the beginning of the learning process. 1 Corinthians 8:1 says, “Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.” The Bible certainly helps us to learn what things are right and what things are sin as we read the Word. However, knowledge by itself only causes a person to become puffed up and proud. Once we have knowledge, then we need both understanding and application. In Psalm 119:100, quoted in the previous paragraph, we see that the thing that gives us more understanding than those much older is learning how to obey the precepts of the Word of God. Then, we are able to both understand the love of God in our own lives and share that love with others.

That is why if we are immature Christians, there is a conflict going on inside our lives. We love what we are learning from the Word of God. At the same time, in our own strength, we fail to obey what we are learning from the Word of God. We may be dealing with this struggle in our own lives at the same time that we are trying to help our physical and spiritual children learn what it means to be free in Christ. Instead of setting us free, this new knowledge only causes us to experience the same things that Adam experienced when he sinned. In Genesis 3:10, Adam said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” In this verse, we see that Adam was controlled by fear, guilt and shame. As Christians, we now know what is right; but, in our own strength, we still continue to practice the things that we know are sin. This causes us to experience that fear, guilt and shame. We want to help our children understand from Scripture how to reverse these things

Romans 7:24-25 says, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” Paul experienced times of misery in his new life in Christ, just as each of us have experienced in our own lives. That misery and conflict in our hearts is what we experience when we depend on our own strength. Our physical and spiritual children also experience these same things. That is why it is so important to help them learn to yield their human spirit to the Holy Spirit moment by moment so that they can enjoy the liberty that we have in Christ. That will be covered in more detail in our next several topics.

Our children also have times in their Christian lives when they want to serve God and be obedient to Him but at the same time feel like they are serving the law of sin. That is why it is so important for every Christian to gain a real understanding of Romans 6:1-8:39. We have just seen what happens when we depend on ourselves. Before the next topic, you may want to reread Romans 7:15-25 and see how many times the words, “I”, “me”, “my” and “myself” are used. Then, you will be prepared to help your children notice that a different group of words are used in Romans 8. May the Lord richly bless you as you explain to your children why Christians have “I” trouble.

Learning Why Christians Do Not Face Condemnation

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn why we have “I” trouble. We saw that when we as Christians try to live our Christian lives in our own strength, we will experience failure and frustration. We will feel guilt because we fail and do the things that we will not do. We also feel guilt when we are unable to do the things that we know are right. Today, we are going to start a series of several topics that will help us learn how to help our children learn to experience more and more victory in their lives.

In Romans 8:1-2, we read, “*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*” The phrase “no condemnation” is a key phrase in this verse because it summarizes what has been taught in the last seven chapters. The word “condemnation” is only used in two other verses. Those two places are in Romans 5:16-18 where we read, “*And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.*” In these verses, we see that condemnation is a word that is used in a court setting.

Because of the one sin of Adam, in verse 16 we see that he experienced immediate spiritual death (separation from God) and later experienced physical death. In verse 18, we see that all people stand condemned, because of the sin that entered the world through Adam and was passed on to all of us. In contrast, we also see in verse 18 that the righteous act of Christ made the free gift of eternal life available to all people. As a result, all those who place their faith in Christ are made just or righteous. Here, in Romans 8:1, we see this means that we no longer face condemnation. We will never have to worry about being condemned again. This is due to the fact that we are in Christ Jesus and He paid our penalty and satisfied the requirements of the law for us.

We see that a new law has now taken effect in our lives at the moment of salvation. This is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus or the law of faith. Romans 3:27 says, “*Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.*” Because Christ is the One who made faith possible, we have nothing in ourselves about which to boast. We came to faith in Christ because He gave us that faith. This new law is in effect even in that period of time when we are experiencing the frustration and failure that we see in Romans 7:15-25. This new law has set us free from the law of sin and death. We saw in the last topic that the law of God is good and holy because God is holy. We could not keep that law and so that law condemned us. Now because of the death of Christ in our place to pay for our sin, the law of faith (law of the Spirit of life) has made us free from the law of sin and death.

A key thing to notice before we go any further is the fact that the Holy Spirit was mentioned only once in the first seven chapters of Romans. We are going to see that the Holy Spirit is mentioned a total of nineteen times in Romans 8. We saw that Romans 7:15-25 concluded with the words “I”, “me”, “my” and “myself” being used about 37 times (depending on which translation you read). In contrast, we will see in the concluding verses of chapter eight, the words “we” and “us” are frequently used. Due to the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in every

Christian, no Christian has to depend on his or her strength to live the Christian life. Instead, at each moment that we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, we have the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives which makes it possible for the love of Christ to flow through our lives to others.

Romans 8:3-4 says, “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” We saw that the Old Testament law could not make us do right. It only showed that we were guilty and facing death as the result. In contrast, God sent Christ to this earth as the God-man. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Christ took on human flesh like we have. He was tempted just like we are tempted. However, Christ had victory over temptation and did not sin. Then, Christ took our sin on Him as He hung on the cross. As a result, He took our condemnation. That is why we no longer face any condemnation once we place our faith in Christ.

The payment of Christ for our sin fulfilled the righteous requirement of God that sin must be judged. The Father showed that He was satisfied with that payment by raising Christ from the dead. As a result, at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ, we were set free from the penalty of the law. At that moment of faith, Christ also placed the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is the Holy Spirit that now gives us the power to walk according to the Spirit, instead of walking according to the flesh. As Galatians 5:16 says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” At every moment that we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, we will have victory over the sinful desires of the flesh. In contrast, when we walk in our own strength we will fail.

Romans 8:5-8 describes what our condition was like before we became Christians. Those verses say, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Before we became Christians, we set our minds on the things of the flesh and we continually practiced the sins of the flesh. That carnal or fleshly mind only produced death. That is due to the fact that the carnal mind is totally opposed to God and lives in continual rebellion. As a result, those who lack faith and are still living in the flesh cannot please God.

We also see that these verses contain some contrasts. When we have been given life according to the Spirit, we are now free to set our minds on the things of the Spirit. That is why Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” We have been set free from our bondage to the flesh. That freedom now gives us the opportunity to serve one another in love. A second contrast is also given. The carnal (fleshly) mind is totally in conflict with God. In contrast, the mind that is yielded to the Holy Spirit is spiritually minded. We see that as we learn to enjoy that blessing of being spiritually minded, we begin to experience a life that is filled with the peace of God.

Romans 8:9 goes on to give all Christians a great reminder, “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” At the moment we became a Christian, we died to the law. Romans 6:3-4 says, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that

just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” At the moment we placed our faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit came into our lives. As a result, we are now in the Spirit instead of being in the flesh. We saw later in that chapter that we are now able to yield our lives to God and He will give us the desire and the power to do those things that are pleasing to Him.

In chapter seven, we had another illustration. The law was compared to the marriage of a wife and a husband. At the time the husband dies, the wife is no longer under the law of her husband because he is dead. She is now free to be married to another husband. In the same way, at the moment we placed our faith in Christ, we were no longer under the law of sin and death. Instead, we see here in Romans 8 that we are now under the law of the Spirit of life because Christ has set us free from the law of sin and death. We were given the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation as our down payment and guarantee of our eternal life. Ephesians 1:13-14 says, “In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” As a result, every Christian has the Holy Spirit take up residence and dwell in our lives beginning at the moment of salvation.

In fact, the last part of Romans 8:9 says that any person who does not have the Holy Spirit is not yet a Christian. Once our children place their faith in Christ, we want to begin teaching them that the Holy Spirit has come into their lives. We want to help them understand that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives them the power to do those things that are right and pleasing to God. We want to help them learn that at each moment they are yielding their human spirit to the Holy Spirit, they will experience the peace of God in their lives. We want to help them understand that they no longer have to fear condemnation. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your physical and spiritual children learn to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Learning the Importance of Being the Children of God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that at the moment they placed their faith in Christ, they were set free from the condemnation of sin. We saw, instead, that they are now under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. We began to see some of the differences that have happened in each of our lives since we have placed our faith in Christ. Today, we will learn about some additional changes that have happened in our lives because we are now under the law of the Spirit of life.

Romans 8:10-11 says, “And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” At the moment that we placed our faith in Christ, He placed the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit gave spiritual life to our human spirit. Ephesians 2:5 says, “Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” Here, we see that in addition to the Holy Spirit, Christ also lives in our lives. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me.” As a result, we now have spiritual life and a desire to please God.

Acts 2:24 tells us that the Father raised Christ from the dead. Here, we see that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and that Spirit dwells in us. The Father who raised Christ from the dead is also the One who has given life to our mortal bodies. A mortal body is a body that will die. Here, we see that even this physical body that will die has been given spiritual life because of the fact that His Spirit (the Holy Spirit) dwells in us. That is why 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 tells us, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”

In the Old Testament, the Jews had a building called the temple in the city of Jerusalem. In contrast, we see that today our physical bodies are the temple of God. That means that every place we go, the temple of God is present. We want to help our children understand this important fact, because their bodies are also the temple of God. That means that everywhere we and our children go, we are representing God to the world by the things that we say and do. That is why 2 Corinthians 5:20 says, “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.” We want to help our children fully understand the great privilege that we have been given to be ambassadors for Christ. We have been given the privilege to speak for God and beg others on the behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God. What an awesome privilege to speak for the Creator of the universe.

Romans 8:12-13 goes on to say, “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” The fact that God has given us life means that we have a debt. However, that debt is not to the sinful desires of the flesh. That is why we no longer need to live according to the flesh because the sinful desires of the flesh no longer control our lives. We saw in a previous topic that when we live according to the flesh as a Christian, we experience great misery and feelings of failure. Romans 7:24 says, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” We see that a Christian living in

sin is very miserable and experiences a mental and emotional death (feelings of total failure).

That is why these verses encourage us by the Spirit to put to death the deeds of the body. This is a moment by moment process that will continue for the rest of our physical life. Each time that we are tempted we have a choice. We can choose to sin. When we make this choice, we feel fear, guilt or shame. In contrast, we can choose to yield to God and be obedient to Him. He then gives us His strength to be obedient. When we make that choice we experience inner peace. Philippians 4:7 says, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Then, Philippians 4:9 promises us, “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.” This peace that God gives us as we are obedient to Him is beyond human understanding.

We also read about another of the things that God does for us as we choose to yield to the Holy Spirit and let Him lead us. Romans 8:14-15 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’” Sin drives us because sin produces fear, guilt and shame. In contrast, the Holy Spirit leads us in our lives. Galatians 5:18 says, “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” The Holy Spirit leads us through the Word of God as He helps us to understand it. 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 says, “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. For ‘who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.” The Holy Spirit helps us to understand the Word of God and then gives us His strength so that we can be obedient to that Word.

When Adam sinned, he received the spirit of bondage. Genesis 3:10 says, “So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’” As soon as Adam sinned, this verse says that he was immediately controlled by fear, guilt and shame. At the moment of salvation, we see that we received the Spirit of adoption. The word “Abba” means Father or Daddy. As a result, instead of being afraid of God and hiding from Him, we can now come boldly to God as we would to a loving father because we come to God through Christ. Hebrews 4:15-16 says, “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Because we are the children of God, He invites us to come boldly into His presence and enjoy fellowship with Him.

In fact, Romans 8:16-17 promises us, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” We see here that once we place our faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit joins together with our human spirit to assure us that we are the children of God. Before we became Christians, we read in Romans 2:15, “Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*.” God used our conscience to convict us of our sin. In contrast, after we become Christians, Paul said in Romans 9:1, “I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit.” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our conscience. As we see here in Romans 8, one of the things that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our human spirit is that we are the children of God.

The fact that we know that we are the children of God also includes several benefits. The first

benefit that we have is that we become the heir of God. An heir is a person who has received an allotted inheritance because they are a child of a certain person. Here, we see that as a child of God, every Christian will receive an inheritance. Titus 3:7 says, "That having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." In this verse, we see that one part of that inheritance is the fact that we have been promised eternal life.

In addition to being heirs of God, we also read that we are joint heirs with Christ. The book of Hebrews begins in Hebrews 1:1-2 by saying, "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds." In this verse, we see that the Father has appointed Christ as the heir of all things. Since we are joint heirs with Christ, that means we will share all things with Him. This means that we will receive a full inheritance.

Since we are joint heirs with Christ, as Christians that means we will also have the privilege of sharing some of His sufferings. In Acts 5:41-42, we read, "So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ." Here, we see that it is a privilege to be counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. To be counted worthy by Christ to share in His sufferings means that we are very special to Him.

However, just as we share in His sufferings on this earth, we can also look forward to the day when we will share His glory for all eternity. This is also a great privilege because we are glorified together with Christ. As we help our physical and spiritual children understand the importance of being the children of God, we see that relationship means that we will enjoy both blessings in this present life and then for all eternity. Those eternal blessings will never come to an end because of the fact that we are joint heirs with Christ and will share them for all eternity. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the importance of being the children of God.

Learning About the Liberty We Have in Christ

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the great blessings that we have received because of the fact that we are the children of God. In fact, we saw that many of those blessings are also future because they will last for all eternity. As we concluded our last topic, we saw that it was a privilege to be counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ.

As we come to Romans 8:18-19, we read, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.” Although we do experience suffering on this earth, we are reminded that those sufferings cannot even be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us. That glory is far beyond anything that we can even imagine. 1 John 3:2 says, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Here, we see that part of the reason why we cannot imagine what we will be like is due to the fact that we will be like Him. There is no way that we can compare our sufferings here on this earth to that glory.

God is going to reveal His glory in the lives of each of us who have placed our faith in Christ. In fact, we see that the entire creation is eagerly waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. The entire creation includes everything except the people. As a result, we see that the entire creation is eagerly waiting for the time when God will reveal all those who have placed their faith in Christ. 1 Samuel 16:7 says, “But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For *the Lord does not see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’” Just as we cannot know the hearts of others, the creation cannot know those who have placed their faith in Christ until the day that God reveals it. However, the creation is eagerly waiting for that day when God will reveal, to the entire creation, every person who has placed their faith in Christ.

We go on to see why the entire creation is eagerly waiting for the day when God will reveal all those who have placed their faith in Christ. Romans 8:20-21 says, “For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Here, we see that the entire creation was affected by the sin of Adam and Eve. Genesis 3:17-19 says, “Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat of it”: Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat *of* it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return.’” Once man sinned, the creation was no longer able to complete the goal that God had for His creation.

However, when all of the sons of God are revealed, then God can purify His creation and the creation will be able to be all that God planned it to be. 2 Peter 3:10 says that God is going to purify the creation when it says, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” Then, 2 Peter 3:13 says, “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which

righteousness dwells.” The creation did not cause the limitations that came on it. Instead, those limitations were caused by sin. However, once all sin is judged, then God can purify His creation and it will be able to complete the goal that God has for His creation throughout eternity.

That is why we are told that the creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption. “Corruption” means *that which is perishing or facing destruction*. The present creation will be burned up and purified so that there will no longer be any of the limitations that came into the creation because of the sin of man. Once sin is judged, both we and the creation itself will experience the glorious liberty that God has planned for us. Revelation 21:4-5 says, “‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’” Once we begin to experience that glorious liberty, the entire creation will be able to join with us by enjoying that glorious liberty for all eternity.

At the present time, the creation experiences many things that are the result of sin. Matthew 24:7 describes a few of the things that have happened to the creation when that verse says, “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.” Here, we see that the earth is subject to famines, pestilences and earthquakes. Then, in Matthew 24:29, we read how sin will affect other parts of the creation when that verse says, “‘Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.’” It should not surprise us when we think about these things that the creation is also eagerly looking forward to the time when it will no longer experience the effects of sin.

That is why verse 22 says, “For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.” The creation is certainly experiencing the results of the sin of man and will continue to experience those results until the time that all sin is finally judged and the creation is restored to its former condition before man sinned.

At the same time, we as Christians are also looking forward to what the Lord is going to do in our lives. Romans 8:23-25 says, “Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.” As Christians we see that the Holy Spirit has also started to bear those first fruits in our lives. Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” We can enjoy the blessing of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives as we wait for the greater blessings to come in the future.

At the same time that we enjoy those firstfruits, we are even more eager to experience the redemption of our body. That redemption actually has two parts. First, we look forward to the fact that we will be given a new body. 1 Corinthians 15:54 says, “So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’” Here, we see that we will be given a body that will never corrupt and never die. However, the second part is that we will no longer have any sinful desires. As 2 Peter 1:3-4 tells us, “As His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is*

in the world through lust.” Here, we see that we become partakers of the divine nature so that we no longer will have the lusts of this world.

As a result of the fact that we can look forward to both a changed physical body and a changed inner man that is no longer tempted by sinful lusts once we are with Christ, we eagerly look forward to that time when we will be with Christ. In fact, it is that hope that helps to give us the inner peace that we enjoy in our lives at the present time. However, that hope will be fulfilled when we see Christ face to face. Titus 2:13-14 says, “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.” Here, we see that we look forward with great hope to that day when we see Christ and He purifies us from every lawless thought and action.

The word that is translated “hope” means *confident assurance that God will do exactly as He has promised*. That is why that hope is called the blessed hope because we look forward to that day when Christ will appear to take us to heaven so that we can be with Him for all eternity. Romans 5:2 says, “Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” It is this confident assurance that makes it possible for us to be filled with joy as we look forward to that day when we will be in the presence of the Lord.

We also see that we want to help our children understand how to live as they wait for the coming of the Lord. We are able to wait for His coming with perseverance. The word translated “perseverance” means *endurance or steadfastness*. 1 Corinthians 15:58 says, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” We want to show our children by our example that we can abound in the work of the Lord as we wait for His coming to take us to heaven. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand the privilege that we have to serve the Lord because of the liberty that we have in Christ.

Learning Why God Works All things Together for Good

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the liberty that we have in Christ. We have been set free so that we can serve Him in love as we wait for His coming to take us to be with Him in heaven. We saw that at that time we will also be changed so that we no longer have any sinful lusts and desires. Today, we are going to see that God takes the things that happen to us on this earth and turns those things around so that even the things that seem bad are used by the Lord to conform us to the image of Christ.

In Romans 8:26, we read, “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” In this verse, we see one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit for all Christians. The word that is translated “weaknesses” means *lack of strength*. In this verse, it means the lack of strength to understand. In this verse, we see that there are many times in our Christian lives when we do not understand how to pray in a particular situation. In this verse, we see that when we lack understanding, the Holy Spirit has that understanding as He prays for us.

Some things that are the will of God are clear and easy to understand. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” In this verse, God makes it clear that it is His will that we give thanks in every situation. In many things we face each day, the will of God is not as clear. Paul experienced this when he had a thorn in the flesh. 2 Corinthians 12:8-9 says, “Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” In this case, Paul was praying for the thorn in the flesh to be removed. After three times, the Lord made it clear that it was His will for Paul to have the Lord’s strength perfected in his life by this thorn in the flesh. Paul was experiencing weakness because of this thorn in the flesh. In this case, the Holy Spirit prayed that the Lord would give Paul understanding so that the strength of the Lord would be perfected in that weakness.

When we do not know the will of God, we see that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. To “make intercession” means *to speak for us and on our behalf*. In Hebrews 7:25, we read, “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” Here, we see that Christ is sitting on the right hand of the Father where He is making intercession for us. Our verse in Romans shows us that the Holy Spirit is also making intercession for us as He prays for us when we do not know how to pray. Since both Christ and the Holy Spirit know the will of God, those prayers that they pray for us will always be according to the will of God.

This is explained more fully in Romans 8:27 where we read, “Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.” As the Father searches our hearts, He already knows what the mind of the Spirit is praying because the Father knows that the Holy Spirit prays for us according to the will of God. As a result, we know that the Holy Spirit takes our prayers and brings those prayers into agreement with the will of God. That means that as we walk by faith, we can know God is going to use whatever happens in our lives to work out His will in and through our lives. As we understand this in our own lives, then we will be able to help our children understand this principle in their lives.

Romans 8:28-29 says, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” It is true that terrible things can happen in the lives of Christians. However, we see that we can know that God takes those terrible things and causes them to work out for good in the life of every person who loves God. Paul understood this in his own life.

Philippians 1:12-13 says, “But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ.” Here, we see that God used the imprisonment of Paul to cause the Gospel to spread among the entire palace guard.

Every Christian has been called by God according to His purpose. Paul was a persecutor of Christians and on his way to Damascus to persecute additional Christians when he was called by God. Galatians 1:15-16 says, “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood.” God was working in the life of Paul from the moment of his birth. In spite of the fact that Paul persecuted the church for a period of time and even held the coats when Stephen was stoned to death, God was working in his life. God was preparing Paul to take the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Paul caused many Christians to suffer before he became a Christian. However, when the Lord sent Ananias to Paul in Damascus, the Lord told Ananias in Acts 9:15-16, “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.’” Paul could certainly understand why he suffered for the sake of Christ since he had earlier forced many others to suffer. That is why even when he was in prison he understood fully that God was completing His purpose for Paul's life as we saw when Paul was in prison in Rome.

Many people quote Romans 8:28 without quoting verse 29. The reason that God causes all things to work out for good in our lives is explained in verse 29. Ephesians 1:4-5 says, “Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” God knew us and chose us before He ever created the world. At that time, He determined to help us become conformed to the image of Christ. In order to help us develop the attitudes of Christ, we also have to experience suffering so that we can develop those attitudes. Paul explained this to the Christians in Galatia. Acts 14:22 says, “Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’” Paul knew that we all have to go through many tribulations in order to become conformed to the image of Christ.

However, we see that it is that suffering that helps us to have the relationship that we have with Christ. The last part of Romans 8:29 says, “That He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” That thought is clarified for us in Hebrews 2:10-11 where we read, “For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Christ made it possible for each of us who become Christians to be with Him in heaven by His sufferings to provide our salvation. Christ willingly experienced that suffering because He was not ashamed to call us His brethren. In fact, one of the first things Christ said after His resurrection is recorded in John 20:17 where we read, “Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and *to* My God and your God.’”” Immediately after His resurrection, Christ started calling the disciples His brethren.

In addition to determining before the creation of the world to conform us to the image of Christ, we also see that the Father did several things to make that happen. Romans 8:30 says, “Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” Because God had determined to call us according to His purpose, He also called each one of us. John 6:44 says, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” We want to help our children understand that the Father was also the one that drew us to Christ because He had called us.

We also see two other things that the Father has done in this verse. Each person who He draws to Christ He also justifies. The word “justified” means *to declare righteous*. At the moment we placed our faith in Christ, we were declared righteous. We were pardoned from our sins and our sins were blotted out. We also had the righteousness of Christ placed on us so that as the Father looks at us He sees the righteousness of Christ. In addition, in the sight of God, He has also glorified us. That means that in His sight it is as if we are already in heaven because we will see by the end of this chapter that no created thing can separate us from the love of Christ.

In these verses, we see why we can help our physical and spiritual children understand why God causes all things that happen in our lives to work out for good. The Lord is using every event that happens in our lives to help us become conformed to the image of Christ. In addition, we want to help our children understand that Christ is not ashamed to call us His brethren. The Lord is allowing all of the things that happen in our lives to help us become like Christ. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn why God causes all things to work together for good.

Learning to Rest in the Love of Christ

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand why God causes all of the things that happen to us to work out for good. We see that the Lord is working through every event that happens in our lives to help us become more like Christ. As a result, when we see Christ, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him as He is. We want to help our children grow in their understanding of the way that Christ is working in their lives. We also want to help them learn to rest in the love of Christ. That will be the focus of our topic today.

Romans 8:31-32 says, “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” We saw that God is working in our lives to conform us to the image of Christ. As we are growing and becoming more like Christ, we see that God wants us to experience a great inner peace. The reason we can experience that peace is summarized by several questions. Since we know that God is for us, the question is asked, “Can anyone be against us?” God showed that He was for us by offering His own Son as the payment for our sin.

In fact, the Father sent Christ to pay the penalty for the sin of every person so that the Father could freely forgive all who would come to Him in repentance and faith. 1 John 2:2 says, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The word “propitiation” means *that which satisfies*. Here, we see the Father said He was satisfied; the sacrifice by Christ was sufficient to include every person who would come to Him in repentance and faith. Those who refuse to come to God by faith in Christ will pay the penalty for their own sins because of their sin of unbelief but God promises that all who come to Him through Christ will be forgiven.

The next question reminds us that all who come to Christ are freely given all things. For all who come to Christ, Romans 8:16-17 promises, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” We have this promise because of the fact that Christ forgives our sins, blots out our sins and remembers our sins no more. We can also assure our children that God promises that He will complete the work that He has started in our lives. Philippians 1:6 says, “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ.” The day will come when He will complete that work and we will spend eternity with Christ.

Romans 8:33-34 give us two more questions that remind us what God has done for us. In these verses, we see a courtroom scene as these two questions are asked, “Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” The word “elect” means *those who have been chosen and picked out by God*. Since God has chosen and picked out each Christian, there is no being that can bring a charge against those that God has chosen and see that charge stand. Then, we see why no one can bring a charge against us. God has justified us and declared us righteous in His sight. Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We have peace with God because Christ died for us and the Father showed He was satisfied by raising Christ.

Since Christ is the One who died to pay the penalty for our sin, once we have accepted that payment by placing our faith in Christ, will He ever change His mind and condemn us? Of course we know that would never happen. As John 3:18 says, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Once we place our faith in Christ, we are no longer condemned.

Instead of condemning us, we see what Christ is doing for us right now. We see that Christ is now sitting at the right hand of the Father. There, Christ is interceding on our behalf. The word “intercession” means *to speak on our behalf to the Father*. In Revelation 12:10, we read, “Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.’” At the present time, Satan spends his time day and night accusing Christians of sin to the Father. Here, we see that Christ speaks for us when Satan accuses us. When I sin, Satan says, “Did you see the sin that Duane just committed?” Christ immediately speaks on my behalf and says, “I paid for Duane’s sins and Duane accepted the payment by placing His faith in Me.” The Father immediately tells Satan, “I am satisfied with the payment. Case dismissed.”

Romans 8:35-36 go on to say, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’” The next question that is asked is if anything could separate us from the love of Christ. Then, seven things are mentioned. Tribulation speaks of the various pressures and difficult things that affect our lives. Distress speaks about a dire calamity that places such great pressure on our lives that we feel like we are in a narrow place and cannot escape. Persecution speaks about suffering that is caused by people who are against Christ. Famine and nakedness talk about a lack of food or clothing. Peril speaks about danger from circumstances while sword speaks about a person trying to kill us. Here, we see that none of these things can separate us from the love of Christ.

Psalms 44:22 is quoted in verse 36. In that Psalm, we see that the writer talks about the fact that the Lord is the One who is watching over us regardless of the kind of suffering that we are experiencing in our lives. As Christians, we may suffer or be killed because of our faith in Christ. However, those things will not separate us from the love of Christ. Instead, this passage goes on to tell us that we will experience great victory through Christ regardless of what happens to us in this world. Here, we see that nothing that we experience in our daily life can separate us from the love of Christ.

Romans 8:37-39 says, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Instead of difficult circumstances separating us from the love of Christ, we see that these things remind us that we are more than conquerors through Christ because of His love for us. The phrase “more than conquerors” means *to conquer completely*. Because Christ is in our lives, the circumstances we experience in life are not any threat to us in light of the eternal life that we have in Christ.

The things mentioned in verse 35 that cannot separate us from the love of Christ are things that could happen in our own lives. As we look at verses 38 and 39, we see that nothing in the entire creation can separate us from the love of Christ. Whether we die or continue to live will not affect our relationship with Christ. Ephesians 6:12 says, “For we do not wrestle against

flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.” Here, we see that principalities are fallen angels while powers speak of those in positions of power and authority. As a result, neither godly angels nor demonic powers can separate us from the love of Christ.

We also see that things that are presently happening or will happen in the future will not change that love. Things like height and depth have no effect on that love. In fact, there is no created thing that can change the love of Christ for us. That is why we can help our children understand that there is nothing that they need to fear because God is in control of all things and He will not let anything separate them from His love.

In these last few verses of this chapter, we also learn another very important lesson. We saw that the last eleven verses of chapter seven used the words “I”, “me”, “my” and “myself” about 37 times. We mentioned that the Holy Spirit had only been mentioned once in the first seven chapters of Romans. We saw that the last eleven verses explain the frustration and failure that we will experience when we try to live the Christian life in our own strength. In contrast, in Romans 8 we see that the Holy Spirit is mentioned 19 times. We also see that these final verses use “we”, “our” and “us” instead of “I”, “me”, “my” and “myself”. We want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that we can experience inner peace in our lives as we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit moment-by-moment.

We also realize that as we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit that the Holy Spirit gives us power to do what Christ calls us to do. John 15:5 says, “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” We want to help our physical and spiritual children fully understand that as they yield their lives to the Holy Spirit, the power of the Holy Spirit works in their lives and the love of Christ flows through their lives to others. This is one of the key lessons that we can help our children understand to help them really begin to grow in their spiritual lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand how the Holy Spirit works in their human spirit.