

Life in the Spirit.01. The Book of Romans

Today, we continue in the overall study of discipleship as we begin to look at the Book of Romans which sets forth the basic doctrines of the Christian life and discipleship

Discipleship, or the making of disciples, is the overall purpose or mission of the church

- It is *the process* of “being transformed into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ”
- A fuller and more complete definition of discipleship is:

The sovereign purpose of God for His glory to
save a people for Himself
from the power and consequences of sin
and transform them into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ,
both individually and corporately,
according to the truth of the Holy Scriptures
by the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit
in order to reign with Christ in eternal life
in the holy, Personal, manifest presence of the glory of God

While the totality of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation reveals these components of discipleship, the Book of Romans is the preeminent book in Scripture that teaches them, and, therefore, the most important book we need to know and understand to live as true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ

- All of the components of discipleship and the Christian life are woven throughout the “fabric” of the book, being mentioned, touched on, or expounded in depth from one degree to another
- Overall, the book of Romans reveals “*the gospel of God*” (Rom.1:1) and teaches the basic doctrines and truths of “the sovereign purpose of God to save a people for Himself”
- Romans 1:16 = *For the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes*

“The power of God for salvation” is both, negatively, God saving us “from the power and the consequences of sin” and, positively, uniting us with Christ in His death and resurrection and “empowered by the Holy Spirit” so that the essence of the mission of the Church given by the Lord Jesus Christ is accomplished, which is “to make disciples, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20)

- This mission is expressly stated in the first and last chapters of Romans as a kind of inclusio or bookends of the whole book
- Romans 1:5 = *through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,*
- Romans 16:25-27 = *the gospel...²⁶ which has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith - ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.*
- “The faith” is what we are to believe, the basic doctrines of “the Gospel of God” (Rom.1:1) as written in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (16:26) and taught by the apostles (1:5)
- “The power of God for salvation” is manifested by obedience to “the faith” - the basic doctrines of discipleship and the Christian life

The Book of Romans reveals the three major categories of salvation from “the power and consequences of sin” we must know, understand and live to be “obedient to the faith”

- Knowing and understanding these major categories of salvation is not merely about understanding abstract theological concepts
- They are about living in the practical reality of the “*power of God for our salvation*”
- While failure to know and understand these will be detrimental and damaging to our relationship with God, knowing, understanding and living in the reality of them will provide and sustain us in the fullness of life in the Spirit and living as true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ
- These three categories are (1) “justification,” which is being saved from the penalty of sin, (2) “sanctification,” which is being saved from the power of sin, and (3) “glorification,” which is being saved from the presence of sin
- The “power of God for salvation” in all three of these categories is the Holy Spirit

(1) Justification

Justification is the judicial act of God, the Sovereign and Supreme Judge of the Universe, by which He declares a person to be legally righteous in their standing before Him

- It is the act of God in which He makes the determination and judgment of a person’s legal standing before Him according to His own justice based on His holy and righteous unchanging nature and stated in His holy, righteous law
- It is a once-for-all time judicial act of God
- A “justified” person is one who has been declared by God to be legally righteous in their standing before Him
- It is the determination of a person’s eternal destiny in which one is granted eternal life in the glorious presence of God (Rom. 2:7), and, because of this, nothing could be more important

The opposite of justification is the judicial act of God based on His holy and righteous unchanging nature by which He condemns a person charged with and found guilty of sin, and, therefore, is legally unrighteous before Him

- Condemnation is the determination of a person’s eternal destiny in which they are sentenced to eternal death suffering “*the wrath of God*” (Rom. 2:5,8), and nothing could be worse

The ultimate issue in regard to a person being justified or condemned is God Himself because it is God Himself, the Supreme Judge of the universe, Who determines a person’s eternal destiny

Chapters 1:18-5:21 of Romans expound in depth the doctrine of justification

- These chapters reveal that while “*all have sinned*” and are “*under sin*,” meaning the power of sin, and, thus, the righteous sentence of condemnation, nevertheless, “*through faith*” alone a person can “justified by God’s grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:9, 23-26)
- Through justification by faith in the Lord Jesus, a person is declared legally righteous before God, is no longer under condemnation, and saved from the legal penalty of sin and the wrath of God
- **Romans 5:1** = *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- **Romans 5:9** = *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.*
- **Romans 8:1** = *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*

Romans deals first with the doctrine of justification through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ because knowing, understanding and living it is the foundation of the Christian life, the beginning of discipleship and a righteous relationship with God

- It is the once-for-all time judicial act of God that is a “done-deal” which takes place in the moment a person truly believes in the Lord Jesus Christ
- **Romans 10:9-10** = *if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*
- The “justified” person is “saved” from the penalty of sin which is the wrath of God
- Because of this, justification is not a future event in which a person will find out on “*the day of the righteous judgment of God*” (**Rom. 2:5**) whether or not they are “saved,” but a past event in which a person knows they have been “saved” and, because of this, nothing “*will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (**Rom. 8:39**)

Practically, where a person stands in their understanding of justification by faith and their personal relationship with God can be revealed in their answers to two questions:

- (1) If you were to die tonight, do you know for certain that you would go to heaven?
- (2) If you were to die tonight, and God asked you, “Why should I let you into my heaven,” what would you say?”

- The first question deals with “assurance of salvation,” the confidence and security a person has in their relationship with God - they know they’ve been saved from the legal consequences of sin
- The second question deals with the knowledge and understanding of the reason a person believes they have confidence that they have been saved from the consequences of sin
- The second question is the most critical one
- While a person may, from one degree to another, have confidence of their salvation, if a person knows, understands and believes the right answer to the second question, they can have assurance in their heart and conscience that they have righteous legal standing before God because God Himself has declared them to be justified through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and they have eternal life
- **Romans 8:33-34** = *Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died-more than that, who was raised - who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*

(2) Sanctification

While justification is being “saved” from the legal the penalty of sin and is a past once-for-all time event in regard to our legal standing before God, sanctification is the present process of our fallen human nature, called “*the flesh*” (Rom.8:7), being saved from the power of sin as we are transformed by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 7:6; 8:2-6; 12:2) to become like the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29)

The word “sanctification” means “the process of being made holy”

- The Bible reveals there are seven components of something being holy, and, through the process of sanctification, God is transforming our fallen human nature by the power of the Holy Spirit to be like Christ to have these are seven components of being holy

The first three components have to do with our personal relationship and standing with God

(1) We are “set apart” from sin “to” the Lord

- The basic and root idea “holy” is that something is “set apart”
- Anything - a person, place or thing - can be set apart from anything else
- This why there is the repeated statement in Scripture “*holy to the LORD*”
- What is “holy to the LORD” is set apart and dedicated to God from everything else for His specified purpose
- This is the basic meaning of the Greek word ἅγιος (hagios) translated “*saint*” which literally means “a holy one”
- **Romans 1:7** = *To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints*
- By “the power of God to salvation” we are “holy to the Lord Jesus Christ”
- Through justification we have been set apart from the penalty of sin, through the process of sanctification we are being set apart from the power of sin, and through glorification we will be set apart from the presence of sin

(2) We belong to that God

- What is “holy to the LORD” is owned by God and to be used for His purpose alone
- **Romans 14:8** = *For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.*

(3) We can draw near to and be in God’s holy, manifest presence

- God’s holy, manifest presence is a “radio-active” consuming fire that will destroy anything and everything that is unholy which comes into His holy, Personal, manifest presence
- Only what is holy can draw near and be in God’s holy, manifest presence
- In Christ, we have personal access into the holy, manifest presence of God
- **Romans 5:2** = *Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand*

The next three components identify the nature of that which is holy

(4) Clean

- This means that is it not defiled, polluted, or contaminated by something unclean

(5) Pure

- This means that it is not mixed with or adulterated by something else

(6) Whole

- This means it exists the way God designed and purposed it to exist and function, being complete, and without defect
- There is nothing broken, wounded, harmed, marred, or dysfunctional about it
- This concept is often translated in the OT as “blameless”
- Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit be clean, pure and whole in our human nature
- These three components identify the purpose of sanctification
- Through the process of sanctification, we have been forgiven of our sin and made clean by the blood of Jesus (**Rom. 3:25**) and are being transformed to be pure and whole like Christ

The seventh component is what holy ultimately is and what holy is ultimately about

(7) Life

- In Christ we have been given eternal life

Chapters 6:1-8:39 of Romans expound in depth the doctrine of sanctification

- We are being saved from the power of sin in our fallen human nature, being set free from sin to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ and transformed in our human nature to obey Christ

- **Romans 6:17–22** = *But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.²¹ But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*

- **Romans 7:4** = *Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.*

- **Romans 8:2** = *For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*

While chapters 6-8 of Romans teach the basic principles of sanctification, chapters 12 through 15:13 give practical instructions about major areas of the Christians life and what it looks like to be “transformed them into the image and likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ, both individually and corporately”

- These include teaching about spiritual gifts (12:3-8), principles of personal relationships (12:9-21; 13:8-14), relationship to civil government (13:1-7), and principles of unity in the Body of Christ (14:1-15:13)

(3) Glorification

While justification is being “saved” from the legal the penalty of sin and is the past once-for-all time judicial act of God in regard to our legal standing before Him, and sanctification is the present process of our human nature being saved from the power of sin to be transformed to become like the Lord Jesus Christ, glorification is the future event when we will be saved from the very presence of sin and being completely conformed to the likeness of Christ to reign with Him in eternal life

- This is our hope, or confident expectation, that will take place at the time of our resurrection

- **Romans 8:20-23** = *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

Glorification means to be given and share in the glory of God and the Lord Jesus Christ which is the brilliance, splendor, and beauty of eternal life, reigning with Him forever

- In our fallen human nature, and apart from being justified and united with Christ, we will not receive the “glory of God”

- **Romans 3:23** = *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

- Justified through faith, we have confident assurance that we will be glorified

- **Romans 5:2** = *Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

- **Romans 5:17** = *For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.*

- **Romans 8:18** = *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

- **Romans 8:29-30** = *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

While these are justification, sanctification and glorification are the general areas of the Christian life, Romans shows that the Christians life, which is the life of a true disciple and follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, must be empowered by the Holy Spirit

Woven throughout the Book in each and all of these general areas of salvation, the necessity of the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit to live as a disciple is stated

- **Romans 2:29** = *But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.*

- **Romans 7:6** = *But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.*

- **Romans 8:2** = *For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*

- **Romans 8:4-6** = *in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.⁵ 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 set their minds on the things of the Spirit.⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*

- **Romans 8:11** = *If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

- **Romans 8:14-16** = *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*

- **Romans 14:17** = *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

The Christian and being a true disciple of Christ can be summarized as “life in the Spirit”