

The Christ Powered Life (Romans 5-8)

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by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

Appendix 4. Participant Handouts for Groups and Classes

If you're working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts at no additional charge.

Each of these lesson sheets includes:

Big Concept. To help your group members grasp the Big Concept is the goal of the lesson. So make that your theme and don't get too far off track.

Questions. You'll find 4 to 6 questions for each lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions. But remember to emphasize the Big Concept.

Key Verses. Each of these passages is rich in Bible verses worth memorizing. The verses here are in the New International Version, but feel free to have your members memorize in any translation you're comfortable with. Scripture memory has a way of fixing God's word in our minds. If you haven't tried assigning verses for memory -- and then testing the following week -- you'll bless your group members, though they may complain about short memories.

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:11, NIV)

The Christ Powered Life (Romans 5-8)

1. We Now Have Peace with God (Romans 5:1-11)

Big Concept 1. God has embraced us with his love and favor far beyond any measure. And he did it while we were still his enemies. So now that we are saved, we are assured that he won't give up on us in the future. We truly are at peace with God! We can relax in this kind of love and just enjoy him.

Q1. (Romans 5:1-2) According to verses 1-2, faith is a key to salvation. For Abraham (4:3), what was the relationship between faith and justification? For us (5:1-2), what is the relationship between faith and justification? In your own words, just what does it mean to be justified?

Q2. (Romans 5:2-5) According to this passage *why* should we rejoice in our sufferings and tribulations? One by one, what is the importance to our lives of: perseverance, tried character, and hope?

Q3. (Romans 5:6, 8) Why is it so important to embrace the truth that "Christ died for the ungodly" (5:6), that "Christ died for sinners" (5:8)? According to 5:8, did Christ die for us at our best or at our worst? How does this give us assurance against the devil's lies about us being too bad to forgive?

Q4. (Romans 5:9-11) What does "reconciliation" mean? Why is reconciliation with God necessary? We understand our having been saved by Jesus' death (5:10a, past tense). In what sense are we being saved (5:10b, present tense) by his life? What is Jesus doing for us in the present?

Key Verses

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

The Christ Powered Life (Romans 5-8)

2. United to Christ, the Second Adam (Romans 5:12-6:5)

Big Concept 2. We are united with Christ so solidly that we are "in him," we are "part of the Body of Christ" and he is our Head. This is true to such a degree spiritually, that when Christ died on Golgotha, it is as if we died with him. This affects how we see ourselves -- and sin.

Q1. What kinds of circumstances in modern life can you think of where a single person acts for an entire group? In what ways are members of the group tied to this person?

Q2. (Romans 5:13, 20) What is Paul saying in these verses? Can there be sin without law? In what sense does the "trespass increase" (5:20) when the law is present?

Q3. (Romans 5:15-19) By what right does Adam represent all humankind? By what right does Christ become head of all who become his disciples? If Christ is *not* our "representative" or "head," how can his death for sins be effective for us?

Q4. (Romans 6:2-5) According to this passage, at what point do we move from being under the headship of Adam to the headship of Christ? Is there anything we must do to bring about this change in headship? What are the implications of us having died with Christ?

United with Christ

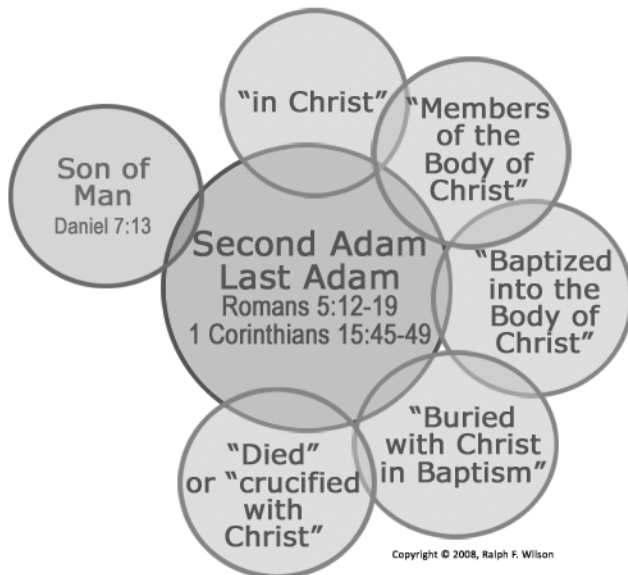


Figure 1.

Key Verse

"Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men." (Romans 5:18)

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3. United with Christ, Free from Sin's Slavery (Romans 6:1-11)

Big Concept 3. The truth is that we have become so united with Christ, that the "old us" died when Christ died and the power of our "flesh" or sinful nature was broken. What's more, we now share the power of Christ's life in our lives. We must believe this enough to live our lives accordingly.

1. We are baptized into Christ's death, not our own (6:3)
2. Baptism involves incorporation into Christ (6:3)
3. Baptism by immersion symbolizes burial and resurrection (6:4)
4. Coming up from the water symbolizes living a new life (6:4b)
5. Baptism symbolizes our 'mystical union' with Christ (6:5)
6. Baptism looks forward to our own resurrection on the Last Day (6:5)

Q1. (Romans 6:3-5) In what sense does baptism bring about our union with Christ? In what sense does baptism symbolize our union with Christ?

Q2. (Romans 6:3-4) In Paul's reference to baptism in 6:3-4, what does "buried" (6:4a) correspond to in the act of baptism? What does "Christ was raised from the dead" (6:4b) correspond to in baptism?

Q3. (Romans 6:1-7) Is Paul referring to a figurative "death" to sin, or to a kind of historical, actual death? Whose death is he talking about? How does this death become our own? To what degree is this just theological mumbo-jumbo or does it have some basis in reality?

Q4. (Romans 6:6-7) In what way has our "body of sin," our "flesh," our old nature been made powerless because of our crucifixion with Christ? In what way have we been freed from slavery? What difference does this understanding make in our struggles against temptation?

Q5. (Romans 6:11) What does it mean to "reckon, consider, count" in verse 11? Does this actually mean that we are convincing ourselves of something that isn't really true? What will be the effect in our lives if we actually do consider it to be true that we died with Christ's death with regard to sin?

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Key Verses

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Romans 6:4)

"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." (Romans 6:6)

"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Romans 6:11)

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4. Slaves to Righteousness Rather Than Sin (6:12-23)

Big Concept 4. Slaves do what they're told. But sin doesn't "own" you anymore; God owns you now. You no longer have to sin! So give yourself wholeheartedly to serving God. You can do this!

Q1. (Romans 6:12) What does obedience have to do with the "reign" of sin?

Q2. (Romans 6:13) In what ways do you "offer the members of your body" to either sin or God multiple times in a day? Why is it that we can sin unconsciously? How can we begin to offer our members deliberately to God? What changes will it take in our daily life to do this?

Q3. (Romans 6:15-18). What does obedience have to do with slavery? In what way does doing acts of righteousness demonstrate your slavery to God? In what ways does doing bad things demonstrate a slavery to sin? How is such a slavery or bondage broken? What part does obedience have in breaking this bondage? In what areas is God speaking to you about a fresh obedience in your life?

Q4. (Romans 6:17b) How does good doctrine affect the way we live? Why should we honor good doctrine? If we shouldn't look down on doctrine itself, what kind of teaching should we be avoiding?

Q5. (Romans 6:18-22) In Paul's analogy in these verses, is there a place of independent freedom apart from "slavery" to sin or to Christ? Why do we long for this kind of independent freedom? Why do we hesitate to firmly take sides and make our allegiance clear to all?

Key Verses

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires." (Romans 6:12)

"Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey -- whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (Romans 6:16)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
(Romans 6:23)

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5. Struggling with Sin in Our Own Strength (Romans 7:1-25)

Big Concept 5. The law, the knowledge of right and wrong is good, but it doesn't have the power to keep us from sinning. Even will power is inadequate to keep us from sin. We only end up frustrated. The problem lies with our corrupt human nature. Fortunately, there is help in the Spirit.

- Our Release from the Law to Serve in the Spirit (7:1-6)
- The Holiness and Righteousness of the Law (7:7-13)
- Our Failure in the Flesh -- the Sinful Nature -- to Fulfill the Law (7:14-25)

Q1. (Romans 7:5) Paul uses the word "flesh" (or NIV "sinful nature") many times in chapters 7 and 8. In your own words, what does Paul mean by "flesh" in these verses?

Q2. (Romans 7:7-8) The law reveals sin for what it is. Why wouldn't we be better off just not knowing that we should not covet, for example? Why does the flesh respond to being told "Do not covet" by coveting all the more?

Q3. (Romans 7:12; 8:3) What does the law do well? What does it do poorly? Why is the law (knowing right and wrong) powerless to save us? What is the problem here?

Q4. (Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:18-20; Romans 7:24) What is the doctrine of "total depravity"? Put it in your own words. Does it mean that none of God's original goodness shows through? Then what *does* it mean? Why does modern man tend to believe that man is basically good? How does this differ from what the Bible teaches?

Q5. (Romans 7:14-25) Christians disagree about who is the "I" in Romans 7. Is Paul referring to himself or others? What is your opinion? (We won't all agree here, but we'll learn what the issues are by taking and arguing for a position -- lovingly).

Key Verses

"Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful." (Romans 7:13)

"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin." (Romans 7:24-25)

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6. Learning to Walk by the Spirit (Romans 8:1-17)

Big Concept 6. When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us in all his power -- really! When we turn our attention to him rather than to our own devices, he gives us the power we need to have victory over sin.

Q1. (Romans 8:3-4) Why can't obedience to the law save us? What is the weak link? What then does it take to save us?

Q2. (Romans 8:5-6) Exactly what does it mean to set your mind on the things of the Spirit? How do you do this? How can you recognize when the things you're setting your mind on relate to your sinful nature? How much of this is deliberate? How much is habit? What part does the Holy Spirit have in this? Or is this primarily right living by force of will?

Q3. (Romans 8:9) Is it possible to be a Christian without the Holy Spirit residing in us? What is the difference (if any) between the *indwelling* of the Spirit and the *fullness* of the Spirit? How do we remain "full" of the Spirit?

Q4. (Romans 8:12) Do we *have to* sin? Are we compelled to sin? Is it possible to live for two hours of wakefulness without sinning? Four hours? One day? Two days? Where do we Christians get such a defeatist attitude towards sin? From Scripture?

Q5. (Romans 8:13-14) What does it mean to "mortify" or "put to death" the deeds of the body by the Spirit? What would it look like to watch a person do this? What does it mean to be "led" by the Spirit? What does this look like in actual practice? How do "putting to death" and being "led" by the Spirit fit together? How much of this is the Spirit and how much is us?

Q6. (Romans 8:15-16) How does the Holy Spirit inspire us to pray "Abba, Father"? What is the significance of us referring to God as our Dad? What happens in our lives if we don't have some kind of personal assurance of our salvation? How do we receive this kind of personal assurance?

Key Verses

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:1-2)

"You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." (Romans 8:9)

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"Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." (Romans 8:14)

"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, '*Abba*, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." (Romans 8:15-16)

"Now if we are children, then we are heirs -- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." (Romans 8:17)

The Christ Powered Life (Romans 5-8)

7. Revealing the Children of God in Future Glory (Romans 8:14-28)

Big Concept 7. The Fall of Man corrupted not only us, but the whole creation. However, we Christians -- sons and daughters of God -- are harbingers of the New Age. The Spirit strengthens us in our weakness at present and causes us to look forward to the Day of Christ's return when we and the entire creation will be restored to our intended glory.

The passage weaves together four themes:

1. We are sons and daughters of the Living Father.
2. At present we experience suffering.
3. The Spirit of God helps us in our present weakness.
4. Great glory is coming.

Q1. In Romans 8:14-21, 28, how many times is the idea of being sons and daughters of God alluded to? What are the promises made to these sons and daughters? What do we learn about our future and our role in the future of all creation?

Q2. (Romans 8:17-22) In what ways was suffering Jesus' lot in life? Why do we suffer? Why does all creation seem to be suffering? What will signal the end of that downward cycle of suffering, decay, and death? Is there anything good to look forward to in this present life?

Q3. (Romans 8:26-27) How does the Holy Spirit act as a Helper or Mediator or Intercessor in verses 26-27? What similarities do you see between the Holy Spirit's ministry here with Jesus' teaching of the Spirit's ministry as Counselor/Comforter/Paraclete in John 14:16 and 15:26)? Why do you think we tend to take the Holy Spirit for granted or fail to understand His ministry to and through us?

Q4. (Romans 8:24-25) What are the characteristics of a person who has lost hope? How does this person typically conduct his life? How does this differ from a person who holds an eager expectation of a better future? What is the "Christian hope"? How should it motivate us and affect our lives now?

Q5. (Romans 8:18-25) In what sense do we expect to experience God's glory when Christ comes? How will the suffering creation experience God's glory? How will our mortal bodies experience God's glory? In what way will our spirits experience God's glory?

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Key Verses

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18)

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." (Romans 8:26-27)

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8. More than Conquerors (8:28-39)

Big Concept 8. Though we Christians go through all sorts of struggles and persecutions now, God is still in charge. Nothing can turn away his intense love for us. And on the Last Day when we stand before his throne we will hear his final word of pardon and feel the embrace of his love.

Q1. (Romans 8:28) What is the actual promise contained in verse 28? What does this promise mean? Put it in your own words. What are the two qualifications to the recipients of this promise? How does verse 28 give you hope?

Q2. (Romans 8:29) What does it mean to "be conformed to the likeness of his Son"? In practical terms, what does that involve in our lives? Why does Paul support this statement with ideas of our destiny? Why does he support this with ideas of brotherhood with Jesus?

Q3. (Romans 8:31-32) What is the significance of the statement: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Who might our enemies be? What is the evidence presented that God is for us? How does this statement make you feel? How does it affect hope? How does it allow you to act? What might: "...graciously give us all things" refer to?

Q4. (Romans 8:35-36) What kinds of perils were the early Roman Christians likely exposed to? What kinds of perils are Christians exposed to today? How does this passage reassure us? In what sense do we Christians "overwhelmingly conquer" (NASB) despite the obstacles we face?

Key Verses

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." (Romans 8:29)

"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." (Romans 8:37)

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)