

**QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION
& SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
FOR MARCH 19 THRU 25, 2023**

—Here are some quotations that are intended to provoke some initial discussion about what's being presented in this study.

—*“Only at the cross do we see the love of God without ambiguity. Here is God’s farthest reach, His most ambitious rescue effort. God personally came to our side of the chasm, willing to suffer for us and with us. At the cross His love burst upon the world with unmistakable clarity. Here at least we have found solid reasons to believe that there was a genuine connection between God and man.”* —**Erwin Lutzer**

—“What the person who believes we can lose our salvation from sin wants to do is to arouse man’s activity; what we (*who believe that genuine salvation from sin is secure in Christ*) want to do is to kill it once for all, to show the sinner that he is lost and ruined, and that his activities (*attempts to maintain salvation through human efforts*) are not now at all equal to the work of conversion by God; that every sinner must look upward. They seek to make the man stand up; we seek to bring him down, and make him feel that there he lies in the hand of God, and that his business is to submit himself to God, and cry aloud, ‘Lord, save or we perish.’ We hold that man is never so near grace as when he begins to feel that he can do nothing at all. When he says, “I can pray, I can believe, I can do this, and I can do the other,” marks of self-sufficiency and arrogance are on his brow. You cannot be saved unless God saves you. Sinners aren’t to come forward, not to look to their own prayers or faith, but to cry out to God to draw them to Christ by His grace. Only God can take away a sinner’s heart of stone and give a heart of flesh that truly loves God. And if anyone complains that he cannot repent or believe, these, too, are gifts from God. Cry out to Him to have mercy and save you. Salvation is totally from the Lord, not from us, or we would boast, even about our own repentance and faith!” —**Charles Spurgeon**

—*“Holiness is not something we are called upon to do in order that we may become something; it is something we are to do because of what we already are.”* —**Martin Lloyd-Jones**

—*“God searches the heart and understands every motive. To be acceptable to Him, our motives must spring from a love for Him and a desire to glorify Him. Obedience to God performed from a legalistic motive—that is a fear of the consequences or to gain favor with God—is not pleasing to God.”* —**Jerry Bridges**

—“In chapters 1, 2, & 3 (of Romans), the whole world was shown to be condemned and lost in sin. In chapters 3, 4, & 5, condemned sinners were seen as justified and declared righteous, if they’ve believed (trusted) in Jesus Christ. Then in chapters 6 & 7, the method of sanctification (developing a holy lifestyle) was explained. Now then, the end of chapter 7 completed the treatment of justification and sanctification. But there remains just one more question that can arise: **‘Will this divine method of justification and sanctification last?’** The eighth chapter of Romans was written to answer that question and the whole burden of the chapter is this: **‘If you are in Christ Jesus, you’re safe!’** Justification and sanctification in Christ will endure!”

—**from Romans—The Gospel of God’s Grace by Alva J. McClain**

—*“Referring to Paul’s statement, ‘Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from this body of death?’ The problem with many Christians is not their despair, like that of Paul, but their lack of it. They don’t feel the anguish of their persistent disobedience. They avoid the struggle, often by minimizing their sin as a ‘personality quirk’ or as ‘just being human.’ They excuse it as normal: ‘Everyone has his faults.’ Until we come to the end of ourselves in utter despair, we won’t truly come to Christ, because we think that we don’t really need Him. Until we see the magnitude of our sin problem in the inner person, we’ll assure ourselves that it’s under control because we’re outwardly moral.”*

—**Bob Deffinbaugh**

—*“Holiness is not something we are called upon to do in order that we may become something; it is something we are to do because of what we already are.”* —**Martin Lloyd-Jones**

—“Everything will be summed up in Christ. That means that all things will be brought under Christ’s direct authority. Christ has accomplished everything necessary to fulfill God’s plan of salvation. The order of nature shall be restored, and justice will prevail throughout the whole universe... Restoration does not negate the doctrine of hell but instead necessitates it.” —**Erwin Lutzer**

—Please carefully read & observe Romans 7:1–8:9 and take note of the main ideas and key words in this passage. You can list them here:

The FOCUS found in Today's Study

A FUNDAMENTAL REALITY ABOUT OUR BATTLE WITH SIN:

When we TRUSTED IN CHRIST, God DECLARED us to be RIGHTEOUS & He began the PROCESS of MAKING US HOLY!

This is a COMBINED effort between us & God!

In this life, we will ALWAYS STRUGGLE with sin, but we can find help by living under the AUTHORITY of God's Spirit!

—Why is it important for every faithful follower of Christ to understand and acknowledge this fundamental reality about our relationship to sin and need for holiness?

—How does confessing our sins influence or impact our relationship with the Lord?

—Should we feel guilty when we sin? Why or why not?

—What happens when we attempt to avoid sin by setting up a strict standard of behavior for ourselves (or for our family members)? Is this a positive & productive strategy?

—Four Related Truths From Romans 1–8:

—1} Because God created this world, He has absolute authority over us & everyone is accountable to Him!

—Based on His grace & our trust in Christ:

—2} we've been rescued from the PENALTY for sin;

—3} we're being rescued from the POWER of sin;

—4} we'll be rescued from the PRESENCE of sin!

—How are these truths relevant to our daily lives? How do they provide us with a sense of hope and assurance?

More questions for discussion:

—1} Why is it important to recognize that believers have both a corrupt old nature and a redeemed new nature?

—2} Why is it dangerous to say that believers only have a new nature?

—3} Why is it erroneous and spiritually dangerous to teach that believers can get to a place of complete victory where there is no personal struggle with sin?

—4} How have some sins that used to be shocking become normal & acceptable in our culture? How is this a challenge to our faith?

—5} Some argue that the path to victory over sin is to see yourself as a saint who occasionally or sometimes sins, but not as a sinner. How does this relate to an accurate biblical strategy for victory?

—6} Why is underestimating the power of indwelling sin a certain path toward spiritual defeat?

—7} Why is it important to distinguish between perfection and persistent obedience? What problems could result if we don't see this distinction?

—8} What does it mean in practical terms to "walk in the Spirit" and "not in the flesh?" Describe what it looks like in specific terms.