

Romans 8

Salvation

PREFACE

God's Word contains the answers to all of life's problems and needs. As we apply God's Word to our daily lives, the Holy Spirit strengthens us, our faith grows, and our lives are transformed.

But for many the bible is a complex book, too huge to tackle.

By selecting important chapters of the Bible (20 from the Old Testament, 20 from the New Testament) and focusing on them, I hope to encourage you to get into God's Word. To help accomplish this, I have prepared a visual memory aid for each key chapter. The aids are purposely *weird* in order to increase retention. Each aid has three elements:

1. The *book* of the Bible
2. The *chapter*
3. The *theme* of the chapter

By studying the memory aid several times and focusing on it, you will recall the image and consequently the book, chapter and theme.

Remembering these key chapters will enrich your daily life. It will also help you to relate God's Word to others. As you write greeting cards or speak with people, you will be able to apply God's Word directly to their problems or needs.

At times, you will be unable to speak directly to a person. Send them a Key Chapter booklet! They are designed for sharing!

Each Key Chapter booklet is presented in the same format:

1. *Background* for the chapter
2. *Key verses* of the chapter
3. *Thoughts* on the theme of the chapter

Bible classes and small study groups will find the third section helpful for discussions. The *thoughts* will provide a variety of applications upon which to reflect.

God will not let his Word return void (Isaiah 55:11)!

He will bless you abundantly as you meditate on his Word (Psalm 119:48)!

He will enable you to be a blessing to others as you spread his Word (Genesis 12: 2-3)!

Soli Deo Gloria,
Paul R. Schroeder

Explanation of the Memory Aid

1. The BOOK of the Bible:
The Colosseum in *Rome* = **ROMANS**
2. The CHAPTER:
The *number* formed by the two balls on top of the flagpole = **CHAPTER 8**
3. The THEME:
The cross in the banner symbolizes the *salvation* Christ offers. = **SALVATION**

ROMANS 8: BACKGROUND

Humanity has developed many philosophies of religion. From ancient times, efforts have been made to know and please God, but our efforts to save ourselves are doomed. No matter how hard we try, we cannot succeed on our own. The problem is sin. God is righteous, and he could not excuse sin. The price had to be paid. And the price of sin is death.

Sin must be removed in order to gain access to God. But how? WE do not have the ability to do so.

God must intervene. And he does. In love he comes to the rescue. Though we rebelled and forsook him, he comes to save us. He does for us what we were unable to do for ourselves; he takes our sin away.

This forgiveness came at a high price. It cost Jesus his life. God sent his Son, Jesus, to die in our place. That was the only way! The price of sin had to be paid.

The price had to be a *perfect* sacrifice. Only Christ could keep the will of his Father perfectly—and be perfectly obedient, without sin. People's futile efforts to save themselves continue to be a hindrance to faith. Pride is such a stumbling block!

Salvation is God's gift—totally, completely his gift. It cannot be earned; it is not deserved.

Those who reject God's love gift in his Son, Jesus Christ, will not have eternal life. They will spend eternity in hell, separated from him (2 Thessalonians 1; 9-10).

Those who trust in Jesus as their personal Savior will be saved. If you believe Jesus Christ has forgiven you your sins and you trust in him for your salvation, you are God's child and you are saved.

Christ is the *only* way to heaven. Take a look at these beautiful passages that tell about god's plan to save everyone who believes in Jesus. This is by not means an exhaustive list, but it will provide a review of this very important truth: Matthew 1:21; 11:28; 28:19; Mark 2:17; Luke 19:10; John 6:35; 44; Acts 4:12; 15: 7-11; Romans 1: 16-17; 3: 23-28; 5: 1-2; 1-:9; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 2 Corinthians 5: 17-19; Galatians 1:4; 2:16; 4: 4-5; Ephesians 2: 4-10; Colossians 1: 19-22; 2 Thessalonians 2: 13-14; 2 Timothy 1: 9-10; Titus 3: 5-7.

KEY VERSES OF ROMANS 8

Verses 1

Therefore, there is now no domination for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For Christ's sake the Father pronounces those who believe in him to be righteous.

Verses 5

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

Your actions reveal whether your mind is set on the desires of sinful nature or on the Spirit.

Verse 6

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.

There are only two options: death or life (see v. 13).

Verse 8

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

People without Christ cannot please God.

Verse 9

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.

The only way to become a child of God is by the Holy Spirit (see vs. 16-17).

Verse 10

But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

As Martin Luther said, "We are at the same time sinners and saints."

Verses 11

And if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

The power of the risen Lord is ours.

Verse 15

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of son-ship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

Our relationship with God is not one of fear, but of love.

Verses 18

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Our sufferings here will soon be over. We look forward to the glory that is coming.

Verse 23

Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

We long for the day when we will be with the Lord.

Verses 26-27

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.

It is our faith, the gift of the Holy Spirit, that makes it possible for us to pray. The Holy Spirit assists us in our prayer. (See Key Chapter booklet *Matthew 6: Prayer*).

Verse 28

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.

God will use all things, even those that appear to be evil, for our eternal welfare. What a glorious promise!

Verse 31

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

No doubt about it—God is for us.

Verse 32

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Since God demonstrated such great love in sending Christ, he will also care for us.

Verse 34

Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Christ prays for us.

Verses 35-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 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 reaction, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Our victory is secure. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. When faith is lost, it is never God's fault.

THOUGHTS ON SALVATION

Day 1

Faith is beyond reason and intellect (Hebrews 11:1) This entire 11th chapter of Hebrews lists heroes who followed God, trusting beyond their own understanding. (See Key Chapter booklet *Hebrews 11: Faith*).

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Satan tries at times to overwhelm us by our sins—even accusing us before God (Revelation 12:10). When we doubt our forgiveness, we are left in despair.

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Becoming a child of God is not all fun and games. There will be a price to pay. Persecution and suffering (cross bearing) are parts of the Christian's life. But God will not forsake us (Matthew 11: 28-30).

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To “accept” God and “make a decision” for him are not our work at all. Rather, the Spirit working through Word and Sacrament enables us to believe. When we are converted, every part of us is converted, including our will.

St. Paul was overwhelmed by God's great goodness. Paul knew God came after him and converted him while he was still an enemy of God (Romans 5: 6-8).

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Salvation comes to us through the gift of conversion. This work of the Holy spirit is sometimes called “being born again.” There should be no question as to what the phrase *born again* means. It is accurately defined and explained in Scripture.

The Bible equates *being born again* with conversion. They are synonyms. If a person is born again, then that person is a Christian. If a person is a Christian, then that person is born again. The two are identical. You cannot be one without the other. That is what causes the confusion with the question, “Are you a born again Christian?” the question

implies that you can be a Christian without being born again. The implication is that here is one brand of general run-of-the-mill Christians and another brand called born-again Christians. So, if someone asks you “are you a born again Christian?” Answer, “Definitely! Every Christian has been born again.”

As *born again* is defined in John 3: 3-6 and 1 Peter 1: 3-5, we see it contrasted with unbelief—very much in the same way St. Paul uses the contrast between light and darkness. In texts that speak of being born again, the contrast is between something born of the flesh, which is human and limited and dies, as opposed (and compared) to something born of the Spirit, which is everlasting and has its origin in God. The point is that flesh (sinful human nature) cannot produce something spiritual and eternal. Therefore, if we are to have the kingdom of heaven, it must come as a result of God’s giving us this second birth of conversion.

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Day 2

It is impossible for an unconverted person to achieve his or her own salvation, since the unconverted spirit is opposed to God (Romans 6:20-21; 8: 7-8).

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One of the great gifts of salvation is the resurrection of the body from the dead (Romans 8:11).

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Word pictures are used throughout Scripture to describe salvation. Here are a few examples:

- Ephesians 6:17—A helmet
- Isaiah 62:1—A blazing torch
- Psalm 132:16—Clothing
- 1 Corinthians 15:57—A victory

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God brings about salvation as the news of Jesus Christ is preached. This is the Gospel message of God’s love through Jesus Christ. It is beautifully stated in John 3:16 and restated in John 3:36.

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Evidence of faith is the presence of *good works*, which are motivated by god’s Spirit in the Christian (John 15:4-5). (See Key Chapter Booklet *John 15: Growth*)

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Once a person is saved, his or her life will reflect the presence of Christ. (See Key Chapter booklet *Romans 6: New Life*).

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Sinful actions erode and destroy faith (See Ephesians 4:30; Galatians 5:21; Colossians 3:5-6).

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One evidence of salvation is repentance. When the spirit of God is present, there will be some sign of his presence. It may be weak and faint at first, but it will be there (Luke 3:8; Acts 3:19).

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Day 3

Jesus personally gave some beautiful promises of salvation in John 6:47; John 11:25-26; and John 14: 6-7.

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God desires to reach the entire world with the message of salvation (Mark 16:15; Luke 14: 16-24; 19:10).

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We cannot remove our own sin. Therefore we cannot earn salvation. Salvation is totally and completely God's gift. (See Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2: 8-9; Romans 4:6; 6:23; Titus 3: 3-7; John 20:31; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 John 5:11; Acts 16: 30-31).

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Two great heresies confronted the early church. The first was the suggestion that man could cooperate with God and thereby help with his own salvation. Paul refutes the first heresy in his writings.

The second heresy was the suggestion that, since faith alone saved, God didn't expect any change or commitment from the new believer. It was argued that life could stay the same. You could say you believed and yet continue living the same sinful life you lived before conversion. It is this second heresy that James refutes. (See Key Chapter Booklet *James 2: Works*).

James argues that an inactive faith is a dead faith. Faith, to be valid, requires more than mental consent. Unbelievers have the capacity to accept Christ as a historical person.

Even Satan knows who Christ is (Matthew 8:29)! Faith, however, *reaches and changes* the heart. Since faith produces good works, the absence of good works proves that faith is dead.

There is no conflict between Paul's teachings and the teaching of James. They address two entirely different problems. When understood in that light, they are in agreement.

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Day 4

What we were unable to accomplish by works (Law), Christ has accomplished for us (Gospel; Romans 8: 3-4).

The Law could not justify (Romans 3:20) or make us heirs (Romans 4: 14) or reconcile us to God (Romans 5:10). Under the Law, we were not free from death (Romans 5:12; 7:24). The Law could not make us righteous (Romans 10:3) and could not make God our Father (Romans 8:15).

Christ accomplished all these things for us. He made us righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21), and we are now God's children (Romans 8: 15-16), reconciled to him (2 Corinthians) 5:18). He has even freed us from the power of death (John 5:24; Hebrews 2: 14-15; Philippians 3: 20-21).

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Those who truly expect the Lord's return live lives of excited anticipation. Christ's return will be a joyful occasion for his believers (Romans 8:23; Luke 21:28).

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Day 5

God gives eternal life to those who believe in his Son, Jesus Christ. The Christian believes the body will also be saved—resurrected from the dead. It will be a glorified body—free from sin—but the same body we now have.

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Heaven is far beyond our human comprehension. It is our final destination, our home. There we will find total perfection and holiness. No sin will be present. Therefore, none of the effects of sin (weariness, fear, loneliness, anger, hatred, jealousy, afflictions, illness, sorrow, despair, etc.) will be present. Happiness and joy will be ours without end, for we will be in the presence of God!

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Salvation can be rejected (Hebrews 6: 4-6; 2 Timothy 4:10; Matthew 13: 18-23). This is not to cause the believer confusion or doubt. God will not go back on his Word. He is not a fickle God. You can rest assured that he will keep his promises! The faithful child of God has nothing to fear. (See Matthew 24:13; 1 Peter 5: 10-11; James 1:12).

However, those:

- Who compromise their faith (Romans 12:2)
- Who do not war against the enemy (Ephesians 6: 10-18)

Are in spiritual danger. For this reason Scripture repeatedly admonishes, “watch and pray”.

Those who fasten and fix their focus on Christ Jesus need not fear! He will not let anything or anyone pluck them from his hand (John 10:27-30). In the last times God will come quickly to prevent the falling away of his chosen people (Matthew 24:22).

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Come quickly, Lord!

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Not all things are good in themselves, but God can turn them and use them for our good (Romans 8:28).