

No Condemnation

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[0 : 00] 1-2 Romans 8 I want to exhort you to move.

To move. To move from condemnation to no condemnation. To make that transition. To move from that zone to the other zone.

No condemnation. No condemnation. How are things between you and the Lord? Has Christ Jesus made you free? Do you rest in a relationship with God?

Or man-made rules? Of course we all need laws. We need rules to obey. Such as wear a seatbelt. Stick to the speed limit.

In spiritual things too we need principles. Principles to live by. And they're right here. As God's own people we have these instructions that govern our choices.

[1 : 31] That help us measure our spirituality. And know our acceptance by God. But do we live in the condemnation zone?

Or in the freedom zone? Do we live under a cloud of condemnation? Working out some kind of performance? Trying to measure up by our own doing?

Burdened and bound by man's rules? What truly prompts us? Is it instead a relationship with our Lord?

A godly desire to please Him. A loving obedience to our dear Lord. The track to take is clear. In 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 1 Paul says, Furthermore then, We beseech you brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as you have received of us, how you ought to walk and please God, so you would abound more and more.

We're called to be obedient. Obedient to His Spirit and accountable to God. But it's not unabiding by some set of rules, man-made rules, thinking that that will make us more spiritual.

[2 : 48] We cannot in any way earn God's favour by anything of our own doing, our own working, our own effort. And one area of works and self-effort that we must guard against is what we call legalism.

Legalism. So what is legalism? Some say, Church for you is legalistic. I've heard people say that. So what is legalism, truly and truly?

Legalism is a toxic kind of false self-righteousness. It can feed our pride. It can hinder our real spiritual life and growth.

It can rob us of our real joy in Christ. And legalism is living in the condemnation zone. Legalism is a distortion of the gospel.

A walking after the dimension of the flesh. An adding to grace. A trusting in our own failed righteousness. In Acts 15, some were saying, unless these folk get circumcised, they cannot be saved.

[3 : 58] Peter responded, We believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they. Some Pharisees in Matthew 15, were pushing their traditions upon the people, saying in verse 2, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?

For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. And our Lord rebuked them, saying, verse 9, But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

And we know, we all can be subject to traditions, as was talked about earlier. I mean, what you're doing right now is unscriptural. Sitting in chairs. They were reclining at the love feast.

They didn't have nice plastic chairs. No. Especially comfortable ones. We need to work on that.

Make them more uncomfortable for you people. But no, really and truly, the traditions of men, we're all subject to them from time to time.

And we've got to be guarded. We don't make the traditions such that they are a condemnation.

Legalism is the opposite of grace. Legalism is a performance.

[5 : 13] It's a trusting in man's commandments. Man's external works. Man's efforts to earn grace.

We cannot. A thinking that we merit God's favour somehow by our own doing of something.

We cannot. Legalism is a being dogmatic where scripture is not. Being divisive when it's our own personal views, when someone might disagree.

Our Lord cautions us in Matthew 16, 12 against the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. He called it leaven. Leaven. Leaven is like a spreading influence, a dramatic impact from just a little, eensy-weensy bit of leaven.

It can affect the whole lump of dough. So just a small amount of yeast, of leaven. And so how do we, how can we counter legalism?

We want to counter it. We want to counteract it. I want to offer some scriptural principles that can help us guard against the dangers of legalism.

[6 : 23] And we see that in this verse. Therefore there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free. Who's free this morning? Free, free, free. Free at last.

Free at last. Free from the law of sin and death. And so firstly, number one, a key is live in Christ. Live in Christ.

Whenever we make choices, our main goal needs to be to take that step of living in Christ, of pleasing the Lord, of being found in Him, in Him.

Not having mine own righteousness, but His. For each step that we take, it's what we do, is subject to, is it, unto Him.

[7 : 25] Unto Him. And this can include our own personal convictions. And it's okay for us to hold our own personal convictions. And some we can hold dearly. The danger can be where we make that keeping of our own rules makes us spiritual, or right with God.

It doesn't. It cannot. Our main motive must be to be found in Christ Jesus. As we read in Romans 14, 6, He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord.

And he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord, he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks.

And he that eateth not, to the Lord, he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. There's some areas that are not areas to divide over.

There are many areas we may set our own standards for. And that is a good thing. It's helpful and good for all of us, individually, to set the standards that we are to live by.

[8 : 31] As God helping us, are scripturally based. Helpful for us as individuals. Helpful for us as leading families in a godly manner.

Issues such as entertainment, movies, cars, recreation, entertainment, for example, television. That can be a controversial subject. I must confess, I have a television.

I have a television and it's covered in dust and cobwebs at the moment because I haven't watched it for literally years. But, nevertheless, I do have a television set.

Issues such as personal appearance, clothes, make-up, hairdos, jewellery. You know, I don't wear a wedding ring. We all have different views about such things, about men wearing jewellery.

You know, I heard a preacher once say this, and this is not to condemn anyone here, but it's a nice little joke I heard. The preacher said, it's okay for men to wear earrings. So I'm going to match the colour of their handbag.

[9 : 36] No, it's okay. Some of these things are preference issues. And again, this is not to you damn, a man, who may choose to wear an earring. But, there's some things that I wouldn't do.

Things such as how we parent, how we parent. We all have to think of our preferences scripturally as parents. And look, this is not a homeschooling church. We are not a homeschooling church.

There are some people thinking, well, I don't fit in, I don't homeschool. Big deal. Nothing to do with it. Nothing to do with it at all. It's just that many who are godly families choose to school their children at home.

And that's a good godly thing to do. It's not saying that's for everybody. We don't condemn anyone on such a matter. It's a preference issue. Music, birth control, Bible translations.

mind you, I know that ESV doesn't have half of the chapter 8, verse 1, for example. I wouldn't use the ESV. And such versions, if they're going to miss slabs of God's word, I wouldn't touch it.

[10 : 42] But Bible translations, it's a preference kind of issue. As much as I adhere to the King James as that which I can rely upon. And I exhort those of us who hold a Bible to hold the King James Bible because I know it's based on the word, on the text that we can rely upon.

And it's a faithful translation. That's the key. In matters of giving, some will tithe, some will not tithe. Give unto the Lord. Give as you've purposed in your heart to give. Give as would be pleasing to Him. Not robbing God, but give as the Spirit prompts you to give. Giving. Politics. You know, there's actually some people think who vote Labor in this church. God forbid. There are some different views about such matters. There are some different views. We don't condemn you for voting the Greens. I don't know why you would, but God help us. But honestly, these are matters of preference. They're matters of personal decision making between you and the Lord as you would prayerfully seek His face.

[11 : 51] Some of you don't even vote. That's your choice. Matters of medical issues, life support, medications, Christmas, as was talked about, food and diets, issues of separation, issues about what you choose to do on a Sunday, the Lord's Day, issues such as mixed swimming, issues such as the environment, debt, credit, drinking, dancing, smoking.

These are matters issues that we all need to make decisions about and I trust in a godly fashion. We've got varying convictions about such things and I have personal views of my own on many issues and as a church we will speak out even on such things as I've mentioned from time to time but the sad thing is when we split, when churches split over hair splitting issues, when churches split, when Christians get up and offended and walk out the door, because someone's trodden on their toes or kicked the holy cow, that area that they don't want to be challenged about and some things though, there's aspects that the Bible is not clear about and we need to allow some measure of grace and the danger is that we can set up our own preferences above the principles of the Bible. Now it's good to have strong convictions and we ought to before the Lord but while respecting that others can, be at different stages in their Christian life and may hold contrary views on some areas and we are not to judge others as less spiritual just because they may not share our personal preferences on particular matters nor should we think ill of others who may set higher standards than we may do.

The personal motive is what matters, is it? to esteem and honour the Lord. Romans 14, 5, one man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike, let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Our motive is to move from the condemnation zone to the no condemnation zone, to be truly walking in Christ Jesus, that's what matters. Our Lord Jesus is full of grace and truth.

[14 : 05] The no condemnation zone is the zone of grace. It's being found in Christ, found in Christ, in that zone, not driven by guilt but driven by grace.

Not by traditions of man that lead us but the moving of the Spirit that prompts us. It's grace, it's grace, the beauty of the cross is grace, marvellous grace, infinite grace, glorious grace, all sufficient grace.

We are saved by grace and we are called to grow in grace. God's grace is contrasted with human works. Grace is not works, works is not grace.

As we read in Romans 11, 6, and if by grace then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.

Grace and works, they're opposite. They're contrasted. As we read in Isaiah 64, 6, that human righteousness is just rags that are filthy.

[15 : 18] And we can get proud in our human works, in our human righteousness. I can get proud. I do get proud. I do get proud. Pray for me that I will not be proud.

Being in Christ we are under grace. And that's the beauty of it. For we are not, for sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace.

Grace, think of it. Grace is the joy of the Lord. We had someone share recently about the joy of the Lord. The joy comes from grace. It's salvation.

It's free gift. It's the law of the spirit of life. It's the glorious liberty of the sons of God. And as believers we are to operate in grace. Grace saves.

Grace supplies. Grace serves. Grace sings. Grace strengthens. Paul says in 2 Timothy 2, verse 1, Thou therefore my son.

[16 : 22] Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. There's many verses I'm just touching without references here. We are to speak with grace. We are to abound in grace.

We are to grow in grace. We define grace through prayer at the throne of grace. The word of grace is able to build us up. We all need grace.

How deep is your grace? God is the giver of grace. In grace God gives election, justification, forgiveness of sins, faith, salvation, hope, spiritual gifts.

It's grace, grace, grace. Therefore there is now therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. So when we decide a matter that's not to say where grace abounds we do what we like.

That's not what I'm saying here this morning. It's all the more because we have His grace. We want to bless, to please, to honour our Lord. Will it glorify God the decisions we make?

[17 : 28] Whether therefore you eat or drink or whatsoever you do. Whether you even drink, do it to the glory of God. Oh, glory.

So firstly, move into the zone of condemnation by living in Christ Jesus. in Him. Secondly, walk not after the flesh.

The second part of our verse it says, walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Again, the fleshliness of pride, of even having our doctrine just all right.

I know everyone else is going to get corrected when they get to glory. It differs from me. You all believe exactly as I believe on every issue when you get there because I've got it all together.

You know, that's how it can be, isn't it? Pride, pride, pride, fleshly, vain, pride, vain glory. It's got to bow down before the Holy Spirit and it's good for us to crucify the flesh and shine what can lead us to sinful habits.

[18 : 30] Again, where sin abounds, grace does much more abound but because of grace we don't take it for granted, do we? We must crucify the flesh.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. Walk not after the flesh. You know, sometimes we can get very fleshly with our spiritual wisdom.

One of my great regrets through my Christian life has been where I rebuked an elder. I rebuked a man of God. He had false doctrine. He believed in a heap of trash.

British Israelism. It's a total false doctrine, absolute abomination. It's alive the devil. And I told him so. Pretty much like that. And in reflection I think, was that really the Holy Spirit?

How I put that to that man? A godly brother in Christ. As much as he was deceived in that area I do believe. Friends, the Spirit of God wants to touch, to use, to fill us, to make us the church of Philadelphia, the church of brotherly love.

[19 : 41] Where godly spirit prevails. The zone of no condemnation. Where the flesh dies. Where even the flesh of our own pet doctrines dies.

In how we deal with others. It must be a walking knot after the flesh. So we follow after the things which make for peace. And things wherewith one may edify one another.

Romans 14. Not in pride and self-righteousness but things that will edify, build up, build up, build up one another. And that's not to say we will attack false doctrine and we will do so strongly.

We contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. we will speak against false doctrine. Whether it offends or not. But it's the manner in which we do so. It's the manner in which we do so.

To build up one another. That must be unloaded. Romans 14. 10. But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set it naught, thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

[20 : 46] Romans 14. 10. We need to be gracious in how we interact and deal with others. Instead of pride, we must have humility. We must have humility.

I must have humility. Genuine humility. Genuine humility. Because it is unto the Lord that all of us will have to give account. One day it will happen. For everyone here.

One of you. Every one of you. And at times we may actually limit our own liberty for the benefit of others. That your humility of mind and godly care and brotherly love will put aside our own preferences at times.

Romans 15. It says, We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves. let every one of us please this neighbor for his good.

It's an edification. Now there's people with all kinds of crazy ideas in this church. You know, I sometimes have the odd crazy idea. men. But we're not to please ourselves but to think of our brother and our sister.

[21 : 54] I pray that we will do so. If we walk in the flesh, sometimes we can ride roughshod over the thoughts of others without thinking of the damage that we can do.

1 Corinthians 10 23. Paul says, All things are lawful for me but all things are not expedient. In other words, I can do pretty much anything I like, says Paul.

I've just about got absolute freedom and liberty to do anything I please. But all things are not expedient. They're not going to do good. All things are not lawful for me but all things edify not. So I'm not going to seek my own thing but every man another's wealth. We're going to think about considering one another. And that's about crucifying the flesh, isn't it?

We need that. Instead of being selfish and where our Moses can be deadly wrong and damaging, instead let's edify, edify, build up.

[22 : 55] Build up. And as the church grows, there's more diversity of opinions and views but we don't want flesh and legalism. It must be crucified.

It says in Romans 14, 15, don't destroy your brother for whom Christ died. And we need prayerfully to repent of walking after the flesh.

Again, that's not to say that grace doesn't have doctrine. Grace has doctrine, sound doctrine and grace has strong standards and godly principles but we will not destroy our brother for whom Christ died.

God. And we want to have a zeal for good works and be that special people, that peculiar people zealous of good works. We don't want to disobey our Lord.

Because that's the other extreme, isn't it? The other extreme. Some say, oh, you're a legalistic church. What's the opposite of that? A liberalistic church.

[23 : 57] She'll be right, anything goes. You know, no doctrine, no standards, no striving for purity, no all consuming love for pleasing our Saviour and Lord and obeying Him.

We don't want to go to that extreme because really that's the flesh as well, isn't it? You know, she'll be right, easy believism, lovers of pleasure more than lovers in God.

Don't ever say a word of exultation, of challenge, lest someone be offended. So the flesh can take us to either extreme of an extreme of a harshness of our own rules driving us and driving us to drive others, or a liberalism that has no kind of sense of truth and standards.

We want to find where we can have that godly fruit, those godly actions. friends, to think of it now, ask yourself, am I acting in the flesh?

Am I in that no condemnation zone, that absolute liberty, the glorious liberty, that freedom that is in Christ, to be found in Christ, to be walking not after the flesh, but thirdly, to be walking in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit.

[25 : 28] That's the third aspect, is a new law, a new law as we walk in the Spirit, a law that we willingly submit to, because prayerfully, as godly men and women, we want to please God, we want to walk after the Spirit of God.

The law of the Spirit of life has made us free from the law of sin and death. This is the new law, the new way of living, a glorious liberty for the sons of God, a freedom from bondage, a freedom of life in Christ, free from the law of sin and death.

That law, that power, that yoke is broken, and if we love the Lord, we'll obey His word, not in some slavish bondage to external rules made by men, but springing from a heart transformed by grace.

1 John 5, 3, it says, for this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous, His commandments are not grievous, they're not heavy, they're not burdensome, they are a pleasure, because we want to please our Lord, and in humility, let us consider our heart, is it fleshly, is it a spiritual work that's going on?

I saw a sermon title by John Wesley that says it all, holiness is not legalism. I think there's truth in that. Holiness is not legalism.

[26 : 59] True holiness is not legalism. It's spiritual liberty. It's a liberty. And we don't want to get bound up and miss the weightier matters of the law, as our Lord rebuked the Pharisees, to miss the real point, to go beyond what is written, and write our own extra-biblical rules.

And as we learn to walk in the Spirit, the Lord will deliver us from imposing our own man-made rules on others' fault-finding, and instead have a hold of scriptural principles that make life make sense.

The way to live, here is the way, walk in it. This is the love of God that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous, they're not heavy or burdensome.

Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. So, friends, to close, we all can set our own standards, and we must, we ought to, as mothers and fathers, mothers and fathers to be.

We've got godly offspring, or as we've prayed, well, they're sinful, really, when they start life. But thank God we can pray for them to be saved, and we can set the example as godly parents, God helping us to, that we might see them trust Him for themselves.

[28 : 27] And we'll set standards for our families, we'll set standards for ourselves, but His commandments are not grievous. And we can stand in the liberty, wherewith Christ has made us free.

And we can obey from the heart, that form of doctrine delivered to us, Romans 6, 17. And the obedience we have is an obedience, it's not rule-driven, but spirit-driven.

Our motive is the glory of God, the love of God, as we walk in the spirit. And one day, it'll be the judgment seat of Christ.

Everything we've said and done will be measured up and evaluated. Thank God at Calvary, our sin has been paid for. As a man, a woman who trusts Him, Christ has paid it in full, forever.

But we all must give account of ourselves to God. 2 Corinthians 5, 9, in that concept, it says, wherefore we labor, that we may be accepted of Him.

[29 : 38] We all need to prayerfully seek God for ourselves, about the choices we made, prayerfully, grow in grace, by the spirit helping us, we will grow that way.

2 Corinthians 3, 17, it says, now the Lord is that spirit, and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. There is liberty. Friends, I trust we'll have true holiness.

It's not legalism. It's not laws of man, but it is the law of the Lord, and that's perfect. The law of the Lord, and that's converting the soul. That's what we must have.

That's what we yearn for by the spirit of God helping us. That's what we need to pray and yearn for. Let us pray. Let us pray.