



LC STUDY GUIDE

“True Belonging”

The Passage: Romans 8:1-11

October 29 – November 11

How to use the LC Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture—study that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve “the other.”

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method (not necessarily on the themes of that particular sermon). In summary, this method stresses “Observation” (what the reader can see from the text), “Interpretation” (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and “Application” (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour or two of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It’s the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the LC Team

Introduction

Romans Chapter 8 is a favorite passage for many Christ-followers and is also a central piece of theology in the New Testament. Today we want to reflect on how Jesus’ work defeats sin, death, condemnation, and shame, and also frees us to live life in the Holy Spirit.

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh,⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 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 because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Romans 8:1-11

O – Identify some of the repeated themes in these 11 verses. Which ones do you most resonate with?

O – Jesus' work on the cross accomplished so much for all of us. Can you identify a few of these things in verses 1-4?

(Jesus' work on the cross (1) stopped condemnation for those who believe, (2) sets believers free from the law of sin and death, (3) became a sin offering on our behalf, (4) while Jesus was on the cross, God the Father condemned the sin that Jesus took on for us, (5) fulfilled the requirement of the law.)

I – Why do you think Paul spends so much time explaining to the readers of Romans that there is no condemnation for those who trust in Jesus?

(Paul wants the Roman audience and anyone who reads these words to reflect on the magnitude of sin and the death it leads to. This has been a major argument in the preceding chapters: sin leads to death and only one can save us. Now that Jesus has saved us, there is no condemnation or shame and now we get to experience life in the Spirit.)

A – Logically, if God no longer condemns those who belong to Jesus, then no man or woman can—nor should we—condemn ourselves. Think of all that comes with condemnation and ask yourself, what are the practical applications of living without condemnation?

I – Contrast the mind of the spirit and the mind of the flesh in verses 5-8. What do you think Paul wants us to see? Why do you think it is so important?
(The “why” is to demonstrate that Jesus’ saving work changes everything and transforms our mindsets from being stuck in the flesh’s way of thinking to living in the fullness of the Spirit.)

A – Re-read verses 9-11. Remembering that Christ and the Holy Spirit are at work in you, what then does a life look like that lives in the realm of the Spirit as opposed to one that is limited to living in the realm of the flesh?
(If you are having difficulty with this one, consider the way Jesus describes the Kingdom life in places like the Beatitudes, or Paul’s description of the fruit of the Spirit. The realm of the flesh largely focuses on worldly pursuits and measurements. The realm of the Spirit pursues the virtues of life like love, peace, courage, reconciliation, sacrifice, and compassion, among many others.)

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- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
 - b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)
 - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
 - d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
 - e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.