



Last week, we started a new series in Romans 8 called “The Greatest Chapter in the Bible,” exploring the incredible truths of our freedom in Christ. Freedom is something we all long for, yet many struggle to experience it fully in their spiritual lives. In Romans 8:2-11, Paul reminds us that true freedom is found in Christ, who sets us free from sin, condemnation, and the exhausting traps of performance and pretending. Too often, we live as though we are still bound by guilt and shame, forgetting that the Holy Spirit empowers us to live in victory. Today, we will discuss what it means to live according to the Spirit rather than the flesh, embracing the life and peace that God offers.

**Key Passage:** Romans 8:2-11

### Discussion Questions:

1. What is the performance trap, and how does it rob believers of freedom? Have you ever felt trapped in a cycle of trying to earn God's approval through your performance?

The performance trap convinces believers they must meet a high moral standard for God to love or accept them. This creates anxiety and exhaustion as they constantly wonder if they've done enough. Romans 8:1-2 reassures us that in Christ, there is “no condemnation,” and God's love is unconditional. True freedom comes when we trust in His grace rather than our own efforts.

2. What is the pretending trap, and why does it prevent true freedom? Have you ever felt the need to pretend everything is fine when you're actually struggling?

The pretending trap is when people act as if they have everything together, even though they are struggling. This prevents true freedom because they constantly hide their weaknesses instead of relying on God's grace and transformation through the Holy Spirit. When we acknowledge our need for God, we experience the freedom of His love and the power of His Spirit at work in us. True freedom comes not from pretending but from trusting in His grace.

3. How does the gospel free us from the performance and pretending traps?

The gospel teaches that “God's love is not based on our performance” but on what Jesus has already done for us. Since God already knows and forgives our failures, we don't have to pretend—we can live in “freedom and authenticity.”

4. What is the "law of sin and death" versus the "law of the Spirit of life" in Romans 8:2?

The "law of sin and death" means that sin leads to judgment and separation from God. The "law of the Spirit of life" means that through faith in Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to live in freedom and righteousness.

5. How does knowing Jesus paid for our sins change our perspective on judgment?

It gives us "confidence and peace" because we are no longer trying to earn salvation. Since Jesus took our punishment, we no longer have to live in fear of judgment—we are "fully accepted" by God.

6. What does it mean to "set your mind on the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5-6)? What are the things that most often occupy your mind throughout the day?

To "set your mind on the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5-6) means focusing on what the Holy Spirit desires—God's glory, truth, righteousness, and love for others—rather than being consumed by selfish desires or worldly concerns. When our thoughts are centered on God, we experience His peace and direction in our lives. This shift in focus leads to true freedom as we align our hearts with His purposes.

7. How does the Holy Spirit help believers overcome sin?

The Holy Spirit "dwells within us" and transforms our desires. Instead of relying on willpower to resist sin, we lean on the Spirit's strength, allowing Him to "change our hearts and actions" from the inside out.

8. What practical steps can believers take to experience the freedom described in today's passage?

Believers can trust in Christ's finished work, reject guilt and condemnation, focus on spiritual growth through prayer and Scripture, and rely on the Holy Spirit for strength instead of trying to do everything on their own.