



#7 “Is there power to change?”

To consider that God is the one who gives his followers the power to change, and the obligation to change, by his Spirit (Romans 8:1-17).

“A Christian person can be 100% confident that they are going to heaven”.

Q1. What do you make of this statement?

“Romans” is a letter in the latter half of the Bible. It is believed to have been written around 60’s AD, by the Apostle Paul, to the young church in Rome (hence the name). Paul wanted to encourage the church by explaining the “gospel” to them. The key sentence of the letter is this: **“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...” [Romans 1:16]**¹

The word “gospel” just means good news. The good news is to do with salvation – with being saved from God’s anger at humanity. It’s a solution that God himself provides in the sacrifice of his son Jesus (see session 1 on Romans 1:18-32, and session 2 on Romans 3:21-26). It’s a solution that requires trusting God’s promise that Jesus’ death is enough to pay for our wrongdoing (see session 3 on Romans 4:18-25). Two of the benefits of relationship with God are peace and hope (see session 4 on Romans 5:1-11). Jesus’ sacrificial death on behalf of others is a powerful incentive to obey God rather than indulge in wrongdoing (session 5 on Romans 6:1-14).

The normal life experience of the Christian person is an on-going struggle with sin (session 6 on Romans 7:7-25). If this is the case, then is this a battle that the Christian will continually lose? Is there any power to change?

Romans 8:1-17

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 flesh², 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.

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² Sinful nature

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.

12 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. **13** For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. **15** The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” **16** The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. **17** Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

“A Christian person can be 100% confident that they are going to heaven”.

Q2. What do you think Paul would make of this statement? [hint: see Romans 8:1-4]

Q3. Paul is contrasting 2 ways of living. We could call these “realms”. What are the 2 “realms” and what characterizes them?



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³ www.hollows.org.au

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Q4. Is Paul saying that only Christians can do good things, do you think? (hint: see verses 5-9)

Q5. What help does Paul say the Christian person has in the work of the “Spirit”?

This teaching about the “Spirit” is a mind-shift, particularly for those who have grown up in rational, non-supernatural cultures. We also can’t “see” the Spirit (although we can see evidence of it in a changed life). So the place to start is what we can “see” – the historical death of Jesus. If Paul is right about this, then he is right about the Spirit.

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