

## **The Romans 8 Process**

*Putting to death the deeds of the body.*

### **Wrestling with God in the night watches.**

A little while ago I was suffering from an illness, and the medications caused extreme insomnia. For nine nights in a row I got only 1 or 2 hours sleep.

I spent many lonely hours in prayer. And as He often does, God turned our conversations to focus my sin.

My Heavenly Father graciously led me to this passage in Romans chapter 8:

*For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Romans 8:13*

I've chewed on this verse many times in the past, and I always get stuck on that "*by the Spirit*" part. I see that the key to dealing with sin is to put to death the deeds of the body. And I long ago learned that no amount of willpower could ever conquer a single sin. But I could never get a handle on how to do it by the Spirit.

Then God took me two verses up, and gave me the key.

Over the next several sleepless nights, what I am about to present to you came together. It's nothing new. God's message never changes. These are old truths, but I believe they have now become extremely urgent.

I always take what God gives me as personal, and try not to assume that it is for everyone. But it has become very clear that this is an urgent message for anyone seeking God.

Stan Osterbauer  
saosterbauer@yahoo.com

All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

## **The Power Of Sin**

Outside of God Himself, sin is the most powerful force in the Universe. Sin is an immense power. It is the power of Death. It was the power which held Jesus in the tomb for three days. It is the power which can hold you in torment in Hell for all eternity.

### **We dare not underestimate the power of sin.**

Sin is not just another problem in the world. It's the ONLY problem, and you MUST deal with it.

Sin is the cause of all the unspeakable evils in the world, and even all of the so-called natural disasters. All of Creation fell when Adam and Eve first sinned. Sin's power reaches to the farthest galaxy in the Universe. (Rom. 8:19-22)

Sin creates an immense locked door between you and Heaven, between you and Life, between you and God.

The Sin Door is so massive & so powerful that only the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, has any power over it. The Resurrection destroyed the power of sin, which is Death.

Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims...no other religion could ever have a hope of making the smallest dent in that Door!

Death has been destroyed, but the Sin Door is still there in our hearts. In Romans 7, Paul wrestles with it mightily. In First John 1 we learn that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and call God a liar.

The deadly power of sin remains in each and every one of us. Sin is at the root of any problem which could afflict us. Either our sin or the sin of others is the reason behind marriage problems, and financial problems, and emotional problems. You name the problem...sin is at the root.

Sin blocks us from God, and the life He wants to give us, and the purposes He wants to accomplish in us.

### **It's time to get serious about dealing with the Sin Door.**

## **Sin and the Body of Christ**

If you have never laid down your life to Jesus and had your heart transformed, then the following questions are NOT for you. God loves you right where you are, and He's calling you to turn to Him. I pray you will respond, and be born again.

To followers of Christ I ask these questions:

1. Do we make an uneasy truce with sin in our lives? I've personally wrestled with gluttony for so long that it just becomes part of the background noise. Gluttony is a sin against my own body, and a poor testimony of who God is.
2. Do we make compromises with sin, and think it's OK. Ever told a ticket-taker your 12-year-old was 11? Ever asked someone to tell a caller you're not at home? A lie is a lie. And all lies have a father: Satan. (John 8:44)
3. Do we hide sin, and pretend it's not there? Men, do we do that with lust? Do we tolerate certain thoughts and fantasies, and think no one knows? Jesus said if you think it, you've already done the deed in your heart. (Matt. 5:28)

The Biblical definition of sexual immorality is any sexual thought or act which is outside of the public covenant of marriage. Inside marriage, God designed sex to be a joy. Outside of marriage it is from the pit of Hell, and an abomination to God. It strikes at the very core of our relationship with God as His image-bearers and as the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 6:18-20)

Probably everyone over the age of twelve has struggled with this. Let's not point fingers at each other. God loves you so much. Don't sell yourself cheap. Your Heavenly Father has something much better for you!

We think our little compromises with sin only affect us, but that's dead wrong. We're part of the Body of Christ. Sin affects the whole Church. When the children of God play games with sin, the Name of Jesus is being blasphemed.

When Christians tolerate the same sin, and watch the same filthy shows, and listen to the same vulgar music, and bow to the same materialism as unbelievers, then the holiness and purity of the Church is being destroyed.

How can such a church hope to reach the world for Christ? Is it any wonder that the American church has lost her influence in the culture?

I believe God is waiting to pour out His Spirit, and He is calling His church – that's you and me – to a higher level of holiness and purity than the meager state we now see in the American church.

If you think I'm being too harsh, read Matthew 18:8-9 sometime. Jesus takes sin very seriously.

## **The Daily Dose**

OK, we've defined the problem of sin. Now let's look at how Jesus would have us deal with it. It's a daily dose of sin medicine:

*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and **take up his cross daily** and follow me. – Luke 9:23*

Now I've heard people talk about the cross they have to bear being a lazy husband, or a nagging wife, or some other troubles. But that is NOT what Jesus is talking about here.

Question: What was the purpose of the Cross? What did Jesus do there?

Answer: On the Cross, Jesus dealt with sin, yours, mine...all sin for all time.

The purpose of the Cross was to deal with sin. Jesus said take up your cross daily. That means deal with sin daily. If we're not doing that, then we're not following Jesus. Christians are followers of Christ, aren't they? Aren't they?

**It's time for the Church to get serious about sin.**

## **Definition**

Sin is anything which falls short of the glory of God, in thought, word, deed, or omission. (Rom. 3:23; Matt. 5:21-30; James 2:15-16)

## **How can we deal with sin? The Romans 8 Process:**

Look at Romans 8:5-13 on the next page, but don't read the verses. Just look at the highlighted words. The Holy Spirit will repeat something He wants you to pay particular attention to. So look at what the Spirit is repeating here:

**Flesh** or **Body** are in orange. They're repeated 11 times in these 9 verses. Your Flesh is an immovable object.

**Spirit** is in blue. It's repeated 10 times. God's Spirit is an irresistible force.

**Mind** is in green. It's repeated 5 times. Your Mind is the battleground where the Flesh and the Spirit duke it out.

The immovable object of your Flesh meets the irresistible force of the Spirit, crashing head-on in verse 13 like two speeding freight trains heading in opposite directions on the same track.

Now read Romans 8:5-13 on the next page, and let its truths sink in.

## **Romans 8:5-13**

5 For those who live according to the **flesh** set their **minds** on the things of the **flesh**, but those who live according to the **Spirit** set their **minds** on the things of the **Spirit**.

6 For to set the **mind** on the **flesh** is death, but to set the **mind** on the **Spirit** is life and peace.

7 For the **mind** that is set on the **flesh** is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God 's law; indeed, it cannot.

8 Those who are in the **flesh** cannot please God.

9 You, however, are not in the **flesh** but in the **Spirit**, if in fact the **Spirit** of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the **Spirit** of Christ does not belong to him.

10 But if Christ is in you, although the **body** is dead because of sin, the **Spirit** is life because of righteousness.

11 If the **Spirit** of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal **bodies** through his **Spirit** who dwells in you.

12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the **flesh**, to live according to the **flesh**.

13 For if you live according to the **flesh** you will die, but if by the **Spirit** you put to death the deeds of the **body**, you will live.

Repeated Words:

**Flesh/Body** - 11

**Spirit** - 10

**Mind**- 5

### 3 Key Verses:

Let's look at three key verses. I've rearranged the order so we can better see the process unfold.

11 *...**he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead** will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

That's the only power in the Universe stronger than sin, and it's in you!

5 *...those who live according to the Spirit **set their minds on the things of the Spirit.***

Here's the key which unlocks that power.

13 *...if **by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body,** you will live.*

Now the power is unleashed against sin.

Summed up, the Romans 8 Process for unlocking the Sin Door of the Flesh is:

1. Christ's resurrection is the power.
2. Setting our minds on the Spirit is the key.
3. Putting to death the deeds of the flesh is the process by which the Sin Door is unlocked.

The battle is in the mind, and it is the Key to unlocking the Sin Door.

**But HOW do we set our minds on the Spirit? How can you use the Mind Key?**

I'll be giving you three "**Faith Keys**" for using the Mind Key. There are many other facets of faith, but I believe these three are the secret to the Mind Key.

Keep in mind that all of this is a process, not a one-time event, and it will not be completed until we see Jesus face to face.

**Faith Key #1: By faith, LDYL.** (What's LDYL? Read on to find out.)

Let's read 4 verses from John 15 asking how & what questions as we go:

5 ...Whoever **abides** in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do **nothing**.

John 15:5 is one of the most important verses in the Bible. Why? Because Jesus tells us here that we can do nothing. Nothing is a huge word. It's absolute zero. It's a bottomless black hole of utter emptiness, and it creates another huge locked door in our path. Let's call it "The Nothing Door".

So how do we get through this door? Let's start by asking our how & what questions. First "what". Jesus says we can do nothing unless we abide in Him, so let's ask what "abide" is. The Greek word for "abide" is "meno". It's a verb, meaning "to stay in one place".

But now we should ask how, right? Knowing what "abide" means and doing it are two completely different things. So let's ask: How can I abide?

Well, we could search the whole Bible, doing a word study on "abide", and spend many months in the process. Or we can look right in the surrounding verses for the answer. So often I've found that when I force Scripture to answer how & what questions, the answers are right there in the context. Is the Holy Spirit cool or what? So if we look just 5 verses down, we find the answer:

10 If you **keep my commandments**, you will abide in my love...

So that's the answer. If we keep His commandments, we'll abide in Jesus. But that begs another question: What are His commandments? If we look just 2 verses down, we find the answer:

12 "This is my commandment, that you **love one another as I have loved you**....

Now obviously this isn't just some cumbayá group hug here. This isn't warm touchy-feely lovey dovey. Jesus tacked those crucial five words on the end: "as I have loved you". So now we have our final "how" question: How has He loved? And you guessed it, the answer is in the very next verse:

13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone **lay down his life** for his friends.

By faith, lay down your life to God, and lay down your life to others. That's how you abide. That's how you open the Nothing Door. **LDYL**. Lay Down Your Life.

## The 1st Corinthians Experiment

Laying down your life is how Jesus defines love. So try this experiment at home: Copy out 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13, and everywhere you see the word “love”, replace it with the phrase “laying down my life” (or “laid” depending on the verb tense). That will give you an excellent picture of what this looks like in action. Here's an example:

*And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not **[laid down my life]**, I am nothing. – 1 Cor. 13:2*

There's that “nothing” word again. And it's tied to laying down your life!

## Eternal Perspective



Imagine this line represents about 700,000,000,000 years. That's more than one hundred million times the age of the Universe, by my calculations.

Your entire lifespan might be 70 or 80 years. Can you pick out 80 years on that 700-billion-year-long line? It wouldn't even be the width of an atom on that line. Not even the width of a proton.

Now imagine a line with no ends. It goes on forever. That's eternity. That 700 billion years wouldn't even be a non-blip of time on the line of eternity.

So ask yourself: Does it really matter that somewhere in that non-blip of time called your lifespan someone hurt your feelings or treated you unfairly? Does it really matter that you had to give up the TV remote?

The closer I get to God, the more I see how little it matters what happens to me in this short life, except for how it moves me toward Him. To God, trouble is a tool, and death just a doorway.

Ask yourself: What really matters?

If once upon a time you did Jesus a big favor and “accepted” Him, but you never really laid down your life, then fall on your face and beg Him to help you do it NOW!

Jesus says this is non-negotiable.

**It's Lay Down Your Life or nothing!**

## **Faith Key #2: By faith, Seek.**

*You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.*  
– Jeremiah 29:13

Whole libraries are devoted to seeking God. Here are 4 basic points.

### **1. Ask**

The most important part of seeking is asking. God tells you over & over in the Bible to ask, and keep on asking. But are you asking for the right things? Are you asking for Him, or for His stuff? Have you asked God if you can become a partaker of His divine nature? Because that's what He's giving away by the boatload! (2 Peter 1:4)

### **2. Know the Word**

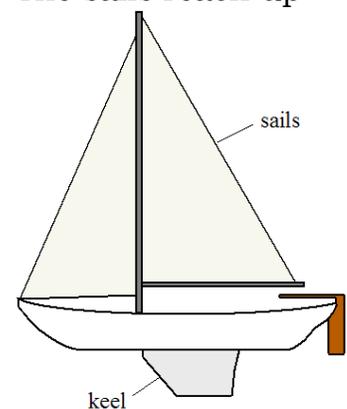
The God of Heaven has revealed Himself in His Word. We need to study and know the Word of God, not just read it. Inductive Bible Study is a great way to do that. You take Scripture apart like dis-assembling a watch to see what makes it tick. You can dive into inductive study in one of the local Precept Bible study groups, or get the book, *How to Study Your Bible* by Kay Arthur.

The best way to get an overview of God's plan throughout history, is the 15 week class called *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*. There's one starting January 6th at Sequim Community Church. I highly recommend it.

### **3. Balance**

I like an illustration by John Piper about a small sailboat. The sails reach up and catch the wind, and the keel reaches down into the water and holds the boat on track. The water symbolizes the Word of God. The wind symbolizes the Holy Spirit.

If we have a huge keel and a tiny sail, we'll be grounded in the Word, but lack the power of the Spirit, and go nowhere. Likewise, if we have a massive sail and no keel, then our boat will be blown all over the sea, with no stability or direction.



### **4. Focus on the Right Goal**

The goal is knowing your Heavenly Father. Not just knowing about Him, but knowing Him personally. Our primary goal in coming to God is to get God. It's not to get healing, or a better life, or peace, or even heaven. If we don't want God above all else, then our goal is horribly wrong.

One of the best works about knowing God that I've ever read is *The Knowledge of the Holy* by A. W. Tozer.

## **The Psychology of Sin**

I have to share one section from the Tozer book which is vital for our understanding of this subject of sin, and of knowing God:

*When the psalmist saw the transgression of the wicked his heart told him how it could be. "There is no fear of God before his eyes," he explained, and in so saying revealed to us the **psychology of sin**. When men no longer fear God, they transgress His laws without hesitation. The fear of consequences is not deterrent when the fear of God is gone.*

*In olden days men of faith were said to "walk in the fear of God" and to "serve the Lord with fear." However intimate their communion with God, however bold their prayers, at the base of their religious life was the **conception of God as awesome and dreadful**.*

*This idea of God transcendent rims through the whole Bible and gives color and tone to the character of the saints. This fear of God was more than a natural apprehension of danger; it was a nonrational dread, an acute feeling of personal insufficiency **in the presence of God the Almighty**.*

The goal is to know God in our spirit by faith. If we know Him as He is, and not the puny man-like image we conjure up, He has a very special promise for us:

*His divine power has granted to us **all things** that pertain to life and godliness, **through the knowledge of him** who called us to his own glory and excellence.  
– 2 Peter 1:3*

## **Know Him, and you have it ALL!**

Those two recommended books again are:

*How to Study Your Bible* by Kay Arthur, and

*The Knowledge of the Holy* by A. W. Tozer.

### **Faith Key #3: By faith, Submit to suffering.**

*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

– James 1:2-4

*Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope...*

– Romans 5:3-4

*If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are **illegitimate children** and not sons...but he disciplines us for our good, that we may **share his holiness**.* – Hebrews 12:8 & 10

Did you catch those two astounding statements in Hebrews 12?

1. If you aren't being disciplined by God, you are not a child of God!
2. God's purpose in allowing suffering is to share His holiness!

I don't want to minimize suffering and troubles. It can be scary when it's winter and your electric bill is two months past due and you have no money to pay for it.

I was in just such a situation several years ago. I was a single parent with two teenage boys, and not much money. I had tried to take the easy way out, and ended up deeper in debt.

So I finally went to God. He didn't send an unexpected check, or inspire someone to pay the bills. Instead, He said, "Are you giving me your full tithe?". I said, "Lord, that's \$70 a month!". Guess what He said?

Sometimes God is more interested in fixing your heart, than fixing your immediate problem.

God used the difficulties of those days to build obedience and faith. The electric bills eventually got paid, and when He was ready God gave me a great job, and to top it off, He gave me a beautiful Godly wife. But best of all, I had a faith that was more precious than pure gold!

### **The Fellowship of His Suffering**

This isn't Frodo and Gandalf and Sam in the "Fellowship of the Ring". This is the Father and Son and Spirit and you in the Fellowship of His Suffering. This is God's chosen method to "share His holiness".

But there's more. God is making available to you His immense power.

Remember the Sin Door? It's so massive & so powerful that only the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, has any power over it.

Do you want the power of His resurrection? Here's how you get there:

Phil. 3:10 (NASB)

*that I may **know Him** and the **power of His resurrection** and the **fellowship of His sufferings**, being conformed to His death*

Be careful what you ask for. The power of His resurrection is found in the Fellowship of His Sufferings. It's not power to perform mighty miracles or gain great wealth. It's power to conquer sin and share His holiness.

In God's hands, trouble is a tool, and death just a doorway. Your Heavenly Father loves you with a perfect love. He is constantly working out His very best for you. Often His very best lies on the other side of a storm.

**Suffer with Him and you will have His holiness, purified faith, and the power of His Resurrection!**

## **The Faith Keys in Operation**

As we by faith lay down our lives, seek Him, and are perfected by suffering, our minds are transformed. As we “set our minds on the things of the Spirit”, His Spirit puts to death the deeds of the body. **The Sin Door opens!**

But conquering your Flesh is not the ultimate goal. If it were, then it would be all about you. That's man-centered. God has something for you to DO.

By “putting to death the deeds of the body”, the Resurrection Power of the Spirit gives “life to your mortal bodies”. And that life will reproduce itself. That's what life does! It's a natural law: **Life reproduces life.**

### **The goal is Spiritual Reproduction.**

This is what I'm getting most out of the things God gave me in those nine sleepless nights. Proclaim the gospel at every opportunity God gives. But Spiritual Reproduction doesn't depend on how eloquently I speak. It depends on how surrendered I am to God.

As sin is conquered the Father has room to work in my heart. He will reproduce His life in His time and in His way. John 6:44 says no one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws them. My first priority is to pray, and share God's love.

But Romans 10:14 asks, “how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?” At some point, I must speak.

Listen to six simple incomplete sentences:

1. Sovereign Creator God
2. Fallen, sinful, hopelessly lost mankind
3. Jesus, God in the flesh
4. Atoning sacrifice on a Cross
5. Resurrection conquering death
6. My unconditional surrender

Those aren't just words. That's the **gospel**. There is supernatural power behind those words.

*For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**, for it is the **power of God** for salvation to everyone who believes... – Rom. 1:16*

Why am I so hesitant to speak? What do I think will happen? If I love people but never get around to speaking those power words of the gospel, will I love them all the way to Hell?

Lord, draw whom You will. Open my eyes to see. Open my heart to love. And open my mouth to speak.

## **Memory Verse**

Scripture memorization is crucial in all of this because you are likely to encounter opposition. How can you possibly go up against the second most powerful being in the Universe without any weapon?

So let's start memorizing a passage right now!

There are more powerful promises of God packed into these two verses in 2nd Peter than anywhere else I know:

2 Peter 1:3-4

*His divine power has granted to us  
all things that pertain to life and godliness,  
through the knowledge of him  
who called us to his own glory and excellence,  
by which he has granted to us  
his precious and very great promises,  
so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature,  
having escaped from the corruption that is in the world  
because of sinful desire.*

These two verses summarize what we've been talking about. I've divided them up into what I call "thought bites", because I like to devour the Word of God one bite at a time when I memorize. Read each line slowly, and digest it.

Notice that phrase, "having escaped". That is past tense. That must already be happening before these great and precious promises can be ours.

Do you want all things that pertain to life and godliness? Do you want to know God intimately? Do you want to become a partaker of His divine nature, and be MORE LIKE GOD?

For that to happen, you must be escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. THAT is the Romans 8 Process!

**Embrace it with all your heart and all your soul and all your might!**