



LifeGroup Bible Study

How does faith in Jesus actually change a person? What is the process?

In Romans 8, the Apostle Paul, more fully than in any other place in the Bible, reveals how faith in Christ leads concretely to growth in character. We all wrestle with the thought that we are not the people we want to be. Paul neither denies the truth of our brokenness, nor holds a pessimistic view of our prospects. He grounds the hope of our new identity in the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, for us and in us. "If God is for us, who can be against us"?

Opening Question

Our hearts are designed to know and experience God and His great love for us. Yet many of us settle for something far shorter than this. We reduce our faith to a bunch of rules, to a bunch of doctrines and to a whole heap of do's and don'ts.

Q. What is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God? What is the difference between knowing about God's love and experiencing God's love?

Read Romans 8:1-4; 38-39

Some theologians say that Romans is probably the most important piece of literature ever written. That it is the highest peak of the Bible and that Romans 8 is the highest part of the book and a bloke called Andrew would claim that Romans 8:38-39 is the climax. So the climax of the climax of the climax of the Bible is to know, experience and to take hold of these verses. Read versus 38-39 again.

Q. What do these verses teach us about what our relationship with God should be like? What should we be experiencing?

According to Paul in this section – The Ministry of the Holy Spirit is the key to knowing and experiencing God. Let's begin to look at the first thing that God's Spirit is wanting to teach us.

No Condemnation

Q. Romans 8:1 - Paul starts with the word therefore – so we need to read Paul's previous argument. Read Chapter 7:14-24. How does this describe your Christian experience?

Often as a follower of Jesus we can feel condemned by our failures, our sin, by our own inconsistency. We can move in and out of condemnation and feel like giving up. But Paul says this radical thing – he says to all followers of Jesus “that now there is no condemnation.”

Read verses 8:1-4

1. (v.1) Take a few minutes for everyone in the group to express what they understand Paul to mean when he says, “There is now no condemnation.” Why is it so important for us as Christians to have a firm grasp on this truth?
2. (v.1) What does it mean to be ‘In Christ Jesus’?
3. (v.3-4) How did God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh achieve what the law was unable to? Why did He do this?
4. What role does the Holy Spirit play in this passage?

Condemnation is a legal term. It means that because of sin there is a charge against us. But because of Jesus' death sin has been dealt with. "To be in Christ" means that our past, present and future sins are dealt with. There is no condemnation! How does this change the way you think about your relationship with God.

Read John 8: 2-11

5. Why was this woman being judged/condemned? How would she have felt?

6. What are the voices, failures, fears in your life that you find condemning. The stones that weigh you down?

7. What would it mean for you to hear Jesus' words "then neither do I condemn you, Go now in peace and leave your life of sin."

8. Finally rewrite verse 38 – 39 in your own words.

For example:

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[k] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,

Neither an addiction

Neither a sin or a failure

Neither a broken marriage

Neither sickness or depression

To all the stuff ups, and to all the failures, and to all the battlers

Nothing - will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.