

Explore the Bible Series for Nov. 13: A lack of vigilance will bring sin to the fore

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A lack of vigilance will bring sin to the fore

- Romans 8:1-14

By Trey Turner

Canyon Creek Baptist Church, Temple

Assuming by the number of humorous stories, the family television set is anything but set. In my home, testosterone keeps the buttons pressed so that the television knows only to slide from one channel to the next. The three various-aged men of this family take their turns “seeking what they may devour” on the television until something captivates.

For instance, the 2004 release of *The Alamo* starring Dennis Quaid and Billy Bob Thornton has as DVD bonus material an option where the viewer can listen to commentary by Texas historians who worked on the movie. These men talk about how events actually happened, how they were portrayed in the movie, details about characters and how these details could only be hinted toward in a movie. The commentary shown on top of

the movie captured my interest; it was set.



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Give attention to God's way for you to live by taking a new mindset. This way is worth living.

Adopt the Spirit's mindset (Romans 8:1-8)

Paul talks about a spiritual mindset, acknowledging the struggle between spiritual life and normal human nature. It is not natural to be led by the Spirit. To do so is contrary to nature. Paul calls it the "law of sin and death."

People default to actions which lead to sin and death. This "law" that was humanly impossible to overcome was overcome when God sent his Son. Now people do not automatically have to live in ways displeasing and hostile (v. 7) to God. Paul says in verse 4 that sin is condemned and the requirements of the law (God's covenant demands) can be met in the believer.

Consider the religious orders of Jesus' day—tithing on the mint, dill and cumin grown in their gardens—yet how their careful obedience falls short of God's law because they neglected the "more important things" (Matthew 23:23). The kingdom of God is a spiritual order prompted within the soul of the believer. Living according to the Spirit's prompting now must captivate

the believer's life.

Previously, he or she could not be pleasing to God by following the outward written law. Now there is the option to fulfill it following the prompting of the Spirit of God who lives within the believer. God gives the individual freedom and responsibility to follow the Spirit's mindset. Freed from the default, will the believer now choose that mindset? Paul says Christians no longer are captive.

Go in the Spirit's direction (Romans 8:9-11)

Christians have the Spirit of Christ, so the Christian's spirit is alive to Christ and able to follow him even in fleshly bodies. Paul says the Christian's body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is alive—the implications are for the overcoming of the weight of those fleshly tendencies. That same Christian has been freed for living the empowered life.

Certain CD players have power indicator lights. Mine lights up red when the power is on. That is only to indicate the fact of power going to the player. It is ready to use. The indicator light does not mean the player is being used, only that power is available.

Similarly, the Christian follows the Spirit's prompting as through salvation Christ's power is made available (10), and following him brings glory to Christ (8,14). But the Holy Spirit's presence does not mean the believer automatically is pleasing to God. He or she must choose to go in the Spirit's direction. Paul says there is strength to obey.

Obey the Spirit's leadership (Romans 8:12-14)

The death brought about by sinful actions is not the “second death” (Revelation 21:8). Nor is it an indication of being lost again, for in Romans 8, Paul is talking in the context of those who are believers. Instead, living by the sinful nature does no one any good; in fact, it does harm. Sinful behavior does not bring about Christ’s righteousness, so why live in that pattern? Learn to put to death this body’s actions that do not glorify God. Paul says the choice belongs to each believer.

Discussion questions

- If Christians are no longer slaves to sin, how would you describe temptation?
- Why are Christians still tempted?
- How can Christians do a better job following the prompting of the Holy Spirit?
- Why should a Christian exercise spiritual disciplines?
- Discuss some of the Christian disciplines. How do they help overcome the flesh’s tendencies?