

# Practicing Godliness Under No Condemnation

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, we've been camped out in Romans chapter 8 as we study the pursuit of holiness.

! Interestingly, the 8th chapter begins with no condemnation and ends with no separation.!

If we were able to continue our study every Monday evening throughout the summer, we would still not exhaust the deep and beautiful doctrines taught to us in Romans chapter 8.

It's just a very rich environment. So in the first verse we had these words, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Apparently, in the original language, there is was added by a scribe. That's the common belief. Because it's really therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And then there's this debate, you know, when you see the word therefore, you've got to figure out what it's there for. And there's different theories, but MacArthur, and I think he's right, he says that's referring to Romans chapter 1 through chapter 7. The whole thing. And once you get all that down, he says, therefore, no condemnation. And he says now. And now is every age.

Starting in verse 31, we have the results of no condemnation. Listen to these words. Think about that. If God is for us, who can be against us?

[ 1 : 54 ] He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died.

More than that, who was raised. Who has the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, for your sake, we are being killed all day long.

We are regarded as a sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[ 3 : 23 ] That is the greatest commentary on the security of a true believer. Bar none. I get in discussion with my good Wesleyan friends at the VOM, and I say, show me anything in there about eternal security.

I say, well, let's turn to the back of Romans. No, I don't want to use that one. But let's just take three of the truths in this portion of Scripture.

We would still arrive at the same place of being secure in Christ. and it would read like this. Nothing in life, nothing in death, and nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What else is there? If nothing in life can do it and nothing in death can do it and nothing in creation can do it, what's left? We are secure in Christ.

This does not mean that we are immune to the battle that rages all around us and in us.

[ 4 : 42 ] But in spite of the battle raging all around us, we are never going to be condemned. Why? There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Now, every human being at some point is or was a sinner who stands condemned.

They stood condemned. Every sinner, every human being coming into this world begins as a child of wrath. We have no resource within ourselves to change that inevitable judgment.

Without conversion provided exclusively by the Lord God, we have no means to escape condemnation, death, and hell.

There's nothing in any human that can merit an alteration of that inevitable status. The sword will fall in judgment unless, and that is a big and wonderful unless, unless that sinner is in Christ.

[ 5 : 55 ] For those who are in Christ, there is no condemnation. So how can that be? Because in your place condemned, he stood.

He stood condemned in the place of every true believer for time and eternity. Now, I wish that that was original with me.

I think that's a nice saying, in your place condemned, he stood. In truth, though, that is the title of a book which I have at home written by Dr. J.I. Packer and Dr. Mark Dever.

that is the greatest promise that we could ever receive. Every true believer has the promise that they will never be condemned.

In our place, he took our condemnation. And that is secured for you by the will of the Father, through the work of the Son, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[ 7 : 06 ] no condemnation. That is an incredible promise. Rejected by much of the church, believe it or not.

And they don't overtly reject it. They don't teach on it. And they don't preach on it. Well, how does this work? Why is it important that in our place condemned, he stood?

God. Because in God's divine wisdom and mercy, no one can ever be exposed to double jeopardy. That is a very important concept, and actually, that, as a direct result of the Bible, that made its way into our legal system in the United States.

It is based upon a Latin phrase, *res judicata*. It means the matter has been adjudicated by a competent court and may not be pursued further by the same parties.

[ 8 : 18 ] If a person is tried for murder and acquitted, found not guilty, that person cannot be tried again for that crime.

That would violate the doctrine of *res judicata*. That would be double jeopardy for that person. I mean, under that theory, you could try them as many times as you wanted to until they got convicted.

All of your sins and all of mine were placed on Christ by the Father Jesus went to the cross for those sins.

He was punished for each and every sin His people would ever commit. I had a dear friend who said, I know He died for all my sins up to the point of salvation, but what about future sins?

And I said, when Jesus died, all your sins were future. Every one of them. the matter has been settled between the Son and the Father.

[ 9 : 32 ] And no one in Christ can be exposed to retrial for even one of those sins.

The wrath of God was completely satisfied for each and every one of those sins, and therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

What I've said here has no application to an unbeliever. Someone who's rejected truth, who's been exposed to truth and walked away, none of it.

Every sinner is condemned by the virtue of the sin of Adam. We inherited Adam's sin. Every sinner is actually doubly condemned because even long after Adam was gone, that sinner was a constant violator of God's law.

Every day, every moment of every day. I mean, we can't even fulfill the greatest commandment of the second greatest commandment from one minute. And actually, every sinner is triply condemned because that guy, if he's truthful, will also tell you, well, I don't believe in Jesus.

[ 10 : 54 ] I think there's another way. Or I believe in God, but not Jesus. I was witnessing this guy over in Joplin, Missouri, one time, and he said, your Jesus is a bunch of dust in a grave in Israel somewhere.

This is a deep and profound, unalteable condemnation is unalteable as far as the power of man is concerned. Rejectors of Christ will be condemned.

They will be condemned. Their sins were never atoned for by Christ on the cross. He is not their propitiation.

He's not a satisfaction for the father towards sin. They will stand at the great white throne judgment and that is not an act of double jeopardy.

They come under other passages that do promise condemnation when you get to the great white throne at the end of Revelation. That's the trial of the unsaved dead or alive.

[12:16] It's where their father looks at the Lamb's book of life and doesn't find their name. He said, let's look at the book of works. See if anything you did measured up to what Christ did. And he will find them be lacking in that I can assure you.

we have some passages, a lot of them that could back this up. I'll just read three. In Ezekiel, the soul that sins it shall die.

Romans, the wages of sin is death. And then Hebrews 9 and 27, it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment.

There's a lot more verses, but those three get our point across. Do you want peace with God? And we do. We need to realize that in Christ, we are beyond the reach of condemnation.

[13:26] All who are in Christ. Now, the tricky part is you've got to make sure you're in Christ. And if you've got some doubts, get in your closet tonight and settle the issue.

So let me say this, if God does not condemn you any longer, this is profound, if God no longer condemns you, don't condemn yourself.

Okay? Don't condemn yourself. Instead, reckon yourself as out from under the penalty of sin, or otherwise you will be imposing a condition on yourself that God himself did not impose upon you.

Practically, Paul is saying there is no need to continually put yourself under condemnation every time you sin. In Romans chapter 8, starting in verse 33, Paul says this, who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own?

will God condemn us? No. He's the one who's given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us?

[15:00] Will Christ Jesus condemn us? No. He's the one who died for us and was raised to life and is sitting at the highest honor next to God the Father pleading for us.

I told my Wesleyan friends, did Jesus ever pray a prayer that wasn't answered? No. Well, he's interceding for you right now. You think the Father says, no, I'm not going to save him.

Are you kidding me? Doesn't work that way, does it? If the Father does not accuse us, and if Christ doesn't accuse us, don't accuse yourself.

Now, let me clean this up a little bit. Because when I sin, and I do, but not over a few minutes every five minutes, you know, a few times every five minutes, this is not a license to sin, ever.

That's antinomianism, we've talked about that, against the moral law of God. I can leave any way I want to, I've been saved. People that believe that have never been saved.

[16:14] It's not a license to sin. Being in Christ is all the motive you will ever need to not sin.

You don't need any further motive to not sin. but when you sin, notice I didn't say if, actually the Bible says if, but it's a Greek word since.

I wish I used those words. When you sin, confess that to the Lord. 1 John 1.9, you go to the Lord in confession and God will cleanse you totally, immediately.

He will cleanse you of that sin and cleanse you of all unrighteousness. What happens if you sin five minutes later? Confess it. Do it every day.

As many times as it takes. Well, we're going to do something tonight that I've never done in all my years of teaching which is about three times longer than Derek's been alive.

[17:35] We have actually completed our look at condemnation and many other passages in Romans chapter 8. And so a little early maybe, but I'm going to move into what will be for us the final phase of our study on pursuing holiness and we're going to do that in just an introduction tonight by looking at the practice of holiness or godliness.

And I'm actually, as we finish out, I'm going to use those terms interchangeably. I may say holiness, I may say godliness, for them I mean the same thing.

We could just as easily title this study back in September, pursuing godliness in an ungodly world. And it would have made still as much sense. Now this will not be an exhaustive study on the subject of godliness.

We only have three and a half lessons left. And we could easily spend the whole year on this. Paul wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith, spiritual son.

And Paul had this to say in 1 Timothy 4 verse 8, verse 9, for physical training is of some value. But godliness has value for all things.

[19:16] Holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. That tells me we're going to take personal godliness, personal holiness into the next life.

I find it interesting that the Bible is a blueprint for godliness or living a godly life, yet the word godliness only appears 16 times in scripture, and all of those references are in the New Testament. Every one of them. And of those, the book of 1 Timothy uses the word godliness nine times. So over half are in just one book.

The word godly appears more frequently. It shows up 35 times. It can be found in the Old Testament 27 times, and in the New Testament eight times.

So having laid the predicate for Timothy, consider Titus. We'll go over to Titus to make a comment on that. in Titus chapter 2 verses 11 to 14.

[ 20 : 35 ] For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live sensibly, righteously, and in a godly manner in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for himself a people for his own possession eager for good deeds.

And as you would expect, this is consistent with the Apostle Paul's opening words in Titus. Paul, slave of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of those chosen of God, and the knowledge of the truth, which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, but at the proper time revealed his word in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God, our Savior.

Paul had been appointed by the Lord to teach godliness to the church.

That was his calling. By doing so, he furthers our faith, he furthers our knowledge of God that leads to godliness.

Godliness is absolutely centered centered on devotion to God. And I would add private devotions and public devotions, but I would stress private devotions.

[ 22 : 53 ] And the God I'm speaking of here is the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our personal devotion to God is supported by three columns.

our desire for God is one of them. Our fear of God is one of them. Our love of God is one of them. And these cannot and should not be divorced from each other. We take them together as they are. But think of that term, our fear of God.

We don't hear that a lot anymore God is not. When I was growing up, you could hear often someone being described as a God-fearing man.

You just don't hear that much anymore. Maybe no one's left. I don't know. But we don't hear that. When's the last time any of us heard that term? in striving for godliness, we are talking about living a level of commitment that brings with it certain costs.

[ 24 : 15 ] Now, I'm going to give you probably a very poor example of what I'm going to use, but I'm going to use it nevertheless. I played high school football in New Jersey courtesy of Phyllis Petroleum Company.

They had transferred my dad to work in New York City. Going back years, the community was aware that there were some young guys in a particular class, it turned out to be the class of 1966, that had quite a bit of talent athletically, and they knew, the community knew, that talent was going to come together in our senior year.

Not in 1966, though, football season was in 1965 in the fall, then we graduated that summer in 1966. By law, we could not practice as a team or even meet with our coaches until September 1st. That was a law in New Jersey. but we could and did meet with ourselves. That wasn't breaking any rules or laws.

We also worked out together on our own. We practiced football during the summer of 1965 and I mean, we were going all out, even tackling, we didn't have any equipment.

[ 25 : 45 ] We had no equipment. And as a team, we made a commitment that no one would smoke and there'd be no drinking because we knew we had potential and our focus was going to be on football.

Now, those two things were never a problem for me and are not to this day, except drinking Diet Coke. We lived up to that commitment though.

We did. when the season was over, we were the undefeated state champions. We were unbeaten, untied, and we were only scored on three or four times in the season.

In fact, only in one game, and that was our principal rival, a team named Clark, and we were behind six to nothing.

That's Oklahoma talk, six to nothing, six to zero, we were behind for about a minute and a half. And it was, they scored six, missed the extra point, we scored, got the extra point, and we beat them 21 to six.

[ 27 : 01 ] The New York Times, I remember, came out that year with a list of the hundred best high school football teams in the nation, and in the first list, we were number two.

The second list, though we remained unbeaten, we were number ten, the final list. And we were pretty bitter over that. I mean, we didn't lose anything, but I finally figured that took years for me to figure out.

I'll tell you what that was. If I don't tell you, remind me in a minute. that was question. But that all came about because of commitment.

We committed to ourselves, to each other, to the school. That's why we reached our goal. We worked to reach the goal.

When godliness is your goal, work at it. The Bible is filled with passages that touch on this subject of commitment. Psalm 63, 1, O God, You are my God.

[ 28 : 07 ] Earnestly I seek You. My soul thirsts for You. My flesh faints for You as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. Jeremiah 29, 13, You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Philippians chapter 3, not that have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me His own.

He wants to live a committed life because Jesus owns him. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that to you. Hebrews 12, 14, strive for peace with everything, and for holiness without which no one will see the Lord. And then a final passage, 2 Peter 1, beginning in verse 5, make every effort to supplant your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

[ 29 : 47 ] For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election. For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now, I mentioned to you the commitment of our football team. In addition to the commitment of the players on the high school football team, there were two other keys to our success.

First had to do with great coaches. Great coaches. Our head coach was Jack McNeil, who went on to become head coach at Boston College where he coached Doug Flutie to a Heisman trophy.

His son coached down in Louisiana for years. Louisiana Tech, I think, or one of the schools down there. And Jack was a great coach.

[ 31 : 09 ] He was destined for a career in the NFL and he was a linebacker and he broke his neck on a hit. And that ended his football.

Our line coach, that's the one I dealt with most because I was a lineman, was Boyd Sands. He had been recruited to play professional football for the Bears or the Lions.

They were both interested in him. Instead, he opted to go into education. Why would he do that? They made more money than football players in those days. They had no helmets. I mean, these guys, you know, they're from a different era.

Coach Sands recently retired as executive director of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association. And he's quite a bit older than I am, but he kept working.

Why didn't we rank higher? Those two men would not run up the score on any team. There were some teams we could have beaten 75 to nothing.

[ 32 : 14 ] They would not do it. The most we ever beat anybody was 25 to nothing. our last game. But they refused to run up the score.

And the New York Times noted, well, they won some games, but they didn't blow them out. Well, we didn't blow them out because my coaches took the high ground, and I grew to really respect that very much.

To achieve godliness, fellas, we have to have a great coach. And we do. He is the Spirit of God, the very Spirit of Christ, who will lead us through the Scriptures.

A great coach. We must also be in training. I said there were two. We must also be in training. I can't understate this. That needs to occur every day. people say, I'm too busy. You know what the problem with that is?

[ 33 : 24 ] You're too busy. Make it your priority. We need to be in the Word of God every day. I opened this morning pretty early in the Psalms.

I'm going to close tonight in the Scriptures at home. So you're off the hook. Every day we need to be in the Word and every day we need to be in fervent prayer.

And you don't have to spend six hours. Spend five minutes, but do it. and we put ourselves at risk when we start skipping a day every now and then of this discipline, these two disciplines.

And I'll tell you what the problem is. One day skipped can become two, and then three, and the next thing you know you're living your life like me. you haven't cracked a book open.

You haven't looked at the Bible. We've got to be in training. I'm also training my mind a little bit this spring and summer reading Pilgrim's Progress in the Old English.

[ 34 : 48 ] The French say it's a challenge. It is, but I've got some good footnotes. The book was published in 1826. They didn't have New English then.

I bought this one day for Peanuts down in Arkansas. I think he would have taken Peanuts. But it was, but it was, this copy was printed in 1826.

Well, that's it for this evening. We're going to close and be dismissed. But remember what I've said, and let's, let's, make a practice of this.

Let's make a commitment. We've got two more full lessons on godliness. This is kind of the icing on the cake that we've been studying since September.

And we'll feed the ladies, and I'll close with some comments and be dismissed. But remember, we're filling in the void this summer with men's ministry on Saturdays.

[ 35 : 52 ] Not every Saturday. Once a month, stand. And avail yourselves to that. Come to that. Come to that. Well, we're going to close for this evening.

So let's bow our heads and go to the Lord. And Father, we thank you for the day.

We thank you for your word. We thank you, Lord, for Jesus. I don't know how people can live in this world, Lord, the way it is, without Christ Jesus.

And it's only going to get darker until we see a light in that eastern sky. Hasten the day, Lord. But until then, may we occupy, until you come, with your business, as you have instructed us in your word.

Ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen.