

Romans 8:10 Commentary

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Click chart to enlarge

Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
[Romans Overview Chart](#) - Charles Swindoll

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	Gods Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith
Modified from Irving L. Jensen's chart above				

- R **Ruin** (Romans 1:17 – 3:20) – The utter sinfulness of humanity
- O **Offer** (Romans 3:21-31) – God's offer of justification by grace
- M **Model** (Romans 4:1-25) – Abraham as a model for saving faith
- A **Access** (Romans 5:1-11) – The benefits of justification
- N **New Adam** (Romans 5:12-21) – We are children of two "Adams"
- S **Struggle w/ Sin** (Romans 6:1-8:39) Struggle, sanctification, and victory

Romans 8:10 [If Christ](#) is in you, [though](#) the [body](#) is [dead because](#) of [sin](#), [yet](#) the [spirit](#) is [alive because](#) of [righteousness](#).
([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [ei de Christos en humin, to men soma nekron dia hamartian, to de pneuma zoe dia dikaiosunen.](#)

Amplified: But if Christ lives in you, [then although] your [natural] body is dead by reason of sin and guilt, the **spirit** is alive because of [the] righteousness [that He imputes to you]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: But if Christ is in you, even if because of sin your body is mortal, your **Spirit** has life through righteousness. ("your Spirit" is an interesting way to render it. I suppose He is God's gift to us and thus He does belong to us in that still quiet mysterious sense!)

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

Hendriksen: "But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the Spirit is life because of your justification."

KJV: And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the **Spirit** is life because of righteousness.

NET: But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, but the **Spirit** is your life because of righteousness

NIV But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your **spirit** is alive because of righteousness.

NLT: Since Christ lives within you, even though your body will die because of sin, your **spirit** is alive because

you have been made right with God. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Now if Christ does live within you his presence means that your sinful nature is dead, but your **spirit** becomes alive because of the righteousness he brings with him. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: But, assuming that Christ is in you, on the one hand the body is dead on account of sin, but on the other hand the [human] **spirit** is alive on account of righteousness. (

Young's Literal: and if Christ is in you, the body, indeed, is dead because of sin, and the **Spirit** is life because of righteousness

Note how the various Versions give a different rendering of PNEUMA - Spirit or spirit. Again, this makes the point that EVERY translation is in some sense also an INTERPRETATION, which is why I strongly encourage you to go back to the original Greek texts and also to carefully examine the context which aids accurate interpretation.

AND (BUT) IF (SINCE) CHRIST IS IN YOU THOUGH THE (physical, mortal) BODY IS DEAD BECAUSE OF SIN: ei de Christos en humin to men soma nekron dia hamartian:

- John 6:56; 14:20,23; 15:5; 17:23; 2Corinthians 13:5; Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:27
- Ro 5:11; 5:12; 2Corinthians 4:11; 5:1, 2, 3, 4; 1Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:27; 2Peter 1:13,14; Revelation 14:13

Related Resources:

- [Torrey's Topic Union with Christ](#)
- [Union with Christ - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

And is probably better rendered "**but**" ([1161](#)) as it indicates a contrast to what Paul has said in the preceding context. Note that Paul now begins to address the readers as "**you**", indicating that he is speaking to believers.

The subject that Paul is dealing with in this verse is how the "**dead**" body, in which **sin** dwells, can also be a vessel of the life of God. His answer is in the next verse. It is the Holy Spirit Who gives life to our mortal bodies.

If ([1487](#)) (**ei**) defines a condition of the first class or one that is assumed to be true. **If** can be understood as *since* or *because*. **If** does not express doubt but indicates that He is in the believer.

Since Christ is in you means that Christ Himself is in us. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the indwelling of Christ Himself. Mysterious? Yes, but it is inspired truth we can believe for our God is faithful, trustworthy! Compare Paul's statement in Ephesians 3 where he prays that the Father "would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power **through His Spirit** in the inner man **so that Christ may dwell in your hearts** through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love." (Ephesians 3:16-17-note)

In **Colossians** Paul stated the same truth writing that Christ had been made known to the saints "to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory. (Col 1:27-note)

In **Galatians** Paul reiterated this truth declaring "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. (Galatians 2:20-note) (**Comment:** Yes, it is Christ in Him and at the same time it is the Spirit of Christ Who gives him the power to live supernaturally! Blessed divine mystery! But blessed truth by which we are to live out by faith not sight nor total understanding!)

Body ([4983](#)) (**soma**) refers to an organized whole made up of parts and members. Here **soma** refers to human the body which is the external man, the human frame which contains the seeds of decay and is mortal, doomed to death, in time due to sin.

Dead ([3498](#)) (**nekros** from **nékus** = a corpse = English - necropsy, necrophobia, etc. Verb = **nekroo**) refers to that which is literally dead even though that end has not yet been realized. Nevertheless the forces of death are working in our bodies and they will all inevitably die, except those whose bodies are raptured.

The reference to the body as **dead because of sin** is clearly a reference to its ultimate destiny by the infliction of the penalty of sin (cf. Ge 3:19; Ro 5:12-note).

Godet writes that "The term **dead** here signifies: irrevocably smitten with death. The human body bears within itself from its formation the germ of death; it begins to die the instant it begins to live. ([Romans Commentary Online](#))

This verse in part addresses Paul's question in Romans 7 "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" (see **note** Romans 7:24)

Sin ([266](#)) (**hamartia**) originally conveyed the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow and then came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. In Scripture sin often describes our thoughts, words and deeds that miss the ultimate purpose God has for each individual, these thoughts, words and deeds falling short of God's perfect standard of holiness. "**Sin**" in this context does **not** describe the actions or results (sins we commit) but describes the underlying root cause, the principle or, in medical terms (I'm a physician with sub specialization in infectious disease), the "virus" we have all inherited from Adam that dooms our physical bodies to decay and eventually die. **Sin** has been defeated by Christ, but **sin** and death still claim their hold on our mortal bodies. Yet in these bodies we are alive spiritually and can live by the Spirit's guidance.

Matthew Henry has some interesting comments about the **body** "is a frail, mortal, dying **body**, and it will be dead shortly; it is a house of clay, whose foundation is in the dust. The life purchased and promised does not immortalize the **body** in its present state. It is dead, that is, it is appointed to die, it is under a sentence of death: as we say one that is condemned is a dead man. In the midst of life we are in death: be our bodies ever so strong, and healthful, and handsome, they are as good as dead (Heb 11:12), and this because of sin. It is sin that kills the body. This effect the first threatening has (Ge 3:19): Dust thou art. Methinks, were there no other argument, love to our bodies should make us hate sin, because it is such an enemy to our bodies. The death even of the bodies of the saints is a remaining token of God's displeasure against sin. (Henry, M. Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible)

Those who have Christ in them now have a brand new vitality. Yes, our mortal, physical bodies are dying because sin killed our bodies, but our spirit is alive because Christ lives in us and the righteousness of God has been imputed to us. "*Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day*" (2Cor 4:16), growing stronger because of the life we have in our bodies from the Spirit of God.

William Newell notes that in this verse "we have the answer to our Lord's prayer in John 17:21-22: "I pray ... that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us: ... that they may be one, even as we are one." We have seen in an earlier chapter how we came to be in Christ: that God, having ended our history before Himself as connected with the first Adam, at the cross, created us in Christ, the Last Adam, the Second Man. Thus was the one part of our Lord's intercession answered. We are in Christ. But the other part of the great mystery is here before us in Romans 8:10: Christ is in us. Although, as we know, He is within us by His Spirit, yet it is Christ Himself who is in us." ([Romans 8: Expository Notes Verse by Verse](#)).

PERSISTENT POSSESSORS OF A "SEDIMENT" OF SIN!

Sin (the principle) still lives in these "**dead**" and dying bodies.

Spurgeon put it this way "There is no doctrine more true to experience than this, that corruption remains even in the hearts of the regenerate, and that when we would do good, evil is present with us... We are often like a glass of water which has been standing still for hours and looks very clear and bright. But **there is a sediment**, and a little stir soon discovers it and clouds the crystal. **That sediment is the old nature.**"

One day soon we will receive our glorified body and then sin's presence and pleasure will be forever totally eradicated. Lord haste the day! No more "sediment!" Hallelujah!

Moule writes "But **if Christ is**, thus by the Spirit, in you, dwelling by faith in the hearts which the Spirit has, "strengthened" to receive Christ (Ephesians 3:16, 17) — true, the **body is dead, because of sin**, the primeval sentence (Ge 2:17 "you shall surely die") still holds its way "there"; the body is deathful still, it is the body of the Fall; but the Spirit is life (see discussion below whether Paul means Spirit of God or man's spirit), He is in that body, **your secret of power and peace eternal**, because of righteousness, because of the merit of your Lord, in which you are accepted (Eph 1:6KJV), and which has won for you **this wonderful Spirit-life**. ([The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans](#)) (Bolding added)

YET THE SPIRIT /S ALIVE BECAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS: to de pneuma zoe dia dikaioner

- John 4:14; 6:54; 11:25,26; 14:19; 1Corinthians 15:45; 2Corinthians 5:6, 7, 8; Philippians 1:23; Colossians 3:3,4; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 7:14, 15, 16, 17) (Ro 5:21; 2Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9

A GLORIOUS CONTRAST: DEAD - ALIVE

Yet - a glorious **term of contrast**. (See more explanation on this strategic conjunction below).

Literally this reads "yet the Spirit **life**", which I like better than the Spirit is alive (the ESV is more accurate here). We see a Pauline parallel in Col 3:4-note where NAS translates it "**Christ Who is our life**" but which more literally reads "**Christ... our life**." One is also reminded of Jesus' words in John 6:63 "It is the Spirit Who gives life; the flesh profits (ABSOLUTELY) nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." **If the words Jesus spoke were (are) spirit and life, it behooves us as often as possible to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col 3:16-note), does it not?**

Yet (but NET Note = that "Greek emphasizes the **contrast** between these two clauses more than can be easily expressed in English.") (1161) (**de**) emphasizes the **contrast** between these preceding statement (body dead because of sin) and this statement (spirit is alive because of righteousness). **Pause and praise God for His glorious contrasts in Scripture** (cp **Ponder/Meditate on a few uses of "But God"** - Ge 8:1, 17:19, 48:21, 50:20, Ps 49:14, 73:26, Mk 2:7, Acts 13:30, Ro 5:8, 1Cor 1:27, 1Cor 3:6-7, 1Cor 12:24, 2Cor 7:6, Gal 3:18, Eph 2:4-note)! Remember to develop the discipline of pausing to ponder and practice interrogating, even when the contrast is easily seen. By slowing down, you are giving the Spirit more time to guide you into all the truth! You are in effect learning how to meditate on the Scripture, not just read it! And oh the glorious benefits God promises to those who meditate on the Scriptures! (Joshua 1:8-note, Ps 1:2-3-note). The

Some favor that "**the spirit**" refers to the person's spirit while others favor a reference to the Holy Spirit (observe this difference of opinion in the translations above, where some capitalize **Spirit** and some do not). Although I tend to favor the human spirit, there is no question that a sense in which the Holy Spirit is also correct because the human **spirit**, having been quickened at regeneration, is possessed of the inalienable principle of life, but only by virtue of the power of the **Holy Spirit** of God. That said, here are a few conservative commentators who argue for spirit with a small "s".

Wuest feels that **spirit** in this context "refers, not to the Holy Spirit which is not a logical contrast to the human**body**, but to the human spirit, that part of man which gives him God-consciousness and enables him when that spirit is made alive by the Holy Spirit, to worship God. The believer's human body is dead in the sense that it has death in it because of sin, Adam's sin which brought both spiritual and physical death to each member of the race (**Ed**: Ro 5:12-note, Ro 5:17-note). The believer's spirit is alive (**zoe**) in that the Holy Spirit energizes it with divine life which is righteous in its quality. Eternal life is not only unending in its nature, but also ethical and spiritual in its content. ([Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

S Lewis Johnson notes that "The word **spirit** in the clause, **but the spirit is life because of righteousness**, is probably a reference to the human spirit and not the Holy Spirit, although that is the interpretation of the translators of the Authorized Version (KJV), for they capitalize the word. The contrast with **body** makes the reference to the human spirit likely, but the human spirit as regenerate. It is given new life in regeneration (cf. John 6:50, 51; 11:26). ([Romans 8:5-17](#))

Charles Hodge also agrees writing that "By **spirit** here Paul does not mean the Holy Spirit, but the human spirit, since it is contrasted with body in the former clause. The body is dead, but the spirit is alive. It should not therefore be printed with a capital S, as in the KJV. The sense in which the spirit is life is antithetical to that in which the body is dead. As the body is infected with a principle of decay which renders its dissolution inevitable, so the soul in which the Holy Spirit dwells has a principle of life which secures its immortal and blessed existence. ([Romans Commentary online](#))

Matthew Henry writes that "the **spirit** (Henry interprets "spirit" not as Holy Spirit but our spirit which is of course made alive by the Holy Spirit), the precious soul, that is life; it is now spiritually alive, nay, it is life. Grace in the soul is its new nature; the life of the saint lies in the soul, while the life of the sinner goes no further than the body. When the body dies, and returns to the dust, the spirit if life; not only living and immortal, but swallowed up of life. Death to the saints is but the freeing of the heaven-born spirit from the clog and load of this body, that it may be fit to partake of eternal life. (Ibid)

The Spirit is alive - NET = "life giving"

Alive ([2222](#)) (**zoe**) is literally the noun "**life**" which stands in radical opposition to **death** in the previous clause. It is the state of one who is possessed of vitality or is animate in the spiritual realm. And so this verse reads more literally "the spirit is **life**".

Godet writes that "The **life of God** does not become merely an attribute of the spirit in man through the Holy Spirit; it becomes his nature." ([Romans Commentary Online](#))

Denny writes that **life** refers to "God-begotten, God-sustained life," if Christ is in you.

Paul explains to the Ephesians that God "even when we were dead in our transgressions, **made us alive** together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:5-6)

Because of righteousness - Is this righteousness imputed to my account, Christ's perfect righteousness (1Cor 1:30, 2Cor 5:21, Php 3:8-9, etc) or is it the righteousness we now work out, energized by the Spirit of God? In the context of Romans 8:10, the

righteousness that Paul describes speaks primarily of **imputed righteousness** or that righteousness which was credited to our "spiritual bank account" when we believed on and received Christ's perfect sinless righteousness (1Co 1:30, 2Co 5:21). This one time historical past tense event equates with so called **past tense salvation** or **justification** (God's declaration of believing sinners as now positionally righteous in Christ). See related discussion on the **Three Tenses of Salvation**.

John Piper interprets this **righteousness** as Christ's righteousness (justification), not our "lived out" righteousness (that would describe sanctification). See his interesting teaching video on Romans 8 given as part of a series of teaching lectures at the 2014 National Conference = [Groaning Creation, Groaning Saints, Groaning Spirit - Desiring God](#).

Righteousness (1343) (**dikaiousune** [word study] from **dikaiois** [word study] = being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified being or in accordance with what God requires) is the quality of being upright. In its simplest sense **dikaiousune** conveys the idea of conformity to a standard or norm. In this sense **righteousness** is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by God.

Righteousness in Biblical terms describes the righteousness acceptable to God which means it is in keeping with what God is in His holy character. Another descriptive definition of God's righteousness is all that God is, all that God commands, all that God demands, all that God approves, and all that God provides in Christ Jesus (1Cor 1:30) Because Christ is in us and He is perfect **righteousness**, we have been declared right with God -- that is, because of the divinely-imparted **righteousness** by which every believer is justified (Ro 3:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26-see **note** Ro 3:21-23; 3:24-26). The eternal, spiritual life of God is implanted by the indwelling Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ here and now, even though a believer's body is mortal.

Dikaiousune is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through faith in Christ (**Click** to read Pastor Ray Pritchard's interesting analysis of **righteousness** in the Gospel of Matthew).

John Witmer writes that "Because of God's imputed righteousness, a believer is alive spiritually. The eternal, spiritual life of God is implanted by the indwelling Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ here and now, even though a believer's body is mortal. ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor](#))

Some like **S Lewis Johnson** feel that in Romans 8:10 **dikaiousune** refers to "both **imputed** and **imparted** (righteousness), for in the context the apostle has had in mind both **justification** and **sanctification** and their indissoluble connection. ([Romans 8:5-17](#))

John MacArthur explains that "if God's Spirit indwells us, our own **spirit** is alive because of **righteousness**, that is, because of the **divinely-imparted righteousness** by which every believer is justified (Ro 3:21-26). In light of that perfect righteousness, all human attempts at being righteous are but rubbish (Phil. 3:8) ([MacArthur, J: Romans 1-8. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Leon Morris - "The believer is credited with **the righteousness of God**; it is this that brings him into the sphere of salvation (justification). But then he is required to live a life that is in conformity with this salvation (sanctification); he cannot be indifferent to the importance of righteousness in his daily living (**Ed**: Unfortunately and sadly many true saints are indifferent or at least not do not highly value this righteousness because they are ignorant of this righteousness as their present possession, which should prompt Spirit energized, love motivated obedience to perform righteous acts -- not to gain salvation, but because of salvation!). At this point it may well be that Paul has in mind neither the process that brings salvation, nor the life that follows, but both. ([Morris, L. The Epistle to the Romans. W. B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press](#))

Many Christians miss out on living their Christian lives in the constant fullness of the Spirit, because they are not obeying the command to continually **be filled with the Spirit** (Eph 5:18-note). And as a result they fail to experience what Jesus spoke about when He described **rivers of living water** flowing from the believer, speaking metaphorically of the Holy Spirit's effect (Jn 7:37, 38, 39). **Let us all pray for and passionately pursue to be continually filled that we might continually experience this glorious outflow of rivers of living water. Amen!**