



CONTEXT AND CLARIFICATION

“No condemnation” can be defined in courtroom language. To have “no condemnation” declared means to be found innocent of the accusation, to have no sentence inflicted and no guilty verdict found. By the grace of God, believers in Jesus Christ will not face the condemnation of God. “We have passed from death to life” (1 John 3:14). The Bible teaches that every human being will be brought before the judgment throne of God for an ultimate and decisive judgment (2 Cor. 5:10), and Christ Himself will be the judge (John 5:27). We are all naturally under the condemnation of God: “Whoever does not believe stands condemned already” (John 3:18b). But Christians will not be found guilty on Judgment Day (John 3:18a; Matt. 25:33–34).

However, the “no condemnation” involves more than acquittal on Judgment Day. In Rom. 8:1 the apostle Paul speaks in the present tense, as evidenced by the word *now*. Also, notice the word *therefore*, which points the reader to the previous passage of Rom. 7:21–25. In Romans 7 Paul describes his struggle against the sinful nature—a struggle that every believer experiences. Paul writes, “Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me” (Rom. 7:21) and, “What a wretched man I am!” (Rom. 7:24). Paul is expressing his hatred for the sinful nature which continues to war against his new nature in Christ—Paul hates the sin he commits, but he is also thankful because he has been set free from *slavery to sin*. He now has the ability to do what is good because Christ has delivered him (Rom. 7:25). Paul takes this a step further in Romans 8 when he teaches believers are not only free from bondage to sin, they are free from the inner emotions and thoughts that tend to bring feelings of condemnation to the Christian when he does commit sin (Rom. 8:2). Christians are free from the “law of sin and death,” which means, although they will commit sin, the Law no longer has the power to condemn them. We are not under the Law’s condemnation because Jesus fulfilled (“filled-up, completed”) the expectations of the Law perfectly, and believers are “in Christ” (Rom. 8:3). Because believers are in Christ, they have the joy of being counted as righteous, simply because Christ is righteous (Philippians 3:9). Paul also points out that genuine Christians, although they struggle, will not live “according to the flesh”; that is, they will not persist in a constant state of sinful living (Rom. 8:5).

Paul encourages us that we need not fear condemnation because we can come to God as our loving, forgiving Father (Rom. 8:15–16). Christians who live in shame and guilt over past failures are needlessly condemning themselves when they ought to be “forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead” (Philippians 3:13). Fear can be paralyzing, “but perfect love drives out fear” (1 John 4:18). As Christians, we must understand that our justification is found in Christ alone—in His finished work on the cross—not in what we do or don’t do (Rom. 3:28). Believers can find solace in the assurance that we have been adopted into God’s own family and have been made heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Nothing can separate us “from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:39). —www.gotquestions.org



LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

Optional Ice Breaker: What was one highlight from your Easter this year?

- 1) Why is the phrase, “I’ve been a Christian my whole life,” not true? Why is it so dangerous for someone to believe?
- 2) What is the Gospel? When is the last time you shared the Gospel with someone?
- 3) [RESEARCH BEFORE LIFE GROUP] What are historical evidences for Jesus Christ’s Resurrection?
- 4) What would be the spiritual repercussions if Jesus had died for our sins and stayed dead?
- 5) What traditions have gotten in the way of the true meaning of Easter in your life/home?
- 6) South Peoria’s Mission Statement is that we are real people that live to lead others to find life in Christ. How have you experienced life in Christ? How can you lead others to find life in Christ in this season of your life?



FURTHER STUDY

Acts 13:39 (NIV)

³⁹Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.

Luke 24:2-3 (NIV)

²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

1 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

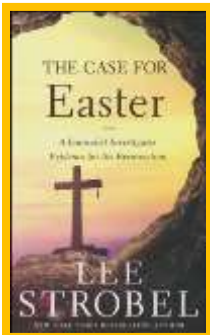
³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

John 11: 25-26 (NIV)

²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”



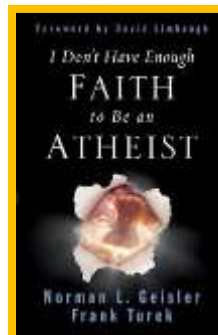
Useful Books For Further Study



THE CASE FOR EASTER

by Lee Strobel

A journey to the truth about the most remarkable event in history: The resurrection of Jesus Christ and the proof behind it.



I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH FAITH TO BE AN ATHEIST

by Norman Geisler & Frank Turek

A resource for Christians seeking to articulate a more sophisticated defense of their faith.



“The Christian’s conflict with sin does not end until he goes to be with the Lord. Nevertheless, there is still no condemnation—because the penalty for all the failures of his life has been paid in Christ and applied by grace. It is also important to realize that deliverance from divine condemnation does not mean deliverance from divine discipline ‘For those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines and He scourges every son whom He receives,’ (Heb. 12:6). Nor does deliverance from God’s condemnation mean escape from our accountability to Him: ‘Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap’ (Gal. 6:7).” —**John MacArthur**



THEOLOGY SHOULD LEAD TO DOXOLOGY

Use these songs in your own personal quiet time as you reflect on Romans 8:1-4.

- He Lives [David Phelps]
- Then Came The Morning [Guy Penrod]
- O Praise The Name (Anastasis) [Hillsong Worship]
- Resurrecting [Elevation Worship]
- Risen [Evan Wickham]

