TEACHER GUIDE | LESSON 16

Romans Part 2

From Condemnation to Life in the Spirit

BIG IDEA United with Christ and indwelt by the Spirit, believers have new life, assurance, and hope despite sin and suffering.

Purpose and outcome

By the end of the lesson, the class should be able to:

- trace Paul's movement from peace with God to assurance in God's inseparable love;
- explain Adam and Christ as the heads of two humanities;
- describe union with Christ as a new identity that produces a new way of life; and
- show how the Spirit gives freedom, adoption, hope, and help in suffering.

Lesson at a glance

TIME	MOVEMENT
0:00-5:00	Opening question and prayer
5:00-10:00	Peace with God and hope - 5:1-11
10:00-18:00	A new representative: Adam and Christ - 5:12-21
18:00-28:00	A new identity: united with Christ - 6:1-14
28:00-34:00	Romans 7 as the bridge, not the destination
34:00-43:00	A new life: the Spirit, adoption, hope, assurance - 8:1-39
43:00-48:00	Choose two discussion questions
48:00-50:00	Synthesis, homework, and prayer

Before class

Write on the board: When grace forgives a sinner, what actually changes?

Controlling question: What does God give those who are united to Christ?

Mark Romans 5:1-5; 6:1-14; 7:24-8:4; 8:14-17; and 8:31-39. Read these selections aloud and summarize the intervening argument.

PROTECT THE SPINE Required: in Christ believers have a new representative, a new identity, and life in the Spirit. Summarize: most of 6:15-7:23 and 8:18-30. If time: the three groanings in Romans 8. Safely omit: a full baptism debate, a verdict on every interpretation of Romans 7, and a detailed predestination discussion.

The whole lesson in one claim

The gospel does not merely repair Adam's old humanity. God joins believers to Christ, gives them the Spirit, and carries them through suffering toward resurrection glory.

CENTRAL LINE In Christ: a new standing. With Christ: a new identity. By the Spirit: a new life and a sure hope.

1. CORE Peace with God and a new representative

Romans 5:1-11 begins with the result of justification: believers have peace with God. This is first an objective reconciliation, not simply a peaceful feeling. Access to grace and hope in God's glory allow suffering to be faced without calling suffering good. The Spirit pours God's love into believers' hearts, and the cross proves that love outside their changing emotions.

IN ADAM	IN CHRIST
One trespass opens the reign of sin and death	One righteous act opens justification and life
Disobedience makes the many sinners	Obedience makes the many righteous
Condemnation and death reign	Grace and righteousness reign toward eternal life

Paul treats Adam and Christ as representative heads of two humanities. We do not begin as isolated moral agents; we belong to Adam's condemned and dying humanity until grace places us in Christ. The repeated 'one man' language makes Christ's obedience, not our performance, the ground of life.

ABOUT THE WORD ALL IN 5:18 Paul's parallel is universal in scope but not a claim that every person is automatically saved. Verse 17 identifies those who reign in life as those who receive God's abundant grace and gift of righteousness. The two 'alls' describe the people represented by Adam and by Christ.

2. CORE United with Christ

The question in 6:1 is predictable: if grace increases where sin increases, why not continue in sin? Paul's answer is not merely 'try harder.' Believers have died to sin because they have been joined to Christ's death and resurrection. Grace does not only change the verdict; it changes the believer's realm, master, and identity.

PAUL'S INDICATIVE	PAUL'S IMPERATIVE
You were baptized into Christ's death	Count yourselves dead to sin and alive to God
Your old self was crucified with Christ	Do not let sin reign in your mortal body
You have been brought from death to life	Offer yourselves and every part of yourself to God

Baptism is the public, covenantal sign that names this participation in Christ; Paul's emphasis here is union, not the mode or timing of baptism. 'Not under law but under grace' does not mean morally unaccountable. Grace is a new ruling power: believers obey from the heart because they now belong to God.

Romans 7 The bridge, not the destination

Romans 7 defends the goodness of God's law while exposing its inability to rescue people ruled by sin. Sin exploits the commandment; the law diagnoses and even intensifies the crisis, but it cannot create the obedience it commands.

LEADING READING OF THE I	WHAT IT SEES
Paul before conversion / under the law	His former life is retold from a Christian perspective.
Paul as a believer still fighting sin	The present tense and delight in God's law resemble Christian conflict.
A representative voice: Adam, Israel, or humanity	Paul dramatizes life confronted by command yet captive to sin.

Teaching posture: acknowledge the debate, then teach the function. Whichever view one takes, Romans 7 is not Paul's final word about Christian life. The cry 'Who will rescue me?' leads through Jesus Christ to 'no condemnation' and the Spirit's liberating work in Romans 8.

3. CORE Life in the Spirit

Romans 8 gathers the argument into four gifts. The Spirit applies what Christ has accomplished, so the justified are not left to produce new life by unaided determination.

GIFT	WHAT ROMANS 8 SAYS
Freedom	No condemnation remains; the Spirit of life frees believers from sin and death (8:1-4).
Adoption	The Spirit leads God's children and enables the cry 'Abba, Father' (8:12-17).
Hope in suffering	Creation, believers, and the Spirit groan as God moves history toward bodily redemption (8:18-27).
Assurance	God works through every circumstance to conform his people to Christ; nothing can separate them from his love (8:28-39).

'No condemnation' is a verdict before it is a feeling. Adoption does not remove suffering; it locates suffering inside a secure relationship with the Father. 'All things work together for good' does not call every event good or promise comfort. Verse 29 defines the good as conformity to Christ, and verses 35-39 assume real trouble, persecution, danger, and death.

Assurance without presumption

Paul grounds assurance in the Father's purpose, the Son's death, resurrection, and intercession, and the Spirit's indwelling witness. Believers may struggle, groan, and pray weakly, but the triune God does not abandon his work. Romans 8:29-30 can invite questions about election. Answer briefly: Paul uses God's purpose here to comfort suffering believers, not to invite speculation about people outside Christ. Lesson 17 will address election and Israel directly in Romans 9-11.

Discussion choose two

1. How is fighting sin from a secure identity in Christ different from fighting sin to earn God's acceptance?
2. What does Romans 8 allow Christians to say—and not say—when someone is suffering?
3. When feelings of assurance fluctuate, what objective grounds for confidence does Paul give?
4. Which gift in Romans 8—freedom, adoption, hope, or assurance—does the church most need to recover?

Likely rabbit trails

Infant versus believer's baptism; whether Christians can become sinless; choosing one final identity for the 'I' in Romans 7; the meaning of 'sons' and gendered inheritance language; Calvinism versus Arminianism; and using 8:28 as a slogan. Give a short answer, name the limits of today's passage, and return to Paul's movement from Adam, to Christ, to the Spirit.

Leader preparation

Sources used: Donny Ray Mathis, 'Romans,' The Gospel Coalition Bible Commentary, sections on Romans 5-8; BibleProject, Guide to Romans, section 'Romans 5-8: The Gospel Creates a New Humanity'; The Gospel Coalition, 'Union with Christ' and 'Assurance.' ECO connections: II.A, Trinity; III.A, God's grace in Christ; III.E, Living in obedience to the Word of God. Before Lesson 17: Read Romans 9-11. Mark every reference to Israel, Gentiles, election or calling, mercy, hardening, faith, and 'all Israel.'