

Fresh Start

By Jerry Bader

The Blessings of a Repetitive God

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As a new Christ-follower, my thirst for God's Word is great. The more I read, the closer I feel to God. One of the most important learning tools shared with me is that when God says anything twice or more in the Bible, you can bet He considers it important for you to absorb. I read a commentary on prayer recently where the author argued that God employs the same technique when responding to our requests. I whole heartedly agree.

Recently, I had been struggling with regret over some of my behavior from before I became a Christ follower. I realized those feelings were the enemy attempting to get me to wallow in regret and hopelessness. I spoke with a friend about it and felt I had conquered the feelings. Then they returned. I prayed to God for help. That's when he blessed me with Romans 8, repeatedly.

Our men's group at Oakbrook has been studying Romans and we began to tackle chapter 8 at a moment when I very much needed its message: *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."* Romans 8:1-2

As powerful as that message was, God made sure I didn't miss it. For the next three days He reminded me in several of the devotionals I read of what our group covered in Romans 8:1-4.

- Day 1: Max Lucado calendar: "When God Whispers Your Name." *"Now we do not live following our sinful selves, but we live following the Spirit."* Romans 8:4 "Think about this. Spiritual life comes from the Spirit! Your parents may have given you genes, but God gives you grace. Your parents may be responsible for your body, but God has taken charge of your soul. You may get your looks from your mother, but you get eternity from your Father, your heavenly Father. And God is willing to give you what your family did not."
- Day 2: Sarah Young, "Jesus Calling," citing Romans 8:1-2: *"There is no condemnation for those who are in me. The law of the Spirit of Life has set you free from the radical law of sin and death."* She goes on to point out that not many Christians know how to live in this radical freedom.
- Day 3: "In Touch" devotional, also citing Romans 8:1: "Though we won't face condemnation, we will one day stand before our Lord so He can assess our work and determine our heavenly rewards."

Our men's group discussion on the first four verses of Romans 8 had already been a gift from God in dealing with the feelings I was experiencing. But He multiplied that gift by reinforcing the message for the next three days. He was reminding me that the old me is gone and I am not condemned for my past behavior; I should leave it behind.

Christ followers, new and old alike, are blessed when we remember that God often answers prayers by presenting us with the perfect verse at the perfect time. And sometimes He takes extra steps to make sure we don't miss what He is telling us. The more time we spend in God's Word, the more times God can bless us in this way. He's willing to repeat Himself, both in his Word and in answers to our prayers, to make sure we get the point, and that's just another reason to give Him thanks and praise.