

November 21

Romans 8:1-2 (NIV) ¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

After giving my life to Jesus, I began keeping a daily journal. The entries consisted of comments, concerns, prayers, and discussions with Jesus. I have now kept that journal for close to 40 years. When I started, I made a commitment to write in it every day because it was my way of speaking with Jesus. There were mornings when time was short, and I did not write. So, the next morning I would go back and fill in those missed days. When I would miss two or three days, I struggled to remember what had happened on those days, but I wrote anyway. Without realizing it, my time with the Lord had become a legalistic endeavor instead of a personal interaction with Jesus. I felt good if I could fill in every day and felt guilty if I missed. Over time, the joy of writing disappeared.

My early days writing in my journal were an example of the law of sin and death. It was a legalistic approach to my relationship with Jesus. If I wrote every day, Jesus must be happy with me. Therefore, by filling in those lost days, I was “earning” His approval. However, as time progressed, there were days I simply could not make up. Those empty days loomed large in my life and killed the joy of spending time with the Lord. Fortunately, the Holy Spirit set me free. My writing in my journal had become an obligation instead of an expression of my love for Jesus. Jesus was not condemning; I was doing that myself because I could not fulfill the “law” of writing every day. When He set me free from that, writing in my journal once again became an intimate time with Jesus. Now, if I miss a day, I miss a day. We are not to live our lives with Jesus as if there were a giant check list that must be completed. Instead, we engage the Holy Spirit Who sets us free from that thinking. We cannot earn Jesus’ love; we cannot lose it. We are to serve Him because of that love and because we want to do so.