

## Forgiven and Set Free

### Scripture Reading — John 8:2-11

*Jesus . . . asked her, “. . . Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.” — John 8:10-11*

God’s law in the Old Testament called for various kinds of punishment for various sins, or acts of disobedience to God. Some of those sins were horrible—for example, burning children on the altars of pagan gods. Other sins, such as adultery, were tempting for many men and women. But God did not tolerate sin of any kind.

Patrick Moynihan, a U.S. senator from New York, once said that society is in the process of “defining deviancy down,” declaring certain behaviors permissible that once were not.

But that’s not what Jesus taught. By forgiving the adulterous woman, he was not saying that adultery was permissible. She and the man with whom she committed adultery both deserved punishment, according to the law. But Jesus saw her repentance, and with divine -authority he forgave her and said, “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

It’s a dilemma: we can’t live with the law, and we can’t live without it. We don’t solve anything by making murder legal, or saying adultery is OK. We don’t protect human relationships by “defining deviancy down.” But Jesus rescued the woman from the law’s demand, setting her free from self-destructive and other-destructive behavior, to build strong, healthy relationships. He gave her hope and a future, where before there had been none.

### Prayer

*Thank you, Jesus, that by bearing our punishment you made a way for us to be forgiven. Lead us to live for you. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Obedience](#), [Christianity](#), [Sin](#), [Discipleship](#), [Repentance](#)

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