

Romans

PART 13

SONS LED BY
THE SPIRIT

Work Of The Spirit In Romans 8:1-17

In the first 17 verses of Romans 8 we see the powerful, transformative work of the holy spirit within us, leading us in God's way and assuring us of what is to come. It is a new authority, transforming our heart/mind, our lifestyle, and ultimately our bodies in resurrection glory.

VERSES 1-4	VERSES 5-8	VERSES 1-4	VERSES 1-4
LAW OF THE SPIRIT	MIND OF THE SPIRIT	SPIRIT IN-DWELLING	THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

There are many phrases used to describe the holy spirit (the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, Christ in you, the spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead, the spirit of adoption, etc.) This helps us understand the multifaceted nature of it.

Chapter Highlights

VS 9-10

Just like at the beginning of Romans 2, when Paul addresses the audience directly in the second person to tell us that we are without excuse for our sin, these verses point directly at us to say that we are NO LONGER in the flesh, but in the spirit. The great mark of the believer in Jesus is that the spirit of God dwells in them (See John 14:17.) And although it is not yet a physical transformation, by faith we are regenerated, or born again. This spirit is the presence of Christ in us (Colossians 1:27), testifying that we are in his fold and in his care as his redeemed people. Just as Christ was marked by resurrection life as the Son of God (Romans 1:4), so we too were raised with him to life as sons of God.

Our bodies are dead, meaning they are subject to mortality and destined for corruption, but dwelling in them is something alive and incorruptible. This is a new kind of life beyond just the physical, and someday it will also restore our physical bodies. As Paul discussed in chapters 4 and 5, the body died with Adam because of sin, but because of Jesus' righteousness the spirit is alive in me. **"Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life."**

VS 11

Our ultimate destination is not mortality. By the spirit, the same energizing power of God that raised Jesus from the dead will also make our bodies alive in new resurrection transformation. Greco-Roman culture taught that the body is less than the soul; that through death you enter a higher state of existence when the immortal soul leaves the body behind. But in Christianity, the WHOLE person (body, soul, and mind) is transformed. This was foolishness to the world, as some mocked the gospel at the mention of resurrection (Acts 17:32.) God's eternal intention *is* for us to have bodies, and the perfect example of the intended form of humans is seen in the person of Jesus, the resurrected Messiah. **So what are you doing with your body now?** Use it for God's glorious purposes while we await resurrection transformation. Though our bodies are corruptible, we don't have to live in bondage to the fear of death, because the spirit overcomes sin and death and will lead us into resurrection perfection.

and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I THESSALONIANS 5:23B

VS 12-13

Therefore, in light of the fact that our whole selves will be quickened by the spirit, we are indebted to live according to that new life and not according to the flesh. We *are* free from the control of the body/mind that would serve self. We don't owe the flesh anything, but we are obligated with our purchased lives to live by the spirit. **The heart of the gospel isn't "once you believe on Jesus you don't have to do anything,"** but rather that the spirit would lead us to live for him. Jesus says, "pick up your cross and follow me." And though God won't force us to, it isn't legalistic for us to recognize that we are to be living sacrifices as a reasonable response to our salvation (Romans 12:1-2.) It would be a shallow Christian experience to live just as you were before spiritual transformation.

Verse 13 puts it in terms of a death vs life contrast. What it really means to be alive is to know and serve God. We are to put to death the deeds of the body. Though our bodies are not evil, they can be used for worldliness and sinful passions (Ephesians 2:3.) Therefore, we should use our faculties for God's glory, subjecting our lives to the leading of the spirit. The world will tell you that living for sin and self is living an authentic life; that following the passions of your belly is good for you. But when we put away those old things (or, figuratively, put them to death) we get to experience what God considers real, authentic life with Him.

VS 14-17

As we are led by the hand by the spirit into God's truth, we get to experience what it's like to be sons of God. It can lead us in our thinking, actions, desires, abilities, affections, and bodies, if only we would follow it's leading. As it prompts us in the inner man to choose God's way with self control and love for Him, we can say yes. As He works in us to will and do of His good pleasure, we can choose to follow the spirit's lead, just as we must choose to eat when we feel hungry.

The basis for doing this is a new and powerful relationship with God. Verses 14-17 all mention our sonship. From the holy spirit comes an intrinsic knowledge of God as our Father, and we can feel security in that. The spirit replaces fear with freedom. Instead of being in bondage to sin and death, we have the spirit of "adoption," which means to be placed as a son. To the Romans, this would be meaningful because families often adopted people, even slaves, to be a child in the family with the same inheritance and rights as natural born sons. These adopted people were given a new name, family, and purpose. In a similar way, we've been placed in God's family, crying out "Abba, Father [Patēr]." This phrase uses words that mean Father in both Aramaic (which Jews spoke) and Greek (which Gentiles spoke.) This is interesting in light of the message of Romans, which teaches that both Jews and Gentiles can call God their Father. The word "Abba" is also the word Jesus used to address God. However, other Jews would have considered this word much too intimate to use of God. Yet by holy spirit, we are brought toward God with bold access to him like a child toward their father; like Jesus toward God. This new spiritual life powerfully draws us toward God as our Father in relationship, fellowship, and communion with Him.

Conclusion

The spirit testifies to us that we are God's children; we cannot be separated from Him. We have an inheritance with God that cannot be taken away: we have God Himself and Christ our Lord. This is the whole point of eternal life (John 17:3).

Let us ask God to open our hearts to the promptings of the holy spirit, following the leading of the spirit so that we might put to death the sinful deeds of the flesh. Let us pray, "Help me by your holy spirit to desire you, even when I'm not feeling it." Let us enjoy the miracle of spiritual transformation that enables us to live according to our true and eternal purpose, someday culminating in the resurrection of our bodies.

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