

Called to Life in the Spirit

Romans 8:1-14

SS Lesson for 05/12/2019

Devotional Scripture: Gal 5:16-26

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: Rom 8:1

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

THE FREEDOM OF THE SPIRIT (ROM 8:1-7)

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No condemnation because of hearing God's word and believing it (John 5:24)

No condemnation because of being justified through faith (Rom 5:1)

No condemnation because of being God's chosen (Rom 8:33-34)

No condemnation because of the blood of Jesus (Eph 2:13-15)

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Freedom from the law because of grace (Rom 5:20-21)

Freedom from the law because of Jesus' proclamation of freedom (Luke 4:18)

Freedom from the law because of the ransom of Jesus (Heb 9:15)

Freedom from the law because of the righteousness of God (Rom 3:21-24)

Freedom from the law because of faith in Jesus (Gal 2:16)

Freedom from the law because the law leads to Jesus (Gal 3:24-25)

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Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

For the last couple of decades, researchers have detected an increase in spiritual interest among people, but little or no increase in church affiliation or attendance. Some identify themselves as “spiritual but not religious” (SBNR). This usually means they have personal beliefs and practices that could be understood as “spiritual,” but have no desire to participate with what they see as “institutional religion.” Some SBNR folks desire their own religious world apart from a church. This desire is not necessarily Christian in orientation, however. It often borrows spiritual practices from Eastern religions, Native American traditional religions, or ancient pagan sources. The good news: a spiritual thirst exists out there. The bad news: the church is not being seen as the source for quenching that thirst. The insights of the apostle Paul are decisive in overturning this outlook—today’s lesson.

The baseline for last week’s lesson from Romans 3 was that all men and women are sinners. Even so, God has made a way for us to be counted righteous in his eyes. In the texts that intervene between that lesson and this week’s, Paul went on to examine the life of the great ancestor of the Jews: Abraham. The key verse in that regard is that “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Romans 4:3, quoting Genesis 15:6; compare Romans 4:22). Abraham’s righteousness came through his faith. And that was before he was circumcised (Genesis 17:24) and long before the law was given through Moses. Paul thereby concludes that faith (as opposed to works) is the God-established pathway to right standing with him. This pathway predates both circumcision and the law. Abraham was essentially a Gentile when God reckoned him as righteous, since Israel did not exist at the time. This fact undercuts any argument that proposes keeping the Law of Moses is the way to earn God’s favor and attain right standing with him. In the chapters from Romans that follow, Paul discusses the three terrifying tyrants of humanity: sin, the law, and death. Sin had dominion over us, but we are freed by the grace of God (Romans 6:14). Sin held out the terror of death as its consequences (6:16, 23). The law enslaved us, but we have been freed to a new life (7:6). Paul ends Romans 7 with an expression of sincere gratitude for his deliverance from the bondage of sin and the law (Romans 7:25). As he does so, he prepares to address further the issue of the three tyrants.

Key Verse: Rom 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

8:1. The question naturally arises, Must a believer spend his whole life on earth frustrated by ongoing defeats to indwelling sin? (7:21-25) Is there no power provided to achieve victory? The answer to the first question is no and to the second, yes. In chapter 8, Paul described the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God who is the source of divine power for sanctification and the secret for spiritual victory in daily living. But first Paul reminded his readers that **therefore**—since deliverance is “through Jesus Christ our Lord” (7:25)—**no condemnation** (*katakrima*, “punishment”) awaits **those who are in Christ Jesus**, as a result of their faith and identification with Him (cf. 6:13; John 5:24). They are justified, declared righteous, and therefore stand in His grace (Rom. 5:2) and not under His wrath (1:18), and possess eternal life (5:17-18, 21). Christ is the sphere of safety for all who are identified with Him by faith. In the better Greek manuscripts, 8:1 ends here. The words “who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit” were probably transcribed from verse 4.

8:2. The word **because** (*gar*, “for”), connects **through** (lit., “in”) **Christ Jesus** in this verse with the identical phrase “in Christ Jesus” in verse 1. (In the Gr. word order of the sentence in v. 2, “in Christ Jesus” follows **the law of the Spirit of life**.) If 7:7-25 is Paul’s testimony of his struggle as a believer with indwelling sin, then “the Spirit of life” is the Holy Spirit of God, not the spirit of the new nature each believer receives. The Holy Spirit is the Member of the Godhead who regenerates every believing individual (Titus 3:5) and bestows new life (John 3:5-8), the resurrection life of Christ (Rom. 6:4, 8, 11). Romans 8:2 has the second mention of the Holy Spirit since 5:5, but He is mentioned 18 more times through 8:27. This law (“principle”; cf. 7:23) **set me free** (the Gr. aorist tense suggests a once-for-all act of freedom at salvation) **from the law of sin and death**. That principle is called the principle “of sin and death” because sin, as Paul said repeatedly, produces death (5:15, 17, 21; 6:16, 21, 23; 7:10-11, 13; 8:6, 10, 13). As the principle of *sin* it contrasts with the Spirit; as the principle that brings *death* it also contrasts with the Spirit who gives life. For the pronoun translated **me** some Greek manuscripts read “us” and others “you” (sing.). The difference is incidental; the truth stated applies to every believer.

8:3-4. Having stated the fact of freedom, Paul then explained how it is achieved. He declared again the impossibility of attaining freedom over sin through **the (Mosaic) Law**. It was **powerless** to free from sin. Not that the Law was weak in itself (as many translations suggest), for it was good (7:12). But because of **sinful human nature**, the Law could not deliver from sin. The words “sinful nature” translate *sarx* (lit., “flesh”), which can mean either human sinful corruption or human weakness (cf. 7:5, 18, 25; 8:4-5, 8-9, 12-13). **God** accomplished deliverance over sin, however, **by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man** (lit., “likeness of flesh of sin”). Jesus was sent not in sinful flesh but *in the likeness* of it. His human nature was protected and preserved from the indwelling principle of sin that has plagued all other human beings since Adam (cf. Luke 1:35). He was also sent, literally “concerning or for sin” (*peri harmartias*, not as the NIV has it, **to be a sin offering**). In other words He came to do something about sin. What He did was to condemn it; by His death on the cross, **He condemned sin** (*katekrinen*, “passed a judicial sentence on it”; cf. *katakrima*, “punishment,” Rom. 8:1) so that those in Christ are *not* condemned. The goal of this was so **that the righteous requirements of the Law**—a life of holiness (Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7)—could **be fully met** as believers **do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit**. The provision of deliverance from the power of sin is through the death of Jesus Christ, but experiencing it in one’s daily conduct comes through the controlling power of the Holy Spirit.

8:5-8. In these verses Paul answered the implied question, What does it mean to **live according to the sinful nature** and according to the Spirit? He explained that the former means having **their minds set on** (*phronousin*, pres. tense, “keep on being mindful of or aspiring for”) **what that nature desires**. An unbeliever cares only for his sinful interests and has no regard for God. The exact opposite is true of **those who live according to the Spirit**. They aspire for or **have their minds set on what the Spirit desires**. The sinful nature and the indwelling Spirit are in conflict (Gal. 5:17). But what difference does it make whether a person is mindful of the flesh or of the Spirit? Again Paul explained. **The mind** (*phronēma*, “mind-set, aspirations”; cf. Rom. 8:6b-7) **of sinful man** (*tēs sarkos*, “of the flesh”) **is death**, that is, it is equivalent to death, or it leads to death in all its forms (physical and spiritual). On the other hand **the mind** (*phronēma*, “mind-set, aspirations”) **controlled by the Spirit** (lit., “of the Spirit”) **is life** (eternal resurrection life) **and peace** immediately (5:1) and ultimately. In 8:7-8 Paul focused only on **the sinful mind** (*phronēma tēs sarkos*, “mind-set, aspirations of the sin nature”; cf. v. 6) to explain why he said (v. 6) that it ends up in death: (1) **It is hostile to God** (cf. 5:10); (2) **it does not submit** (pres. tense, “is not submitting”) **to God’s Law**; and (3) **it cannot do so**. The result is that **those controlled by the sinful nature cannot** (pres. tense, “are not able to”) **please God**. The unsaved lead lives that are totally void of spiritual life and ability. A believer, then, who gives in to his sin nature is acting like the unsaved (cf. 1 Cor. 3:3).

8:9-11. After speaking objectively about the two types of persons, Paul now addressed his readers directly. **You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit** (lit., “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit”), **if** (*eiper*, “if, as is the fact”; cf. v. 17) **the Spirit of God lives** (pres. tense, “is dwelling”) **in you** (cf. v. 11). The indwelling Holy Spirit gives a believer a totally different life (2 Cor. 5:17). The opposite, however, is also true: **If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ** (lit., “this one is not of Him”). Since only the Holy Spirit gives spiritual life, a person cannot be related to Christ apart from the Spirit. The interchange of the titles “Spirit of God” and “Spirit of Christ” argues for the deity of Jesus Christ. This statement also makes it clear that the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is the identifying mark of a believer in Jesus Christ (cf. 1 John 3:24; 4:13). Another significant fact is that Romans 8:10 equates the indwelling presence of Christ (**Christ is in you**) with the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (vv. 9, 11). This adds further support to the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. Verse 10, like verses 9b and 11, is a conditional statement in which in Greek the condition is

assumed to be true; **if** can be understood as “since” or “because.” As a result of Christ’s indwelling presence, **your body is dead** (or, “subject to death”; cf. 7:24) **because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.** Because of God’s imputed righteousness, a believer is alive spiritually. The eternal, spiritual life of God is implanted by the indwelling Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ here and now, even though a believer’s body is mortal. Then Paul wrote about an even better promise (8:11). Since God **raised Jesus from the dead** (lit., “out from dead ones”; cf. 4:24; 6:4), God promises believers in whom His **Spirit... is living** (cf. 8:9) that He **will also give life to their mortal bodies through His Spirit.** In other words, God promises spiritual resurrection life now (6:4, 8, 11) for each believer’s mortal body and physical resurrection in the future for that mortal body (6:5; 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:42, 53; 2 Cor. 4:14).

8:12-14. Paul drew a conclusion and made an application from his previous discussion. **Therefore... we have an obligation.** Each believer’s responsibility is a positive one—to live each day in the control and power of the Holy Spirit. But first Paul expressed this truth negatively—**not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.** Each Christian is to refuse to follow the inclinations and desires of his sin nature. He is to deny the efforts of that nature to impose its lifestyle on him (cf. Titus 2:12). The reason is that a **sinful** manner of life results in death. This does not suggest that a believer who sins will face eternal death in hell; instead, it means he will not enjoy his spiritual life. He will seem like an unsaved person (1 Cor. 3:1-4) and will be unable to enjoy the indwelling presence of the Spirit. **You will die** is literally, “you are about to die,” or “you are at the point of dying.” On the other hand, **if by the Spirit you put to death** (pres. tense, “are putting to death”) **the misdeeds of the body, you will live.** A few Greek manuscripts have “flesh” instead of “body.” But the body is the vehicle by which one’s sin-nature expresses itself (cf. Rom. 6:6, 13). Only by the Holy Spirit’s power can a believer put to death the sins of his former life (cf. Eph. 4:22-31; Col. 3:5-9). This is what Paul referred to when he said “count yourselves dead to sin” (Rom. 6:11). Paul then continued his explanation. **Those who are led** (pres. tense, “are being led”) **by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** Many Bible students see no difference between the word translated “sons” in 8:14 and the word translated “children” in verse 16. However, in verse 16 the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence attests *the believer’s birth relationship to God* (*tekna*, “children,” is lit., “born ones”). But in verse 14 the Holy Spirit’s control and direction attests *the believer’s privileges in God’s family* as a “son” (*huios* means a child mature enough to take on adult family privileges and responsibilities). A son in God’s family is led by God’s Spirit.

8:15-17. In contrast with the control of sin, which enslaves to the point of **fear**, believers have **received the Spirit of sonship.** The word translated “sonship” (*huiiothesias*) means “placing as a son” and is frequently translated “adoption” (as in, e.g., v. 23). Believers are adopted sons (Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5), not slaves (Gal. 4:7); so they need not be enslaved to sin or in fear. In New Testament times adopted sons enjoyed the same privileges as natural-born sons. So, instead of cowering in slave-like fear, Christians can approach God in an intimate way calling Him **Abba, Father.** “Abba” is a Greek and English transliteration of the Aramaic word for father (used elsewhere in the NT only in Mark 14:36; Gal. 4:6). Besides being adopted into God’s family as sons, believers also are His children (*tekna*, “born ones”) by the new birth (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1-2). And **the Holy Spirit**, who gives believers life, **testifies with** (not to) their **spirit(s)** of the fact of the new birth. In many families children inherit their parents’ estates; each child is an heir and the children together are co-heirs. Similarly, since Christians **are God’s children, they are His heirs** (cf. Gal. 4:7), **and they are co-heirs with Christ.** They are recipients of all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3) now, and in the future they will share with the Lord Jesus in all the riches of God’s kingdom (John 17:24; 1 Cor. 3:21-23). Sharing with Jesus Christ, however, involves more than anticipating the glories of heaven. For Jesus Christ it involved suffering and abuse and crucifixion; therefore being co-heirs with Christ requires that believers **share in His sufferings** (cf. John 15:20; Col. 1:24; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12). In fact believers do share in His sufferings; **if indeed** translates *eiper*, which means “if, as is the fact” (cf. Rom. 8:9). Then after the suffering they will **share in His glory** (2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Peter 4:13; 5:10).

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

(Note: the lesson major points and cross-references were copied from a previous lesson dated 04/03/2005)

The Freedom of the Spirit (Rom 8:1-7)

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Freedom from condemnation (1)

No condemnation because of believing in the Name of Jesus (John 3:18)

18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

No condemnation because of hearing God's word and believing it (John 5:24)

24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

No condemnation because of being justified through faith (Rom 5:1)

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

No condemnation because of being God's chosen (Rom 8:33-34)

33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

No condemnation because of the blood of Jesus (Eph 2:13-15)

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace

Freedom from the law (2-4)

Freedom from the law because of grace (Rom 5:20-21)

20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Freedom from the law because of Jesus' proclamation of freedom (Luke 4:18)

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed,

Freedom from the law because of the ransom of Jesus (Heb 9:15)

15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Freedom from the law because of the righteousness of God (Rom 3:21-24)

21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Freedom from the law because of faith in Jesus (Gal 2:16)

16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Freedom from the law because the law leads to Jesus (Gal 3:24-25)

24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Freedom from the flesh (5-7)

Freedom from the flesh through the discernment of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:14)

14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Freedom from the flesh through denying self (Mark 8:33-35)

33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." 34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

Freedom from the flesh through living by the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16-17)

16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Freedom from the flesh through putting off the old self (Eph 4:21-24)

22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Freedom from the flesh through setting my mind and heart on things above (Col 3:1-3)

3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

The Power of the Spirit (Rom 8:8-11)

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Power of being in Christ (8-9)

Being in Christ brings life (1 Cor 15:22)

22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

In Christ, God's promises are yes (2 Cor 1:20)

20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Being in Christ means being a new creation (2 Cor 5:17)

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Being in Christ means being heirs to the promises made to Abraham (Gal 3:26-29)

26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Being in Christ means being blessed in the heavenly realms (Eph 1:3)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Spiritual power (10)

Spiritual power through the Holy Spirit for eternal life (John 4:14)

14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Spiritual power that leads us into the likeness of Jesus (1 Cor 15:46-49)

46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

Spiritual power that leads to perfection (Heb 12:22-24)

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Spiritual power that comes from putting on the full armor of God (Eph 6:12-13)

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Spiritual power in the inner being (Eph 3:16-19)

16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Resurrection power (11)

Resurrection power for those who believe (Eph 1:19-20)

19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms

Resurrection power that leads to a new life (Rom 6:4)

4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Resurrection power that will be manifested by believers being raised (1 Cor 6:14)

14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

Resurrection power that presents the believer into God's presence (2 Cor 4:14)

14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.

Resurrection power that transforms our bodies into a glorious body (Phil 3:21)

21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

The Witness of the Spirit (Rom 8:12-14)

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors -- not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Witness of how we are living (12-13)

Witnesses how we live by convicting of things sowed (Rom 6:21)

21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!

Witnesses how we live by leading us to serve in a new way (Rom 7:6)

6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

Witnesses how we live by identifying the acts of the sinful nature (Gal 5:19-21)

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Witnesses how we live by convicting of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:6-11)

7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

Witness of being sons of God (14)

Witness of being sons of God through faith (Gal 3:26)

26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,

Witness of being sons of God by being sealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:21-22)

21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Witness of being sons of God through the Holy Spirit who calls us into sonship (Gal 4:5-7)

6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Witness of being sons of God through the testimony in the heart (1 John 5:10)

10 Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

The Spirit of Life and Liberty (8:1-11)

The first dimension of the work of the Holy Spirit is found in verses 1-11 where He is described as the Spirit of life and liberty:

For the Law of the **Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus has **set you free** from the Law of sin and of death (Romans 8:2).

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead **will also give life to your mortal bodies** through His Spirit who indwells you (Romans 8:11).

If I could summarize what Paul is saying in verses 1-11, it would go something like this: What the Lord Jesus Christ acquired by His death, burial and resurrection, the Holy Spirit applies through His indwelling ministry in the life of the Christian. What Christ has won for us positionally, the Holy Spirit works in us practically.

There is no condemnation to be dreaded by the Christian. Why? Because all of our sins, past, present, and future, have been dealt with on the cross of Calvary. Even the sins we commit as Christians are forgiven. But more than the fact that we have been delivered from the penalty of sin, we have also been delivered from its power. Since the Law was incapable of producing righteousness due to the weakness of our flesh, Christ redeemed us from bondage to the Law by His death. As Paul illustrated by the analogy of marriage in chapter 7, we have died to the Law in Christ. It no longer has dominion over us. The claims of the Law and of sin on the Christian have been fully met in the sacrificial death of Christ. This is the negative side. We have died to the Law and to sin's authority over us.

On the positive side, God has made provision for the Christian to fulfill the requirements of the Law through the Holy Spirit's power. "In order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:4). What could never be accomplished in the power of the flesh—the meeting of the righteous standards of the Law—can be achieved in the power of the Spirit.

The flesh cannot please God (verse 8) for several reasons.

(1) First of all, the flesh is hostile toward God. "Because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the Law of God, for it is not even able to do so" (Romans 8:7).

(2) The flesh is incapable of producing righteousness. That is surely the conclusion we must draw from chapter 7.

(3) The flesh can only produce death: "For the mind set on the flesh is death ..." (Romans 8:6).

The Christian now has an alternative, for God has placed His Spirit within every Christian, and this Spirit is the source of liberty and of life: "However you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (Romans 8:9). One common characteristic of all true Christians is the fact that they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We need not talk in these days of 'receiving the Holy Spirit' for we **have** received Him, if indeed we are true Christians. Paul says to the Christian, "If you are a true Christian, then the Holy Spirit indwells you."

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit Who indwells us is a life-giving spirit. He has power over death. The measure of the power of the Holy Spirit can be seen in the fact that He was the instrument through which the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead (v. 11). So far as our flesh is concerned, it is dead in its ability to produce the fruit of righteousness. But the Holy Spirit has power over death, so that He can give life to our mortal bodies. He can produce in us the righteousness God requires of His saints.

The Spirit of Adoption (8:12-17)

When we come to the subject of the 'adoption' of the Christian, we come at one and the same time to one of the most crucial, and yet one of the most neglected doctrines of the New Testament. J. I. Packer laments this tragedy when he writes:

It is a strange fact that the truth of adoption has been little regarded in Christian history. Apart from two last-century books, now scarcely known (R. S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God*, R. A. Webb, *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption*), there is no evangelical writing on it, nor has there been at any time since the Reformation any more than there was before.

Packer also reminds us that although the doctrine of justification is the primary and fundamental blessing for the Christian, it is not the highest blessing, the blessing of adoption. In justification, we are declared innocent of sin and righteous through the work of Christ. In adoption we are constituted sons of God. If justification makes us the servants of God, adoption makes us sons.

Let me illustrate it in this way. Suppose that I was an incorrigible criminal, standing guilty before a judge. It would be one thing for the judge to pronounce me innocent in the eyes of the law on the basis that my wrong doings had been paid for. But it would be something far greater for the judge to make me his own son and take me home to be a part of his family. The Holy Spirit is the source of our sanctification in that He is the Spirit of Adoption. This is the thrust of verses 12-17.

Paul informs us that we have absolutely no obligation to relapse into a walk according to the flesh; rather our obligation is to walk in the Spirit. Walking in the flesh produces death; walking in the Spirit, life (v. 13). Not only is the Christian characterized as one who has the Spirit dwelling within (v. 9), but in verse 14 the Christian is also one who is being led by the Spirit. As Warfield points out, this leading refers not so much to personal guidance in this context as it does to the process of sanctification. Every Christian is spirit-indwelt and Spirit-led. It is inconceivable for the Christian to continue to live willingly and persistently according to the flesh.

More than this, the Holy Spirit gives us the disposition of a son and not a slave: "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out 'Abba! Father!'" (Romans 8:15).

The New Testament concept of adoption is somewhat different from that prevalent today:

The term 'adoption' may smack somewhat of artificiality in our ears; but in the first century AD an adopted son was a son deliberately chosen by his adoptive father to perpetuate his name and inherit his estate; he was no whit inferior in status to a son born in the ordinary course of nature, and might well enjoy the father's affection more fully and reproduce the father's character more worthily.

The word 'abba,' is the intimate family term for father that a baby would use to address its father. We would probably find its equivalent in the expression 'daddy.'

The force of Paul's words here is that the Holy Spirit not only joins us to the family of God, but that He continually assures us and reminds us of this relationship. The Holy Spirit brings to our attention our spiritual 'roots,' for who we are has a great deal of bearing upon what we do.

The Holy Spirit assures us of this intimate relationship of sonship in two ways. First, He gives independent testimony to our sonship in a way which is experiential and illusive of description. Second, He corroborates the testimony of our own human spirit, that we are a child of God (v. 16). The conviction of our own spirit would surely be related to the Scriptures, to our devotional life, and to the evidences and the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Needless to say, our realization of this testimony would vary in intensity at different times in our experience.

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/agon-y-ecstasy-romans-8>)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Living above the principles of the world is not easy. A media-saturated society surrounds us with opportunities to gratify the flesh. Hungry? Gluttons are welcome at the all-you-can-eat buffet. Sexually anxious? Check out the Internet with your private web browser turned on. Need money for a luxury car? Play the lottery. Some enticements may not be sinful in and of themselves. But they all can appeal to a persuadable (weak?) part of our nature. They tempt us to take our eyes off God. They have no view of eternity. Let us walk by the Spirit, not the flesh

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

Remember when you said this? Wasn't that terrible that you did that? You'll never get over that one. God's going to get you." One of Satan's number one jobs is to accuse Christians, remind them of their past, make them feel hopeless over recurring habits, and most of all paint a picture of God looking at them with a big frown on His face. Paul counters Satan's attacks with truth from the Scriptures. Christians who are now in Christ Jesus, identifying with Him, God's penalty has been removed.

Flesh vs. Spirit - Paul drew a contrast between life in the flesh and the Spirit-filled life. People who are constantly looking to Christ for all their needs are very different from those who are always worried about if they are in or out of God's good graces. A loving Father wants His children to be free, enjoying their relationship with Him, not chained to a set of unachievable standards- Jesus' death perfectly fulfilled God's requirements.

The Spirit-Filled Life - When one becomes a believer, God's Holy Spirit now comes to life inside the person. This is the seal that he or she is truly God's child. Like a river, the Holy Spirit should be flowing through the life of a believer. Daily the spirit-filled Christian constantly consults the Holy Spirit for direction, conversation, help—basically running the life of the Christian.

Who's Driving? - Can you honestly say the Holy Spirit is in the driver's seat of your life, or are you in the backseat attempting to take over the wheel or complaining about every bend in the road? Some think, if they let the Holy Spirit direct their lives, it will be like living in a religious prison, without any freedom or joy. True freedom is trusting God knows how to drive and He always knows the best way to go.