

Romans 8:1-17  
Sanctification – The Believer’s Relationship to the Spirit

Introduction

1. The word spirit occurs 21 times in Romans 8 (with all but two referring to the Holy Spirit (15a, 16b))
2. In this chapter Paul describes our relationship to the Holy Spirit by describing two ways in which the Holy Spirit works in the life of the believer

A. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Life (1-13)

1. Paul begins with a declaration: Those **“in Christ”** no longer face condemnation (1): **“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”**
  - a. The condemnation Paul refers to is God’s wrath, judgement, spiritual death and an eternity separated from Him in the Lake of Fire
  - b. Based on what Paul has already written, this is the fate of all of mankind and the only solution is faith in Jesus Christ
  - c. Look at what Paul wrote in 7:24-25: **“Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”**
2. The reason Paul can make such a confident assertion about the believer is because of what he writes in v. 2: **“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.”**
  - a. He mentions two laws here and they are in essence two approaches to life
  - b. On the one hand, there is the **“law of sin and death”**—this is the spiritual law that condemns the sinner and sentences him to death
  - c. On the other hand, there is the **“law of the Spirit of life”** which justifies the believer and grants him eternal life (there is no definite article but context clearly indicates this is the Holy Spirit)
  - d. It is this law of the Spirit of life that sets us free from condemnation—without the Spirit of life we would not have life!
3. Paul explains how the law of the Spirit works (3-4):
  - a. The Law—here he is talking about the OT Law--could not accomplish what was necessary to free us from condemnation because it was weak (3a): **“For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did...”**
    - 1) Paul has already shown that sin uses and abuses the Law to deceive (chapter 7)
    - 2) He has also demonstrated that it is impossible to perfectly fulfill the Law through the flesh (also chapter 7)—there is always a battle between the mind that wants to fulfill God’s laws and the flesh which is driven to sin
  - b. However, God did what was necessary to free us from condemnation by sending His Son (3b-4):
    - 1) He condemned sin by sending Jesus as an offering for sin (3b): **“sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,”**

- a) To “**condemn**” sin in the flesh is a judicial reference and it means to make a judgement against it
  - b) This was done through Christ’s incarnation and atoning, sacrificial death
- 2) The requirement of the OT Law is now fulfilled “**in us**” (4): “**so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**”
- a) God’s Law requires perfect submission and obedience—that’s the requirement of the Law
  - b) This is something that only Jesus did
  - c) However, the good news is that the requirement of the Law is also fulfilled in the believer because he/she walks in accordance with the Holy Spirit:
    - His or her mind is focused on the things of the Holy Spirit (4-5): “**For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.**”
    - The mind focused on the flesh results in death (6): “**For the mind set on the flesh is death,**”
      - It is hostile toward God (7a): “**because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God;**”
      - It doesn’t submit to God (7b): “**it does not subject itself to the law of God**”
      - In fact, it can’t submit to God (7c): “**for it is not even able to do so**”
      - This makes it impossible for such a mindset to please God (8): “**and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**”
    - But, the mind focused on the Holy Spirit results in life and peace because it is able to please God (6b): “**but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,**”
4. Paul summarizes our freedom from condemnation (9-13):
1. Because of the work of the Spirit, we are no longer in the flesh but rather in the Spirit (9): “**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.**”
    - a) Because of our union with Christ, the Holy Spirit now dwelled within us
    - b) Therefore, we now belong to God
  2. Because of the work of the Spirit, our spirit is now alive (10): “**If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.**”
  3. Because of the work of the Spirit, our mortal bodies will also be made alive (11): “**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 dwells in you.**”
  4. Because of the work of the Spirit, we are no longer under obligation to the flesh, but to the Spirit (12-13): “**So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh--13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**”

B. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Adoption (14-17)

1. Because we are God's sons, the Holy Spirit leads us (14): **"For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."**
2. Because we are God's sons, the Holy Spirit removes the fear of facing God and replaces it with affection (15): **"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!'"**
  - a. Paul could have said we have been adopted
  - b. Instead, he says that we have received **"a [the] Spirit of adoption"**
  - c. He is focusing not on the action of adoption here, but rather the but the indwelling Holy Spirit that removes all fear and allows us to cry out, "Daddy!"
3. Because we are sons of God, the Holy Spirit testifies to our security as His children (16): **"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God"**
4. Because we are sons of God, the Holy Spirit guarantees our inheritance:
  - a. V. 17: **"and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him."**
  - b. Ephesians 1:14: **"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."**

Conclusion