

**ROMANS – LIVING BY FAITH**  
**THE CHILDREN OF GOD & THE SPIRIT OF GOD – Chapter 8**

**LESSON 25 – THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – Romans 8:12-17**

In this lesson we discover the blessings brought to the believer by the Holy Spirit. We are not born again by the Spirit and then abandoned by the Spirit. We are not released from bondage to the flesh and then left to struggle on our own. Instead, we are brought by the Spirit into an entirely new household of faith and God Himself is the Father.

Romans 8:1-11 reveals how we as Christians are delivered from the penalty, power and practice of our sinful flesh. Beginning in verse 12, Paul now takes on the believer's responsibilities in light of the benefits and privileges he has just described.

A Christian who has been delivered from the obligation to obey the mandates of the sinful, human nature must live in obedience to the Holy Spirit. Believers are obligated to live in a new way even though it is impossible for them to do so in their own strength. We are called to action but we are powerless to act. Only by the Spirit of God can we fulfill our obligation to walk free from sin. It is this attitude of dependence on God that Paul talks about in Philippians.

Philippians 2:12-13, "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed - not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence - continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."

**We Are Responsible to the Holy Spirit**

In the first chapter of Romans, Paul reminds us that we have a responsibility to share the Gospel with the world. Here he tells us that we are responsible for living a holy, righteous life. Since the Holy Spirit has given life to our souls, we are responsible to live according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. Because we've been made alive, we must live according to the Spirit.

**We Are Reinforced by the Holy Spirit**

The automatic outcome of living in accordance to the flesh is death. But if, by the Holy Spirit's power, we put to death the deeds of the body, the automatic outcome is life. Even though we are no longer in the flesh, the flesh is still in us. We cannot destroy the flesh in this life, but we can destroy the deeds of the flesh.

"There is a kind of life which leads to death, and there is a kind of death that leads to life." – John Stott

We are responsible, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to put to death the misdeeds of the body. We must put to death the deeds of our own flesh by walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. We fool ourselves if we think the habits and desires of our flesh will die without a fight but I'm so glad there is good news! On the other side of this death experience is new life! The painful process of crucifying the flesh produces a quality of life we can never experience any other way.

## We Are Ruled by the Holy Spirit

More than just reinforcing our new spiritual desires, the Holy Spirit actually leads and guides us toward holiness. The process of being led and following the Spirit's leadership is proof that we are indeed the children of God. The Spirit leads us in two ways...

**Leads in Godliness** – The Spirit leads us to put to death the misdeeds of our flesh. The Spirit leads but we are still responsible to follow proactively.

**Leads in General** – While leading us into holiness is the priority of the Holy Spirit, He also leads us as we progress through the Christian life. Paul uses the present tense when he says we “are led” in verse 14. This describes our experience of following the Spirit's leading in our daily lives. Many Christians have claimed Proverbs 3:5-6 as their life verse because it speaks of our dependence on God's leading in everything.

Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

## We Are Released by the Holy Spirit

According to verse 15, we have been released from the spirit of fear by the Holy Spirit. We have received the spirit of adoption. While this actual adoption will occur in the future, the spirit of adoption provides for us a release from the bondage we once knew. The picture Paul uses here is the contrast between slavery and sonship. Slavery stands for our old lives before knowing Christ. There are two things that confirm we have been released from the fear of slavery into sonship...

**Adoption** – This word means to be installed or placed as a child. It is the legal process in which a person was taken from one family...or no family...and placed into a new family. We have been taken from the family of Adam and placed into the family of God. There is only one Son of God but many are made children of God through adoption.

John 1:12, “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”

**Abba Father** – Abba was an ordinary family word in Jesus' day. It conveyed intimacy, tenderness, dependence and complete lack of fear. A modern English equivalent would be Daddy. This basic word tells us that God is not a distant Ruler but One Who is intimately close.

No Jew would ever have dreamed of using this intimate term to address God, but Jesus always used it in His prayers. Jesus instructed His disciples to use this word in their prayers as well. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak to God just as a small child speaks to his dad.

## We Are Reassured by the Holy Spirit

Paul is not saying that the Holy Spirit bears witness TO my spirit that I am a child of God. He is saying that the Holy Spirit bears witness WITH my spirit that I am God's child. In other words, at the same time I am praying and calling God my Father, the Holy Spirit is doing the same thing from within me. This is dual evidence of our sonship.

## **We Are Rewarded by the Holy Spirit**

There are two words that describe the rewards of sonship brought to us by the Holy Spirit. First, we are children. All of the truth about adoption is given here to help us understand our new position as sons instead of slaves. We have been placed as full-grown, adult members of God's family. The evidence of this is the fact that we are being led by the Holy Spirit. Because we are His children, we no longer fear the Father but we come to Him boldly and in intimate conversation just as Jesus did while here on earth. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we have been rewarded with sonship.

Second, we are heirs. This implies actual possession in part here and now...with the promise of complete possession and enjoyment in the future. We actually possess in Christ everything that God has for us.

Colossians 3:23-24, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

When the Lord tells us that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus, we are being informed that everything God the Father has given to Jesus the Son has been given to us as well.

"God is all-sufficient, and this is an all-sufficient inheritance. God is eternal and therefore it is an eternal inheritance – an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and fades not away. It is God Himself Who is the inheritance of His children." – Robert Haldane

Since God is our inheritance, nothing can keep us from it. Paul mentions that in the process of gaining our inheritance, we will learn something about suffering. Since we are joint-heirs with Christ and He suffered, we might expect to experience suffering as well. That is the focus of our next lesson.