

Romans X

Introduction

Romans chapter 7 describes the futility of trying to live the Christian life without the Spirit of God. We were helpless to overcome the deadly disease of sin without His unmerited favor, and we are equally powerless to please God without His Holy Spirit providing grace.

Romans 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.* This is the cardinal, essential, truth of every believer's new life *in Christ*. This is the truth on which we stand, by which we live and through which we ultimately achieve victory. God has officially declared our Justification and He will not retract His Word. We are justified by Grace on the basis of Jesus Christ's sacrifice.

Remember that we are internally free from the control of sin, now, as well as when we get to heaven. ² *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.* We are set us free, now, and with on-going help.

The truth is that we are positionally righteous *now*, as well as on that day we stand before God, our creator and Judge. 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.* What the Law could not accomplish, God has accomplished on our behalf through His Son Jesus.

In Chapter 7 we read about two natures struggling for control: *the flesh*, our old sin nature, and *the Spirit*, the gift of God's presence in us. Even though our old nature keeps rearing its ugly head, we have the assurance the Holy Spirit is stronger than our old nature. But the question is *to who will we yield control?* Paul implies in Romans 8 that the believer makes the choice.

Romans 8:5 *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*

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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.*

But what is fleshly thinking? What does it mean to live *according to the flesh*. Before we became Christians and received God's grace and He took up residence in us, the flesh craved only evil. But in the context here Paul describes a common occurrence in the Christian where they try to become righteous by simply trying harder. Illustration of the high jump in chapter 3.

Fleshly thinking can have worthy and noble ideas, but at times can be full of pride. Fleshly thinking tries to achieve godly objectives without God. It rejects the Grace of God in favour of doing it their own way, on their own terms. Our flesh life was hostile to God before our salvation and it will not want to co-operate now. The flesh cannot change, it can only be left behind.

For those who live according to the Spirit, the Spiritually minded, there is life and peace. Paul continued ⁸ *So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.* If we really do want to please God then we need to live by His Spirit.

Romans 8:9-11 *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.* Paul reminded his readers that those who have received God's grace through faith are no longer deluded by fleshly thinking, but now have the ability and capacity to think and choose as a result of their freedom *in Christ*. The Spirit of God has given them this freedom.

Romans 8:12-13 *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.*

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Because the Holy Spirit lives within us and because we have the mind of Christ we have an obligation, **not to do good works for God**, but to allow the Holy Spirit to do good works, on our behalf, through us, so that we will become more like Jesus and share the blessings that are due Him.

God has good works prepared for us beforehand. He has the desire and the ability to prepare us for those good works. Best of all, He has promised to bring it all together to accomplish what he has determined. **Our responsibility is to let Him.** If we do, we live. If we give ourselves over to our flesh then we will have an unhappy life.

Ephesians 2:8-10 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

Philippians 1:6 *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

Next Paul taught the practical benefits of living in the Spirit. Romans 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* This verse is both a promise and a practical means of assurance. Those who are actively following the Spirit will bear the unmistakable evidence of that leading.

Galatians 5:18-25 *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk*

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in the Spirit. When that evidence – or fruit as Paul likes to call it – is visible, it assures the believer that he or she is indeed a *Son of God*. That they really are led by the Holy Spirit.

Paul deliberately choose the word *son* to indicate that believers stand to inherit something. Women are also *sons of God* because they, no less than men, will receive the same inheritance.

Romans 8:15 *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”* Paul again reinforced the good news that believers have been emancipated. God has freed us. Amen! Whilst God has every right to own us as slaves, He tore into shreds our slavery papers and drafted a new document: **adoption papers**. God is not merely a kinder, gentler Master. He is our Abba. That’s the Aramaic term of endearment for **father**. It’s the closest word we have to the name **Daddy**. Paul taught us that we can have intimacy with the Almighty Creator of the universe! This is God’s plan for us.

We are not slaves repaying a debt, but as sons, who have a genuine stake in our Father’s estate. We become a contributing member of the family. As we do good it’s not just for God’s sake alone, but for others in God’s household.

Romans 8:16 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.* Here the Spirit speaks directly into ours and assures us that we belong to God.

Romans 8:17 *and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.* Adoption was common practice in Roman law. Much of Roman society depended on a system called *patronage* in which one person becomes a godfather to less powerful people. This person in turn owed allegiance to his patron. When Paul talked about *adoption as sons* his readers would have immediately recalled that Caesar Augustus received much of his power through adoption by his patron, Julius Caesar.

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Through adoption, believers have become coheirs with God's one and only Son - Jesus Christ. Through our identification with Him, we stand to inherit everything that is due Him. In revelation 5:12 we find that He will share everything with His adopted brothers and sisters, **except worship.**

The Apostle Paul didn't describe what kind of behaviour would help us live by the Spirit or prescribe a seven - step plan to become more spiritual. As we allow the Holy Spirit to move in our lives, He will do this on our behalf, because He knows what is best for us. Sometimes we try in our own strength to be more spiritual. Let the Holy Spirit help make us spiritual.

Today will you invite Him, will you ask Him to do His work, in your life.