

Sanctification and Life in the Spirit

Lesson Scope: [Romans 8](#)

Lesson Focus

Romans 7 revealed the struggle of one who knows God's holy standard and sincerely tries to obey. But because he does not find power within himself to do what the Law requires, he cries out in desperation, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" Chapter 8 proceeds to unveil the way out of this predicament.

The answer comes through the work of Christ. He releases us from the bondage of sin. He provides the power to meet the requirements of God's holy standard. He supplies the grace to walk after the Spirit. Christ in us—and we in Him—produces a new walk of life. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Romans 7 is full of defeat, but Romans 8 overflows with victory. If a person claims to be walking in the Spirit, he must give practical evidence of that walk. Many professing Christians today claim the power of God, but they actually deny that power by their inconsistent living.

We receive the carnal nature through natural birth, and the spiritual mind through the new birth. Christian living is not a mixture of the two, but a crucifying of the carnal mind so that the spiritual mind can have full control.

A lifelong conflict rages between the flesh and the Spirit. But through the grace of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of His Holy Spirit, "we are more than conquerors."

Lesson Aim: To see what it means to live after the Spirit.

Theme Verses: [Galatians 5:24-25](#). And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Lesson Text

New Law

Romans 8:1-11 ¹ *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath 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 sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: ⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ⁵ For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after 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, neither indeed can be. ⁸ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. ¹⁰ And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

New Relationship

Romans 8:12-17 ¹² Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. ¹³ For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ¹⁵ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ¹⁶ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: ¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

Romans 8:26 ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

New Confidence

Romans 8:28 ²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Romans 8:31-32 ³¹ What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? ³² He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Romans 8:35-39 ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Questions for Study

New Law

1. In what sense was the Law "weak through the flesh" (8:3)?
2. What is the result of trying to accommodate both the carnal mind and the spiritual mind simultaneously?

New Relationship

3. Explain the meaning of 8:12.
4. What happens to the flesh in conversion?
5. List some parallels between earthly adoption and spiritual adoption.
6. What are some privileges enjoyed by those who walk in the Spirit?

New Confidence

7. How can we have confidence that "all things work together for good" (8:28)?
8. In what way are the sons of God more than conquerors?

Analyzing the Passage

Therefore (8:1) indicates a change of condition in the person who now walks after the Spirit. The bondage described in chapter 7 has ended; he is now free to serve God. Condemnation is lifted when God forgives.

Two verbs describe a person's relationship to his carnal nature or to the Spirit-energized new nature. Walk (8:1, 4) means "follow (as a companion) in the whole round of the activities of life." Mind (8:5) means "pursue" or "entertain."

The word flesh in these verses usually refers to the carnal nature. Some people teach that the body is evil, and they try to bring it under subjection by inflicting punishment and pain. But those measures will not result in true walking after the Spirit.

The title Abba (8:15) is an Aramaic word for father, such as a young child might use, denoting closeness and unwavering trust. Sons, not servants, were permitted to use this term to address the head of the family. Verse 26 presents a beautiful picture of the Spirit's work. Helpeth means "to take hold with at the side for assistance." Infirmities are weaknesses that make one unable to produce results.

"More than conquerors" (8:37) describes the tremendous victory that the believer enjoys in Christ. Conquerors in earthly battles often overcome at great cost, but Christians can be victorious without losing anything of value. Also, instead of fading honor, they receive eternal glory.

Principles and Applications

New Law

1. Those walking after the Spirit are free from guilt and the bondage of sin (8:1-3). Sin acts as a taskmaster (6:16-23), and the wages are guilt and death. But through faith in Christ and the Spirit entering the heart, sin must leave. Then guilt lifts and death flees.
2. Those who are walking after the Spirit possess a Spirit-controlled mind (8:5-7). Before conversion, a person's mind is carnal. Even though he may exert every effort to be cultured and decent, yet he is at "enmity against God" and is "dead while [he] liveth." At best, he is selfish and shortsighted in his choices. But when the Spirit transforms him, his heart makes choices in light of eternity and in favor of God's desires for him.
3. The presence of the Spirit gives testimony that we are one of His (8:8-11). "By their fruits ye shall know them." What did you say when your neighbor accidentally scratched your pickup? What look crossed your face when the auctioneer told that dirty joke at the farm sale? Where was your mind while the minister patiently explained the mes-

sage of the Lord? A person truly delivered from sin will prove it in daily life.

New Relationship

4. The Spirit-filled person will mortify the flesh (8:12-13). The flesh desires ease, gratification, and pleasure. But rather than cater to these desires, we must continually mortify (kill) them. If we do not crucify the flesh, it will destroy us.

5. Those who are led by the Spirit experience divine adoption (8:14-17). Adopted sons enjoy both the privilege and the position of natural sons. Through the work of the Spirit within us, we may reverently cry, "Abba, Father." As sons, we look forward to an inheritance because we are joint heirs with Christ.

6. Those who walk after the Spirit have assurance of salvation (8:16). God wants us to know that we belong to Jesus and are ready to meet God. His Spirit within us knows our hearts. It is He who either pricks our consciences or assures our spirits that we are the sons of God.

7. Life in the Spirit enables the child of God to rise above human limitations (8:26). When our understanding is limited or when praying is difficult because of emotional or mental stress, the Spirit bears even our unuttered requests to God.

New Confidence

8. Walking after the Spirit provides rest in the sovereign will of God (8:28). God perfectly understands each of us. Through His Spirit within, He leads us in the paths that are best for us. Following God requires unquestioning faith and submission on our part. Then we find true rest.

9. Those who walk after the Spirit have their faith anchored on the promises of God (8:31-32, 35). What calms the soul when one faces martyrdom? What gives strength to plod ahead when life is full of reverses? In the challenges of family life, from where does the Christian parent receive inspiration to persevere? Faith in God's promises is the answer. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ if we maintain a living faith in Him.

10. Those who are walking after the Spirit experience perpetual victory (8:37-39). These verses assure us of abundant victory ("more than conquerors"). No outside influence can pry us away from Christ and the assured victory through His Name. Only our own will is capable of separating us from the love of God.

Important Teachings

1. Those walking after the Spirit are free from guilt and the bondage of sin (8:1-3).
2. Those who are walking after the Spirit possess a Spirit-controlled mind (8:5-7).
3. The presence of the Spirit gives testimony that we are one of His (8:8, 9, 11).
4. The Spirit-filled person will mortify the flesh (8:12-13).
5. Those who are led by the Spirit experience divine adoption (8:14-17).
6. Those who walk after the Spirit have assurance of salvation (8:16).
7. Life in the Spirit enables the child of God to rise above human limitations (8:26).
8. Walking after the Spirit provides rest in the sovereign will of God (8:28).
9. Those who walk after the Spirit have their faith anchored on the promises of God (8:31-32, 35).
10. Those who are walking after the Spirit experience perpetual victory (8:37-39).

Answers to Questions

1. In what sense was the Law "weak through the flesh" (8:3)?

The Law gave the standard for holiness, but it did not give power to men in the flesh to live up to that standard.

2. What is the result of trying to accommodate both the carnal mind and the spiritual mind simultaneously?

"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). When we try to have both, we end with only the carnal mind. Jesus said that even those who look back are not fit for the kingdom (Luke 9:62).

3. Explain the meaning of 8:12.

We are indebted to God to sacrifice ourselves for Him because of all He has done for us. The flesh has no just claim on us. We give in to the flesh because we want to.

4. What happens to the flesh in conversion?

The flesh is "mortified," or regarded as dead, by the power of Christ (Romans 6:11 and Galatians 5:24). This dying must be a daily experience.

5. List some parallels between earthly adoption and spiritual adoption.

Both involve a change of father, a change of family, a change of responsibility, and a right to an inheritance.

6. *What are some privileges enjoyed by those who walk in the Spirit?*

We are no longer fearful slaves but children of the Master. He leads and encourages us. His inner presence reminds us of who we are. The Spirit intercedes for us.

7. *How can we have confidence that "all things work together for good" (8:28)?*

We must make sure that we are fully committed to God and His purposes for us. Remember that God does not promise to make us happy or to make things "go our way," but He is working for our eternal welfare. We can gain confidence by considering God's work in the past. We gain confidence by reading His Word.

8. *In what way are the sons of God more than conquerors?*

Even before the battles, we can know that, with Christ, we are on the winning side. Unbroken victory is possible through Him. The rewards of an earthly conqueror are fleeting, but conquering through Christ brings eternal glory and blessing. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Revelation 21:7).

Summarizing the Lesson

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armor on;
Strong in the strength which God supplies,
Thro' His eternal Son.
Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
And in His mighty pow'r:
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.
That, having all things done,
And all your conflicts past,
Ye may o'ercome, thro' Christ alone,
And stand complete at last.

—Charles Wesley

Research Guide

Read the chapters titled "Adoption" and "The Christian's Hope" in *Doctrines of the Bible*.