

Book Study #13 ROMANS

Rom. 8:1-17 Life Through the Spirit

Before We Begin...

*1Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,^a 2because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the **sinful nature**,^b God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.^c And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the **sinful nature** but according to the Spirit. 5Those who live according to the **sinful nature** have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8Those controlled by the **sinful nature** cannot please God. 9You, however, are controlled not by the **sinful nature** but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. 10But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. 12Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the **sinful nature**, to live according to it. 13For if you live according to the **sinful nature**, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of **sonship**.^d And by him we cry, "Abba,^e Father." 16The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*



When was the first time you remember being confronted with the reality of death? How did you respond?

Exploration... Discovery... Revelation...

1. What was the law unable to do? Why? (v.3)

2. Who then accomplished it? How What was the result? (vv. 3-4)

3. What does “no condemnation” mean to you? (v.1) What words or phrases does this bring to mind?



4. In the space below, compare the two kinds of life which Paul describes.

living according to the sinful nature	living according to the Spirit
v. 5	v. 5
v. 6	v. 6
vv. 7-8	v. 9
v. 13	v. 13
v. 15	v. 15-17

5. These two ways of life characterize two classes of people. According to verse 9, what is the spiritual condition of those who are "controlled by the sinful nature"? Of those who are controlled by the Spirit?
6. Whom does the Holy Spirit indwell? (v.9)

7. How does Paul describe his own condition in verses 14-25? How does this compare to his descriptions elsewhere of the believer's condition in Christ?

8. In the context of this passage, what does it mean to be "led by the Spirit?" (v. 14)

9. In **Galatians 5:16—26**, Paul contrasts the "acts of the sinful nature" with the "fruit of the Spirit." In the space below, list his examples of each.

acts of the sinful nature	fruit of the Spirit

As we end this part of the Journey...

Pray for one another. Pray that we would each live the "Holy Life." A life filled with the desire to do the Will of God and follow Christ and the Holy Spirit. "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires." (The Apostle Paul in Romans 8:5)

Commentary

In vivid contrast with the previous section, which describes Paul's failed attempt to find righteousness through law-keeping, 8:1-17 lays out the believer's new life of freedom from law.

v. 1 ***There is now no condemnation*** . . . In contrast to times past, we have now been released from the law and are no longer under its condemnation.

v. 2 ***because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free*** . . .

Through Christ, Paul was set free from the bondage to sin and death described in 7:7-25. The "law of the Spirit of life" is the principle of new life in Christ which the indwelling Holy Spirit brings us. This nullifies the principle which previously operated in us, the "law of sin and death". As a result, there is "no condemnation" for those who are in Christ.

v. 3 ***what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature*** . . . Paul's description of his own experience in 7:7-25 is a vivid illustration of this principle. The law is unable to overcome sin in us, not because of any defect in the law itself, but because of the weakness of our "sinful nature", or flesh.

he condemned sin . . . This means more than just exposing sin as evil; the law was able to do that. This condemnation means pronouncing the sentence of death on sin itself, rendering it powerless. This is what the law could not do, and what God did through Christ (see Rom. 6:9-12).

in the likeness of sinful man . . .

Paul is not saying that Christ had sin (2 Cor. 5:21). Nor is he saying that Christ only *appeared* to be a man. Christ is fully human, but his humanity includes neither Adam's sin nor any sin of his own.

v. 4 ***in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us*** . . . Through the death and resurrection of Christ, our guilt and sin were credited to him, and his perfect righteousness was credited to us. Thus, the righteousness demanded by the law was fully satisfied.

who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit . . .

The righteousness which we have in Christ is first of all a legal righteousness, or a right standing before God. But we also experience a changed life, as we walk in accordance with the indwelling Holy Spirit. The freedom from sin which we have in Christ means both freedom from the ultimate *penalty* of sin and also freedom from the present *power* of sin.

v. 5 This verse presents a contrast between unbelievers, "***those who live according to the sinful nature,***" and believers, "***those who live in accordance with the Spirit.***" While the focus of the unbeliever's mind is on himself and his own desires, the focus of the believer's mind is on Christ and the things which please and glorify him.

v. 6 The mind of the unbeliever is focused on those things which bring ***death***, while the Spirit-controlled mind is focused on those things which bring ***life and peace***.

v. 7 ***The sinful mind is hostile to God*** . . .

The mind of the unbeliever is not merely neutral concerning God's law; it is hostile to it. It does not submit to the law, because it cannot do so. What then, are we to make of people such as the Pharisees, whom Christ called "sons of hell" (Matt. 23:15), but who were observant of the law? The answer is that they were hypocrites, observing the outward requirements of the law, but rebelling against God in their hearts. They were zealous of the law as a means of prideful self-righteousness rather than as a means of glorifying God (see Matt. 23:23).

v. 8 It is impossible for the unbeliever to please God. Not even his inadequate attempts to "do the right thing" or keep the law give God any pleasure; they are nothing more than "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6).

v. 9 ***You, however*** . . . This introduces a sharp contrast. Believers are not under the control of the "sinful nature", or flesh, but are under the control of the Holy Spirit.

if the Spirit of God lives in you . . . It is not just certain super-spiritual Christians who are controlled by the Spirit, but all believers, because all believers have the Holy Spirit. Paul makes this clear by his next statement: "***if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.***"

v. 12 The "sinful nature", or flesh, while still a part of us, no longer has any rightful claim on us. Our only obligation is one of obedience to Christ.

v. 13 Paul here contrasts the lifestyle of the unbeliever and the believer. One is a life lived according the flesh, which brings death. The other is a life of continual "putting to death" of the deeds of the body through the power of the Holy Spirit, which leads to life. This is a description of the believer (see Gal. 5:16-18). Note that both our will and the Holy Spirit are involved in this "putting to death". We must choose to obey, but the power is His. Note also that Paul is not laying out requirements for salvation. This "putting to death" requires that we have the Holy Spirit, which is true only of those who are already saved.

v. 16 ***The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children*** . . .

Believers have an "inner witness", the Holy Spirit, by which they know they belong to God.

v. 17 ***heirs of God*** . . . One of the implications of being related to God is that we look forward to an incredible inheritance! This inheritance is both physical and spiritual (see Matt. 5:5; 1 Cor. 3:21-23; Eph.1:11-18; 1 Pet. 1:3-4).