



# gracefellowship

Series: The Holy Spirit  
Date: June 11, 2023

Title: The Spirit of Belonging  
Passage: Romans 8:12-17

Family Dedication

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

The passage which was just read to us was a huge part of what we focused on during JTerm this week. In this series on the Holy Spirit we are not going to really spend time focusing on Spiritual Gifts because we dedicated three nights to that conversation. If you missed out on JTerm, I would encourage you to either get the videos of that on our YouTube page or you can go to RightNow Media and watch Chip Ingram's series: "Your Divine Design." As followers of Jesus, each of us has at least one spiritual gift. Part of the role of the Holy Spirit in your life is to help you know how to use your gift(s) in the Church and in the world.

Last week we talked about the reality that when we come to Jesus for salvation, one of the things the Holy Spirit does is He liberates us from the sinful desires we have as we submit to Him. We talked about two realms that we occupy: The realm of the flesh and the realm of the Spirit. In the realm of the flesh we tend to give in to our sinful, carnal desires. But when we come to Jesus, the Holy Spirit retrains our minds to be governed in a way that brings life and peace.

And that is where Paul picks up writing today in Romans 8. With that idea in mind- that we have been brought out of the realm of the flesh and now live in the realm of the Spirit- let's check out Romans 8:12-17.

**:: Romans 8:12-17**

**12 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it.**

**13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.**

**14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.**

**15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."**

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

The first thing Paul communicates to us in our new life following Jesus is there is a change in obligation. When you hear that word, what kinds of things come to mind? Each of us has obligations in life.

- Pay your bills
- Show up for work
- Honor your marriage covenant
  - o “Forsaking all others, I cling to you...”

Paul tells us that when we come to faith in Jesus our obligations change. We are no longer obligated to do what our flesh entices us to do. We gain a power in our life, through the Holy Spirit, which enables us to say “no” to the things that damage our relationship with God.

**The Holy Spirit empowers us to fight sin and reminds us we are not obligated to our sinful desires.**

What you were once obligated to, you no longer have to do. You have been given power to say no to sin. But it's something you have to learn as you agree with the Holy Spirit and work with Him to fight against the draw of sin in your life.

**:: Titus 2:11-14**

**11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.  
12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,  
13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,  
14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.**

I am so thankful for this passage. One of the amazing things we get from a relationship with God's Spirit is the power to say “No” to sin.

- When we are tempted to lust, God's Spirit strengthens us to say, “I will not give my eyes over to sinful lusts.”
- When we are envious, the Holy Spirit teaches us to say, “I do not have to be crave and be jealous of what others have!”

- When we are tempted to gossip, the Holy Spirit whispers to us, “Don’t drag their name and reputation through the mud.”
- When we want to lie to protect ourselves, the Holy Spirit reminds us that freedom is found in truthfulness.

Whatever sin you are prone to in your flesh, the Holy Spirit says, “I can help you put that to death so you enjoy the freedom of Jesus.”

We are not obligated to the things our flesh naturally craves.

When Jesus saved us He gave us the ability to leave a life of sin that leads to death. But when we turn away from sin, we also turn toward something else—new life in Christ. *Our obligations change.*

**We are obligated to God and to the life He made available to us through His Son, Jesus.**

When we go back and look at what Paul wrote in Romans 8 we find the power of what the Holy Spirit does in our salvation.

**The Holy Spirit gives us a place of belonging in God’s family.**

When you become a follower of Jesus you become a child of God.

**:: Romans 8:14-17**

**14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.**

**15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”**

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

**17 Now 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.**

**Those led by the Spirit of God are children of God.**

- **Slavery invites fear.**
- **Adoption invites belonging.**

When we follow Jesus as disciples we gain a place in His family! The Spirit, who lives in us, teaches us to live as God’s children and to even to call Him, “Abba, Father.” That’s an intimate expression. No one spoke of God that way. In fact, for the Scribes, when they would write and copy the words of the Torah, any time they came across the name of God, they would write it and then discard the pen they were using, because the name of God was so sacred and holy to

them. The Essenes, a religious group who was prone to show their devotion to God by withdrawing from society and going to live in remote places, would copy the Torah as well. If you've heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls, this is the group who wrote out the text of Torah and hid it in caves in the desert. In fact, if you go with us to Israel next year, this is one of the places we will visit when we tour the Dead Sea. When an Essene would write the name of God, he would not only discard his pen, he would go into a Mikvah, a baptismal that was used for ceremonial washing, and would immerse himself in the waters before he would continue copying the scrolls.

No one in the time of Jesus would dare refer to God as his or her "Daddy!" It was far too personal. But through Jesus, we gain access to God in a new way. He becomes our Father, not just in the sense of our Creator, but as the One who is the loving head of our family.

*Illustration:* There have been a couple occasions where I have been fortunate enough to be in a courtroom where an adoption is taking place. In that setting the judge will say to the children being adopted: "Today, because of this adoption, it will be as if you were born to these parents." Then the Judge will look at the parents and say: "Today, because of this adoption, it will be as if these children were born to you and have all the rights of a biological child."

The same is true for us. And Paul make a statement that describes this incredible truth for us:

If we are God's children, then we are His heirs!

Interpretation: We are the beneficiaries of everything God has!

Then Paul says, if we are heirs of God then we are co-heirs with Christ! This doesn't elevate us to the status of Christ- we are not divine and therefore equal with Him- but Jesus is our brother. What He receives from the Father, we receive from the Father! And hopefully that informs how we think about this idea of being obligated to God rather than our sin nature.

**We are obligated to God because He purchased us- not to make us slaves, but to make us sons and daughters!**

**:: 1 Corinthians 6:17, 19-20**

**17 But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.**

**19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;**

**20 you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.**

What is that price that purchased us? The innocent blood of Jesus poured out for us on the cross. This wasn't a free transaction. You have the standing you do with God because He purchased you! His love for you is so great that He sent His Son to pay for your sins, meaning you don't have to, so you could walk into His family.

*Illustration:* When I was in college, during my sophomore year, I played basketball and I was in the chamber choir. Typically those things didn't have any overlap because practices and classes are at different times. But around Christmas our choir had a concert in the afternoon during a practice time. I felt a struggle as to which one I should be dedicated to. Let's be clear, as much as I love to sing, I loved basketball way more! And I don't know if you've ever had to go to a coach before and tell them you needed to miss practice, but that isn't usually met with excitement! So, I'm struggling between the options of going to the concert or going to practice.

But then something came to mind that made the decision a lot easier for me. I was on scholarship for choir! On the basketball team I was a walk-on who sat on the bench! I had to go to my coach and say, I need to miss practice because I have an obligation to the one who is paying for me to be here!

The Holy Spirit of God, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, and your acceptance of His grace, moves you out of the kingdom of darkness and into the Kingdom of Light. As a child of God, you are no longer obligated to your sinful ways. There is a new family that you belong to with new standards of holiness.

Here's the final thing I want us to notice about our place in God's family:

**There is a family business we are meant to be part of!**

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

**17 Now 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.**

The word for sufferings here in the Greek is where we get our English word "sympathize" or "sympathetic." It conveys the idea that we experience pain jointly. We can on some level identify with Jesus in the suffering of His death and some Christians are martyred for their faith. But what if that is not our lot in life? Do we not share His glory if we don't suffer to death? I'm not sure that's what Paul is saying here. What did Jesus suffer doing throughout His ministry?

Making disciples! As Jesus made disciples He...

- Faced rejection of people
- Lost family relationships
- Was ridiculed
- Found Himself isolated and lonely

- Was drained as He poured Himself out mentally, physically, emotionally...

As we make disciples it is possible our sufferings won't lead to a violent death, but a loss of family or friends; being mocked; facing rejection; giving up your free time for Kingdom involvement; facing hardships for the Kingdom...is very possible.

In those things, we are to join in the sufferings of Jesus to painstakingly make disciples. And if our physical life is demanded of us, than we can lay it down in the power of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God. We are commanded by the risen Jesus to go into all the world and make disciples of every nation. This is the family business!

The last hours Jesus spent with His disciples he told them that he no longer called them servants, but friends because a servant doesn't know his master's business, but Jesus had taken everything He learned from His Father and taught it to the Disciples. Now the work of the Holy Spirit is to be with us as we make disciples of Jesus. The Holy Spirit instructs us in what to say and do.

If you are part of the family, you are in the family business. As followers of Jesus, the Church is our primary family. We are children of God and identify with Him first and foremost. You may have heard the quote, "Blood is thicker than water." But did you know that isn't the full quote?

**"The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb."**

The saying means that chosen bonds are more significant than the bonds with family or "water of the womb." The covenant relationship we have with Jesus that makes us children of God is even more powerful than the relationships we have with family members on earth.

And your relationship with the Holy Spirit helps you fulfill the final command of Jesus: go and make disciples! We go out in His power to fulfill the mission.

- Pray