

Romans 8:1-17 “The Spirit-filled Life”

Pastor Bruce Zachary

Thesis: The Christian life is the Spirit-filled life. It is a life empowered by, directed by, and yielded to the Holy Spirit [Ac. 1:5-8, Eph. 5:18]. When you receive Christ, you receive a spiritual birth, and now have the power of the Spirit to live a life that is pleasing to God. There is a profound contentment that flows from appreciating and appropriating your new life in the Spirit.

In chapter seven, Paul emphasized the inadequacy of our strength to overcome the flesh, but here Paul emphasizes the work of the Spirit nineteen times. How is the Spirit-filled life different?

Subject: The Spirit-filled life

Object: Live for God by His Spirit

1. A new relationship to sin [1-4]

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. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. ³For 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, ⁴that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

You are not condemned for sin [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 [1]. Those who have received Jesus have been forgiven of their sin. They now walk or live by the Spirit. God will never condemn His children for not measuring up. Condemnation separates people from God, but conviction leads us to God.

There are times that I sense the conviction of the Holy Spirit when I'm not doing what I know God wants me to do, but I don't worry about God condemning me, because I'm His. Also, I know that guilt and shame are not from God, but from the enemy to discourage and to cause doubt and distress.

You are not controlled by sin [2-4]

Jesus' followers are free from the penalty of sin, because He took the penalty on the cross for us [3]. Jesus fulfills the requirements of the law and defeats sin at the cross [4]. Jesus' followers are free from the power of sin that separates us from God [2]. Twice Paul repeats the principle, *who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit [2,4]*. Jesus' followers are free from a lifestyle dominated by the flesh, and now live empowered and directed by God's Spirit.

2. A new relationship to life [5-8]

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 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. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

New priorities [5]: prioritize spiritual life, and the life to come vs. temporal. Jesus' followers focus more on spiritual life, the life to come, and pleasing God - *the things of the Spirit*, unlike unbelievers who focus on this world and pleasing their flesh [Matt. 6:21-32].

New peace [6]: peace with and from God.

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Those who live for God by the power of His Spirit experience peace with and from God. Jesus provides peace, because our confidence is in His performance, love, control. **“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” [Jn. 14:27]**

New purpose [7-8] live to please God.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Prior to yielding your life to receive Christ you cannot please God because *the carnal mind is enmity against God*, and *those who are in the flesh cannot please God*. When there is no desire to yield authority to the God who loves you and

created you for relationship with Him you cannot please God [Col. 1:16]. You are most satisfied and God is most glorified when you live to please Him.

3. A new relationship with God [9-17]

⁹ 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 ¹² 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.

¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 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.” ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 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.

New spiritual life [9-13]

You live through the Spirit that dwells in you [9-11]. When you receive as Lord and Savior, your sin is forgiven, God’s righteousness is given to you [10], and you receive spiritual

life ... through His Spirit who dwells in you [11]. Jesus' followers are no longer dominated by the flesh [12], but by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body, and live [13]. Victories over the flesh by the Spirit provide assurance of eternal life with God. On the other hand, a life dominated by the flesh produces separation from God and death [Gen. 2:17].

New family [14-16]

*¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 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." ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. All of humanity are the offspring of God [Ac. 17:28], but only Jesus' followers are *sons of God* or His children [14, Jn. 1:12]. Jesus' followers have *received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba Father* [15]. We have been adopted into the family of God. In context of the Roman Empire of the New Testament times, adopted sons had the full rights and privileges of birth children. They would share the inheritance, and adopt the name and values of their new family. The term *Abba* [15] is an Aramaic term that we would translate as Papa. It is a term of endearment. At the time of Christ, Jews did not pray to God as "Father" but Jesus did except at the cross. In the Model Prayer, he urges us to pray, "our Father." Yet, here the idea of Papa implies an even greater intimacy and familiarity.*

The Holy Spirit confirms our adoption [16], *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*. The Spirit's work in you is evidence of God's adoption as we are conformed to the values of our new family. As Paul would write to the church at Ephesus,

“The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our promised inheritance” [Eph.1:13-14], which brings us to the next benefit of this new relationship with God.

New inheritance [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. We are now *heirs of God*, and *joint heirs with Christ*. As joint heirs, we share equally with Christ in the inheritance of God's riches [Eph. 1:3].

Study Guide Qs

Q1. How might Jesus' followers distinguish condemnation verses conviction (see section 1 above “A new relationship to sin” and Digging Deeper #1 below)?

Q2. What are some of the challenges of trying to live for God?

Q3. How is God's Spirit making it easier for you to live for God?

Q4. Describe some of your thoughts and feelings about your new life, family, and inheritance.

Digging Deeper

1. Here is a helpful article regarding distinguishing conviction and condemnation: [https://
applygodsword.com/what-is-the-difference-between-condemnation-and-conviction/](https://applygodsword.com/what-is-the-difference-between-condemnation-and-conviction/)
2. Here is an interesting article explaining our inheritance as joint heirs with Christ: [https://
www.gotquestions.org/co-heirs-with-Christ.html](https://www.gotquestions.org/co-heirs-with-Christ.html)