

74. The Book of Romans 8:9-15

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

(12-18-24)

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We are currently in the third major section of the Book of Romans—a section that runs from Chapters 6-8 and deals with the **sanctification** of the believer in Jesus Christ. Tonight, we find ourselves in the climax of this section—Chapter 8, which is a chapter of victory that ends with a shout of victory—

“We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (through our relationship with Jesus and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit).”

As someone has said—Romans Chapter 8 is one of the most comforting chapters in the Bible in that it is, *“God’s prescription for troubled hearts, His special remedy for the devil’s ‘guilt trip’s—a chapter that starts with ‘no condemnation’ and ends with ‘no separation.’”*

Romans 8:5–9 (NKJV)

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 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. 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.

So, in verses 5-9 of Romans 8 Paul is comparing *believers* with *unbelievers*—the reason being is that he wants to show the fundamental difference between those who are in Adam and those who are in Christ—

I. Two Divisions-verse 5

II. Two Dispositions-verse 5

III. Two Destinies-verse 6

IV. Two Dominions (Over Man)—verses 8-9

Romans 8:8 (NKJV)

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

When I speak of ‘**Dominion**’ I’m using it to mean, *‘the rule or domination over an individual.’*

Notice we’ve gone from *“according to the flesh”* and *“according to the Spirit” (verse 5)* to an entirely different level where Paul is talking about being *“in the flesh”* and *“in the Spirit” (verse 8)*.

There is a progression in the way Paul describes both categories of people—they are first of all **“according to”** and then they are **“in.”**

The terms move from the pattern of one’s life—to the sphere of one’s life. The reason people *walk* (live) according to the flesh is because their minds are *dominated* by the things of the flesh.

- The reason for that is because they are **“in the flesh”** which means that they are being controlled by their fleshly fallen nature.
- The same goes for those who walk **“in the Spirit”**—they’re being controlled by their new nature (the nature of God in Christ) because they now exist in the realm of the Spirit.

So in that regard it’s no surprise, that **“Those who are in the flesh cannot please God”**—(verse 8)—they are in a fallen state of being, the flesh, and in the flesh nothing good dwells (Romans 7:18).

There is nothing an unsaved person can do to **‘please God’**—no good works, no religious observances, no sacrificial services—**absolutely nothing!**

We can only please God by being *in Christ* (saved)—apart from Jesus all our so-called righteous deeds are worthless—

Isaiah 64:6 (NIV)

⁶ All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

As we said last time, pleasing God is the goal of the Christian life—

Revelation 4:11 (KJV 1900)

¹¹ Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

So, we were created to please the heart of God—but what does the Bible say pleases God?

A. Proclaiming the Gospel

1 Corinthians 1:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

B. Seeking God by faith

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

⁶ But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

C. Obedying all that God has said

1 John 3:22 (NKJV)

²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

D. Staying away from sexual sin

1 Thessalonians 4:1–3 (NKJV)

¹ Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; ² for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

E. Refusing to be a man-pleaser

Galatians 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

F. Giving to others who are in need

Philippians 4:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.

G. Praising and giving thanks to God

Psalms 69:30–31 (NKJV)

³⁰ I will praise the name of God with a song, And will magnify Him with thanksgiving. ³¹ *This* also shall please the Lord better than an ox *or* bull, Which has horns and hooves.

H. Keeping your priorities straight

2 Timothy 2:3–4 (NKJV)

³ You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴ No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

Romans 8:8–9 (NKJV)

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

Verse 9 is the key to properly interpreting this chapter.

All true Christians have the Holy Spirit in them—that’s what it means to be a Christian, born of the Spirit (John 3)

William MacDonald—

*“When a person is born again, he is no longer **in the flesh but in the Spirit**. He lives in a different sphere. Just as a fish lives in water and a man lives in the air, so a believer lives in the Spirit. He not only lives in the Spirit, but the Spirit lives in him. In fact, if he is not indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”*

Romans 8:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

Because of sin, which was passed down to us in the form of our sin nature from Adam, we carry in our bodies the seeds of death—

Romans 7:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

1 Corinthians 15:22 (NKJV)

²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

When we received Jesus, we were redeemed soul and spirit—but our bodies were not redeemed at that time, they are still a product of the fall and *“dying they shall surely die.”* (Genesis 2:17)

Romans 8:22–23 (NKJV)

²² For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

This will happen at the time of the Rapture—and yet even though our physical bodies shall die, our spirit will go on living forever.

Romans 8:10–11 (NKJV)

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.**

The Holy Spirit will deliver us from the **“body that is dead because of sin”** (our physical body which is still subject to the fall) at the Rapture (when we will be resurrected and receive a new glorified body)—as Jesus promised us, *“Because I live, you will live also.”* (John 14:19)

In the **first eleven verses**, Paul has been contrasting *believers* with *unbelievers*—those who are **‘in the Spirit’** with those who are **‘in the flesh.’** **Starting in verse 12** he begins to lay out our responsibility as children of God, that we are no longer responsible to the flesh, we are no longer debtors to the flesh to live any longer under its control—

Romans 8:12 (NKJV)

¹² **Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.**

The **“Therefore”** in verse 12 is not the usual word for **‘therefore’** that we see so much in the New Testament.

The Greek word used here means, *“a final conclusion, a key point.”* It’s used in Romans 7:25 translated, *“So then...”*—

Romans 7:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

I'll paraphrase verse 12—*"Therefore, in light of all God has done for us, we are debtors to live for Him and to put to death the deeds of the flesh through the power of the Holy Spirit."*

Romans 8:13 (NKJV)

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.**

Those who **'live according to the flesh'** will **'die'**—not only *physically* but spiritually and eternally.

'To live according to the flesh' is to be *unsaved*—which Paul made clear earlier in Romans 8. But why does Paul address this to those who were *already* Christians? Is he implying that some of them might eventually be lost even if once saved?

No, but the apostle often includes words of *warning* and *self-examination* in his Letters—realizing that in every congregation there may be some people who have never been genuinely born-again.

The rest of the verse describes what is characteristically true of genuine believers—that through the enablement of the Holy Spirit they **"put to death the deeds of the body"** (first by accepting Jesus and being saved).

As a result—they enjoy eternal life now and will enter into life in its fullness when they leave this earth.

Romans 8:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**

We should not think that being led by the Spirit is a pre-condition to being a son of God—instead, we become sons first, then we are able to be led by the Spirit of God which becomes the evidence of our salvation. The verb here means *"willingly led"*—in other words, we yield to the Spirit willingly at the moment of salvation and then each day thereafter.

As we do, He guides us by His Word and His 'still small voice' and gentle touch upon our lives day by day. But the question that every child of God needs to ask themselves constantly, in every situation is—am I being led by and obedient to the Holy Spirit (primarily to the Word of God) or my flesh?

Here Paul gives us the mark, the evidence—the guidelines of how to be led by the Holy Spirit as children of God—

1. A definite **conviction** in your heart.
2. It can't violate the clear **commands** in the Word of God.
3. Ask God for some **confirmation** from the Word or through circumstance.

Now there are a lot of ways the Holy Spirit will lead a child of God, but in general—He will lead you closer and closer to Jesus and farther and farther away from sin, which is what Paul is referring to in verse 13. So, Paul is saying that if you can look at your life and see yourself moving away from sin and closer to God, then that's an evidence that you are truly a child of God—

John 10:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

Those who follow Jesus are the true children of God—and as such they are safe and secure.

They hear His voice because they have a new nature—and follow Him because of their new heart.

J. Vernon McGee—

“I have been preaching the Word of God for a long time. I have found that those who are His sheep will hear His voice and obey. The others—they hated me and wanted to get rid of me. Why? They were not His sheep. The Lord Jesus said, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you.” (John 15:18)”

Romans 8:15 (NKJV)

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.”

Pastor Chuck Smith—

*“So, Paul here is declaring, ‘**for you did not receive the spirit of bondage**’, that is, you do not have a legal relationship with God. The Jews had a legal relationship with God. God had given to them the Law. God had said ‘**if you will keep this law, do these commandments—then I will be a God unto you and you shall be my people.**’ But it was a legal kind of a document, an arrangement, that God had with them.*

*But God does not want a legal relationship with you. God wants a loving relationship with you. So, the Lord said through Jeremiah the prophet, ‘**and in that day I will not write My law on tables of stone like the ten commandments. But I will write my law on the fleshly tablets of their heart.**’*

*God wants you to serve Him from your heart! God wants you to yield to the Spirit. ‘**As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.**’*

*You don’t have this legal relationship. You’ve not received the ‘**spirit of bondage again to fear.**’ Remember when God gave the law to Moses, the people were so afraid of the presence of God. They said to Moses, ‘**you go up to the mountain. You talk to Him. And you come down and tell us what He said. But we are afraid to approach the mountain.**’ The fear! You’ve not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. But you received ‘**the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father** (Aramaic for ‘papa’ or ‘daddy’).”*

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Want to know more? Click [here](#).

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