

Romans 8:1-17

In Chapters 6 & 7 Paul carefully expressed to us the conflict we experience between the Spirit and the flesh. He pointed out how sin takes hold within our flesh and prompts us to do things that we know we shouldn't be doing. He pointed out that we need to consider ourselves dead to sin, dead to the law and alive to Jesus Christ. In Chapter 8 we find out how spiritual life begins to take shape.

In Christ we have new life; we must now let the Holy Spirit grow that new life within us.

- I. A Spiritual Walk 8:1-4
- II. A Spiritual Mind 8:5-11
- III. A Spiritual Identity 8:12-17

- I. A Spiritual Walk 8:1-4

- A. 8:1 The word *condemnation* has to do with a condemning verdict or sentence. The believer need not worry about coming into judgment in that way. We receive a complete pardon when we put our faith in Jesus Christ.

John 3:16-18 (NKJV) ¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- B. Q: “That may be true theologically, but tell me, why do I often feel so condemned?”
A: Condemnation usually comes from one of three places:

- i. **From the law.** Romans 7 affirmed that the law was good, but **8:3** tells us that the law is weak. The law provides information, but not transformation. It tells us what is right, but gives us no power to carry it out. Therefore, our guilt has to lead us to the cross. Trying to live up to a law will leave you feeling condemned.
- ii. **From the devil.** The word *devil* means accuser or slanderer. He's constantly trying to make you feel guilty for things that Jesus has already forgiven. In some cases, he tries to lay guilt on you when you haven't even done anything wrong.
- iii. **From your own heart.** Real guilt causes us to feel bad. That's OK to a point, but the conviction of the Holy Spirit will move us forward to a Spirit-led course of action.

1 John 3:20 (NKJV) For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart ...

- C. The solution is twofold:

- i. **Believing what God says.** In Christ there is no condemnation. **See 8:1.**
- ii. **Learning to walk in the Spirit.** **See 8:1 & 4.** Walking in the Spirit might be described as “God-directed behavior”. The Holy Spirit leads us into God-honoring desires, pursuits and even godly responses to the daily stuff that finds its way into our lives.

Galatians 5:16 (NKJV) I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

In Christ we have new life; we must now let the Holy Spirit grow that new life within us.

II. A Spiritual Mind 8:5-11

- A. Many Christians wisely avoid certain worldly activities. They live life assuming certain things are off limits or forbidden. That's good, but it's also essential to understand that our character is shaped at a deeper level—in our mind—”be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2) It is possible to outwardly avoid a lot of worldly or carnal things and still be proud, covetous, selfish, stubborn, and arrogant. Only when the Holy Spirit renews, reeducates, and redirects our mind are we truly transformed. The complete verse goes as follows: (Also see *Mind* in Handbook of Bible Application)

Romans 12:2 (NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- A renewed mind is a mind that thinks like the Bible.

- B. Sin typically begins in the mind. A godly personality begins there too. Jesus emphasized that loving God with *all our mind* should be among our highest priorities.

Matthew 22:35-38 (NKJV) ³⁵Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

³⁷Jesus said to him, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*” ³⁸This is the first and great commandment.

- i. What do we spend our time thinking about?

- a) On the one hand we can spend our time reliving our hurts, mulling over them, dwelling on them, becoming ever more bitter. We can fantasize about a life we'll never have and shouldn't really have anyway. We can fill our minds with useless thoughts, gossip or pornographic images. All of this will shape our character.
- b) On the other hand we can cultivate a mind full of worthwhile, beneficial thoughts.

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV) Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

- c) Read **8:5-11** once more.

- Small theological footnote: Notice how the the terms used for the Persons of the Trinity are used almost interchangeably: the Spirit, God, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, Christ in you, etc.
- The Trinity is not a man-made doctrine. It's a way of reconciling what otherwise wouldn't make sense and might even seem contradictory.

In Christ we have new life; we must now let the Holy Spirit grow that new life within us.

III. A Spiritual Identity 8:12-17

- A. There is a sense in which each of us has a chosen identity. This identity is the person, personality or individual that we feel ourselves to be. It's the person in our minds that we try to live up to. Our identity will simultaneously connect us with and set us apart from other people. It will influence our decisions by help us to determine what we do or don't do, This brings an element of choice into who we are or end up being. It's almost like playing a role except that it's real. Sometimes we hear the terms "identity crisis" and "identity confusion," to describe issues people face regarding who they are.
- B. God wants us to self-identify correctly, to view ourselves properly. He wants us to know who we truly are in Christ. What's more, the Holy Spirit within us is actively trying to get us to think of ourselves properly – to take on our rightful **spiritual identity**.
- i. We are sons of God. (v.14)
 - ii. We have been adopted by God so that He is now our *Abba* or Father (Daddy). (v.15)
 - iii. We are children of God. (v.16)
 - iv. We are joint heirs with Christ. (v.17)

Galatians 3:26-29 (NKJV) ²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

1 John 3:1-3 (NKJV) ¹Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

- C. There are times when our identity, to some extent, has to change.
- i. A student who graduates needs to begin thinking differently about his or her role.
 - ii. Marriage, or divorce for that matter, causes us to rethink our role in life.
 - iii. Having a first child makes someone a parent – and that means thinking of yourself in light of those new responsibilities.
 - iv. Jesus imposed a change of identity upon His first disciples.

Matt. 4:18-20 (NKJV) And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

In Christ we have new life; we must now let the Holy Spirit grow that new life within us.

Conclusions:

- This *change of identity* may be the most important part of this passage.
- We need to begin thinking of ourselves as children of God and joint heirs with Christ.
 - Since this is how God sees us, we need to begin viewing ourselves from this perspective.
 - This ought to affect our actions and our thinking.
- For example:
 - A bum in the park may behave strangely, but nobody really gets upset over it. You try to ignore him, you move to another spot in the park, if need be you ask a police officer for some help. Let's say the bum gets arrested. It's still a very low-impact issue.
 - What if the arrested bum turns out to be a local politician? Everything now changes. It's all over the news, the guy probably loses his job. He has certainly lost his credibility. The man should have realized that in politics it matters what you do outside the office.

In Christ we have new life; we must now let the Holy Spirit grow that new life within us.

- We are now children of God, joint heirs with Christ. We have a heavenly inheritance that we will some day enter into. We need to have a spiritual walk, a spiritual mind and begin living up to our spiritual identity. We have a spiritual destiny to fulfill. Some of us, spiritually speaking, are still acting like bums in the park. Our minds are carnal, our walk is carnal and we are still trying to maintain a carnal identity. Well, we can't. Our position in God's family places us at a much higher level than a local politician. We're more like royalty – and we need to live up to different standards.

Philippians 3:17-21 (NKJV) ¹⁷Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. ²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.