

Romans 8:12-17
April 12, 2015

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

If you weren't here for the opening lesson on chapter 8, let me bring you up to speed. I suggested that most of us probably don't live our lives with a frame of mind that says, "I'm going to live victoriously in Christ Jesus today!" In fact, most of us have probably fallen into the trap of going through life a bit in automatic pilot. Yet, we have the Holy Spirit in us who empowers us to live our lives for Jesus.

When I prepared the lesson for Chapter 8, I just saw numerous nuggets of truth where our Triune God is working in us to help us live victoriously. So we are going to continue in that vein.

Transition: I am still proposing that every born-again believer CAN live a victorious life in Christ BY trusting all the WAYS that our Triune God works in us once we became His child. As we go through the remainder of this chapter, let's pluck out the WAYS that our Triune God works in us.

BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Rom 8:12-17 The Spirit Has you!]

V.12:

- Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.

V.13:

- For 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,** [He is the Spirit of death. He can enable us to "put to death" the sinful deeds of the body.]

The Holy Spirit is the "the Spirit of Adoption":

V.14:

- because **those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.** [verb for "led by the Spirit" means "willingly led." We yield to the Spirit, and He guides us by His Word]

V.15:

- **For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.** And by him we cry, "*Abba, Father.*"

V.16:

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

V.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.

Process Observations/Questions:

- Q: We are looking for WAYS that a Triune God works in us as God's children. Let's just go verse by verse and see if we can identify them. What ways do you see in these verses? [Review all highlighted phrases above and process them]

LOOK:

When we said “yes” to Jesus, we were sealed by the Holy Spirit, which means He lives in you. Let’s thank God that He allowed us to become His child and adopted us. You are the precious child of the King! This week, remember that you are precious to Him, regardless of what others think of you. You have a perfect Father in heaven we can call “Abba Father” who loves us unconditionally.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 539–543). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

But there is a third level of experience for which the other two are preparation.

“The Spirit has you!” (vv. 12–17) It is not enough for us to have the Spirit; the Spirit must have us! Only then can He share with us the abundant, victorious life that can be ours in Christ. We have no obligation to the flesh, because the flesh has only brought trouble into our lives. We do have an obligation to the Holy Spirit, for it is the Spirit who convicted us, revealed Christ to us, and imparted eternal life to us when we trusted Christ. Because He is “the Spirit of Life,” He can empower us to obey Christ, and He can enable us to be more like Christ.

But He is also the Spirit of death. He can enable us to “put to death” (mortify) the sinful deeds of the body. As we yield the members of our body to the Spirit (Rom. 6:12–17), He applies to us and in us the death and resurrection of Christ. He puts to death the things of the flesh, and He reproduces the things of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is also “the Spirit of adoption” (Rom. 8:14–17). The word *adoption* in the New Testament means “being placed as an adult son.” We come into God’s family by birth. But the instant we are born into the family, God adopts us and gives us the position of an adult son. A baby cannot walk, speak, make decisions, or draw on the family wealth. But the believer can do all of these the instant he is born again.

He can walk and be “led of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:14). The verb here means “willingly led.” We yield to the Spirit, and He guides us by His Word day by day. We are not under bondage to Law and afraid to act. We have the liberty of the Spirit and are free to follow Christ. The believer can also speak: “We cry, Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15). Would it not be amazing if a newborn baby looked up and greeted his father! First, the Spirit says, “Abba, Father” to us (Gal. 4:6), and then we say it to God. (“Abba” means “papa”—a term of endearment.)

A baby cannot sign checks, but the child of God by faith can draw on his spiritual wealth because he is an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ (Rom. 8:17). The Spirit teaches us from the Word, and then we receive God’s wealth by faith. What a thrilling thing it is to have “the Spirit of adoption” at work in our lives!

There is no need for the believer to be defeated. He can yield his body to the Spirit and by faith overcome the old nature. The Spirit of life will empower him. The Spirit of death will enable him to overcome the flesh. And the Spirit of adoption will enrich him and lead him into the will of God.

Witmer, J. A. (1985). *Romans*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 472–476). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

D. Power for sanctification (8:12–17).

8:12–14. Paul drew a conclusion and made an application from his previous discussion.

Therefore ... we have an obligation. Each believer’s responsibility is a positive one—to live each day in the control and power of the Holy Spirit. But first Paul expressed this truth negatively—**not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.** Each Christian is to refuse to follow the inclinations and desires of his sin nature. He is to deny the efforts of that nature to

impose its lifestyle on him (cf. Titus 2:12). The reason is that a **sinful** manner of life results in death. This does not suggest that a believer who sins will face eternal death in hell; instead, it means he will not enjoy his spiritual life. He will seem like an unsaved person (1 Cor. 3:1–4) and will be unable to enjoy the indwelling presence of the Spirit. **You will die** is literally, “you are about to die,” or “you are at the point of dying.”

On the other hand, **if by the Spirit you put to death** (pres. tense, “are putting to death”) **the misdeeds of the body, you will live**. A few Greek manuscripts have “flesh” instead of “body.” But the body is the vehicle by which one’s sin-nature expresses itself (cf. Rom. 6:6, 13). Only by the Holy Spirit’s power can a believer put to death the sins of his former life (cf. Eph. 4:22–31; Col. 3:5–9). This is what Paul referred to when he said “count yourselves dead to sin” (Rom. 6:11).

Paul then continued his explanation. **Those who are led** (pres. tense, “are being led”) **by the Spirit of God are sons of God**. Many Bible students see no difference between the word translated “sons” in 8:14 and the word translated “children” in verse 16. However, in verse 16 the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence attests *the believer’s birth relationship to God* (*tekna*, “children,” is lit., “born ones”). But in verse 14 the Holy Spirit’s control and direction attests *the believer’s privileges in God’s family* as a “son” (*huios* means a child mature enough to take on adult family privileges and responsibilities). A son in God’s family is led by God’s Spirit.

8:15–17. In contrast with the control of sin, which enslaves to the point of **fear**, believers have **received the Spirit of sonship**. The word translated “sonship” (*huiiothesias*) means “placing as a son” and is frequently translated “adoption” (as in, e.g., v. 23). Believers are adopted sons (Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5), not slaves (Gal. 4:7); so they need not be enslaved to sin or in fear. In New Testament times adopted sons enjoyed the same privileges as natural-born sons. So, instead of cowering in slave-like fear, Christians can approach God in an intimate way calling Him **Abba, Father**. “Abba” is a Greek and English transliteration of the Aramaic word for father (used elsewhere in the NT only in Mark 14:36; Gal. 4:6). Besides being adopted into God’s family as sons, believers also are His children (*tekna*, “born ones”) by the new birth (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1–2). And **the Holy Spirit**, who gives believers life, **testifies with** (not to) their **spirit** (s) of the fact of the new birth.

In many families children inherit their parents’ estates; each child is an heir and the children together are co-heirs. Similarly, since Christians **are God’s children**, they **are His heirs** (cf. Gal. 4:7), **and** they are **co-heirs with Christ**. They are recipients of all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3) now, and in the future they will share with the Lord Jesus in all the riches of God’s kingdom (John 17:24; 1 Cor. 3:21–23). Sharing with Jesus Christ, however, involves more than anticipating the glories of heaven. For Jesus Christ it involved suffering and abuse and crucifixion; therefore being co-heirs with Christ requires that believers **share in His sufferings** (cf. John 15:20; Col. 1:24; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12). In fact believers do share in His sufferings; **if indeed** translates *eiper*, which means “if, as is the fact” (cf. Rom. 8:9). Then after the suffering they will **share in His glory** (2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Peter 4:13; 5:10).