

ROMANS

From Wretchedness to Righteousness

Study 12

Romans 8:1-17

Fighting Sin With The Spirit

Regeneration: New Freedom to Live (Romans 8:1-5)

Verse 1

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

1) Objective question. Choose the most appropriate answer(s), which can be more than one.

Verse 1 says that there is “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”. Which of the following statement is true according to the video lecture?

- A. After becoming Christian, we become totally good and never sin again
- B. I must be a good Christian or God will leave me
- C. No condemnation only applies to those who stop sinning
- D. Only past sins are forgiven, not the future sins

E. Both past and future sins are forgiven

Verse 2-4

Romans 8:2-4

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

2) Objective question. Choose the most appropriate answer(s), which can be more than one.

Which of the following statement is true according to the video lecture?

- A. God loves you no matter what because he sees Jesus when He sees you**
- B. “righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us” in verse 4 means imputed righteousness from Jesus to us.**
- C. The law (v.2) could not free us from sin and death because of the enslaving fleshly desires, so God has to send his own Son to free us**
- D. The new way is according to the Spirit, not law, not flesh.**

Sanctification: New Method to Live (Romans 8:5-13)

Verse 5-8

Romans 8:5-8
For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

3) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture, fill in the difference between living by the flesh and living by the Spirit.

Living by the flesh (self)	Living by the Spirit
Minds set on what the flesh desires	Mind set on what the Spirit desires
Brings death	Brings life and peace
Hostile to God, does not submit to God nor can it do so.	Indwelling of the Spirit
Cannot please God	

Verse 9-11

Romans 8:9-11
You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

4) a) Reflection question. The Holy Spirit is with you no matter when you do good or bad. How does that make you feel?

b) Objective question. Choose the most appropriate answer. According to the video lecture the Holy Spirit is:

- A. A force
- B. A person**

Quick Verse Reference
John 16:13-14
But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak

on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.

Verse 12-13

Romans 8:12-13

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

5) a) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture, there are 2 parts to the Holy Spirit’s sanctification. Google the definition of the 2 types, choose the most suitable, and describe it in the Christian context in your own words.

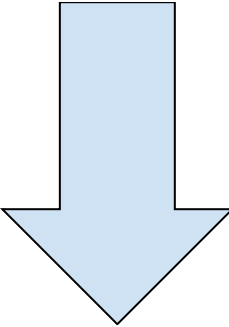

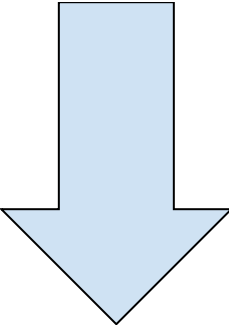
	Part one	Part two
Description	The Holy Spirit helps us see the glory of Jesus.	Moving away from the world, mortifying your flesh (Romans 8:12-13)
Metaphor	Aspire to please spouse after marriage	Stop leaving messy clothes around the house
Type	Aspiration	Mortification
Definition according to Google	a hope or ambition of achieving something.	the action of subduing one's wordly desires.
Your own words	Desire to change/want to change	Resist or killing the urge to do things that aren't good in the eyes of God

b) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture, there are two types of actions that can facilitate sanctification. Fill in the blanks on what type of actions and what type of results as evidence by each of the verses.

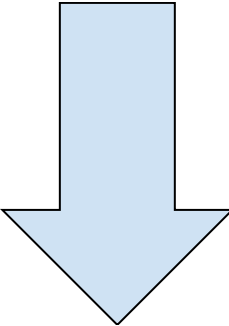
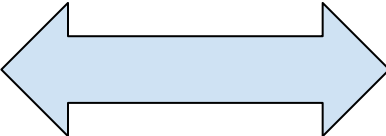
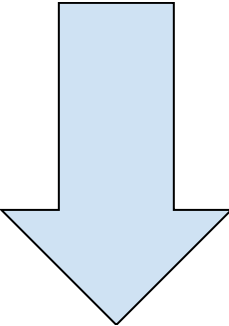
ESV	Action	Result
Colossians 3:16	Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,	teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
Ephesians 5:18-	And do not get drunk with	addressing one another in psalms and

19	wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,	hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,
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c) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture, fill in details on the views on “how the spirit works”

Conservative view	Balanced view	Charismatic view
		
Biblical truth	Both Experiential and biblical truth	Experiential
Spirit always works together with the truth		

c) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture, fill in details on the sanctification.

Legalism	Biblical	Let go Let God
		
Human effort	Human effort led by Spirit	Spirit alone

High Assurance: New Reason to Live (Romans 8:14-17)

Verse 14-17

Romans 8:14-17

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 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.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. 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.

6) Objective question. Choose the most appropriate answer(s), which can be more than one. According to the video lecture, what are the things we will receive as children of God?

A. Access and Security

B. Inheritance and Authority

C. Assurance and Intimacy

D. Responsibilities as free child labor and the bills for old folk’s home

E. Beatings, scoldings, and years of therapy

Case Studies

Case 1

Manga Low was fascinated when he attended the Church of Subang Jaya because the pastor was always preaching about the Holy Spirit.

When the sermon revolved about Romans 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 set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace” (Romans 8:5-6 ESV)

Manga wanted to be taught how to speak in tongues and attended a class on prophesy as well as one on healing. He reasoned that these are the things of the Spirit and when he was doing this, he was setting his mind on the Spirit.

He struggled with his business and adopted some shady practices like shortchanging his customers and misrepresenting facts about the items he sold. When he was found out, he felt very guilty and did not go to church for weeks on end. Then he came back to church and continued to speak in tongues every day and started to prophesy over people because it made him feel close to God. He started to pay more and more tithing to the church. He attended church almost 3-4 times a week.

7) a) Discussion question. Has Manga properly understood what it means to have the mind set on the Spirit? What does Paul mean about setting our minds on the things of the Spirit? You may use the model answer below to help you answer.

1 Corinthians 13:1 "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." Like how they say an empty tin makes a lot of noise, so I think Manga prioritize the wrong thing. God cares more about what type of person you are rather than any impressive ability that you can do. God can't be impressed by anything that you can do, He can do everything! He prefers that we don't self-destruct by continuously sinning.

Model answer

Paul says the connection between living and thinking is a tight and close one. Literally, he says: "For those being according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh, but those being according to the spirit mind the things of the Spirit." In other words, whatever you have set your mind upon shapes your lifestyle and character. But what does it mean to "mind" something or "set the mind?" Even in English, when the word "mind" is used as a verb, it has a stronger meaning than simply "to think about." It means to focus intently on something, to be preoccupied with something, to have the attention and the imagination totally captured by something.

Archbishop William Temple once said, "Your religion is what you do with your solitude." In other words, wherever your mind goes most naturally and freely (when there is nothing else to distract it), that is what you really live for. That is your religion. Your life is shaped by that which preoccupies your mind.

b) What are the "things of the Spirit?" This is not the same thing as simply thinking about religion all the time or theology in general. Manga thinks it is the spectacular supernatural manifestations of the Spirit which is why he is always attending classes to this effect. The "things" of the Spirit would be those things to which the Spirit draws attention; to mind, the Spirit would be to be preoccupied with the things the Spirit is preoccupied with. What are those? In the rest of chapter 8, we see that the Spirit comes to show us that we are sons and daughters of the Lord. (We will explore this much more next week.) Notice in v.14 that those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God. Verses 15-16 tell us that the Spirit removes a sense of fear of rejection and assures us we are God's beloved children. Verses 26-27 tell us the Spirit gives us the confidence to approach God in prayer. In other words, the rest of Romans 8 tells us what the Spirit is preoccupied with — how in Christ we are adopted, loved, welcomed.

A parallel passage is Colossians 3:1-4. "Since you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated... your life is now hidden with Christ in God..." Here Paul tells us to be preoccupied with "things above" — we are to remember we have been raised with Christ and are accepted in him before the Father. The Holy Spirit is not mentioned

here, but the principle is the same. We are to be preoccupied with our standing in Christ. We are to drill into our minds and hearts his love and adoption of us. To “mind the things of the Spirit” means to never forget our privileged standing, to never forget we are love

b) Discussion question. How has his misunderstanding about setting his mind on the Spirit, led to his current behavior when he left the church for a while and then came back and attended even more vigorously?

Manga has a basic misunderstanding about the work of the Holy Spirit. He equated the speaking in tongues and ministry gifts to closeness to God. The work of the Spirit involves regeneration in conversion, sanctification as we are molded closer and closer to the image of God, and assurance with anointing for ministry. Just because God uses us for ministry with power does not mean that we are closer to Him. Ministry and gifts are not a proxy for the relationship and sanctification which is the primary focus of a Christian. The work of the Spirit in sanctifying us will produce the fruit of the Spirit namely love, joy, peace, etc.

c) Discussion question. How do we live by the Spirit and put to death the deeds of the body in verse 13? You may use the model answer below to help you answer.

Desire to change for God and deliberately enforcing that killing of thyself.

Model answer

How it works is like a two-stroke engine. There is Aspiration and Mortification or putting to death the old nature.

Aspiration means the changing of one’s motivation to sin by remembering to apply the gospel. It looks at the motives of the heart. Verse 12 says, “Therefore, brethren, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature...” This is a critical statement. “Therefore” refers to the statement before, in which Paul tells us we have been redeemed by Christ’s righteousness and we will some day be totally delivered from all evil and pain in the bodily resurrection. Then Paul turns and says, “Therefore we have an obligation...” Some translations say, “Therefore we are debtors — but NOT to the sinful nature.” Paul means if we remember what Christ has done and will do for us, we will feel the obligations of love and gratitude to serve and know him.

Paul is saying that sin can only be cut off at the root if we expose ourselves constantly to the unimaginable love of Christ for us. That exposure stimulates a wave of gratitude and a feeling of indebtedness. Sin only can grow in the soil of self-pity and a feeling of “owed-ness.” “I’m not getting a fair shake! I’m not getting my needs met! I’ve had a hard life! God owes me; people owe me; I owe me!” That’s the heart-attitude of “owedness.” But Paul says, you must remind yourself that you are a debtor. You bathe yourself in the remembrance of the grace of

God — that will loosen, weaken, and kill sin at the motivational level.

Mortification (putting to death):

We should notice the progression of thought here. In vv.9-11, Paul is saying that when we received Christ and became righteous in God's sight, the Holy Spirit came in and made us spiritually alive. (v.10 – "Your spirit is alive because of righteousness.") Someday, even our bodies will be totally renewed and eternally alive by the Spirit. (v.11– "He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit.") But there is still within us, which is hostile and inimical to our growing spiritual life, the remaining sin nature. And Paul says here that, "If you let the remaining sinful nature alone — if you allow it to prosper and grow, there will be terrible trouble. Instead, you must by the Spirit attack and put it to death." The more you put to death the sinful nature, the more you will enjoy the spiritual life that the Holy Spirit gives — life and peace (v.6). This process of "putting to death" is what the older theologians used to call "mortification." They got it from the old King James translation of the verse — "If ye through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Mortification means ruthless full-hearted resistance to sinful practice. The very word translated "put to death" (Greek word thanatoute) is violent and total. It means a "ruthless rejection of all practices we know to be wrong" (John Stott). It means to declare war on attitudes and behaviors that are wrong — to give them no quarter, take no prisoners, to pull out all the stops. It means a Christian doesn't play games with sin. You don't "taper off" or say, "I can keep it under control." You get as far away from it as possible. You don't just avoid things you know are sin, but things that lead to it, and even things that are doubtful. This is war! Putting to death!

Therefore, "putting to death" (v.13) is just one form, a sub-set under "setting the mind on the things of the Spirit" (vv.5-6). Mortification is withering a sin's power over you by focusing on Christ's redemption in such a way as to soften your heart with gratitude and love which brings you to hate the sin for itself, so it loses its power of attraction over you.

Sum: We "kill sin in the Spirit" when we 1) soften our heart from sinful motivations with a sense of our debt to love and grace 2) minding the things of the Spirit. 3) by turning from sinful practices ruthlessly.

d) Discussion question. Write down some very practical ways in which you can "put to death" a particular sin pattern. What will you say to your heart that can undercut sin's power over you? Share with others your experiences. You may use the model answer below to help you answer.

Recognizing the immortal becoming mortal in the form of Jesus is a slow realisation process, it's like me going into a story book, to save the side characters. It sounds so absurd to risk my life for

something that is relatively insignificant. The appreciation grows with that realisation of the absurdity, which is a process of a lifetime.

Model Answer

The key to this exercise is to write down “grace-centered mini-sermons” you can preach to yourself during the day, especially when tempted. (Remember from v.5 — your life is an expression of your mind.) Most Christians try to control themselves with “law-centered mini-sermons.” In other words, we say to ourselves things like: “God will get me” OR “It’s against my Christian principles” OR “It will hurt people around me” OR “I will be embarrassed” OR “It will hurt my self-esteem” OR “I’ll be caught” OR “I’ll hate myself in the morning.” Some or all of these may be true, but Paul tells us — inadequate! They don’t kill. That is taking your sin to the law and using the sense of fear to deter yourself.

But we are to use the logic of the gospel on ourselves. “Look what he’s done for me! Is this how I respond to him?”

“A legalistic conviction of sin ariseth from a consideration of God’s justice chiefly, but an evangelical conviction of sin comes from a sense of God’s goodness and grace. A legally convicted person cries out, ‘I have exasperated a power that is as the roaring of a lion... I have provoked one that is the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, whose word can tear up the foundation of the world...’ But an evangelically convicted person cries, ‘I have incensed a goodness that is like the dropping of the dew; I have offended a God who comes to me as a loving friend!... Is my heart made of marble or iron to be so hard?’

– Stephen Charnock, Works, vol.4, p.199

Here is how one old pastor preached to his heart with the gospel:

“What have I done? What love, mercy, what blood, what grace have I despised and trampled upon? Is this the return I make to the Father for his love, to the Son for his blood, to the Spirit for his grace? Do I thus requite the Lord? Have I defiled the heart that Christ died to wash?... What can I say to the dear Lord Jesus?... Do I account communion with him of so little value?... Shall I endeavor to disappoint the very purpose of the death of Christ?”

– John Owen, On Mortification

Case 2

Felicity Lum attends a church in Subang Jaya where the Holy Spirit plays a pretty dominant role. She is quite dismissive of conservative churches as they just fill you with head knowledge and no heart knowledge. She says she is not much into bible study as the knowledge is always puffed up. She has been a Christian for 15 years and never does any bible studies, just reads her daily bread. She is into prayer and spends most days in prayer.

She receives message from God in terms of impressions. God will tell her that this person or that person is in trouble and she will seek to minister to them.

On the weekends she usually comes up to the front of her church to be ministered and to be prayed over and many times to be “slain in the Spirit” where she feels the power of the Spirit surge through her body like electricity. This is the filling of the Spirit.

She runs a neighborhood bar and many of her workers despise her as she is a hard woman and very tight fisted. They never accept her invitations to church. She is loud and finds faults with most people she comes into contact.

8) a) Discussion question. Is Felicity really being filled with the Holy Spirit? How do you know?

Felicity does not adequately meet the biblical definition of being filled with the Spirit. There is no exhibition of the fruit of the Spirit in her life. There is no endearment to the Word of God. It does not play a large role in her life as she is only ever at Daily Bread even after 15 years as a believer. We are not sure as to whether the Spirit really speaks to her and inner impressions are often very subjective even if the promptings are to minister to people in need.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?¹⁰ “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds

(Jeremiah 17:9-10 ESV)

Whatever her messages from the Spirit are it must be according to the truth which is the Word

b) Discussion question. What is the relationship between the Spirit and the Word looking at Col 3: 16 and Ephesians 5:18-19? What is the proper biblical explanation of being filled with the Spirit in these verses?

Being filled with the Spirit is being filled with the Word, it is inextricably linked. Hence Felicity needs to engage with the Word to be filled with the Spirit.

She cannot just seek the emotional experience of the Spirit and not the Word as they come together.

c) Discussion question. What does the Spirit do to the Word?

The Spirit’s job is to highlight the Word, to provide understanding. Drive the head knowledge into the heart knowledge. Imagine a man who has been told to diet and keep of high cholesterol foods all the time and he has head knowledge, he knows it must be done but he does not do it. The knowledge remains head knowledge. One day after a heart attack the reality of that truth becomes sharply real in his life due to his near death experience and finally his behavior changes,

there is transformation. The information has percolated from the head to the heart via the experience of the heart attack. The Holy Spirit's job is to make God's word real in the heart of the believer in the same way.

d) Discussion question. Look at John 16:13-14 and discuss what the role of the HS is in the lives of Christians. Do you have this in your lives ...please share with each other

The job of the Holy Spirit is to make Jesus real in our lives. That the more and more we realize how beautiful and glorious and important He is to us so that He will take up greater and greater portions of our lives. We find Him so wonderful that we willingly and excitingly seek Him.

Meditation

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 set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace
(Romans 8:5-6 ESV)

What wrong attitudes do I need to repent of?

What is it in these verses that bring comfort?

What is it in these verses that build me up?

Meditate on these for the next week and come back to share with each other how God has spoken to you through the Holy Spirit.