

## LED BY THE SPIRIT

### **TEXT: ROMANS 8:5-17**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Romans 8 teaches that by the power of the Holy Spirit we are delivered from the condemnation of sin (cf. 8:1, 2).
2. We are not condemned because we are "in Christ Jesus" (8:1).
3. We are delivered from the power of the flesh (8:3, 4).
4. And we are delivered from the power of death (8:11).
5. Romans 8:12 continues along these lines -- "Therefore" (8:12).
6. Therefore, we are not debtors "to the flesh" (8:12), but to the Spirit.
7. The emphasis here in Romans chapter 8 is on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (8:1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, etc.).

#### **I. TO MIND THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT (8:5-12)**

#### **II. TO MORTIFY THE DEEDS OF THE BODY (8:13)**

#### **III. TO ALLOW GOD TO GUIDE US (8:14-17)**

#### **I. TO MIND THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT (8:5-12)**

1. We are not "to live after the flesh" (8:12). "Flesh" in Romans 8 refers to our old sinful unregenerate nature. It is the life lived apart from God (8:5, 6).
2. It is "enmity against God" (8:7), literally "hostile to God."
3. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (8:8).
4. There is a great contrast presented here (cf. 8:9).
5. To "mind" the things of the Spirit means "to interest oneself in or to set the affection on" (*Strong's Concordance*).
6. It means, they that are after the flesh do set their minds on the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
7. To be led by the Spirit means to mind the things of the Spirit.
8. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "The whole bent, trend, and tendency" of a man's nature "will be towards that which actuates him. Natural things suit the natural man and spiritual things suit the spiritual man" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).
9. Because the Holy Spirit has given life to his soul, and will "quicken" (make alive) his mortal body, the Christian has an obligation (he is a "debtor") to live after the Spirit (8:11, 12).
10. Paul uses the word "debtor" three times in this epistle (1:14; 8:12; 15:27). It refers to a spiritual obligation.

11. We have derived nothing good from the flesh, so we are under no obligation to the flesh. The flesh is still in us after we get saved, but we are not to mind the things of the flesh.

## II. TO MORTIFY THE DEEDS OF THE BODY (8:13)

1. Romans 8:13 shows a contrast between the unsaved man who lives after the flesh, and a saved man who walks in the Spirit and mortifies the deeds of the body.
2. Kenneth S. Wuest said, "The individual who lives habitually under the dominion of the evil nature is an unsaved person. That one is on the way to final death in the Lake of Fire. But the person who by the Holy Spirit habitually puts to death the deeds of the body, will live. That person is a saved person" (*Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*).
3. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die" (8:13). If a man lives a corrupt life that flows from his corrupt nature, then death is the inevitable result.
4. On the other hand, the true believer will mind the things of the Spirit, and will walk in the Spirit, and will "mortify the deeds of the body" and live (8:13).
5. "Mortify" (8:13) means "put to death."
6. The same Greek word translated "mortify" is used elsewhere in the New Testament in reference to our Lord's crucifixion. Matthew 26:59 says, "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death."
7. First Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."
8. Paul uses this same word in Romans 7:4, where it is translated "dead."
9. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."
10. We died to the law when we were saved. This happened when we became united to Christ by faith. Now we are "in Christ" (8:1).
11. We entered into our union with Christ through faith. Now "we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (8:12). Therefore, through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit we are obligated to mortify (to put to death) the deeds of the body (8:13).
12. The flesh can never be "eradicated" in this life, but the deeds which proceed from the flesh can be mortified or put to death.
13. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "It is important for the spiritual life that we should remember that the flesh is still with us and dangerous, and that it is to

be dealt with not by extirpation, but by mortification" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).

14. Dealt with not by extirpation, but by mortification.
15. "Extirpation" means, "to pull out by the roots and removed."
16. It should be noted that the verb "mortify" in Romans 8:13 means "to keep on making dead." Not a one-time act, but day by day, and moment by moment.
17. This leads to a life of victory over sin. Living after the flesh leads to death (8:14).
18. We cannot defeat the power of the flesh by our own strength, but only by the power of the Holy Spirit -- "through the Spirit" (8:13); "led by the Spirit" (8:14); "the Spirit of adoption" (8:15); etc.
19. Efforts to live the Christian life apart from the power of the Holy Spirit can only lead to failure.

### **III. TO ALLOW GOD TO GUIDE US (8:14-17)**

1. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (8:14). This indicates that being led by the Spirit is the normal Christian life because all born again believers are children of God.
2. Sadly, many Christians live subnormal Christian lives.
3. Leonard Ravenhill said, "Christianity today is so subnormal that if any Christian began to act like a normal New Testament Christian, he would be considered abnormal."
4. In contrast to "the spirit of bondage" which produces fear, we have received the spirit of adoption, which is the spirit of freedom (8:15).
5. Those who are in the flesh (unbelievers) are in bondage; they are enslaved to sin. They are continually subject to fear (8:15). That is why so many sinners drink and take drugs, and go to psychiatrists, etc.
6. Second Timothy 1:7 says, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."
7. "The Spirit of adoption" (8:15) is the Holy Spirit. Warren Wiersbe said, "We *enter* God's family by regeneration, but we *enjoy* God's family by adoption."
8. "Regeneration concerns our nature and condition, while adoption concerns our position and privileges" (W.H. Griffith Thomas).
9. One who has been adopted enters into all the rights and privileges of sonship (cf. 8:14). We are sons through regeneration and adoption.
10. In Romans 8:16, the KJV translation says, "the Spirit itself," whereas most modern translations say, "the Spirit Himself." This is because the Greek word "spirit" (*pneuma*) is neuter in gender. According to the rules of Greek grammar, the personal pronoun must agree with its antecedent in gender, therefore, the translation "itself" is correct grammatically.

11. But since the Holy Spirit is a Person, the pronoun "Himself" is correct theologically.
12. "Beareth witness" (8:16) describes the intimate union and intimate knowledge that comes from the Spirit of God to our spirit. We can know that we are children of God. This is assurance of salvation.
13. We are not only children of God, but "heirs of God." And not only heirs, but "joint-heirs with Christ" (8:17).
14. Warren Wiersbe said, "In fact, we are joint-heirs with Christ, so that He cannot receive His inheritance in glory until we are there to share it with Him" (*Expository Outlines in the New Testament*).
15. Regeneration is evidence of justification, and the born again child of God is led by the Holy Spirit from the moment he is saved till the moment he goes to heaven to receive his full inheritance.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Romans 8:17 refers to suffering for Christ, but Christians in America know very little of this.
2. But many Christians around the world are being tortured and martyred for their faith in Christ.
3. Here is a recent article by "Open Doors," a ministry in over sixty countries where Christians are being persecuted, imprisoned and executed.
4. "For the thirteenth consecutive year, North Korea is ranked No. 1 on the World Watch List of the fifty countries where persecution is most extreme. The god-like worship of the leader, Kim Jong-Un, and his predecessors leaves little room for any other religions and Christians face unimaginable pressure in every sphere of life. Meeting with other Christians is virtually impossible. Anyone discovered engaging in unauthorized religious activity is subject to arrest, arbitrary detention, disappearance, torture and/or execution. Those Christians who attempt to return to North Korea from China are sentenced to life in prison or executed."
5. North Korea consistently ranks as No. 1 on the World Watch List of the 50 countries where persecution is most extreme. Nine of the other top ten countries are Muslim countries.
6. Meanwhile here in the USA, Christians make a big fuss over Starbucks coffee cups!