



In Paul’s systematic presentation of the Gospel, Romans 8 gives the clearest description of the work of the Holy Spirit found anywhere in Scripture. Here is where we learn who the Spirit is and how He imparts life to us.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Romans 8:5-17

⁵Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

¹²Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation -- but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. ¹³For 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, ¹⁴because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵For 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." ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷Now 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.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Look up the word “Spirit” in a Bible dictionary. Define spirit in your own words.

Count the number of times “Spirit” is used in this passage.

Make a list comparing what Paul says about living according to the sinful nature and living according to the Spirit (vv. 5-11).

Sinful Nature	Spirit
What is the relationship of each mindset to the Law of God?	

Since we are not set right with God by doing good works, what is the motive for changing our lives?

How are we to deal with our sinful nature (vv. 13-14; see 6:13, 19)?

What does it mean to be led by the Spirit (v. 14)?

How is that evident?

From v. 17 explain what Paul is describing by “share in His sufferings” (see v. 18 & I Peter 2:21).

What type of suffering is Paul referring to?

What do you think he means by “glory to come”?

LIFE RESPONSE: What Does it Mean to Me?

What does it mean, to you, that you are not God's slave, but His child?

How can this help you handle feelings of guilt and unworthiness?

When unhealthy thoughts enter your mind, what is most useful in dealing with them?

Can you give an example from your life where you have depended on the Spirit as you worked to "put to death" an area of sin?

Many people who are adopted into the spiritual family of Christ remain ignorant of their new roots. What a shame! Our heavenly Father has written over 1800 pages of family history and has preserved it unadulterated for some 4000 years. What an insult to our heavenly Father, to remain ignorant of our heritage!

We need to know that the Godhead has three Persons, not just two - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Many do not even know how the third person functions. We may observe his fruit in our lives without knowing who he is.

How can I know the Spirit is leading me? What is the dominant characteristic of the Spirit-filled life? Should I expect signs, wonders, miracles, and speaking in tongues? Good news! In Paul's systematic presentation of the gospel, Romans 8 gives the clearest description of the work of the Holy Spirit found anywhere in Scripture. Although it is not exhaustive in detail, it is complete as to its presentation of theme. This chapter covers everything from justification to glorification. If this was all we knew, we could live a balanced life, knowing who the Spirit is and how he imparts life to us.

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Christians are called to **sanctification**. It remains the indispensable condition of their communion with God. As the complement of justification it is, a work of the Holy Spirit, both as a one-time act, and as an ongoing, progressive work. In the latter sense, it also becomes a human work. It takes place in our earthly lives, as a moral and spiritual cleansing and dedication of soul and body, harnessing and deploying all human faculties in the service of God, for the upbuilding of Christian fellowship and the implementation of God's will in the world. Holiness means to be at God's disposal. It is the restoration of the image of God in man, the gradual assimilation of the believer to Christ and "the mind of Christ", and the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (2 Cor. 2:4). Directed by the double commandment of love of God and love of neighbour as the fullest description of human dedication, it works by the instruction and drive of the Holy Spirit through which we fulfill the requirements of God's law (Rom. 8:14, 4). Finally, sanctification, the eager pursuit of holiness in the midst of an unholy world, is the positive alternative to secularism, the attitude of a world turning away from God.

J.I. Packer,
New Dictionary of Theology