

Seven Blessings of the Spirit

We learned from God's Word to the Corinthians that there are two classes of Christians. Paul speaks of some who are carnal and of others who are spiritual. The life of the carnal Christian is an improper and wretched state. Therefore, it is important that we consider the steps by which we can get out of the carnal state and into the spiritual. In order for a person to make such a transformation, he/she must first be fully convinced and deeply convicted of the error and unpleasing nature of the carnal state before God, and full of hope and belief in the possibilities and blessedness of the spiritual state. What does God's Word teach of a life in the Spirit?

When the Children of Israel got to Kadesh-Barnea not long after the exodus from Egypt, they sent out spies to see what the land was like. God expected that when they saw the grapes and heard of the beauty of that land that they would all be eager to enter in. Their thoughts and impressions should have centered on the excellence of God's provision. This is precisely how God wants us to view the spiritual life, believing that it is God's wonderful plan and intention for our lives and that it is indeed possible and within our reach. God desires us to believe that we may live a life in the fullness of the Spirit day by day.

Romans 8:1-16 reveals seven of the blessed fruits of the Spirit in us, allowing us to live by the Spirit, walk by the Spirit, and be led by the Spirit as God's sons.

1. **"Walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."** (8:4) Our entire being and conduct must be under the rule of the Spirit.
2. **"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed us from the law of sin and death."** (8:2) The Spirit frees us from one realm and escorts us into another.
3. **"They that mind the Spirit – you are in the Spirit - the Spirit dwells in you."** (8:6, 9-11) All genuine believers have a new nature imparted into them, even God's Spirit exists within each one.
4. **"Mind the things of the Spirit."** (8:6) Minding just the Spirit yields life and peace. Mind (a verb not a noun, here) relates to our disposition; to mind the things of the Spirit means to have a spiritual disposition.
5. **"Those who through the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body shall live."** (8:13) The Spirit applies the "putting to death" of the flesh and sin in our body, making it an actual reality.
6. **"As many as are led by the Spirit of God these are the sons of God."** (8:14) God the Father desires to lead us as His sons. This is Divine guidance which supersedes our natural inclinations and selfish ambitions.
7. **"You have not received the spirit of slavery (bondage) bringing your into fear again, but you have received the Spirit of sonship (adoption)."** (8:15) The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are indeed God's sons (8:16).

Romans 8:1-16 is simply the description of every genuine believer's normal life in Christ. As we mentioned previously, most Christians remain immature based on being carnal or fleshly. But that should not be the norm. It is also easy to get caught up with matters like the baptism of the Spirit, spiritual gifts, and of being filled with the Spirit for God's service, as though these were God's goal. However, it is possible and all-too-often true that many who have the baptism of the Holy Spirit for special service, and those who are given special grace and gifts from the Spirit, are still carnal.

Many Christians seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a power for work only, but lose sight of the far more important matter: that we need the baptism of the Holy Spirit to saturate our whole life and living. In other words, the work of the Spirit constitutes our living, rather than being limited to an event or act at a certain point in time. For example, over 100 men in the gold fields of South Africa had been Christian workers for years, but eventually gave up their work of the Spirit for gold. It is possible that at the time of their initial service they had the Spirit of God, but these workers did not allow the Spirit's operation to penetrate their being and permanently change their lives and living. They limited the Spirit to a very superficial work in their hearts and lives. The Holy Spirit had never been allowed to go down into the very depths of their being to establish and constitute the life of God throughout their entire nature. If they had allowed the full operation of the Spirit, they would never have been deceived by the world's riches. In fact, nothing can usurp us when the Holy Spirit gains possession of our entire inner life.

On one hand, God has made provision for all of His sons. On the contrary, mankind is selective and exclusive. In England, the nobility bequeaths their name and estate to the eldest son only. Often the younger sons get little to nothing. God does not do that. He disinherits none of His sons. He grants the blessed gift of the Holy Spirit to all of His children. They may not all have equal portions of the gift of power for work, but they all are afforded the opportunity for a life full of God.

Let's consider seven principal thoughts in Romans 8:1-16.

1. The Spiritual Believer is a man who walks after the Spirit. (Romans 8:4)

Galatians 5:24 says, "**If we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit.**" "**Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.**" (5:16) My walk is my conduct, what the Bible calls my manner of living, my course of life, my external manner of life. Here I am told as a believer that God will enable me to walk after the Spirit, with the Spirit as my inspiration. Unregenerate men walk after the flesh and the flesh leads them and tells them what to do. The believer in Christ can come into the life of the Spirit. In the realm of the Spirit, he lives, acts, walks, and has the continual hidden guidance of the Spirit of God molding and shaping his will and walk. God calls us to walk and live in the Spirit at all times. As a minister of Christ, it is essential that I walk after the Spirit not only when I pray, not only when I preach, not only when the congregation is present, but at all times. It is unacceptable to pray for the Spirit only when so-called ministering, but in my daily life with my spouse, children, and neighbors, I

live according to the flesh. I need the Spirit when I sit down to eat; when my temper might be tempted to rise; in my business affairs and dealings; and in trials of any kind. I should always seek the power of the Holy Spirit to work in me and to move within me. All my walk is to be according to the Spirit. How is this possible?

2. Paul says in the Romans 8:2, **“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”**

In chapter 7:15-24 Paul wrote of a believer, a regenerated man, who delights in the law of God after the inward man but who finds another law in his members that leads him into captivity to the law of sin and death. Even as a believer in Christ I am a prisoner, a captive, who desires to do good as part of the will of God, but cannot because of the flesh. Suppose a husband is in prison and his wife and children are all starving. She writes to him "Can you not do something to help me?" He writes back, "I long to help you, I would do anything I could to help you, but here I am bound, so that I cannot." This is just like the believer in the seventh chapter of Romans, "I long to obey God but I cannot." Why? Because he is bound with the chains of the flesh, he is confined by captivity to the law of sin and death in his members.

The beauty of the full gospel is that the Spirit sets a man free out of this captivity: **"The law of the Spirit of life hath made me free from the law of sin and death."** There are two powers operating within every believer: the power of the Spirit and the power of sin (flesh). Which is stronger? Many Christians believe that the power of the flesh is stronger because they are constantly defeated by it. It is deeply disturbing that so many genuine believers accept this kind of thinking and existence. Paul tells me, God tells me, that the power of the Holy Spirit is stronger and the power of the Holy Spirit can make me free from the law of sin and death if I trust Him. It is not a question of the last root of sin being exterminated. We need to understand that the tendency towards evil remains to the end of this earthly life, but, we must believe the truth of God's word that the Spirit of life in Christ makes me free from the law of sin to such extent that it has no power over me. My enemy is ever present, but he cannot touch me.

After the close of the civil war in America those who had been slaves could dwell in the presence of their former masters; the masters were not dead and yet they could not touch their former slaves. Likewise, the Holy Spirit can take possession of us, and in the presence of the power of sin the Holy Spirit can fill the believer and make sin powerless. There are too many who serve God under constraint, who have to force themselves to go and work for God, while constantly feeling that they fall short. They cannot rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. The Master said, **"If the Son sets you free you shall be free indeed,"** (John 8:36) but you do not enjoy it. We must have faith to believe the truth, we must trust God's word and long for the fullness of the Holy Spirit so that we understand that nothing less than being set free by the indwelling Holy Spirit enables you to live an inwardly holy life that manifests itself in a holy and righteous outward manner of living.

3. **“You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.”** (Romans 8:9)

"Of the Spirit," "According to the Spirit," "In the Spirit," and **"The Spirit of God in you"** all express the one thought of the closeness, and the reality of the blessed union by which the Holy Spirit takes possession of me. I am in Him and He is in me just as a man is in the air and the air is in him. The air is in my lungs and I am in the air that surrounds me. The two things go together; I go into the fresh air and the fresh air comes into me. Even so the child of God is taken out of the life of the flesh and brought into the life of the Spirit. The Spirit surrounds him on every side with a divine power that is breathed into him and that constitutes his life. He is in the Spirit and the Spirit is in him. He is after the Spirit and the very nature, the divine nature of the Spirit, is in him. Have you ever enjoyed the wonderful Spirit of God becoming the very spirit of our life? Many people think of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us as a man dwells in a house, the man and the house remain separate entities all the time. There is no organic union, no participation of life or nature between the two. That is not the way with the Holy Spirit. He comes into my very being and just as my mind (thinking), will and emotion (feeling) make up my human nature, so by the Holy Spirit, I become partaker of the divine nature. He enters deep, deep, into me and pervades my whole inner life. The Spirit of God is in me and I am in the Spirit of God. This revelation should fill us with a holy fear and a holy joy. Fear, lest we should remain ignorant of the truth; and joy, in the expectation of all we will do in God.

The Spirit who came out from the Father and the Son brings and reveals the Father and the Son to me. These three persons in the one God-Head come into my heart through the Spirit so I live in the Spirit. Why are there so many believers who do not think it possible to live this blessed life? The simple reason is due to unbelief. They do not believe God's word that the Almighty God will dwell in them. Instead, we must be those who thank God and believe that we can lead a holy and blessed life.

4. **"They that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit."** (Romans 8:5)

What does it mean to "mind" the things of the Spirit? Generally, it is used of the faculty of intellect, but here it means something else. When the Bible speaks of a high-minded man it relates to a haughty disposition, a person who always considers himself above or before others. In contrast, to mind the things of the Spirit is to focus on the Spirit to the point that we take on the disposition or "mind" of the Holy Spirit, which produces a spiritual man (1 Corinthians 2:14-15). To be spiritually minded yields life and peace (Romans 8:6).

The Holy Spirit is ever ready to breathe within us the very mind and disposition of Christ. Paul defined this "mind" in Philippians 2:5, **"Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus."** If the Holy Spirit comes in and takes possession of my disposition I shall have the mind of Christ. What is this mind of Christ? God's word says, **"Love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself"** (Matthew 22:37-39). This is the central focus of God's heart and mind. Many

Christians claim to know the mind of Christ, but fall short because it is not natural. We cannot love God or others in our own strength. Our default mode is to love ourselves first and to mind the things of the flesh. However, it is no difficulty for a mother to be gentle, tender, and loving because it is her natural disposition to be so. Similarly, the Holy Spirit can make my disposition spiritual minded as I allow Him to live within me, to breathe into me everything that is gentle, Christ-like, and humble. He infuses me so that Christ's life and nature becomes my life and nature practically.

How do we know that the Spirit is transforming us to be spiritual minded? Because now I can love those whom I have hated. Now, the more unlovable a man is the more I love him. The more unworthy a man is the more the love of God is magnified in me to love others. If you are honest, you may admit that you find it difficult to impossible to not lose your temper towards others, especially those closest to you. This is because you are not spiritually minded. You have not allowed the Spirit of God to come and transform you. You may have Him in some lesser measure but He desires to fill you deeper and deeper. He must fill you with the disposition of Jesus so that you become spiritually minded. Christians! you must long to have such a disposition that everything about you might be spiritual. The Spirit who dwells in you can and will change your disposition to the mind of Christ if you yield to Him.

5. **"If you through the Spirit put to death (mortify) the deeds of the body you will live."** (Romans 8:13)

The word "mortify" simply means to cause to die. **"If you put to death the deeds of the body you shall live."** The man who has not yielded himself to the Spirit to do His work experiences much trouble, anxiety, and inner conflict, which results in outward acts of sin in the body. Many Christians never understand that it is the deeds of the body that must be made dead. But it is very hard, and in fact impossible to put the deeds of the body to death until we begin to see that this only occurs through the Holy Spirit, Who is the mighty power of God.

The Spirit desires to put every sin to death, whether big or small. For instance, it may seem a very small matter to overeat or drink a little too much. We may not consider that such a great sin. But the Bible says, **"Whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God"** (1 Corinthians 10:31). Overeating or eating for mere enjoyment, adds weight and makes the body heavy and unfit for prayer. That is the time the devil can come to you. A man may be living in victory over some sin but through the pleasure of eating the devil may get power over his flesh. When you think you are only feeding the body you are actually feeding the flesh, you are strengthening it by gratifying its appetite. That cannot please God.

Temper is also a sin of the flesh. It is ingrained in me. It is my person or disposition to react quickly to a situation rather than slowly and carefully. Anxiety stems from a bundle of nerves facing the unknown or the unwanted. It is nothing but a bundle of self. The Holy Spirit is able to mortify the deeds of the body and to reign through any circumstance with His Divine peace and power. If you want to have the deeds of the body mortified, beware of the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16).

Remember that to have your body be the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16), and to live a holy life (1 Peter 1:15-16), you must be filled with the Spirit. Therefore, your body, soul, and spirit must all be under the Spirit's power (1 Thessalonians 5:23). You might know the mysteries of the heavens, like the apostle Paul, but this does not guarantee a holy living. "**Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up**" (1 Corinthians 8:1-3). God's word will not help you except as you apply the word of God and allow yourself to be filled with the Spirit. For instance, the Scripture speaks about being baptized into the death of Christ, meaning that we are dead and buried to our own self-life (Romans 6:3-5). Romans 6:11 states that we must reckon ourselves indeed dead unto sin and alive unto God. Galatians 2:20 says that we are crucified with Christ, meaning we are dead to all former things, including our former self. In Romans 8, God instructs us to mortify our members.

True regeneration is to experience life out of death, the former life is dead to sin in Christ, and the new life is raised into a new creation in Christ. It is the Spirit of Christ that maintains the power of death in the body and it is the Spirit of Christ that raises us to walk in newness of life. People say that this is too hard. Christians of old sometimes practiced asceticism and tried their best to keep the body in check from sin. Some of the most earnest would go into solitary caves or monasteries to avoid the world's temptations. However, they found themselves tempted more than ever with evil spirits especially in their minds. They were trying to be holy by self-mortification but they did not succeed. We must realize that it is only through the Spirit that we can mortify the deeds of the body, and only through the Spirit can we live in newness of life.

Are you willing to claim and receive the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this crucifying and life-giving work? It was the Holy Spirit that took Christ to Calvary. It was through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself as a sacrifice unto God (Hebrews 9:14). By that eternal Spirit we too, can be led to Calvary, to the place of crucifixion, to the conformity of Christ's death and the experience of its power (Philippians 3:10). Have you ever cried in despair, "Oh, that I might be crucified to the world and dead to sin?" The Holy Spirit will do it. Then, we can experience the blessedness of a life filled with the Spirit.

6. "**As many as are led by the Spirit of God these are the sons of God.**" (Romans 8:14)

Once we experience the putting to death of the deeds of the body, we need the leading of the Holy Spirit. There are a great many people who ask, "Can I know the leading of the Holy Spirit practically? Can I truly know God's will in my daily life? (Ephesians 5:17) I pray and seek, but cannot get it." (Matthew 7:7-8) They seek to know God's will related to some overwhelming, specific, perplexing question in their life. But they are going about the process from the wrong perspective. Consider the organic life of a little child. He comes to his father and says, "I want to be an engineer." The father says, "Yes, my son, but you must learn a number of things before you can be an engineer." The child may say, "I want to be an engineer but I don't want to learn all those things." The father will point out that he must learn to add, multiply, divide, and learn many other things, before he can be an engineer, and that it will take a good long time. The father will continue to show the child that he must master the simple things

before he can go on to the more complex. Eventually, the son will not only do engineering, but will be an engineer. In a similar fashion, the Holy Spirit wants to lead you in the simpler things of daily life. He wants you to be spiritually minded all day long, every day. Then you will know the mind of the Spirit in the special circumstances. If, in your daily life, you will say, "Lord, let me know what my conduct should be today," then you will be prepared for understanding His leading in times of need or distress. Then He will lead you into deeper things of God's word. Then He will show you how you are to walk. That is exactly the life of the Lord Jesus. You remember He said, "**I cannot do anything of myself, the words I speak are not my own, what the Father shows me I do**" (John 12:49). He was always listening to the voice of God and was led by God day by day and moment by moment.

What a wonderful privilege this kind of life and living is for us! God says, "**As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God.**" Are you willing to sacrifice everything so that you might be led by the Spirit? You know God cannot abate His requirements. I must give up having any will of my own. I must desire above everything to lead a holy life like Jesus: dependent on Him, humble, and waiting upon God for all things. Those who are carnal, defeated, or apathetic say this is too hard. It is not too hard. It is the most blessed life. It is exactly the life Jesus lived. It is a privilege to have the blessed God lead and guide me all along, in everything, and He has promised to do that. "**As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God.**" If you speak about the baptism of the Holy Spirit for service to God — and I want you to speak about it — then be filled with the Holy Spirit for your work. Remember there is something of far deeper importance: your whole life, from moment to moment, bears the mark of being led by the Spirit, of being spiritually minded. The Spirit of Jesus makes you like Jesus, and through the Holy Spirit you can live a Christ-like life.

7. "**You have not received the spirit of slavery (bondage) bringing you into fear again, but you have received the spirit of sonship (adoption) in which we cry Abba, Father.**" "**The Spirit dwells with our spirit.**" (Romans 8:15-16)

The Spirit that has been described in the previous verses as leading us, making us spiritual minded, and Who put to death the deeds of the body is the spirit of sonship (adoption). This is the Spirit that will bear witness within me that I am a son of God. Too many people talk about the witness of the Holy Spirit they received when they believed, but they do not live like it. They remain carnal. If we want to experience the Spirit of sonship so that every day we can have the assurance to confidently say, "**Abba, Father,**" then we must be in the Spirit and must walk after the Spirit. If I live by Him, if He dwells in me and possesses me, if I live according to the Spirit and under the rule of the Spirit, if the Spirit is mine, then, the evidence of my life will be that of increasing joy and deeper fellowship with God. How tenderly He leads me. How close He stays by me. Through the Spirit God fulfills the word that He spoke to the elder son in the parable of the prodigal son, "**Son, you are always with me, and all I have is yours**" (Luke 15:31). This relationship becomes a possession, an experience, made real by the Holy Spirit, making a spiritual, heavenly minded person. "Abba, Father," is not a slogan or cheer that we have to try and feel or struggle to obtain. It is an organic

relationship with the Everlasting God who reveals Himself to me as my Father. So, my Living Father teaches me personally and intimately how to dwell in love, how to dwell in God, and how to enjoy all the promises the Holy Spirit brings to us. "**The Father shall send the Comforter that He may abide with you forever**" (John 14:16). There is a wonderful life, which the Holy Spirit makes intensely real and true. It is a real Canaan life of "milk and honey". It is indeed a solemn, precious thought that God's Holy Spirit can make all God's promises and provisions in Christ our daily experience.

Are we ready to come into such a life and claim our heritage as sons of God? Are you willing to pay any price to seek the Spirit so that Romans 8:1-16 is literally fulfilled in your life? Let me suggest four simple mind-sets:

1. I must be filled with the Spirit. God commands it. My soul needs it. The Spirit longs for it. Christ will do it. The world needs to see it. I cannot live properly without it. I must be filled with the Spirit.
2. It is possible for me to be filled with the Spirit. God does not give a command without the possibility. God does not say, you must live holy, without saying you have the ability to live holy. Say, "I believe it is possible." God has promised it, Christ has purchased it, the Word reveals it, thousands have experienced it. It is possible to be filled with the Spirit.
3. I desire to be filled with the Spirit. Say, Lord, my heart longs for it. Begin to say, I give up everything O, God: self, sin, self-will, self-confidence, the flesh; I give up everything. I desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Lord God, set Your mark upon me; I am an empty vessel waiting to be filled. I would be filled with the Holy Spirit. I am ready.
4. I shall be filled with the Holy Spirit. God has promised it to me. I have a right to say, I shall be filled with the Spirit. Say that tremblingly and very, very humbly. I confess I am carnal, I have felt my sinfulness, I confess my sin. My heart is willing for it; I am going to trust God for it. Oh, God, You do above all that I can ask or think, I give myself to Thee entirely, I trust Thee forever, I give myself up fully and I claim the filling of the Holy Spirit. You give it.