

Indwelt
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Romans 8 (Select Verses)

Opening: Remember WWJD bracelets? Paul's transparency about struggling with the sin nature (chapter seven last week) might make us think we need a bracelet for the other wrist: "Why Don't I Do It?" or better yet, HCIDI – "How Can I Do It?" Romans chapter eight begins to answer that question.

Quick Review: Romans 6 — Christ frees us from sin's mastery. Romans 7 — We continue to struggle with sin's presence. That brings us to Romans 8.

The Point: God gives us His Holy Spirit to enable us to live as God's children—transforming us to become more like Christ as we grow in our relationship with Him and sustaining us through life's struggles.

- So, what is the role of the Holy Spirit in making us more like Christ, and how do we cooperate with Him in that? Like many things, it begins in the mind.
- When we were saved, God gave us a new heart, but that doesn't mean all our old ways of thinking disappeared.
- Verse 5: "those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit."ⁱ Verse 6: "...letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace."ⁱⁱ
- The Holy Spirit makes this transformation possible. Our responsibility is to yield to His leading. Romans 12:2 says instead of copying "the behavior and customs of this world"...let God transform you...by changing the way you think.
- Paul told us followers of Christ can have "the mind of Christ" and the "same attitude" as Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16; Phil. 2:5) Let's talk about how that works.
- This process is supernatural, but here's a human example. I'll bet you can tell me how your spouse thinks about most things. How did you learn that?
The key to growing to think the way Jesus thinks is to KNOW HIM.
- In Philippians 3:8 (NLT) Paul said, "...everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." He said he "discarded everything else...as garbage...[to] become one with [Christ]."
- As we get to know Christ, the Holy Spirit increasingly changes the way we think. As our thinking changes, our desires and choices begin to reflect His character.
- Christ-followers CAN learn to know His mind because His Spirit lives in us.

(NLT) — 9a But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you...

- The Spirit makes it possible for us to please Christ, but we have a responsibility:

12 Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. **13** For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live.

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. **15** So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father."

- God gives us His Spirit when we become His children through faith in Christ.
- Satan will try to cause us to doubt our place in God's family. The Spirit helps us:

16 For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. **17a** And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory.

- What a promise! Co-heirs with Christ, sharing in God's glory after this life is over.
- But we still live in this world cursed by the original sin in the Garden of Eden.

17b But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. Becoming a Christ-follower doesn't remove suffering. Quite the contrary.

- Paul speaks of suffering with Christ because we belong to Him. He then broadens the discussion to the suffering all creation experiences in a fallen world.
- Suffering BECAUSE we follow Christ (i.e. persecution, rejection, ridicule).
- Suffering because we live in a fallen world (illness, grief, disappointment, loss).
- God doesn't abandon His children in suffering. Through His Spirit, He can use those experiences to draw us closer to Him.
- We learned in Romans 5:3-5 that in suffering the Holy Spirit can deepen our dependence on God and make our character more Christlike.
- Because we are His children, suffering won't have the final word: **18** Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.
- Verses 19-25 tell us all of creation anticipates the day when God will put an end to suffering, death, and decay. Those who are saved wait with hope. In the meantime, in our times of weakness there is a beautiful promise:

26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. **27** And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. **28** And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

- Three more wonderful promises in the next few verses:
 - Verse 29: God knew his people in advance, and he chose us to become like his Son...[as] brothers and sisters.
 - Verse 31: What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?
 - Verse 38: ...[N]othing can ever separate us from God's love." Not death, not evil forces, not our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. Wow!
- The Holy Spirit was sent to help us in other ways. Here's a quick list:

- Constant presence - The Spirit lives inside us forever. (John 14:16-17)
- Teaching and reminding - The Spirit teaches and reminds us of what Jesus said (John 14:26)
- Convicting of sin - The Spirit shows us our sin (John 16:8-11)
- The Spirit leads us into all truth (teaching us what Jesus said) while making sure everything points back to Jesus. (John 16:13-15)
- Empowering your witness - Power to tell others about Jesus. (Acts 1:8)
- Giving you words – What to say when persecuted. (Luke 12:11-12)
- Spiritual overflow - The Spirit's presence overflows to bless others (John 7:37-39)
- This is a small snapshot of living as a Christ-follower with the help of His Spirit.
- How can we apply this to our lives and enjoy the Holy Spirit's help?
- We said, the key to growing more like Christ is to KNOW HIM.
- In John 15:5, Jesus described Himself as the vine and His followers as the branches. Without Him, we can do 'nothing.' We must remain in Him.
- Obviously, Jesus is in Heaven, so He sent His Holy Spirit to live in us.
- Looking back at verse fourteen: Children of God are “led by the Spirit of God.”
- As we get to know Christ, the Holy Spirit increasingly changes our thinking, desires and choices to reflect Jesus' character. Think about the moon. It doesn't produce its own light; it reflects the light of the sun. Likewise, we don't manufacture Christlikeness through our own efforts. As we grow closer to Christ, His Spirit transforms us to reflect more of His character. (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- We don't obey God to become His children. We desire to obey Him because we are His children. Being God's children makes us desire to be more like Jesus.
- A human illustration: A child wants to imitate the parents. As they grow, the better they know the parents they will learn (good or bad) from their example.
- Another illustration: Living right vs disappointing those you love. Even humanly speaking, a love relationship can be great motivation for right living.
- **Ephesians 5:1-2 (NLT)** — **1** Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. **2** Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God. (See also: 2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 8:29; 1 John 2:6)
- Stating the obvious: A child cannot imitate the parent until they are born! We cannot imitate Christ until we have been “born again” trusting Him for salvation.
- That is because we need the power of His Spirit to help us imitate Him.
- Otherwise, we would be “cheap imitations” trying (and failing) to be like Christ.
- The Spirit helps us to be genuine children of God, not struggling “knock offs.”
- Let's get practical. What does that look like in our everyday lives?
- We can only change through the Spirit's power, but we do have to do some things.
- In Galatians 5:16 Paul says, “let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't [do] what your sinful nature craves.” Later, in verse 25, “let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.”
- Notice our responsibility: We are commanded to follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. We must choose to respond to Him.

- Philippians 2:12-13 says, “Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. [That’s us] For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. [God’s power]

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- I want to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and know Christ. How do I do that?
- Let’s start with spiritual disciplines. In the church we use the word “should” a lot.
- You should read your Bible. You should pray. You should have a quiet time. Why?
- Chuck Swindoll writes, “*Our primary purpose is to know Jesus Christ personally with ever-deepening intimacy (Phil. 3:8–11). If we read Scripture, pray, meditate, journal, or fast, let us do it for the sole purpose of knowing His mind.*”ⁱⁱⁱ
- We should ask the Holy Spirit: How does that verse reflect the mind of Christ?
- What about my behavior? How can I periodically “test” if I’m led by the Spirit?
- Am I learning to pause before I do or say something and ask, “Would Jesus be pleased? Would He be glorified in the eyes of others? Would this enhance His reputation to a watching world?”
- **Philippians 2:15 (NLT)** — 15 so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.
- Another test: Galatians 5:22-23 says, “...the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” Am I becoming more like that?
- Another: If I say something that sounds like Jesus, that ain’t me, it’s His Spirit! ☺
- Going back to our parent and child illustration. Good parents often say to their child as they leave the house: Remember who you are, and act like it!
- If the child truly loves and respects the parent, they are more likely to strive to please them. They won’t be perfect, but they will try because of the relationship.
- We won’t be perfect either as God’s children, but if we have the Holy Spirit living in us and if we are committed to following His leading, we will continue to grow to look and act more like Jesus.

ⁱ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ro 8:5). Tyndale House Publishers.

ⁱⁱ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ro 8:6). Tyndale House Publishers.

ⁱⁱⁱ Swindoll, Charles R.. *Insights on Romans* (Swindoll's New Testament Insights) (p. 135). (Function). Kindle Edition.