

Romans Session 104

Life in the Spirit 8

Romans 8:14-16 (AMP)

¹⁴ *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

¹⁵ *For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father!*

¹⁶ *The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God.*

This is one of the richest and most beautiful passages in all of Scripture.

Using the figure of adoption, Paul explains the believer's intimate and permanent relationship to God as a beloved child.

In these verses, Paul continues to disclose the ways in which God confirms that believers are eternally related to Him as His children, testifying that we are led, given access to God and granted inner assurance by His own Spirit.

These three means of assurance are closely related and intertwined, but each presents a distinctive truth about the Spirit's work in the believer's life.

1. We are led by the Spirit of God
2. We are given access to God by the Spirit
3. We are assured by the Spirit

WE ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Romans 8:14 (AMP)

¹⁴ *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

The first inner confirmation of adoption is the believer's **being led by the Spirit of God**. A person who is truly experiences the leading hand of God at work in his life can be certain he is God's child.

It is important to note the tense Paulo uses here. **Are being led** translates the present passive indicative of *ago*, indicating that which already exists.

The phrase **are being led** does not, however, indicate uninterrupted leading by **the Spirit**. Otherwise the many New Testament admonitions and warnings to Christians would be meaningless.

But the genuine believer's life is basically characterized by the Spirit's leading, just as it is basically characterized by Christ's righteousness.

A merely professing Christian does not and cannot be **led by the Spirit of God**.

He may be moral, conscientious, generous, active in his church and other Christian organizations, and exhibit many other commendable traits. But the only accomplishments, religious or otherwise, he can make claim to are those of his own doing.

His life may be outstandingly religious, but because he lives it in the power of the flesh, he can never be truly spiritual, and he will never have the inner conviction of God's leading and empowering.

When someone confides in me that he has doubts about his salvation, I often respond by asking if he ever senses God's leading in his life. If he answers yeas, I remind him of Paul's assurance in this verse

Romans 8:14-16 (AMP)

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

God's children are secure in Him even when they are not as responsive and obedient to His leading as they ought to be. Now that is not to say that a child of God will always *feel* secure.

The Christian who neglects study of Scripture, who neglects God in prayer, who neglects fellowship with God's people, and who is careless about His obedience to God will invariably have doubts about his salvation, because he is indifferent to God and the things of God.

Even for the obedient child of God, doubts about his relationship to God can easily slip into the mind during times of pain, sorrow, failure, or disappointment.

Satan, the great accuser of God's people, is always ready to take advantage of such circumstances to plant seeds of uncertainty.

But to God our Father, He wants His children to be certain at all times that they belong to Him and are secure in Him. As Paul has just stated;

Romans 8:13 (NASB)

¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

The idea here is that the person who is succeeding in putting to death sin in his life is not doing so in his own power, that is, in the power of the flesh, but by the power of the Spirit.

Those who see victory over sin in their lives, who see their sinful desires and practices diminishing, can be certain they **are the sons of God** because only God's **Spirit** can bring victory over sin.

In the same way, when we begin to understand biblical truths that have long puzzled us, when we experience God's convicting our consciences, when we grieve for the Lord's sake when we sin, then we have the divine assurance that we **are the sons of God**, because only the indwelling **Spirit of God** can instill such understanding, conviction, and godly sorrow.

Our finite minds cannot comprehend how the Spirit leads a believer, just as we cannot fully understand any of the supernatural work of God. We do, however, know that our heavenly Father does not force His will on His children.

He seeks our willing obedience, which, by definition, cannot be coerced. It is when we are genuinely submissive to Him that our Lord supernaturally reshapes and redirects our will into voluntary conformity with His own.

God saves men through their faith in Him, and He leads those who saves through the same human channel of faith.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NASB)

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

The seeking, willing, and obedient heart is open to the Lord's leading.

David prayed;

Psalm 25:4-5 (NASB)

⁴ Make me know Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths.

⁵ Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day.

Later in this same chapter he reminds us:

Psalm 25:9 (NASB)

⁹ He leads the humble in justice, And He teaches the humble His way.

In another Psalm he entreated the Lord;

Psalm 143:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

Isaiah assures us that if we truly seek the Lord's will, He is already standing beside us, as it were, ready to say;

Isaiah 30:21 (NASB)

²¹ Your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left.

The prophet was not speaking necessarily of an audible voice, but the voice of the believer's God directed conscience, a conscience instructed by God's Word and attuned to His Spirit.

Isaiah also assures us that the Lord is continually ready and eager to lead His people in the right way.

Prophesying in the name of the preincarnate Christ, the prophet declared;

Isaiah 48:16-17 (NASB)

¹⁶ "Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit."

¹⁷ Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, Who leads you in the way you should go.

Jeremiah acknowledged;

Jeremiah 10:23 (NASB)

²³ I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.

Even a child of God cannot discern divine truth by his own intelligence or obey it in his own power.

God's Spirit sovereignly leads His children in many ways, sometimes in ways that are direct and unique. But the primary ways by which He promises to lead us are those of illumination and sanctification.

In the first way, God leads His children by illumination, by divinely clarifying His Word to make it understandable to our finite and still sin-tainted minds.

As we read and meditate on, and pray over Scripture, the indwelling Spirit of God becomes our divine interpreter. This begins with the conviction of sin that leads through saving belief into the whole of the Christian life.

Although Joseph was not indwelt by the Holy Spirit as are believers under the New Covenant, even the pagan Egyptian ruler recognized him as a man in whom is a divine spirit;

Genesis 41:38-39 (NASB)

³⁸ *Then Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?"*

³⁹ *So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are."*

The Old Testament saint who wrote Psalm 119, which so eloquently glorifies God's Word, knew he needed the Lord's divine help both to understand and to obey that Word.

Every believer should continually pray with the psalmist;

Psalm 119:35 (NASB)

³⁵ *Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it.*

And;

Psalm 119:133 (NASB)

¹³³ *Establish my footsteps in Your word, And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.*

During the upper room discourse, shortly before His betrayal and arrest, Jesus told the apostles;

John 14:25-26 (NASB)

²⁵ *"These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you.*

²⁶ *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

That promise had special significance for the apostles, who would become Christ's uniquely authoritative witnesses to His truth after His ascension back to heaven.

But the promise also applies in a general way to all believers after Pentecost. From that time on, every believer has been indwelt by Christ's own Holy Spirit, whose ministry to us includes that of shedding divine light on scriptural truths that otherwise are beyond our comprehension.

During one of His post-resurrection appearances, Jesus said to the eleven remaining apostles;

Luke 24:44-45 (NASB)

⁴⁴ *Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."*

⁴⁵ *Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,*

Again, Jesus' words had unique significance for the apostles, but in a similar way the Lord opens the minds of all His disciples, to understand the Scriptures.

Reading the Scriptures by the unredeemed, is useless until they read it to see what God has offered them in Christ. But for us it is our spiritual food and we need to feed on it every day. And the truths we learn today are good for today, and we will need and read new truths for tomorrow. It is like the mana given to Israel, it was gathered for one day at a time. And then we get more tomorrow. We must search for those truths each and every day and when we do we will be led by God to know how to walk and talk, and how to live for His Glory.