

Romans 8:5-11 by Wayne Barber

PREVIOUS

NEXT

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans — 3:21-5:21	Romans — 6:1-8:39	Romans — 9:1-11:36	Romans — 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	Gods Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith
Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work " Jensen's Survey of the NT "				

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Romans 8:5

Romans 8:6-8

Romans 8:9

Romans 8:10-11

Romans 8:5-11

Free to Be What God Wants Us to Be

by Dr. Wayne A. Barber

Romans 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

How wonderful to know that what God expects us to be He has enabled us to be. Last time we saw that God has sent His Holy Spirit to come and live in us so that we now can be empowered to do His will. Now, when we fail to allow the Spirit to control us, and we put ourselves back under law and the confidence of our flesh, then we sin as chapter 7 showed us.

But when we sin, we are not to condemn ourselves. In Ro 8:1-note, Paul tells us, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." The word "condemnation" is the word for the sentence itself, and there is no sentence of eternal death to those who are in Christ.

Romans 8:2-note: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh." We are now free from the penalty of sin and the power of sin. The "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" supersedes the "law of sin and of death".

Remember I gave an example using the law of gravity. When you see a big 747 sitting on the runway, and you realize it weighs more than you can comprehend, if you apply the law of gravity to that fact, then it is impossible for that plane to fly. But, when you look at the power of it's engines, and watch it take off, you realize that there is a higher law in force, which does not deny the law of gravity but it simply supersedes it. The law of sin and death still works in our flesh, but is superseded by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ.

It is the Spirit that now fulfills the "requirement of the law" in us. We read in Romans 8:4, "in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." What is the requirement of the law? How could we sum it up? Look at Romans 13:9-note: "For this, 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

The flip side is in Gal 5:22-note, Gal 5:23-note: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Well, Ro 8:1-4 has shown us the role of the Holy Spirit, which is to accomplish in us what the flesh could never do. Now, in verses 5-11, we will see the result of the Holy Spirit being in us. What is the result of the Holy Spirit being in us? We used to be totally under the control of the flesh, but now things have changed since we are in Christ and His Spirit lives in us. Paul is going to show us a contrast of people who have the Holy Spirit living in them and those who do not.

ROMANS 8:5-note

First, he shows the mindsets of those who have and do not have the Holy Spirit. Look at Romans 8:5: "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."

"For those who are according to the flesh." The verb here is the present participle, so it is saying their lifestyle is according to the flesh. They live according to the power of the flesh.

Then Paul says they have "set their minds on the things of the flesh. The phrase "set their minds on" is one word, meaning "a fixed mindset." It refers to one that is devoted to something. He is speaking of those who have a mindset that is consistently devoted to the flesh. These are the unconverted who obey the impulses of the flesh. They live to gratify the desires of their corrupt nature. They know no other way

But—note the contrast here. He says: "but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." Paul shows the contrasting lifestyle of those who are unbelievers with those who are believers. Their minds have been changed through repentance and now they are fixed on the things of God.

2Ti 1:7-note says: "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." These are the ones who have a "saved" mindset. If you think of it as a radio, their minds have now gone from AM to FM. They are on a completely different wavelength.

ROMANS 8:6-note

Next Paul shows the misery of those who do not have the Holy Spirit in verses 6-8. Verse 6: "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace." The mind of those who are unbelievers, that is fixed on the flesh, is death. All the aspects of death are in it. They have no ability to enjoy anything pertaining to life. Imagine it if you can. Remember, we used to be that way before we were saved.

But, the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. What a contrast. The Spirit of God dwells in us and therefore we have all the potential of life and peace. The life of God and the peace of God is ours always to enjoy.

ROMANS 8:7-note

Well, the "misery" of those who do not have the Holy Spirit gets worse. Verse 7: "because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so." Paul explains why the mind set on the flesh is death. Again, the word here for mindset means "a fixed attitude." This mindset is hostile toward God. Because of Adam, it is at

enmity with God.

Paul says, "for it does not subject itself to the law of God." It has been turned away from God and His law. This is in the present passive voice. The "passive" voice is explained in the next phrase: "for it is not even able to do so." Not at any time is it able to submit to God's law. It is depraved because of Adam.

ROMANS 8:8-note

Paul finally shows the utter helplessness of those who do not have the Holy Spirit. Look at verse 8: "and those who are in the flesh cannot please God." Paul changes and says that those who live consistently "according to the flesh" are "in the flesh". They cannot, in any way shape or form, ever please God as they are. They have no ability whatsoever to please God. Do you have unsaved family or friends? Does this cause you to have a little more concern for them?

ROMANS 8:9-note

Thank God, we have the Holy Spirit living in us. Paul shows us in verses 9-11 the marvel of those who have the Holy Spirit. First, they are no longer "in the flesh"—bound there because of being in Adam. They are now forever in the Spirit.

Look at verse 9: "However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." Paul has identified those in Adam, to be those in the flesh. He now identifies those in Christ, to be those in the Spirit.

We cannot get back into the flesh. We can allow it to influence us, and fall because of it. But we are never again able to be "in the flesh." We are forever "in the Spirit." The prerequisite for being in the Spirit is that the Holy Spirit dwells in you. It is conditional. The Holy Spirit must dwell in you, or live in you just as one lives in a house.

"But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." We must have the Spirit of Christ living in us or we are not a believer. The word for "does not" means not in any way shape or form.

ROMANS 8:10-note

Second, in verse 10 we see that those who have the Holy Spirit in them, are alive forever in their spirits with God's life: "And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness."

Now, this is the practical truth for us in our struggle with the flesh. He says, "Though the body is dead because of sin." This is not new to us—we've seen this before. The body we live in is "dead." The forces of death work in it. The lusts of the flesh also abide in this body. It is dying.

However, "the spirit is alive because of righteousness." Because the Holy Spirit of God lives in us, our spirits are alive. The righteousness of God has been imputed to us through the Holy Spirit living in us.

ROMANS 8:11-note

Third, those who have the Holy Spirit in them have a "glorified" body to look forward to one day when Christ comes. Verse 11: "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you."

Because of this, one day our mortal bodies will be raised in the likeness of His resurrection even though our mortal bodies are going to die because of their being the vehicle of sin. Oh, the results of the Holy Spirit living in us!