

Walking in the Spirit

Romans 8:1–17 (NIV)

1. Announcements – Chris Swanson

- ➔ Welcome, my name is _____.
- ➔ Invite visitors to fill out a Connect Card
- ➔ Give online at tru.church or the black giving boxes
- ➔ Last Chance to Give to the 40 Day Matching Fundraising Sprint for the building refinance.
- ➔ DC ANNOUNCEMENT?
- ➔ Pray for our time in the Word

2. [1] Introduction: Walking in Victory Through Romans

- a. We have been walking through Romans together to learn what it looks like to Walk in Victory through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- b. Romans 1–4 exposed the truth about humanity:
 - i. we are fallen, we are captive to sin, spiritually dead, and we cannot fix ourselves by trying harder.
- c. Chapters 5–7 We talked about the Good News of the Gospel
 - i. that what we could not do for ourselves, Christ did FOR US on the Cross.

3. Romans 8 opens with one of the most liberating sentences in scripture:

- a. [2] “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
 - i. Last Week James taught us: This internal war points us to a deeper Dependence and Intimacy with the God Who deeply loves us.
 1. We don’t arrive at chapter 8 by skipping the fight...
 2. We arrive bloodied, bruised and yet Believing anyways.
- b. Believing that Because of Christ’s victory, there is now a new way to live and walk OUT OF SHAME AND DEATH and into victory – completely free from condemnation!
 - i. Don’t you want that???

[3] II. The Two Ways to Walk: Flesh versus Spirit (Romans 8:2–13)

1. Paul spends the rest of our passage contrasting two ways of life in the opening verses of Romans 8: the way of the flesh and the way of the Spirit.
 - a. **The flesh – sarx** – (sarcasm)
 - i. refers to our sinful nature that is set against God and his ways
 - b. Way #1: The way of defeat through the flesh, chained to sin and death
 - c. Way #2: And The way of victory in the Spirit, free from condemnation

2. Read Romans 8:2–4.

- a. “because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

- i. Here is the heart of the gospel in legal and spiritual language.

- 3. The law – God’s rules in the Old Testament, like, but not limited to the 10 Commandments – exposed what was wrong in us but could not deliver what was right.

- a. **Then, in our despair, God did what the law could not:**

- i. He sent His Son to offer Himself as a sacrifice
- ii. On the cross Jesus absorbed the condemnation and punishment that rightly belonged to us.
- iii. He drank the cup of God’s wrath for sin FOR US, so we would never have to.
 - 1. Drank that cup DOWN TO THE DREGS – the chunky stuff at the bottom!
 - 2. There’s nothing left

- iv. **For those who are in Christ, condemnation has been exhausted.**

- 1. **Some of you need to hear that this morning**

- a. You’re a Christian, and yet still live under the dark cloud of shame and fear
 - i. Hyperaware of your failings
 - ii. Despairing of ever being good enough, terrified that God’s mad at you because of what you just did, or what you did a long time ago.

- b. Hear this: THERE IS NO MORE CONDEMNATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS!

- i. **No matter what you’ve done, or still struggling with**

- ii. There is NO CONDEMNATION LEFT FOR YOU

- iii. Jesus paid it all

- b. **Illustration: I’ve shared before about how, even as a Christian, for years I lived in shame and fear** as I remembered both my past and lingering sins.

- i. And I despaired that I’d ever be able to be free of it. Couldn’t shake it!
- ii. And yet, these words became my liberation, as I began to apply and believe them with the help of others: I’ve been forgiven and rescued by JC!

- iii. EVEN FOR ME, There’s No Condemnation at all

- 1. AMEN! → And I’ve never been the same since!

4. But Paul is quick to explain that our newfound freedom from the Law is not license to remain enslaved to our old patterns.
 - a. The Spirit who gives life also changes the inner dynamics of our hearts and minds.
 - b. **Notice verse 5:**
 - c. [4] Romans 8:5 - “Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.
 - d. So, what does it mean to walk not according to the flesh, but walk in the spirit?
 - i. **Walking in the Spirit begins inside the mind.**
 1. It’s in our thought and beliefs
 2. NOT primarily in our behaviors, those flow FROM thoughts & beliefs!
 - ii. **The flesh is focused on immediate satisfaction, ego, and self-preservation.**
 1. Obsessively thinking about Me, mine, and my.
 2. Temptations nearly always start with thought patterns
 - a. an invitation to justify, to resent, to envy, to take, to exploit.
 3. Only when those patterns are dealt with at their root in the mind, considered and chosen differently, will behavior change in lasting ways.
 - iii. **The Spirit renovates our thinking, giving us life and peace as we walk it out**
 1. The Spirit reorients us around life-giving things: love, joy, peace, patience, righteousness, and communion with God.
 - iv. **This is so different from our default settings**
 1. **We all, by default, live life according to the law of sin and death**, the law of the flesh, which says I must behave in order to be accepted
 2. **But the law of the Spirit frees us in the MIND to be able to think and choose.**
 - a. Because of God’s GRACE secured for us
 - b. SO ONLY from that, can we respond to God’s acceptance and love for us by choosing to behave.
 3. **This is something ONLY THE BELIVER can do!**
 - a. As Paul continues on to address:
 - e. [5] Romans 8: 6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. 7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. 8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.
 - i. **Paul is direct:** a mind governed – ruled—by the flesh is hostile to God and cannot submit to His law in the way God intends.

1. **This is the person still living under the rule of the law of sin and death**
– totally unable to walk in a way that pleases God **because they do not have the Spirit** of God that comes through faith in JC alone
2. **That's some of you listening to me right now!**
 - ii. That's a bleak diagnosis, but then Paul offers hope: the Spirit lives in those who belong to Christ through faith in Him!
5. [6] Romans 8:9–11 - "You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And 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 because of his Spirit who lives in you."
6. **Not only does the Holy Spirit give believers the ability to choose** to live God's way, to walk in the Spirit – even as we continue to struggle with the remnants of our sinful nature,
 - a. **What's MORE – even our sinful nature will EVENTUALLY be done away with** for good by the Spirit's power!
 - i. **The hope of all hopes – resurrection from the dead and eternal life**
 - b. The Spirit will BOTH give our physical bodies eternal resurrected life when JC comes back
 - i. AND also give us that resurrection POWER NOW to overrule the power of sin that still remains in our flesh, so that we can LIVE THE RESURRECTION LIFE NOW through the power of the spirit!
 - c. **In light of this, WE CHRISTIANS have a choice**
7. [7] Romans 8:12–13 - "Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live."
8. **The choice is real and the command is clear.**
 - a. Choose to walk in the old ways of the flesh, the way of sin, and you'll die
 - i. living continually in defeat
 - b. Or choose to live God's way – walk in the Spirit -- And step into life
 - i. living in victory that begins now!
 - c. **I choose life!**
 - i. **What about you?**
 1. What way HAVE you been choosing?
 2. And what do you want to choose this morning?

9. And now, we get to the best part of this whole section

- a. Perhaps of the whole bible!
- b. Paul's talking about the effects of walking in the Spirit, instead of in the flesh**
 - i. **Not only do those who walk in the spirit obtain eternal life**, both eventually in our physical bodies
 - ii. And even now spiritually to rule over our indwelling, remaining sin nature...

III. (ADOPTED AS SONS)

- 1. **[8] Romans 8:14–17- “For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.**
The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now 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.”
- 2. Now, if you’re reading or listening closely, you’ll remember that Paul is talking to the church in Rome, the believers, telling them that they’re:
 - a. **[9] CHILDREN of God**
 - i. **CRAZY MIND BLOWING STUFF ON IT’S OWN!!!!**
 - ii. You’ll notice he uses a gender inclusive phrase
 - 1. bc/ his audience is a mix of roughly 50/50 men and women
 - iii. **But then he shifts in this next verse to tell them they they’ve been adopted to sonship**
 - 1. **Male gender language**
 - iv. Is Paul being sexist?
 - 1. Let’s see
- 3. **In Paul’s day, when people in Rome heard the word “adoption,” they didn’t think of an orphan baby being welcomed into a new family.**
 - a. They thought of a grown man being legally chosen by the head of a household to carry on the family name.
 - i. In Roman law, adoption wasn’t sentimental—it was strategic.
 - b. In fact “Adoption to sonship” is ONE WORD in the original Greek.**
 - i. A legal-technical term.
 - ii. From the moment the person was adopted, the man lost every connection to his old life.
 - 1. His old debts were erased.
 - 2. His old name was gone.
 - 3. And he gained all the rights, privileges, and inheritance of a true son.

4. As if he were born biologically to that father.

c. That's the picture Paul paints when he says, **"The Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship"**

i. He's telling us: God didn't just forgive your sins—He chose you, legally and permanently, to bear His name and share His inheritance.

4. **And here's the radical twist:** Paul gives that word "adoption to sonship" to everyone who believes in Christ.

a. **Whether you're male or female, you get the same title, the same standing, the same inheritance as an adopted son!**

i. **Women and men alike** in the church share equally in the divine inheritance — eternal life, the Spirit, and God's kingdom.

ii. It's a statement of **radical inclusion under the guise of legal imagery** that everyone who heard it would be flabbergasted by.

b. [10] In **Galatians 3:26–28**, Paul makes the same point even more clearly:

i. **"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus... there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female."**

ii. **Then he uses the same adoption language again in the next chapter — "God sent His Son... that we might receive adoption to sonship."**

c. So, far from sexist, Paul is intentionally giving everyone (including women and slaves) the **status and privilege** that only Roman sons had.

5. **The implications of this "adoption to sonship" are no less flabbergasting today**

a. [11] ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...

b. **God legally adopts each of us who place our trust in Jesus, to be FULL LEGAL CHILDREN of His, including FULL RIGHTS OF INHERITANCE, as of firstborn sons**

i. Meaning, not only are we adopted, so that Jesus becomes our brother

ii. **We share in JESUS'S INHERITENCE OF GOD'S KINGDOM**

c. Like the father in the Prodigal Son parable states to the older brother, "Everything I have is yours"

i. The Father says this to Jesus

ii. **AND NOW ALSO, TO YOU!**

d. **YOU ARE CO-HEIRS WITH JESUS HIMSELF OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

i. Sit with that for a second

ii. Try to let it sink in.

6. [12] **Illustration: I remember well when Chris and Effie Swanson adopted Reed 6 yrs ago.**

- a. I got to be there at the courthouse when the judge declared, “This child is now your own, with full rights,” and the legal transfer was complete.
- b. He was now Reed Swanson.**
 - i. Their son through and through.
 - ii. Brother to Cade and Parker.
 - iii. Adopted on Parker’s due date, actually, June 20, 2019.
- c. Adopted, not by anything he’d done to earn it, but because he was chosen. Wanted.
- d. Adopted just like God adopts us and declares us His own apart from our good works, but based on the choices of the Father
 - i. Adopted. Full rights as a son.
 - 1. Heir to whatever is leftover after nursing home fees.
 - ii. Done deal.

IV. (Abba, Father: The Heart of the Spirit)

- 1. Like Bob Barker was famous for saying: But wait, there’s more!!
 - a. Paul now moves from the legal to the intimate.
 - b. And not only are we brought into the family, and given inheritance of everything God the Father has
 - c. Not only, does God’s SPIRIT comes to indwell us, to ensure us that it’s real; we’re actually God’s Adopted children.
 - d. Not only are we brought into his household:**
- 2. **Our Heavenly Father has also brought us close to his heart**
 - a. As a beloved child to the heart of his father and mother
 - b. [13] By GOD’S SPIRIT, we cry ABBA, Father – back to God!**
 - i. This entire section was written in Greek
 - ii. BUT THIS WORD, ABBA, was left Aramaic – the most intimate and familiar word for a father used by a young child
 - 1. abba
 - 2. Like daddy
 - 3. Or even pappa!
 - c. THAT’S HOW GOD’S SPIRIT HELPS US LEARN TO connect with and speak with our heavenly father
 - i. Not only FATHER, or my Lord, But abba → Papa!**
- 3. **And that shift changes everything!**
 - a. Especially as we consider the effect of walking in the Spirit, rather than in the flesh
- 4. **In the flesh,**
 - a. God seems to be a rigid disengaged father, or an angry principal

- b. Distant as long as you follow the rules
- c. Present in terror of punishment if you mess up
- d. You live under the shadow of “God’s disappointed, angry, annoyed, with me”

5. But In the Spirit

- a. God is abba, papa
- b. You living in the sunshine of His delight in me!
- c. All the best parts of your earthly father (flawed though he was, some much more than others), multiplied by a million
 - i. Loving holding us
 - ii. Being with us
 - iii. Playing with us
 - iv. Listening to us babble on about whatever little thing is on our minds
 - v. Scooping us up when we get hurt and holding us close to his chest
 - vi. Eager to offer us grace and forgiveness a million times over
 - vii. Because we’re the apple of his eye

6. That’s what happens when you move from being a slave to fear to being an adopted son or daughter of our gracious God.

- a. The Spirit doesn’t just help us behave better—
- b. He helps us believe better about who we are,
 - i. who our Father truly is,
 - ii. and what he thinks about us.

7. Walk therefore, each of you, in the Spirit, and not in the flesh

- a. You have a choice. --- Choose well!

V. Practical Marks of Walking in the Spirit

- How do we know we are walking in the Spirit?
- What habits and attitudes signal that we are living by the Spirit’s power?

1. [14] Walking in the Spirit begins in your mind.

- a. Start by setting your thoughts on truth each morning.
- b. Pay attention to your thoughts and assumptions throughout your day.
- c. Replace the lies that condemn with the gospel’s affirmations:
 - i. “I am loved. I am forgiven. I am His child.”
- d. Practice Scripture meditation to intentionally renew your mind and its patterns

2. [15] Walking in the Spirit takes intentional practice

- a. These practices come in ancient forms – habits of engagement with God
 - i. Prayer – conversational ABBA style!

- ii. Reading his Word
- iii. Practicing confession, gratitude, forgiveness, fasting, giving, serving
 - 1. All these and many more help us train to walk with the Spirit more consistently and effectively.
- iv. Until it becomes like second nature
 - 1. Spiritual muscle memory that doesn't take near as much conscious effort as it used to.

3. [16] Walking in the Spirit happens in community

- a. Not meant to be a Just-Me-and-Jesus thing.
- b. Spiritual growth happens primarily as we live intimately connected to others in the Body of Christ (practicing vulnerability, receive correction, and practice grace).
 - i. That's why we encourage everyone to get connected with a group here at Tru
 - ii. Like one of our LIFE Groups – 1 meets Sunday pm, the other Wednesday pm.
- c. Single greatest step you can take to grow in your faith and ability to walk in the Spirit

4. [17] Walking in the Spirit leads to fearless living.

- a. If we truly believe we are God's beloved children, then many of the fears that dominate our lives and culture lose their power.
- b. No longer do we live as a slave to the fear of God's disappointment or condemnation.
- c. We no longer have to control our image, hoard resources, or manipulate outcomes.
- d. So we can take heart – have courage – risk walking in his way even when it's hard
 - i. giving forgiveness, reconciliation, generosity, and sacrificial love because we stand secure in our Father's provision and love for us.

5. CONCLUSION

- a. As we consider these practical marks, take a moment to ask:
 - i. [18] Where in my life am I still walking in the flesh?
 - 1. living under the fleshly law of sin, condemnation, defeat
 - 2. **Perhaps you need to surrender yourself** finally to God by placing your trust in Jesus's death and resurrection. To free you from bondage to sin and death, and give you His Spirit forever.
 - 3. **Maybe you have the Spirit but are still walking in the old ways** of the flesh, of sin, death, addiction, shame, and defeat.
 - ii. [19] Where is God inviting me to walk in the Spirit as an adopted "SON"?
- b. That is the posture of life God invites us into:
 - i. not fear, but freedom

- ii. not striving, but rest
- iii. not accusation, but adoption.
- iv. not defeat, but victory

VIII. Closing Prayer

Abba, Father, we thank You that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Thank You for the Spirit who leads us into life, who gives us a new identity and a renewed mind. Thank you for your power at work in us—the same power that conquered the grave lives in me! Holy Spirit, teach us to walk with you, like sons and daughters, not slaves. Free us from fear. Free us from the lie that we must perform to earn your love. Help us to see God's smile and to rest in Your delight—so that we may walk in your Spirit in victory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

1. [20] Communion

- a. As you come and receive the bread and the cup, let these elements remind you:
 - i. you are not condemned; you are chosen; you are loved.
- b. The bread reminds us the Jesus' body, broken for you, has freed you from the slavery to the flesh
- c. The cup of juice reminds us that Jesus' shed blood has paid for our sins, once for all, so that we can be brought close to the perfect Heavenly father.
- d. The Spirit who raised Jesus is at work in you. Celebrate and live this week in the freedom of that truth.



WALKING IN **V**ICTORY
THROUGH ROMANS

ROMANS 8

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.



2 WAYS TO WALK: FLESH VS. SPIRIT

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the **Spirit** who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the **flesh** ^[sarx], God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful **flesh** to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the **flesh**, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the **flesh** but according to the **Spirit**.



2 WAYS TO WALK: FLESH VS. SPIRIT

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



2 WAYS TO WALK: FLESH VS. SPIRIT

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the **flesh** but are in the realm of the **Spirit**, if indeed the **Spirit** of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the **Spirit** of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the **Spirit** gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And 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 because of his **Spirit** who lives in you.



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¹² Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the **flesh**, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the **flesh**, you will die; but if by the **Spirit** you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.



2 WAYS TO WALK: FLESH VS. SPIRIT

¹⁴ For those who are led by the **Spirit** of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The **Spirit** you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the **Spirit** you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba*, Father.” ¹⁶ The **Spirit** himself testifies with our **spirit** that we are God’s children. ¹⁷ Now 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.



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GALATIANS 3:26,28 ^(ESV): “in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ...There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female”



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TALK: FLESH VS. SPIRIT

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received does not make you slaves,
again; rather, the **Spirit** you received
testifies to sonship. And by him we
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- Where am I still walking in the flesh?
 - Where is God inviting me to walk in the Spirit as an adopted “son”?

