

11. Living by Spirit

Romans 8:5-17

Introduction

What are some of the best things about being a Christian for you?

The apostle Paul in chapters 5 to 8 of his letter has described the radical change in our lives as believers. He has described some of the tremendous blessings that are ours through Christ Jesus. In chapter 7 one of the things he mentioned was that having died to with Christ we have been released from the law to serve in the new way of the Spirit (7:6). In these verses the apostle picks up on this and describes in greater detail what living by the Spirit is like. Please read 8:5-17 to discover what our mindset and obligations are if we live according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh.

Our Mindset

1. What is the mindset of those who live according to the flesh (sinful nature NIV1984) compared to that of those who live according to the Spirit (5)?

2. What is the outcome of each of the two mindsets (6-8)?

3. Who are those who live by the Spirit (9-10)?

4. How can people live even though their bodies are dead because of sin (10-11)¹?

Think about it

At what point does the Spirit come to dwell in the life of a believer?

Please describe the difference that the indwelling Spirit makes to our lives.

¹ You might like to read 1 Corinthians 15:42-58 for a description of the way that God will give life to our mortal bodies.

What does it mean to have our mindset on the things of the Spirit (8)? You might like to compare what is said here with Colossians 3:1-14 or Galatians 5:16-26.

Our obligations

The apostle Paul describes more fully what it means to live according to the Spirit in verses 12 to 17 where he describes our obligations. If the Spirit of God lives in us, we have an obligation to no longer live as we once lived.

6. Why are we obliged to not to live according to the flesh (12-14)?

7. Why are those who live by the Spirit regarded as sons or children of God (15-16)?

8. The word “sonship” could also be translated “adoption”². The word was used the Greco-Roman world in a legal way when the rights of son were conferred on child through adoption. What are the benefits of being God’s adopted children (17)?

9. What is the life that the believer is to share in here and now and why (17)?

Think about it

What do you think it means to be led by the Spirit (14; Galatians 5:16-26)? Does it have anything to do with guidance or God revealing his will to us? What does it mean?

The word “Abba” was intimate term used by Jesus for God as His father. What does the use of the word here in Romans suggest about the nature of our relationship with God as Father?

² See margin of NIV for this alternative.

Conclusion

If we belong to Christ we are no longer under the control of the flesh, sin and the devil for those who live by the Spirit of God are children of God.

Think about it

What will be involved in us living as children of God here and now?

What help do we have to live this way?

Going Further

1. Please read chapter 8 verses 18 to 39 several times in preparation for the next study.
2. Review the memory verses from Romans that you have tried to commit to memory. Which of these verses have you found most useful and why? You might like to share this with the group when next you meet.