

ROMANS 5-8: Living Your Life God's Way

On Being a Son of God

Rough Transcript

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Hey, guys, and welcome to our continuing series in the Book of Romans. Please grab your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter eight. And we're going to look at the first 17 verses of this passage. And this is kind of a long passage so I want to read it to you. But before I do, let me just tell you that our topic today is on being a son of God. And this passage is a beautiful passage of scripture. We probably could have spent two or three weeks on it. But it's a wonderful passage where Paul talks about what it means to be an actual son of God. And so will you read this passage with me? Starting in verse one, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done with the law weakened by the flesh could not do by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.

And in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh. But those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death. But to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God for it does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You however are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if in fact the spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness. 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 dwells in you. So then brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba. Father." The son spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him."

So as we look at this passage today, the three points that we're going to talk about are first of all, what will you set your mind on? What will you set your mind on? Secondly, what does it mean to be in the spirit, or as Paul says elsewhere, "to be in Christ." And then finally, what is it look like to live like a son?

How can we live our lives truly like a son. Before we get into that though, I just want to take a little quick side road and look at the first couple of verses of this passage. Romans 7, Pat talked last week about Romans 7, this great passage about the things I don't want to do, I keep on doing. The things I want to do, I don't do.

And Paul's expressing his frustration as a believer, as a follower of Christ, how he still sins, he still does the things that he doesn't want to do and doesn't do the things that he knows that he should. And he ends with this plea, "Who can save me from this body of death?" And then he says, "Praise God through Christ Jesus, I can be saved." And so when you look, then the next verse is Romans 8:1, and he says, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." But the interesting thing is, is that when he says there is therefore now no condemnation, he's not just referring to the last chapter, to chapter seven, he's really referring to everything he's written up until that point.

Paul is making the case, really the first seven chapters of Romans make the case for this exact phrase, there is therefore now no condemnation. So here's my question. Do you get it? Do you really get it? Do you believe it, that there is no condemnation? Condemnation is to live under the consequences of the actions that you've committed, the actions that you've taken. If you are condemned in court, you are living under the consequences of the crime that you've committed and a sentence is imposed on you. But when Paul says there is therefore now no condemnation, he's saying you are released from that sentence, you are released from the penalty of those sins because Christ has paid those penalties for you on your behalf. And so, as we get started here, I just want to ask you, do you believe it? Do you really get it that there is no so condemnation, and are you willing to live in that freedom of not being condemned for your actions, and instead, having a new lease on life, a new opportunity to live a godly life, which is really what this passage is all about coming up?

And so if you look at this passage going forward, you can see that the first point we're going to talk about is what will you set your mind on? What will you set your mind on? And in verse five, Paul says, "For those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit, set their minds on the things of the spirit." So we want to, as Christian men, we want to set our minds on the things of the spirit. If you're discipling something, let's say you're a disciple-maker, you've got a guy that you're meeting with, maybe you're just sort of friends, you're journeying through life together, you want to challenge each other to set your mind on the spirit. How do you do that?

Well, let me give you two ways of looking at it, sort of a macro way and a micro way. So when I say macro, what I mean is what are the big picture things that you can do, the consistent things that you can do to set a foundation of living your life in a way that you are continually setting your mind on this spirit. And so these are things that some would call spiritual disciplines, right? So I'm going to give you the six, I think the six most important ones. There's other ones too. Maybe most important is not the right word, but six ways that you can set your mind on the spirit on a regular basis that will then make it easier for you then on the micro-level to do that as well.

So here they are. First of all, the first three are sort of inward, facing inward and upward-facing, and that is prayer, scripture, and journaling. So, guys, we need to be spending time talking to God every day, every minute that we can think of it, we need to be spending in conversation with God. We need to be

looking for his words for us in the scripture. He gave us the Bible. He speaks directly to us. And then I don't know about you, but when I spend time praying and I spend time in the scripture, five minutes after I get up, the emails start coming in and my to-do list starts running through my head and the phone starts ringing and I have all these obligations, and I lose track. The worries and cares of the world, like in the parable of the sower, the worries and cares of the world, really distract me. And so that's why journaling, I think is just so incredibly important.

When I journal regularly, I do such a better job of setting my mind on the spirit. And when I don't journal, sometimes the other stuff that I do, the prayer times and the Bible reading and Bible studies just becomes going through the motions. I'm just checking the box off, but I don't really remember it. So I really encourage you to journal. The next three are really outward-facing, and those are fellowship, service, and sacrifice. So fellowship obviously, right? You need to be in relationship with other guys and relationship with your family and relationship with your church. We, as men, as Christians, we are not called to be lone rangers. We are called to be as part of a community and so fellowship is critical for us if we're going to set our mind on the spirit.

And then are we serving? Are we investing in the kingdom? Are we helping others grow in their faith? Are we serving somehow inside the church or outside the church to build God's kingdom? And then the sixth way I think is sort of something that we don't talk about very often. But I think as men, we need to be looking for ways to intentionally make sacrifices on behalf of the kingdom of God.

Just as if you were in a football team or on a sports team, you make sacrifices to be on that team. You sacrifice a lot of time that you could be doing other things. You might sacrifice your health, or at least you'll be in pain sometimes, especially if you play a contact sport because you want to practice and get better for the sake of the team and so you sacrifice your comfort. You might even sacrifice your position. I've seen in different sports where guys recognize that another person is better at a position and so they play a different position. That's a sacrifice. Are you looking for the sacrifices that you need to make and so that you can build the kingdom? I think those are the macro ways that we can set our mind on the spirit.

And then the micro ways is just listen, every decision we make, every circumstance we come into, we can make an intentional decision to look at those things through the lens of the flesh or look at those things through the lens of the spirit. We can set our minds on the flesh on our personal benefit and reputation, what's best for me, what's going to make me feel good, or we can set our minds on the spirit and say, what's good for the kingdom, what's good for my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ? What's good for those who could look at my life and see an example of God's kingdom and want to know more about that because they don't really know anything about that? What's good for bringing God glory, not for bringing me glory? And so I think those are the micro ways of setting your mind on the spirit.

And this sort of brings us to our big idea. So, how do you set your mind on things of the spirit? How do you have your life exhibit, what it looks like to live in the spirit? And I would just say this, as we're moving forward, this is the big idea that's going to frame where we go from here and that is that the more secure you are in your position with the Father, the more your life will reflect godly character and purpose. And so how do we grow in our security, in our position with the Father, and then out of the result of that, how do we make sure that our life is reflecting, godly character and purpose?

And so let's look at, what does it really mean to be in the spirit? And in the spirit, there's another phrase that Paul uses in First Corinthians a lot. He uses the phrase "in Christ" over and over again, when you are in Christ, in the spirit. And in this passage, he says in verse 10, "But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness." And in the verse before that, he says, "You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if in fact, the spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to him." So we want to live in the spirit in Christ.

And so what does that mean? That's a phrase we hear a lot, I think, but we don't really know what it means. So let me give you some metaphors. Living in the spirit is like being a hand in a glove, right? So what happens to the hand that goes into the glove? Well, the glove protects it and provides a warmth for the hand. And so the hand is better off being in the glove than not being in the glove. Being in the spirit is like being a boy in school. What do you get as a boy in school? You get structure, you get a system that makes sense. You have a purpose. You're there for learning and for growing. You get discipline and you get to discover things as you grow. And so being in school is better than being not in school because you don't have that system and structure and the same opportunities to learn that you might have if you were in school.

Let's say being in the spirit is like being a paralyzed man in a mechanical suit. Apart from the mechanical suit if you're a paralyzed man, you can't move. You can't get around. You don't have freedom. Your life is greatly diminished. But if you are a paralyzed man in a mechanical suit that gives you the ability to walk around and to go where you want to go, you get freedom. You get movement. You get life that you could not have had without that mechanical suit. Being in the spirit is like being finally in a family where you are loved. You are named. You have an identity. You have a legacy that you're leaving and you have a history of your family that you were building on. You have standards and you have an inheritance.

And so these are all the things that it means to live in the spirit. And the benefits of living in the spirit are incredible, benefits like life. If you look at verse two, the law of the spirit of life has set you free. Look at verse six, for to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life. And peace in verse 10 and 11, if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness. The spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you. He will also give life to your mortal bodies. And so being in the spirit means getting life. It means power.

Look at verse 11, again, the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you. He who raised Jesus from the dead will also give you life. You get the power of the spirit, the very spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead. That power is in you. It's when you live in the spirit. You get a newfound freedom. Look at verse 15, you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you've received the spirit of adoption. And so we're not slaves, we're free. And earlier in this passage, we talked about Paul uses that analogy a little bit differently. You're not a slave of the law, but you are a slave of righteousness, but he's just talking about the power of righteousness and that mindset in that frame.

And then finally, the inheritance. Verses 15 to 17, you do not receive the spirit of slavery, but the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, "Abba. Father. Daddy. Father." The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are what, children of God. And if children, then heirs, and heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ provided we suffer with him in order that we also may be glorified with him. And so this is the benefit of living in the spirit. It's power. It's life. It's freedom. It's an inheritance. And these

analogies of being protected like a glove, of having structure and learning like a boy in school, of having freedom in life like a paralyzed man in a mechanical suit, and being loved and having an identity, and a past and a present and a future, a legacy and an inheritance, these are all the benefits of living in the spirit. It's what our hearts yearn for, I think.

And so once again, just to remind you, our big idea here then is that the more secure you are in your position with the Father, the more your life will reflect godly character and purpose. And so then what does it look like to live like a son in this third point? And I want to say this, this is where the English language can get a little vague. Yes, you're living like a son, but a better word than like would be as because you're not like a son, you are a son. So you are living as a son. What does it look like to live as a son? Well, the first thing I want to just remind you again, is that you are adopted. So you are a son.

We have, on both sides of my family, we have adopted members of our family and we have biological kids and adopted kids in our family. But you know what, we don't look at any of them, any different at all because they're all our, for me, nieces and nephews, for their parents, they're their sons and daughters. They don't look at them as different than a biological child. So, we have adopted kids into our family. When God adopts you, guys, you are not like a son, you are a son. He has made that vision. And I want you to feel secure in that position because to live like a son, you've really got to believe that you're a son.

And so to build this belief, honestly, to move this from an idea to an identity, it's supernatural. And so where does that supernatural power come from to move your heart from idea to identity? Well, it's when you have the spirit in you, guys, that helps your heart change from just liking the idea of being considered like a son of God, to really resting in that identity as a son of God, as a co-heir with Christ of the inheritance that is due to a son, the legacy that God gives us, the future, the identity, the purpose that God gives us. It's a wonderful, wonderful gift to live as a son of God with all of us of the rights and responsibilities that come along with that. This is your security. And as your security grows, your confidence grows, your belief grows, you will become more secure in your position with the Father and the more your life will then reflect godly character and purpose.

So what exactly is this godly character and purpose? And let me just wrap up with this by reminding you about a parable and a story from Jesus. So the first thing, let's talk about character first. So the first thing I want to remind you of is the parable in Matthew 18. You don't need to turn there, but you can. But Matthew 18, it's the parable of the unmerciful servant. This is a servant he has forgiven of a great debt by his master. But then when he is then confronted with somebody who owes him, he does not show the same grace and compassion and forgiveness to the person that owes him. And when the master finds out, the master recomposes the consequences of his debt on him because he was unwilling to forgive the debt of someone else. And this is the character of a godly man.

A godly man recognizes that he is forgiven of much and so he is willing to forgive. A godly man, the character of a godly man is one of grace and compassion. It's one of generosity and love. And, of course, it's the character trait of forgiveness, of limitless forgiveness, 70 times seven, which is actually where this parable well comes from, as Jesus is trying to explain how often a man should forgive someone else. That's a character issue. What about the purpose of a godly man? Well, let's look at Luke 17, the story of the 10 lepers. Jesus heals 10 lepers and he sends them off to the priest to show that they've been

cleansed, they've been purified and only one comes back. That one former leper comes back and he thanks Jesus and he brings glory to Jesus. And that is the purpose of a godly man.

We are to be grateful to God. We are to bring glory to God and we are to live a life of faith. Jesus says to the leper, "Your faith has healed you." And so we need to be men of faith, living in that faith, in that confidence of our positions, as co-heirs with Christ, as adopted sons of God, with all of the rights that our son has. How wonderful is that great truth? So go out there, guys, and live as a son of God, bringing God glory, having God's character, and living in the confidence of an eternity spent with the living God.

Let's pray. Father, we're so grateful for Paul and for this effort that he put forth to write this letter to the Romans. Lord, it's so rich, and so we pray Lord continually for understanding of what you would have us learn from this. But Lord, would you help us to first of all, truly believe that there is no condemnation, and second, Lord to truly believe that we are your sons, that we could live a life of godly character and purpose. To your glory, in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Thanks, guys. I hope you have a fantastic week.