



360 DISCUSSION 10.23.16

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT | ROMANS 8:1-17



I remember car shopping with my parents as a child. The showroom was set up perfectly—all the sights and smells of new cars. The Thunderbird and the Mustang were front and center in all their chrome and glory with their hoods propped in a proud display of raw horsepower. Even as a five-year-old I knew there was something special about these machines.

To sweeten the deal back then, if you purchased either one of these vehicles, they would throw in a replica pedal car for the kids. You've probably seen one of these hanging from the ceiling in Chuy's or some retro burger joint. I jumped in the Thunderbird and pedaled madly through the showroom until my driving privileges were simultaneously revoked by my mom and the sales manager.

Needless to say, my parents gravitated to one of the most embarrassing station wagons Ford ever produced, when for a few dollars more I could have been the proud owner of a Thunderbird pedal car.

Sometimes in the Christian life, I feel like we are little kids in a pedal car. We've settled for something that looks like the real thing, but does not come even close to the power and the beauty. We are pedaling as fast as we can, but in the end we are only going in circles in the driveway. Some of us have stopped pedaling altogether and have moved on to the next new thing.

The apostle Paul wants us to experience all the power, grace and beauty of life in Christ, and that power, grace and beauty comes to us through Life in the Spirit.

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FREE FROM GUILT AND SHAME (vv. 1-4)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ²because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³For 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, ⁴in 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.

1. In chapter 7, Paul highlights the frustration and ultimate failure of trying to keep the Law in our own strength (the flesh). Why is keeping the Law in our own strength ultimately a failed project?
2. What has God done in Christ and in the Spirit to overcome our powerlessness?
3. How does Paul describe the Spirit? Why is that significant?
4. What are the results of the Spirit's work in our lives?

A WHOLE NEW MINDSET (vv. 5-7)

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.

1. How does Paul describe those who live according to the flesh?
2. How does Paul describe those who live according to the Spirit?

A NEW REALM, NEW RULER, A NEW OBLIGATION (vv. 5-13)

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.

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.

1. While the battle between the flesh and Spirit often seems to be insurmountable, Paul wants us to know, nothing could be further from the truth. In Christ we have made a clean break with our past and have entered a new realm, under a new ruler and with a new obligation. How would you describe the old realm, the old ruler and the old obligation?
2. How would you describe the new realm, the new ruler and the new obligation?
3. While those who are not in Christ have no choice but to live according to the flesh, those of us who are in Christ, do. Why do we so often choose to live in a way that is contrary to our life in Christ? What are the results of that choice?
4. What does Paul tell us is absolutely critical for living by the Spirit?

ALL DAUGHTERS AND SONS (vv. 14-17)

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.

1. How does the Holy Spirit assure us that we are truly children of God?
2. According to Paul who are the true children of God?
3. What are the privileges of being sons and daughters of God?
4. What are the responsibilities of being sons and daughters of God?
5. What do you think it means to share in the sufferings of Christ?
6. How are our sufferings in and of themselves a source of hope and assurance?
7. What are some steps you can take in the week to come to insure that you experience the power, grace and beauty of life in the Spirit?