

Who's In Control? (Part 4)

Romans 8:5-11

Thought for the Day: As Christians, our body has been sentenced to death because of sin, but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is imparting eternal life to us so that we will live with God in heaven forever.

In Romans 8:1-17 the Apostle Paul is challenging us to reflect on a very important question: Who's in control of your life? As believers, we are either being controlled, empowered and led by God the Holy Spirit or we are being controlled and empowered by our own sinful nature.

"While inadequacy has been my feeling all the way through this epistle, especially here I feel totally incapable of dealing with these great truths. This is such a glorious and wonderful epistle that all we can do is merely stand as Moses did at the burning bush with our feet unshod and our head uncovered, not fully realizing or recognizing the glory and wonder of it all.

"Chapter 8 is the high-water mark in Romans. 'If Holy Scripture were a ring and the epistle to the Romans its precious stone, chapter eight would be the sparkling point of the jewel.'

"Someone as added, 'We enter this chapter with no condemnation, we close with no separation, and in between, all things work together for good to those that love God.'" (Dr. J. Vernon McGee, *Romans*)

To be effective and fruitful in the Christian life, to be victorious over sin, temptation and our own sinful nature, we have got to understand how to live under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit!

There are three groups of people spoken of in Romans 8:5-11:

1. Those who are in the flesh – those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior from sin, who are spiritually lost and dead in their sins. (Eph. 2:1-3)
2. Those who are in the Spirit – those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior, who have been spiritually born again by the Holy Spirit into the family of God. (John 3:16)
3. Those Christians who are either living under the control of the flesh, their old sinful nature (carnal Christians), or those Christians who are living under the control of the Holy Spirit (spiritual Christians).
 - a. Illustration: cars that are powered either by gasoline or propane.
 - b. Application: we have only one engine (our mind, heart and will) but that engine can be powered either by our old sinful nature, or by the Holy Spirit. We choose!
 - c. "Paul divides people into two categories—those who let themselves be controlled by their sinful natures, and those who follow after the Holy Spirit. All of us would be in the first category if Jesus hadn't offered us a way out. Once we have said yes to Jesus, we will want to continue following him, because his way brings life and peace. Daily we must consciously choose to center our lives on God." (*Life Application Study Bible, p. 2419*)

9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. (NIV)

- This is not the best translation of the original language.
- It does not automatically follow that we are controlled by the Holy Spirit simply because the Holy Spirit lives within us.
- We have the *possibility* of being controlled by the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit lives within, but it's not automatic!

9 You, however, are not *in the flesh* but *in the Spirit*, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. (ESV)

And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

- The supreme evidence of genuine spiritual conversion is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- If you do not have the Holy Spirit within you, it doesn't matter how good you are or how religious you are, you do not belong to Jesus Christ!

10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. (NIV)

But if Christ is in you, even though your body will die because of sin, the (Holy) Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. (NLT)

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 through his Spirit, who lives in you. (NIV)

- If the Lord tarries, our body will ultimately die due to the consequences of sin.
- But in our spirit and soul, our inner being, we have received God's gift of eternal life imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, and we will never die.
- When a believer dies physically, their spirit and soul, their inner being, immediately goes to be with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:6-8)
- And one day, according to the promises of God's Word, our body will be resurrected and reunited with our spirit and soul and we will go to heaven to be with the Lord forever. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
- As Christians, our body has been sentenced to death because of sin, but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is imparting eternal life to us so that we will live with God in heaven forever.