

## Are You Fulfilling Your Obligation? (Part 1)

*Romans 8:12-17*

**Thought for the Day:** As those who have put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, we have an obligation motivated by gratitude to submit to the will and desires of the Holy Spirit and to seek to do those things that are pleasing to Him.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 – “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

In Romans 8:12-17, we are reminded that we are children of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And because we are His children, we have received some very remarkable and special blessings from God. Each member of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—is mentioned in this passage and each One plays a very special role in our salvation.

The Holy Spirit enables us to put to death the misdeeds of the body and to live a victorious Christian life. He leads us and guides us and gives us the full assurance that we are indeed the children of God.

God the Father is just exactly that—He is our heavenly Father who has gladly welcomed us into His eternal family. And we are able to have a personal, intimate, loving relationship with Him.

And we are reminded that the Lord Jesus Christ has suffered on our behalf in order that we may share in His glory. Together with the Lord Jesus Christ we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ; everything that belongs to Jesus Christ also belongs to us!

There is, however, a special emphasis in this passage on the role of the Holy Spirit in our salvation. Prior to Romans 8:1, the Holy Spirit is mentioned only four times in the book of Romans (1:4; 2:29; 5:5; 7:6). But when we come to chapter 8, He is mentioned no less than 22 times!

With regard to the lifelong process of sanctification—our personal growth in holiness and Christlikeness—our relationship to the Holy Spirit and His ministry in our lives is absolutely critical.

### **12 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.**

- As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we must adopt the mindset that we have no obligation to do what our sinful nature desires or demands. (Romans 6:11-14)
- We do not have any obligation to live according to our sinful nature because our sinful nature has never done anything but get us into trouble! (*Warren Wiersbe*)
- Living according to the desires and demands of our sinful nature has done nothing but produce misery and shame and bondage to sinful habits in our lives.
- Our obligation is to live according to the Holy Spirit.
  - It is the Holy Spirit who brought us into a saving relationship with Christ and it is He who is now at work in our lives to bring us into conformity to the image of Jesus Christ.

- “To the old life of sin, to its evil passions and appetites and indulgences, we owe no debt of obedience. Our real debt is to the Spirit who empowers us for holy living, to whom therefore we owe submission and service.” (*Erdman, Romans, p. 87*)
- To live according to the sinful nature is to live in submission to its dictates and to seek to fulfill or gratify its desires.

**13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,**

- If, as believers, we live according to the dictates and desires of our sinful nature, we will experience spiritual separation from God—broken fellowship and spiritual corruption in our lives.
- “We can choose our behavior but we cannot choose the consequences.”
  - We can choose whether we will live according to our sinful nature or the Holy Spirit but we cannot choose the inevitable consequences of our choice. (Galatians 6:7-9)
- As we live in submission to and dependence on the Holy Spirit, He will enable us to put to death the misdeeds of the body and enjoy the abundant, victorious life that Jesus Christ came to give us. (Galatians 5:16-25)
- “It is not enough for us to have the Spirit [Romans 8:9]; the Spirit must [also] have us! Only then can He share with us the abundant, victorious life that can be ours in Christ.” (*Wiersbe, Be Right, p. 101*)

**14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.**

Verses 12-13 are somewhat negative—they talk about the consequences of living according to our sinful nature and what we must put to death in our lives. But verses 14-17 are positive—they talk about the benefits we receive when we live according to the Holy Spirit.

**1. As we live in submission to and dependence on the Holy Spirit, He will lead us and guide us.**

- Cp. Psalm 23:1-4.
- The primary means whereby the Holy Spirit leads us is the Word of God.
- The Holy Spirit will *never* lead us to do something that is contrary or contradictory to teachings and principles of the Bible.

**15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."**

- The Spirit of sonship (adoption) – from a Greek word that is literally translated, “to place as a son”.
- 2. As we live in submission to and dependence on the Holy Spirit, He delivers us from fear and enables us to enjoy all the benefits of being the beloved children of God.**
  - Cp. 2 Timothy 1:7.
  - If we are operating out of a mindset of fear, we need to understand that we are operating in the power and energy of the flesh (our sinful nature) rather than the power of the Holy Spirit.