Sunday, May 12, 2019

**Lesson:** Romans 8:1-14; **Time of Action:** 56 A.D.; **Place of Action:** Paul writes to the church in Rome from Corinth

**Golden Text:** “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1).

**I. INTRODUCTION.** Many believers today are trying to live the Christian life with human power even though God offers them supernatural power. Jesus promised His disciples, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (see Acts 1:8). Jesus’ words were fulfilled when the Holy Spirit manifested His power on the Day of Pentecost. The book of Acts bears witness to what the Holy Spirit can do when lives are yielded to Him. The power of the Holy Spirit continues to be available today to God’s saints, but they must take hold of it by faith. Like Paul, and many others, we too can be liberated from the enslaving power of sin. This week’s lesson explains how that can happen.

**II. LESSON BACKGROUND.** Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome. Neither he nor the other church leaders,
James and Peter had yet been to Rome. Most likely, the Roman church had been established by believers who had been at Jerusalem for Pentecost (see Acts 2:10), and travelers who had heard the Good News brought it back to Rome (for example, Priscilla and Aquila: see Acts 18:2; Romans 16:3). Paul wrote the letter to the Romans during his ministry in Corinth at the end of his third missionary journey just before returning to Jerusalem (see Acts 20:3; Romans 15:25). His goal was to encourage believers and to express his desire to visit them someday (within three years he would). The Roman church had no New Testament because the Gospels were not yet being circulated in their final written form. Therefore, this letter may have been the first piece of Christian literature the Roman believers had seen. Written to both Jewish and Gentile Christians, this letter is a systematic presentation of the Christian faith. After a brief introduction, Paul presents the facts of the gospel (see Romans 1:3) and declares his allegiance to it (see Romans 1:16-17). He continues by building an airtight case for the lostness of mankind and the necessity for God’s intervention (see Romans 1:18-3:20). Then Paul presents the Good News—salvation is available to everyone, regardless of a person’s identity, sin, or heritage. We are saved by grace (unearned, undeserved favor from God) through faith (complete trust) in Jesus Christ and His finished work. Through Him we can stand before God justified, or “not guilty” (see Romans 3:21-5:21). In Romans chapter 6, Paul established the truth that victory over indwelling sin is possible because saints are identified with Christ in death and resurrection. In chapter 7, he portrays the plight of someone who, despite his love for God, finds himself in a desperate struggle with sin. Paul’s cry in Romans 7:24, “O
wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” called for an answer. He touched on the answer briefly at the beginning of verse 25: “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Therefore, it was only logical and necessary for Paul to explain more fully God’s deliverance of the believer from a life of spiritual frustration. Our lesson begins with chapter 8.

III. THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT (Romans 8:1-4)

A. The believer has been freed from the law of sin (Romans 8:1-2).

1. (vs. 1). Our first verse says “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The Apostle Paul begins chapter 8 with the word “therefore.” It has been said that when you see the word “therefore,” you should stop to see what it is “there for.” So, the “therefore” in this verse looks back to chapters 6 & 7 where Paul established the truth that Christians have victory over indwelling sin because we are indentified with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. (see Romans 6:1-7:25). As a result of that relationship with Christ, Paul concludes that “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” This is justification. In other words, those who “are in Christ Jesus” or who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior are no longer condemned for their sins. God has justified or declared them
not guilty of their sins and therefore they will receive no punishment. The phrase, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” describes the character of the person who is “in Christ Jesus” or in union with Him. This is sanctification or holy living. The character of every Christian is shown by their daily behavior, not by any one particular act, but by their daily living. The “condemnation” that we justly deserved for our sin was completely satisfied when we were justified by Jesus Christ (see Romans 3:23-25) and identified with Him through baptism (see Romans 6:1-6).

**Note:** Not being condemned for our sin is the unspeakable privilege and comfort of everyone who is in Christ Jesus. But notice, Paul does not say, “There is no accusation against the believer,” because there is; but the accusation is thrown out, and the indictment torn up. He does not say, “There is nothing in the believer that deserves condemnation,” because there is; we are all sinners. But the believer knows this, and owns it and even condemns themselves for it; but we shall not be ruined by it. Paul does not say, “There is no cross, no affliction for believers” because there may very well be; but there is “no condemnation.”

Believers may be chastened by the Lord, but we are not condemned with the world (see I Corinthians 11:32). Christians are not condemned because we are sinless, but because we “are in Christ Jesus,” and this is by virtue of our union with Him through faith.

2. (vs. 2). This verse says “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Here Paul says that the key to
spiritual success is “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” This refers to Christ’s life being transferred to our lives by the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 2:20). The Holy Spirit is the Member of the Godhead who regenerates every individual believer (see Titus 3:5) and gives them a new life (see John 3:5-8) which is the resurrection life of Jesus Christ (see Romans 6:4, 8, 11). Paul also said that this new “life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Believers have not only been acquitted or found not guilty from sin, but we have also been freed from its power and authority (see John 8:32, 36). Although Christians may be tempted to sin, we don’t have to give in to it. But if we are to break the power of our sinful tendencies, we need outside help. God has given us this help in the Person of “the Spirit.” He has come to live in us. In response to our faith, “the Spirit” delivers us when temptation arises. When Paul spoke of “the law of sin and death” that we have been freed from, he was referring to what he described in Romans 7:7-25. “The law of sin and death” has no condemning power over the Christian, because we are dead to “the law” (see Romans 7:4) and therefore free from it.

B. The weakness of the Law (Romans 8:3-4).

1. (vs. 3). This verse goes on to say “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh...” In case some may ask how this victory over sin and death was accomplished, Paul’s answer lies in the accomplishments of Jesus’ death, because the law could not do it. Paul said “For
what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh...” Paul noted that “the law” couldn’t accomplish victory over sin and death because “it was weak through the flesh.” It couldn’t justify or sanctify, neither could it free us from the guilt nor from the power of sin, since “the law” didn’t have the promises of pardon or grace. “The law” here refers to the Mosaic Law. It could not make anyone right with God because “it was weak.” What it couldn’t do was destroy the power of sin over a human life. Paul had earlier pointed out that the commandments only moved the sinful nature to commit more acts of transgression (see Romans 7:7-11). But the apostle also said that this weakness was not because there was anything wrong with “the law,” but “it was weak through the flesh,” through the corruption of human nature, which makes us incapable of being justified or sanctified by “the law.” The term “flesh” refers to sinful human nature which is both corrupt and “weak.” Because we are flesh or human, we are unable to keep “the law,” so the law left us as it found us—still unsaved sinners. The law itself is not flawed or sinful as Paul declared earlier (see Romans 7:7, 12). It is the perfect expression of God’s will, but it was not given to provide power for godliness. When confronted with the stubborn arrogance of sinful human nature, “the law” cannot transform it or change it. “The law” can only pronounce guilt on human nature. But God had a solution to sin’s dominion over human nature that had to come from another source. Paul said for “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh...” We should take note that
the initiative for breaking sin’s power came from God the Father, not man. To do it, God the Father sent “his own Son,” the beloved One with whom God had a unique relationship (see I John 4:9). The Father sent the Son “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” Although the word “likeness” indicates that Jesus did not actually become sinful, we cannot assume that He was not really human. Indeed, He was “manifest in the flesh” (see I Timothy 3:16) and “come in the flesh” (see I John 4:2). Jesus took on the closest relationship possible with sinful humanity without becoming a sinner Himself. God also sent His Son “for sin.” The Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint) sometimes uses this expression to mean sin offering, and that’s probably how it should be interpreted here. Although Jesus did come to atone for sin, it’s quite possible that when Paul used the words “for sin” he meant to emphasize something else. He may have been emphasizing that Jesus was sent concerning “sin”—that is, to deal with it and do something about it. So what did God do about “sin” through Jesus Christ? Paul said that He “condemned sin in the flesh.” In essence, God passed a judicial sentence upon sin and ended its dominion over us. Instead of finding ourselves “condemned” to a life of sinful bondage, “sin” itself was “condemned.” There’s no doubt about it, the human race deserved the death penalty because of its “sin” (see Romans 6:23), and God’s holiness and justice required full payment. In Jesus Christ that payment was made and sin was judged. The phrase “in the flesh” refers to Jesus’ human existence in which He secured sin’s condemnation. He became “flesh” so that He might die and therefore deal with “sin.” It’s interesting that “sin” has dominated the rest of mankind in the flesh, and that is
precisely where Christ defeated it—“in the flesh.” So the truth presented here is that in His death, Jesus dealt with the power of indwelling “sin.”

2. (vs. 4). This verse continues to say “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” God’s goal in sending Christ to condemn sin in the flesh was so “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The word translated “righteousness” refers to the righteous or right requirements the law demanded. After everything Paul had said about the inability of the law to justify or to sanctify, he still recognized that it came from God. The “righteousness of the law” refers to the law’s righteous requirement which was summed up by Jesus Himself as being supreme love for God and for our neighbor (see Matthew 22:35-40). Jesus’ redemptive work on the cross on behalf of the believer makes it possible for the righteousness of obedience to the commands of “the law” to be “fulfilled in us.” But this is not automatic. It can only be accomplished when by the “Holy Spirit” the law of love is written on our hearts, and that love is the fulfilling of “the law” (see Romans 13:10). Paul then said that we can only fulfill the “righteousness of the law” or the law of love when we “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” In other words, living right before God daily depends on our having a proper relationship with the indwelling “Holy Spirit.” Being in Christ, we can choose to live according to the Spirit’s will and guidance, or to continue to appease our sinful desires by walking “after the flesh.” The “Holy Spirit” won’t make us
do anything. He will lead us (see Romans 8:14), but the choice to follow His leadership is up to us. Therefore, it is imperative that believers “walk” or continually live daily in submission to the “Holy Spirit” (see Ephesians 5:17-21). When we submit to the control of the “Holy Spirit,” we are able to fulfill the law’s requirement—love for God and for our neighbor—without consciously trying to do so.

IV. THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Romans 8:5-11)

A. The believer has life and peace (Romans 8:5-8).

1. (vs. 5). This verse says “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” Here Paul tells his readers what it means to walk after the flesh and after the Spirit. He explains that the total person is engrossed in one or the other. He said “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.” The verb “mind” as used here speaks of being constantly or habitually focused on the desires of the flesh. Mind, emotions, and will are all preoccupied with fleshly interests. “Things of the flesh” are not limited to the grosser lusts like immorality, drunkenness, or gluttony. Fleshly interests include anything that is dedicated to self-centered interests. Fleshly interests could take the form of envy, pride, sins of the tongue, greed, or malice. They may also include
legitimate pursuits in science, technology, art, literature, and music. Fleshly things may even include religion that conveys false ideas about God, man, and salvation. But those who “are after the Spirit” mind or are absorbed in “the things of the Spirit.” Since their personalities are influenced by the indwelling “Spirit,” their thoughts, affections, and wills are absorbed in what originates with “the Spirit.” The favour of God, the welfare of the soul, and the concerns of eternity, are the things of “the Spirit,” which those who are “after the Spirit” do “mind” of focus on. In addition, the lives of those who “are after the Spirit” are focused on Christ and His salvation, on the expectation of His return, on fellowship with other believers, and on living according to the standards of God’s Word. Believers can understand the fleshly “mind” because we once followed its philosophy (see Ephesians 2:1-5). But unbelievers have known nothing except the “mind” of the “flesh” so they consider spiritual things to be foolishness (see I Corinthians 1:18). The “mind” is the seat of man’s thoughts. It is true that the man is, as the “mind” is. The wise man Solomon said, “For as he (a man) thinketh in his heart, so is he...” (see Proverbs 23:7).

2. (vs. 6). This verse goes on to say “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” In this verse, Paul continued to explain the differences between the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit by contrasting their outcomes. First he said “For to be carnally minded is death.” To be “carnally minded” is the same thing as “the mind of the flesh.” It refers to the behavior produced by man’s sinful nature. Paul equates the “carnally minded” or “the mind of the flesh”
with "death." This means not only that the "carnally minded" results in physical and spiritual "death" (see Romans 6:23), but it exists in a state of "death" even now. The unsaved person is alive physically, but dead spiritually. The inner natural man is dead toward God and does not respond to the things of the Spirit. He or she may be moral, and even religious, but they lack spiritual life. Therefore, they need "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (see verse 2). The essence of "death" is separation, and the flesh's behavior is totally separated from God (see Ephesians 2:1). This spiritual "death" that the "carnally minded" suffer eventually leads to physical death and eternal separation from God (see Galatians 6:8; Philippians 3:18-19). In contrast to the results of being "carnally minded" which is "death," Paul said "but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Of course, "spiritually minded" is the same thing as "the mind of the Spirit." It refers to the behavior produced in the believer by the Holy Spirit. Paul equates being "spiritually minded" with "life and peace." Since the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of life" (see verse 2), He gives new life to everyone He indwells. Anyone who possesses the "Spirit" possesses the life of God. Just like the flesh contains the seed of eternal death, the Spirit’s "life" contains the seed of ultimate happiness in God’s presence (see Galatians 6:8). Not only is "spiritually minded" life, it is also "peace." The believer who is justified and reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ is put at "peace" with God (see Romans 5:1) because our struggle against Him is over (see Ephesians 2:15-18). The believer can also enjoy "peace" with their fellowman (see Ephesians 2:14-16) as well as "peace" in the midst of their circumstances (see
Philippians 4:7). As the Holy Spirit’s power moves throughout the believer’s life, He replaces the bothersome works of the flesh with the fruit of “peace” (see Galatians 5:19-22).

3. (vs. 7). This verse says “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” In this verse Paul gives the reason why being carnally or fleshly minded means death. It is “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.” This means that our fleshly or sinful nature is hostile toward “God.” The word “enmity” is a strong word. It indicates that “the carnal mind” or our sinful nature is actually God’s bitter enemy, completely hostile to everything that is godly. Unbelievers are dominated by sin and are hostile toward “God” and His laws, because as Paul said “for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” In other words, because the old sinful nature within us is at war with God, it does not submit itself to God’s law, since it cannot. **Note:** It is important to note that this describes man not as he was originally created, but as being bound by a sinful nature handed down through Adam (see Romans 5:19). The old nature rebels against God and will not submit to God’s law (see Romans 7:15-25). Those who have trusted Christ enjoy “peace with God” (see Romans 5:1), while the unsaved are at war with God. “There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked” (see Isaiah 48:22).

4. (vs. 8). This verse says “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Having stated that the
carnal mind or our sinful nature is at war with God, Paul draws a conclusion here saying “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” To be “in the flesh” means to be lost, outside of Christ. Those who are “in the flesh” or lost are in a carnal unregenerate state. They are under the reigning power of sin and cannot do the things that please God. Proverbs 15:8 tells us that the very sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. The unsaved person lives to “please” himself and rarely if ever thinks about pleasing “God.” The root of sin is selfishness and pride—“I will” and not “Thy will” (see Isaiah 14:12-17). Pleasing God is the Christian’s highest goal (see Galatians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 4:1), but those who are “in the flesh” or lost will always fall short when it comes to pleasing the Lord. Anyone who rejects the way of faith will never “please” God (see Hebrews 11:6).

B. Four encouraging facts for the believer (Romans 8:9-11).

1. (vs. 9). This verse says “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Contrary to being “in the flesh” or lost, Paul said to the Roman Christians, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” Of course every saint is made of flesh and spirit, but one cannot be both “in the flesh” and “in the Spirit” because they are contrary. To be “in” something means to be overcome or subdued by something. Paul said that his readers were “not in the flesh” meaning that they
were not overcome by fleshly behaviors; they were not lost. He said that these believers were “in the Spirit.” They were overcome by the Holy Spirit and were saved. The Holy Spirit’s indwelling of the believer takes place at the very moment he or she accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior (see Ephesians 1:11-14). Having the Holy Spirit is also God’s mark and our guarantee that we are saved (see II Corinthians 1:22; 5:5). When Paul said “if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you” he didn’t mean that he doubted whether or not these Romans were saved. Paul was cautioning anyone who may have only a superficial profession of faith, not to wrongly assume that he or she is saved and has the Holy Spirit. Paul then gave a direct and solemn warning saying “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Again, the “Spirit of Christ” refers to the Holy Spirit. With this statement, Paul is clearly teaching that every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost (see I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). If the Holy Spirit is not in a person, that person does not belong to Christ and is lost. There is no such thing as a believing Christian who has not been indwelt by the presence of the Holy Spirit. That cannot happen! If you don’t have the Holy Spirit, then you are not saved. It’s that simple! Note: There are probably many people who worry about whether or not they really are a Christian. Simply put, a Christian is anyone who has the Spirit of God living in him or her. If you have sincerely trusted Jesus Christ for your salvation and acknowledged Him as Lord and Savior, then the Holy Spirit has come into your life and indwells you, and you are a Christian. A person won’t know that the Holy Spirit has come if they are waiting for a certain feeling. You will know He has
indwelt you only because Jesus promised He would. When the Holy Spirit is working in a Christian, he or she will believe that Jesus Christ is God’s Son and that eternal life comes through Him (see I John 5:5). The saved person who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit will begin to act as Christ directs (see Galatians 5:22-23); they will find help in their daily problems and in praying (see Romans 8:26-27); they will be empowered to serve God and do His will (see Acts 1:8; Romans 12:6-10); and they will become part of God’s plan to build up His church (see Ephesians 4:11-13).

2. (vs. 10). This verse continues to say “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” The word “if” here is better translated as “since.” So Paul is saying to these Roman Christians, since “Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin.” In other words, even though “Christ” is in every believer, the body will still die “because of sin.” The new life (see II Corinthians 5:17) that we have in Jesus does not immortalize “the body” in its present state. The “body is dead,” that is, it is appointed to die (see Hebrews 9:27), it is under a sentence of death. And this is “because of sin.” It is sin that kills the physical “body” (see Genesis 3:19). While our bodies are “dead because of sin,” Paul then said, “but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” Faith in Jesus Christ results in the indwelling presence of “the Spirit (who) is life.” Not only is “the Spirit” Himself “life,” He gives “life” to the believer. The “Spirit” does this “because of righteousness,” that is, because the believer has trusted in
Christ and is clothed in His righteousness (see Romans 3:22). While we Christians are still subject to physical death "because of sin," a dramatic change has taken place in our lives. Because of the imputed "righteousness" of God (see Romans 3:21-26), we have spiritual "life."

3. (vs. 11). This verse says "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

In addition to giving spiritual life, in this verse Paul first said "But if the Spirit of him (God) that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Since we have been saved through faith in Jesus Christ, the "Spirit" of God who "raised up Jesus from the dead" now dwells in us. Because of this, Paul added that the same God who resurrected "Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

The word "quicken" means "to make alive." Paul was saying that since the "Holy Spirit" dwells in every believer, God will make our "mortal" or dying bodies live again after we die. God will do this by means of the same Holy Spirit who is living within us. Note:

Although at death the body is cast aside like a despised broken vessel, it will be reunited with the soul, and clothed with glory (see I Thessalonians 5:23). Our vile dead "bodies" shall be made new (see Philippians 3:21; I Corinthians 15:42), and we shall be like Christ (see I John 3:2). Paul gives two great assurances of the resurrection of the body. First, the resurrection of
Christ itself assures us that we will be resurrected. Paul said God who “raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (make alive) our mortal (dead) bodies.” Jesus Christ rose as the first-fruits, and forerunner of all the saints who will follow Him in resurrection (see I Corinthians 15:20). The fact of Christ’s resurrection assures believers that we shall also rise. Second, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit assures us that we will be resurrected. Paul said that God will raise our bodies by the same “Spirit” that “dwelleth” or lives in us. Although our temples may lie in ruins for a while, yet they will be rebuilt. The Spirit, breathing upon dead and dry bones, will make them live (see Ezekiel 37:1-14), and the saints who have died in all ages even in their flesh shall see God (see Job 19:26).

V. THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Romans 8:12-14)

A. Believers owe the flesh nothing (Romans 8:12-13).

1. (vs. 12). This verse says “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.” The word “Therefore” refers back to the Holy Spirit’s ministry in the previous verses. Paul was saying, as a result of the Spirit’s work in salvation, “brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.” The
The fact that Paul refers to these Roman believers as “brethren” confirms that he believed that they were saved. In Greek, the word “debtors” refers to people who have an obligation or who owes someone (see Romans 1:14). By “flesh” here, Paul meant all sinful desires, motives and affections. The fact that “we are debtors, not to the flesh” means that Christians don’t owe our “flesh” or sinful and carnal desires anything. We are not “debtors” to it; “the flesh” never did any kindness to us that would make us want “to live after the flesh” which means “to serve it.” Although Paul does not specifically say it, his statement implies that we are “debtors” to Christ and to the Spirit to whom we owe everything. Since we were delivered from eternal death (see Romans 5:8) by such a great ransom (see Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; I Peter 1:18-19), we are deeply indebted to our Deliverer (see I Corinthians 6:19-20), not to our “flesh” or carnal desires.

2. (vs. 13). This verse says “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Here again (see verse 4) Paul sets the two lifestyles in bold contrast. First he said “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.” Living “after the flesh” or submitting to carnal desires characterizes the unbeliever who is headed for eternal destruction. The word “die” here refers to eternal death. It is the pleasing, and serving, and gratifying of the flesh, that results in the second death (see Revelation 2:11; 20:6; 21:8). Death for the unbeliever is eternal death, but the death of the saints is simply sleeping (see I Thessalonians 4:14; 5:10). Then Paul said, “but if ye through the Spirit do mortify
the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” To “mortify” means “to kill” or “to destroy.” Here the meaning seems to be “to subdue.” The apostle was saying that believers will live eternally if we “mortify” or subdue and keep under control “the deeds of the body.” This refers to all fleshly lusts and affections (see Galatians 5:19-21). We are called to “mortify” or bring our fleshly lusts and affections under control. This is self-mortification and can only be done “through the Spirit.” But temptations are so great that we cannot do this self-mortification without the “Spirit” working it in us, and the “Spirit” will not do it without our doing our part—submitting to the Spirit. Through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we are able to truly live and produce “the deeds” of a holy and godly life (see Galatians 5:22-25).

Note: No born-again person deliberately chooses sin as the continuing course of his or her life. So, the first thing a professing believer should do if he or she falls into fleshly living is to reexamine their faith (see II Corinthians 13:5). Like David, a true believer may sometimes fall into sin, but he or she will not remain in sin (see Galatians 5:19-21). In the power of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to “mortify” or put to death all known unholy aspects of his or her conduct (see Galatians 5:24).

B. Believers are children of God (Romans 8:14). Our final verse says “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Spirit-led living is the normal, everyday joy of all who submit themselves to it. Paul said in this verse “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” This means that everyone
who is allowing themselves to be “led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (children) of God.” Christians are sons and daughters of God by virtue of their spiritual union with the Son of God (see John 1:12; I Corinthians 12:13). One of the evidences of this relationship is that spiritual sons and daughters are “led by the Spirit of God.” The Spirit’s leading is a definite evidence that they are saved. Many illustrations of the Spirit’s leading can be found in the book of Acts (see Acts 8:29; 10:19-20; 13:2, 4; 16:6-7; 20:22-23). An important fact in being “led by the Spirit” is that a knowledge of God’s Word is primary, since the “Spirit” inspired the Word (see II Timothy 3:16), and never leads contrary to it. The believer will find it easier to submit to the leading of the “Spirit” as he or she develops regular habits of communion, engages in Christian service, and obtains counsel from older, more mature Christians.

VI. Conclusion. This week’s lesson has reminded us that all unbelievers are “in the flesh,” meaning that they are spiritually dead and unresponsive to God. All believers are “in the Spirit” and have been made alive to God—His Spirit lives in them. It is impossible to be regenerated and live a life in the Spirit and not be indwelt by God’s Holy Spirit. It was not Paul’s intention to make Christians wonder whether they are truly saved. He simply wanted to make it clear that every Christian has the Holy Spirit and should live accordingly. It is the Spirit-filled life that enjoys God’s favor, pleases Him, and radiates the Lord’s presence in our lives.
Sunday, May 12, 2019: “Called to Life in the Spirit” Commentary
(The ISSL Curriculum)