

Is the Body Already Dead?

In Romans 8:10, Paul stresses that in relation to a New Testament believer, “...*the body is dead because of sin...*” Paul is not teaching that our bodies cease functioning after accepting Jesus as Savior. He proves, rather, that we can consider powerless any lie that the power of “*sin*” sends into our minds through the avenue of “*the body*.” This teaching ties in perfectly with our discussion regarding Romans 6:11, so you might want to review those notes. (Remember that the power of sin’s thought enters the New Testament believer’s mind—not the power of sin itself.)

Paul also stresses that “...*the spirit is alive because of righteousness*” (Romans 8:10). In other words, because we know Christ and have been made “*righteous*,” our “*spirit is alive*.” After all, we are “*one spirit with...the Lord*” (1Corinthians 6:17), making us “*alive*” indeed (Romans 8:10).

But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (1Corinthians 6:17)

Thus, only through the indwelling presence of Jesus can a New Testament believer receive true “*life*.”

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. (John 14:6)

Paul is not finished, for he confirms that God’s “*Spirit*” living inside us gives “*life to*” our “*mortal bodies*” (Romans 8:11).

But 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 indwells you. (Romans 8:11)

The apostle refers to more than receiving our glorified bodies at the Rapture of the church. He also speaks of the privilege we now have of living above our temptations through the power of the Holy Spirit. God did more than deliver us from condemnation through justification—subsequent to our repenting and believing while depraved. He also empowers our lives in the here and now as we yield to His life within us. Christ’s blood is the avenue through which our sins were removed; His body is the avenue through which our old self was eradicated. Consequently, we were freed from the penalty of sin through Jesus’ blood, but we have been freed from the dominion of the power of sin through our death with Jesus on the cross (Romans 6:6-7; Galatians 2:20). What terrific news! Isn’t Romans a phenomenal book?

Not Obligated to Sin

Isn't it wonderful to know that, "*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*" (Romans 8:1)? Have you ever heard better news? This truth should encourage us to know the Lord as intimately as possible: To pant after Him "*As the deer pants for the water brooks...*" (Psalm 42:1). The more we know Him, the more we will love Him. The more we love Him, the more we will desire to glorify Him through every thought and deed. Thus, Paul writes:

"So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—" (Romans 8:12)

Paul's use of the pronoun "we," writing to "brethren" (believers), confirms that the New Testament believer can "*live according to the flesh.*" However, we are not obligated to do so due to our new holy and perfect nature that hates sin. Don't miss the fact that, although we are not obligated to "*live according to the flesh,*" we are capable of doing so when caught off guard—proving that the phrase "*live according to the flesh*" (Romans 8:12) points to behavior that can be exemplified by the redeemed. As we discovered previously, to "*walk according to the flesh*" (Romans 8:4) means that we have allowed the power of sin, through its use of the ungodly habit patterns stored in the brain, the brain being a piece of "*flesh,*" to influence our behavior. We do so when we believe the power of sin's lies sent into our minds by means of these ungodly patterns. Thus the phrases, "*live according to the flesh*" (Romans 8:12) and "*walk according to the flesh*" (Romans 8:4), are equivalent. Many of these ungodly habits were formed before we met Christ, but some are fashioned after we become believers. Yes, new sinful patterns are produced when I, the new self (the new man), believe the power of sin's lie in a new area and respond accordingly. Therefore, when I sin, the new self has sinned, since I am the new self.

To live "*according to the flesh*" means that we "*must die*" (Romans 8:13):

for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die;... (Romans 8:13)

The margin in my NASB indicates that the phrase, "*you must die,*" can actually be rendered, "*you are about to die.*" Indeed, if we (as New Testament believers) live "*according to the flesh*" long enough and don't experience physical death, we find ourselves living as though we are dead. In fact, to live in a prolonged state of disobedience, after having known the peace and joy of fellowship with Christ, results in nothing but defeat and despair. Joy and peace are restored through repentance and confession, but "*consequence*" is reaped from our disobedience the remainder of our stay on earth (Colossians 3:25). Yet, not once does God condemn the believer who exemplifies such unwise behavior (Romans 8:1)!

Paul continues by writing:

"...but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13).

Truth is amazing in that it exposes and incapacitates deception. As we yield to the “*Spirit*” of God (the “*Spirit*” of Truth), the power of sin which dwells in our physical body is defeated as it attempts to deceive us into being influenced by our ungodly habit patterns (reference Circle Diagram 8). Hence, only through responding to the Spirit’s promptings do we really “*live*”! With this fact in mind, consider the following truth regarding our Savior.

Jesus was born void of a sin nature (old self) because he was the Father’s Son, not the son of Joseph. On occasion, however, His mind was flooded with thoughts (lies) from Satan, as verified by Matthew 4:1-11. He chose to reject these thoughts (lies) the moment they entered and remained pure and holy. Therefore, Jesus proves that a sinful thought does not result in sin until we allow it to negatively impact our thinking and, in turn, our behavior. Consequently, we must refuse any thought that violates the principles taught in the full counsel of God’s Word.

Was Jesus capable of committing sin? After all, His brain was void of sinful habit patterns. The answer comes from a question: Have you sinned in a new area of temptation since becoming a believer? Of course you have! Thus, a person can sin in an area where no habit pattern exists. However, a new habit pattern begins to be formed the moment we commit sin in untried areas of disobedience. Certainly, Jesus was capable of sinning. How else could He relate to our struggle with sin!

Are you developing a greater appreciation for truth? Doesn’t this magnificent news encourage you to devour God’s Word, to make it “*the joy*” of your “*heart*” (Psalm 119:111)? The truth found in Jesus alone will set us free from anything the enemy sends our way.

Sons, Not Slaves

Paul teaches:

“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”
(Romans 8:14).

The phrase, “*are being led,*” is a present, passive, indicative verb in the Greek, which indicates present tense action—linear action that is ongoing. Thus, if a man is being “*led by the Spirit*” on a fairly consistent basis, he shows himself to be a son “*of God.*” No one, not even the greatest of saints, is “*led by the Spirit*” every moment of the day. Thus, if we are open to the Spirit’s leading, it confirms we are believers.

Some people would argue that since believers are “*led by the Spirit of God*” (Romans 8:14), and that the “passive” voice is in play (meaning that the subject is being acted upon “*by the Spirit*”), that the New Testament believer is void of a free will. Such a scenario cannot be the case due to the many passages that encourage believers to choose the Spirit over the flesh (such as Galatians 5:16 and 25)—proving that a choice (on our part) is first required before we can be “*led by*” God’s Spirit.

We become “*sons of God,*” and receive the Holy “*Spirit,*” at the point of justification (salvation). But we must learn to be “*led by the Spirit.*” We are being “*led by the Spirit*” when we allow the thoughts directed into our minds by means of the “*Spirit*” to

control our lives, thoughts that are always in agreement with the Word of God. “*The Spirit*” grants wisdom to make proper choices, which in turn frees us to live as Jesus lived. He taught that “*the Spirit*” is “*the Spirit of truth*” and that He would “*guide*” us “*into all the truth*” (John 16:13). As a result, we grow “*from faith to faith*” (Romans 1:17) and experience the amazing adventure accessible to the redeemed alone.

We are given even more encouraging news in Romans 8:15:

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:15)

Paul states that we “*...have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again,*” but “*a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’*” Hence, the “*spirit of adoption*” we have “*received*” frees us to perceive God as a loving “*Father*” Who has our best interests in mind. Simply put, if we are justified (saved), we are sons of God whether we feel like it or not (John 1:12):

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, (John 1:12)

This truth is comforting news, especially to those individuals void of an earthly father’s love. After all, God is “*A father of the fatherless*”:

A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, is God in His holy habitation. (Psalm 68:5)

Hence, the Lord “*supports the fatherless*”:

The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow; but He thwarts the way of the wicked. (Psalm 146:9)

Therefore, no believer should view himself as lacking support. We must communicate these wonderful truths to all who will listen, for an improper view of the Father keeps many people from accepting Christ as Savior.

The “*Spirit*” reveals to us “*that we are children of God,*” through bearing “*witness with our spirit*” (Romans 8:16):

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (Romans 8:16)

No need to be afraid of God, for He is our Father—and He reminds us of this glorious truth on a consistent, never-ending basis. We are also “*...heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ...*” (Romans 8:17):

and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. (Romans 8:17)

When “*all things*” are summed up “*in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:10), we will be “*fellow heirs with*” Him (Romans 8:17)—possessing all that He possesses. We are also “*heirs of God*” (v.17), confirming that we are His offspring and “*heirs*” of everything He has to bestow. What could possibly keep us from becoming legitimate bond-servants of this God Who loves us so?

As a result of being “*heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,*” we will “*also be glorified with Him*”? (Remember that the spirit and soul of a New Testament believer are glorified at the point of justification, but no New Testament believer receives his glorified body until the Rapture of the church.) According to Revelation 3:21 and Revelation 20:4, we will rule with Christ as well. Consequently, God must train us for such a responsible position by building character in the fiber of our being through using the difficulties of life for our good—the very catalyst, when coupled with truth, that prepares us to reign.