

[Romans 8:6 – 17]

~ Do you consider yourself truly alive and vibrant in your spiritual life? Are you walking close to the direct will of God in hopes of receiving His full blessing for those you touch by being in their life? Is your relationship with Christ one whereby you are growing each day in His grace and knowledge? Or do you feel frustrated by continual failure? Do you need someone else to fight the spiritual battles for you? Paul said, “... *if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.*” I hope you’ll take your Bible out and pray for judgment, wisdom and discernment concerning the things of God; then read this section of Scripture in your own Bible – then read this report – all very carefully. If you will take a few moments out from your dreadfully chaotic daily routine and designate a few minutes each day for an educated study of the Word of God, I promise you it will be a very rewarding experience.

Our Spiritual Safari has not advanced significantly in our previous reports in the epistle to the Romans. All things are new here, and old things pass away! The new law God rules and reigns with is that of the Spirit of Life! God doesn’t work in a haphazard manner, either. Here, we have the Holy Spirit versus the law; meaning the Mosaic Law or any other system or philosophy, theory or principle of law. The Christian life can only be lived when the Holy Spirit lives it through us. You and I can’t overcome the old nature in our flesh, but God can!

In our last report, we saw those who were according to the flesh, and had set their minds on the things of the flesh, and lived only for the here and now – and that means *THEIR* flesh. Well, God says those people mind – obey – the things of the flesh. They are their own gods. They are typically *VERY* active in the church and community. We’ve already been instructed succinctly on this in chapter six. Some Christians say they just have to do this or that thing because they live in this body of flesh – and all that – I ask: does your new nature rebuke you? If the answer is “no,” then you must not have a new nature! Those who are after the Spirit of God will obey the things of the Spirit of God written in the Word of God. Because we have

been given a new nature, we can yield ourselves to the power that only the Holy Spirit can provide. That's an act of our will, too, by the way....

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

~ One thing is for sure: if you are living in the flesh then you are *NOT* having fellowship with God; because that would literally be *I-M-P-O-S-S-I-B-L-E!* Jesus told Peter that if He washed not Peter's feet, then Peter had no part with Him! Jesus meant it, my beloved. The Lord Jesus Christ will *NOT* commune with you if you have unconfessed sin in your life and you continue to live for your flesh. That gives us dirty spiritual feet in our walk with Him. God won't have it. Make a note.

We are to present ourselves to Christ and confess our sins in prayer, friends! Only in that confession is Christ faithful and just to forgive us our sins. That is so important to see. You and I have no concept exactly how frightful our old nature really is. We really cannot see how terrible we are; we are completely ignorant to how utterly disgusting we are as fleshy beings. That's why it's no surprise God has no plans to redeem our flesh! We have been given a new nature that has no power of its own; and we cannot live for God in the old nature. That's problematic.

If we continue in the old nature, we must not be a child of God. The unconverted man will continue in his sins time after time again; but the child of God will hate himself for getting into sin in the first place. The idea that we might train our old nature to live harmoniously in us is absurd; not to mention impossible. Those pious people who are high on their belief that they keep the law and control their own flesh are *ALWAYS* the worst gossips you have ever met. They're dangerous. Stay far from them.

When we say we hope to be better people, we are saying God is not doing His best work by living through us, and that we can do better. To hope to be a better person is to fail to see yourself in Christ only. We all hope to do better but, if we're honest, we all know we can't do better. We must begin to see ourselves from that proper perspective. We must recognize only the Spirit of God can move through us to accomplish improvement. To be

disappointed with ourselves means we believed in ourselves at some point! To be discouraged means we don't believe God will do His best in all things. Are you disappointed and discouraged with yourself? You should be! No good thing is going to come out of our flesh, you may be sure. You're going to have to decide if you are going to allow the Holy Spirit to live through your new nature – or not. God has a plan and a purpose for your life, and you can lay hold of it today.

Those who develop spiritual pride will invariably and quickly become deaf and blind to the things of God. We have *NO* standing before God in and of ourselves. If we could see ourselves as God sees us, we wouldn't be able to stand ourselves! The lack of divine blessing in your life, my friends, comes *directly* from *UNBELIEF*! Lack of divine blessing is *NOT* the result of a lack of devotion – let's be clear. I get a bit tired of the super-duper pious and educated Christian idiots who have no clue how the lack of divine blessing happens *ONLY* because we do not believe God. No. Other. Reason. We have nothing to offer God. Every shred of being and substance we ever possess in this life is only because it was given to us by Him and because of His marvelous grace! Do you really believe God today? Jesus said, *“without Me ye can do NOTHING!”* I hope this paragraph comes across as strongly as I intend it to....

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 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.

~ This “if” in verse nine does not cast doubt over salvation; no, they were definitely saved. The real test is: does the Spirit of God dwell in you? Do you truly desire in your heart to serve God because you love Him? What is in your mind that you would call *service to the Lord*? Have you talked to Him about it in prayer? There is a good chance you are in rebellion against God and aren't even aware of it, friends. Paul had to remind the Corinthians

their body was a temple of the Holy Spirit which they had of God and not of their own! Paul's first visit to Ephesus had people saying they were Christians, and Paul asked them, "... *did you receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?*" They didn't even know what Paul was talking about. These men had been baptized unto John the Baptist! That baptism was unto repentance only – *NOT* unto faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! Only when Paul preached the resurrection of Christ to them did they receive the Holy Spirit. See, it helps to know what we're talking about when we deign teach the Bible....

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

~ You and I are *IN CHRIST!* That means when He died, we died! We've been all through that on safari; we are to reckon on this fact and yield – present – our bodies to Christ! The defeatist talk about "*I can't*" and "*I've tried*" - and all that talk - is *NOT* the language of the believer; we are to turn this all over to Christ in faith. If you are not conscious of God working in your life; and if you have no desire to serve the Lord Jesus – then you need to do what Paul says to do: examine yourself and see if you be in the faith. Prove yourself, my beloved.

2 Corinthians 13: 5 *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? 6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates ~*

God wants us to make known the Hope of Glory of His riches; which are Christ in us. The last thing Jesus says is, "*behold I stand at the door and knock; and if any man will open the door I will come in unto him!*" Is the door open in you life? Has Christ come in through that door? The body has been put into the place of death! When a man reckons on that, he should be compelled to turn his life over to the Spirit of God! Of course, we can't do it of our own volition, but God can do it through us....

11 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.

~ A little later in our Roman safari we're going to see how you and I have an old body that is going to be put in the grave one of these days; unless the Lord returns and takes us alive. Either way, we're going to be raised in newness of life in a glorified body! These old bodies of ours are just groaning masses of painful decaying flesh; the assurance we have that we will be raised unto newness of life with glorified bodies from the dead is the Holy Spirit that indwells us now! Christ was raised from the dead and we are to be raised from the dead. The body of this death can only be delivered by the Holy Spirit....

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

~ Paul has already said we are not to live after the flesh. God created man body, mind and spirit. When man sinned, his spirit died immediately. God said, *"in the day ye eat thereof ye shall surely die!"* Well, Adam didn't die physically until nine hundred years later; but he died spiritually that same day! Death means separation from God, of course. Humanity was turned upside down in one willful act. The body, the flesh and the old nature became dominant. See, man is dead spiritually; and regeneration means we are turned right-side up again! It means we are born again spiritually, and our new nature can yield to Him when we desire to serve God! Oh, my friends, it is so important to stay close to Christ today. Some people are very active in the church, but the reality of Christ is a million light years away in outer space from them and their thinking.

The natural man says he owes it to his flesh to satisfy it. Humanism says, *"... we have to eat, too,"* you know? The movie star says, *"... I lived for sex!"* They merely satisfied selfish burning desires, of course. If they had not had the means to live in debauchery, they would be criminals. They say they have to have their needs met; world be damned. That type of thinking has plunged us into the death throws of immorality as a world society. The

old nature is no good, make no mistake; and we all have that old nature in this flesh....

13 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.

~ As Christians, we know this truth; and everyone knows death isn't a theory. It is an absolute. When you sin, my brothers and sisters, does it make you feel like holding a prayer meeting? Do you feel like going to church and reading the Bible? - Of course not; because we slip into a state where we are separated from God. Let's be practical to ask and be honest in answering ourselves: what is your hang up? Drink? Drugs? Sex? Thought life? Gossip? Truthfulness? Coldness? Indifference? Have you honestly confessed all of these things in your prayers and turned them all over to the Holy Spirit? If people would deal with those things in reality, they could stay off of the psychiatrists couch. The psychiatrist can't help them with these problems anyways. They can medicate them; but not help them. The psychiatrist can't get rid of the guilt complex – it's part of our old nature, my friends – and you will always have it unless the Holy Spirit takes away the guilt of your sins by empowering your new nature. Only Christ can forgive us of our sins....

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

~ God doesn't drive His sheep – He leads them gently. Believers are never forced into the will of His hand nor into that of the Father. His sheep hear His voice; and they're the ones that are safe and secure. They're led by the Spirit of God, and they follow Him! We have a new nature so now we hear His voice. The way I teach the Bible, I can see His sheep hear His voice. I also see a lot of people that don't; and they are always ready to fight about everything. The ones who want to fight aren't His sheep. Jesus told the apostles, *“the world hated Me; the world is going to hate you!”* If you're a friend of the world, then something's wrong. There are a whole lot of people in the church today who aren't His sheep. His sheep follow Him....

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

~ Are you always worrying and wondering about your spiritual condition; unhappy and despondent with life, in general? Or, are you filled with joy? Does the Holy Spirit overwhelm you and make you just cry out, “*Abba?*” “*Abba*” is another word in the Bible that was never translated. The men who translated the Word of God had a great reverence for Scripture; and they believed it they were handling Holy Writ – and they never translated “*Abba.*” It means roughly “*my daddy*” – but we don’t talk about God like that on safari; quite frankly, asserting yourself to be so overly familiar with God is blaspheme in my book. It is also the most illiterate of babies who talk that way about God our Father....

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

~ Whatever problems you’re having today are going to seem very light and insignificant in the enormous weight of eternal glory! Most people in eternity are going to wish they had the opportunity to suffer for Jesus just a little bit more. Other children of God are going through terrible situations right now. Horrible afflictions meet the Christian on every corner of life’s streets. Well, like it or not, that’s God’s method of schooling and training those He loves down here. You can just write that down. I don’t just guess at these things I write, friends – I happen to know exactly what I am talking about — from *experience*. Not theory. Whom the Lord loveth, He disciplines ~