

3. New Destiny

17 And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.- Romans 8:15 NLT

*6 And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father."
- Galatians 4:6 NLT*

*36 "Abba, Father," he cried out, "everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."
- Mark 14:36 NLT*

Not only do we have a new identity as God's children, we have a new destiny as God's heirs. What two things does Paul say we will share with Christ?

Despite the commonly accepted interpretation of "glory" as "the place we go when we die (aka heaven)", Paul doesn't reference heaven. We find God's glory wherever God's presence dwells. His presence now dwells in us, and we share in His glory. When God creates a new heaven and new earth (Rev 21:1-2) He will dwell with His people there.

We will look further into the idea of a new heaven and earth later in this chapter, but for now, discuss the ways you envision God's good creation in a perfectly restored state where God dwells among us.

WRAP-UP

There are two ideas to reflect on from this week's passage. First, we have a new identity. We are God's child if we have believed and accepted Jesus as Lord. And second, we have a new destiny. We are destined to live in God presence eternally. With His Spirit dwelling in us now, and in a new heaven and earth with God in the future. And though there will be challenges along the way, Jesus is with us through the suffering, and He has already overcome the world.

MEMORY VERSE

15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." - Romans 8:12-17 NLT

Challenge- What for the ways God's Spirit is leading you this week. Maybe you will feel a nudge to do something, go somewhere or talk to someone. Don't ignore it, follow that nudge and see what God does.

Led By the Spirit

Romans 8 - Week 4

INTRODUCTION

As we continue our deep dive into Romans 8, we discover how dramatically our lives are changed by our choice to follow the Spirit rather than the sinful nature. In this week's passage Paul contrasts the two identities and two destinies that lie before us. It is literally the choice between life and death.

Ice Breaker

Do you remember a time when you chose a route that took you in the opposite direction of your destination? How long before you figured out you were going the wrong way and how did it impact your trip?

Key Passage

*12 Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. 13 For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." 16 For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. 17 And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.
- Romans 8:12-17 NLT*

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. No Obligation to the Sinful Nature

6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. - Romans 6:6-7 NLT

Romans chapter 8 is woven tightly together and unfolds thought by thought as Paul guides us using little connecting words and phrases. Verse 12 begins with the Greek word *gar*, meaning “therefore” or “So then”. He has just finished explaining the struggle we face between the flesh (sinful nature) and the Spirit and follows with the logical conclusion in verse 12. Romans 6:6-7 also gives us an explanation of how this works.

Paul refers to being crucified with Christ and that we died with Christ. Why is it necessary that we died to ourselves and our sinful nature rather than just “cleaning it up” and improving the old me? What happens when we try to hang on to some of our old ways in addition to following God’s way (Luke 9:23-24)?

23 Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me. 24 If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. - Luke 9:23-24 NLT

What happens when we choose to give sin control of our lives (v.13)? What helps you win the battle to resist giving in to the old nature?

The power of sin and death are broken when we die to ourselves (i.e. our sinful nature) and invite the Spirit to live in us. That is why we have no obligation to sin, because it no longer has the power it once had to enslave us.

2. New Identity

3 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” - John 3:3 NLT

*17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT*

*14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.
- Romans 8:14 NLT*

*12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.
- John 1:12 NLT*

You have probably heard the term born-again. Once we have put to death our old sinful nature we are starting a new life. We are “born-again”. In verse 14, Paul uses his connecting term, *gar* in the Greek, meaning “so then”, to explain what happens after the sinful nature is put to death. We are being given a new identity.

What is our new identity? What conditions are placed on that identity in Rom 8:14 and John 1:12?

Step by step Paul leads us down this path: 1) we are not obligated or enslaved to sin and the death that results from it 2) because the Spirit gives us power to put that sinful nature to death. 3) And so, when we choose to believe in and accept Jesus as Lord, and be led by the Holy Spirit, we are adopted as God’s children.

Share a little about your story of how you chose to accept Jesus as Lord.

In verse 15 (beginning again with “*gar*/therefore”) Paul specifically addresses his audience’s understanding of the relationship we have to God. The Roman church to which Paul writes consisted of both Jews and non-Jews. Both of whom lived under Caesar’s rule, and some of those were slaves. When they heard that they must make Jesus their Lord and give complete control to the Spirit, their context was slavery under Caesar’s rule. A slave in that time was property, without personal rights and subject to mistreatment. Of course that might stir up fear. In stark contrast Paul defines their relationship as that of a child who calls their father “*Abba*” or *papa*. Additionally, we are his by choice, adopted. Even those who were not born into the Jewish faith were considered God’s children.

*15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “*Abba, Father.*” Romans 8:15 NLT*

25 Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives. - Galatians 5:25 NLT

Are you aware of any relationship where someone abused their authority? How do you think that affected the other person’s ability to trust anyone else with authority over them?

Our perception of God as our father is also greatly influenced by how we view our earthly father. How would you characterize your view of your earthly father?