

**Romans 8:12-17**  
**“Who we are” verses “The way we were”**

**I. Intro**

**II. Vs. 12-17 Sons of God**

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In the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter Paul started out by letting all believers know that “*There is therefore now NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*” and a collective sigh of relief ought to have been heard from all believers as Jesus’ work on the cross has:

- **Paid for the penalty of my sin**
- **Broken the power of my sin**
- **Removed the guilt of my sin**

**But what is the practicable implication of those facts?** Paul divides this into **two sections**:

- A. Verses 12-17) Here Paul reveals that this has allowed us to enjoy being a child of God.
- B. Verses 18-30 Paul will write on the seeming contradiction of our standing compared to our often experiences of suffering.

**II. Vs. 12-17 Sons of God**

Vs. 12-13 Remember, our debt is to the Lord, not to our flesh! we don’t owe our old carnal nature any pampering, furthermore if we give in to its demands it will rob us of the things of our life in CHRIST. Paul is specific in these words as he says, “*if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*” In the news on May 5<sup>th</sup> was this article: “*A South Korean man said to have fanatical religious views was found dead on a crucifix with his hands and feet nailed to it after an apparent attempt to emulate the death of Jesus Christ, the Korea Herald reports. When they found him on the cross he had a stab wound to the right waist and several whip*

marks. An autopsy showed that he used an electric drill to make holes in his palms. A hammer, a hand drill and a knife were found nearby the body. **Police are investigating whether the man killed himself or had help in his crucifixion.** I'm no C.S.I. but I think I can tell you with some certainty that "*he had help*" even if he used a drill. There would be no way to do this by yourself. The point of this story is: This is true not only physically but spiritually as well as there is only one way to "put to death the deeds of the body" and that is by the Spirit. **Too many believers are trying to fight their old ways in their own strength, it's one thing to drill a hole in your hand, whip yourself and it's another thing to stay on the cross and the only successful way of doing that is by the Spirit.**

Vs. 14-15 There are so many wanting direction from the Lord and here we have yet another benefit of the Spirit filled life. **The Spirit of God will give you guidance in your life.** Augustine, one of the most influential theologians from the fourth century wrote, "*Love God and do as you please.*" Some see his words as irresponsible; "*Do whatever you want? Are you kidding?*" But Augustine had solid ground to stand on as thousands of years earlier, another theologian in Israel named David said in Ps. 37:4, "*Delight Yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart*". **The reason for this truth is if you Love God He will change your desires to His desires!** Our being led by the Holy Spirit is NOT a pre-condition to being a child of God; Paul didn't say:

- "*As many as go to church, these are the sons of God.*"
- "*As many as read their Bibles, these are the sons of God.*"

Spurgeon noted that, it does not say, “As many as are **driven** by the Spirit of God. The devil is a driver, and when he enters either into men or into hogs he drives them furiously. Whenever you see a man fanatical and wild, whatever spirit is in him it is not the Spirit of Christ.”

This is the first time Paul has used the phrase “**sons of God**” and though this seems sexist it is actually **a generic term that includes both men and women**, “all believers who have received the gift of right standing and worth by trusting in Jesus alone”. We need to understand biblically that **not every person is a child of God relationally**. The world tends to **mix this concept up with being God’s creation** but being our creator is vastly different than Him being our Father. That was Jesus’ point to Nicodemus that you “*must be born again*”, **we are all God’s creatures, but we aren’t all God’s children**, part of His family by way of adoption through new birth!

- A. **We are adopted because God wants us to realize that we weren’t naturally a part of the family of God, adoption is an action a legal process as we were taken out of a family and adopted into another family.**
- B. Once adopted we are now considered born into the family of God. **He now not only makes us “legally” His, He makes us “relationally” His so that we will share not only the benefits of His kindness legally but the benefits of His nature relationally.** Like naturally born offspring will take on the characteristics in attitudes and actions of our Father and older brother Jesus. That is what Jesus told Philip in John 14:9 “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*”. It was what is behind the calling us Christians or “*Christ like*” by those in the worlds as Christians took on the attitudes and actions of the One they spoke about. Or as Peter put it in 2 Peter 1:4 speaking of the “*exceedingly great and*

*precious promises that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature*". We can't tell outwardly looking at someone if they are God's child or not, there is no special glow or hallow but you know inwardly, relationally and Paul is going to help us with **three practical ways we can know if we are God's children.**

1. Vs. 14b "**Led by the Spirit of God**": This speaks of control and here we see that the One in control leading our life is no longer our fleshly passions but rather the Spirit of God. The Bible says that if we are being led by the Spirit than when things come into our lives we will react differently than we did prior to being led by the Spirit. Take for instant the Bible when we read it or listen to the teaching of the Word we will recognize what Jesus said in John 10:27 when He said, "*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*" Prior to being believers the Bible at best was only a collection of antiquated boring stories that had no relevance in our lives. Now, we not only recognize the fact that God is speaking to us we also want to put our lives in line with what He is telling us. Another way we can see we are being "*Led by the Spirit*" is in our communication with Him and the sense that we aren't just throwing out a shopping list but talking directly to our Heavenly Dad who loves us. Then there is also a desire to hang around our brothers and sisters as those whom outside of the family of God we would most likely have nothing in common with. Then we see the fruit Paul spoke about in Galatians 5:22-23 Love, described in 8 characteristics joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

2. Vs. 15b “**We cry out, Abba Father**”: “*Abba, Father*” is most suggestive as “*Abba*” is Aramaic, and “*Father*” is Greek. This suggests that God is not the Father of one people but all people in Christ. Of further interest is that *Abba* is a word for a baby’s lips and *Father* is for the more mature which tell us that young and old can approach God by the Spirit. This speaks of an emotional loving response, one of security and devotion. One of the things that is hard for people to understand when looking at Christians is that our responses are not religious they are relational because we feel love we respond in love. We have our Father’s love surrounding us, His concern protecting us, His wisdom directing us. In Exodus 17:15 after Moses built an altar of devotion to the Lord he called it the “*Lord is my Banner*”. In Song of Solomon, Solomon waxed poetic saying that God’s “*banner over him was love.*” As a person who lost my earthly father when I wasn’t yet 5 I can tell you that these last 30 years of being a believer I’ve experienced a real powerful emotional sense that I have a Dad who loves me. One of the first Bible verses I ever learned was Psalm 68:5 where we are told that God is “*A father of the fatherless*”.
3. Vs. 16 “**The Spirit bears witness with our spirit**”: The testimony of the Spirit is not to our spirit but with our spirit. Beyond the outward observations and the inward emotional experiences is a deep conviction and awareness that we are Children of God. In Romans 5:5 Paul explained it this way saying that “*the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*”

Paul says that those who are God's children, born again by the Spirit of God, know their status because the Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit that this is so. We don't have to wonder if we are really Christians or not. God's children know who they are.

Vs. 17 We started out in Adam now by faith in Christ are children of God, led by the Spirit and heirs of God as all that He has is committed to us in Christ. Dear ones because we are in Christ, we have the privilege of relating to the Father as Jesus does - therefore, we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Remember this truth *“One who has been adopted into a family must also be adapted for that family.”* In Luke 18:18 the rich young ruler asked Jesus, **what must I do to inherit?** But he missed the point because **inheritance is not a matter of doing it is a matter of being.** Such a blessing defies our ability to grasp it, all that our Dad has in store for those whose only worthiness is to be found in our reception of His love. The point of Paul in telling the Romans and us this is that we will begin to identify more with who we are than the way we were! Friends it will become much easier to say no to our former flesh life when we see that pursuing it rips us off from something far greater. But Paul also reminds them that just because we are in Christ, doesn't mean we are immune from suffering. In fact, our sharing in present suffering is a condition of our future glorification. In 1 Cor. 2:9 Paul wrote that, *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”* But the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of this verse seems to contradict this truth as we read: *“if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”* Is Paul linking **groaning with glory, hallelujah with hurts?** How can those two opposite things go together? In 2 Cor. 4:17 Paul would further elaborate on this saying, *“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”*. Suffering is a part of our inheritance as much as glory.