

“Freedom from the Fear of Condemnation”
 Romans 6-8
 “Citizens of Another Country”
 Part V

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 Title: Freedom from the Fear of Condemnation
 Text: Romans 8:1-17a
 Theme: Living in the reality of our union with Christ frees us from the fear of immediate and future condemnation.

The eternal view:

It is said that the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin so feared for his safety that his residence in Moscow contained eight bedrooms. Each night Stalin chose a bedroom at random to ensure that no one knew exactly where he was sleeping.
http://www.bible.org/illus.php?topic_id=543

In many ways this is how we live the Christian life. We think we believe there is now no condemnation, but just to make sure we live our lives doing the best we can just in case we do end up standing before Him having to give an account for any or all of our sins. Such thinking is regrettable.

Why would I teach this?

The purpose of the Spirit is to free you from the darkness of sin and lead you into the light of God’s sufficiency.

Introduction:

Paul has just established the inherent goodness of the Law, but if looked to as a *measurement of and means to* sanctification, then the believer will live in the defeat of his old nature. It is only when we look to Christ and to Christ alone, that we can live in His victory. Our present passage assures us of this victory by showing us what life in the Holy Spirit looks like.

He does not say, "There is no accusation against them," for this there is; but the accusation is thrown out, and the indictment quashed. He does not say, "There is nothing in them that deserves condemnation," for this there is, and they see it, and own it, and mourn over it, and condemn themselves for it; but it shall not be their ruin. He does not say, "There is no cross, no affliction to them or no displeasure in the affliction," for this there may be; but *no condemnation*. (Matthew Henry)

As noted earlier, structurally, the section runs from 7:13-8:30. Because of its size, we will look at all three movements separately. In this study we will consider the second of three ideas. What happens in this section (8:1-17) is an explanation of what it means to have been “set free from the body of this death” (7:24).

With a stunning declaration Paul captures the idea of 7:24 and 25 and catapults us into our union with Christ and the treasures of this union.

“This whole verse is an exclamation and a shout. It contains no verb. The negative is the most emphatic.” (J.P. McBeth, Exegetical and Practical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 184).

The unveiling is unprecedented. It is unfortunate, yea; it is a tragedy of the highest kind, in that we have made the benefits of this union conditional. Believers are benefactors. They simply show up by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone and everything described in the eighth chapter is theirs; oh what glory is theirs now and forever more.

We live our lives like the condemned, when just the opposite is true. We walk about as if there is no hope, no healing, and no wholeness. We have no response to the death sentence of the damned. Christian, there is now no condemnation to those who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the life of Christ. The merit of His cross work has been fully and completely transferred to your account. This is a present reality in which we are living. There is nothing we can do to undo what He has done.

In fact, “An interesting feature of the chapter which is not always noticed is that there is not a single imperative.” (Leon Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 299).

Thus, “Griffith Thomas sums it up with some negatives: “as Godet says, the chapter begins with ‘no condemnation,’ and ends with ‘no separation,’ while in between, as C.A. Fox remarks, there is ‘no defeat.’” (Leon Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, 299).

“The chapter gathers up various strands of thought from the entire discussion of both justification and sanctification and ties them together with the crowning knot of glorification.” (Everett F. Harrison, Romans, EBC, vol. 10, 85).

“This great truth [that there is now no condemnation for His disciples], thus laid down, he illustrates in the following verses; and shows how we come by this great privilege.” (Matthew Henry)

There are three reasons as to why there is no condemnation.

I. There is no condemnation because the Law has been fully met (vv. 1-4).

The first reason as to why there is no condemnation for the justified is because the law has been fully met. There is a new law in operation. It is the law of the Holy Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (v. 2). The law was weak to justify and to sanctify. Yet the inability of the law did not lie in it, but in us. This new law changes my relationship to sin.

A. There is no more condemnation for sin (v. 1).

“The [now] is not temporal but conclusive; not momentary but summary; not of time but eternity. Condemnation is without the article, and therefore the emphasis is general rather than specific, that is, it denotes any judgment rather than the final judgment alone. **There is no condemnation from any cause, person, or source. Being in Christ, the believer is just as free from condemnation as is Jesus. Jesus**

would have to be condemned before those in Him could be condemned. If any believer should ever be condemned, come into judgment, and go to hell, then the loss of that one believer would disprove the truth of this Scripture.” (J.P. McBeth, Exegetical and Practical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 184).

This whole idea will unfold even more as we come to the final question in 8:31-39.

B. There is no more control by sin (v. 2)

The “for” explains verse 1. It answers the question “Why?” from verse one. I am free from the law of sin and of death. “According to this new law there is complete freedom for the believer both from the penalty and power of sin [and one day from the presence of sin].” (John Phillips, Exploring Romans, 121).

The word “set free” is an aorist active indicative. It means “to be free from liability.” **All believers because of their union with Christ are no longer legally responsible to the law of sin and death.**

- It is the truth that has made us free (John 8:32).
- The Son sets us free (John 8:36).
- Believers are free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 6:18, 22; 8:2).
- This freedom is described as “the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21).
- Everything about the Christian life is marked by freedom (Gal. 5:1).

What does this freedom mean and what does this freedom look like in the Christian life?

What does it mean?

- Freedom does not mean lawless.
- Freedom does not mean without accountability.
- Freedom does not mean without a Master.
- Freedom means I am no longer under an authority that I do not desire to obey.
- Freedom means I am no longer working from the flesh, but from the Holy Spirit.
- Freedom means my identity is sourced in who Christ is and what He has done.

What does it look like?

- Freedom looks like glad submission.
- Freedom looks like sacrificial love.
- Freedom looks like generous giving.
- Freedom looks like moral purity.
- Freedom looks like open reception.
- Freedom looks like a love without condition.
- Freedom looks like an acceptance without requirement.
- Freedom looks like a forgiveness without limit.
- Freedom looks like a service without reward.

This is what it means to be free and what this freedom looks like in the Christian life.

C. There is no more continuation in sin (vv. 3, 4)

The “for” explains the previous thought. Here we see the action of God’s grace against sin.

“But how was this freedom gained? The opening statement about the powerlessness of the law because of the weakness of the sinful nature to which its commands are addressed is an obvious reminder of the major thrust of chapter 7.” (Everett F. Harrison, Romans, EBC, vol. 10, 86).

There are four ideas that unpack verses 3 and 4.

1. The initiative of God (“God did, sending His own Son”)

God had to do what He did. Had not God taken the initiative, you and I would be lost forever. The law could not free me from sin and death. Because of this, the Father sent His Son to condemn sin in the flesh. The weakness of the Law did not lie in the Law but in our flesh. This thought has already been noted in chapter 7. Because of our sin God did for us what we could never do for ourselves. Let us never forget this singular idea. In the absence of a reigning grace, you and I could never have merited what was needed.

2. The incarnation of Christ (“In the likeness of sinful flesh”)

Jesus Christ took on Himself the nature of human flesh. He was like us in every way, except without sin. Sin is not essential to humanity. In the incarnation, Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh but apart from sin filled flesh.

3. The intention of the Cross (“for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh”)

The intent of the cross was to condemn sin in the flesh. This it accomplished fully.

4. The importance of the Cross (“So that the requirement . . . might be fulfilled”)

The “so that” provides a reason. My union with Christ has fulfilled the law in us. We run into this idea consistently in the Christian world. Somehow it is taught that believers are to keep the Law (i.e. Mosaic Code). But this verse tells me that “in Christ” the Law is being kept. He is the Law keeper for you and for me.

Many read the last part of verse four and say, “See, right here in this verse, the condition for no condemnation and for Law fulfillment is in me walking according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh.” There is great heartbreak in not understanding what is said. There is only one condition to walking after the Spirit and that is our union with Christ. This conclusion is unavoidable if we consider the thought in its larger context.

“The life that Jesus lived can now be reproduced in us by His Spirit. It is not reproduced *by* us, but *in* us.” (John Phillips, Exploring Romans, 124).

“A righteousness of satisfaction for the breach of the law is fulfilled by the imputation of Christ's complete and perfect righteousness, which answers the utmost demands of the law, as the mercy-seat was as long and as broad as the ark. A righteousness of obedience to the commands of the law is fulfilled in us, when by the Spirit the law of love is written upon the heart, and that love is the fulfilling of the law. **Though the righteousness of the law is not fulfilled by us, yet, blessed be God, it is fulfilled in us.**” (Matthew Henry [emphasis added])

“Paul recognizes that the believer has a life to live; he is not a robot, but a person accountable for his redeemed life as a stewardship. At the same time Paul pictures the requirement of the law as fulfilled (passive) in the believer, not by him, as though to remind him that the redeemed person does not possess spiritual power he can control and utilize on his own. Rather, the Spirit is always channeling that power and never releases it to those he dwells in for them to use independently of him. The power resides in the Spirit, not in the one he indwells.” (Everett F. Harrison, Romans, EBC, vol. 10, 88).

Many have stumbled over the idea of walking according to the flesh or according to the Spirit as if to say that we move from one idea to the other throughout any given day. The idea of walking is the overall direction of one's life. Inside of walking you run, skip, trip, stumble, crawl, leap, sprint, and trot. All of these actions suggest movement. The idea of walking in our text encompasses a broad scheme.

ILLUSTRATION:

I am a Christian. Sometimes I am functioning as a shepherd of the sheep, sometimes I am functioning as a husband to my wife, a father to my adult children, a friend to my friends, a car mechanic, and lawn maintenance hired hand. None of these activities cause me to cease being a Christian. My overarching character trait is “Christian.” Thus, I am a Christian shepherd of the sheep, I am a Christian husband to my wife, I am a Christian father to my adult children, I am a Christian friend to my friends, I am a Christian car mechanic, and I am a Christian lawn maintenance hired hand.

So it is with walking after the flesh or the Spirit. You are either in the flesh or in the Spirit, but you are not both at any one time or falling in and out of each at any given moment. If you are saved, you are walking in the Spirit. If you are lost, you are walking in the flesh.

This brings us to the second reason in our paragraph as to why we face no condemnation.

- II. There is no condemnation because the Mind has been set on the Holy Spirit (v. 5-8).

The second reason as to why there is no condemnation for the justified is because their minds have been set on the Holy Spirit. There is a new mind in operation. It is the mind set on the Spirit (v. 2). It is the same word used in Colossians 3:2.

¹ "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² **Set your mind** on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Col. 3:1, 2).

Verses 5 and 6 explain the idea and verses 7 and 8 draw it to a conclusion. Those who are minding the flesh are hostile toward God and thus do not please Him. Notice how this mind is described.

"The carnal mind," he says, "is ENMITY against God." He uses a noun, and not an adjective. He does not say it is opposed to God merely, but it is positive enmity. It is not black, but blackness; it is not *at* enmity, but *enmity* itself; it is not corrupt, but corruption; it is not rebellious, it is rebellion; it is not wicked, it is wickedness itself. The heart, though it be deceitful, is positively deceit; it is evil in the concrete, sin in the essence; it is the distillation, the quintessence of all things that are vile; it is not envious against God, it is envy; it is not at enmity, it is actual enmity. ("The Carnal Mind Enmity Against God," A Sermon, (No. 20), Delivered on Sabbath Morning, April 22, 1855, by the REV. C. H. Spurgeon At Exeter Hall, Strand).

There is never a point in time when the unbeliever is anything other than this. The exact opposite is also true. Those who are minding the Spirit are friendly toward God and thus do please Him. Although the old nature still remains with the believer (7:13-25), the flesh no longer forms his identity.

For whatever reason, we struggle believing we are pleasing to God and are thus always working to please God instead of believing we are pleasing Him and working from there. The language is graphic. The flesh does not have the ability or power to please God. Unbelievers do not have it within their make-up to be something other than hostile toward God. Because this is true, they can never please Him.

Unless God steps in, we would always be viewed as God haters. One of the charges raised against the theology of Reigning Grace is the idea found inside the New Testament of pleasing God. Many believers presuppose that they are not pleasing God already. Such thinking sets them on the path of doing in order that they might secure the pleasure of God and thus unload the blessing of God which usually means something good is going to happen to them in some tangible, visible way. Let me pause for just a moment in light of Romans 8:8.

Romans 8:7-9 are some of the most difficult verses for believers to accept. Somehow we are reluctant to give up on the idea that God's pleasure has to be earned or merited and that *somehow we are up to the task of doing so*. This is regrettable. Such thinking is delusional. In such thinking self-deception reigns supreme. There is a significant failure not to fully understand our bankrupt status spiritually. There

is great delight in understanding our union with Christ and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to work in us and through us, but **instead of seeing this as a life exchanged we see it as a life make-over.**

The New Testament speaks of pleasing God and couples with it thoughts of commandment keeping or in other words obedience. Many, through mechanical performance, believe their actions of obedience bring pleasure to God. Such assumptions are faulty. God has never been pleased with rote external conformity to biblical revelation. This has not nor ever will please Him.

Even under the Old Covenant (i.e. Mosaic Code), God saw heart obedience as the bottom line expression of His relationship to His people.

Listen to the words spoke by the prophet Samuel to the first king of Israel, Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22, 23.

²² "Samuel said, 'Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice**, And to heed than the fat of rams. ²³ For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king'" (1 Sam. 15:22, 23).

We would think that the sacrifice is the obedience, but **the prophet correctly notes how heart obedience is different than external conformity.**

The Proverbs give us sweeping generalizations. Listen to the Proverb of 21:2, 3.

² "Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But **the LORD weighs the hearts.**
³ To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD more than sacrifice"
 (Prov. 21:2, 3).

The issue in both passages is that mere conformity to a set of rules and regulations has never been God's measurement of or means to pleasing Him.

When the prophet Isaiah addressed the nation of Israel, his words probed the heart of the issue in Isaiah 1:11-17. The prophets Hosea (6:6) and Micah (6:6-8) spoke to the same matter.

This same idea does carry over into the Gospels. Listen to Mark 12:28-34.

²⁸ "One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; ³⁰ AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' ³¹ "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." ³² The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM; ³³ **AND TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE**

ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions" (Mark 12:28-34).

Although the nature of the covenant shifts after the cross, there is a principle that is retained; **an obedience that comes from the overflow is a work of the Spirit and an obedience that comes from external conformity to rules and regulations is a work of the flesh.** This principle forces the question, "What is it about obedience that pleases Him?" Perhaps even more fundamental is the question, "What pleases God?"

The Westminster Confession states, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." John Piper's slight modification of this confession reads as follows, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." Such statements are large and sweeping, but there is at the core the essence as to why God created.

If my obedience is viewed as a work of the flesh, then all it shows is my self-centered old nature. But if I see my obedience as a fruit of the Spirit and fully sourced in Him and through Him, then in that "fruit" or "obedience" He sees the image of His Son and it is this that pleases Him.

The New Testament calls us to please Him. In such statements, misguided zealots pursue a path of imitation fruit. Instead of resting in His finished work, they determine to show Him how much they "love" Him through their own efforts. Such efforts end up being works of the flesh. Such efforts might look good, but they are self righteous fruit that amount to nothing but filthy rags.

To think that His people do not please Him undermines the very nature of their union with Christ and the imputation of His cross work to their account. They are always acceptable to Him and they are equally pleasing to Him. So what are we to make of those passages that set forth the idea of pleasing God? What follows is a listing of the passages that accent the idea of pleasing God. There are three words considered in what follows. All three words are inside of the same word family (i.e. *aresko*, *arestos*, *euarestos*). It originally meant "to set up a positive relation," hence "to make peace." (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 77). In the New Testament, it carries the idea of "well-pleasing" of "acceptability."

- Jesus Christ always did those things that pleased His heavenly Father (John 8:21-30, esp. note v. 29).

In John 8, Jesus is in a volatile conversation with the religious leaders of His day. They are making multiple accusations in order to undermine His integrity and ministry. Our Lord's response shows how "nothing He did was of His own initiative" (v. 28). He always did those things that pleased His heavenly Father. It is this life that we exchanged with Him. He took my life of sin and death and I received His life of grace and life. Because of the exchanged life, I am always doing those things that

please my heavenly Father. Friend, if you have been tracking with us for the last several years, you marvel in this glorious truth. If you are new to it, then you might have significant mental strain.

- It is used of pleasing others (Rom. 15:1-3; 1 Cor. 10:23-33, esp. note v. 33). Instead of living selfish lives, seek to serve others. This involves “pleasing” others before “pleasing” oneself.

In other passages the word is used to speak of selfless service towards others instead of focusing on one’s self. What you do and whom you serve depends on whom you desire to please, either yourself or others. God delights in having His body be the body to one another (Phil. 4:10-19, esp. note v.18).

- It is used of pleasing one’s spouse or living single and pleasing only the Lord (1 Cor. 7:32-34).

This same principle is used in Galatians 1:10 (See also 1 Thess. 2:4). If I am always seeking to “please” men, then my attention is diverted away from “pleasing” the Lord. This same idea is present in 2 Timothy 2:4 concerning soldiers being single minded. This usage of the word does not mean married people do not please the Lord, only that their attention is diverted away from a single mindedness.

- Those who fight against God’s people and program do not please Him (1 Thess. 2:15). If you’re for God, you are pleasing Him. If you’re against God, you are not pleasing Him. Those who are “for God” are to be embraced as those who please Him (Luke 9:43-50).
- Those who walk in the Lord please God (1 Thess. 4:1). This is very similar to our passage in Romans 8.

This “walk” is not conditional, other than regeneration. Bearing the fruit of the Spirit/keeping His commandments pleases Him because it is the outworking of our identity in Christ. This is why He answers our prayers (1 John 3:22). God is always working in and through His people those “fruits” that please Him (Heb. 13:21). First Thessalonians 4:1 is of interest because the apostle encourages his audience to please God more and more, just as they already are.

- Accepting our union with Christ pleases God (Rom. 12:1, 2).

Accepting who you are in Christ and embracing His work is pleasing to Him. This is why mind renewal pleases God (Eph. 5:10). It is as our mind’s are awakened to our union with Christ that we begin to recognize the power of the cross manifesting its impact in us and through us. Thus, God delights in seeing the Spirit of Christ manifested in our earthen vessels (Rom. 14:18). When we have set our minds on Him, He is pleased (2 Cor. 5:9).

There is another word used that is different than the previous three words considered. With few exceptions this word is used of that which pleases God. The redemptive purpose of God in working the image of His Son in and through His people is what pleases Him (Eph. 1:5, 9; Phil. 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:11).

Why is God pleased with obedience?

- Our obedience is nothing less than a fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- Our obedience is nothing less than the imputed righteousness of Christ revealing itself through our “physical body.”
- Our obedience is the outworking of our identity, an identity that is sourced completely in the cross work of His Son. This work puts the character of Christ into the life of His people. It is a transfer of nature.

When I obey it is nothing less than His righteousness being manifested in me and through me. When God sees the life of His Son in me and through me, He is pleased. This expression of spiritual fruit is well-pleasing to Him. Not only is this His desire, but it is the fulfillment of His will, a will that is immutable and unstoppable.

As a child of God, I take great comfort in knowing that He is working His good pleasure in me and through me to those around me. I rest knowing that nothing created can stop Him from fulfilling His eternal purpose.

Does God delight in “my sin?” Of course not, but what He sees sourced in my old nature is never accredited to my account. There is an enormous joy in knowing that my actions can never undo His pleasure in me. My desire is always to do those things that please Him, and I rest in the knowledge that He is doing just that.

This brings us to the third reason in our paragraph as to why we face no condemnation.

- III. There is no condemnation because believers are no longer in the flesh (vv. 9-11).

Verses 9-11 give the surest confidence that His people are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. To deny that you are in the Spirit is to undo by your actions what God has done through His. If you can move between the flesh and the Spirit, then there are moments when the Spirit of God is not dwelling within you. Such thinking would completely undermine what Paul stated earlier in Romans 6:1-14.

“The pronoun and its position, the emphatic negative, the strongest conjunction, the present tense, and the absence of the article from ‘flesh’ and ‘Spirit,’ all go to frame the firmest denial of the flesh and the strongest affirmation to the Spirit, that inspiration could muster.” (J.P. McBeth, Exegetical and Practical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 189).

“The ‘if’ is not intended to raise doubt, as though to suggest that some of Paul’s readers might have to be excluded. The ‘if’ in this type of construction presupposes the truth of the statement.” (Everett F. Harrison, Romans, EBC, vol. 10, 89).

This brings us to the conclusion in our paragraph.

IV. What freedom from the fear of condemnation looks like (vv. 12-17a)

A. The justified are putting to death the deeds of the flesh (vv. 12, 13)

I am no longer a debtor to the reign of sin and death. My citizenship is to another country, another government, another law. I now live in a country and am a citizen where grace reigns. It is a reign marked by grace and life. To this reign I have pledged my allegiance.

If walking according to the flesh is death and is hostile toward God and not able to obey God and cannot please God, then those who walk according to the Spirit is life and friendly toward God and able to obey God and is pleasing to God.

There does not appear to be any condition except the indwelling Spirit. The question is, “Does the Spirit of God dwell within you?” If yes, then what follows is true. If no, then you are an enemy of God and you are not pleasing to Him. Because in His death we have been set free from the flesh, we are no longer obligated to obey the mastery of the flesh.

If you are living according to the flesh, you must die (the second death is certain for all who are unbelieving). However, if because you are saved you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live (you will escape the second death because you are believing).

The verse is not suggesting disconnect between living according to the Spirit and putting to death the deeds of the body. If you are living according to the Spirit, you are putting to death the deeds of the body. Paul uses a present active indicative to speak of the “now” reality of this action. This statement is calling us to consider what is already true (Rom. 6:6). It is the same idea found in Colossians 3:5.

“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry” (Col. 3:5).

The ideas of . . .

- Living by the Spirit
- Putting to death the deeds of the flesh
- Being led by the Spirit are all parallel ideas.

To have one is to have all three.

B. The justified are Sons of God (vv. 14-17)

An important note of assurance must be seen in our text:

“All too often a believer may come to the point of doubting his salvation because his sanctification has proceeded so slowly and so lamely. The Spirit, however, does not base his assuring testimony on progress or the lack of it in the Christian life. He does not lead us to cry, ‘I am God’s child.’ Rather, he leads us to call upon God as Father, to look away from ourselves to him who established the relationship.” (Everett F. Harrison, Romans, EBC, vol. 10, 93).

ILLUSTRATION:

The significance of sonship is noteworthy. Think of the person that you would most like to be a child of. Perhaps it is some religious leader or world leader or sports figure. Perhaps it is an individual or family where money flows like water. The reality of our sonship to God does not impress us as actual. But these lesser appetites do. This is a regrettable oversight on our part.

1. Thus we are led by the Spirit

Notice the language: Those led by the Spirit are the sons of God. **You do not become a son by being led; you are led because you are a son. You cannot have one without the other.**

Am I to make a distinction between walking, minding, in the Spirit, and led, or should I simply see them as describing the same thing? If the Spirit of Christ dwells in me and if I am a son of God, then I am walking, minding, in, and led by the Spirit. Because of Him being in me, I am putting to death the deeds of the body. Instead of making such fruit **conditions**, we must see them as **consequences** of being a child of God.

2. Thus we are adopted

“The word ‘cry’ is emphatic, expressing the spontaneousness, the strength, and the exuberance of the final emotions.” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

“The Spirit that enables us to say, ‘My Father,’ also testifies that God says, ‘My son.’” (J.P. McBeth, Exegetical and Practical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, 192).

3. Thus we are fellow heirs with Christ

All that has been secured for me through His cross work shall be fully granted to me. The faithfulness of God guarantees the outcome of this promise.

I will address the later part of verse 17 with the next paragraph (8:17b-30).

APPLICATION: (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. Stop living like your condemned and start living free.
2. Stop looking to the law for a measurement of and means to your relationship with the Trinity.
3. Start living in the fullness of the cross work.
4. Stop beating yourself up for failure and start living in the freedom from sin that is yours by right.
5. Start treating your brothers and sisters in Christ as those with whom God is pleased.
6. Live your life believing His life is being lived through you on a moment by moment basis.