

GOD WANTS A RELATIONSHIP

Not a Performance

Romans 5, 6, 7 & 8

**“Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son...
an heir through God” (Galatians 4:7)**

Study Number Nine – The Definition of the Relationship – Romans 8:12-17

To just summarize briefly where we’ve been, we started in Romans chapter 5 with this thought:

“What are the results of a relationship so I know whether or not I’ve had one?”

The apostle lists 8 specific things that we could discern. And then we went on into the HOW of the relationship.

The apostle tells us in that great theological section at the latter part of chapter 5 this truth: Each of us is born in sin. We are born in an Adamic family. And the sin problem must be dealt with before we can plan on spending eternity with Him.

In the HOW of the relationship we said, as the apostle described it, we are either IN ADAM or IN JESUS CHRIST.

We are born in Adam physically. We must be born again by the Spirit into Jesus Christ to be prepared for our eternal destiny.

This brought us to Romans chapter 6 and the responsibility of the relationship. Now that we are a Christian, now that we're identified with Jesus Christ and His life is flowing through us, what is our responsibility? Well, the first thing that we recognize is that after we become a Christian, we still sin.

What's our responsibility with regard to the matter of sin? And how is sin handled in our life? The apostle gave us three main points. He told us we are not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies. We were not to present our members as instruments of wickedness. We were to recognize and consider the fact that we were dead to sin in Jesus Christ.

Then this brought us to Romans chapter 7. And in Romans 7 we saw an illustration of the relationship in marriage. Just like two people are committed to one another for a lifetime, they become one flesh in the marriage relationship, so we are married to Jesus Christ. And out of that living union with Jesus Christ is to flow a new fruit, a new life in Him.

Now the normal thing in a relationship, from a human point of view, is to decide that it is a performance now, to please the Lord—the One with whom we have the relationship. And it's an awful subtle thing to make that relationship legalistic. In other words, we try to perform for God's certain legalistic standards. And if we don't perform those then we're not doing

too well in the relationship. And if we do perform them, we're really pretty good.

The apostle cuts at that very strongly in these last couple of studies. He points up the fact that we're no longer under Law. We're living under grace and the freedom of a love relationship, loved unconditionally, totally and perfectly by Jesus Christ. And we are not under the performance. We're not under the Law anymore.

The Law came to an end. It terminated its relationship with us when it brought us to Jesus Christ. It's the function of the Law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world might become guilty before God.

Now what we're going to look at and the definition of the relationship, we're going to look at verses 12 through 17 in this particular study.

Here we're going to discover two things:

First, in the relationship—NEGATIVELY—we were delivered from bondage.

But—POSITIVELY—we were made sons. We have been brought into a vital living sonship that includes also an adoption and an inheritance.

So let's pick up now at verse 12.

v. 12 So then, brethren, we are those under moral obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

“So then, brethren, we are those under moral obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—”

What he is saying now is since we have become Christians, we are no longer obligated to that old nature that still resides within us.

There is a teaching abroad that we can become a Christian and after we become a Christian, we can get rid of that old nature and we'll never sin again. The only problem is, we have yet to find anybody who's been able to follow that pattern of truth consistently. Because if they try, they're usually proud of it and that's the end of all that.

What we're saying here and what the apostle is saying, and what he's been trying to teach us to this point is that when we became a Christian, we received a new divine nature that came to dwell within. But that doesn't mean that our old one's gone. It's still there.

And in an instant, in a flash, we can respond to that old nature just that quick. Remember we had the illustration in our last study about driving down the freeway. One minute we can be singing, “Let's just praise the Lord!” and we're in fellowship with everybody. And the kids are happy in the car and all of a sudden somebody cuts in on us and “Boom!” we're

yelling at him. And then our spouse says, “Well!” And then we’re yelling at them. Now we have to pull over to the side of the road and we have everybody angry at us.

In an instant we responded to that nature. And make no mistake about it, it’s there. The challenge we have as Christians in learning to walk with the Lord Jesus Christ is learning how to live with a cancer that’s there. And it’ll be there until we go to glory.

One of the magnificent thoughts about glorification to the apostle Paul and to us is that one day that old sorry thing is going to be departed. The only entrée that Satan has into our life is through our old nature. And the only entrée that the old nature has to perform an act of sin is our body. So that’s the only explanation for sin.

Satan wants to use our old nature so he can see through our eyes, so he can read through our mind, so he can act through hands and through our feet. He uses that body.

What is Paul telling us here? He’s telling us in this twelfth verse that we have no longer any moral obligation to this flesh, to this old nature, to live like that. Why? Because we now have a new divine nature. We now have the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit that energizes that new nature that produces Christlikeness in our lives.

So Christian living basically is a choice on a daily basis. We cannot be living under the control of both natures at the same

time. As we are here in this service, we are either living under the control of one or the other, never both. We are under the control of the Spirit by our new divine nature or we're speaking to each other in the flesh under the control of our old nature. And as we listen, we're listening with one of those two options as well.

And only we know our spiritual condition in our heart. It is a moment-by-moment thing. That's why the apostle says in Galatians 5:17: "Walk by means of the Spirit and you will not fulfil the desires of your old nature."

What is a walk? Every step is a potential fall. When we take a step, we walk. Another step, we walk. We see Christian experience is not encompassed in a crisis. When we make an emotional decision or we make a dramatic dedication and all of a sudden everything's going to be alright.

Christian growth and Christian living and Christian maturity is a day by day, moment by moment, walk with the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, giving us momentary victory over sin.

That's the subtlety of this whole thing. We're living in a day of instant pudding. We're living in a day of instant Jell-O. We're living in a day of instant this. Give it to me quick! In a hurry, in a company little deal! After all that scientists have been able to do with its computers and calculators, Christianity ought to be like that. We ought to be able to just "Click!" All of a sudden here on Sunday morning all the lights turn on and

we're a spiritual giant on our way to glory experiencing the abundant life and there'll never be another problem.

God did not design our life like that. What he is saying here is that in our Christian life, recognize the fact that every day is a new opportunity. We are not under moral obligation to that old nature and to that old way of life because we have all the equipment inside us as a believer to walk by means of the Spirit. And we will not fulfill these desires of the flesh.

v. 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you are about to die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

“for if you are living according to the flesh,”—that is, as a Christian, we're living according to our old nature—“you are about to die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

Now what's the apostle saying? He certainly is not denying the fact that we still have that old nature. He says if we're living according to that, “you are about to die.” That kind of scares us, doesn't it?

What does that mean? If we're “living according to the flesh”?

In Galatians 5:19 the apostle says this as he comes down to verse 21:

Galatians 5:19-21

And things like these [this big long list of the works of the flesh] which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

He's saying that if our normal habit pattern in our life as a Christian is explained in terms of us just answering our desires, our old nature. If it feels good, do it and that type of thing. If that is the only pattern to our life, it is an indication that we have never come to a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Basically, the Bible only describes one of three positions that any one of us could be in. They are the defined photography of 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3.

1. The Bible says we are a NATURAL man. That's a man born in Adam, or
2. Secondly, we are a SPIRITUAL man. That is by the grace of God we are walking in the power of the Holy Spirit energizing our new divine nature and we are beginning to look like Jesus Christ. That is God's definition of a spiritual man, or
3. Thirdly we are a CARNAL or fleshly man. That is the description of the Corinthians to whom Paul is writing. He says we are still carnal because there's envy, strife, division, and bickering. And there are these things that are the

response of the old nature among us.

And so, we are in either one of those three positions. Now the carnal person is a Christian but he is living under the dictates and the controls of this old nature to which he has no more obligation.

Now why would it be possible that we might be sitting here and we're studying this and we could be living a carnal life? We could be living under the control of the flesh? Well, because of one of three reasons:

1. First, we'd be living a carnal life because we are by ourselves trying to be righteous. We've set certain standards and we say, "I can handle it. I can be spiritual." And we're trying by ourselves to be spiritual.
2. Or secondly, like the apostle Paul warned us in chapter 7, we are living by the thought that this is a performance and so we're living under the bondage of the Law. And the flesh loves the Law. And trying to be righteous, trying to be this way makes us hypocritical because none of us can keep the Law.
3. Or thirdly, we might be living a carnal life simply because some sin has come in, fellowship has been broken, and we and the Lord are at a distance. Sin has separated us from the Lord.

In this thirteenth verse he sounds a very serious warning of this condition.

“if you are living according to the flesh, you are about to die;”

Now what does that mean?

You might be saying, “I have to admit it. I’m here and I’m living a low-level Christian life. I’m just doing what I want to and I’m not really too excited about things. And things are just rocking along. Do you mean that I’m about to die, that I’m about to lose my salvation?”

No. Perish the thought. When we get to Romans chapter 8, the end of it here, we’re going to hit into the heavenlies to see there’s nothing that can separate us from the relationship.

Well then what does it mean that “you are about to die”?

The answer is found in 1 Corinthians 11. The apostle tells the Corinthian church that if they would have dealt with the sin in their lives, the manifestations of their old nature, they wouldn’t have been judged by the Lord. But because they would not deal with that matter in their lives, there were many of them who would have already died in a physical sense.

That’s pretty severe teaching. To say that “you are about to die” refers to our physical death. But the moment we enter into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and we continue to live in the flesh, every day brings us closer to our physical demise.

When we forfeit the right to the good life that the Lord has given us by our persistence to live in the flesh rather than in the power of the Spirit, we're coming closer and closer to our physical death.

“The Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (ref. 2 Peter 3:9)

But when we're born again by the Spirit of God into His family, we're living a new ball game. We're going to be an asset and a tribute to His family. He's going to begin a good work of making us like Christ. And to resist that by continuing to live in the flesh is to face the consequence of physical death—the Father saying, “come on home.”

Now if it were just this particular verse, that would be something different. But let's chew on a few verses.

First Corinthians 5:5—here's a man living in immorality. He's living in sexual immorality in the church and he's having an affair with somebody in the congregation and this is what Paul says:

1 Corinthians 5:5

I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a serious sin of immorality and in dealing with it, Paul says, “I’ve decided to deliver him over. Satan can destroy his flesh so that his spirit will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 John 5:16

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death: I do not say that you should make request for this.

What is the “sin not leading to death”? That’s the accident we had on the freeway when we responded to the old nature and got mad. And then got mad at our spouse and kids. That’s an accident.

And when those things happen, we’re so hurt inside that we stop and I say, “Lord, forgive me for being such a lousy representative of Yours and such a poor witness. I’m sorry! I want Your forgiveness and Your cleansing!” And the Lord says, “Brother come on. You’re learning.” And we’re forgiven and cleansed, loved unconditionally.

What about the sin to death? This is just continuing to pursue a path of disobedience when we know it’s wrong and it’s a response to that old nature. And we’re living in it, we’re rationalizing it, we’re self-justifying it, we’re trying to continue in that thing and we know it’s not right but we do it anyway. We excuse it as a weakness. “I’m just that way. I’ll

just always be that way. I'll never change." And on and on we go.

The apostle says when we continue in that sort of thing, that is considered a sin unto death.

James 5:20

Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sin.

Let's say we come to this fellow, he's continuing to live this way. And we say, "Buddy you better deal with that in your life. You better clean up your act there or it's going to be all over." And he says, "Yes! That's right!"

And he responds. What do we do? We saved his soul from physical death and we covered a multitude of sins. And in love we covered that thing and together we committed ourselves. His life was going to be right now with the Lord James tells us.

Here's another one:

John 15:2

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away. And every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit.

What does that mean? “Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away.”

What’s that picture? That’s a picture of picking it up. Here He comes down through the vineyard and here’s a branch laying in the dirt that isn’t doing anything, there’s no fruit coming from it, He begins to pick it up. He begins to bear it up.

What the Father wants from our life as a Christian is that as we abide in the vine, there will be fruit that will come out of it. And that fruit as we have learned in numerous studies is the fruit of the Spirit’s work in energizing the new nature—love, joy, peace—these things.

And also, fruit in the lives of others who come to know Christ because of what they see in us. And as the Father sees this, He has to take action. And it says, every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it. He brings it to the place where it’ll be more productive.

What is being said here is if we are “living according to the flesh,” just the response to the old nature, we “are about to die” physically.

“but”—CONTRAST in the passage—“if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

He says, “by the Spirit,” and that’s very important.

Paul was frustrated in Romans 7 because he was trying by himself to be righteous. He was trying by himself to put down that old nature. He was trying to prove, just like he had in Judaism, that he was capable!

One of the biggest problems of spiritual maturity is to get the focus off of ourselves and on the Lord Jesus Christ and on the power of the indwelling Spirit. And for some people this is the hardest thing in the world because we've always been adequate. We've always been taught to be the master of our fate and the captain of our salvation! And if we couldn't handle it, it wasn't worth handling!

And we didn't mind getting pinned to the wall when everybody else did it. With Frank Sinatra we can sing with all the gusto, "I did it my way!" No matter what!

And it's the hardest thing in the world for us to give up on ourselves, to give up on our performance of the 10 commandments and the golden rule and to come to the simplicity of the fact that we cannot be righteous in God's sight.

We have that nature that will plague us and that sin that is more powerful than we are, and it'll defeat us. That it is only in the power of the indwelling Spirit that we can put "to death the deeds of the body."

That is very important. Notice that phrase "you are putting to death the deeds of the body"? What tense is that? That's in the

PRESENT TENSE. If we were to translate that in English we would say, “if you are by the Spirit, continually putting to death the deeds of the body.”

Now does that sound like we can make one decision and instantaneously deal with the whole thing? The apostle's telling us that it's moment by moment. It's day by day. Satan wants us to sin and respond to our old nature and our body has to be the instrument he's going to use. That's all he's got.

And moment by moment we must be continually “putting to death the deeds of the body” in order to experience the joy of fellowship and Christlikeness.

How do we put “to death the deeds of the body”? It's already been taught to us in Romans chapter 6.

1. Consider ourselves to be dead to that—that's an ATTITUDE. Remember? (ref. Romans 6:11)
2. Secondly, don't let it reign—that's our WILL. We don't have to respond that way anymore. (ref. Romans 6:12)
3. And third, We are persons who are going to present our members as tools of righteousness to the Lord rather than tools of wickedness to our old nature that's still very much there and desires to be in control and domination of our life. (ref. Romans 6:13)

The moment we recognize that we can't and we allow the

Spirit of God who now indwells us as a believer to carry out His function, we begin to discover victory. We begin to discover for the first time that God in Jesus Christ and in the power of the Spirit has placed within us all that is necessary for a victorious and righteous life.

That's what the apostle meant when he said, "I am treating my body roughly and I'm making it serve me, lest when I preach to others I myself should be disqualified." (ref. 1 Corinthians 9:27)

Now, recognizing that fact, let's just hasten on if we can for just a few moments to verse 14.

v. 14 For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

"For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

How do we recognize a child of God? One who is "led by the Spirit of God"?

For at the moment of our salvation when we came to faith, the Spirit of God came in to carry on these very specific functions in our life. And just because we've had a power failure in our life, just because we know that we're a Christian but there is no power and victory in our life, it is not because the Spirit of God is not there.

An evidence of our sonship is the fact that He's there, but it is whether or not we are rightly related to the Spirit of God who dwells within. The Spirit of God will never take over as long as self is in control. And only one or two can be in control at the same time. We're either under control of self and we're responding to our old nature, or we're under the control of the Spirit and we're responding to our new nature. And that's the constant conflict in the Christian life.

That's why he says, "walk by means of the Spirit and you will no longer fulfill the desires of the flesh." (ref. Galatians 5:16)—the old nature.

"For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

That's a new introduction in our study. When we became a Christian we became a son of God, a daughter of God.

What does SONSHIP refer to? A RELATIONSHIP.

We have this relationship now where God is our Father and we're His son/daughter! That's the responsibility! We're part of His family!

We always tell our kids when they leave the house, "Well, kids realize you're an Anderson and conduct yourself accordingly."

There's a responsibility to that relationship. At home, we can let down our hair down, but when we get out there we have a

responsibility to the relationship because people are going to think of us the way they think of them. So our responsibility, remember whose we are and who we represent when we get out there.

v. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery to cause you to fear, but you received the spirit of adoption by which we are crying out, Abba! Father!

“For you have not received a spirit of slavery to cause you to fear, but you received the spirit of adoption by which we are crying out, Abba! Father!”

He’s telling us there in that fifteenth verse that we did not receive “a spirit of slavery.” We didn’t receive a spirit that said, “do this and do that—live by this and live by that.”

“Come unto me all Ye that are weary and are heavy laden and I will give you rest!” the Lord Jesus says. “Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest for your souls!” (ref. Matthew 11:28-29)

We didn’t receive “a spirit of slavery where you had to perform that would cause you to fear.” What does that mean? Well, if it were like that, every time we didn’t perform very well we’d get scared, wouldn’t we?

Just like our kids get scared to death when they don’t perform well. “And you know Dad’s coming home and there’s going to be a reckoning!” They’re scared! They didn’t perform right and

now there are going to be some consequences and they just can't wait to get it over with.

And a lot of people are going to heaven like that. They've been under a spirit of bondage and slavery all their lives and they're just wondering if they did enough and check in right! And they're so fearful. They're so frightened. They've lived under this bondage of trying to perform righteous acts.

We're a son/daughter! We're loved unconditionally! We're in a new relationship. "You received the spirit of adoption by which we are crying out, Abba! Father!"

What does it mean, "the spirit of adoption"? We use the word "adoption," don't we? To refer to somebody that's not a son? Let's say that we decide we wanted to help somebody and so we adopted this child into our family. We took somebody who wasn't our child and we brought him into our family. Now that's the way the American's use the term adoption.

The Jewish mind didn't use it that way and neither did the Greek mind. To them adoption referred to taking somebody who was already in the family and giving him the rights of the inheritance.

When we became a Christian, two things instantaneously happened:

1. We were born again by the Spirit of God into His family and became a son.

2. And we received the adoption, because at the moment of our new birth, we also became an heir and a joint heir with Jesus Christ.

We are our Father's heir and everything that Jesus Christ gets, we get too in glory. We are a joint heir with Jesus Christ. He is our Brother in a greater sense and God is now our Father. We cry like the little baby cried the first time, "Abba! Father!" We are His children!

v. 16 The Spirit Himself is bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

"The Spirit Himself is bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

There are two parts of this relationship:

1. We've cried "Abba! Father!"

We realize that we have a new relationship with Him. Because of the death of Christ, we're now part of God's family and that relationship will never be severed.

2. And secondly, "The Spirit Himself" also endorses in our innermost being that this transaction has taken place.

John Wesley made the great statement that encompasses everything in these verses:

“I exchanged the faith of a servant for the faith of a son. And discovered the reality of Christ.”
(source unknown)

When he exchanged the faith of a servant for the faith of a son, it was at that point he experienced the reality of an abundant life.

We’re a son or a daughter. That we’re a part of His family? And God loves us unconditionally just like we love our kids. It says, “every good and every perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights, and whom there is no shadow of turning.”
(ref. James 1:17)

Think we know how to give good things to our kids? Do we think God the Father would give any less to His children? Is He permitting things in our life right now, although they seem terribly adverse, that are not for our good as His child?

Many of our children question the goodness of us as parents when we do things in their lives to bring them to that but we tell them we love them. We tell them that we want to see them differently. We want to see them grown up. And so our loving Father does the same in our own lives.

Are we living in light of our sonship? Our daughtership? One day we’re going to spend eternity with our brothers and sisters. Are we going to be ashamed of those relationships with one another? Are we realizing the fact that our greater

brother Jesus Christ is going to spend eternity with us? Are we spending time now to get to know Him? That's the most important assignment that each of us have.

v. 17 And if children, also heirs; on the one hand heirs of God, on the other fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed, we are suffering with Him in order that we may also be glorified together.

“And if children, also heirs;”—the last verse of the study—“on the one hand heirs of God, on the other fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed, we are suffering with Him in order that we may also be glorified together.”

We have equal rights to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God is filled with references.

First Peter 1:3 and 4 talks about the inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away.

Ephesians 1:11 says we've obtained an inheritance.

In John 17, when Jesus prayed, He says: “And the glory which You have given me I have given to them that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be perfected in unity that the world may know that Thou didst send Me and didst love them even as Thou hast loved me. Father, I desire that they also whom Thou hast given me, may be with me where I am in order that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me: for Thou didst love me before

the foundation of the world.” (ref. John 17:22-24)

Are we living today, in light of the great riches and the anticipation of the inheritance which is ours as a son or a daughter?

It's not a spirit of slavery. It's a spirit of sonship. It's a spirit of a beautiful relationship.

Dr. Barnhouse tells the graphic story of preaching one Sunday in a church in the south. And when he got on the platform a little old lady came late to the service. She came down and sat very near to the front and the minister leaned over and said, “You see the little lady down there?” He said, “Remind me. I'll tell you a story about her after church.” Well, he looked and he couldn't help but see her sitting there. She had on these old leather shoes that had been torn over and the soul was loose and there was a big old hole in the bottom of it. She had on a quilted looking dress that looked like it had come out of the local barrel. She also had an old hat that was quite disheveled.

Well Dr. Barnhouse went out in such compassion and concern he wanted to give her a few dollars after service to help her in her need and the pastor said, “No, no. Let me tell you something.” And so they got together and talked for a minute. He said, “You know that lady you saw down there? She and her husband a number of years ago were sheep ranchers. They had a house that was very, very dilapidated. Fifty yards this way was the outhouse and fifty yards this way was the pump. And they lived in between and drove this old jalopy, quite

ancient.” He said, “Just a number of years ago they discovered a well on their ranch and shortly thereafter her husband died.” He said, “She refuses now to sign any royalty checks and they’re piling up. She’s got over a hundred wells. She’s many times a millionaire and yet she’s living in abject poverty. She’s still driving the old jalopy and still living in these clothes.”

“You know,” Dr. Barnhouse said, “That is oftentimes the spiritual experience of many of God’s children. They’re living in abject poverty by resisting the power of the Spirit to produce Christlikeness in their lives. Because you and I live like that.

(source unknown)

We keep our lives on performance, performance, performance instead of recognizing the beautiful relationship that is ours in Jesus Christ. And to learn the sheer thrill of the spiritual blessings of grace that will flow. Of spiritual blessings and victory that’ll be ours and strength in the time of trial and great need! All of these are available. Make no mistake about it, he says that with this sonship there is also suffering. And the Word of God teaches us that we identify ourselves with Christ as we suffer here but there’s going to be glory there.

Jesus knew what it was to suffer and now He knows what it is to experience glory.

Philippians 1:29

For unto us it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him but also to suffer for His sake.

“in order that we may be also glorified together.”

As we conclude this message, let's be reminded of a parable in Luke chapter 15. The parable is the parable of the Prodigal Son.

Remember the story? He went to his dad and he said, “Dad, I want all you've got to give me and I'm going to leave.” And he went to the far country and in the far country he squandered all that the father had given him. And then finally, after even trying to enter into an alliance with a citizen of the foreign country to feed pigs, in the midst of that famine it says he came to his senses and he returned to his home and to his father.

First of all, are we a son, are we a daughter? We just didn't become that because we were born like that. Don't ever make that mistake.

“As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” (ref. John 1:12)

We must make that personal decision and commitment to Jesus Christ. We must by an act of our will decide that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Savior. And when the Spirit of God comes to dwell within in answer to faith, we are born again into His family.

We say, “Well, I’m a son. But I’m like the prodigal son. I’ve asked my Daddy, my heavenly Father, to give me everything that He can give me and I just keep using it for myself. And I just keep enjoying it. And right now I’ve got to be honest with you, I’m in a far country.”

In this case, they’ve forgotten whose they were and who they represented, didn’t they? God’s dealing quite severely with them.

Maybe we’re eating the husks with the hogs today and God would have us rich. God would have us know it as unconditional love. All that stands between us and that is our pride, is our self-will, our ability to admit that we have a need we can’t handle. Sin’s more powerful than we are. That we really have been nailed to the wall and now we come to our senses.

It’s not just enough to come to our senses, he could have sat there all day and said, “How many sons of my father have more? Servants of my father have more to eat and I’m perishing here with hunger?”

Through an act of his will, he got up out of that pig pen and he headed back home to the father. Did he know the joy of a daddy who was already watching in the window and God was an old man running to get his arms around that kid and to restore him to the sweetness and the abundance of a right relationship with Him?

Where are we today? Are we in His family? Are we a joy to our heavenly Father? Or are we out there living in carnality? Living in the power of the old nature, under the domination of our flesh? We're not pleasing to Him. May God deal with us accordingly.

Here are the lessons that we learn from our passage of scripture:

Lesson #1: The apostle has shared in these verses with us the tremendous thought of the relationship being defined as being sons of God.

Lesson #2: As a result of this new union with Jesus Christ, we have been taken out of slavery to law of works and placed as sons of God who have within us the Spirit of God bearing witness that we are children of God.

Lesson #3: As a result of this relationship, we have also been made heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

Lesson #4: Ask yourself the question, "Am I a son of God? Have I been born again by the Spirit of God unto His family?"

Lesson #5: If you are His child, what an awesome responsibility it is to remember Whose we are and Who we represent.

Our heavenly Father, how we thank You for Your Word—the

riches of it. The victory and the adequacy there is in Jesus Christ. We pray that by Your Holy Spirit You'd quietly impress upon us now the truths of the scripture that we've looked at today. Lord, if there's some that are really suffering today and having a rough time, we pray that they'll take this as part of the relationship. And that out of it they'll become more Christlike. There will be something beautiful begin to happen in their lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

GOD WANTS A RELATIONSHIP

Not a Performance

Romans 5, 6, 7 & 8

**“Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son...
an heir through God” (Galatians 4:7)**

Study Number Nine – The Definition of the Relationship – Romans 8:12-17

NOTES

v.12 So then, brethren, we are those under moral obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

v.13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you are about to die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

v.14 For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

v.15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery to cause you to fear, but you received the spirit of adoption by which we are crying out, Abba! Father!

v.16 The Spirit Himself is bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

v.17 And if children, also heirs; on the one hand heirs of God, on the other fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed, we are suffering with Him in order that we may also be glorified together.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Romans 8:12-17 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What is the manifestation of living by the Spirit, according to verse 13?

3. Who are those who are led by the Spirit of God, according to verse 14?

4. Describe our relationship to God, according to verse 15.

5. What is one of the manifestations of the Spirit's presence in our lives, according to verse 15?

6. What evidence do we have of the fact that we have become children of God, according to verse 16?

7. Describe our inheritance, according to verse 17.

8. According to the last phrase in verse 17, what will be our ultimate destiny?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The apostle has shared in these verses with us the tremendous thought of the relationship being defined as being sons of God.

LESSON #2: As a result of this new union with Jesus Christ, we have been taken out of slavery to law of works and placed as sons of God who have within us the Spirit of God bearing witness that we are children of God.

LESSON #3: As a result of this relationship, we have also been made heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

LESSON #4: Ask yourself the question, “Am I a son of God? Have I been born again by the Spirit of God unto His family?

LESSON #5: If you are His child, what an awesome responsibility it is to remember Whose we are and Who we represent.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:
