

New Creation: Walking According to the Spirit (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:5)

I. THE REVELATION OF GRACE (ROMANS 3-8)

- A. We are studying Romans 3-8 to receive revelation of God's grace. This passage includes themes such as how to walk in victory over sin by knowing who we are as new creatures in Christ, what our legal position before God is, and what our rights and authority are in Christ.
- B. 2 Corinthians 5:17 is the classic passage that summarizes what Paul develops in Romans 3-8. Paul's dramatic declaration, that we have become a new creation in Christ with all things becoming new, has vast implications. The all things that are new pertain to our spirit (not our soul or body). Everything pertaining to our spirit becomes new the moment we are born again.

¹⁷If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new...²¹ that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:17, 21)

- C. Two things happen pertaining to righteousness. We receive a new legal position of righteousness in our standing before God and our spirit is refashioned, or remade. Foundational to the new birth is that we, our spirit, became righteous with God's righteousness (v. 21). Throughout all eternity, our spirit will never be more righteous than it is the moment we are born again.
- D. To understand the glory of the new creation, we must first understand that God created humans with three parts—spirit, soul, and body. Man is a spirit, he has a soul, and lives in a body.

²³May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless... (1 Thes. 5:23)

- E. At the new birth, our spirit is joined to the Holy Spirit and thus filled with supernatural life. We were created with a spirit so that we could relate to God who is spirit. Our spirit is the place where we communicate with God directly and receive revelation from the Spirit.
- ¹⁷But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (1 Cor. 6:17)*
- F. Our soul speaks of our personality, consisting of our mind, emotions, and will. Our body has five senses which enable us to receive from the physical world as our spirit enables us to receive information from the spiritual world.
- G. There are two Greek words for “life” in the New Testament. The Greek word ***psuche*** speaks of natural life that all humans and animals have. The Greek word ***zoe*** points to the supernatural life of God. It is the quality of life that God has. Adam was created with the ***zoe*** life in his spirit.
- H. Before Adam sinned, his spirit governed his soul and body. His spirit possessed the ***zoe*** life of God; thus, his spirit was dominant in his decision-making and thought processes. His physical appetites, five senses, and emotions were subject to his spirit. When Adam sinned, his spirit became devoid of the supernatural life of God, but continued to possess natural physical ***psuche*** life. His spirit man was now “spiritually dead” and unable to receive revelation (Eph. 2:1). Everything reversed, and his body (five senses) and soul (emotions) gained power over his spirit.

- I. The challenge is that we do not feel or discern God's righteousness or presence in our spirit. Peter and Paul referred to our true life or our spirit man in this age as being "hidden" in Christ. Our born-again spirit is called "the hidden person of the heart."
⁴ The hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle spirit... (1 Pet. 3:4)
³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:3)
- J. Because our spirit man is very different from our soul and body, it cannot be discerned by our emotions (soul) or our five senses (body). Thus, it is referred to as "hidden" from our five senses. Most believers do not know who they are in their spirit as they do their soul and body. Just as we receive training related to our body and soul, we must also receive training related to our spirit.

II. THE MIRACLE OF BECOMING A NEW PERSON IN CHRIST

- A. Ezekiel prophesied that God would put a "new spirit" in a believer as part of the new covenant.
²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you... (Ezek. 36:26)
- B. At the new birth, our spirit man was created anew in righteousness. We were so radically refashioned that Paul used the term "created" (Eph. 2:10; 4:24; Col. 3:10). The Holy Spirit could not live in our spirit unless our spirit was made new in the perfect righteousness of Jesus.
²⁴ Put on the new man which was created...in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:24)
¹⁰ Put on the new man who is...according to the image of Him who created him... (Col. 3:10)
¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus... (Eph. 2:10)
- C. The **new man** in Christ consists of two components—the **rebirth of our spirit** (which was made righteous and indwelt by the Holy Spirit) and the **renewed mind**. Our spirit is instantly and completely made new. Our mind is progressively renewed by agreeing with the Word.
- D. In the new creation, our **condemnation** passed away. Now we can feel confident that **God enjoys** us. Our **powerlessness**, our enslavement to sin at the heart level, has passed. Now, by the power of the **indwelling Spirit**, we can challenge the prompting of sin that rises up in our emotions.
- E. We are to see ourselves as **alive in God** (righteous, enjoyed, and indwelt by God). The old man is the person we were—under condemnation and spiritually dead, without the indwelling Spirit. Two facets of our wealth are that our human spirit has been made righteous and that we have received the Spirit.
¹¹ Reckon [see] yourselves to be...alive to God in Christ... (Rom. 6:11)
⁶ Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. (Rom. 6:6)

- F. After we are born again, **sinful desires** remain in our **body** (body of sin; Rom. 6:6) and in our **memory** of things we have done or seen that stirred up lust. Lust is further stirred up by being in **wrong circumstances**, seeking to **please people** doing ungodly things, and by **demonic attacks**.
- G. If we do not develop an awareness of who we are in our spirit, then we end up continuing as a slave to our physical appetites and five senses and, thus, our emotions go high and low based on that information. We continue to live as if we are helplessly enslaved to the desires in our body.
- H. The impulses of sin do not all go away, but now we have power to effectively challenge them. We have an effective defense against them. We still have the old thought patterns and emotions that were formed in us while we lived under the reign of sin. They are related to condemnation, powerlessness, darkness, and being destitute. Many have lived under the tyranny of slavery to sin for so many years that they have established thought patterns and emotions related to it.

III. WE ARE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF OUR MIND

- A. We are transformed by changing the way we think. We must live in agreement with God's Word. Only as our mind breaks its agreement with our flesh (five senses and emotions) are we freed.
² **Be transformed by the renewing of your mind... (Rom. 12:2)**
⁶ **My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. (Hos. 4:6)**
- B. We are set free by the knowledge of the truth.
³¹ **Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (Jn. 8:31-32)**
- C. The "spirit of our mind" refers to more than changing a few ideas. It speaks of a change in the atmosphere, perspective, and mood of our inner life. Our thought patterns and emotional responses change as our primary orientation shifts to our spirit man instead of our body.
²² **Put off...your former conduct...²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind. (Eph. 4:22-23)**
¹⁰ **The new man who is renewed in knowledge... (Col. 3:10)**

IV. CONFESSION OF THE WORD

- A. The renewing of our mind always includes the **faith confession** of the Word back to God. Our confession is what we say to the indwelling Spirit about who we are in Christ and what we believe about what Jesus did in us. The way that we carry our heart before God is our confession.
⁸ **The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart...that is, the word of faith which we preach...¹⁰ with the mouth confession is made unto salvation [victory]. (Rom. 10:8-10)**
- B. We access the wealth in our spiritual bank account, or "write checks" on it by confessing the Word. It only takes thirty seconds to write a check. It is possible to have great wealth without ever accessing it. We can continue to live like a homeless beggar under the bridge.

C. Our word of testimony includes our confession of what we believe about who we are in Christ.

¹⁰ *The accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night...¹¹ They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony... (Rev. 12:10-11)*

²³ *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering... He is faithful. (Heb. 10:23)*

¹⁴ *Let us hold fast our confession...¹⁶ Come boldly to the throne of grace... (Heb. 4:14-16)*

¹² *Fight the good fight of faith...you...have confessed the good confession... (1 Tim. 6:12)*

D. Paul quoted Ps. 116:10 to establish the necessary principle of speaking the Word with our mouth.

¹³ *And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak. (2 Cor. 4:13)*

E. Man shall live by the Word, which is living and powerful as it works in the heart of believers.

⁴ *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (Mt. 4:4)*

¹² *The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. (Heb. 4:12)*

V. LIVING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT: A NEW ORIENTATION

A. Paul contrasts two orientations to life that each believer must choose between (Rom. 8:1, 4, 5). He refers to those who live according to the flesh and those who live according to the Spirit.

¹ *Those who...do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit...⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:1-6)*

B. Spiritual maturity occurs as our primary orientation for life shifts to our spirit instead of our physical appetites, five senses, and emotions. We do this by living with awareness of the nature of our born-again spirit made righteous, by dialoguing with the indwelling Spirit, and by living with confidence that we are enjoyed by God, by living by the truths of the Word concerning who we are in our spirit. We grow in our awareness of the Spirit the more we speak with Him. Our friendship with Him increases as we talk to Him. A simple prayer: “**Holy Spirit, let me see what You see and feel what You feel about... (put many different subjects here).**” We start by drawing on the truths of the Word by confessing the Word. The new orientation of our life begins to be anchored in our spirit instead of in our body. It takes time for that awareness to grow.

C. Those who live according to the flesh set their mind on the things of the flesh, including living by their bodily appetites, five senses, and circumstances. It affects the way they approach God, their struggle against sin, and their circumstances. They base their life on whatever they feel in their body, five senses, or emotions. They give up and give in to sin and discouragement.