

# Cornerstone Bible Church

## What Is It To Be Spiritual?

(Romans 8:1-11)

Survey of Romans part 23

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March 18, 2018

## Introduction: What is it to be spiritual?

This is often confused with traits of temperament.



calm

self-effacing

strict

conscientious

rigorous



active

self-confident

joyful

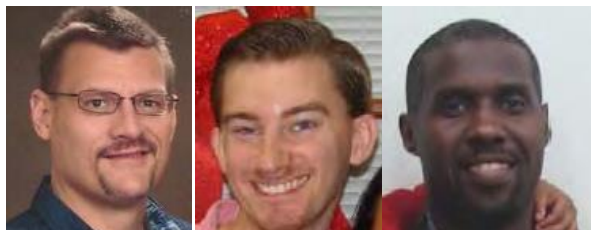
liberal

free spirited

This is certainly not how Romans 8 explains sanctification, and what is it to “live in the Spirit.”

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We may use more realistic pictures, but the truth remains. Spirituality may be confused with character traits.

## **Introduction: What is it to be spiritual?**

The Pillar Commentary (Leon Morris) states:

1. There are no imperatives in the chapter
2. The passage is sandwiched between 2 Gospel promises:
  - “There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus”
  - “There will be no separation from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.”
3. This sets the platform for sanctification.  
Life in the Spirit is not about personal effort in the flesh, but about living in the realm to which we were called to live, **because of the Holy Spirit in us.**

## **Text: Romans 8:1-11**

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free **in Christ Jesus** from the law of sin and death.

<sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

<sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, **who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit**.

<sup>5</sup> 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 set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

## **Text: Romans 8:1-11**

<sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

<sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

<sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> **You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit**, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

<sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

<sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

## **Text: Romans 8:1-11**

### **Outline: what is it to be Spiritual?**

I – No Condemnation (verse 1)

II – To Be Set Free (verses 2-4)

III – To Live by the Spirit (verses 5-8)

IV – What (or rather Who) Makes the Difference? (9-11)

#### **I - No condemnation vs 1**

a. No longer guilty of sin, despite its *presence*

b. No longer accursed by sin, even when we *commit* it

c. No longer enslaved to sin, in spite of still *struggling*

## II – Set Free (verses 2-4)

### a. Set free from the law of sin and death by a new law, the law of the Spirit (verse 2)

- The Law in tablets can no longer condemn.
- The “new law” of the Spirit, is the new principle which guides the believer to liberty from sin.
- Paul is rehashing Romans 6: we are not only forensically freed from condemnation, but also practically removed from slavery to sin.



## II – Set Free (verses 2-4)

### b. A new principle operates in us, “The law of the Spirit.”

- Remember Jesus’ promise in the upper room discourse. I will send you the Holy Spirit.
- The Spirit is the “vicar of Christ on earth”. He came in Jesus’ place to be with us and in us.

### c. “In Christ” is repeated twice

- This is the operative term to explain why we are no longer condemned, nor under the tyranny of sin.

### d. Forensic Justification restated:

- Jesus is God’s solution to the inability of the Law to save, He kept it “in the flesh” active & passively.
- **Sanctification** and **Justification** are inextricably joined, positionally and practically, though not completely (we still struggle with sin), until the resurrection (verse 11).

### III - The acid test (verses 5-8).

#### a. There are only two kinds of people: carnal or spiritual

- This does away with the theory of the carnal Christian as described in the 70's and 80's.
- No such thing as receiving Jesus as Savior and living sinfully, unless and until, we also make Him our Lord.

#### b. They are distinguished by what they set their minds on.

- Theologians and scholars debate the meaning.
- The natural meaning? If we are spiritual, we live, think, regard, value and regard, the things of the Spirit, and vice-versa.
- The challenge is that we can be a religious, philanthropists and moralists, who live (think, value, regard) according to the flesh.
- Or we can be like Peter. He was a disciple, but Jesus rebuked him for “setting his eyes on the things of the flesh” (momentarily)

### III - The acid test (verses 5-8).

#### c. Being “spiritual” is not an act of the human will.

- We either have the Spirit of Christ or we don't.
- The flesh does not and cannot submit to God.
- One is death and the other one, life and peace. (*You're in or out*)
- *Owen's advice*: where does your mind go in idle
- (Illustration: a misaligned car)
- Don't test yourself when you have a tooth ache.

#### d. What are the things of the flesh?

- Vs 7) Hostility to God and rebellion against Him.

#### e. What are the things of the Spirit?

- Not listed, but we could assume the contrary of what verse 7
- **Love** to God and **submission** to His will.

### III - The acid test (verses 5-8).

f. Let Paul define himself using material from Galatians 5.

<sup>19</sup> Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are:

immorality, impurity, sensuality,

<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

<sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that **those who practice such things** shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

<sup>24</sup> Now **those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

## IV – Spiritual/Carnal: Who makes the difference? vs 9-11

### a. The answer is always Jesus (verses 9-11)

- In verse 9 Paul identifies every believer as spiritual.
- He is actually contrasting believers to non-believers in the text.
- He is not seeking to inflict guilt on believers ... *“you however”*
- The ultimate difference is being indwelt by the Holy Spirit or not.

### b. Verse 10 is a summary of chapter 7.

It recognizes the struggle of true believers

### c. Verse 11 Comfort with the hope of the resurrection

- Because Jesus was raised by the Spirit, so will every believer be.
- The Spirit is the token of assurance of our final salvation.
- This **“hope”** which stems from the love which we have been loved, is the motivation for our purification comp 1 John 3:1-3

## CONCLUSION: how do we connect with Romans 8?

### 1. Fight, run and live assured!

- “**There’s now no condemnation**”. “God is not out to get you.”

### 2. Because there’s no condemnation, **there’s no excuse.**

- We have been set free by the Spirit of God.
- You don’t have to spend another night with frogs like Pharaoh.

### 3. Your mind & walk identifies your state.



- This is not religion, conduct modification or “pack acceptance”.
- **What** do you occupy your mind in? Colossians 3:1-4
- **Who** are you in the intimacy of your thoughts?
- **Where** do you go and **what** do you do, *when nobody is watching?*

## **CONCLUSION: how do we connect with Romans 8?**

4. If you are convicted of always living according to the flesh, then don't fool yourself, you are of the flesh.

5. However, do not try to fix this by yourself.

- True spirituality arises from the gospel fact that Jesus paid it all.
- If you are convicted, whether you are a member of this or another church, and have professed to be a believer for decades, there's only one answer: **Go to Jesus!**
- Trust Him for your salvation, He will send you His Spirit to be with you and in you, until the day of your resurrection.
- The struggle of our duality is not solved within, but without, **turning to Jesus** is not the initial point, but the very race.

## **CONCLUSION: how do we connect with Romans 8?**

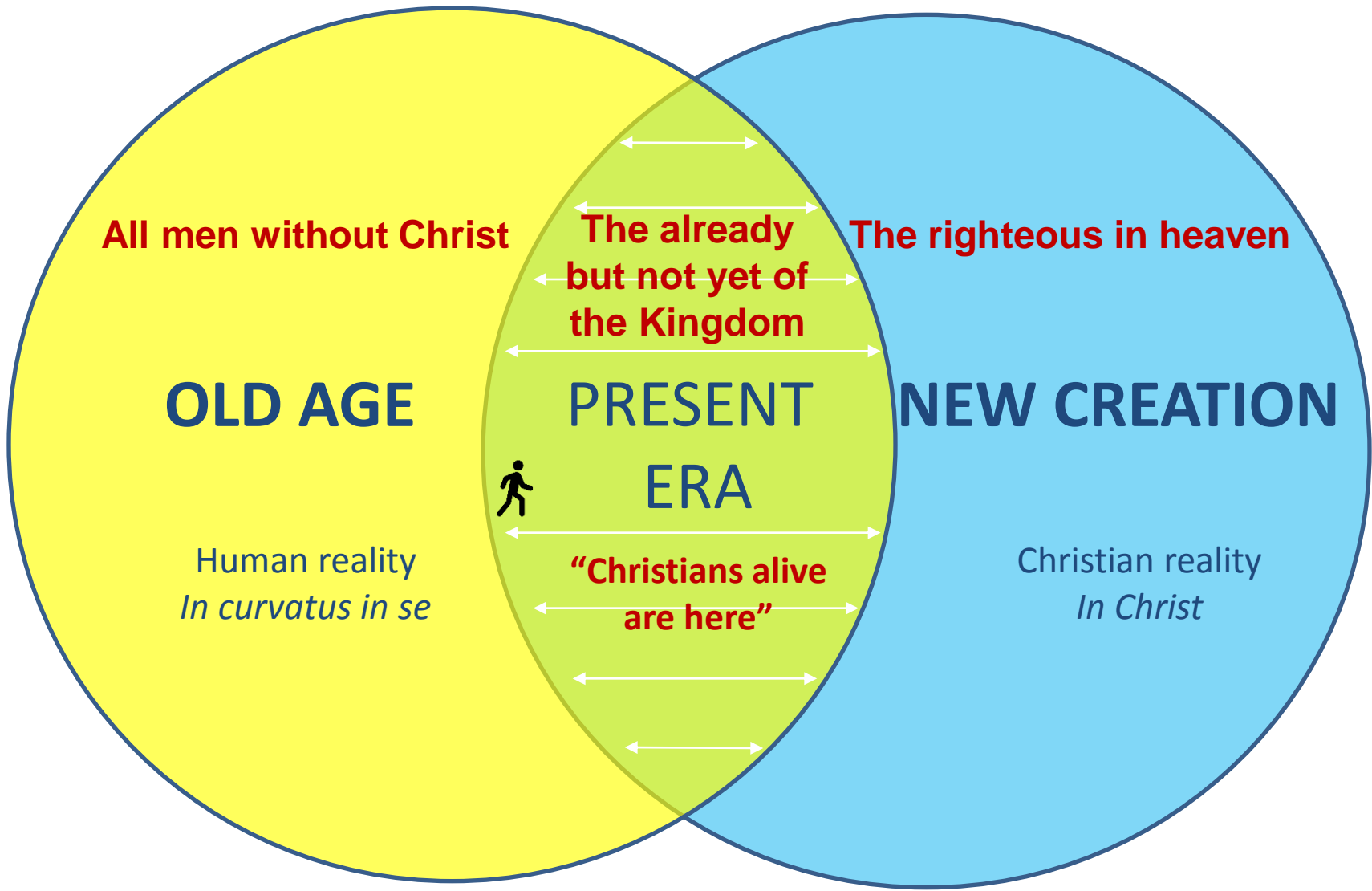
### 7. **But we struggle ...**

- ... and that's where the hope of the gospel kicks in.
- Just as the Spirit raised Jesus, He will raise our mortal bodies as well.



*The Tension to Understand Romans 6, 7 & 8*

*SIMMUL JUSTUS ET PECCATOR*



Romans 8:11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

**The righteous in heaven**

**NEW CREATION**

Christian reality  
*In Christ*

**END**