

Counseling God's Way

IV. Foundational Truths for Counseling

Lesson 16 - Walking According to the Spirit

By

Bob Hoekstra

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P.O. Box 2848

Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2848

Phone: (877) 600 – 5426

URL: [Living In Christ Ministries](#)

Email: office@livinginchrist.org

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[Matthew 10:8](#)

We are continuing now in this section of our course called “Foundational Truths for Counseling God’s Way.” We looked a few studies ago at the matter of being in Adam or in Christ. All the problems of man source in Adam and all the remedies of God are given in Christ. Then chapter 6, united with Christ, giving us everything we need for time and eternity. However, Romans 7 and 8 are critical in the process, because, as we just viewed it together, Romans 7, walking according to the flesh and the struggle that develops, is where we really deeply, personally, with an ultimate deep-hearted cry for help, realize how totally we need the provisions that are given to us in Christ in Romans 6. And Romans 7, really every Christian has some treks through there. And it really shifts you from sort of a theological head knowledge, yeah it’s all there in Christ and united to Him, and I die with Him and raise with Him and I’m dead to sin and alive to God in Christ, amen. But what is this struggle about, you know? It is about the flesh. That is why I need so desperately everything described in chapter 6, because I can’t just now go out and do it for God. No, you have to depend on everything provided in Romans chapter 6.

So just as chapter 6 shows God’s remedy for the old man in Adam is the cross, it will show in Romans 8 that that the remedy for the walk according to the flesh is to learn to walk according to the Spirit. It’s really God displacing each by a whole new resource that comes from Him alone.

Remember the way out of the Romans 7 struggle. It is a struggle of self-effort to please God and serve God on our own best effort was the humble cry for a Deliverer, the desperate, humble cry for a Deliverer. “Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Romans 7:24). And the answer is, the song that the heart sings, thanks be to God, it’s through Jesus Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 15:57, “Thanks be to God who gives us the victory [How?] through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Not by giving us some technique we manage to do and win or maintain victory, but through a person—relating to the Lord Jesus Christ properly. By faith and dependence we walk in the gift, the gracious gift of the victory God has given us over sin and death.

Now Romans 8 really tells us how this occurs day by day. As we learn to walk according to the Spirit instead of according to the flesh.

Now the law of the Spirit is described in Romans 8:1-4,

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus...

There’s the law of the Spirit, this principle of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus—

*...has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 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.*

In Romans 7, the righteous requirement of the law is not being fulfilled in that struggling brother. But those who will not walk according to the flesh, not walk by human resource, not walk by best striving self-effort, but by dependence on the Spirit, the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in them. We’ll talk about that in a moment.

Now praise the Lord for Romans 8:1. “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” That sure comes at a great time in the text of the Book of Romans too. “The good that I will to do I do not do. But the evil I will not to do, that I practice. And I’m striving. And I’m pleased with the law of God. I will do it. I will, I will. But there is this other principle warring against this law of my new mind in Christ, the mind of Christ dwelling in us. Romans 7:23 brings us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members. And we’re struggling in there.

“*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). In that struggle, God isn’t condemning us saying, “Oh why did I ever bring you into My family? I was so sure I could count on you. That’s why I chose you!” No. That’s totally wrong. That’s the way the enemy thinks. “Boy, did you let God down! Why He thought I would do great? He thought I would be the first one never to walk according to the flesh? Or that maybe my flesh would have some good in it?” No. He wasn’t surprised at all. He knows that nothing good dwells in our flesh, our own human resource. There’s no condemnation. God is not ready to cast us off or chuck us out or be frustrated and wonder why we can’t do it.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Why? Romans 8:2, because “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

There are two laws, two principles, two spiritual realities operating upon a person, a born again believer. Not a person in general. There’s just one operating in an unbeliever. That’s the law of sin and death. But in a believer there’s the law of the spirit and the law of sin and death. The law of sin and death dwells in the humanity of everyone, including the flesh of a Christian. Their bodily tabernacle and all their human resources, mind, emotions, will and especially so related to the physical brain that’s part of the flesh resource. The law of sin and death dwells there. This is the principle that humanity is fallen and is vulnerable and inclined towards sin, if left to him or herself. It is the law of sin and death. It is kind of like a spiritual drag, or like a deadly spiritual gravity, just yanking you down into defeat. We all carry it with us.

Of course the enemy likes to say it’s us. Why can’t you do it like these other Christians? Look at them. They’re so victorious all the time. What is it with you? He’s always working on us. He knows the law of sin and death dwells in us, so he knows he can make a connection. “Oh yeah, why can’t I?” Praise God it’s exposed in the Word. This dwells in all of us. It’s not some just get beyond that. You know, they kind of yank it out by the roots or something and others just can’t seem to get rid of it. No, it dwells in all of us, until we see the Lord and are glorified, transformed.

So the law of sin and death dwells in all, including the flesh of believers. But in believers also there’s the law of the Spirit. Another law. This is another principle called the law of the Spirit, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It is the fact that the Holy Spirit can take the very life that is in Christ Jesus and make it our resource to live by, if we walk according to the Spirit.

And that law has made me free from the law of sin and death. Whenever I walk in that, I’m not dragged down by the other because that is more powerful than the other. Just like “Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4 NASB). Well, greater is this law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus than this law of sin and death. If I walk by the greater the lesser doesn’t drag me down. It can’t exert its influence. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. So we live by that, we walk in victory. We don’t

have to fall back repeatedly, habitually, daily into the Romans 7 struggle. We can just every day get up, like in Luke 9:2, “Lord, it’s not my self-life today. I say no to that. It’s death to self. I take up my cross. That’s my hope. All I have—the only option I have left today, Lord, follow Jesus. And that’s the path I want to walk. I want to look to Him for His Spirit to bring life and victory and fruit and all of that.” That’s the normal Christian life. Again, not the average, it is the normal. It fits the norm of Scripture. It’s what we’re called to. It’s what is provided.

Of course again, if we get bound up in that self-struggle to try to do all the righteousness on our own, the only way out is through a humble plea for a Deliverer. “Oh, wretched man that I am!” It’s like an accentuated Luke 9:23. It is no-to-self with exclamation marks added. “Oh wretched man that I am!” Saying “no” to self, every day and clinging to the cross. Follow Jesus. That’s sufficient.

But when brought down into that struggle and trying harder and harder, it’s like the Lord says, “Let’s go through that real clear now. Remember that no to self? Let’s put it this way now—Oh wretched man that I am,” It probes the depths of the reality of our spiritual bankruptcy. It is because God gives grace to the humble. God opposes all these prideful procedures to make victory happen. Whether it’s kind of a charismania, speak it forth, name it and claim it. Or some other, “Well, you try the hardest to keep the laws.” So whether you are going religiously crazy or very sober and serious and self-help, it’s all flesh. It’s self-help and self-hope. God gives grace to the humble.

This law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, living by the Spirit, the Holy Spirit at work in our lives, is taking the resurrection life of Christ and letting us live above this drag of defeat of the law of sin and death that is in our members. That sets us free. This certain fact that the resurrection life of Jesus is available to and released through every child of God whenever he or she depends on the Spirit of God to be their resource.

I love to share this illustration of how this works in the spiritual realm. I don’t remember how many years ago I heard this, I have never forgotten it. Think of the physical realm, how a physical lower law can be overruled by a physical higher law. And it is a beautiful picture of this double spiritual principle in Romans 8:2, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

Take these big intercontinental jet passenger planes. They are gigantic, so many thousands of tons. I mean, they are just enormous. And you think, “Yeah, what operates that gravity? What can that plane do on its own without any other force exerting, you know, just the plane sitting there? To get free from that law of sin and death, that law of gravity that just locks that big plane right down to the ground. If there’s not some other force exerted for it, it is just locked there. Why? It is under the dominion of sin. It is under the dominion of gravity. It was created to fly, but it’s locked to the ground.

But you put that same plane subject to the law of aerodynamics, oh hey, no problem now. That same plane that without another force exerted in there or introduced, it’s just locked to the ground. But if you put it subject not to the law of gravity but to the law of aerodynamics, and it just soars like an eagle. Seven miles above the earth. What made all the difference? It not being subject to that lower law that defeated it or drug it down, but subject to this higher law that is more powerful that lifts it up. That works against, that kind of gives victory over the law of gravity in that sense.

And that's the way it is to be with Christians. We all have the spiritual law of gravity dragging on us, the law of sin and death. It is built in our members, Romans 7. And we can never remove it until we are with the Lord. It will be gone forever. And it is dragging us down into defeat, deadness, striving, lack of victory, self-effort, and human resource only.

But we don't have to walk that way. We can walk subject to this other law—the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. This other principle that the Holy Spirit can give to the trusting heart, the very life of Christ, the life that is in Christ Jesus to be their resource to draw on. So they are not trying to create victory, they're just walking in a victory already given. It is the life, the victorious life, the glorious overcoming life of Jesus Christ. And that is when we—trusting in the Holy Spirit instead of human resource and our best effort—we then instead of defeat and bondage, can mount up with wings like eagles. We can be given “hinds feet on high places” (Psalm 18:33) and get up above the valleys of defeat. We can live practically, experientially, personally, daily, more and more as those who are “seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6).

Remember that story, I may have told you of the Christian who said to the other Christian, “How are you doing?” when they met. The second Christian said, “Pretty good under the circumstances.” And the first one had a wise response. He said, “Well, what are you doing living under there? I thought you were seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. What are you doing living under there? Aren't you to be living looking down on those circumstances?”

Let's see, what does God think about this? What's God going to do with this? How can God handle this? I mean, that's tremendous. That's a person walking in the Spirit, not in the flesh. The one walking in the flesh is drug down by the law of sin and death. The one walking in the Spirit is set free from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Jesus had the totally non-circumstantial life. Circumstance never dictated how He behaved or talked or thought or related. Whatever He was doing He could still have one common testimony. Whether He was walking on the water, raising the dead, or being beaten, betrayed, lied about and murdered; He could still say, all the time, the same thing, “I do always those things that please My heavenly Father” (John 8:29). This was a totally non-circumstantial life, total victory.

That is the life that is in Christ Jesus. And we can live by the law of the Spirit of life, the Holy Spirit that is related to the life that's in Christ Jesus. And we can walk by the Spirit and be given a share in that life, drawing on that life. You know, it is kind of like people who can't get enough oxygen. Give them that tank and they do great. New life, you know! Well, it is a whole new resource we get. It is the life that's in Christ Jesus [deep breath] we share in, we trust in, we depend on. As sure as we depend on breathing and oxygen for our physical life, we can through prayer and dependence and trust and walking in the Spirit, draw in the very life of Christ Jesus, spiritually. Not in a mechanical type of procedure, you know, but spiritually. In the realm of the heavenly kingdom it's as real as breathing air. We can walk in the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It sets us free from the law of sin and death.

That is why, when one cries out, “Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?” The Spirit of God says, “It's Christ Jesus and here is His life. Here is the victory. It's right here. Just humbly receive it.” Oh thanks be to God it's through Jesus Christ our Lord! Thanks be to God it's not through trying harder.

And I'm not saying we don't throw ourselves into the Christian life. But it is a spiritually discerned thing. We throw our whole being into it. But the dynamic in it and behind it is not self-effort. It is the Lord working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:12-13).

Then Romans 8:3, what the law could not do, the commandments, the demands that say be holy, be perfect, be as loving as Christ. “What the law could not do, God did.” How? It was by sending His Son. What the law could not do—that is, it could not cause man to obey it. The flesh is too weak. What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh. What is the weakness of the law? It is the flesh of man. The law demands that man live up to this standard. Man can't do it. There is the weakness of the law because the flesh can't respond. That's why Hebrews 7:19 says the law makes nothing perfect. It just demands perfection. That is a pretty tough code. That is a pretty tough way to live, demanding perfection but unable to supply it.

What the law could not do, God did. God wasn't through with the law. It was just part of His revelation of man's need and His holiness. What the law couldn't do, God did. How? He sent His own Son. One greater than the law is here! The One of whom the law speaks, Jesus Christ. God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. He wasn't sinful. He just looked like any other man and all men are sinful, but He wasn't. So that death was not involving His sin at all because He had none. But on account of sin, the fact that sin was among the family of man and needed to be dealt with, He came on account of sin. Your sin and my sin! He became an offering for sin. Then He condemned sin in the flesh. He judged and dealt with this indwelling sin in my flesh. It doesn't have to have control. We can be free from it living by the death, resurrection, and spiritually-supplied life of Jesus Christ.

And He did all this in order that—here is God's purpose and the great result and benefit for us—in order 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” (Romans 8:4).

Remember what the righteous requirement of the law is? Holiness. Be holy. Or you could say, love. What kind of love? Agape love. What is that like? Look at Jesus. If you can love exactly like Christ did, then you know, you don't need a sacrifice. You are keeping the law and you're living. That's what life is supposed to be like. But no one can do that on their own. Love is of God. God is love. Love is of God.

But the righteous requirement of the law can be fulfilled in us, lived out in us. This is an astounding verse. You and I, in whose flesh dwells no good thing (Romans 7:18) can nonetheless grow in godliness and practical daily righteousness. We can be more like Christ tomorrow than yesterday, or next year than last year. The righteous requirement of the law can be fulfilled in us, lived out in us increasingly. That is if we will not walk according to the flesh, but rather, according to the Spirit and not live by means of human resource.

And again, this verse is a total indictment of the psychological, integrative path the church has taken. The church is coaching people and even charging a fee for it, of how to stay in the place of defeat. Isn't that astounding? When we introduce psychological counseling, which entrenches self, appeals to the flesh, wants to strengthen self. You can do it, I know you can! Come on, you can. Here, try this. Think about that. Explain it this way or that way. No. How about God's way? It is God's life in Christ.

Walking according to the flesh, that is what the psychological theory helps people master. How to do that better and better. Teaches them how to manipulate, understand, self-justify, self-glorify, self-affirm, and have self-esteem. We are not to walk by human resource. The only way the righteous requirement of the law can be fulfilled in us is by walking according to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is supplying the resurrected life of Jesus Christ, right in and through our experience.

This is what we need to counsel other people with. Help them see the difference between the walk according to the flesh and according to the Spirit. And help them learn to grow in a walk according to the Spirit. That produces holiness, not self-centeredness. It produces a Christ-like life, not an indulgent, lazy, self-justifying, self-serving life.

So in the Christian life, whether we sit or run, whether we wait or go, whether we know it clearly or wonder what is happening, we are to walk through it all in dependence on the Holy Spirit. People say, "Let go and let God." Yeah, but get up and go and let God too. The whole realm is having God at work in your life.

How do you do that? It's a whole different realm. It is whatever you do, just do it in dependence upon the Lord. And there is a time to be very quiet and still and inactive. There is a time to be very much on the move and the go. How do you know? Be led of the Spirit. It is about being related to a Person, not trying to put into practice certain principles and ideas and procedures. It is learning to relate to a Person, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

To help us in this, this chapter just presses right on contrasting the flesh with the Spirit in verses 5 through 8. Contrast between the flesh and the Spirit in Romans 8:5-8,

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. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be. [That's how radical it is.] So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Flesh versus Spirit. Oh here again are four verses that you can almost have a fulltime counseling ministry with, just helping people think with God together, listening to the difference between the flesh-life and the Spirit. See, we are told the will of God, the standards of God, the righteousness of God, the work of God that takes place in those who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. And then God just launches into it. Here is the flesh and where it leads and here is the Spirit and what it's about.

Those who live according to the flesh, verse 5, they set their minds on things of the flesh. Those living by human resource and for self, by self, they set their mind on things of the flesh. What do they think about? Me, myself and sometimes I, you know, it's my will, my success, my money, and my entertainment. They set their mind on things of the flesh.

But those who live according to the Spirit, they set their mind on the things of the Spirit. Instead of their mind always on self, it's more and more on Jesus Christ. Instead of thinking about my will it's I'm thinking about His will. Instead of just getting into religion, which self is willing to do, those who live according to the Spirit want to get into God's Word and get into relationship with Jesus. Instead of thinking about success all the time, the mind set on the Spirit thinks of prayer. Instead of entertainment, we are thinking of worship, fellowship, and service. Instead of thinking about earthly things all the time, we think about heavenly things and heaven's relationship to earth.

Verse 6, "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace."

To be carnally minded, thinking with carnal thoughts, on carnal, human, earthly, time bound, self-centered things, it is death. It produces anxiety, worry, fear, futility, pride, self-righteousness, self-sufficiency. It is death.

But the spiritually minded, oh that's life and peace. That's love and joy and spiritual vitality and spiritual tranquility and humility and dependence. I mean they are just as different as night and day. And it is all the difference between focus on the flesh or focus on the things of the Spirit.

See the mind set on the flesh in verse 7, the carnal mind, is enmity against God. Literally it is hostile toward God. The mind thinking on self and my will and religion and success and money and entertainment and earth and all that, it's a mind in hostility toward God, and it is in rebellion toward God. It's not subject to God. It won't submit, in fact it can't even submit. It needs to be nailed and crucified.

Verse 8 says, "So then those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

You know, without faith it's impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). What really pleases God? Not the fleshly things of man. Remember Matthew 3:17 where the Father said, "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." I think one of the implications of that is when the Father looks down from heaven above now, and He looks upon us of whom Jesus is the firstborn among many brethren, who will be like Him more and more, what pleases the Father? I think you could say, by implication, when the Father looks down and sees His beloved Son being formed in us, His heart must again say, "Oh that's it! That's My beloved Son. Oh, that's so pleasing. That's what I want."

But those who are in the flesh, they cannot please God. The flesh shows humanity and self and sin and defeat. Such God-pleasing living though is available to us because the Holy Spirit lives in us. And these next verses talk about the indwelling Spirit of God.

Romans 8:9-11,

But you are not in the flesh [the bottom line story about Christians] but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. [No Holy Spirit dwelling within, you cannot be a Christian. Christians, you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you.] And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

The indwelling Spirit of God in verse 9, since the Holy Spirit lives in us, we are not in that sense, in the flesh, the way the world is just simply and exclusively in the flesh. That would mean there is no Holy Spirit in us, then we cannot be a Christian. The Spirit lives in every believer.

Now if Christ is in you, verse 10—and He is. Since He is, you could read that. Since He is, though the body is dead, it's a sinful, fallen, dying body. Same body we have now, same one we had before we were saved. The law of sin and death is in it. It is wasting away. Sorry to spoil your day, but it will not be basically improving the rest of the way out. The outer man is decaying, but the Spirit is alive. The inner man lives. He lives by the life of Christ within.

The wonderful thing is even though these bodies of ours are fallen and fading and gravity is winning, but look at verse 11, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, [indwelling you is the Spirit of resurrection] He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies [How?] through His Spirit who indwells.”

The indwelling Spirit can display resurrected life in and through us. Remember some of us have studied together 2 Corinthians 4:7, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels.” These bodies are so earthen. But the heavenly, Holy Spirit of God lives in us. And He can quicken our mortal bodies. He can give life to them. He can sustain us here on this earth in our physical bodies by supplying a life that sustains. We Christians aren't just running on natural human life. We have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of resurrection who can give life to our mortal bodies. You know, He can just keep us going when the going gets tough by the indwelling Spirit of God.

And then of course in all of this, we want to be led by this indwelling Holy Spirit. Romans 8:12-14, “Therefore brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh....”

We don't owe anything to the flesh. You know, a man's got to do what a man's got to do. Well, there are a lot of things a man's got to do that he doesn't have to do, that he shouldn't do, you know. And the Lord can prevent him from doing. Well, I'm just human.” Well yes, that's why you need to live by the life of Christ. “Well, nobody's perfect.” That's right! That's why we need to draw on that perfect life. We owe nothing to the flesh. We don't need to excuse it. “I'm not Christ, you know.” Yes, but He lives in us, doesn't He? So there can be ongoing progress and change and maturing and fruit and victory because it doesn't depend on us. We are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. We don't have to get locked into that pattern.

Romans 8:13-14,

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Being a child of God involves being led by the Spirit of God. Not charting our own course, but letting the Spirit lead. We owe no allegiance, we have no reason why we have to give attention to fleshly living or fleshly thinking.

Verse 13, drawing on fleshly resources. If you live by the flesh, if you aim at fleshly goals, draw on fleshly resources, you'll die. This is not just talking physical here, I'm sure, but spiritual deadness, spiritual dullness. Spiritual defeat always comes with that. But, if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh—if by the work of the Holy Spirit in us we want those deeds of the flesh crucified, the deeds of the body and the way of man, crucified. You know, take up your cross daily and you will live. If by the Spirit, if our hope and resource is the Holy Spirit, and by the Spirit we are saying no to the things of the flesh, agreeing with God concerning the bankruptcy of the flesh, the deeds of the body, the desires of the ways of the flesh, we'll live. We'll have spiritual vitality.

But again, it is by the Spirit. If by the Spirit you put to death. It's not, “I will crucify myself.” What are you going to do after you nail one hand? Well, there you go. It's not comfortable but it doesn't solve the problem either, you know. We can't nail ourselves. But if by the Spirit—“Oh Lord God, by Your Holy Spirit, I want these fleshly temptations, these fleshly inclinations of my body and my old brain, I just want them nailed, just to the cross of Christ. Just left there where that old man died with Christ. That's what I desire, Lord.” You'll live. You'll just find more and

more abundant life. As you are willing to walk that way and I'm willing to walk that way, we find more life.

It's a matter, again, of life and death, not just religious procedure or holding a reputation or something. It is life and death, depending on flesh or Spirit, Spirit or flesh. Such people then, are the ones led by the Spirit of God and they are the sons of God. They are demonstrating that they are God's children. They are being led by the Spirit.

A person led by the flesh gives no real demonstration or indication to the world or to other Christians that they are really believers. I tell you, I know I'm a Christian. I'll prove it to you. I have the card I signed the night I walked the aisle, twenty-eight years ago. "Well, why do so many wonder if you're born again?" "I don't know because I can prove it right here." Yeah, but are you led by the Spirit? "Well, who knows how that works anyway?" Well, God does. And He's written to us. He wants to teach us. I mean, that's how—"these are the children of God, those who are led by the Spirit. Not procedure. Not self-energy. Not human resource, but led by the Spirit and guided right through life by the Spirit of God.

My goodness, how do you do that? Well, "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). Lord, by Your Spirit, be my shepherd and my guide this day. It's not that complicated. It comes back to humility, faith, trust, dependence. Not I but Christ.

In conclusion, a few Scriptures just to restate very quickly, briefly here what these Scriptures have said.

Galatians 5:16, "I say then: walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

You mean I don't have to fight and beat and struggle against the flesh? No. Walk in the Spirit and you won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh. The Spirit leads us in victory over that.

In 2 Corinthians 3:17, "Now the Lord is the Spirit [the life-giving Spirit of the new covenant] and where the Spirit of the Lord *is* there *is* liberty." Where the Holy Spirit is given room to work in a life, a church, a work, a ministry, a family, there is liberty. There is just freedom, including freedom from the flesh, freedom from defeat.

In 2 Corinthians 3:6, speaking of God, "Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

The letter kills. The legalistic, religious appeal to the flesh to be perfect like God. "Come on, try harder. You know you can. You've let God down. You've let us down. You've let your family, your church, the pastor. . . ." Well, you know, it might produce all kinds of heavy motivations of guilt and condemnation and even striving to do better. But the letter kills. Hey, here's the standard and you've got to do it, it kills. Because don't forget the letter says, "Be holy, be perfect." We're back to the flesh again, the flesh trying to live up to the holy life of Christ.

It's the Spirit who gives life. He gives it. We are talking grace. Not earning it He gives life. It is a gift. Eternal life is a gift from the Lord. Not only initially, sending is bound for heaven. But daily letting us walk in vitality instead of deadness of defeat.

Then last is Ephesians 5:18, "And do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation. But be filled with the Spirit."

Crying out to God is so right in light of that verse. *Lord, fill our lives with Your life-giving presence, Your life-giving Holy Spirit. Flood us. Control us. Shine out through us. Pour the life of Christ into us and out of us toward others.*

These are foundational truths, knowing the difference between walking according to the flesh and according to the Spirit. Romans 8 is a work of the Holy Spirit. God's answer to the fleshly struggling, defeated Christian who wonders, "Why can't I walk in victory?" This is God's answer. Thanks be to God it's through Jesus Christ the victory comes. How is that supplied day by day, that victory in Christ? It is by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is there to reveal Christ to us and supply His life through us.

Can you see taking these truths to minister personally one to another in the church? Troubled, struggling people come you say, "Let's go to Romans 5, 6, 7 and 8." Or if some excited, eager, humble, hungry, wanting to move-on Christians come, you don't just hype them up a little higher. Hey, get grounded on these things. God's going to answer that desire in you this way. Not through your own flesh. Not through Adam's line and resource, but in Christ. Yeah, you'll find if you get striving in the flesh, you are on your own resource and you are drug down. But there is always this law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that's made you free from the law of sin and death. What fantastic foundational truths to counsel people with because they speak into every situation of life. And again it is not that we can't give specific, particular words, but even with that I think it is great to add this. And often you don't have that Proverbs 18:12 or whatever come into mind, you know. How about running to Romans 5, 6, 7 and 8? Give them foundation of life to stand on.

Remember again, in seeking counsel, giving counsel, this is the kind of counsel God wants. Point here and watch out for psychological theory integrating the flesh right back into a life that's to be only of the Spirit.

Let's pray together.

Lord, we thank You for speaking so profoundly on these matters in Romans 5, 6, 7 and 8. Lord, may we hear, believe, receive, stand on, count on, these glorious truths and may they be working up through our lives into every arena and extremity of our thinking, living, talking, relating. Our values, priorities, our resources we draw on, that we might be those, Lord, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And have the Holy Spirit taking the life that is in Christ, making it our actual, daily, experiential, personal, walk on this planet Earth experience. Christ living in us the hope of glory. And teach us, Lord, how to share this with others when they come either struggling or excited and hopeful, that they might have the foundation of truth, the truth of Christ that sets them free. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.