



## INTRODUCTION

Part 1

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ROMANS 8 - Part 1

#### Introduction

This study will look at what is really the central message relative to the work of the Holy Spirit in all of Scripture – **Romans 8**. There is no other place in all of Scripture where the work of the Holy Spirit is so illuminated as in this chapter. In a sense, it is the crown jewel of information relative to His work in the believer's life. For me personally, **Romans 8** is the greatest chapter in all of Scripture, and **Romans 8:28** my life verse. James Montgomery Boice in his outstanding commentary on **Romans 8** begins his exposition of this chapter titling it the "*Greatest Chapter in the Bible*".

There are such vital and crucial truths in this one chapter alone that if someone is willing to simply spend time to understand these truths, they will supernaturally produce life transforming results in them personally. It is much more than just reading these verses several times or even studying them. The believer has to personally **internalize** the great truths of Scripture for them to really have an impact on their life. I.e., it is a matter of knowing them, studying them, applying them, and praying that the Holy Spirit will provide His illumination on them so that "**the eyes of our understanding**" will be opened. When that happens with any of the great doctrines of Scripture, the effect will be life-transforming, life-changing, and life-altering. That is the very nature of these kinds of words.

It seems that one of the reasons that many professing Christians have no evident heart-felt conviction about Christ and the things of God is simply because the great truths of Scripture do not mean much to them. It is like they think it is okay to just ignore these great truths, to just pay no attention to them, to just by-pass them, and to just overlook them. However, it is the truth of God **understood, loved, and applied** to the believer's life that changes them. It is the truth of God that is life transforming. **John 8:32** says,

<sup>32</sup>**And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."**

Now, it is important to observe something important about **Romans 8**. For the first seven chapters of Romans, the Holy Spirit has only been mentioned three times in **Romans 1:4, 5:5, 7:6**.

<sup>1:4</sup>**and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.**

<sup>5:5</sup>**Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

<sup>7:6</sup>**But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.**

However, in **Romans 8**, the Holy Spirit is mentioned **nineteen** specific times through v27 – over six times more than the previous seven chapters. Obviously, when God mentions something over and over in a passage it is generally the primary emphasis of that passage. In **Romans 8**, the primary subject through v27 is the supernatural and life-changing work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.



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Paul has gone to great lengths in [Romans 1-5](#) to impart the truth of the believer being justified before God - of being judicially declared righteous and of justification by faith alone. Salvation is a complete work of a sovereign God, and He has declared the believer to be righteous apart from any work on their part. He gave the sinner the grace to believe and then He gave them the gift of salvation. Every believer has been birthed by the Holy Spirit, born again by the Holy Spirit, and brought into the kingdom of God by the sovereign will of God. Unless the Holy Spirit had drawn the sinner to Christ, they would never have come. In that salvific work, God justified the believer, and Paul spent five chapters teaching that one great truth.

However, beginning in [Romans 6](#), Paul begins to teach on the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, and he completes that teaching in [Romans 8](#) with this incredible emphasis on the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. The message is simple – **the believer cannot live the Christian life in their own strength.** It must be lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul has talked about the sinfulness of man, about the utter hopelessness of his condition apart from Christ, and into that picture of utter depravity he has introduced the doctrine of God's grace. Then he arrives at [Romans 8:1](#). It has to be one of the most incredible verses in all of Scripture.

**<sup>1</sup>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.**

Here the Christian find himself at the very pinnacle of God's grace. The first three chapters declared every man and woman utterly and completely guilty before a holy God – and guilty without any recourse on their own. He talked about the wrath of God and the “wages of sin” being death – both temporal death and eternal death. Just as a sampling, [Romans 1:18](#) says,

**<sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness**

[Romans 2:5](#) reiterates,

**<sup>5</sup>But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.**

It was all about wrath and condemnation, but now it is all about not being condemned, about not being guilty, and about not having to stand before a holy God under His wrath. It is now about “**no condemnation**”. That is every believer's new status before God. Each believer was once abiding under His wrath, but now they are abiding in a position of “**no condemnation**”. This is a chapter on the believer's eternal security, and it has in [Romans 8:31-39](#) probably the greatest of all doxologies of praise for the glorious work of Christ on the believer's behalf in which **NOW** “**nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord**”.

This chapter is incredible. It resonates with the simple fact that the Christian life is a spiritual life lived in the Spirit and because of the Spirit. He calls, He regenerates, He renews, He teaches, He empowers, He sets free from sin, He helps put to death the deeds of the flesh, He leads, He strengthens, and He even prays for every believer. Anything that any believer will ever do that brings honor and glory to



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God the Father and Christ the Son will only occur because of the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit within them. Without His work in a believer, they would NEVER honor or glorify Christ.

Now, it is important to briefly identify all that [Romans 8](#) has to say about the Holy Spirit. The following is not an exposition of any of these verses, but just a simple recognition that in each of them there is something significant stated about the person and work of the Holy Spirit within the believer and for the believer.

V1 – The Holy Spirit has brought each believer into a “**no condemnation**” status before God, and because they are now in Christ and they are able to walk according to the Holy Spirit and not according to the dictates of our flesh.

V2 – He is called the Spirit of life – i.e., He is a life giving Spirit. Because of that, He has made every believer free from the present and operative law of sin and death.

V4 – He helps the believer to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law.

So, in v1-4 the Holy Spirit has delivered the believer from the penalty of sin and from the condemnation of the law. However, in the verses to follow, v5-14, Paul declares that the Holy Spirit has delivered the believer from themselves and from the power of sin that wants to reign over their lives.

V5 – He helps a believer to set their mind on the things of God and not the things of the flesh.

V9 – The believer knows that they are one of God’s children because of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence in them.

V10 – He helps the believer to live a life of righteousness.

V11 – He gives life to the believer’s mortal body.

V13 – He helps the believer to put to death the deeds of the body so that they might truly experience life. He empowers them to be able to live victoriously over sin.

V14 – He leads and guides believers.

In the next several verses, Paul declares that the Holy Spirit has given believers **a new standing before God**. They use to be slaves to sin, but now the Holy Spirit has brought them into a relationship where they are free from its controlling power over them and are they actually called “**sons**”, “**children of God**”, “**heirs of God**”, and “**joint heirs with Christ**”.

V15 – He causes the believer to cry out “**Abba, Father**” as identification of their sonship. Sonship gives each believer access to God.

V16 – He bears witness with the believer’s spirit that they are genuinely children of God.

V23 – He creates a hunger within His children for their redemption to be made complete.

V26 – He helps believer’s in their weaknesses and intercedes on their behalf.

V27 – He intercedes for believers according to the will of God.



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One of the great truths that God wants the believer to understand from this chapter is really a very simple truth. It is the truth that **the Holy Spirit is sufficient to meet every need of the believer's life.** When Christ walked with His disciples, there was never a time when they did not have everything that they needed. They never lacked anything, not one single thing. However, when He was resurrected, He had no intentions of leaving them alone, so He sent them the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to be to them everything that He was to them while He was with them on the earth. This is what He told His disciples in [John 14:16-18](#),

**<sup>16</sup>And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—<sup>17</sup>the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup>I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.**

[John 16:7](#) says,

**<sup>7</sup>Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.**

[Acts 1:4-5 and 8](#) says,

**<sup>4</sup>And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; <sup>5</sup>for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."**

**<sup>8</sup>But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

And then we read of the actual event in [Acts 2:1-4](#) which says,

**<sup>1</sup>When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

God has not left the believer alone. He has given to each the mighty, eternal Spirit of the living God to live in them, to be with them, and to be upon them. They began the Christian life under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and He is the One who took the gospel and made Christ real to their heart. So, a believer does not start the Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit, but then continue the Christian life in their own strength. That is the problem that the Galatian believers had. In [Galatians 3:3](#), Paul asked them this question,

**<sup>3</sup>Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?**

Too often the problem is really very simple. **Believers have overestimated themselves and underestimated God.** They have made a tragic spiritual miscalculation, and in the process they have



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refused to give God the glory and have stolen the glory for themselves. Believers live in a very sophisticated and complex culture that causes them to fall prey to all sorts of spiritual delusions. There is so much information and so much data, and from all of that they are given theory after theory and viewpoint after viewpoint and one solution after another. People can reel off statistics and studies and facts and numbers to the point that the Christian just becomes numb to what is being said. There are so many multi-faceted programs, new church growth approaches, and so much religious pragmatism. There is a plan and a program for everything, and to be quite frank, it sometimes believed that as long as there is a bona-fide program in place, then the Holy Spirit's guidance is not really that necessary. The church lives under an illusion. It is the illusion that with enough planning and enough money that it can win the world to Christ. It would never be purposefully stated that way, but the church is certainly willing to function that way.

If someone wanted to they could go to a different seminar every week on how to grow a church, or how to win people to Christ, or how to develop a men's program, or how to do this or do that – they could. The spiritual climate that abounds is a world of pragmatism, of common sense, and of plans and programs – and quite frankly the church has, in an almost clinical way, simply removed the Holy Spirit from the church and from its life. The result is simple to see. Rarely is the supernatural outworking of God ever truly seen in the midst of the church or even people's personal lives. Whatever happened to prayer in the churches?

The real issue is what Paul mentioned in [Galatians 3](#) - **having begun in the Spirit, each believer must continue in the Spirit.** When the sinner came to Christ, it was simply because He convicted them of sin and then gave them the grace to believe. Believers may be able to give someone the gospel message, but the work of **conviction** is always that of the Holy Spirit. Because a lost man is so depraved, he will never on his own see the utter sinfulness of his condition – never. The Holy Spirit is the only One who can create a godly conviction that leads to repentance. Preachers may preach the Word and someone be saved, but it is only because the Holy Spirit was working in that individual's heart and bringing about within them a conviction of sin and a desire to repent. Apart from the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, no one would want to repent of anything. So, once again, why are so many Christians not praying for this to happen in people and praying for the supernatural and convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit to fall on the hearts and minds of lost men and women? What would ever make a believer think that they could save someone through their own efforts?

So, the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, He gives the desire to repent, He gives the grace to respond to the truth, and He regenerates the sinner and brings them into the kingdom of God. Salvation is always a work of God and a work of God alone, and at the very moment of salvation which has been both initiated and completed by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit then indwells that individual. In [Acts 2](#), Peter had preached this powerful message in Jerusalem at Pentecost, and the people were greatly stirred and convicted to the very core of their being. The following is what they said and what Peter said in [Acts 2:36-38](#),

<sup>36</sup>“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” <sup>37</sup>Now when they heard this, **they were cut to the heart,**



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and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” <sup>38</sup>Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

What is the gift? It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life. [Romans 8:9](#) states it this way,

<sup>9</sup>But you are not in the flesh 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.

In [1 Corinthians 3 and 6](#) Paul asked two questions, and they were both directly related to the simple fact that the body of a believer is the actual temple of the Holy Spirit. He asked the Corinthians twice “Do you not know...”? Do you not know what? Do you not know that the Holy Spirit indwells you?

So how could all of this be summarized and maybe a few more things added. The Holy Spirit convicts the believer of sin, He makes them alive to the Word of God, He brings them to repentance, He gives them faith to believe, He births them into God’s kingdom, He indwells them, He places them into the Body of Christ, He gives them spiritual gifts, He seals them as the guarantee of God’s work within their life, He begins the work of sanctification within them, He sets them free from the law of sin and death, He gives life to their mortal bodies, He leads them in their daily lives, and He bears witness with their spirits that they are the children of God. So, what is the point? **A believer simply cannot live the Christian life apart from the Holy Spirit.** Having begun in the Spirit, each believer must continue in the Spirit. What an incredible tragedy for the Christian to neglect the Holy Spirit’s work within them, to ignore His Word, and to treat the local church in a such a casual, flippant, and superficial way.

There are not many subjects more vital to study than this particular one on the Holy Spirit and His work in the believer’s life. Whatever is needed to effectively live out the Christian life must come from the Holy Spirit. There is no other source of spiritual life. Anyone who ignores these great truths will simply fall into a spiritual deadness or a spiritual numbness.

The ultimate ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life is to exalt Christ. Why does He do that and what is His purpose in exalting the person of Christ? It is so that the believer can see Christ for who He is and then submit their life to Him. [2 Corinthians 3:12-18](#) says,

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—<sup>13</sup>unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. <sup>14</sup>But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. <sup>15</sup>But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. <sup>16</sup>Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. <sup>17</sup>Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. <sup>18</sup>But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.



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This passage is speaking of [Exodus 34](#) when Moses went on the mountain to meet with God and He saw the backside of God's glory. The corresponding result was that the glory of God actually reflected on his face in such a way that his entire face was shining. The point that Paul is making, especially in v18, is that as the believer gazes on the glory of Christ, the glory of Christ in turn reflects on them. The more they see Christ and the more they become like Him, then the more He is reflected in their life. Each believer exists for the glory of God. [Philippians 2:9-11](#) says this,

**<sup>9</sup>Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

So as the glory of Christ is beheld, the believer becomes more and more like Him. However, who is doing this in the believer? Well, it is there in [2 Corinthians 3:18](#) - **just as by the Spirit of the Lord.** It is the Holy Spirit that is bringing about this transformation. So, what does the Holy Spirit want to do? **The Holy Spirit wants to show every believer the glory of Christ,** and while they are gazing intently at the glory of Christ and seeing the beauty of His person, that glory is becoming more and more their own and they begin to radiate the glory of Christ within their life.

So, there is a tremendous amount of Scripture related to the work of the Holy Spirit in [Romans 8](#). It has more **concentrated** teaching on the Holy Spirit than any other portion of Scripture. Obviously, [John 14-16](#) has a great deal of emphasis on the Holy Spirit as well. Paul moves from the wrath of God and the sinfulness of man to justification by faith, absolute judicial peace with God, and beginning in [Romans 8:1](#) he has declared a "**no condemnation**" status before God for every believer. What needs to be appreciated in looking at [Romans 8](#) as a whole is **how incredibly extensive** the work of the Holy Spirit actually is within the believer. Unfortunately many Christians really have no substantial understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit, and therefore no real meaningful relationship with Him. It is what was declared earlier that a believer cannot live out the Christian life on their own. It is a spiritual life that demands a spiritual source for its proper outworking.