

## **"We Are Debtors ..."**

*"So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:12f).*

The apostle has contrasted at length two attitudes in spirits: the mind of the flesh -- the mind of the Spirit. He has shown where each mind or spirit leads and in these verses just cited he gives a summarizing conclusion. We must put to death the deeds of the body (the flesh) by the Spirit. If we do this, we shall live. The same writer wrote elsewhere: *"They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh, with the passions and lusts thereof" (Gal. 5:24)*. We are debtors to live after the Spirit for: *"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made us free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2)*. The law could not do this but Christ's law could. To be free from the *"law of sin and death"* means we are not under sin's condemnation. Rather than fearing death, we anticipate life. The Spirit gives *"life also to our mortal body" (Rom. 8:11)*. We rise from baptism as a new creature, to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4; 2 Cor. 5:17). That newness of life is a complete new direction in life; a life governed, spelled out by the Spirit. Because the Spirit has made possible our freedom from the law of sin and death, granting us new hope as well as new direction, we are obligated to live as the Spirit directs. We are debtors.

A third reason we now given as to why we are debtors to live after the Spirit. *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14)*. The next three verses emphasize our role as children. We are not bondservants that fear. We have been adopted by God and may cry *"Abba Father" (Rom. 8:15)*. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16). If we are children of God, we are heirs; heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17). All this -- if we are led by the Spirit of God.

There is recorded an interesting exchange between Jesus and the Jews of His day. He said, *"I speak the things which I have seen of my Father, and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father" (Jn. 8:38)*. The Jews at first misunderstood Jesus and said, *"Our father is Abraham,"* but Jesus denied they were saying, *"If ye were Abraham's seed, ye would do the works of Abraham" (Jn. 8:39)*. Because they did not do the works of Abraham (although they were his seed) Jesus denied they were children of Abraham (Jn. 8:39f). He told them they did the works of their father (Jn. 8:41). As understanding dawned in them that Jesus spoke of a spiritual Father, they retorted, *"We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God"*

(Jn. 8:41). Jesus said their claims would not stand. *"If God were your father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God ... ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father it is your will to do"* (Jn. 8:42-44).

With some, being led by the Spirit involves a personal communication from the Spirit, who personally leads and directs them. That is not how one is led by the Spirit. The Jews of John 8 were sons of the devil and led by the devil because they did his works. By the same token, those who are sons of God, who are led by His Spirit, are those who do His will. The Jews of Jesus' day provide a grave warning to us. They claimed to be Abraham's seed and sons of God. They were not. They were not led by God because they did not hear God's voice. No man today is led by the Spirit who rejects the Spirit's words concerning salvation and godliness. When one says, "Baptism is not essential to salvation," you may be certain that one is not led by the Spirit for Jesus said otherwise (Mk. 16:16). When one says, "The child of God cannot so sin so as to be lost," ye may be certain that one is not led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:4). Those who are led by the Spirit do the Spirit's will, just as Jesus could say God was His Father because he did His Father's will. NEXT: "I Reckon That The Sufferings ..."

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