

# Oakland International Fellowship Jesse McLaughlin

# Romans 8:12-25 Handout

# Christian Assurance & Sanctification

In the previous lesson we learned that those who are “in Christ” are free from sin & death. This enables the Christian to live in the Spirit instead of the flesh. Paul continues to teach on the concept of sanctification and moves on to address the Spirit’s work of assuring the Christian of salvation.

## The Assurance of Adoption (Romans 8:12-17)

**12**So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— 13for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” 16The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. **[[1]](#footnote-1)**

1. **Led by the Spirit (vv. 12-14)**
   1. The Christian is “under obligation” or as the ESV states “we are debtors”. The obligation is to live according to the Spirit which means we must put to death the deeds of the body (v. 13). This obligation to the Spirit is not oppressive service or earning God’s love. Living in the Spirit is a loving response to God and a fulfillment of our purpose!
   2. This “putting to death” (v. 13) is known as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The flesh dies as we recognize of the evil of our deeds and take active measures to stop our wickedness. The right response to sin can only be carried by the regenerate person empowered by the indwelling Spirit. Killing the flesh in NOT physically harming yourself or depriving yourself of natural bodily needs but choosing to stop the pattern of sin.
   3. The life in the Spirit is not just enjoyed in the future instead it is a way of life here and now experienced as we learn to carry ourselves as the “sons of God” (v. 14)

***“The Holy Spirt assures us that we ae God’s children no matter how furiously sin may rage within us, so long as we follow the Spirit and struggle against sin in order to kill it.” –Martin Luther[[2]](#footnote-2)***

1. **The Spirit of adoption (vv. 15-17)**
   1. The slave to sin must always live in fear of God’s wrath on the Day of Judgment but the adopted son is freed from the fear of judgment.
   2. The ability to call almighty God *Abba* (Aramaic) & *Father* (Greek) was modeled by Jesus in Mark 14:36 and demonstrates the change in position that our adoption has accomplished. The Christian may approach God with intimate prayers making known praise, emotion and supplication.
   3. The fact that the Spirit dwells within us gives us assurance that we are indeed God’s child.
   4. As adopted children we will and must mature into the image of our Father. We have the privilege of entering the sufferings of Christ: rejection and injustice from the world and physical death. Yet, as “heirs with Christ” we also look forward to the coming glory!

***“Each verse gives us an example of the Holy Spirit’s ministry of inward assurance, as he convinces us of the reality of God’s love on the one hand and of God’s fatherhood on the other.” – John Stott[[3]](#footnote-3)***

## Assurance of Future Glory (Romans 8:18-25)

18For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

1. **Glory revealed (vv.18-19)**
   1. The sufferings of this life are passing and insignificant in comparison to the glory we will enjoy in that coming age. First, Paul addresses what this means to the Christian – experiencing the new resurrected body.
   2. Not only does the individual look forward to “glory” but all of creation longs to be remade without the curse of sin. The natural world yearns to witness the “sons of God” because this is a sign of the coming new creation.
2. **Groaning for Glory (vv. 20-23)**
   1. God’s judgment of Adam’s sin (Romans 5:12) resulted in “futility” for the entire natural world. Nature under the curse “groans and suffers” (v. 22) but it “hopes” to be set free and experience new creation and the full reign of Christ.
   2. The indwelling Spirit reminds us of what we do not have yet (death of the old nature & new life for the body) so we groan in longing for the realized promise.
   3. There is a sense in which our adoption is not complete. We are waiting to share in the glory of Christ, to be made like him in form and character. The Christian faces the paradox of the already-not-yet state of being.
3. **Christian hope (vv. 24-25)**
   1. Hope is not wishful thinking but the sure promise of experiencing the fullness of salvation.
   2. Right now we wait; knowing that the day will come when we are redeemed entirely. We must exercise perseverance and maintain eager expectation in the “waiting room” of Christian life. Do not forget that the Spirit is the “first fruits” of the awesome harvest we will soon reap!

**Conclusion:** In the present, the Spirit indwells the Christian giving assurance, power and guidance to kill the flesh. Though the Christian and all nature experience suffering right now we have the hope of future resurrection and new life.

### Discussion Questions:

* ***Please take a few minutes to fill out the Sunday Training evaluation!***
* How do we put the flesh to death practically? What role does the Spirt have in this activity?
* How does adoption relate to the assurance of salvation in the Romans 8?
* How does the promise of the body’s redemption give you hope?

1. All Scripture quotations taken from New American Standard Bible (NASB), Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by [The Lockman Foundation](http://www.lockman.org/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Luther, Martin. Preface to the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Stott, John R.W. The Message of Romans. The Bible Speaks Today. E-book. p. 283. IVP. 1994. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)