

REACHING MATURITY

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Romans 8:9-17

1. In Ephesians 4:11-16 the Apostle Paul clearly set forth what the ministry of the word is meant to accomplish.

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

- a. To equip the saints for the work of ministry leading to the building up of the body of Christ.
 - b. To instruct the saints leading to a cohesive and comprehensive understanding of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God.
 - c. To promote spiritual maturity and spiritual stability.
 - d. To help every believer to live under the headship of Jesus Christ so that the church functions as a cohesive body.
2. For the above to happen every believer needs to understand, believe, and live by the spiritual realities Paul set forth in Romans 6 and 8.
3. Like Paul, in his early experience, many sincere believers are trying their best to live the Christian life without a clear understanding of how the Christian life is to be lived.
4. Real progress cannot be made until we give up on ourselves and begin to live by the principles set forth in these chapters.
5. This truth does not imply passiveness on our part.
- a. God’s part. Phil 1:6
For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.
 - b. Our part. Phil 2:12-13
So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

6. When Jesus stated, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing," (John 1:5) He was not implying that we have no part to play.
7. What He was saying is that the Christian life can only be lived by those who are in actual and vital union with Him; those in whom He actually dwells in the person of the Holy Spirit.
8. With these truths in mind let's look at the passage we are considering today.

I. Powerful points. 9-11

- A. In verse 8 Paul stated, "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."
- B. But that statement led to, "However, you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you."
NOTE: The point Paul is making here is that a true follower of Jesus Christ is not limited to or dependent upon his own strength.
- C. Every true Christian can rely on the Spirit of Christ because the Spirit of Christ is present in every believer.
NOTE: The absence of the Holy Spirit means that a person does not belong to Jesus Christ.
- D. Verse 10 points out that we are redeemed persons in an unredeemed body, and therein lies our problem.
NOTE: Paul's reference to "the spirit" in this verse is referring to our souls and to that place in us where God the Spirit dwells.
- E. That said, our unredeemed bodies will one day be redeemed according to verse 11.

II. Positive potential. 12-14

- A. As Spirit-indwelt followers of Jesus Christ we are no longer obligated to that which once controlled us.
 1. Our old self was crucified with Christ so that we would no longer be slaves to sin. 6:6
 2. However we must consider ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 6:11
 3. Furthermore we are not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies. 6:12
 4. Rather we are to let God reign where sin once reigned. 6:13
 5. Sin is no longer our master because we are no longer under law but under grace. 6:14
- B. Rather than yielding to sin we can now, by the Spirit, put to death (mortify) the deeds of the body.
- C. "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." 14
NOTE: The word "led" has several implications: to lead by laying hold of, to lead by accompanying, to move or impel.
 1. Gal 5:16-19
But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.
17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;

for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 18 But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the Law.

2. Gal 5:25

If we live by the Spirit, let us also **walk by the Spirit**.

3. Eph 5:18-19

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled with the Spirit**.

III. Privileged position. 15-17

A. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Adoption by Whom and because of Whom we can refer to God as our Father. 15

B. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Assurance who testifies to our spirits that we are in fact children of God. 16

C. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Promise, the earnest of our inheritance.

2 Cor 1:20-22 17

For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. 21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, 22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge (down-payment).

D. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Identification with Christ leading to suffering.

John 15:17-20

"This I command you, that you love one another. 18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. 20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also."

APPLICATION

1. It can be said that every true Christian has the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit does not have every Christian.

2. Too many of those who claim to be Christ's followers are conflicted in that they cannot bring themselves to the point of complete surrender.

3. Consequently the Holy Spirit is often resisted and thus grieved by their dalliances with sin and the world.

4. There is a little poem that goes:

"There is a way, ways and the way. The high man walks the High Way, the low man walks the low, and in between, on misty flats, the rest run to and fro."

5. It is important that we decide who we are going to fully identify with; Jesus or the world. Rev 3:15-17

The Glorified Christ declared, "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I **wish that you were cold or hot**. 16 So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth."