

Remember that we are in the book of Proverbs and Proverbs chapters 25-29 form the doctrinal section for the members of the remnant of Israel when God resumes and fulfills His program with Israel.

The information contained in Proverbs 25-29 that the Father is going to utilize in connection with giving His son *counsel* and *wisdom* into the **experience** aspect of it. The son will need that experience in order to “attain unto wise counsels.” Therefore, these chapters assist the Father in imparting to the son the experience aspect to the curriculum (both educational-wise, and opposition-wise) that brings about the *attainment unto the wise counsels* that finishes off the son’s edification.

If you paid attention to the “opposition-wise” in the above paragraph, you saw something that will be a focus in the Thessalonian epistles. In fact, there is an attack on a Level 3 son (assembly) that we would never know about if it were not for 2 Thessalonians. But we will look at that later on.

I mentioned that one of the distinctive characteristics of these proverbs is that they have “experience” attached to them. Let me give you some examples:

Proverbs 25:1-7 – the experience of kings and princes

Proverbs 25:21-22 – quoted by Paul in the “justice” section

Proverbs 26:4-5 is a good example of the kind of experience, discernment and perception that a son attains unto.

Proverbs 26:4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

Proverbs 26:5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

People often use these to show the Bible doesn’t make sense or that it contradicts itself. But what is really being showcased here is that the son, as a “man of understanding,” has developed a real, critical, perceptiveness in connection with the **motives** behind **QUESTIONS** that are put to him.

Jesus was great at doing this. When He was asked questions, did you ever notice that sometimes he would answer the question and other times he ignored the question and would not answer it? He was operating out of the wisdom that is being described here in Proverbs 26:4-5.

By the time a son gets to this point, the son is now able to totally defend everything about his Father’s business. He can defend every business decision. He can deal with all the challenges that comes against him and his Father’s business.

Part of the **skill** the son develops in connection with that, is to know when to answer someone, when not to answer someone and when a particular kind of answer is necessary, and when another kind of answer is necessary when dealing with someone.

The son is not only able to perceive it in himself, as well as working in others, but he’s also able to perceive it **INCORRECTLY** operating in others. He’s able to “read” others just by what

comes out of their mouth, by the kind of questions he asks them and by the probing he does with them.

By the way, this is why the doctrine in the pastoral epistles, that is designed for the bishop/pastor of the local assembly, is put together the way in which it's put together; it's to develop that skill in the bishops and deacons. Let me give you an example.

1 Timothy 6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;
4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

Paul's able to give an analysis of that person (pastor) who has been given the corrective doctrine, not to be a teacher of the law, and not to be teaching other doctrines. And if he won't *consent*, (won't change his mind) Paul then gives a detailed psycho-analysis of that man's human spirit. He describes exactly what's taking place in that man's thinking and the operations of his conscience. He tells Timothy exactly what's going to take place if he continues dealing with that man and that if he doesn't change his mind, then Timothy is to withdraw himself from him because it's not worth it!

My point is just to point up how, when a man like a pastor who gets to that Level III *man of understanding* stature gains a skillfulness in regards to being able to "read" people. He knows how to tell the difference between "foolish and unlearned questions" and "legitimate questions."

2 Timothy 2:23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

A man of understanding has the skill to know when someone is trying to provoke him to anger with questions. That's the kind of skillful son that's being talked about here in Proverbs 26. In short, the son is being equipped to deal with particular kinds of "fools."

The *fool* may indeed be a legitimate member of the remnant of Israel, or a legitimate member of the church the body of Christ—but he's one whose ear has become inclined to unsound doctrine, and he doesn't heed the warning to get back on track with *the doctrine which is according to godliness*.

The son was warned, earlier in Proverbs, to turn away his ears from the foolish and unlearned questions. I know we haven't covered any of this doctrine, so let me just give you this to look at.

Proverbs 19:27 **Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.** ²⁸ An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity. ²⁹ Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.

Now watch this. At the end of chapter 19, the *fools* now change and the *fools* attempt to get the son to throw in with them and to get him to cease hearing the words of the Father and to *hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge*.

If a son gets affected by the *fool*, then he becomes one of those *fools* himself. The *fools*, from chapter 20 on, are primarily sons who have gotten victimized by that aspect of the policy of evil! It is those *fools* who actually end up being a ‘thorn in the flesh’ to the sons who go on. This may be fascinating but it is also very frightening!

The reason why this needs to be understood is because those fools need to be answered **differently**, depending upon what comes out of their mouth. They’re always being given an opportunity to change their mind. They’re actually in a position where they are “*opposing themselves*” as Paul calls it.

2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

You can see from vs. 26 that these are the ones who have fallen victim to the POE. Verse 25 says the “oppose themselves.” They’re in a position where God gives them opportunity for “*repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; ... that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.*”

Therefore, a son who is a *man of understanding* has to know if he is getting a *foolish and unlearned question* from one of these *fools* (in which case he’s ***not to answer him, lest he be like unto him***) or whether he’s getting a question that indicates that this guy is really starting to re-think some things, and his question is really a product of honesty of heart. In that case, the son is to “***answer that fool, lest he be wise in his own conceit.***” That’s why Paul goes on to say what he does in II Timothy 2:24.

2 Timothy 2:24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

This has to be handled just as Paul says; you’ve got to be *gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient*, 25 *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.* You’ve got to realize that this is a person who could, if there is any honesty of heart there, repent and change his mind.

The son has to have the skillfulness to know what kind of *fool* he’s dealing with, and what kind of question he’s getting. The information and the *wise counsels* provide for that kind of discernment and perceptive wisdom that allow you to counsel someone appropriately. Sometimes the counsel is: **you don’t answer them** and sometimes the counsel is: **you need to answer them**.

Well, this is what I wanted you to know in this brief discussion of the exhortations in the book of Proverbs for a Level 3 son. Now, we can take up the 3rd and final issue that I wanted to cover before getting back to Romans 8.

The two Thessalonian letters make up the doctrinal section for a Level 3 son in this dispensation of grace. I know the natural tendency would be to label I Thessalonians as the doctrine for Phase 1 of Level 3 and 2 Thessalonians as the doctrine for Phase 2 of Level 3. I'm not sure that it is all going to work out that way so I'm going to hold off making that kind of statement. It is obvious that, if the son, in Phase 1, is going to be taken back through the curriculum as a father, then I Thessalonians does not do that.

Because of that, I wouldn't expect to find any "new" information in the Thessalonian letters, but I would expect to find them addressing the saints along the lines of exhortations, warnings, support, encouragement, and dealing with any problems associated with a wise man doing what he has to do to get to be a man of understanding attaining unto wise counsels.

Especially I would expect to find sections in them that address the kind of opposition and resistance they'll be facing from the satanic policy of evil. When you read through these two epistles, you do find those kinds of things being covered by Paul.

Keep in mind that Paul is addressing saints who have reached an unprecedented level of edificational growth than in any of his other letters. This is the assembly that is doing things right and with linesess. Clearly, they are the most advanced of any of the assemblies Paul writes to, so much so that in some cases, Paul says that they have no need for him to write to them at all because they already have that doctrine firmly in place and are operating on it.

Let's look at some examples of what I'm talking about.

In the first 2 chapters of I Thessalonians, you are actually dealing with Paul recounting what he did when he was there; how they responded to his doctrine/words (2:13) and why he did what he did, etc.

1 Thessalonians 1:2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;³ **Remembering** without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

1 Thessalonians 1:6 And **ye became followers of us**, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

1 Thessalonians 2:1 For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it **was not in vain**:

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when **ye received the word of God** which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

You can see that you don't really see any new information being given, but you do see information about taking what they already know and increasing it and abounding in what they're doing as they are increasing learning.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 And the Lord make you to **increase and abound** in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: ¹³ **To the end he may stablish** your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

That word “stablish” without the “e” on the front of it is not talking about getting established, but is looking at the end result of it; stabilized in what you have already been “established” in. Establish looks to the front or beginning; stablish looks to the end or finish.

There is a “stablish” at the end of the book of Romans. At the front of the book he talks about establishing them.

Romans 1:11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be **established**;

Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to **stablish** you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

As a “simple” son at the end of the book of Romans, Paul talks about them being “stablished.” And now look back at what we were looking at in 1 Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 And **the Lord make you to increase** and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: ¹³ **To the end he may stablish** your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

As a Level 3 son, Paul talks again about being “stablished.” And if you doubt that Paul is talking about the end of Level 3, take a look at what the event is in the last verse; “at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

We can see this issue again in I Thessalonians 4:9.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 But as touching brotherly love **ye need not that I write unto you:** for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. ¹⁰ And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that **ye increase more and more**;

When Paul says what he does in vs. 9, he isn’t just talking about them having some fondness for each other. He is talking about a actual “form of doctrine” that has occurred, that produces a certain kind of godly, brotherly love. And when Paul says that they, themselves are “taught of God to love one another,” that is one of the hallmarks of an advanced son!

The “increase” here is the passing on what they already know; which is “increase learning.” This is exactly what these two epistles are doing; they are setting forth for us an example/ensample of those that are fully educated and fully edified sons.

But to the point of what I Thessalonians does, especially in those first two chapters, Paul goes back over some issues with them that he had previously covered. No, the book does not have

Paul do the entire curriculum, but it parallels what you would do as a Level 3 son – go back over it again. And that is what Paul does as he rehearses certain issues that they have previously covered together.

Now, moving to 2 Thessalonians, this book seems to set forth some definite examples of that *man of understanding* who has *attained unto wise counsels*, but I think it also acts much like those Corinthian and Galatian epistles (and the Philippian & Colossian epistles) in the sense of addressing some of the problems and opposition associated with Phase 2 of Level III.

As a Level III son, the information contained in II Thessalonians provides for you to counteract the effects of the policy of evil against you. Actually 1/3rd of the book is actually taken up with a particular kind of an attack of the policy of evil and issues surrounding that. What was the major attack the Thessalonians encountered from the policy of evil?

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, ² That ye **be not soon shaken in mind**, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, **nor by letter as from us**, as that the day of Christ is at hand. ³ **Let no man deceive you** by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; ⁴ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. ⁵ **Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?**

Verse 2 describes the way in which the POE will attack you; by causing you to be “shaken in mind.” This means to shake your confidence in what you think you know. This attack is really carefully crafted on the Thessalonians because the POE actually produced a forged letter from Paul to shake up their belief. Can you imagine, if they thought one thing and then they get a letter from (they think) Paul telling them they have missed the catching away, the confusion they must have felt?

The argument was carefully crafted so that the tribulations they were encountering were made out to be the sufferings of the day of wrath. So, Paul has to write to them to straighten out the error and further instruct them on how to deal with the afflictions they were experiencing. You can see this in 2 Thess. 1:5-10.

II Thessalonians is the information that a Level III son needs to have in order to deal with some of the **advanced tactics of the policy of evil against him**.

It’s interesting that, as you look at how **I Thessalonians** (yes, I Thess.) comes to a close, it’s apparent to me that at least some in their midst had *attained unto wise counsels*. And since wise counsels is gained by the experience and use of the doctrine/curriculum, not by getting another body of information, these books really focus on the experience of dealing with problems and opposition.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. ¹⁵ See that none render

evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*. ¹⁶ Rejoice evermore. ¹⁷ Pray without ceasing. ¹⁸ In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. ¹⁹ Quench not the Spirit. ²⁰ Despise not prophesyings. ²¹ Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. ²² Abstain from all appearance of evil. ²³ And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In this passage, you have a list of things that, for most people, are not properly understood. Yes, we can look at the words themselves and think about it the way we used to under the old systematic theology, but that would not be telling what you need to know.

When it says, “warn the unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men,” it is not talking about these things in general. In other words, can you identify the “feebleminded?” You may know what you mean when you call someone that, but do you know what Paul means? And did you notice that Paul does not explain any of these phrases? Why not? Because he expects they already know! They know how to “comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, etc.” Since we are talking about knowing without having to be told, look at vs. 25.

1 Thessalonians 5:25 Brethren, pray for us.

Paul doesn’t tell them what to pray because they know what to pray for. And this is no generic request like we do today when we say, “pray for me.” When we say it, we often have no idea what someone may be praying for. When someone says in a general way, pray for me, I wonder what they mean for me to pray for. If they did not have some among them who had attained unto wise counsels, Paul could not talk to them this way. And by the way, in some ways, this parallels the issue of the Thessalonians understanding the “words of the wise and their dark sayings.”

And this brings us to the end of what endeavored to do when we left Romans 8:14-15; which is provide a mental backdrop for being able to make that cry of Abba, Father when we read those two verses.

Now that you have an idea of what your heavenly Father intends to do with you (no, you don’t have a lot of detail), once you read that you have been made a son, by the specialized process of adoption, and understanding what all is entailed in that, when you read that you have been given the Spirit of adoption, the immediate response of your heart should be “Abba, Father!” (or, in other words, Yes, I want this!)

Now we ready to go back to Romans 8:14-15. But we are not finished with our Sonship Orientation, not until we do the work on these two verses. So we will take a little time to make sure you understand what is sitting in those two verses.

As we return to Romans 8:14-15, it is necessary for us to connect this up with the previous information in the chapter, so we can see how all this is connected and how it flows naturally into sonship. We don't need to do much, but considering it was almost 15 months ago that we first came to Romans 8:14, we probably need a little refreshing.

As a quick review of where we are in our sanctification, let's just look at a brief outline which will begin in Romans 6 and bring us through to Romans 8:14.

We learned in the first 13 verses of Romans 6:

- that we are dead to sin
- that we have been raised to walk in newness of life
- that our old man is crucified with Christ
- that we are free from sin and not its servant
- that we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God

We learned in Romans 6:14-23:

- that sin shall not have dominion over us
- that we are not under the law but under grace
- the only way to produce "fruit unto holiness" is by grace alone
- the law is incapable of restraining sin and promoting good

We learned in Romans 7:

- that we are no longer bound by the law, though we yet live
- the law exposed our inability to produce our own sanctification
- that the law gave sin the power to exceed all our honest efforts
- that the law puts our functional life to death
- we have never been capable of producing our own sanctification
- to live unto God under the law is to live "in the flesh"
- Paul tried to live unto God by the law and utterly failed
- the law can NEVER be utilized to:
 1. "walk in newness of life,"
 2. "to live unto God"
 3. to put our "sanctification into effect"
 4. "to restrain sin and promote righteousness"
 5. to "please God"

But by the end of Romans 7 you were only taught:

- how NOT to put your identity in Christ into practice.
- you do not live unto God under the law
- you do not produce fruit unto holiness under the law

Back in Romans 6 you learned:

- your sanctification was not under the law but under grace.

So, the questions that you should have are:

- “Well then, just how do I functionally live unto God under grace?
- How does that get done?
- I know what NOT to do, but I still don’t know what TO do.
- How does living under grace get accomplished?”

That last question is critical because:

- 1) You have to be able to clearly identify and clearly define the mechanical means for having functional (sanctified) life under grace,
- 2) This is going to be one of the most attacked areas of your life by the Adversary, who’s going to attempt to get you living under the law and put you to functional death

Romans 8 is going to answer all the questions.

The first 13 verses of Romans chapter 8 are designed to give you:

- a full, detailed analysis of how a saint is to functionally live unto God and produce fruit unto holiness under grace.
- all you need to know about how to put your sanctified position in Christ into practice.
- the details and features properly installed in your mind so that you have absolute confidence in knowing when you’re doing it and when you’re not and when it’s working and when it’s not.

The 1st section of Romans 8 is found in vv. 1-4.

This section deals with the fact that our sanctification can only be put into practice under grace and not under the law.

The 2nd section is found in Romans 8:5-13.

When you get into vv. 5-13, you are going to have the question answered, “How is that done?”

What you discovered is that it’s done by:

- thinking in a particular way;
- by thinking of, and being mindful of who the Spirit of God has made me to be in Christ.
- That thinking determines the steps I take, what I say, where I go, and how I respond to situations and circumstances when I end up in them, based upon my walk

WALKING AFTER THE SPIRIT IS ACHIEVED BY MINDING THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT, AND NOT BY MINDING THE THINGS OF THE FLESH.

Romans 8:5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be

spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Being “after the flesh” and “minding the things of the flesh” and being “carnally minded” all have to do with serving God by the keeping of some law. It is associated with the flesh because the flesh is where the law gets its power. But, as we know, the “flesh is weak.” Remember vs. 3?

Romans 8:3 For **what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh**, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

When a man utilizes the law to sanctify himself, God calls that “minding the things of the flesh,” or being “carnally minded” or being “in the flesh.” Therefore, vs. 8 says “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, **if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you**. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

The Spirit of God “dwelling in you” is not the same thing as you being given the Spirit or simply having the Spirit in you. We all received the Spirit when we trusted Jesus Christ as our all-sufficient Savior; He was “given” to us. And since that took place when we were saved, we learned about it back in Romans 5:5.

Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by **the Holy Ghost which is given unto us**.

But just because the Spirit was given unto us when we received Jesus Christ, it does not mean the Spirit “dwells” in us.

Romans 8:9 But ye are not **in the flesh**, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

The phrase “in the flesh” has to do with operating in the energy, power and capacity of the flesh, which is what you have when you are under the law. But when you are “in the Spirit,” you are operating under the Spirit’s capacity, power and ability to put your sanctified position in Christ into effect!

You already know from Romans 7 what being “in the flesh” is. When you are “in the flesh” you are attempting to produce your sanctification by the capacity, energy and ability of your flesh. And the result of being “in the flesh” was always functional death!

Functional death is brought about by trying to produce your own sanctification under the law, which was working in the capacity of your flesh, which is so weak that sin always exceeded its best efforts. And knowing that about being “in the flesh,” just what do you suppose (consistent with the context of the doctrine) being “in the Spirit” is about? You already know the answer to

that too. It is putting your sanctified life into practice by all the doctrine that was given to you when you were told to “walk after the Spirit” and be “spiritually minded.” The encapsulation of all that doctrine, when you do it, is called being “in the Spirit.”

In other words, in your endeavor to live your sanctified life, you will do it either “in the flesh” (your capacity under the law) or you will do it “in the Spirit” (His capacity under grace.) And there is no other option available.

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, **if so be** that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

The “if so be” makes being “in the Spirit” conditional upon that which is about to follow. This is not one of those 1st class conditional “ifs” which is demonstrating the truth of one thing as compared to another. This is an “if” of: maybe you are and maybe you are not (in the Spirit.)

So what is the condition that must be met in order for us to be “in the Spirit?”

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be **that the Spirit of God dwell in you**. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

I was taught that every believer had the “indwelling of the Spirit.” But that understanding is absolutely wrong. Every person is “given” the Spirit at the moment of salvation, but the Bible does not teach that the Spirit “dwells” in every believer.

The misunderstanding of what the Bible is teaching us comes, to a great degree, from the use of a word the Bible never uses. The words “indwelt, indwell and indwelled” never appear one time in your Bible, yet, those are the words used by preachers to describe Romans 8:9.

If the Bible meant to say that every person is “indwelled” by the Spirit it would have either used that word or it would have said something like, “if so be that the Spirit of God (resides or lives or is) in you.”

The word “indwell” means “to be permanently present or living in” or “fixed in a person’s body for a long time.” But that is not what the Bible is teaching us in Romans 8:9.

If this is a problem area for you then I would encourage you to go back over your notes at the end of our study in Sanctification. But I can say it another way which I think will clear all of this up very easily.

- Ever since Romans 6, we are talking about our Sanctification
- From Romans 6:14-7:25 we were talking about the error of using the law (or some form of it) to live for God

- Just as there are two ways a man can utilize to be saved, there are two ways a man can attempt to live for God; by law (performance) or by grace (what God has done and given as a free gift)
- We also learned that the two are mutually exclusive; that is, they cannot be combined

Romans 11:6 And **if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.** But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

- In Romans 8:1-9, Paul contrasts living for God under the Law with living for God under grace by use of certain phrases.
- Those phrases that describe utilizing the Law are: “to walk after the flesh, carnally minded, and in the flesh.”

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not **after the flesh**, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not **after the flesh**, but after the Spirit. 5 For they that are **after the flesh** do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

The word “after,” as it is used here, has to do with “in accordance with” or “to follow.” So what Paul says in vv. 1, 4 and 5 are tantamount to saying, “Do not walk (conduct yourself) in accordance with what the flesh naturally desires to do” (which is – follow the Law), or “do not walk by following after the flesh.”

There is another phrase to describe this action of following the Law to live for God.

Romans 8:6 For to be **carnally minded** is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Carnally minded means to be thinking that the Law is way to please God in your daily life. But that thinking produces a functional death – or, an inability to serve God.

Now, there is one more phrase that is connected to this following the Law in our sanctified life; “in the flesh.” If you are thinking about using the Law as the means to serve God, to live for God or to be right with God, (which is to be “carnally minded”) then you are said to be “in the flesh.” And if you are “in the flesh, then you cannot please God!

Romans 8:6 For **to be carnally minded is death**; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because **the carnal mind is enmity against God**: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then **they that are in the flesh cannot please God.**

Now we come to our verse, verse 9.

Romans 8:9 **But ye are not in the flesh**, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

All through this chapter Paul has been contrasting being “in the flesh” (the Law) with “in the Spirit” (grace). Paul says in verse 9 that we are not “in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if...” something is true for us. So what is that “if?”

Before we answer it, let me ask you something. Is it possible for a saved person to “walk after the flesh?” Is it possible for a saved person to “mind the things of the flesh?” Is it possible for a saved person to be “carnally minded?” Is it possible for a saved person to be “in the flesh?” Or, to say it another way, “Is it possible for a saved person to think about and attempt to use the Law in order to live for God and please Him (sanctification)?”

The answer to all of the above questions is “yes.”

Well then, consider that if you make “if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you” the equivalent of “having the Spirit of God inside of you” then it would be IMPOSSIBLE for any saved person to be “in the flesh.”

But Paul has already made it abundantly clear that you can, as a saved, JUEL saint, be “in the flesh” when you try to live for God by employing the Law.

Paul also makes it clear that you can be “in the Spirit” when you live for God out of who He has made you to be in Jesus Christ (grace). When you live out of your new identity in Jesus Christ, then the Spirit of God is said to “dwell” in you.

When the Spirit is said to “dwell in you,” that means the Spirit is doing something inside of you. It does not, and indeed cannot, mean that He is simply in there. This whole thing is conditional upon you not being “carnally minded.”

If, as vs. 6 says, you are “spiritually minded” (which means that your thinking is in accordance with your new identity in Christ) then you are not “in the flesh,” but you are said to be “in the Spirit.” And if you are “in the Spirit” then the Spirit of God can “dwell in you.” And what is it that the Spirit is doing when He is said to “dwell in you?” (Not “indwell” you! Those are two different things.)

Romans 8:11 **But if the Spirit** of him that raised up Jesus from the dead **dwell in you**, he that raised up Christ from the dead **shall also quicken your mortal bodies** by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Notice the phrase “dwelleth in you” is used instead of “indwells you.” But the main thing I’m after is what the Spirit does when He “dwelleth in you;” the Spirit is “quicken your mortal

body.” Do you remember what we talked about when we defined the difference between being “quickenened” and being “made alive?”

By the way, your mortal body (which refers to your body of flesh with sin still in it) is already “alive.” This is not talking about resurrection. This is talking about your ability to live for God while you are still in this body with sin in its members (Romans 7:23)

To quicken means “to rouse to fullness of function.”

Here is the process: You are spiritually minded, the Spirit which was “given” to you at salvation now “dwells” in you. That action results in Him quickening your mortal body. When he quickens your mortal body, He makes so that, in spite of the fact that is not yet redeemed and in spite of the fact that it has sin in it, it can produce a righteousness that is of such a nature that God accepts it as on par with His own – because it IS His own (produced in you)!

Therefore, you are said to be “in the Spirit” IF SO BE THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELL IN YOU. If He is not quickening your mortal body, then you cannot be “in the Spirit.” And the way to get the Spirit to “dwell in you” is to be “spiritually minded,” or to “think about who the Spirit has made you to be in Christ!” You live for God out of what He has done for you – without any help on your part – and given to you as a free gift of grace. When you do, you are spiritually minded. When you are spiritually minded, the Spirit dwells in you. When the Spirit dwells in you, He quickens your mortal body so that it can now produce a righteousness that could never be produced by your best efforts in keeping any kind of Law or set of rules. When that happens, you are said to be “in the Spirit.” That is the “if so be” part of vs. 9.

Paul’s conclusion to all this in vv. 12-13.

Romans 8:12 **Therefore**, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.
13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but **if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body**, ye shall live.

Notice that verse 13 presents another “if” to us. This would naturally raise the question, “How do I, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of my body?” That statement introduces us to what we are told in the next two verses and to the roll of Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of adoption!”

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. ¹⁵ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.