My Confession for Today

I confess that I am never going to stop until I have attained the high level of love Jesus wants me to have in my life! I don't go around talking about myself all the time, constantly exaggerating and embellishing the facts. I don't behave in a prideful, arrogant, haughty, superior, snooty, snobbish, or clannish manner. I'm not rude and discourteous. I'm not careless or thoughtless. As I spend time with Jesus, I am being changed into His image-and I demonstrate His life and His nature to other people!

I declare this by faith in Jesus' name!

Rick Renner

ROMANS CHAPTER 8

Prayer Study #448

First Love Ministries, Inc. of Perry, Georgia USA

Romans 8 - Amplified Bible (AMP)

To me, this is one of the most important and powerful chapters in the entire Bible, and it is a chapter whose verses are frequently quoted and known by the general populace of the Body of Christ. It rivals passages like Psalm 23 and Isaiah 53 in popularity.

8 Therefore, [there is] now no condemnation (no adjudging guilty of wrong) for those who are in Christ Jesus, who live [and] walk not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit.
2 For the law of the Spirit of life [which is] in Christ Jesus [the law of our new being] has freed me from the law of sin and of death.
3 For God has done what the Law could not do, [its power] being weakened by the flesh [the entire nature of man without the Holy Spirit]. Sending His own Son in the guise of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, [God] condemned sin in the flesh [subdued, overcame, [deprived it of its power over all who accept that sacrifice],
4 So that the righteous and just requirement of the Law might be fully met in us who live and move not in the ways of the flesh but in the ways of the Spirit [our lives governed not by the standards and according to the dictates of the flesh, but controlled by the Holy Spirit].

Two words that the Apostle Paul uses over and over in his writings, especially here in the 8th chapter of Romans are flesh and spirit. He uses the word "flesh" in three different ways: 1) the physical body, 2) looking at things from the human point of view (as in Jesus is the son of David or on the human side of his decent, he comes from the line of David), and 3) the *flesh nature* which is evil and cannot please God. The latter is used to speak of those who walk according to the flesh as distinct from those who live the Christian life and walk according to the Spirit, the old man as opposed to the new man. A partial list of the sins of the flesh is found in Colossians 3:5-10: fornication, uncleanness,

passion, evil desire, covetousness, idolatry, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, and lying. Also, we find a list in Galatians 5:19-21: *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambition, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like, of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.* The opposite of walking in the flesh is walking in the Spirit. Galatians goes on to tell us in Galatians 5:22-25: *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit….*

This final verse 4 in this passage reminds me of Paul's words in Athens on Mars Hill in Acts 17:28: *"...for in Him we live and move and have our being…"*

In summary, this passage is about those who walk according to the flesh as distinct from those who live the Christian life and walk in the Spirit.

Barclay says this about the flesh and the way Paul uses the word:
"*He really means human nature in all its weakness, and he means human nature in its vulnerability to sin. He means that part of human beings which offers sin a way in. He means sinful human nature, apart from Christ, everything that attaches people to the world instead of to God. To live according to the flesh is to live a life dominated by the dictates and desires of sinful human nature instead of a life dominated by the dictates and the love of God*."

5 For those who are according to the flesh and are controlled by its unholy desires set their minds on and [pursue those things which gratify the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit and are controlled by the desires of the Spirit set their minds on and [seek those things which gratify the [Holy] Spirit.
6 Now the mind of the flesh [which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit] is death [death that [comprises all the miseries arising from sin, both here and hereafter]. But the mind of the [Holy] Spirit is life and [soul] peace [both now and forever].
7 [That is] because the mind of the flesh [with its carnal thoughts and purposes] is hostile to God, for it does not submit itself to God's Law; indeed it cannot.
8 So then those who are living the life of the flesh [catering to the appetites and impulses of their carnal nature] cannot please or satisfy God, or be acceptable to Him.
9 But you are not living the life of the flesh, you are living the life of the Spirit, if the [Holy] Spirit of God [really] dwells within you [directs and controls you]. But if anyone does not possess the [Holy] Spirit of Christ, he is none of His [he does not belong to Christ, is not truly a child of God].

10 But if Christ lives in you, [then although] your [natural] body is dead by reason of sin and guilt, the spirit is alive because of [the] righteousness [that He imputes to you].
11 And if the Spirit of Him Who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, [then] He Who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also restore to life your mortal (short-lived, perishable) bodies through His Spirit Who dwells in you.

In this passage Paul is contrasting two different kinds of life. There is the life dominated by the sinful human nature. The focus is on self. The desire is on doing what feels good when and where it feels good. That desire may take the form of lust, passion, pride, or ambition. It is human nature without Christ.

The second kind of life is that life dominated by the Spirit of God. The focus is on Jesus and the Word of God. The desire is on pleasing Christ. The will of Christ is their only law. Their desire is Spirit-controlled, and Christ focused.

Life controlled by sinful human nature leads farther and farther from God and closer and closer to death, especially spiritual death. Those who walk this walk are hostile to God and resentful of His Word and His control. The Spirit of God controlled life moves closer and closer to heaven until there is the natural and inevitable transition by way of death to God's presence. This is symbolized by the life of Enoch who walked with God and God took him home (Genesis 5:24). Death is only the bridge from life in the Spirit on earth to life in heaven with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

12 So then, brethren, we are debtors, but not to the flesh [we are not obligated to our carnal nature], to live [a life ruled by the standards set up by the dictates] of the flesh.
13 For if you live according to [the dictates of] the flesh, you will surely die. But if through the power of the [Holy] Spirit you are [habitually] putting to death (making extinct, deadening) the [evil] deeds prompted by the body, you shall [really and genuinely] live forever.
14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.
15 For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father!
16 The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God.
17 And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory.

Against the backdrop of the rules of the Roman father system, Paul gives a metaphor in the adoption of the Christian into the family of God. The father had absolute control and the power of life and death over his children. No matter how old a son was,

he was still under the authority of his father. An adoption was extremely difficult. Twice the father of the child had to sell his son and had to buy him back. The third time the father sold his son but did not buy him back. The adopted person lost all rights in his old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family. He became heir to his father's estate. Even if sons were born later to the father, the adopted son still was a co-heir. The old life of the adopted person was completely wiped out. This included any debts that the adopted person might have owed.

An example of this was when Emperor Claudius adopted Nero so that Nero could succeed him to the throne. Claudius had a daughter Octavia whom Nero wished to marry. But in the eyes of the law, Octavia and Nero were brother and sister. Nero, however, got the Roman senate to pass special legislation that said the marriage could take place.

Paul says that God's spirit witnesses with our spirit that we really are His children. In the Roman ceremony, there had to be seven witnesses. If the father died and there was any dispute about the adopted person being the father's son, one of the seven witnesses would step forward and swear that the adoption was genuine. Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit is the witness to our adoption into the family of God.

Thus, using the Roman adoption as a metaphor, Paul is saying that the Christian has been adopted into the family of God. Therefore, he is God's absolute possession, our debts have been wiped out, and we have become heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus. We are joint heirs of both His glory and His suffering.

18 [But what of that?] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time (this present life) are not worth being compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us and for us and conferred on us!
19 For [even the whole] creation (all nature) waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known [waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship].
20 For the creation (nature) was subjected to [frailty (to futility, condemned to frustration), not because of some intentional fault on its part, but by the will of Him Who so subjected it—[yet] with the hope
21 That nature (creation) itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and corruption [and gain an entrance] into the glorious freedom of God's children.
22 We know that the whole creation [of irrational creatures] has been moaning together in the pains of labor until now.
23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves too, who have and enjoy the firstfruits of the [Holy] Spirit [a foretaste of the blissful things to come] groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies [from sensuality and the grave, which will reveal] our adoption (our manifestation as God's sons).
24 For in [this] hope we were saved. But hope [the object of] which is seen is not hope. For how can one hope for what he already sees?

25 But if we hope for what is still unseen by us, we wait for it with patience and composure.

In this wonderful passage, Paul comes back to the troubled state of the present world. But then he draws a great picture of all creation waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. He was painting a picture that every Jew would have understood. The Jews believed there were only two time periods: the present age and the age to come. The present age was all bad, full of sin and death and decay. Some day would come the Day of the Lord, which was a time of judgment when the wicked world would be shaken to its foundations. From that judgment would come a day of a renewed world where the power of sin and death and decay had been broken and the glory of the Lord would cover the earth like the waters of the sea. To give us a little taste of this glorious kingdom to come, the Lord gives us the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The new age will bring redemption of our bodies and we will realize our full adoption rights. Barclay summarizes this section, "Christians are involved in the human situation. Within they must battle with their own evil human nature: without, they must live in a world of death and decay. Nonetheless, Christian do not live only in the world; they also live in Christ. They do not see only the world; they look beyond it to God. They do not see only the consequences of human sin; they see the power of God's mercy and love. Therefore, the keynote of the Christian life is always hope and never despair. Christians wait not for death but for life."

We have looked extensively concerning the manifestation of the sons of God. All creation is groaning for this manifestation. The reason for this is the creation knows that, when the sons of God are manifested, Jesus is coming back. He will come for that Bride *"not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but she should be holy and without blemish"* (Ephesians 5:27).

Verse 25 involved faith, patience, and hope. God gives us a promise, which creates hope, and then we must have faith until it comes to pass. Patience is always tested, for God does not often give and fulfill a promise immediately. He works in us patience.

26 So too the [Holy] Spirit comes to our aid and bears us up in our weakness; for we do not know what prayer to offer nor how to offer it worthily as we ought, but the Spirit Himself goes to meet our supplication and pleads in our behalf with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance.
27 And He Who searches the hearts of men knows what is in the mind of the [Holy] Spirit [what His intent is], because the Spirit intercedes and pleads [before God] in behalf of the saints according to and in harmony with God's will.
28 We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose.

29 For those whom He foreknew [of whom He was aware and loved beforehand], He also destined from the beginning [foreordaining them] to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness], that He might become the firstborn among many brethren.
30 And those whom He thus foreordained, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified (acquitted, made righteous, putting them into right standing with Himself). And those whom He justified, He also glorified [raising them to a heavenly dignity and condition or state of being].

Barclay calls this "one of the most important passages on prayer in the whole New Testament." In Verse 26 the Spirit takes our human limitations, such as ignorance when we do not have the full or clear mind of God and really don't know how to pray according to the need and prays for us. I would think that this could include both praying in tongues and going into travail. I don't think we should limit it to these two things, however, because often the Spirit will put in our mind what to pray. The intercessor in us is the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26-27). The intercessor for us is Jesus (Romans 8:34).

Verse 27 tells us that God searches the hearts of His own. Since the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one, the Holy Spirit is in continual touch with the Father and the Son.

Romans 8:28 is one of the first Rhema words the Lord ever gave to me. This verse is about something we *know*, not we think or hope or pray so. Whether good or bad, everything is working together for good-both God's good and the believer's good. The requirements are that you love God and that you are called (the Greek *kletos* means *the invited*), according to His purpose.

We see this Romans 8:28 principle in the lives of the saints-Job, Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, the Lord Jesus, Paul, to name a few examples, and many, many more. All suffered evil as well as good, and yet God worked them all together for good.

Verse 29 and 30 are highly debated verses that have spun off whole denominations. *Foreknow* is used 5 times in the New Testament (Acts 26:5, 1st Peter 1:20, 2nd Peter 3:17, Romans 11:2 and here in Romans 8:29). It does not mean f*oreordain.* It signifies pre-knowledge, not pre-election. Foreknowledge is always first, followed by predestination. It is not a matter of some being predestined to heaven and others to hell, but those He foreknew would respond to His call and invitation are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.

The firstborn of the first fruits were always given directly to God. They represented the choicest and best and were also the sample of the harvest, flock, or family to follow. Jesus is the firstborn, the choicest and best, but also the representative of the vast family to follow.

31 What then shall we say to [all] this? If God is for us, who [can be] against us? [Who can be our foe, if God is on our side?]

32 He who did not withhold or spare [even] His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also with Him freely and graciously give us all [other] things?
33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect [when it is] God Who justifies [that is, Who puts us in right relation to Himself? Who shall come forward and accuse or impeach those whom God has chosen? Will God, Who acquits us?]
34 Who is there to condemn [us]? Will Christ Jesus (the Messiah), Who died, or rather Who was raised from the dead, Who is at the right hand of God actually pleading as He intercedes for us?
35 Who shall ever separate us from Christ's love? Shall suffering and affliction and tribulation? Or calamity and distress? Or persecution or hunger or destitution or peril or sword?
36 Even as it is written, For Thy sake we are put to death all the day long; we are regarded and counted as sheep for the slaughter.
37 Yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us.
38 For I am persuaded beyond doubt (am sure) that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things impending and threatening nor things to come, nor powers,
39 Nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Verse 31 must give us great peace and assurance as we walk as lambs among the wolfs of this world system. We with God are always a majority, no matter what the situation.

Verse 32, even if they did not believe Jesus was God's Son, would have impacted the Jews and recalled for them Father Abraham who proved his utter loyalty to God by being willing to sacrifice his only son, "the son of promise." This is the greatest example in the world of an individual's loyalty to God. Paul is telling us here that, if God was willing to sacrifice His only Son for us, surely, He can be trusted.

Verses 33-35 tell us that God has acquitted us, and therefore, no one can condemn us, i.e., those who are covered with the blood of Jesus. Also, Christ has risen, and therefore nothing can ever separate us from His love. Verse 34 is saying four things: Jesus died; He rose again; He is at the right hand of God; and He makes intercession for us there. In Paul's mind, Jesus was not seen so much as a judge but as a lover of human souls. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. No disaster in the world can separate us from Christ.

Verses 36-39 continue this wonderful theme that absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of Christ-neither life nor death, angelic powers (the Jewish Rabbis believed that everything had an angel, even blades of grass, and these angels were hostile to mankind because they were jealous), nor age in time, nor negative powers, nor heights

nor depths (these are astrological terms and refer to the domination of people's lives by the stars), nor anything else.

Verse 37 contains a phrase that all the Romans would have understood: …*we are more than conquerors…* Nero in his arrogance had a statue of himself erected in Rome which had the inscription: *Conqueror of the World.* We have been made more than conquerors through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Barclay summarizes this section: "Here is a vision to take away all loneliness and all fear. Paul is saying: 'You can think of every terrifying thing that this or any other world can produce. Not one of them is able to separate the Christian from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ, Lord of very terror and Master of every world.' Of what then shall we be afraid?"