

Security of the Wind-Powered Life

Lesson 8

Romans 8:1–16



Big Idea

Weather forecasts can predict hurricanes, gusty winds or gentle breezes—each with its own anticipated effect. We can never be completely sure that our experience will match the prediction, because weather forecasts, although educated projections, are based on ever-changing data. However, the security of our spiritual lives does not depend on the unstable things around us, but on the personal God who created the entire universe. The Wind-powered life we are called to is secure despite constant changes, because it is built on God, who never changes. Believers are secure in Him and His promises are faithful, true and accurate in every way.



Background

At Pentecost, many Jews from all over were gathered in Jerusalem and were transformed when Holy Spirit came in power. These new Christians returned to their hometowns, including Rome, and shared the Good News about Jesus. They likely became the seeds from which the church in Rome grew.¹

Paul wrote to these churches to assure them of the Good News: Jesus Christ had dealt with the problem of sin for all people. Paul offered encouraging assurance about the new Wind-powered life that was theirs through faith. He stated that the old nature, which used to control them, chafed against the laws of God and expressed itself in rebellion and hostility toward Him (7:5). But, he assured them, Holy Spirit had come with power, which freed them to live Wind-powered, God-honoring lives.



Read Romans 8:1–16

8:1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. ³ The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

¹ Moo, Douglas J. *The Letter to the Romans*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018. 2039

⁴ He did this so that the just [righteous]¹ requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

⁵ Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. ⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. ⁷ For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. ⁸ That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

⁹ But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) ¹⁰ And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

¹² Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. ¹³ For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

¹⁵ So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.



Dig In

1. How does Paul's definitive opening statement about those who belong to Christ impact you? **(8:1)**

Paul was convinced that all believers do, in fact, belong to Christ. What effect does belonging to Christ have on the power of sin? **(8:2)**

¹ NIV

2. Review **verse 3** below, where Paul recounted what God did to save us because the Old Testament law¹ proved unable to do so. Underline the action words that show God's work on our behalf.

³ The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

- a. Why did God do these things? (**8:4**)

- b. Read the following quote:

"[In Romans 7] the law was pictured as faultless in itself, a revelation of a holy God, but agonizingly elusive for the man who tries to keep it in his own strength. The self-satisfied man will minimize the law's demands by magnifying his own achievement, whereas the conscientious man will end up in despair."²

Have you ever experienced either of these struggles with rule-keeping? Do you tend to lean toward magnifying or increasing your own achievements, or do you tend to give in to despair?

- c. God's plan was to effectively deal with sin, both through Christ's sacrifice and through His Wind-Power within the believer. What assumption do you see in Paul's statement in **verse 4**?

¹ The "Law of Moses" could refer to the laws dispensed at Sinai or could be understood as embracing more laws than were strictly Mosaic. Douglas, James Dixon., et al. *New Bible Dictionary*. Inter-Varsity Press, 1994. 686-687

² Longman, Tremper, and David E. Garland. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Romans*. Zondervan, 2008 87

③ Paul contrasted the characteristics of the life controlled by its sin nature¹ and the life controlled by Holy Spirit (the Wind-powered life). What do you notice about the characteristics of each in **Romans 8:5–8**?

① Life controlled by sin nature:

② Life controlled by Holy Spirit:

③ What thoughts or feelings come to mind in response to what you just wrote?

4. In **Romans 8:9–11** below, underline statements about the spiritual reality of the Roman believers.

⁹ But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) ¹⁰ And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

¹ The sin nature Paul is referring to in **verses 5–8** is that of a person who has not yet been transformed through faith in Christ, as shown by his statement in **verse 9** excluding believers from the control of the sin nature. But that does not mean the Christian has no vulnerability at all to the sin nature, or there would not have been any reason for Paul to warn believers about the need to resist the urges of the sin nature (**8:12**). "... for the moment Paul wishes to expose the [sin nature] in its stark reality as being totally alien to God and his holy purposes." Longman, Tremper, and David E. Garland. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Romans*. Zondervan, 2008. 89

a. When Paul used the word “if” in **verse 9**, it is better understood as “since.” It is not used to raise doubt or suggest that some readers might be excluded. Rather, he implied the foundational truth that Holy Spirit lives in believers.¹ Describe a time when you have struggled with doubt about Holy Spirit’s presence within you.

b. Read these verses that speak to the assurance of Holy Spirit’s presence in all believers:

i. **Acts 2:38–39**²

³⁸ Peter replied, ‘Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ This promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away—all who have been called by the Lord our God.

ii. **Ephesians 1:13–14**

¹³ ...And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. ¹⁴ The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify Him.

iii. Respond to these verses by writing a simple prayer of praise. Consider sharing the prayer you wrote with your group.

¹ Longman, Tremper, and David E. Garland. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans*. Zondervan, 2008. 89

² Baptism is not a prerequisite to be saved. “Water baptism identifies a person as a disciple of Christ and celebrates the passage from an old life into a new life in Christ. Simply stated, it is an outward sign of an inward change.” “Baptism.” *The Alliance*, www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/perspectives/baptism.

5. Paul stated that believers are not obligated to their sinful nature (**Romans 8:12**). How have you seen your obligation to the sinful nature change over the course of your life as you have learned to walk with Holy Spirit?

6. What did Paul indicate was the path to death, and what did he indicate was the path to life? (**Romans 8:13**)

a. Putting to death the sinful nature and developing a character marked by the fruit of the Spirit¹ is not something we can do on our own. We need to cooperate with Holy Spirit by listening to Him, choosing to follow His lead and depending on His help. Read the following quote about the development of Wind-powered lives:

“We cannot grit our teeth and become patient. We cannot muster our willpower and become kind. We cannot stress and strain our way to generosity. This ‘fruit’ is the work of the Holy Spirit. Like the fruit on a tree, it is developed naturally from the inside to the outside.”²

i. How does this quote encourage or help you?

ii. How might you specifically choose to yield to Holy Spirit’s inner work in your life today?

¹ Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

² Smith, James Bryan. *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows*. IVP Books, 2009. 31

- b. Are there any particular “deeds of your sinful nature” (**Romans 8:13**) that you are struggling to put to death?

There is power in confession.¹ Consider sharing with a friend and asking them to pray with you that Holy Spirit would guide you and empower you in putting those deeds to death.

7. Paul stated in **Romans 8:14–16** that all believers have been adopted as God’s own children forever.² How are you impacted by the permanence of your Spirit-powered status as God’s adopted child?

- a. The legal act of adoption was not practiced by the Jews, so what Paul had in mind concerning the adopted children of God was likely drawn from the Greco-Roman practice whereby a man could formally confer on a child all the legal rights of a birth child, including a full inheritance.³ How could receiving this status help a child overcome fear, as stated in **verse 15**?

¹ **James 5:16**

² The term “adoption” bears an important relationship to justification in that it is declared and has permanent validity. Longman, Tremper, and David E. Garland. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Romans*. Zondervan, 2008. 93

³ Moo, Douglas J. *The Letter to the Romans*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018. 261

b. Paul said we can call God “Abba Father,” just as Jesus did in the Lord’s prayer. However, many people experience earthly fathers who wound them. “The solution is not to abandon the term ‘father,’ but to let Jesus define it.”¹ In the Lord’s prayer (**Matthew 6:9–13**) Jesus revealed “Abba Father” as: near/present,² holy, powerful, a provider and a protector.³ How can this perspective on God help a person confidently call out to “Abba Father” for help living a Wind-powered life?

c. What comes to mind as you consider being supported and led by that kind of father?

¹Smith, James Bryan. *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows*. IVP Books, 2009. 60

² In Jewish cosmology heaven was the surrounding atmosphere, the very air they breathed. Smith, James Bryan. *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows*. IVP Books, 2009. 60

³Smith, James Bryan. *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows*. IVP Books, 2009. 60-61

Security of the Wind-Powered Life

Life is full of challenges, and it is easy to become overwhelmed, fearful or self-focused. If you've ever seen the enormous wind turbines that generate electricity, you know that if you are standing right next to one, you will miss the glory of the wind moving the blades unless you look up. As you read the statements below, lift your eyes and reflect on the truths about the Wind-Powered life.

Ask God to help you see how His Wind is faithfully turning the blades of your life:

- Everyone who trusts Jesus for forgiveness of their sins is Wind-Powered.
- The Wind-Powered person is free from condemnation.
- The Wind-Powered life pleases God.
- The Wind-Powered person is free from obligation to their sin nature.
- The Wind-Powered person receives help following God.
- The Wind-Powered person is uniquely gifted to be a blessing.
- The Wind-Powered person has a secure identity as God's own adopted child.
- The Wind-Powered person has received a full inheritance from their Father.

1. Which one of these truths did you need to hear the most? Consider writing it down and placing it where you can see it this week.

Read and be encouraged by **John 7:37–39**.

³⁷ ... Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! ³⁸ Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'"

³⁹ (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him ...)

2. Spend some time thanking God for His unlimited power in you and for you.

