***Hope in the Future, No. 2
RO112-01***

**© Berean Memorial Church of Irving, Texas, Inc. (1977)**

Romans 8. We are in verses 22-25. Our subject is Hope in the Future, segment number 2.

We have learned in this passage that the world of nature is in disarray because of God's curse upon Adam's environment as punishment for his sin of negative volition relative to the tree in the Garden of Eden. Nature is viewed by Paul in these verses as if it were a person, that is nature is personified. And so, he speaks about nature looking back to the sin that took place in Eden with sorrow, and nature sighs that it ever happened. Furthermore, Paul says nature suffers as if it were in the pangs of birth which will, in the future, result in the delivery of a creation freedom from the divine curse.

Now, the time when nature will be released from the suffering of God's curse, we find from researching the Word of God, is the era of the millennium when Jesus Christ reigns on this earth. Actually, the ultimate and final removal of that curse is going to be in what the Bible describes as the new earth. That will be a new earth that God will bring together along with a new heaven which will be after the millennium and which will be the eternal state.

We looked at that briefly in Isaiah 65 beginning at verse 17 where that new earth is described. Isaiah says, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Isaiah here declares that there's going to be a full restoration from the curse in the new earth in eternity after the millennium.

2 Peter 3:10-13 refers to this same new earth. Revelation 21:1 refers to the reality of this new earth. Now, this is eternity, this new earth, and verse 17 is talking about eternity. However, verses 18-25, I want to clarify, refer to a transition stage to that eternal condition. And the millennium is the transition stage.

Now, all that Isaiah's talking about is simply the longing of nature to be released from the curse of sin. But that longing is not only true, Paul continues in Romans 8 to point out, of nature; it's true of all of the rest of us.

So, in verse 23, we continue. Paul says, "And not only they." The word "not" is a definite "not." It's the particle "ou," the strong negative. "Only" is the Greek word "monos." It is a word which is indicating that there is not a restriction here to merely creation. We would translate this as "and not only this." Paul connotes but not just creation alone is in this condition. Then he says "but," and he uses a strong Greek word for "but," the word "alla." This is introduced here as a comparison of nature and the Christian in terms of something that both are doing. But Paul says, "But not only this," that is, that nature is looking forward to being released, "but ourselves also." "Ourselves" referring to we church-age believers who joined them also in something that we have as a problem with the curse. "We who have," he says. And the word "have" is the word "echo." The word "echo" means to possess something, and what we have is what he describes as the first fruits: the "aparche."

"Aparche" refers to the first sample of something that you take. A farmer goes out to the field. The crop has come into fruition. He pulls off a little bit of the grain. That first piece of the grain that he takes from his field is the fruit fruits of that harvest. There is more to come from that source, and it is going to be the same.

**The First Fruits of the Spirit**

This is why this word is used in terms of the Lord Jesus being the first fruits of the resurrection. Because that means in the resurrection, there is going to be more people just like Christ was raised from the dead. He's not the only one who's going to come back to life. All the believers are going to come back just like He did, and furthermore, there are going to be just as He is when they are raised. As the grain sample is just like what's out in the field, so Christ was in resurrection in a glorified, we too will be. Now, we have a first fruits. We've got a sample of what God is going to do for us.

Question: what is the sample? And Paul identifies it as the first fruits of the Spirit or which is the Spirit. This is the Greek word "pneuma." The first fruits which is God the Holy Spirit. This word refers to the Holy Spirit as possessed by the Christian. The gift of the Holy Spirit is given to every believer as God's pledge for the inheritance which is promised to the Christian in heaven. The Holy Spirit is the pledge of what God says He's going to do for us.

2 Corinthians 1:22 puts it this way, "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest [or the down payment] of the Spirit in our hearts." God says, "I have destined you for a heavenly inheritance. I have got something waiting for you that you wouldn't believe in heaven. And in order to make it clear to you that I mean to keep my Word, I'm going to make a down payment."

Now, as you all know, a down payment on anything is but a small bit of what is going to ultimately be paid. Now, I want you to keep that in mind as we examine this down payment of the Holy Spirit as the first fruits of what we will receive from the hand of the living God. There will be the fantastic release of the Christian in heaven from the presence and the power of sin with all of its destructive effects.

Yes, creation is looking to get rid of all the curse of sin, and not only this, not only that they are doing it, but it is also true that we Christians are also looking for that release. The ministry of the Holy Spirit to the Christian during the church age is but the first installment of an eternity of such amazing blessings indeed. 1 John 3:2 puts it well when it says, "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

1. **Regeneration of the Sinner**

So, let's take a look for a moment and review exactly what it is that God the Holy Spirit produces for us as a down payment. In what way is He the first fruits? Number one, one of the things He does is He regenerates. The Holy Spirit regenerates the believing sinner so that he possesses a living human spirit which is required for life in heaven.

We are told this in John 3:3, "Jesus answered and said unto him [to Nicodemus], 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again [regenerated], he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" Verses 6-7 say, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, 'Ye must be born again [that is, you must be regenerated].''"

Now, Ephesians 2:5 tells us that this is exactly what God has done for us. Where the Apostle Paul says, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." When we were dead in sins, He made us regenerated.

And one more that we may add to that is the book of Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Now, this is God's only provision whereby a person who has been born spiritually dead may instantly become spiritually alive. And until you are spiritually alive, you cannot enter heaven.

You will notice that this is entirely the work of God the Holy Spirit apart from any provision on the part of the sinner. It is entirely the work of God the Holy Spirit upon the sinner who trusts in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

In John 1:12-13, we therefore read, "But as many as received Him [Jesus Christ], to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name: Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." So, the first factor to know about what we have in the Holy Spirit as the first fruits is that this is the person who makes it possible for you to be changed in the way that enables you to be qualified to go to heaven. He provides regeneration. That's just a sample of what God is going to do.

1. **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

Then, there is another factor, and that is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit permanently joins the believer to Jesus Christ at the point of salvation by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is clearly declared in 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit [one Holy Spirit] were we all baptized into one body [the body of Christ, the church], whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit [that is, here to be indwelled by one spirit]."

So, the Holy Spirit permanently joins the believer to the Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 6:3, we read, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" This is not water baptism. Water baptism couldn't put you into the death of Christ. This is Holy Spirit baptism that did that.

Furthermore, Galatians 3:27 emphasizes this same point, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." So, it is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that removes the believing sinner from the position of death in Adam to the place of eternal life in Christ. And it is received by all believers automatically at the point of salvation.

1 Corinthians 12:13 says, "Were we all baptized." Everybody in that body. And as you know, many of those in the church of Corinth were very carnal people, and yet all of them in spite of their carnality have been baptized into Christ, because that's how you're saved. If you're not in Christ, you're not saved. So, the baptism of the Holy Spirit joins the believer to the benefits of the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ in order to free that Christian from the domination of the sin nature.

Colossians 2:12 says, "Buried with him in baptism [Holy Spirit baptism], in which also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." We are united to that death through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now, of course, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I should say, has nothing to do with power for Christian living or Christian service. It has to do only with God as a judge providing a solution for the fact that we have a sin nature which we received from Adam. And the way God solves the fact that we have a sin nature is to take us out of Adam and to put us in Christ. That's His judicial solution for the sin nature.

And the baptism of the Holy Spirit is basic: to be born again. It has nothing to do with coming into power. Now, the charismatics love to tell people that baptism of the Holy Spirit is something that comes afterwards. You do not get into the Holy Spirit after salvation in order to have power for service or living. But, the truth of the matter is, He does place you into Christ. Now, that is an amazing down payment: to be taken out of the place of death in Adam and placed into Jesus Christ. How else could that be done?

1. **The Permanent Indwelling of the Holy Spirit**

Then, there is another factor of that down payment, and that is that the Holy Spirit indwells every church-age believer, and He indwells Him permanently. It is important that you add the word "permanently" because the Bible says that He will be with us forever. In the Old Testament, sometimes people were indwelt, but they were never indwelt permanently.

John 14:16-17, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter [referring to the Holy Spirit], that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." The Lord Jesus while He was with His disciples told them that in the near future, God the Holy Spirit would do something that He had never done in the Old Testament: He would permanently come and make His residence in them. They would become His temple now.

In 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Paul says therefore, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Now, I don't know how you feel, but when I read a verse like that, I get some goosebumps on the back of my neck, because this is dangerous territory that you're treading. When God says your physical body which includes that brain, don't forget, is the temple of the living Spirit of God. And if you defile it, you can expect to be destroyed! Do I have to explain to you what "destroyed" means? We are being cautioned that you are treading on the pathway of death itself if you do not treat the temple of God the Holy Spirit - your physical body and your mental capacities - in a proper way. This is a great first fruits, but it's a very sobering down payment factor.

We may add to this 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Paul says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye were bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

You see, emphasizing the same thing: your body belongs to God. All of its capacities belong to God. See that you treat it accordingly and in that way. So, God assures the very presence of Himself with us twenty-four hours a day by bringing God the Holy Spirit to indwell us. It's a permanent indwelling, and I should not have to point to you that if God the Holy Spirit permanently indwells you, the last place you have to worry about going to is to the lake of fire. If He indwells you permanently, you can never be lost again. Whatever else you may do, you can never be lost again or else this scripture cannot be true. If He indwells you permanently, you are safe in your salvation.

The absence of the Holy Spirit, in fact, indicates that you are not born again. We've already learned that earlier here in Romans 8:9, the last part of the verse that says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." If God the Holy Spirit is not in you, you are not His; you are not going to heaven. So, this is another tremendous thing. The first fruits includes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

1. **The Sealing of the Christian's Salvation**

But, there is a fourth one, and that is that the Holy Spirit seals every Christian for an eternity in heaven. Sealing indicates what a thing is destined for, what it's restricted to be used for. Ephesians 1:13 says, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

In Ephesians 4:30, we read on the same subject, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." The Holy Spirit himself is actually the seal of our salvation. The fact that we have Him stamped upon us indicates that we have been sealed for heaven. The believer receives this eternal sealing at the moment of salvation; you don't have to go looking for it. The sealing of the Holy Spirit declares that the believer belongs to God who intends to preserve the Christian to the day of redemption, it says. And there, again, you see, you have another evidence of your eternal security, your salvation, because you're sealed to that destiny and to that destiny alone.

Because sealing makes a Christian secure in his salvation, he is, however, admonished to avoid using this as license to grieve the Holy Spirit with his sinning. That's what Ephesians 4:30 is talking about. This person who sealed you to the day of redemption and enabled you to breathe a sigh of relief that you're never going to have to face hell is not there so that you can then live a sinful life, that you can just abandon yourself to evil. And so he says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit." And grieving the Holy Spirit means refusing to be obedient to the Word of God, to permit sin to function in your life.

1. **The Teaching of the Holy Spirit**

There is a fifth factor to be considered in the fact He is our first fruit, and that is that He teaches the believer. The Holy Spirit teaches the Christian Bible doctrine truth in order to develop the believer's divine viewpoint. Without the Holy Spirit, we could not learn any divine phenomena.

In John 16 beginning at verse 12, we read, Jesus says, "'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now [you're not able to receive them]. Nevertheless, when He, the Spirit of truth [God the Holy Spirit], is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come [He will show you prophetic truth]. He shall glorify Me: for he shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

Jesus says, "If he is showing you what I know and what I have, He is also showing you what God knows and what God has to say, because I get everything from my Father.

So, through the agency of the gift of teaching which has been provided in the age of grace for brining divine viewpoint to the understanding of the believer, the Holy Spirit instructs us in divine viewpoint truth. He leads the believer personally in being able to identify what is true doctrine as he is taught the Word of God.

And a Christian has to be able to listen to a preacher and know when he's hearing the truth and when he's hearing bunco. And it is God the Holy Spirit that is the protective element to keep you from being conned. God the Holy Spirit will never permit falsehood into your human spirit. That will never be stored there. He will alert you and put you on guard to be negative to that which is not compatible to scripture.

And so in 1 John 2:27, we read, "But the anointing which ye have received [that is, this indwelling of the Holy Spirit]." ".The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him."

Now, of course, this verse is not saying that you don't need a human teacher. Otherwise, there'd be no point to having the gift of teaching in the New Testament church. But what it says is after you've been taught, you don't have a human being to tell you, "This is true, this is false." You have the Word of God, and God the Holy Spirit will guide you to putting up the red flags in your mind when falsehood is being conveyed to you.

Divine viewpoint truth which you receive, however, with positive volition from the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, is converted into truth that is stored in your human spirit for reference as you need it. Now, that is a great element of down payment: the Holy Spirit teaching us the Word of God.

1. **Guidance Into the Will of God**

Point number 6, and that is that He guides us into the will of God. The Holy Spirit through Bible doctrine guides the believer into the will and to the blessing of God. Notice Ephesians 5:26. Ephesians 5:26, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." He guides us into that which is the truth of God. And Romans 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." So, the Bible makes it clear that God the Holy Spirit is in the business of guiding us into what is the will of God and into what is the blessing of God.

Christians, furthermore, are therefore told that they are always free to ask the Spirit of God for guidance for their lives. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Now, the Holy Spirit, of course, uses various means to move the positive believer in the right direction, but the Christian who is open to His leading will be led in the right direction. The Holy Spirit leads the yielded believer who is in temporal fellowship with the Father. He does not lead the unyielded, carnal believer. This enables a believer to exercise his priesthood and to make those marvelous spiritual sacrifices which please God, such as are described in Romans 12:1 and Hebrews 13:15-16 and other scriptures. The spiritual sacrifices of our priesthood. It is God the Holy Spirit who guides us in making those sacrifices in an appropriate way.

1. **Living a Supernatural Life**

And then, here's a very dramatic factor from God the Holy Spirit which is but a down payment of the real thing that's coming, and that is power to live the supernatural life which is demanded of the Christian in the devil's world. We are called upon to live a life of maturity. The Bible calls that "perfection." That is absolutely impossible without divine capacity to do it.

Matthew 5:48 says, "Be ye therefore perfect [spiritually mature], even as your Father which is in heaven is mature." Now, that's a big demand. That's a fantastic demand.

Notice Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." It is not easy for a Christian not to live according to the patterns of this world. It is not easy for a Christian to reject the styles of this world, to reject the thinking of this world, to reject the ideals, the aspirations, the goals in this world's system, when you're surrounded by them. It is God the Holy Spirit who takes a Christian who is in temporal fellowship, filled with the Spirit, and He controls that believer. It enables that believer to live the supernatural life that is demanded of us.

Ephesians 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." As we are filled with the Spirit, that is the basis of our power for living.

And 1 John 1:9 about the confession of sin tell us how to be filled with the Spirit. Now, I must caution you that when we are talking about power for living, I am loathe to use the word success, but that's what most people think about. Most people think about successful living. Successful living is a dangerous concept today, and it is being used in a dramatic way by the devil, because now even churches are becoming oriented to telling people how they may be successful, and that is becoming the criterion instead of the fact that they may be humble servants who do not appear to be successful in the eyes of the world.

But God has a power capacity for the believer, but I want to tell you it is not positive thinking. It is not the concept of mind over matter. It is not even a good self-image. Now, all of the psychiatrists have just blown their tops. "It isn't a good self-image? It isn't mind over matter? It isn't having a positive mental attitude?" No, it isn't. All that is a deception of eastern mysticism and modern psychology which envisions that that there is a great potential in man which is nothing short of divine.

Now, either we are degraded, either we are sinful, either we are everything the Bible says and therefore we are incapacitated, or else we are little gods, just like the Mormons tell us, "We are potential deities."

And when we talk about having a down payment of God the Holy Spirit as power for living, I can assure you it has nothing to do with what is common thinking and that is commonly being promoted in the cutesie-poo little Bible classes around the world and around the Christian communities today. You know, this idea that you can visualize yourself into being successful in some way. That's a satanic delusion. Where do you ever find in the Word of God that man has the mental capacity like God has with His omnipotence to bring something into existence that you can think into existence, that you can visualize yourself into some successful condition and bring it about to pass? It is a satanic delusion, and it's based on the deception that man possesses divine powers yet untapped.

Have you ever heard about the fact that we don't use 90% of our brain power? Bologna! There's no proof of that whatsoever. That's just a cute idea in order for the people who want you to go toward deification to say, "Hey, you've got great power, great capacity." Now, I can see why the idea arose that most people don't use 90% of their brains. That's a self-evident fact with many, but it is not true. You've got double organs in your body to have a standby, to have a backup system so that one can go out of operation and you can still survive. But when they are both there, there are both functioning. And I can assure you, all of the capacity of your brain is functioning all the time. It is what you are putting into it that makes the difference. It is the person of God who indwells you who makes a difference with what you do with that thinking power.

So, turn your eyes upon Jesus and not on an assured self-potential waiting to be turned loose by imagination, by visualization, and by bio-feedback techniques. You'll get some results from that, but you should be aware that you have now stepped into the occult. You should be aware that you're now dabbling in sorcery. You should be aware that the results you're getting is from the demonic world. And you should be reminded that the penalty for that is death. So, you may want to rethink treading that kind of dangerous territory. The Christian's power for godly living and for His capacity for service which indeed, we find, we do possess, and we are given is not anything in man's old sin nature, but it is in the Holy Spirit who indwells him. Holy Spirit power, not mind power. That's the difference.

So, it's a great thing this is a down payment. Do you realize what that means? That's only a fraction of the kind of power you're going to someday have to be able to exercise. The down payment is a small part.

1. **Provision of Spiritual Gifts**

There's another thing, of course, and that is that the Holy Spirit provides with spiritual gifts. He provides us with the gifts with which we serve God and thereby we may earn rewards in heaven. The Bible is very clear that we do receive spiritual abilities. These are not your natural abilities that you're born with.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 say, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirit; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the very same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

There are different gifts. Some of these mentioned here are no longer operational. But, those that are operational come to us by delivery at the hand of God the Holy Spirit. This scripture makes very clear that it is the Spirit of God who divides every man individually as He, God the Spirit decides. You don't go asking for a spiritual gift. If you have it, it is because you received it at the point of your salvation. And indeed, it is a spiritual ability you need to identifying yourself, because it gives you the capacity of the particular kind of Christian service which you are uniquely fitted to perform. God gives it to you so that you may prepare yourself for His service, and that's what you do with a gift. You do prepare it, you do sharpen it, and then you use it, and He responds with the blessing of providing the rewards in heaven.

1 Corinthians 3:11-13 describe that passage that we all know so well that we are going to face an evaluation for our works, and we will be rewarded according to the nature of those works, whether they were divine good or whether they were human good. But I do want to stress that you are responsible for using the spiritual gifts which God has given you. You are responsible, and you will be called to account to what you did with the gifts, the capacities that He gave you.

1 Peter 4:10 says, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." The Lord expects us to be good stewards of the capacities He has given us.

In Titus 3:8, we read, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God [Christians] might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto man." Divine good is produced through the use of your spiritual gifts. That, then, becomes the basis upon which you will receive the rewards in eternity that make the difference between one Christian's heaven and another Christian's heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:10 puts it this way, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." So, we're going to face the music someday for what we did with the spiritual gifts we had.

1. **Production of the Character of Jesus Christ in the Christian**

There is another element of the down payment that is very dramatic, and that is that the Holy Spirit produces in us the character of Jesus Christ. He produces in the believer as part of our down payment the beginning of transforming us into the ultimate image we will bear: the person of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:22-23 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit [which is the character of Jesus Christ] is love [mental attitude affection, not emotion], joy [inner happiness which is not dependent on people, things, or circumstances], peace [projecting a spirit of tranquility in all that you do], patience [the spirit of waiting upon the Lord to make the changes that need to be changed], and kindness [treating others as yourself], goodness [considerateness in dealing with others], faithfulness [dependable in your relationships; your word can be trusted], gentleness [tenderhearted with people who don't deserve that kind of treatment], and self-control [personal discipline that you do not respond with the sin nature response that you may be inclined to deliver to somebody that rightly deserves it]."

All of this, indeed, is the character of Jesus Christ, and it is God the Holy Spirit who produces this in us. Now, if we had all of this functioning, this is an amazing quality. These would be fantastic if all of these elements of the fruit of the Spirit were operating in us. This is just a down payment! We can't even begin to imagine what kind of people we are someday going to be.

1. **Assistance in Prayer**

There is a tenth factor that's part of this first fruits. The Holy Spirit assists us in prayer, and this is such a valuable, terrific down payment. Romans 8, we haven't come to it yet, shortly we will, verses 26-27 say, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

The sin nature in our human finiteness creates a weakness in our practice in making us effective in prayer. Christians don't always know how to pray about some matters so that they are in the will of God. Christians don't always know whether they should keep praying for something, whether they should keep pursuing something, and you have to turn to God the Holy Spirit and ask Him to edit your prayers to ask Him to lead you to the topic of prayer that you should be pursuing. That's what these verses mean. He comes in and takes over for us when it gets out of hand when we are not sure of what we should be doing.

He prayers, furthermore, in our behalf, we are told in keeping with the will of God to meet our needs. And most of all, we should be aware of the fact that it is God the Holy Spirit who performs the wonderful ministry of moving us to engage in prayer. It is the easiest thing to neglect. It is the least performed function among Christians, and it is the least thing they teach their children to do with their parents on their own. It is only at mealtime. It is only at bedtime. It is only at these little periodic things that the children learn to pray, but they don't learn to live a life of prayer, because their parents aren't people who live a life of prayer. And it is God the Holy Spirit who comes in and says, "Christian, don't neglect that. Pursue it. That prayer is what's going to make the difference."

You remember James 5:16? The last part of that verse, it says, "The effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much." It means that the prayer of a righteous man is effectual to accomplishing much when it is in operation. That's what the verse says. The prayers of a righteous man - one who is born again and in temporal fellowship - will accomplish enormous things when it is put to use. And it is God the Holy Spirit who comes in as part of His down payment ministry to enable us to perform what 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says: "Pray without ceasing."

1. **Assurance of the Christian's Position in God's Family**

Another thing the Holy Spirit brings assurance of the Christian's position in the family of God. We've learned this in Romans 8:16, "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the conviction and the peace of heart that we've been born into the family of God. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to the believer that he has a marvelous position in that family as a joint-heir with Jesus Christ which is what we learned in Romans 8:17, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." What a marvelous down payment that is.

1. **The Ability to Gain Victory Over the Sin Nature**

The Holy Spirit enables the Christian to gain victory over the sin nature. Romans 8:13 says, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit [his capacity enables you] to mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

The sin nature, as you know, has a pattern of terrible lusts that it is constantly imposing on every young person, every adult. Galatians 5:16 lists these for us when it says, "This I say then, 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.'"

And then, Paul goes on, and he describes the lusts of the flesh. Galatians 5:19[-21], "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness [that is, sensuality], Idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, wrath, factions, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and the like." Paul says, "There's more. I won't list them. There's a lot more like this." The sin nature no longer holds authority over the Christian, and the Holy Spirit preserves the believer from enslavement in practice.

**Longing for the Resurrection**

So, Romans 8:23 has introduced us to a very tremendous thought when it says not only this, that creation is looking forward to being delivered from its pain, but we are ourselves also are looking to be delivered from our pain because of sin - we who have the first fruits of the Spirit. And when you run your eye over these twelve things we have listed this morning, you can see that it is unbelievable what we yet shall someday be.

Ephesians 1:14, "Who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." Paul says, "This is the down payment of the Holy Spirit." We are longing for something. You know what we're longing for? We're longing for the resurrection, and next time, we shall delve into the marvels of the future that has to do with our full adoption when we receive those resurrected bodies and all the implications of that condition.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)