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Galatians

Chapter 4 - Man's Way Enslaves

Minor Restrictions (vs.1-3)

Galatians 4:1-7: Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

I so love this book of Galatians. It is a freeing book. It tells us what God really wants, and it clarifies it for us. I mean, some things I actually have to have a picture and God knows I'm simple that way, so He draws pictures for me. In many respects, that's what we're looking at in this wonderful book of Galatians, as Galatians 5 tells us that Christ came to set us free, and we go, "What does that look like?" and "What are we being freed from?"

At a very early age, I had a drug problem. My mother drugged me to church; she drugged me to Sunday school; she drugged me to Sunday night, and I had to be there. I didn't have a choice, and it was that I oftentimes bucked. I didn't want to be there. I didn't want to do that. I'd have to sit in the front row while my dad preached, and he would sometimes raise his eyebrow at me. I knew that meant that I was going to be in trouble when I got home. So, I knew that church was something that I was supposed to do, and I knew how I was supposed to act. I didn't always act that way. It would be one of the deacons, I never will forget, he loved to pull my ear. I would do something wrong, and he was a big old guy, worked construction, laying bricks, and so he'd see me, and he'd just walk up to me, grab me by the ear, pull me outside, and let me have it. So, you know, I don't have the fondest of memories when we were first going to church, but I do remember many good people and many loving people and the influence of those people. Nevertheless, I realized that I was immature, and I realized that many of the things that I was doing I was doing because I was told I had to do them. This is really the difference between the Law and the Spirit. Scripture is wanting us to know and feel that difference, because really, you

and I are not truly saved or clearly walking in the Spirit of God until it's the Spirit leading us and not the Law. How do you convey that the Law is not bad, but the Law is not where we need to be anymore? How do you convey that? Well, the book of Galatians does that and begins to reveal to us just what that picture looks like. In many respects, Paul is revealing to us what it means to live under the Law, and it had a place. It had a time. In fact, his statement is, in Galatians 3, that the Law was a tutor to lead us to Christ. We've been talking about that word "tutor," which is that pedagogue in the olden days, the antiquities days. We began to realize that was somebody that a father would hire to watch over his kids. We would in some respects maybe refer to it as a nanny of sorts, but the tutor was not as much the instructor of the school. The tutor would take you to school, and the tutor would make sure that you were doing the things that you needed to do on the way to school; make sure that you weren't getting into trouble on the way to school. But that was the person that was overseeing you. What was interesting in that context, is that they were actually hired slaves. One particular incident, Plato writes of that particular time, a few 100 years before this, which it's interesting, over a 1000-year span, this was the given way in which you took care of kids, and you raised them. If you had enough money, you would hire a servant, who would then be the one that would oversee your kids and make sure that they stayed out of trouble. But the kids sometimes also manipulated the tutor, and Plato writes of a precocious adolescent who actually dragged his tutor around wherever he wanted him to go. This is actually recorded. He had actually turned to his tutor, and he would say, "Look here. Who's the slave? Are you the slave of me, or am I the slave of you?" And of course, the tutor knew that he was hired, and he was a slave of his father. So, kids knew that they weren't totally in charge of them, and they would play on that. Sometimes, of course, the tutor would be over aggressive and sometimes hostile and pull on people's ears and do things like that. The point is that the whole purpose of the tutor was to keep the kids straight until he was of age to where he could function on his own and he would be an adult. This Scripture is going to tell us it's the picture of the Spirit. It is the fullness of time that we come into, and we become mature. What Scripture tells us, is that the tutor is the Law. So, the Law has a purpose. The Law keeps us in line. It keeps us from hurting each other, from destroying each other. Of course, his statement is, I want to remind you in Galatians 3, as it tells us in verse 19, "Why then the Law," right? Why do we have the Law? I oftentimes go back, in my mind, and I remember sitting at church reading the Old Testament, and having the Old Testament read to me. Certain things in the Old Testament, especially when you go through the book of Leviticus and there's a lot of detail about the Law to Israel and some of it, you're just going, "I have no idea what he's talking about." And it just sort of separates you from that. The more you go into the Law, the more you almost feel oppressed by it in some respects, but it has a purpose, and the purpose is to keep us from going outside of the realm. Of course, one of the things that was clear is that from the early days of Jacob, Jacob was rebellious. In fact, Micah records it in Micah 3:8. It speaks of rebellious Jacob and his children. So, up to that point, we

really didn't have a Law. Of course, in the time of Abraham, there was no Law; 430 years before the Law, Abraham was a friend of God.

Why then the Law? The passage says, well, "It was added because of transgressions." In other words, people were stepping out of the line, and they weren't doing what they were supposed to do. So, by the time you come to Israel, of course you have, let's see, how are they described in Scripture? A rebellious and obstinate people, and that's literally how it's described. So, they didn't have the maturity to say, "I'm going to do what's right because I love God or because I trust him," or they didn't have the maturity to walk by faith as Abraham walked by faith, and thus was a friend of God. There are passages that convey this. Let me just mention some of them.

Deuteronomy 9 speaks of Moses actually smashing the tablets, the rules and the regulations that God had given them to keep those people in line. Why? Well, He says, "Because you're a rebellious people." And Moses literally says in Deuteronomy 9:24, he cries out, "You have been rebellious since day one."

So, why do you have to have the Law? Well, if people are rebellious, you're going to have to have more rules and regulations. Why are laws made in their own country? Well, you don't have to have a Law if everybody's doing the right thing. When people begin to do the wrong thing, then you get, "Alright, we're going to have to have a law for that one." And every now and then, new inventions come. I mean, if you were to talk about Facebook or any of these crazy things that they talk about now with the phones and the internet or whatever, if you were to talk about those things 20, 30, 40, or 50 years ago, people would go, "What are you talking about? What are you talking about a law that would regulate this?" But because people misuse the new inventions, well, then laws have to come.

There's a passage in Ezekiel; if you look with me in Ezekiel 2, and just to define what I'm saying because sometimes I make statements, and I want you to see that it's actually in Scripture. If you look with me in Ezekiel 2:1, he turns to Ezekiel during the time in which the children of Israel were in captivity. Why were they taken into captivity? Well, we're going to have to say that that was remedial punishment. Why remedial punishment? Because they're not doing the right thing.

(Ezekiel 2:1) "Then He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!"

(Ezekiel 2:2) As He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard Him speaking to me.

(Ezekiel 2:3) Then He said to me, "Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day.

(Ezekiel 2:4) "I am sending you to them who are stubborn and obstinate children, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.'"

Now, I just want to remind you of something. This is after the Law. We're about 1000 years after the Law. So, they had 1000 years to have the Law. The perception is "Well, if I just knew what I was supposed to do, I would do it." God goes, "Ok, We'll give you what you're supposed to do." They don't do it. In fact, things are actually worse.

He states in Ezekiel 3:7,

"Yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me. Surely the whole house of Israel is stubborn and obstinate."

How many times does He say that within this particular book? They are rebellious house. They go into exile.

(Ezekiel 3:11) "Go to the exiles..."

Which he's telling us they're in captivity. So, does the law help them? No, remedial punishment.

"Go to the exiles, to the sons of your people, and speak to them and tell them, whether they listen or not, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.'"

(Ezekiel 3:12) Then the Spirit lifted me up..."

The bottom line is that no parent wants to, shall we say, put down the law? They don't want to make their kid have to do things. They would rather their kid want to do the right thing. No parent that loves their child really wants to discipline them, but Scripture says because you love them, you will discipline them because you don't want to see them go and do the wrong thing. In the beginning years of a child, the child needs the oversight of a parent. The child needs somebody that is making sure that they're not stepping out of line. Oftentimes, those laws have to get more detailed. I know I had one child that all I had to do was kind of frown at the child and the child would melt, and they would do the right thing. Another one, it didn't matter what I did, whatever. It didn't matter what I did. It's like "What? Why are you hitting me? Why? I don't even know what's going on." So, the point is that if you're a rebellious and obstinate people, you're going to have to have a lot laws.

If you go through the Old Testament, and you begin to read some of these laws, you begin to realize that God is not only keeping them busy, but He's also keeping them focused on the right thing, which they normally wouldn't do. They would get themselves involved in a lot of other

things that would be destructive to their own lives. So, when you go through the different laws and you're seeing all the details of the different kinds of sacrifices, you're seeing the different details of the kinds of worship, God is giving them pictures of what they clearly should be thinking and doing but because they can't think from their heart, they've got to do it with their hands so to speak.

You're going to really think I'm a bad person, which is actually true, but in school I remember times in which I had those remedial times that the teachers just couldn't. So, they're going to tell you to do something. So, one of the things that they used to do back in my day is if you did something wrong, they would have you right on the board. So many times, usually it was over 100. I can think of one in particular, "I will not throw the eraser in class." And if the teacher really wanted to make you suffer, they would keep adding to the sentence, "in class on Tuesday at 3:00." So, they just keep adding so that would be longer. I remember writing on the board and as you're writing well, first of all, you're not throwing erasers. So, that's a good thing, but the point of that particular punishment was to be reminded of what I wasn't supposed to be doing. Now, did it change my heart? No, not really. It didn't change my heart. It made me think the next time I was thinking about throwing an eraser, "Maybe I don't want to do that. It could ruin a whole day." But it could not change my heart. What you look at in the Law are rudimentary things that God was telling the children of Israel to do. "Have the sacrifice this way. Do this." And it was all pointing to Christ.

In fact, let me let me show you a couple of passages in the New Testament. One is found in Colossians 2, and we'll segue into the passage that we're looking at today. Colossians 2, if you look there with me, will make this interesting statement,

(Colossians 2:8) "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."

Now, the Law is rudimentary; it's elementary principles of the word. What it means by "elementary," is foundational stuff. The best way I can describe it to you is this, that in order for you to learn how to read, you had to learn the alphabet. That's elementary. So, you learn your ABC's. You actually learn the alphabet. You're not going to be reading till you learn those, but it's not the ABC's that help you read. They'll get you off to a good start and point you to the right direction, but now you've got to form words, and you've got to put them together and that goes beyond the rudimentary. So, there's a foundation in the ABC's, there's no doubt about it, and it'll get you in the right direction. The Law was a tutor to lead us to Christ, but it's not the end. It's just the beginning, and that's why it uses the word "elementary," rudimentary, or more specifically, the beginnings of things. It is the beginning of things. The passage says don't go back to them. In other words, let's say that I had a blackboard here in the church, and

you saw me pull out a piece of chalk and I started writing, "I will not throw the eraser in class anymore." You go, "What are you doing that for?" And I go, "Well, that's the Law. I just want to be reminded of the Law." You go, "But you don't throw erasers anymore." I mean, how ridiculous would it be for me to go back to those rudimentary practices and start going back in that lifestyle because I'm a grown up? I'm not a child anymore. I don't think that way anymore.

So, the passage goes on,

(Colossians 2:16) "Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—"

He's talking about the worship of the Old Testament specifically.

(Colossians 2:17) "things which are a mere shadow..."

And the Book of Hebrews will convey this. In fact, by the time you come into the Book of Hebrews, in Chapter 9, it begins to talk about the things of the Tabernacle and the things that were in the Tabernacle. Well, those were all foundational, rudimentary shadows of what they were pointing to. For you to go back to that, would be to revert back into childhood. It would be like going back to Grade 1 and trying to learn the same things when you've already graduated from that mindset. it goes on.

It says it goes on, it says in verse 17,

"Things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."

Now, if you understand what a shadow is, it has no substance to it. What is the substance? What's the real? Christ.

Once again, you go to Hebrews 11, "Now faith is the substance." What is he saying? That faith is the real. In other words, you don't get real until you get mature. Up to that point, you're just doing things because somebody tells you that you have to. You're just doing things because you have the pressure upon you, but there's not real heart in this. It's all fake. It's all superficial. I was sitting there because I had to. I wasn't rejoicing. I would sing a hymn, but my heart wasn't in it because I was wanting to go outside and play. So, what is that telling us? Well, it's telling us that you can't go back there once you're mature. If in fact you've received Christ, you're going into a realm that's really destructive.

If you go on with me a little bit, in verse 18,

"Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,

(Colossians 2:19) and not holding fast to the head..."

In other words, if you and I gather together and we just start talking about the Law and started focusing on the Law, how great I am and how great you are; the fact that we make sure that we do everything according to the Law, we even do the sacrifices, which I'm sure people would arrest us for doing that today, but we even do those kinds of things, and if our hope is in the feast, if it's in all the practices, then we're just going back to the rudimentary things that God called us out of in His Spirit.

So, it goes on, it says,

(Colossians 2:19) “and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

(Colossians 2:20) If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world...”

You've died to the elementary principles. I don't still try to go through the ABC's. I mean, I actually read without doing that. You form words, you form thoughts without doing that. Why don't we do that? It would be regressing into childhood.

“If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,

(Colossians 2:21) “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!””

Why are you thinking that way? Why are you thinking the Law?

As we come to Galatians, it is this point that Paul is emphasizing. Look, the Law was simply a tutor to lead us to Christ, but the time came when you grew up. When did that time come? When you received Christ. What happened when I received Christ? You received the Spirit of a Son that cries out “Abba! Father!”

He writes this, if you look with me in Galatians 4:1,

“Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything.”

His point is that as a child, you're really not experiencing all the joys and all the privileges of actually being an heir because you're a kid. The word that he uses, “*nēpios*,” in the Greek, is making reference to the fact that you're just a minor. It's a word that is used from infant to about 11 years old. That is to say, you don't make your own decisions, you still have somebody overseeing you. You still have somebody telling you what to do. You can't hand over the inheritance to a kid who is still at the point where he's capricious, he's undisciplined and he still needs somebody to watch over him. You can't hand over all of the wonderful things that are

his, but when he grows up, then you can. The point of the passage is that as long as you're a child, and that's what is Paul doing, he's putting you in the realm of "have to's." Strangely enough, there are still people that come to church because they feel like they have to or obligation, or maybe it's to impress somebody or whatever, but they're not here because they really want to. It's not the Spirit. They'll read the Bible, and go, "I've read through the Bible." You know, people say, "I've read through the Bible." And I go, "Well, what does this say?" "You know, I'm not sure. It's just confusing to me, but I read through it every year." Ok, so, you read through it every year, so what? What difference does it make? You can get into the fundamentals and never get out of them. I mean, some grown-ups never grow up. That is the Corinthians. When you read the Book of Corinthians, and Paul says, "I wish I could talk to you like adults, but I have to talk to you like babies." In fact, one of the statements that he makes is, he says, "Do I come to you with a rod, or can I come with grace?" And you realize, "Ok, if he's coming with the rod, they're still kids. They're not listening." It's the threats of the law that will put them in line. If you're operating in the realm of, "I'm afraid that if I don't do this lightning is going to strike me or something," you're still a kid. You're still thinking childishly, and this is the whole thing that Paul is trying to get the Galatians to stop doing.

In fact, if you go back to Galatians 3:1,

"You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?"

(Galatians 3:2) This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

(Galatians 3: 3) Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"

Are you thinking that you're going to do this by virtue of your resolve to do the Law, or do you believe, as I believe, that it's the Spirit of God that changes my heart? Now, I long to do the things that God tells me to do. God has given us the Spirit of His Son, that cries out, "Abba! Father!" In Romans 8 and now, in Galatians 4, it is a different Spirit that grows up, and that's why he uses beyond "*nēpios*" and beyond "*teknon*," which are two words that refer to children; he now uses "*huios*," which is the word that says a child that is raised has grown up and now looks like his dad. More specifically, the son that is mature. You have become mature in Christ.

What made us mature? It's not always that easy to describe what causes a kid from ages 1 through 11 to then come to a point of making more adult decisions, seeing things differently. It's almost a miracle because as they grow up, there's a point where you look at one of your kids and you go, "You've grown up." And it's usually those moments in which the kid says something like, "You know what? I don't want to do this for me I want to do this to help this

person.” You're going, “Wow.” And though you would like to take all the credit you realize through all the years of hardship, that everything that you were doing could never bring them to that point, but that's a divine act that happens in the process of maturity. What Paul is wanting us to understand is there's a divine thing that happens when you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The divine thing that happens is you've become sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise and the Spirit of Christ now is within us.

The way that this reads is, as long as you're a child, you don't differ from a slave. You still have to do things because somebody tells you to do things. You're not doing things because you want to do things.

(Galatians 4:2) “but he is under guardians and managers...”

“Overseers;” he's under people that are in charge of household affairs.

“... until the date set by the father.”

This is really parallel to the Jewish understanding that around age 12 a child begins to think beyond the realm of just the concrete, and he's able to think in terms of the abstract, More specifically, he's able to think in terms of caring, think in terms of reaching out, of ministering, of doing things. So, they have what is called a “bar mitzvah.” The “bar,” making reference to “son;” “mitzvah,” making reference to the Law. So, he becomes a son of the Law. What that means is that up to this point, he's been doing the Law because he had to, but now as he matures, he now wants to do the Law. Therefore, he graduates as the “son of the Law”, and it becomes a part of his heart.

Scripture actually records an incident such as this in Luke 2, would you turn there with me?

(Luke 2:39) “When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord...”

This is Mary and Joseph.

“...they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

(Luke 2:40) The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

(Luke 2:41) Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

(Luke 2:42) And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast;

(Luke 2:43) and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days...”

The fullness of time,

“...the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it,

(Luke 2:44) but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day’s journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

(Luke 2:45) When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him.

(Luke 2:46) Then, after three days they found Him...”

That’s significant, isn’t it?

“...in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

(Luke 2:47) And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.”

There's an interesting Psalm in Psalm 119:139, “My zeal has consumed me,” the psalmist writes as he's writing of the Messiah to come.

Psalm one 119:97-100,

(Psalm 119:97) “O how I love Your law!

It is my meditation all the day.

(Psalm 119:98) Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies...”

(Psalm 119:99) “I have more insight than all my teachers...”

(Psalm 119:100) “I understand more than the aged,

Because I have observed Your precepts.”

“Because I practiced them.”

We realize that there's a moment here of growing up. Scripture is showing us the way it was supposed to be. The Law was just simply a tutor to lead us to a place of maturity. The Law can't take us into the realm of the heart. It can't do that. It will never save you. It can only take you up to a certain point. The Law's not bad, it's just not able.

If you go on and read within the passage,

(Luke 2:48) “When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.”

(Luke 2:49) And He said to them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? ...””

And he could literally say, “According to the Law, I'm a man. I need to do what My Father in heaven wants me to do.” Well, he's actually demonstrating to us what it means to grow up. We

go from putting our trust in our parents or those overseeing us, to then placing our trust in the God of the heavens and walking with Him directly. It's an interesting picture, as it goes on, of course, in the process, He doesn't argue with His parents, He still submits to them, but He submits to them because He wants to, not because He has to. What a great picture of the transformation; the way things should go.

If you go back to Galatians, he goes,

(Galatians 4:3) "So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world."

"Do this. Don't do that."

(Galatians 4:4) "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law."

That He might reveal to us what this whole maturation process is about, and why the Law was never something that we should embrace. It was something that just led us. It would be as foolish as embracing a shadow. Why would you embrace a shadow? That's not the real at all.

"But when the fullness of time came." The picture of fullness there within the text is a completion. A completion of what? Completion of maturity. Now, God is going to reveal that His Son coming to Earth brings us into that completion. The one thing the Law couldn't do is it couldn't complete us. Another word that is used for that particular word, "fullness," is "maturity." It couldn't bring us into maturity.

Let me show you a passage in Romans 8, if you look there with me. It starts off by saying that how wonderful it is that we don't have any more condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. What does the Law do? It condemns.

But it states this,

(Romans 1:1) "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

(Romans 8:2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

From you trying to do it by sheer resolve or do it because somebody told you that you had to do it; list of rules and regulations. "Let me go through all those regulations. Let me write it on the board one more time." And God goes, "You know that never made you better. It kept you from being in trouble, but it never made you better."

Verse 3, you might want to mark it,

“For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

(Romans 8:4) so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled...”

Ah, that was fulfillment. Even as a child, you saw Him fulfilling the law, didn't you?

“...who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

(Romans 8:5) For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”

I can tell you when I made that decision to give my life to Christ. Nobody told me I had to sit in a chair anymore. I was there. I wanted to be there. Nobody told me I had to read the Bible, memorize Scripture. Look, I understand kids, you want them to memorize Scripture, memorize Scripture. It's frustrating to me to see adults memorize Scripture because I'm thinking at this time, if you don't love it, all the memorizing in the world isn't going to get you anything. If you love it, you'll never forget it. “Thy word have I treasured in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.” It'll just become a part of your life. I mean, I find myself accidentally remembering verses, not because I said them over and over again, but because they meant something to me and I can't let them go.

So, what he's talking about here is,

(Romans 8:6) “Rom 8:6

“For the mind set on the flesh is death...”

That's why you find it so hard. I mean, if you're forcing yourself to do something, you'll get in the Bible, and you'll go, “What is that saying? I have no idea what it's talking about.” You have the Spirit of God, and you're going, “That's for me. He's talking to me.”

It goes on, and says if this same Spirit is within you, then you won't do the wrong things. In other words, nobody's going to have to tell you what to do or what not to do, you're just not going to do them. As Paul will say to Timothy, the Law is necessary for the lawless, but he goes on and says, but the Law is not needful to the law abiding; there's no reason for a law. As Paul will write in Romans, love fulfills the law, but it goes on and says in this, this is very interesting to me,

(Romans 8:12) “So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

(Romans 8:13) for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

(Romans 8:14) For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

Once again, he does not use "*nēpios*," and he does not use "*teknon*" which is dealing with little kids. He uses the word "*huios*" which deals with you have the nature of your dad. You're grown up.

(Romans 8:15) "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again..."

You and I don't do what we have to do because we're afraid we're going to get in trouble. All of our sins have been paid for by Christ. We do what we do because we love Him, and it's the love of Christ that constrains us to do these things.

It goes on and says,

"... but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

(Romans 8:16) The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

(Romans 8:17) and if children, heirs..."

Now, he goes back to just like a child. I mean, if you believe you become a child of God, but God says you're not to stay there. You need to walk by the Spirit that He gave you. He gave you the Spirit of His Son, that is mature, and you should be living that way.

Now, watch the way the phrase goes. It's very interesting because I often ask myself, "How do I know I'm really walking by the Spirit of God?" You ever ask yourself that? It's right here.

(Romans 8:16) "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God."

We know that we're children. He gives us confidence.

(Romans 8:17) "and if children, heirs ..."

Ok, at what point do I get to enjoy the relationship with God?

"... heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if..."

Do you see the word "if" there? You might want to underline it.

"...if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him."

There's a lot I want to say about this, but I'm going to have to end here, but this is the point I want to leave you. The passage is telling you how you can understand that you're walking in maturity or not. Here's the point, if you are willing to suffer for doing what is right. You know, as a child, I remember going to Sunday school and Vacation Bible School and that they would

hand out buttons if you did something really good. I actually went to a camp where they would hand out trophies if you're a really, really good person. As a kid, you're going for the gold, you're going for the trophy, and that in and of itself, I guess can be a kind of impetus, but in the end result, it's a wrong impetus. It's the wrong signal that we would send. I mean, we want to encourage kids to do the right thing, and I understand what we're doing in that, but it's just simply the Law that's bringing them here. Our hope is that they catch the desire; that they receive Christ in their heart, and now they come, and they want to do the things, and they begin to share verses. I've seen kids share verses that you could see it was something that they loved, and I go, "That's the Spirit of God. That's a mature kid. That kid has grown up." But how you know that you've really grown up, is you're willing to suffer for doing what's right. You're no longer looking for that immediate gratification. Have you ever talked to somebody, and they said, "You know, I did the right thing and man, this person did this. Nobody was grateful. Nobody patted me on the back." And I'm going, "Who'd you do it for?" I mean, did you ever hear Christ after He's resurrected from the dead go, "I went on that cross. I died on the cross. Where are the thanks I get? The only thing I got was people spitting on Me and people hating Me." Not once. Why? "I only want to do what is pleasing to the Father." And I can always see maturity in people's lives. I can see the Spirit of Christ in people's life when they say to me, "It was hard, it was difficult, but I was constrained. It was the love of God that was moving me to do what I was told to do." And you go, "Now, that is a Spirit filled, mature person." It is where God wants to lead us. Don't go back into the Law, don't go writing things back on the board again, you're just reverting. Come into the realm of the Spirit of Christ and grow up.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word that brings us into a relationship with You. It takes us far beyond the rudimentary things and practices and the regiment of the world; things of dos and don'ts. It takes us out of the Law. We admit with You the Law is good. It's not bad. Tutors are not bad or evil, but we were never meant to be there. We were never meant to stay there. We're meant to live in the freeness of Christ. You're calling us to have this Spirit in You in us. How magnificent it is that the Spirit of Christ could now be within us.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, this is what we ask you and desire you to receive. The graciousness of God, who sent His only begotten Son, that you wouldn't perish, but would have everlasting life. He has sent to you the Spirit of His Son in your heart, and how amazing you'll find it to be that you'll just long to do the things that God calls you to do. It doesn't matter what anybody says, it won't matter what anybody thinks, it won't matter if you get a pat

on the back, or you get recognized. It won't matter, if in fact, according to the world, it looks like you lost or won. The only thing that will matter to you is, "Did I do the right thing?" And "Did I do it for God?" And God will say, "This is My son, in whom I am well pleased." Is this what you desire? Come to Christ. Receive His Spirit.