

## STUDY GUIDE 9 – ‘Living the Spirit’

Read **Romans 8:1-17** in the dramatised script and/or in another version.

(1) Am I <i>in Christ Jesus</i> ? What does this mean? <b>(1)</b> [Or discuss this under (B) opposite.]	
(2) How can I know that I won't be <i>condemned</i> for my sin? <b>(1, 3)</b>	
(3) What has <i>the law of the Spirit</i> done for me? <b>(2)</b>	
(4) How can I now perform what <i>the law requires</i> ? <b>(4)</b>	
(5) Find reasons why I can't <i>please God</i> if I am <i>controlled by the sinful nature</i> <b>(5-8)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
(6) Find two consequences of being <i>controlled by the Spirit</i> <b>(5-6)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
(7) How can I not be <i>controlled by the sinful nature</i> ? <b>(9)</b>	
(8) Do I <i>have the Spirit of Christ</i> ? How do I know? <b>(9-10)</b>	
(9) How come I am both <i>dead and alive</i> if I am a Christian? <b>(10)</b>	
(10) What are my future prospects if I have the <i>Spirit living in me</i> ? <b>(11)</b>	
(11) What practical <i>obligation</i> do I now have? <b>(12-13)</b>	
(12) What is my relationship (a) to the <i>Spirit</i> (b) to <i>God</i> ? <b>(14)</b>	
(13) Is the Spirit something to be <i>afraid of</i> ? Why (not)? <b>(15)</b>	
(14) What does the Spirit <i>testify</i> to us (assure us of)? <b>(16)</b>	
(15) What does being a <i>co-heir with Christ</i> involve? <b>(17)</b>	

(A) <i>Read the dialogue overleaf.</i> What should make us suspicious about Jenny and Lenny's offer? What is Paul trying to 'sell' us in Romans 8? Can we trust him?	
(B) Discuss (perhaps in smaller groups) the meaning of <i>those who are in Christ Jesus</i> . Is <i>in Christ</i> the same as <i>Christ in you</i> (v10)? Other passages to look at: Jn 15:4; 1 Cor 6:17; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20; Col 2:6-7.	
(C) <i>Read the note on v9 overleaf and read the passages listed there.</i> When does the Holy Spirit come to live in a believer? Do some people have more of the Spirit than others?	
(D) Read <b>8:14-17</b> again (e.g. in <i>The Message</i> ). Which of these privileges means the most to us?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there one point about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) that I have understood in a new or deeper way?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there one practical step I could take as a result of studying this section of Romans?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there something in this section which I could turn into praise or prayer to God?</li> </ul>	

## 'Transforming' by Paul Glass<sup>1</sup>

*Jenny and Lenny walk into the Sunday morning service at church.*

- LENNY (*Talking as he walks.*) Morning everybody, morning. How are we all, then?
- JENNY It's good to see you all here.
- LENNY Glad that you responded to our invitation.
- JENNY 'Cos we know how busy you all are.
- LENNY And we really appreciate you giving up your time like this on a Sunday morning.
- JENNY I mean after all, you could have gone to the car boot sale.
- LENNY Or the footie practice.
- JENNY Or B & Q.
- LENNY All very important things.
- JENNY So we're glad you came down here to listen to us. My name is Jenny.
- LENNY And I'm her associate, Lenny.
- JENNY And I don't think you're going to be disappointed by what we have to say to you this morning.
- LENNY No indeed. In fact I think you're going to feel this morning was time very well spent.
- JENNY Very well spent indeed.
- LENNY Let me just ask you this, ladies and gentlemen. Do you feel tired?
- JENNY You do, don't you? I can tell. Tired, listless, worn out.
- LENNY You just wish your life could be transformed.
- JENNY Given a sense of purpose and direction.
- LENNY You want to feel full of energy and life.
- JENNY Full of a power that doesn't seem to come from you at all.
- LENNY Well I can tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that this very morning ....
- JENNY Here in this little bottle ... (*Produces bottle*)
- LENNY We have the answer to all your problems.
- JENNY In this bottle we have Lenny and Jenny's Liquid of Life. It's guaranteed to lift you up.
- LENNY To turn your life around.
- JENNY To give you meaning and purpose, when all there was before was an empty hole.
- LENNY And at £74.99 I think you'll agree it's a bargain that you just can't miss out on.
- JENNY Now I know there are going to be some religious types who are going to say it's only God who can transform your life.
- LENNY It's God what sends the Holy Spirit to turn your life around.
- JENNY Well, I'm sorry, but doesn't that just sound a little far-fetched?
- LENNY Especially when you can have this special Liquid of Life that also acts as a hair restorer, for under £75?
- JENNY Now who would you rather trust, ladies and gentlemen ...
- LENNY Almighty God?
- JENNY Or Lenny and Jenny with this once in a lifetime offer?
- LENNY Terms and conditions apply.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Glass *Dramatic Dialogues* (Epworth 2003) p92.

## RIGHT THROUGH ROMANS

### 'Living the Spirit' (8:1-17)

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At this point in Romans we are like travellers who have struggled through jungles, mists and increasingly steep hillsides to a col, from which the view suddenly opens out to reveal a magnificent panorama bathed in glorious sunshine. Ch 8 is one of the richest passages in the whole of the Bible and we shall spend two weeks exploring it.

**8:1-4 The good news restated: the benefits of being 'in Christ' (a).** **1** *In Christ Jesus.* When you board a ship, you leave the shore behind, you are safe inside the boat (you hope!), you go where it goes, you receive all the benefits of being a fully paid-up passenger (three meals a day, talking with the officers including the captain himself etc). So too when we step into Christ by faith, we become united with him, we receive everything he has done for us, and above all we receive his indwelling life as the secret of our daily existence. That is what is meant by being *in Christ*, and Christ being *in us*; by his Spirit being *in us* and us being *in the Spirit*. None of this requires a special holiness or spiritual achievement; it is a free gift won for us by Jesus and communicated by the Holy Spirit according to the loving plan of God the Father. **2-4** *God did.* Paul gives a short summary of the gospel, which shows not only how God has dealt with the penalty of sin through Christ's cross, but also how he deals with the power of sin through the gift of the *Spirit*. So we are doubly *free* from the old *law of sin and death*. *Law* means 'principle' or the way something works.

**8:5-8 The old human nature can't do God's will (a).** There is always the possibility of choosing to think and live according to the sinful nature, but that would be to live out of character with the new person we have become. Our new character is a Spirit-formed personality which can do what God requires and which delights in pleasing him – something we were incapable of doing before.

**8:9-11 The difference the Spirit makes (a).** **9** This is the clearest possible statement that all who believe in Christ and ask him into their lives, at the same time receive the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:5; Acts 2:38; Eph 1:13). This is a matter of faith, not necessarily involving a vivid spiritual experience (though it may). Notice how Paul varies the description of the Spirit: *the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, Christ in you* etc. The Spirit is the birthright of every Christian and no one Christian has 'more of the Spirit' than anyone else. **11** *Give life to your mortal bodies.* This refers primarily to the final resurrection from the dead which all believers will experience when they wake up after physical death (Jn 11:25); but it could also refer to God's gift of well-being and vigour while we are still on this earth ('life to the full' as Jesus called it, Jn 10:10). It is not to be taken as a promise that every illness and infirmity will be healed in this life; but it could include a capacity for endurance and cheerfulness under great suffering. Paul says in 2 Cor 4:7 that 'we have this treasure in jars of clay.'

**8:12-13 The choice: flesh or Spirit? (a).** **12** *We have an obligation.* The old self still insists that we ought to obey its wishes; but that way lies spiritual death (6:23). **13** *Put to death.* This is a present tense, emphasising that temptation is an everyday occurrence. *By the Spirit*, not by ourselves. We can turn to the Lord Jesus and give him permission to win the fight, which he alone can (1 Jn 4:4).

**8:14-17 The Spirit makes us full children of God (a).** This section is all about the privileges of membership in God's heavenly family. **14** *Led by the Spirit.* This is for all, not just a special few. Jesus is my Leader and I should develop the habit of going to him for my instructions. **15** *Not slaves ... in fear.* Without Christ, we felt threatened by God, by our personal failures, by the future and by the prospect of death. Now that God is our *Father* and Jesus our Brother, we can go to him at all times with our intimate concerns (Jesus himself called God *Abba*, Mk 14:36), so that even death holds no terror. **16** If you wonder sometimes whether you are a true child of God, ask the Lord to *testify* (give you solid assurance) of this fact. He will most likely point you to your *adoption* papers, the promises of the New Testament (e.g. Jn 1:12, Rev 3:20, Jn 6:37). **17** *Heirs.* Three words in this verse have the prefix 'together with': we share Christ's *inheritance, suffering and glory*. When the disciples were in the boat with Jesus, they experienced the same as him – toil, storms, darkness, but also his Father's protection and deliverance. This is what it means to be *in Christ* (v1).