

## The True Sons of God Romans 8:12–14

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

### Introduction

In his often-republished book *The Reformed Pastor*, the seventeenth-century Puritan Richard Baxter wrote,

Take heed to yourselves, lest you live in those sins which you preach against in others, and lest you be guilty of that which daily you condemn. Will you make it your work to magnify God, and, when you have done, dishonor him as much as others? Will you proclaim Christ's governing power, and yet condemn it, and rebel yourselves? Will you preach his laws, and willfully break them? If sin be evil, why do you live in it? If it be not, why do you

dissuade men from it? If it be dangerous, how dare you venture on it? If it be not, why do you tell men so? If God's threatenings be true, why do you not fear them? If they be false, why do you needlessly trouble men with them, and put them into such frights without a cause? Do you "know the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death;" and yet will you do them? "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery," or be drunk, or covetous, art thou such thyself? "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonored thou God?" What! Shall the same tongue speak evil that speakest against evil? Shall those lips censure, and slander, and backbite your neighbor, that cry down these and the like things in others? Take heed to yourselves, lest you cry down sin, and yet do not overcome it; lest, while you seek to bring it down in others, you bow to it, and become its slaves yourselves: "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage." "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." O brethren! It is easier to chide at sin, than to overcome it.... Many a tailor goes in

rags, that maketh costly clothes for others; and many a cook scarcely licks his fingers, when he hath dressed for others the most costly dishes. ([Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 1974], pp. 67–68)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). *Romans* (Vol. 1, pp. 420–421). Chicago: Moody Press.

Sin is the universal problem of humanity. It is the source of all trouble, death and disease. It offers pleasure, only to destroy in the end.

Sin is called

Transgression, iniquity, unrighteousness, disobedience, darkness, evil, impure, unholy, ungodly, defiling, staining, deadly, destructive, to name a few...

Sin rules the heart, controls the mind, feeds the passions, and destroys the life of man

Sin turns beauty into ugliness, perfection into deformity and life into death.

The Bible calls sin

that accursed thing Joshua 7:13

1 John 3:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> ..... and sin is lawlessness.

It is compared to snakes venom, and the stench of rotting flesh.

**Thomas Guthrie** wrote

“Who is the undertaker that digs man a grave?  
Who is the painted temptress that steals his virtue?  
Who is the murderess that destroys his life? Who  
is the sorceress that first deceives and then damns  
his soul? Sin.

“Who, with icy breath, blights the fair blossom of  
youth? Who breaks the hearts of parents? Who  
brings old men with sorrow to the grave? Sin. Who,  
by a more hideous metamorphosis than Ovid ever  
fancied, changes gentle children into vipers, tender  
mothers into monsters, and their fathers into worse  
than Herods, the murderers of their own  
innocents? Sin. Who casts the pain of discord on  
household hearts? Who lights the torch of war and  
bears it blazing over trembling lands? Who, by  
division in the church, rends Christ’s seamless  
robe? Sin.

“Who is the Delilah that sings the Nazarite asleep  
and delivers up the strength of God into the hands  
of the uncircumcised? Who, winning smiles on her

face, honeyed flattery on her tongue, stands in the door to offer the sacred rites of hospitality, and when suspicion sleeps, treacherously pierces our temples with a nail? What fair siren is this, who, seated on a rock by the deadly pool, smiles to deceive, sings to allure, kisses to betray, and flings her arm around our neck to leap with us into hell? Sin.

“Who turns the soft and gentlest hearts to stone? Who hurls reason from her lofty throne, and impels sinners, like the Gadarene swine, down the precipice into the lake of fire? Sin.”

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/80-70/sin--its-characteristics-and-cure>

The Bible also talks about sin in terms of debt owed.

You and I have accumulated a debt. An obligation, a payment. We owe a huge debt.

### **Romans 6:23 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **Romans 2:5–6 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart **you are treasuring up for yourself** wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, <sup>6</sup> who “*will render to each one according to his deeds*”:

### **Galatians 5:3 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

### **Matthew 6:12 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.

### **Matthew 18:23–35 (NKJV)**

<sup>23</sup> Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup> And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup> But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. <sup>26</sup> The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I

will pay you all.’<sup>27</sup> Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

<sup>28</sup> “But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’<sup>29</sup> So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’<sup>30</sup> And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.<sup>31</sup> So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.<sup>32</sup> Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.<sup>33</sup> Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’<sup>34</sup> And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

<sup>35</sup> “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

# Lesson

1. The Certainty
2. The Comparison
3. The Conclusion

## 1. The Certainty

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

### Therefore,

ara: therefore (an illative particle)

**Original Word:** ἄρα

**Part of Speech:** Particle, Disjunctive Particle

**Transliteration:** ara

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ar'-ah)

**Definition:** therefore (an illative particle)

**Usage:** then, therefore, since.



686 ára (probably akin to arō, "to join, be fitting," see J. Thayer, Curtius) – an inferential particle meaning "it follows that . . .".

**8** There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

<sup>3</sup> For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

<sup>4</sup> that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ....

<sup>8</sup> So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. ....

<sup>10</sup> And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

<sup>11</sup> But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the

dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

we are

Pres. A.In We are continually and exist as.....

ἔσμέν

**eimi:** I exist, I am

**Original Word:** εἶμί

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** eimi

**Phonetic Spelling:** (i-mee')

**Definition:** I exist, I am

**Usage:** I am, exist.

1510 eimí (the basic Greek verb which expresses being, i.e. "to be") – am, is. **1510** (eimí), and its counterparts, (properly) convey "straight-forward" being (existence, i.e. without explicit limits).

We are debtors, NOT to the flesh.....

**1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NKJV)**

<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

**Romans 6:6–7 (NKJV)**

<sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. <sup>7</sup> For he who has died has been freed from sin.

**1 Peter 4:1–3 (NKJV)**

<sup>4</sup> Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, <sup>2</sup> that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. <sup>3</sup> For we *have spent* enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

## 1.The Certainty

# 2.The Comparison

<sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Here in this text, Paul gives one of his many examination passages. These are those the make you evaluate your standing before God. Am I really a Christian? Am I truly born again?

## 2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

## 1 Corinthians 11:28 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup> But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

## Hebrews 12:14–15 (NKJV)

<sup>14</sup> Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: <sup>15</sup> looking

carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

This was a theme in the preaching of Jesus too

### **Matthew 7:13–15 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. <sup>14</sup> Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

### **Matthew 7:17–20 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

### **Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied

in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’<sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

### **John 8:30–31 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup> As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

### **John 15:5–6 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

<sup>13</sup> For if you **live** according to the flesh **you will die**; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

**live** zaó: to live Pres A. Ind continue to live

**Original Word:** ζάω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** zaó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (dzah'-o)

**Definition:** to live

**Usage:** I live, am alive.

## you will

melló: to be about to

**Original Word:** μέλλω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** melló

**Phonetic Spelling:** (mel'-lo)

**Definition:** to be about to

**Usage:** I intend, **am about to**; I delay, linger.

3195 méllō – properly, at the **very point of acting**; ready, "about to happen." 3195 (méllō) is used "in general of **what is sure to happen**" (J. Thayer). imminent

## **Romans 8:5–6 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For

to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

### **Romans 6:21 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death.

### **Romans 7:5 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

### **James 1:15 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

The Scottish theologian David Brown wrote, “If you don’t kill sin, sin will kill you.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). [Romans](#) (Vol. 1, p. 423). Chicago: Moody Press.

sin is a serious issue

### **Matthew 5:29–30 (NKJV)**



29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

**13** For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you **put to death** the **deeds** of the body, you will live.

### **put to death**

**hanatoó: to put to death**

**Original Word:** θανατόω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** thanatoó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (than-at-o'-o)

**Definition:** to put to death

**Usage:** I put to death, subdue; pass: I am in danger of death, am dead to, am rid of, am parted from.

**deeds** praxis: a deed, function

**Original Word:** πρᾶξις, εως, ἡ

**Part of Speech:** Noun, Feminine

**Transliteration:** praxis

**Phonetic Spelling:** (prax'-is)

**Definition:** a deed, function

**Usage:** (a) a doing, action, mode of action; plur: deeds, acts, (b) function, business.

**Cognate:** 4234 práksis – "a function, implying sustained activity and/or responsibility" (L & N, 1, 42.5). [See 4238](#) (prássō).

**13** For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you **put to death** the **deeds** of the body, you will live.

## **1 Corinthians 9:27 (NKJV)**

<sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

## **Galatians 5:24–25 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

### **Ephesians 4:21–24 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: <sup>22</sup> that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, <sup>23</sup> and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, <sup>24</sup> and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

### **Colossians 3:5–10 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

<sup>6</sup> Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, <sup>7</sup> in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

<sup>8</sup> But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

If a professing Christian habitually lives in sin and shows no concern for repentance, forgiveness, worship, or fellowship with other believers, he proves that he claims the name of Christ in vain. Many false Christians in the church work hard at keeping their lives pure in appearance, because other people think more highly of them for it and because they feel prouder of themselves when they act morally and benevolently than when they do not. But feeling better about oneself, the popular psychological cure-all for many people in our times, is the very heart of the proud sinful flesh, man's unredeemed selfishness and godless humanness. Doing good for one's own sake rather than for God's is not doing good at all, but is merely a hypocritical projection of the sin of self-love.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). [Romans](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 423–424). Chicago: Moody Press.

1.The Certainty

2.The Comparison

## 3.The Conclusion

<sup>14</sup> For as many as **are led** by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

**are led** agó: to lead, bring, carry

**Pres Pass IND** are continually being led

**Original Word:** ἄγω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** agó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ag'-o)

**Definition:** to lead, bring, carry

**Usage:** I lead, lead away, bring (a person, or animal), guide, spend a day, go.

Galatians 5:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Galatians

5:18 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Galatians 5:22–25 (NKJV)

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18–21 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another in the fear of God.

<sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, **these are** sons of God

### **these are**

retaining a pronoun which puts some emphasis on the fact that they really are God's sons. We should understand the leading of the Spirit as a distinguishing sign of God's sons, but not as making us sons

Morris, L. (1988). *The Epistle to the Romans* (p. 313). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

**Sons of God** (υἱοὶ θεοῦ [*huioi theou*]). In the full sense of this term. In verse 16 we have τέκνα θεοῦ [*tekna theou*] (children of God). Hence no great

distinction can be drawn between υἱός [*huios*] and τέκνον [*teknon*].

John 1:12–13 (NKJV)

<sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

υἱοὶ Θεοῦ. The difference between υἱός and τέκνον appears to be that whereas τέκνον denotes the natural relationship of child to parent, υἱός implies, in addition to this, the recognized *status* and legal privileges reserved for sons. Cf. Westcott on St. John 1:12 and the parallels there noted.

Sanday, W., & Headlam, A. C. (1897). [\*A critical and exegetical commentary on the Epistle of the Romans\*](#) (3d ed., p. 202). New York: C. Scribner's Sons.

The truth is that υἱός [*huios*] is used in various ways in the New Testament. In the highest sense, not true of any one else, Jesus Christ is God's Son (8:3). But in the widest sense all men are “the offspring” (γενος [*genos*]) of God as shown in Acts 17:28 by Paul. But in the special sense here only

those are “sons of God” who are led by the Spirit of God, those born again (the second birth) both Jews and Gentiles, “the sons of Abraham” (υἱοὶ Ἀβρααμ [*huioi Abraam*], Gal. 3:7), the children of faith.

Robertson, A. T. (1933). [\*Word Pictures in the New Testament\*](#) (Ro 8:14). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

### Galatians 4:4–7 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

<sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” <sup>7</sup> Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

### Romans 8:15–21 (NKJV)

<sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.



<sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup> For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; <sup>21</sup> because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.