

What Distinguishes the Christian from the Non-Christian Romans 8:9-13

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Review

Chs 5-8 The gospel and the sure hope it gives

7:1-8:17 The triumph of grace over the power of the law

8:1-4 God has done what the law could not do. God sent His Son to atone for sin, and condemned sin as Christ bore that sin. And now the life-giving Holy Spirit has set the Christian free from sin's penalty and power. God's purpose was that we would be made to obey the law of God, which we do as we walk according to the Spirit.

8:5-8 Those people who are in a fallen, unredeemed condition, Paul terms as being "according to the flesh." They set their minds on the things of the flesh, and are spiritually dead. Their mind is hostile to God, unable to submit to God's law. They cannot please God.
In contrast, the redeemed are termed as being "according to the Spirit." They set their minds on the things of the Spirit, and have eternal life and peace with God.

The indwelling Holy Spirit distinguishes the Christian from the non-Christian (9)

9a "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you."

1. These two positions and realms were contrasted in verses 5-8
2. What changed our position was the Holy Spirit taking up residence within us
3. When the Spirit made His home in our life, He also regenerated us

9b "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."

1. The Spirit is called both "the Spirit of God" and "the Spirit of Christ"
2. "does not belong to him [Christ]"
3. Christ's gift of the Spirit is connected to His atoning work
 - **John 7:38-39** "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV).

4. Having the Spirit is a necessary feature of being a Christian

The indwelling Holy Spirit gives the Christian life (10-11)

10 “But if Christ is in you...”

1. If the Spirit dwells in you, it is also true that Christ is in you
 - **John 15:5** “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and **I in him**, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

10 “...although the body is dead because of sin...”

- Our physical body is headed toward death as part of the wages of sin

10 “...the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

1. Whether “Spirit” should be capitalized (as a reference to the Holy Spirit) is a matter of interpretation
2. **NASB** “the spirit is alive because of righteousness.”
3. Interpreting this as the Holy Spirit is supported by the other references to the Holy Spirit in this paragraph
4. Interpreting this as our spirit (as in 1:9 “God is my witness, whom I serve with **my spirit** in the gospel of his Son”), is supported by...
 - a. The contrast in verse 10 with ‘body’
 - b. The paragraph’s flow of thought (verse 11 speaks of God giving life to our mortal bodies)
5. I agree with NASB
6. The inner man was given life when one received a righteous standing with God

verse 11

“him who raised Jesus from the dead”

- The Father

The indwelling Holy Spirit not only has given life to our spirit, His indwelling indicates that the Father will act through the Holy Spirit to give resurrection life to our bodies

Question: Why is the doctrine of the future resurrection of the believer's body (verse 11) an important doctrine?

The Spirit who began a good work in us will bring it to completion (cf. Phil 1:6)!

The indwelling Holy Spirit gives the Christian an obligation (12-13)

verse 12

“So then, brothers”

- Looks back to verses 1-11

“we are debtors”

- *Question:* What does it mean that believers are "debtors" (verse 12)?

“not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.”

1. The flesh demands that we sin
2. When we feel that demand, we must resist it with the truth that we owe nothing to the flesh but everything to our God and Savior

13a “For if you live according to the flesh you will die,”

1. Eternal death
2. *James Boice:* “Paul is saying that if you live like a non-Christian, dominated by your sinful nature rather than living according to the Holy Spirit, you will perish like a non-Christian—because you are a non-Christian.”¹

13b “but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

1. Part of our obligation
2. The Spirit gives the desire and ability
3. Will live spiritually and eternally with God

It would be wise for us to study what it means to “put to death the deeds of the body”

1. Refers to sinful deeds, deeds connected to man’s fallen condition
2. It means killing off our sinful deeds, getting rid of them altogether
3. A continuing duty

¹ Boice, *Romans*, 2:826.

4. Does not speak of perfection, but real growth and change as you live the Christian life

It would also be wise for us to study how the Spirit-indwelt person is to go about putting to death the deeds of the body

1. **Psa. 139:23–24** “Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!”
2. **1 John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
3. **Col. 3:1–2** “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” (cf. Col 3:5 “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you...”)
4. **Psa. 119:11** “I have stored up your word in my heart,
that I might not sin against you.”
5. **Matt. 14:23a** “And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray.”
 - *John MacArthur*: “Sincere prayer has a way of unmasking sin’s deceit.”²
6. **Matt. 5:29–30** “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.”
7. **Eph. 4:21–24** “assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and **to put on the new self**, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

John MacArthur: “Being controlled by God’s Spirit comes from...studying and submitting oneself to Scripture. As a believer faithfully and submissively saturates his mind and heart with God’s truth, his Spirit-controlled behavior will follow as surely as night follows day. When we are filled with God’s truth and led by His Spirit, even our involuntary reactions—those that happen when we don’t have time to consciously decide what to do or say—will be godly.”³

² MacArthur, *Romans*, 426.

³ MacArthur, 428.