

ROMANS SEASON 2

HOW THE GOSPEL WORKS

CONNECT *BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING*

- What were some of your favorite moments over the holiday season?
 - What's one thing you plan on changing in your life this year?
 - When you hear the words "The Holy Spirit," what associations come to mind?
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TRUTH *UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING*

We're jumping back into Romans – this beautiful exploration of the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ. In chapter 8, Paul is going to describe how the Holy Spirit changes the life of someone who believes the gospel. Depending on your background, the Holy Spirit might come along with some weird associations. But we can't let that keep us from seeing the fact that the Spirit is absolutely essential to a life shaped by the gospel. In fact, it's only through the Spirit that a life shaped by the gospel is even possible.

A New Desire

READ: Romans 8:1-8

DISCUSS: What's one thing you see in these verses that the Holy Spirit brings about in the life of a disciple?

When Paul talks about two different laws – the law of the Spirit of life and the law of sin and death – he's talking about a principle at work, not just a set of rules. Those who are in Christ operate according to a different principle. What's that driving principle? A love for God, which is what he means by saying that the "righteous requirement of the law" is fulfilled in us. Those who love God desire to please him. Those who don't love God mistrust him. Those who love God are preoccupied with things that bring him joy. Those who don't love God are preoccupied with gratifying their flesh. The difference is a love for God given to us by the Spirit.

A New Reality

READ: Romans 8:9-11

DISCUSS: What do you think we should do in light of these verses?

That was trick question. Sorry. The funny thing about Romans 8 is that there aren't any imperatives in the whole thing; we're never told to do anything. Paul is simply describing what *is* reality for a Spirit-led believer. Notice all the if/then statements in the passage. A believer, empowered by the Spirit, simply is no longer dominated by the flesh and is fully capable of enjoying the new life the Spirit. The new life of the Spirit isn't something you can *work* yourself into getting without him.

A New Victory

READ: Romans 8:12-17

DISCUSS: What stands out to you from these verses and why?

The message that you should deny desires that don't please God is offensive in our day and age. Yet that's exactly what people living in the new way of the Spirit do. The flesh will try pressure you into "deeds" that displease God, like a yapping dog demanding food. But those in Christ don't owe that dog anything. This doesn't mean that your flesh offers pleasure and the Spirit offers displeasure. Quite the opposite! The Spirit empowers you to fulfill desires in a way that pleases God and that produces life and peace in your own life.

GRACE SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS

The flesh barks out, "God's holding out on you!" The Spirit says to your soul, "You are God's child." A God who adopted us at the cost of his own Son has given us the Holy Spirit that we might know whose we truly are. And if we are his then we are heirs of his promises. The yapping dog of the flesh has nothing to offer.

CHANGE APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS

- How does this description of life in the Spirit change the way you see your own life?
 - What "deeds of the body" is the Spirit calling you to put to death in your life right now?
 - What kind of impact does it have on you to know that God calls you a fellow heir with Christ of his promises?
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PRAYER RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER

- Pray for anyone struggling to believe that they're loved by God.
- Pray for the empowering of the Holy Spirit in your life this week.

Discipleship Check-In

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?