

Romans 8:1-6 (NIV) Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. 5 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

45-08-02 -True Spiritual Liberty

Liberty, freedom, desires

Rom 8:5-6

Living in the Spirit liberates us from bondage to sinful desires.

INTRODUCTION: (Rom 8:1-6 as Scripture Reading)

–**Re-read Rom 8:5-6**, *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

–**HOM.idea.** *True spiritual liberty (title) is the real pursuit of human hearts. But failing to realize this, we often pursue sinful desires which are often misunderstandings or misuses of the natural desires given to us by God. These natural desires, when not under the control of the Holy Spirit, can easily become the playground of the fallen human nature, which the Bible calls the sin nature.*

–We live in two worlds: a *natural* and a *spiritual* world. Ever since the Fall, *natural life* always ends in *death*. That tells us something about where to place our priorities. During our *natural lives* on earth, we must let the Holy Spirit establish and strengthen our spiritual lives.

–**[Francis de Sales:** “*liberty of spirit...consists in keeping the heart totally disengaged from every created thing in order that it may follow the known will of God.*”] A life “*controlled by the Spirit*” must first be detached from the natural life, then reattached to it under the control of the divine spiritual life residing in us through the Holy Spirit. *What does this **spiritual liberty** look like....?*

The person who enjoys true spiritual liberty is...

I. No longer *sinfully* dominated by the body’s natural hungers:

- A. Physical hunger can be tyrannical. (*Eating can become gluttony.*)
[the body: “I want!” - the spirit: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”]
- B. Sexual desire is a blessing in marriage, a bondage in promiscuity–
 1. Marital love= *Using physical affection to celebrate a lifelong commitment of mutual caring.*
 2. Sexual lust= *Misusing someone’s body for self-gratification with no concern for loving commitment.*
- C. Living “*in accordance with the Spirit*” brings bodily **needs** and **desires** into subjection to God’s original design– **1 Cor 10:31**. So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (*Hungers are*

thereby spared from becoming sinful avenues leading to bondage.)

The person who enjoys true spiritual liberty is...

II. No longer *sinfully* driven by the soul's natural longings:

A. Some *God-given aspirations* can become compulsions—

1. “*I want privacy!*” can become *isolationism*. (Its cure is the wise exhortation in **Heb 10:25a**, Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another...)
2. A *thirst for knowledge* can be a *liability* [It was with **Adam & Eve**—
 - a. *Curiosity about gossip* is a dangerous *thirst* [If “**Curiosity killed the cat**,” some people are in danger of *using up all nine lives!*]
 - b. The *media* can dominate us. [**Solomon**: “Of making many books there is no end.”] (We can't *absorb* or *digest* all information available. [**Eyes bigger** than our stomach: *interests bigger than our lives.*])
3. A *desire for esteem* can be a pitfall. (Seeking everybody's *praise* is useless, when what we need is to hear God say, “*Well done!*”)

B. Living “*in accordance with the Spirit*” comes with an automatic test question: “Since time is limited, *is this where God wants me*, *what should I be learning about* and *whom should I be trying to please?*”

The person who enjoys true spiritual liberty is...

III. No longer *sinfully* bound to natural loyalties:

A. *Excessive loyalty* is when certain loyalties block the path of duty:

1. Inordinate loyalty to parents can damage *loyalty in a marriage*.
2. Overprotective loyalty to children (as they get older) can inhibit their journey toward *responsible adulthood*.
3. An exclusive loyalty to friends or a can keep us from following God's larger plan of *reaching out to others*.
4. An narrow loyalty to our own country can prevent us from loving and caring for *God's Kingdom throughout the world*.

B. Living “*in accordance with the Spirit*” establishes loyalty to God as *top priority*, setting *all other loyalties in their proper order*.

The person who enjoys true spiritual liberty is...

IV. Free from *sinful attitudes* toward natural duties:

A. There's a kind of bondage in the “*I don't want to*” attitude—

1. An aversion to certain tasks: “*That's beneath me.*” (Our freedom is in being *God's servants* [**There is Joy in Serving Jesus**, as I journey on my way, / Joy that fills the heart with praises, / Every hour and every day.])

2. An aversion to certain people: “*We don't click*” or “*They're not my type.*” (Freedom from this bondage is in *seeing others as God does*, with *supernatural love*, which overlooks imperfections.)

B. Living “*in accordance with the Spirit*” curbs our *sinful* resistance with a holy, unrestrained flexibility of mind— **Psa 51:12**, Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

The person who enjoys true spiritual liberty is...

V. Free from *sinfully* enforcing our natural tendencies on others:

- A. Do we insist on having everything done in *our way*, on *our time schedule*, and by *our standards*?
- B. Do we make allowance for others who *differ from us*?
- C. Are we in the habit of being critical, fault-finding, complaining?
- D. Living “*in accordance with the Spirit*” lets us set *personal views and preferences* aside for the sake of others— **Phil 2:3-5**, Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...

CONCLUSION:

—We could go on and on, investigating other areas where our *natural desires* and *dispositions* become exploited by our sinful nature. But the important thing is to remember: **Living in the Spirit liberates us from bondage to sinful desires.**

—God wants us fully alive, fully blest, fully free— **v.6**, The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. God gives us the Holy Spirit to guide the navigation of our natural earthly life on a *daily* basis.

—Praying to know God's will and then submitting to it are what *living in the Spirit* is supposed to look like. And when we do it, it's *our best advertisement* for others to come and discover salvation in Christ.