



# INSIGHT

to biblical TEXTS

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## Slide #1

The *Introduction* article for *Critical Concepts in Christian Living* discussed two diametrically opposed viewpoints dealing with the Christian life. It would be helpful to read that introduction article prior to considering any of the four *Critical Concepts*. This article *Critical Concept #1* addresses the content of Romans 8:1-14, *walking in relation to the Spirit* and *being led by the Spirit*.

## Insight to Romans 8:1-14

### Walking in relation to the Spirit Being Led by the Spirit

(CRITICAL CONCEPT #1)

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## Slides #2 & #3

The entire Romans 8:1-14 text (NASB) is present on slide #2 (vv 1-11) and slide #3 (vv 12-14).

### WALKING IN RELATION TO THE SPIRIT

#### Romans 8:1-11

8 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.  
2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.  
3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,  
4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.  
5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.  
6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,  
7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,  
8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.  
9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.  
10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.  
11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

NASB

2

**Slides #2 & #3**

The entire Romans 8:1-14 text (NASB) is present on slide #2 (vv 1-11) and slide #3 (vv 12-14).

**WALKING IN RELATION TO THE SPIRIT**  
**Romans 8:12-14**

12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

NASB

3

**Slide #4**

The outline of Romans 8:1-14 is broken down into three segments, as follows:

Two Ways of Walking 8:1-4

Two Ways of Thinking 8:5-9

Two Ways of Living 8:10-14

**OUTLINE**  
**Romans 8:1-14**

Two Ways of Walking 8:1-4

Two Ways of Thinking 8:5-9

Two Ways of Living 8:10-14

4

Slide #5

Romans 8:1 takes us back to Romans 5:15-18, which is addressed in-depth in *LeaderQuest's* article *No "Power of Sin;" only "Servitude to Sin."* Verse 16 provides the contextual perspective (significant words indicated in red):

And the free gift is not like *what happened* through one man [Adam] who sinned. For the judgment (*krima*) came for **one offense to produce servitude (katakrima) to sin.** But the **free gift** [given through the grace of **one Man**, Jesus Christ (v 15)] *brings release* from many offenses to produce **righteous action (dikaioma).**<sup>1</sup>

Adam's sinful act resulted in "servitude to sin" for all mankind. At birth all are subject to sin's bondage. On the other hand, Christ's sacrificial act provided the opportunity for anyone not only to have a relationship with God through faith in Christ but

also the potential to live righteously before God, reflecting the theme of Romans: "the righteous by faith shall live" (1:17). This is where we pick up Paul's concern in Romans 8 for each Christian to walk in the *manner* God intends since Christ has made available the opportunity for doing so through His sacrificial act. Paul wrote, "Therefore there is no servitude (*katakrima*) to sin for those who are in Christ Jesus" (8:1).<sup>2</sup> Those who are in Christ Jesus are positionally "dead to sin" (6:11) and, having been made alive to God, "should no longer be slaves to sin" (6:6). The Christian's position in Christ should become a reality, being lived out in his or her every day experience. [Note: the bracketed portion of verse 1 is not in some early manuscripts. Whether or not it is a scribal insertion for clarity, it is descriptive of the identical content occurring in verse 4 which will be discussed.]

Even though no longer in servitude to sin, verse 2 gives the needed prospective through two laws in the sense of governing "principles" regarding Christian living.<sup>3</sup> Paul tells us for he himself *the law of the Spirit of life* had liberated him from *the law of sin and death*. In Romans 7:15-25 as a young believer, Paul used himself as a personal illustration of the outworking of "the law of sin and death" in his own life.<sup>4</sup> Coming from his pharisaical heritage (e.g., Phil 3:5-6), Paul writes of his struggle with sin due to his misunderstanding of the Mosaic Law's purpose [see chapter 12 of *Escape*]. He had the indwelling Spirit, being in Christ (see Rom 8:9), yet was in servitude to sin. Unfortunately Paul had approached the Law as a list of dos and don'ts, which aroused sinful passions within him. He came face to face with the impotent Law (8:3a), in that it was weak "through or because of the *resistance* of [his] flesh."<sup>5</sup> Though the Law (7:7) sin uses every opportunity to overtake the believer (vv 8, 11) and for Paul resulted in sinful behavior and nullification of fellowship with Christ (vv 10-11). Experiencing a living death, Paul found his struggle with sin to be intolerable and in frustration cried out, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" (v 24).

Paul found the solution to his struggle in the understanding that Christ had, in deed, released him from his obligation to sin. In gratitude he wrote, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself [my inner man] serve the law of God with my mind [understanding], but with the flesh *I serve* the law of sin" (v 25).<sup>6</sup> Paul came to the realization he had responded inappropriately to the Mosaic Law, thinking mere law-keeping led to God's blessings. Paul tells us he had been serving "the law of sin with his [sinful] flesh" (v 25), which he now equates with "the law of sin and death" (8:2). This is the very reason in his early letter to the Galatians this former Pharisee wrote, "Do not turn your freedom [from the Mosaic Law and sin] into an opportunity for the flesh" (Gal 5:13). We also can respond incorrectly to the Law of Christ (Gal 6:2; Jam 1:25), seeing it only as a list of "got tos" in order to gain God's favor [see chapter 11 of *Escape*, 168-74]. Instead as Paul learned, we need to focus our attention on Christ and His will. Paul links that awareness to "the law of God with my mind [my understanding]" (7:25), which he now equates with "the law of the Spirit of life" (8:2). The next slide reveals four additional governing principles that must be considered to give insight into our text.

## TWO WAYS OF WALKING

### Romans 8:1-4

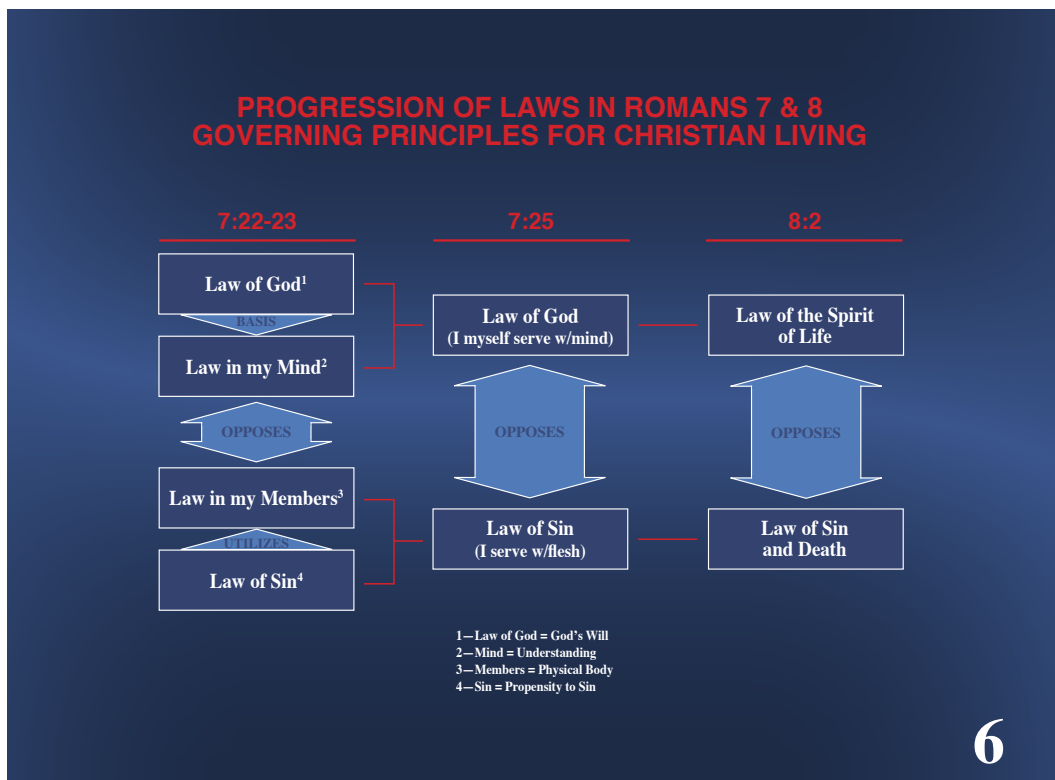
1	Therefore, now <i>there is no servitude to sin</i> to those in Christ Jesus, [not walking in relation to flesh but in relation to Spirit].	
2	For the <b>law</b> . . . . has <b>set me free</b> of the <b>Spirit</b> from the <b>law</b> of <b>life</b> in Christ Jesus of <b>sin</b> and of <b>death</b> .	<u>Two Laws</u> 1-Spirit/Life (7:25b) 2-Sin/Death (7:25c)
3	For the impotent Law, in that it was weak through the flesh, sending His own Son in likeness of sinful flesh and as a sacrifice concerning sin, <b>God pronounced sentence on sin</b> in the flesh,	
4	<b>So that</b> the law's <b>righteous action might be fulfilled</b> in us, who do not <b>walk</b> in relation to the <b>flesh</b> but who <b>walk</b> in relation to the <b>Spirit</b> .	<u>Two Ways</u> <u>of Walking</u> 1-with <i>Flesh</i> 2-with <i>Spirit</i>

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Slide #6

The progression of the laws or governing principles at the end of Romans 7 and the beginning of Romans 8 is shown on slide #6. Remembering that the Greek text had no chapter-and-verse distinctions and with six principles occurring within a span of less than 150 words, we should conclude they are interconnected. As shown it is understandable that the preceding principles are folded into the next principle and so on. Paul specifically tells us “the law of the Spirit of life” freed him from “the law of sin and death” (8:2) so that he could experience enriched living, with the manner in which that occurs being explained in 8:3-14. Moving backwards in the earlier texts of Romans 7, we point out the association between the laws in 8:2 and 7:25. Moving further back to the corresponding laws in 7:22-23 offers additional insight to the way Christian living should be understood.



Notice in each set of laws they are in opposition to one another, but differing from the latter two, the first set of laws in 7:22-23 are further delineated into two parts each. In the bottom two laws, “the law of sin” corresponds to each believer’s *propensity to sin*. While at the new birth our inclination to sin was “*rendered inoperative* so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin” (see 6:6, italics added), believers can reactivate their propensity to sin. If reawakened, it works through the members of our physical body—“the law of my members”—being utilized as instruments of unrighteousness (see 6:13). You can readily see the parallel “with my flesh I serve the law of sin” (7:25). This was the circumstance that Paul deplored in Romans 7:15-25.

As Paul came to learn, he did not have to continually live in servitude to sin. The will of God—“the law of God”—is provided in the Scriptures through the Spirit (2 Tim 3:16-17) and His desires should increasingly align with our own through “the law in my mind [my understanding].” Again the parallel with “I myself [inner man, see v 22] serve the law of God with my understanding” (Rom 7:25) is obvious. The basis of your knowledge of God, being found in His Word, is to impact our minds—“the faculty of intellectual perception”<sup>77</sup>—so that we correctly understand God’s desires and then respond in obedience. Rather than simply being aware of the Scriptures, the idea is to have discernment concerning them in order to live righteously. Paul came to realize through a proper “understanding” of God’s will that he had mistakenly allowed the Mosaic Law to arouse his propensity to sin and thus “let sin reign in [his] mortal body” (6:12).

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Slide #7

Returning to Romans 8:2, we have just seen how the composition these two opposing principles — “the law of the Spirit of life” and “the law of sin of death”— govern Christian living. Even though now free from the law of sin, Paul was fully aware of the disconnect between being able to obey and actually obeying God’s will. Since sinful flesh can take advantage of the weakness of the Law (v 3a), God “pronounced sentence on sin in the flesh” (v 3c) as a result of Christ’s sacrificial act (v 3b). Then Paul gives us the reason for the pronouncement: “so that the righteous action (*dikaionoma*, see 5:16 above) of the law might be fulfilled in [believers] who do not “walk in relation to the [sinful] flesh” but “walk in relation to the Spirit” (8:4). [For an explanation of “fulfilling the law by a righteous lifestyle” see chapter 13 of *Escape*.]

Walking “in relation to the flesh” or “in relation to the Spirit”

captures the intent of this text when contextual considerations are taken into account. Particularly notice the construction of these prepositional phrases [preposition *kata* + object (noun in accusative case)] is “denoting a relationship to something.”<sup>8</sup> In this context Paul is describing “the process of living, or the *manner* in which one behaves.”<sup>9</sup> He is indicating a way of life tethered either to one’s relationship to the flesh or the Spirit. One author wrote, “A paraphrase might be: ‘those who walk *flesh-wise*,’ and ‘those who walk *Spirit-wise*,’ that is, with a fleshly or with a spiritual orientation.”<sup>10</sup>

This translation varies from the typical idea that the Christian can “walk according to *the power of the flesh*” or can “walk according to *the power of the Spirit*.” The phrase “the power of” relating to either sin or the Spirit is not found in the Greek text and, therefore, not included in any translations. Nevertheless, they are theological assertions based solely on the existence of an *assumed* “power of sin,” which in turn requires an *alleged* antidote, “the power of the Spirit,” in order for the believer to walk obediently. But the fact remains that nowhere in the “how-to-live” section of Romans 5–8 does the term *power* occur except for one instance in Romans 8:38, which references demonic beings who are at work in the world to thwart God’s purposes. Both the “power of sin” and the “power of the Spirit” are theological claims that are unsupported from the Scripture. [Note: The assumed “power of sin” is addressed in chapters 3–4 of *Escape* and article *No “Power of Sin;” only “Servitude to Sin.*” The alleged “power of the Spirit” is addressed in chapter 9 of *Escape* and articles *Insight to Acts 1:4-8* and *Insight to Ephesians 3:14-21*.]

Imposing “power” into the context of Romans 8 as the *causational means* of walking, either in disobedience “by the power of sin” or in obedience “by the power of the Spirit,” removes Christians from their responsibility to live obediently. Rather than power, this context calls for responsible *Choices!* Christians walk by making choices— whether good or bad. Notice Paul did not indicate “power” was the solution to living an obedient walk. Instead in Romans 7:25 he came to the realization through his inner man [new life (see 7:22; Col 3:10)] he could “serve the law of God with [his] understanding” (7:25b). He discovered the answer was to be found in the use of his “perception faculty”<sup>11</sup>—his mind—to grasp a proper understanding of God’s will so that the “gracious gift of righteousness might reign in [his] life” (Rom 5:17). In turn, Paul also came to the understanding he should no longer be exploited by his propensity to sin, “because [he was no longer] under law but under grace” (6:14). He no longer needed to “serve the law of sin with [his] flesh” (7:25c).

While being informed that “the law of the Spirit” sets one free from “the law of sinful flesh,” it is only as we choose the former (aligning our desires with God) will we actually experience freedom from the latter (siding with the world’s system). In the context of Romans 8, one’s “relationship to godly desires” is contrasted to one’s “relationship to worldly desires.” Choosing to walk in relationship to God’s will is to serve “the law of God with my understanding” (7:25b), that is, serving “the law of the Spirit of life” (8:2). On the other hand, choosing to walk in relationship to the inclination to sin is to serve “the law of sin with the flesh” (7:25c), that is, serving “the law of sin and death” (8:2). *Choices rather than power determines your relationship!*

## TWO WAYS OF WALKING

### Romans 8:1-4

1	Therefore, now <i>there is no servitude to sin</i> to those in Christ Jesus, [not walking in relation to flesh but in relation to Spirit].	
2	For the <i>law . . . . .</i> has <i>set me free</i> of the <i>Spirit</i> from the <i>law</i> of <i>life</i> in Christ Jesus of <i>sin</i> and of <i>death</i> .	<u>Two Laws</u> 1-Spirit/Life (7:25b) 2-Sin/Death (7:25c)
3	For the impotent Law, in that it was weak through the flesh, sending His own Son in likeness of sinful flesh and as a <i>sacrifice</i> concerning sin, <b>God pronounced sentence on sin</b> in the flesh,	
4	<b>So that the law’s righteous action might be fulfilled</b> in us, who do not <b>walk</b> in relation to the <b>flesh</b> but who <b>walk</b> in relation to the <b>Spirit</b> .	<u>Two Ways</u> <u>of Walking</u> 1-with <i>Flesh</i> 2-with <i>Spirit</i>

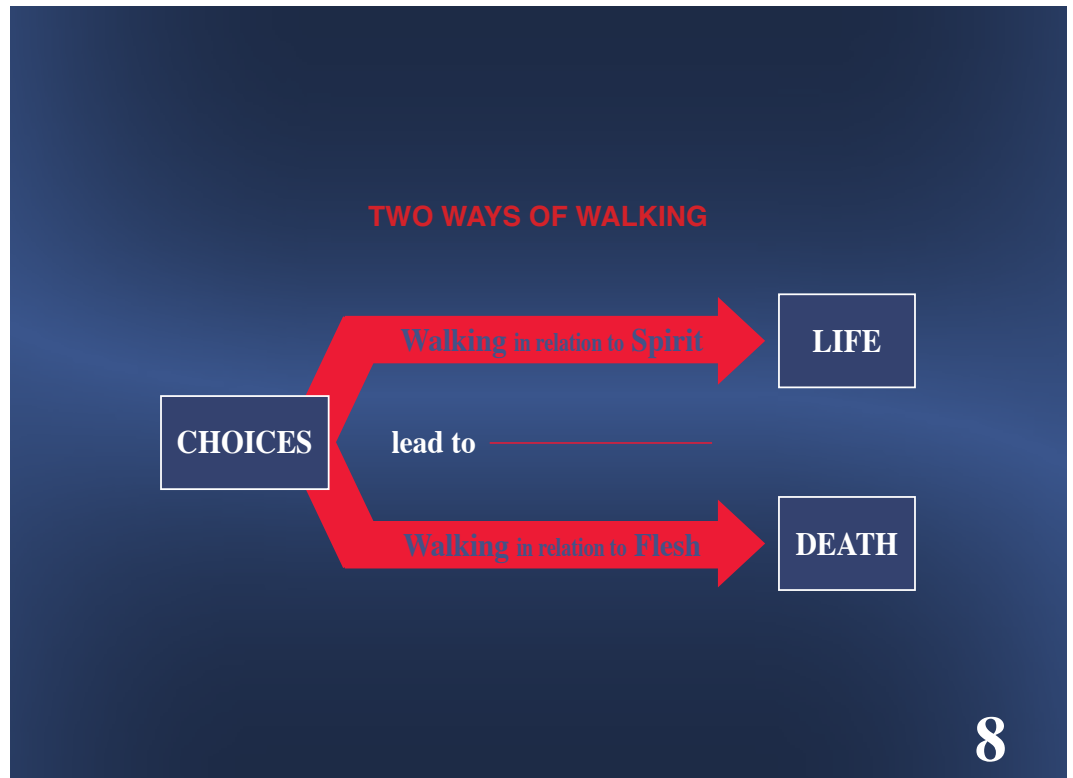
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Slide #8

Notice that power is not the issue in Paul's struggle and that applies to us as well. Choices, not power as the *causational means* of walking, are the essence of the Christian life. Those choices lead to abundant living or a living death.



Slide #9

Paul recognized something was terribly wrong with his approach to the Christian life (7:15-25). Having come to understand he was no longer in “servitude to sin” (8:1) and the “law of the Spirit” had set him free from the “law of sin” (v 2), only then could he “walk in relation to the Spirit” and experience life rather than “walk in relation to sinful flesh” and continue to experience death. Romans 8:5-9 gives further insight into *how* this “walk in relation to the Spirit” could become a reality.

Paul tells us the path on which a believer walks is determined by his “mind-set” (v 5).<sup>12</sup> Whatever the believer *focuses on* is lived out in his choices and actions. As suggested earlier, it is a matter of *orientation*, referring to “those who walk flesh-wise” compared to “those who walk Spirit-wise”<sup>13</sup> The word *orientation* brings to life the context of Romans 8, prompting two ideas. First, the *association*

**TWO WAYS OF THINKING**  
**Romans 8:5-9**

5	<p>For those . . . have their <b>minds set on</b> the things who are in relation to the flesh of the <b>flesh</b>, but those . . . have their <b>minds set on</b> the things who are in relation to the Spirit of the <b>Spirit</b>.</p>	<p><i>Two Ways of Thinking</i> 1-with Flesh 2-with Spirit</p>
6	<p>For the <b>mind-set . . . is death</b>; of the <b>flesh</b> but the <b>mind-set . . . is life</b> of the <b>Spirit</b> and <b>peace</b>.</p>	<p><i>Results of Thinking</i> 1-with Flesh Death 2-with Spirit Life</p>
7	<p>Therefore, the <b>mind-set . . . is hostile</b> of the <b>flesh</b> toward God, for it does not submit to God's law, for neither is it able to;</p>	
8	<p>and those . . . are <b>unable to please God</b>, who are <b>in the flesh</b></p>	<p><i>Positional Standing</i> 1-in the Flesh w/o Spirit 2-in the Spirit w/ Spirit</p>
9	<p>But you are <b>not in the flesh</b> but you are . . <b>in the Spirit</b>, since <b>God's Spirit dwells</b> in you. But if anyone has <b>not Christ's Spirit</b>, he does <b>not belong to Him</b>.</p>	

**9**

between objects, like an architect determining the position of a building on a parcel of land. Second, the *familiarity* between objects, like a new student visiting his chosen college campus for an orientation week.

The Christian's continual association and familiarity with sin leads to spiritual death, meaning loss of fellowship (vv 6, 13). On the other hand, developing an association and familiarity with spiritual things is a process of growth bringing about enriched living (vv 6, 13). The primary resource of the Spirit for Christian growth is God's communication to us through His Word. The Word is “God

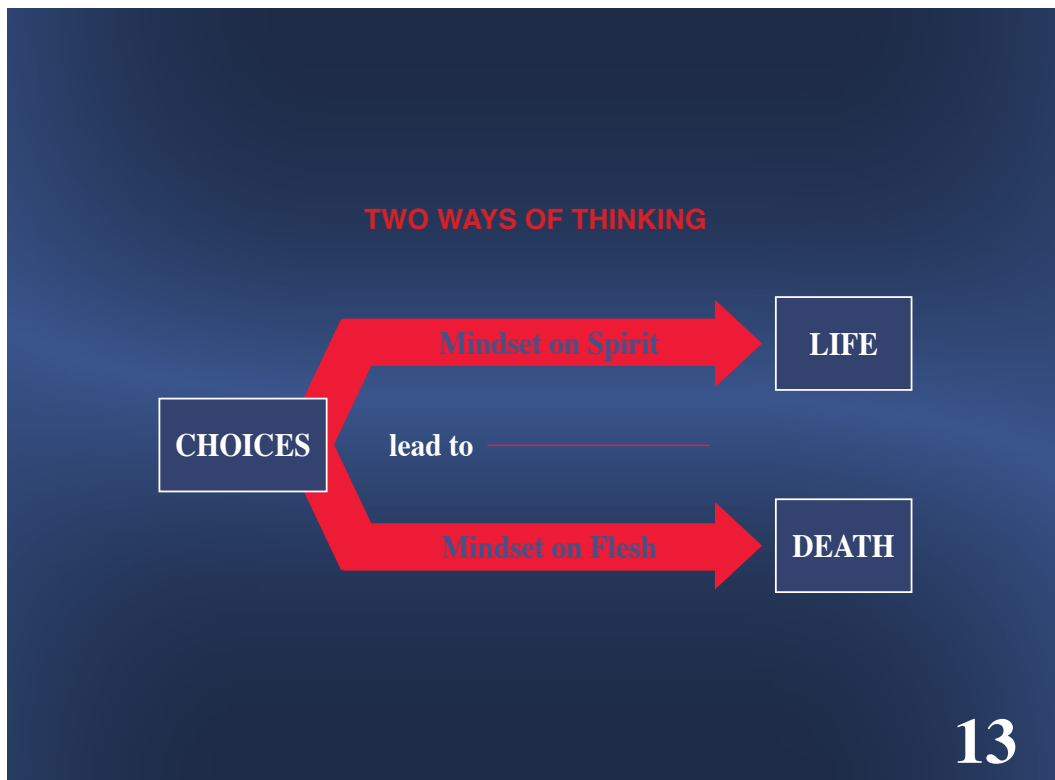






Slide #13

Notice again power is not the issue in Paul's solution to his struggle and that also applies to us as well. Choices are the *manner* in which the Christian life is experienced as we allow the Spirit to influence our choices through the Word of God, not by the Spirit's power as the *causational means* of living. Those choices lead to abundant living or loss of intimacy with Christ.



13

Slide #14

Paul progressed from *two ways of walking* (Rom 8:1-4), since believers are no longer in servitude to sin, to *two ways of thinking* (vv 5-9), which determine the manner in which believers walk. In verses 10-14, Paul consolidates his Christian-life teaching with *two ways of living*.

Paul reminds each believer that "Christ is in you" (v 10a), referring to "Christ's Spirit" who indwells them (v 9). While alive, the believer's physical body is spiritually dead (v 10b), being "spiritually unresponsive (i.e., dead) to God's will precisely because it is the seat of the 'law of sin, which is in [the believer's] body's members (7:23)."<sup>20</sup> While using the selfsame physical body, God makes the believer spiritually alive (cf. Eph 2:5). Having been made alive spiritually, the Spirit "works in" believers, *assisting* them to respond to God's will through "the law of God with my understanding" (7:25) and to experience enriched living (Rom 8:10c) [see chapter 8 of *Escape*, 112-15]. Paul explains that God the Father, who raised Christ from the dead, brings life to the believer's physical body through His indwelling Spirit (v 11). Consequently, believers are no longer obligated to their sinful flesh and should not "live in relation to the flesh" (v 12).

Twice in verse 11 Paul tells us, "God raised Christ from the dead." *First*, Paul writes, "The Spirit of the One [God the Father] who raised Christ from the dead" now indwells each believer (v 11a), alluding *possibly* to Christ's resurrection *in relation to* God's

**TWO WAYS OF LIVING**  
**Romans 8:10-14**

10	But if Christ <i>is</i> in you, the <b>body is dead</b> because of sin, yet the <b>Spirit is life</b> because of righteousness.	<i>Death &amp; Life Principle</i> 1-due to Sin 2-due to Righteousness
11	And if the <b>Spirit</b> . . . . . dwells of the One who raised Christ from the dead the One . . . will also <b>bring to life</b> your <b>immortal bodies</b> who raised Christ through His Spirit from the dead who dwells in you.	
12	So then, brothers, we are <b>not obligated</b> . . . . . to <b>live</b> to the <b>flesh</b> in relation to the <b>flesh</b> .	
13	For if you <b>live</b> in relation to the <b>flesh</b> , you will <b>die</b> ; but if you <b>put to death</b> . . . . . the <b>deeds</b> with the <b>Spirit</b> of the <b>body</b> , you will <b>live</b> .	<i>Two Ways of Living</i> 1-with <b>Flesh</b> 2-with <b>Spirit</b>
14	In fact, as many as are <b>being led</b> by the <b>Spirit</b> , these are <b>God's sons</b> (adult sons).	<i>Being Led by the Spirit</i>

14

Spirit in Romans 1:4. In the *second* use of the clause “God raised Christ from the dead” (v 11b), Paul refers to God’s ministry of bringing to life each believer’s physical, yet spiritually dead, body through the Spirit who now indwells them. Many conclude Paul is addressing the Spirit’s “resurrection power,” which is used to produce “resurrection living.” Seemingly supporting that position, verse 11 resembles Romans 6:3-4 where believers’ co-death, co-burial, and co-resurrection with Christ make it possible for them to “walk in newness of life.” This understanding would align with the supposed idea that Christians “walk according to *the power of the Spirit*” (8:4) to experience spiritual victory.

Nevertheless, there is another way to understand verse 11. In fact, there are a number of considerations that must be addressed (see slide #15).

### Slide #15

Three major considerations must be taken into account to correctly understand Romans 8:11.

#### *Importing Causational Power from Romans 1:4*

Romans 1:3-4 introduces the contrast between the “flesh” (v 3) and the “Spirit” (v 4), which becomes fully developed regarding believers in Romans 8.

3 Concerning His Son who was a descendant of David with reference to [*in relation to*] the flesh,<sup>4</sup> who was appointed the Son-of-God-in-power according to [*in relation to*] the Holy Spirit by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord (NET).

A comparison between “flesh” and “Spirit” in Romans 1 and “flesh” and “Spirit” in Romans 8 is instructive. The above insertions *in relation to* the flesh/Spirit

[preposition *kata* + object (noun in accusative case) construction] are identical to those in the Greek text of Romans 8:4-5, 12-13 and in each instance it is only “denoting a relationship to something.”<sup>21</sup> Notice that Christ was “a descendant of David *in relation to* the [physical] flesh” (1:3), yet without sin; while Christians, being physical descendants of Adam (5:12), can place themselves in servitude to sin and thus “walk *in relation to* the [sinful] flesh” (8:4).

Being the God-man, Christ came to die on the cross for the sins of the whole world (cf. John 3:16; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 John 2:2). As a result of His resurrection, He was designated the “Son-of-God-*in-power*”<sup>22</sup> or the “Son-of-God-*with-power*.”<sup>23</sup> In this context, power should be understood as “the fundamental power that His resurrection bestows upon Him” and “this power is inseparably related to His right to judge all men.”<sup>24</sup> In that regard, “the destiny of every human being is in the hands of Jesus Christ”<sup>25</sup> with Christ being “powerfully active to bring salvation to all who believe (cf. 1:16).”<sup>26</sup> Here the word *power* refers to the power that Christ himself possesses, not to be confused with the power of the Spirit. Granted we must recognize the Spirit of God has power, evidenced not only in miracles performed during Jesus’ ministry but also in empowering believers (OT and NT) for ministry. Make no mistake, *causational power* physically raised Christ (1:4) and spiritually raises those who place their faith in Christ to eternal life (6:4). Nevertheless, “resurrection power” by the Spirit was *not* Paul’s emphasis in this particular text (1:4) and also *not* in the how-to-live section of Romans (ch 5–8) when addressing Christian living [see chapter 10 of *Escape*, 154-60]. To miss this central issue leads to misapplying and imposing supposed ideas that are biblically unwarranted.

#### *Spirit’s Ministry in Romans 8:11*

In Romans 8:11, God the Father is the one who raised Christ from the dead. God was the agent of Christ’s resurrection, just as Christ was the agent who raised Lazarus (John 11:43-44). The Spirit participated in Christ’s resurrection (Rom 1:4) and, though not stated, is assumed to have participated in Lazarus’ resurrection, since throughout His earthly ministry Christ “performed numerous miracles in the power of the Spirit” (see Matt 12:28; Luke 4:14-15, 18).<sup>27</sup> If God was the agent who raised Christ from the dead (Rom 1:4 and 8:11), what type of life is addressed in verse 11: “The One...will also bring to life your mortal bodies?” And, what is the Spirit’s role?

The answer becomes evident when seen in light of the flow of Paul’s argument. Paul wrote to believers who are no longer trapped in “servitude to sin” (8:1) and therefore should “walk in relation to the Spirit” (v 4) as a result of having a “mind-set...on the things of

## CONSIDERATIONS Romans 8:11

### Importing Causational Power from Romans 1:4

### Spirit’s Ministry in Romans 8:11

### Clarity from Romans 6:11-13

15

the Spirit (spiritual things)” (vv 5-6). The basis for a “Spirit-wise walk” was the believer’s positional standing—being “in the Spirit” (v 9). In verse 10, Paul tells us the believer’s “living, physical body” is actually “dead,” being spiritually unresponsive to God “because of sin.” Yet, the believer is now spiritually alive because of the “gracious gift of righteousness” bestowing life through Christ (5:21). So when we come to verse 11, Paul explains “how those who *are* alive from the dead can live like it,”<sup>28</sup> particularly since the believer continues to have the same physical body. Paul tells us the very same body can increasingly become responsive to God “through or because of the *assistance* of the Spirit”<sup>29</sup> Previously, Paul failed to properly approach and obey the law “because of the *resistance* of the flesh”<sup>30</sup> (8:3) since his flesh served the “law of sin” (7:25c). But Paul learned the new regenerate inner man, being “in Christ” (8:1) and “dead to sin” (6:11), is alive to “serve the law of God with [his] understanding” (7:25b), that is, “the law of the Spirit” (8:2), through the influence of the Spirit with the Word of God (8:11). In so doing, the believer can “walk in newness of life” (6:4). Consequently this verse does not speak to causal power but rather to allowing the Spirit to influence the believer’s thoughts and actions to align with those of his heavenly Father provided in the Word.

Clarity from Romans 6:11-13

Remember the Christian’s physical body can be an instrument for unrighteousness or righteousness. Clarity is provided when we again return to Romans 6 addressed above. Remember Paul wrote, “Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (6:11). Being positionally dead to sin, meaning no longer in “servitude to sin,” Paul wrote, “Do not go on placing the members of your [physical] body at the disposal of sin as instruments of unrighteousness” (6:13a). Evidently they were doing what they should not have been doing. Rather, he continued, “Placing yourselves at the disposal of God as those alive from the dead [spiritually] and your members [physical body] as instruments of righteousness to God” (6:13b). In each decision believers must choose if their body is placed at God’s disposal to be used for righteousness (righteous behavior serving God) or at sin’s disposal for unrighteousness (unrighteous behavior in servitude to sin). Notice again the Christian life isn’t the Spirit causing righteous behavior or sin causing unrighteous behavior. They are not power sources. Rather, the obedient Christian life is the result of godly choices by aligning thoughts and actions with the will of God, as assisted or influenced by the Spirit. In so doing, “God...will bring to life your mortal bodies [in responsiveness to God’s will] through His Spirit” (8:11).

One then should conclude that verse 11 was not addressing the Spirit’s “resurrection power” that is used by the Spirit to produce “resurrection living.” Rather, the point being that the members of the believer’s physical body can manifest righteous behavior as a result of godly thinking that leads to right choices with the *assistance* of the indwelling Spirit from the Word of God.

Slide #16

Returning to Romans 8:12-13, Paul concludes his argument begun in verse 1. Since believers are “no longer in servitude to sin” (v 1) and since “God pronounced sentence on sin in the flesh” (v 3), why then didn’t Paul write, “Just let the Spirit’s power cause your body to live obediently to God?” But he didn’t! Rather, bringing to a conclusion the previous eleven verses he wrote, “We are not [any longer] obligated to the flesh [propensity to sin] to live in relation to the flesh [propensity to sin]” (v 12). This is the lesson Paul had learned the hard way earlier in his Christian life (7:15-25). He had come to understand that positional deliverance from sin could only be actually experienced through wise/godly thinking which leads to wise/godly walking—Spirit-wise thinking and living.

Paul again presented the life-death contrast (v 13), being associated with the manner in which

TWO WAYS OF LIVING  
Romans 8:10-14

10	But if Christ <i>is</i> in you, the <b>body</b> is <b>dead</b> because of sin, yet the <b>Spirit</b> is <b>life</b> because of righteousness.	<i>Death &amp; Life Principle</i> 1- <i>due to Sin</i> 2- <i>due to Righteousness</i>
11	And if the <b>Spirit</b> . . . . . <b>dwells</b> of the One . . . . . in you, who raised Christ from the dead the One . . . will also <b>bring to life</b> your <b>mortal bodies</b> who raised Christ . . . through His Spirit from the dead . . . who dwells in you.	
12	So then, brothers, we are <b>not obligated</b> . . . . . <b>to live</b> to the <b>flesh</b> . . . . . in relation to the <b>flesh</b> .	
13	For if you <b>live</b> in <i>relation to the flesh</i> , you will <b>die</b> ; but if you <b>put to death</b> . . . . . the <b>deeds</b> with the <b>Spirit</b> . . . . . of the <b>body</b> , you will <b>live</b> .	<i>Two Ways of Living</i> 1- <i>with Flesh</i> 2- <i>with Spirit</i>
14	In fact, as many as are <b>being led</b> by the <b>Spirit</b> , these are <b>God’s sons</b> (adult sons).	<i>Being Led by the Spirit</i>

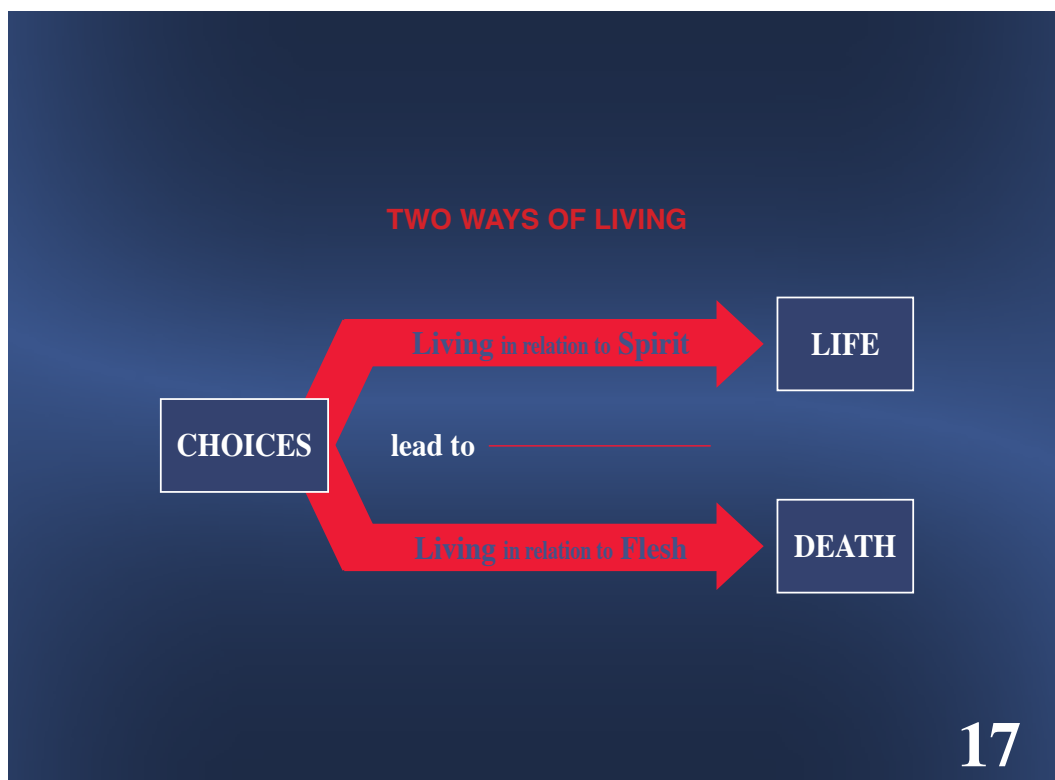
believers walk as a result of their choices—in relation to the Spirit or in relation to flesh. From his previous use of these parallel “in-relation-to” expressions (8:4 and 5), we would assume he would write, “live *in relation to* the Spirit” (italic added) to address living associated with the Spirit (v 13c). Instead he wrote, “put to death the deeds of the body *with* the Spirit”<sup>31</sup> (italic added). Three things come to our attention. *First*, “putting to death [killing] the deeds [practices] of the physical body with the Spirit” is equivalent to

“living in relation to the Spirit.” By “putting to death the deeds of the body,” the believer experiences “life” (abundant life, v 13d) rather than “death” by “living in relation to flesh” (v 13b). In order to live authentically in one behavior pattern, the opposite pattern must be eliminated. The one is counterproductive to the “life or death” experience of the other and vice versa. *Second*, the expression “with the Spirit” (v 13c, italic added) is interchangeable with “in relation to the Spirit” (8:4, italic added). The former is a noun (dative case) referring to an association with or manner in which something is accomplished, while the latter is a prepositional phrase [*kata* + object (noun in accusative case)] indicating a relationship to the Spirit.<sup>32</sup> Being analogous in usage, it should be understood to “walk/live in respect to the Spirit” is equivalent to “walk/live with the Spirit.” We will again encounter this equivalence when we address *Critical Concept #2*, which concerns the believer’s walk in Galatians 5:16-25. *Third*, the activity of “putting to death [sinful] practices” falls squarely on the believer, whose responsibility it is to “put to death sinful practices,” rather than being the Spirit’s responsibility. Similarly addressing believers’ conduct, Paul wrote, “Put off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light” (Rom 13:12, italics added) and “Put off all such things as anger, rage, malice...(Col 3:8, italics added) but rather “Put on a heart of compassion, kindness... (Col 3:12, italics added). Notice the behavior to be put-off/put-on in Colossians 3 corresponds to the “deeds of the flesh” (Gal 5:19-21a) and “fruit of the Spirit” (vv 22-23a) and occurs in the context of “walking with the flesh/Spirit” (vv 16-17). In those cases, Paul addressed conduct that the believer himself is responsible to avoid (“put off”) and to pursue (“put on”).

Once again it is the believer’s two options, his choice between two different alternatives, which lead to experiencing enriched living or loss of fellowship. Only by cultivating a Spirit-wise mind-set focused on the will of God can the believer’s choices result in displacing flesh-wise conduct.<sup>33</sup> Rather than the power of the Spirit, the Spirit influences our thoughts and actions through the Word of God. Remember: *what we think ultimately determines what we do!*

### Slide #17

Notice for the third time power is not the solution to the believer’s struggle in Christian living. Choices are the way the Christian life is experienced as we allow the Spirit to influence us through the Word of God, not by the Spirit’s power as the *causational means* of living. In reality, those choices lead either to abundant living or a living death.



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Slide #18

While usually assigned, as it should be, to the next section of Romans 8, the flow of this text into verse 14 is significant. Particularly is this pertinent since Galatians is the other text that covers both how believers are to properly address the “law” as well as the contrast between walking “with the flesh” and “with the Spirit.” Also in that context, these two books are the only time the expression *being led by the Spirit* (Rom 8:14; Gal 5:18) occurs in the New Testament. But before we consider “being led by the Spirit,” a wise author gives some needed perspective. He writes:

In the context of Romans 8 [as well as Galatians], this has nothing to do with what is often described as “the leading of the Lord.” That concept is essentially an appeal to some “inner direction” that is more mystical than Biblical.<sup>34</sup>

**BEING LED by the SPIRIT**  
Romans 8:14  
Postscript

14 In fact,  
as many as are **being led**  
by the **Spirit**,  
these are **God's sons** (adult sons).

*Being Led  
by the Spirit*

**18**

So, what does it mean, “to be led by the Spirit?” Unfortunately the normal automatic default kicks in and it is assumed that the “power of the Spirit” comes into play. Consequently, the Spirit leads the believer *by means* of His power—the “inner-direction” view.

Slide #19

The grammatical construction of verse 14 assists in gaining insight to the proper understanding of this verse in the context of Romans 8. The construction of “being led by the Spirit” is made up of a present-passive-indicative verb (*are being led*) and a noun (*Spirit*) in the dative case. The verb *to lead* means “to lead...morally or spiritually, *lead, encourage (in the direction of)*.”<sup>35</sup> While the present, indicative verb form informs us the “leading” takes place, the passive voice indicates the subject (an assumed “you” or “believer”) receives the action performed rather than executing the action.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, the verb form describes “being led” as a “willingness to *allow oneself to be led*.”<sup>37</sup> The noun *Spirit* is translated as a prepositional phrase *by the Spirit*, being understood as the dative of agency—“the word in the dative denotes the agent by whom something is done.”<sup>38</sup> Consequently Paul teaches, “You [believers] are being led by the Spirit [agent of leading].”

**GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTION**  
Romans 8:14

**(BELIEVERS) BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Agent</b>
(3rd pers, pl)	(pres, pass, indic)	(dative)

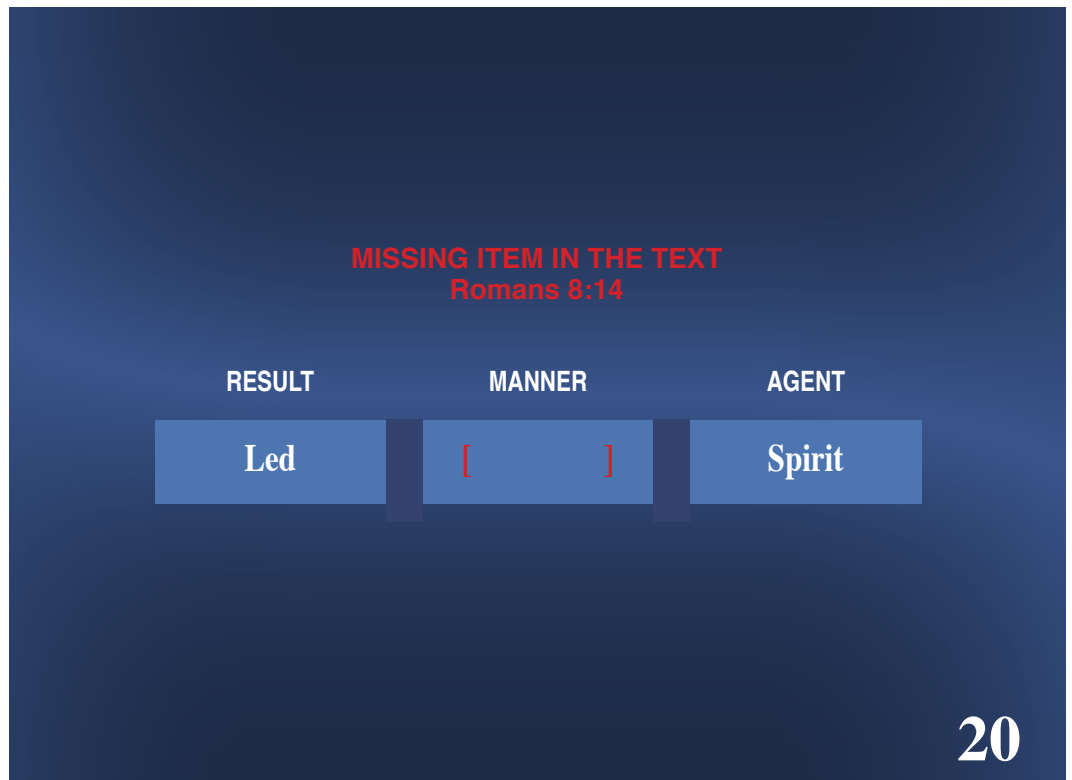
**19**



Slide #20

Having identified the “Spirit” as the agent of leading, it should be understood that “agency” does *not clarify the manner* in which leading occurs.<sup>39</sup> The key to understanding the manner of leading is found in the context of the passage under consideration. In Romans 8, we have discovered the Spirit “works in” believers, “influencing” them to respond to God’s will through “the law of God with [their] understanding,” that is, “the law of the Spirit of life,” based on God’s Word (2 Tim 3:16-17), which was provided through the Spirit Himself (2 Pet 1:21). Rather than a mystical zapping of power, it is a process in which the believer continues to place himself at the disposal of God and His will, turning over his body’s members as instruments of righteousness in service to God. It is continuing to choose to walk “in relation to Spirit through the Word” as a lifestyle, having “the direction of one’s life as a whole determined by the Spirit.”<sup>40</sup> In so doing, the believer is “being led by the Spirit.”

Notice Romans 8:14 does *not* teach the Spirit is the *means* by which something is *produced*, with believers allowing the Spirit (the means) to mystically zap them. Rather, this verse teaches the Word of God is the *manner* in which something is *obtained*, with believers allowing the Word (the manner) from the Spirit (the agent) to lead them.

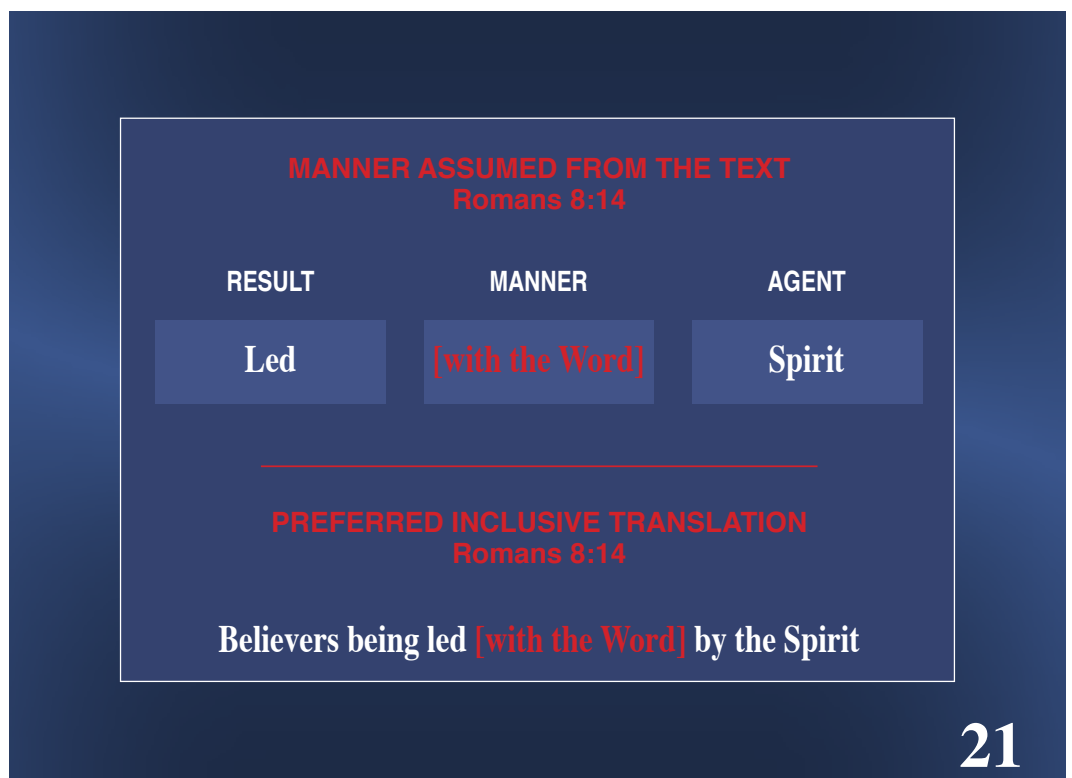


Slide #21

*Being Led* is the process of choosing to be increasingly *receptive* to the Word of God through the Spirit; it is a *willingness to allow* “God’s Word” provided by the Spirit to influence one’s thinking and behavior. The preferred translation of Romans 8:14 takes into account the *manner* of “being led,” which is *with the Word of God*. Consequently, the verse could be translated:

(Believers) being led [with Word]  
(Subject) (Manner)  
by the Spirit  
(Agent)

Perhaps an illustration will give some clarity to the concept of “agency.” In high school, I had a basketball coach who was demanding, always expecting our best effort, but always fair. The coach provided us with a sophisticated playbook that diagrammed each and every play. As practice started, we wouldn’t begin at full speed. Rather



we would walk through certain plays. It was basketball in slow motion, but it allowed every player to fully understand his responsibility so that each player and the team would be successful. Then after repeating the same plays relentlessly over and over at full-speed, the timing and execution increasingly became second nature. We became a successful basketball team because we put the playbook into practice just as the coach designed it.

If agency refers to “the person by whom something is accomplished,” then certainly a basketball coach is an *agent*. Now notice the *manner* that brought about the desired outcome. With the use of the playbook and repetitive practice, the coach instilled the game tactics in his players. Consequently, the individual players became proficient and the team successful. This precisely parallels the ministry of the Spirit who has provided believers with a playbook, the Word of God, so that through application in life experiences they become increasingly obedient to Christ.

“Being led” in basketball is allowing oneself to be influenced with the playbook provided by the coach. Notice, it’s the individual players, not the agent, who actually do the playing. Likewise, “being led” in the Christian life is allowing oneself to be influenced with the Word of God provided by the Spirit. Again, it’s believers, not the Spirit, who actually do the walking.

Now notice again the result of being led by the Spirit: “these are God’s sons.” Being led by the Spirit is “a ‘distinguishing sign’ of being a son [note small “s”] of God.”<sup>41</sup> The significance of this statement is found in the meaning of the term *son* in the context of both Romans and Galatians since they addressed similar issues (Law, walking with the Spirit, and leading by the Spirit). One author offers insight:

In Paul’s much earlier epistle to the Galatians, he clearly distinguished between a “minor child” (*nepios*) and a “son” (*huios*). The former is a child “not yet of legal age”...who is under the governance of a tutor (the law), while the latter is the “adult son” who is no longer under this tutor (see Gal 4:1-7).<sup>42</sup>

The one who is “being led by the Spirit” is in fact the one who is living “the life of an adult son who is no longer under the law (note especially Rom 6:14).”<sup>43</sup> The son’s *lifestyle* is “in conformity to the revealed will of God as found in His Word.”<sup>44</sup>

#### Slide #22

When seen from the proper perspective, one would conclude from Romans 8:14 the following *biblical principle*:

Believers are being led  
[as they walk in relation to  
the Word of God]  
by the Spirit.

**BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE**  
**Romans 8:14**

Believers are being led [as they walk  
in relation to the Word of God] by the Spirit.

22

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Slide #23

Living is a product of the choices by the decisions we make. If we choose to continue to “walk in relation to the Spirit” in conformity to the will of God in His Word, we will be recognized as those who walk no longer as infants but rather as adult sons. Our *lifestyle* will give evidence that we are indeed “being led by the Spirit.”



## Endnotes

1. Zane C. Hodges, *Romans* (Corinth, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2013), 151.  
The alternative translation is from Zane Hodges. Additionally, the alternation translation in slides 5, 7, and 9 includes inserts from Hodges.
2. *Ibid.*, 151-54; 206-07.  
Hodges argues that the particular word *katakrima* used in 8:1 (as well as in 5:16, 18) should be translated “servitude” rather than “condemnation.” Hodges’ conclusion is supported by two recognized scholarly Greek resources: BDAG and M&M. [BDAG—Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich] Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 518 and [M&M] James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 328.  
Christians are freed from the “servitude to sin” in their daily lives as they walk with in relation to the Spirit. The alternative translation, “Therefore there is now no servitude to sin for those who are in Christ Jesus,” provides an entirely different perspective to the verse and aligns with the entire context of Romans 5–8. Consequently, there is no biblical requirement for the “power of sin” theological assumption or the “power of the Spirit” to be the antidote in Christian living. [The assumed “power of sin” is addressed in chapters 3–4 of *Escape* and article *No “Power of Sin;” only “Servitude to Sin.”* The alleged “power of the Spirit” is addressed in chapter 9 of *Escape* and articles *Insight to Acts 1:4-8* and *Insight to Ephesians 3:14-21*.]
3. BDAG, 677.  
See definition 1, a.
4. Many understand Paul to be a non-believer in Romans 7, illustrating his plight in finding favor with God. That approach is troublesome since the entire context of Romans 5-8 addresses how-to-live the Christian life, concerning to those who are already Christians.
5. BDAG, 225.  
See marker A, 5. While the preposition *dia* + *sarkos* (object in the genitive case) is typically translated “through (by the agency of) the flesh” (BDAG, 225, marker A, 4, a). “at times” as here it “seems to have causal meaning” and rendered “because of the resistance of the flesh” (BDAG, 225, marker A, 5). Also see endnote 29.
6. Hodges, 200, (*italics his*).  
Hodges’ translation of Romans 7:25 is provided.
7. BDAG, 680.  
See definition 1, a.
8. BDAG, 513.  
See definition 6. The alternative translation *in relation to* [preposition *kata* + accusative noun (object of preposition) construction] is based on BDAG definition 6. Walter Bauer, the author of this leading Greek resource, indicates that *kata* used with an accusative noun can be translated “with respect to” or “in relation to” when “denoting a relationship to something.”
9. Hodges, 208 (*italics added*).
10. *Ibid.*, 209 (*italics added*).
11. *Ibid.*, 201.
12. *Ibid.*, 214.  
Hodges correctly identifies two contrasting focuses or mind-sets. In addition, notice the participle phrases “who are in relation to the flesh” and “who are in relation to the Spirit” identify and clarify “those” in Paul’s argument. Unfortunately, some insert “live” in order to continue the idea of walking from verse 4 into both clauses: “who *live* with respect to the flesh/Spirit” (e.g., NIV, NKJV, NET). That approach is unwarranted since Paul is transitioning from “walking” (v 4) to “thinking” (v 5), with verse 5 addressing the basis for the actions in verse 4—thinking leads to walking. In light of the information in verse 6, seemingly the intent of both participle phrases is captured in the paraphrases “those, who have a mind-set in relation to the flesh, experience death (forfeited fellowship)” and “those, who have a mind-set in relation to the Spirit, experience life (abundant).”
13. *Ibid.*, 209 (*italics his*).
14. BDAG, 248.  
See definition 3, a.
15. Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986), 69.
16. BDAG, 778.  
See definition 1, a: “to put at someone’s disposal” for use.
17. BDAG, 255.  
See definition 2, b. In the context of Romans 12:2, “proving” means to “draw a conclusion,” indicating something is “accepted as proved” (also Eph 5:10; Jam 1:3, 12). In these four texts, “proving” is to demonstrate a lifestyle consistent with the ways of God as revealed in His Word.
18. BDAG, 778.  
See definition 1, a: “to put at someone’s disposal” for use.
19. Hodges, 216.
20. *Ibid.*, 217 (*italics his*).
21. BDAG, 513,  
See definition 6.

22. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 48.
23. Hodges, 27.
24. *Ibid.*, 28.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Moo, 50.
27. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1965), 47.
28. Hodges, 169 (*italics his*).
29. BDAG, 225.  
See marker A, 5. While the preposition *dia* + *pneumatōs* (object in the genitive case) is typically translated “through (by the agency of) the Spirit” (BDAG, 225, marker A, 4, a), “at times” as here it “seems to have causal meaning” and rendered “because of the assistance of the Spirit” (BDAG, 225, marker A, 5, underlined words changed to align with content of v 11).  
**Note:** Some Greek manuscripts have “Spirit” in the genitive case, while in the accusative case in other manuscripts. The preposition *dia* + *pneumatōs* (object in the genitive case) differs from *dia* + *pneumatā* (object in the accusative case), being indicated by the *os* ending for genitive as opposed to the *a* ending for genitive. In the accusative case, it would emphasize “constituting cause”—“the reason why something happens” and is typically translated “because of, for the sake of” (BDAG, 225, marker B, 2, a). In fact, the *dia* + object (in the accusative case) occurs twice in verse 10—*dia* + *sarkos* (“because of sin”) and *dia* + *dikaioσunh* (“because of righteousness”). It seems likely that the accusative case would be preferred by some to align with the occurrences in verse 10, as well as, to align with the teaching that the Spirit’s power *causes obedience*. Nevertheless, this author prefers the genitive case, emphasizing the Spirit’s *assisting obedience*, which fits well with the verses 12-13 that follow in which each believer chooses to obey rather than caused to obey. Also see endnote 5 that address Romans 8:3 in which preposition *dia* + *sarkos* (object in the genitive case) is rendered “because of the resistance of the flesh.” The parallel of “resistance of the flesh” (v 3) and “assistance of the Spirit” (v 11) lends support for countering a two-power conflict in the Christian walk.
30. BDAG, 225.  
See marker A, 5 (*italics added*). While the preposition *dia* + *sarkos* (object in the genitive case) is typically translated “through (by the agency of) the flesh” (BDAG, 225, marker A, 4, a), “at times” as here it “seems to have causal meaning” and rendered “because of the resistance of the flesh” (BDAG, 225, marker A, 5).
31. Philip R. Williams, *Grammar Notes* (Tacoma, WA: Northwest Baptist Seminary Greek class notes, 1988), 13, 15, 16.  
In Romans 8:13, “put the death the deeds of the body *with* or *by* the Spirit” are contextually available translations. Williams indicates that a noun in the dative form, designating the person or thing with which one associates, is a *dative of association* and typically indicated by “with.” Likewise a noun in the dative form, designating the manner in which something done, is a *dative of manner* and again typically indicated by “with.” A noun in the dative form, denoting the agency by which something is done (impersonal), is a *dative of agency* and typically indicated with “by.” Consequently, whichever approach selected, it does not support an empowerment view of the Spirit for Christian living. That view is not the emphasis of this or any other text since it is biblically unsupported.
32. See endnote 31.
33. Hodges, 396.
34. *Ibid.*, 220.
35. BDAG, 16.  
See definition 3.
36. H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: The Macmillan Company, 1957), 161.  
“The passive voice is that use of the verb which denotes the subject as *receiving the action*” (*italics theirs*).
37. Rene A. Lopez, *Romans Unlocked* (Springfield, MO: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Press, 2005), 171.  
Lopez cites BDAG for *allow oneself to be led* (BDAG, 16, definition 3).
38. Williams, *Grammar Notes*, 16.  
A noun in the dative form, denoting the agency by which something is done (personal), is a *dative of agency* and typically indicated with “by.”
39. In this presentation, we pointed out that the “Spirit” in Romans 8:14 (“Believers be led by the Spirit”) should be understood as a *dative of agency*. Others, however, disagree and indicate that the “Spirit” is a *dative of means*. That distinction is critical since the verb *be led* is in the passive voice, indicating that believers cannot lead themselves. So, it is very important to understand biblically in what way believers are to be led. In this presentation, we indicated that the acquisition of biblical truth through the Word by the Spirit results in “the leading” (the Agency Approach). On the other hand, others believe the power of the Spirit produces “the leading” (the Means Approach). The former is the *manner* in which something is *obtained*, with believers allowing the Word from the Spirit (agent) to inform and influence them. On the other hand, the latter is the *means* by which something is *produced*, with believers allowing the Spirit to energize them.

Which approach should be chosen—Agency or Means? Unfortunately many select the Means Approach, being swayed by the typical understanding that the “power of the Spirit” for “Christian living” causes and produces obedience through the Christian. That in fact is not true! It cannot be biblically supported! Of course, the Spirit empowers believers for ministry, but that is not the case for “Christian living” (see article *Introduction to*



*Critical Concepts in Christian Living*, 1-2). Yet, that is the bases for selecting the Means Approach in reference to the “Spirit” in Romans 8:14.

Below we reveal the way the Agency Approach differs from the Means Approach. Even though there are similarities in grammatical layout, the critical distinction is the *error of empowerment by the Spirit for Christian living in the Means Approach*.

#### AGENCY APPROACH

A noun in the dative form, denoting the agency (personal) by which something is accomplished, is a *dative of agency* and typically indicated with “by” (see endnote #38). Using Ephesians 5:18 (“Believers be filled by the Spirit”) as an illustration, we will show the way the verse is addressed via the “dative of agency” as understood by Philip Williams. [Philip R. Williams, *Grammar Notes* (Tacoma, WA: Northwest Baptist Seminary Greek class notes, 1988), 16.]

The grammatical construction of Ephesians 5:18 with a *dative of agency* is understood as follows:

Believers	be filled	by the Spirit
Subject	Verb	Agent
(2nd pers, pl)	pres, pass, imper)	(dative)

Within a sentence with a dative of agency, the subject receives the action of a passive voice verb. However, the manner in which that action is accomplished must be determined from the context. In this case, the “manner” is *with Christ’s will* (see v 17). The *Agency Approach* for Ephesians 5:18 follows:

Believers be filled [with Christ’s will]	by the Spirit
(Subject)	(Agent)

#### MEANS APPROACH

Others understand the “Spirit” in Galatians 5:18 to be a *dative of means*. In comparison and again using Ephesians 5:18 (“Believers be filled by the Spirit”) as an illustration, we will show the way the verse is addressed when the “Spirit” is understood as a “dative of means.”

##### First Example by Daniel Wallace

[Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 158, 162, 375.] Wallace understands the “Spirit” in Galatians 5:18 “to indicate the means or instrument by which the verbal action is accomplished” (162). Consequently, the grammatical construction of Ephesians 5:18 with a *dative of means* is understood as follows:

Believers	be filled	by means of the Spirit
Subject	Verb	Means
(2nd pers, pl)	(pres, pass,imper)	(dative)

Rejecting the dative of agency approach, Wallace’s translation of Ephesians 5:18 is “Believers are to be filled... *by means of the Spirit with the content of the fullness of God*” (375, italics his). As such, the *Means Approach* for Ephesians 5:18 follows:

Believers be filled [with the fullness of God]	by means of the Spirit
(Subject)	(Means)

##### Notice:

*First*, when compared to the agency approach, the “content” in the “means approach” and the “manner” in the “agency approach” refer to a similar concept.

*Second*, while not stating the means of filling is by the “power of the Spirit,” that is in fact his position as illustrated in his discussion on “walk by the Spirit” (Gal 5:16). He wrote, “the *empowering of the Spirit*...enables one to resist the flesh” (158, italics his).

##### Second Example by Harold Hoehner

[Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 699, 704.]

Citing Daniel Wallace (see footnote #2, 704) for support, the grammatical construction of Ephesians 5:18 with a *dative of means* is again understood as follows:

Believers	be filled	by means of the Spirit
Subject	Verb	Means
(2nd pers, pl)	pres, pass, imper)	(dative)

Coming essentially to the same conclusion as Wallace, Hoehner’s translation of Ephesians 5:18 is “the Holy Spirit is the means by which believers are filled with Christ and his will” (704). Consequently, the verse rendered by the *Means Approach* follows:

Believers be filled [with Christ and his will]	by means of the Spirit
(Subject)	(Means)

Notice:

*First*, when again compared to the agency approach, the “content” in the “means approach” and the “manner” in the “agency approach” refer to a similar concept.

*Second*, while also not addressing the means of filling is by the “power of the Spirit,” that is in fact his position: “The will of the Lord...is carried out by the *power of God’s Spirit*” (699, italics added).

40. Moo, 498.

41. Ibid., 499.

42. Hodges, 221.

For “minor child” (*nepios*) see BDAG, 671 (definition 2) and for “son” (*huios*) see BDAG, 1025 (definition 2, c, a).

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., 220.