

Exegetical Notes - Romans 8:12-17

“Sons of God”

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Romans 8:12-17

Verses 12-13

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

- “Therefore”... because the Holy Spirit lives in us and gives us life both now and eternally, we are under obligation to God. Our obligation is to reject the sinful desire of the flesh and to live for Christ.
- If we live to satisfy the desires of our sinful nature, we will die. To live as the Holy Spirit directs means to reject the desires of the flesh. That kind of living brings life.

Verses 14-15

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

- The obligation is not a new enslavement. It is not in fear that we serve God. It brings us joy because it means that we have become God’s children. Through his grace, God has adopted us into his family.
- God has given us a special relationship. We have the rights of adult sons even though we are still growing in our understanding of what it means to be part of the family of God. We may call him “abba.” The Greek word is intimate. It is best translated “daddy.” While we have the full rights of adult children, our relationship with God is, by His grace, close and intimate. We are not afraid of God as slaves would be; we are in love with him.

Verses 16-17

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

- In these verses the Greek word for “children” is different. In verses 14-15, the word is the one that means adopted children, adult sons. Here, the Greek word is that which means “natural” children. Those who are members of the family by right of birth.
- Jesus is God’s “Only Begotten Son.” Jesus is God’s son by right of natural birth. He stands in a place different from that which we have as children of God. But by grace, God has extended to us the same rights as those which belong to Jesus. We are co-heirs with Christ. All the blessings which the kingdom of God offers are ours.
- “IF” ... There is a condition placed on our position as God’s natural children. We must do as Jesus did if we want to be God’s children. We must die to self, “not my will be done but yours,” and, live to honor God, our Father.

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