

## **Led by the Spirit** **Rom 8:12-17**

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. NKJV

In the Oriental countries the shepherd does not use a sheep dog. He does not make a whip to drive the sheep. But he simply calls his sheep to get their attention and then he walks away and the sheep follow. Jesus told the religious leaders one time that they did not follow him because they were not his sheep. He said that his sheep listened to his voice and they followed him.

Have you seen some folks around town taking their dogs for a walk. Often it looks like the dogs are the ones leading and the supposed master is following.

But among God's children, it is the children who are led and God who does the leading.

- I. For (the connection to v-13)
  - A. We find the Spirit in v-13 enabling the child of God to mortify the deeds of the body.
  - B. That work of the Spirit is what assures of spiritual eternal life.
  - C. That work of the Spirit is part of the work of the Spirit.
- II. As many as (who are we talking about)
  - A. Obviously not everyone.
    - 1. Many people claim to have a connection to the Holy Spirit without mortifying the deeds of the body.
    - 2. It is erroneous to equate all spiritual activity to the work of the Holy Spirit.
    - 3. As we will see later the Holy Spirit is one person and never goes contrary to Himself or the other persons in the Godhead.
    - 4. Only the Sons of God can claim the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
  - B. The lost person may do many things but never through the Spirit's leading.
    - 1. A merely professing Christian does not and cannot be led by the Spirit of God. He may be moral, conscientious, generous, active in his church and other Christian organizations, and exhibit many other commendable traits.

But the only accomplishments, religious or otherwise, he can make claim to are those of his own doing. His life may be outstandingly religious, but because he lives it in the power of the flesh, he can never be truly spiritual and he will never have the inner conviction of God's leading and empowering. MacArthur

III. By the Spirit of God (who is the agent)

- A. The Holy Spirit sent by the Father and the Son for the purpose of being our helper.
- B. In regeneration He takes up residence in the children of God.
- C. By indwelling God's children He leads them.

IV. Are led (what this involves)

- A. To be led means to be submissive.
  - 1. Throughout the Scripture God depicts Himself as leading, not driving His people.
  - 2. The Old Testament often comments that God "led" Israel through the wilderness (Ex 15:13; Deut 3:2; Ps 77:20; 78:52; 106:9; 136:16; Jer 2:6, 17; Hos 11:4; Amos 2:10; for the new exodus, see Isaiah 48:20-21; Jer 23:7-8) and called Israel his "sons" or "children" when he redeemed them from Egypt (Ex 4:22; Deut 14:1; 32:5, 18-20; Ps 29:1; Isaiah 1:2, 4; 43:6; 45:11; 63:8; Jer 3:19, 22; Hos 1:10; 11:1, 10). IVP Bible Background Commentary
  - 3. In both devotional and historical language, God's leading was sometimes associated with his Spirit (Neh 9:20; Ps 143:10; Isaiah 63:14). IVP Bible Background Commentary
  - 4. Hosea 11:4 I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love, And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them. (NKJV)
  - 5. The Spirit leads as opposed to sin that is a cruel master compelling us to go where we would not.
  - 6. "They are led by the Spirit of God, as a scholar in his learning is led by his tutor, as a traveller in his journey is led by his guide, as a soldier in his engagements is led by his captain; not driven as beasts, but led as rational creatures, drawn with the cords of a man and the bands of love. It is the undoubted character of all true believers that they are led by the Spirit of God. Having submitted themselves in believing to his guidance, they do in their obedience follow that guidance, and are sweetly led into all truth and all duty." (from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible
  - 7. That makes sense, doesn't it? [God does not drive His sheep](#); He leads

them. When our Lord told of the safety and security of the sheep, He made it clear that they were not *forced* into the will of His hand and that of the Father. He said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them [*and I drive them out!* Oh, no] and they follow me” (John 10:27). They are the ones who are safe and secure; they follow Him. They are led by the Spirit of God. [They hear His voice because they have a new nature, and they follow Him.](#) From Vernon McGee Thru the Bible

- B. The tense of the verb is active.
  - 1. He continues to lead the children of God throughout their lives.
    - a. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding, In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5-6).
  - 2. It does not mean that they cannot and do not act contrary to the will of the Spirit, remember it depends on their submission.
  - 3. But it does mean that the Spirit continues to lead.
  - 4. An absence of the leadership of the Holy Spirit is a matter of grave concern.
    - a. Either this person was never a Christian and had only been a superficial believer or they are in open rebellion against the leadership of the Spirit.
    - b. Either one is perilous and needs immediate attention.
- C. The path in which the Spirit leads.
  - 1. The Spirit will never lead contrary to the word of God.
  - 2. God is not schizophrenic but in perfect unity, never changing.
  - 3. The Spirit will never lead contrary to God’s moral principles.
  - 4. The Spirit will never lead contrary to God’s revealed will.
- D. The manner in which the Spirit leads.
  - 1. The primary way in which the Spirit leads is by the Word that He inspired to be written.
    - a. The other day Victoria asked why God does not speak to us like He did to Abraham.
    - b. First we need to remember that Abraham went decades without a revelation from God.
    - c. The appearance of God to Abraham was powerful but seldom.

- d. In a real sense we are more blessed than any bible character for we have the revealed will of God at our disposal every day.
  - e. Therefore however God might “speak” to people today, He never speaks contrary to His Word.
  - f. As we read, meditate on, and pray over Scripture, the indwelling Spirit of God becomes our divine interpreter. This begins with the conviction of sin that leads through saving belief into the whole of the Christian life. MacArthur
  - g. “Make me walk in the path of Thy commandments, for I delight in it” (Ps. 119:35)
  - h. “Establish my footsteps in Thy word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me” (Ps. 119:133).
  - i. “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col. 3:16).
2. God often leads through circumstances.
- a. He brings events into our lives to either hinder the way we are going or to expedite it.
  - b. Sometimes God opens doors and at other times He closes them.
  - c. In those cases God gives us a sense of His opportunity.
  - d. We need to be careful in this area though, for not all open or closed doors are of God’s leading.
    - (1) The case in Zechariah is a case in point.
    - (2) They felt that because rebuilding the temple was difficult it must not be God’s will.
    - (3) But God had already revealed His will and He intended them to do it even though it was difficult.
    - (4) God often tries our faith with difficulties to help us to understand our dedication to Him.
  - e. As we can see, without the Word of God, we cannot completely understand the circumstances in which we find ourselves.
3. God often uses others to communicate His will to us.
- a. Very often in Bible God uses a prophet or a preacher to get His message across to His people.

- b. It is always the responsibility of the prophet to proclaim God's word and not the prophets preferences.
- c. The people also are called on to distinguish a preference preaching prophet from the real Word of God.

V. These are sons of God (authentication)

- A. The above sends the signal that we are Sons of God.
- B. We have life because we are children of of God.
- C. The Spirit helps us mortify the deeds of the body because we are the sons of God.
- D. The first inner confirmation of adoption is the believer's being led by the Spirit of God. A person who is truly experiencing the leading hand of God at work in his life can be certain he is God's child. But the genuine believer's life is basically characterized by the Spirit's leading, just as it is basically characterized by Christ's righteousness. MacArthur

Are we easy to lead? Do we desire to know the Lord's will? The true children of God desire just that. It is a consuming desire. Let us call out with the Psalmist "Make me walk in the path of Thy commandments, for I delight in it" (Ps. 119:35), and, "Establish my footsteps in Thy word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me" (Ps. 119:133).

The first inner confirmation of adoption is the believer's being led by the Spirit of God. A person who is truly experiencing the leading hand of God at work in his life can be certain he is God's child.

It is important to note the tense Paul uses here. Are being led translates the present passive indicative of *ago*, indicating that which already exists. The phrase are being led does not, however, indicate uninterrupted leading by the Spirit. Otherwise the many New Testament admonitions and warnings to Christians would be meaningless. But the genuine believer's life is basically characterized by the Spirit's leading, just as it is basically characterized by Christ's righteousness.

A merely professing Christian does not and cannot be led by the Spirit of God. He may be moral, conscientious, generous, active in his church and other Christian organizations, and exhibit many other commendable traits. But the only accomplishments, religious or otherwise, he can make claim to are those of his own doing. His life may be outstandingly religious, but because he lives it in the power of the flesh, he can never be truly spiritual and he will never have the inner conviction of God's leading and empowering.

When someone confides in me that he has doubts about his salvation, I often respond by asking if he ever senses God's leading in his life. If he answers yes, I remind him of Paul's assurance in this verse: All who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

God's children are secure in Him even when they are not as responsive and obedient to His leading as they ought to be. But that is not to say that a child of God will always feel secure. The Christian who neglects study of Scripture, who neglects God in prayer, who neglects fellowship with God's people, and who is careless about His obedience to God will invariably have doubts about his salvation, because he is indifferent to God and the things of God. Even for the obedient child of God, doubts about his relationship to God can easily slip into the mind during times of pain, sorrow, failure, or disappointment. Satan, the great accuser of God's people, is always ready to take advantage of such circumstances to plant seeds of uncertainty.

But our heavenly Father wants His children to be certain at all times that they belong to Him and are secure in Him. As Paul has just stated (Rom. 8:13), a person who is succeeding in putting to death sin in his life is not doing so in his own power, that is, in the power of the flesh, but by the power of the Spirit. Those who see victory over sin in their lives, who see their sinful desires and practices diminishing, can be certain they are sons of God, because only God's Spirit can bring victory over sin. In the same way—when we begin to understand biblical truths that have long puzzled us, when we experience God's convicting our consciences, when we grieve for the Lord's sake when we sin—we have the divine assurance that we are sons of God, because only the indwelling Spirit of God can instill such understanding, conviction, and godly sorrow.

Our finite minds cannot comprehend how the Spirit leads a believer, just as we cannot fully understand any of the supernatural work of God. We do, however, know that our heavenly Father does not force His will on His children. He seeks our willing obedience, which, by definition, cannot be coerced. It is when we are genuinely submissive to Him that our Lord supernaturally reshapes and redirects our will into voluntary conformity with His own.

God saves men through their faith in Him, and He leads those he saves through the same human channel of faith. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding,” the writer of Proverbs counsels. “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5-6). The seeking, willing, and obedient heart is open to the Lord’s leading. David prayed, “Make me know Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; for Thee I wait all the day” (Ps. 25:4-5). Later in that psalm he reminds us that God “leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way” (Ps. 25:9). In another psalm he entreated the Lord, “Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God; let Thy good Spirit lead me on level ground” (Ps. 143:10).

Isaiah assures us that if we truly seek the Lord’s will, He is already standing beside us, as it were, ready to say “This is the way, walk in it” (Isa. 30:21). The prophet was not speaking necessarily of an audible voice, but the voice of the believer’s God-directed conscience, a conscience instructed by God’s Word and attuned to His Spirit. Isaiah also assures us that the Lord is continually ready and eager to lead His people in the right way. Prophesying in the name of the preincarnate Christ, the prophet declared, “Come near to Me, listen to this: from the first I have not spoken in secret, from the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit. Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; ‘I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go’” (Isa. 48:16-17). Jeremiah acknowledged, “I know O Lord, that a man’s way is not in himself; nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). Even the child of God cannot discern divine truth by his own intelligence or obey it in his own power.

God’s Spirit sovereignly leads His children in many ways, sometimes in ways that are direct and unique. But the primary ways by which He promises to lead us are those of illumination and sanctification.

In the first way God leads His children by illumination, by divinely clarifying His Word to make it understandable to our finite and still sin-tainted minds. As we read, meditate on, and pray over Scripture, the indwelling Spirit of God becomes our divine interpreter. This begins with the conviction of sin that leads through saving belief into the whole of the Christian life.

Although Joseph was not indwelt by the Holy Spirit as are believers under the New Covenant, even the pagan Egyptian ruler recognized him as a man “in whom is a divine spirit.” Consequently “Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are’” (Gen. 41:38-39).

The Old Testament saint who wrote Psalm 119, which so eloquently glorifies God’s Word, knew he needed the Lord’s divine help both to understand and to obey that Word. Every believer should continually pray with the psalmist: “Make me walk in the path of Thy commandments, for I delight in it” (Ps. 119:35), and, “Establish my footsteps in Thy word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me” (Ps. 119:133).

During the Upper Room discourse, shortly before His betrayal and arrest, Jesus told the apostles, “These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your

remembrance all that I said to you” (John 14:25-26). That promise had special significance for the apostles, who would become Christ’s uniquely authoritative witnesses to His truth after His ascension back to heaven. But the promise also applies in a general way to all believers after Pentecost. From that time on, every believer has been indwelt by Christ’s own Holy Spirit, whose ministry to us includes that of shedding divine light on scriptural truths that otherwise are beyond our comprehension.

During one of His postresurrection appearances, Jesus said to the eleven remaining apostles, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:44-45). Again Jesus’ words had unique significance for the apostles, but in a similar way the Lord opens the minds of all His disciples “to understand the Scriptures.”

On behalf of the Ephesian believers Paul prayed that “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might” Eph. 1:17-19). Later in that epistle Paul offered a similar prayer, asking that God “would grant you, according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God” (3:16-19).

Paul assured the saints at Colossae that “we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Col. 1:9). His devotion to them was again expressed in the loving words: “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (3:16).

Perhaps the most definitive passage on the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit is in Paul’s first letter to Corinth. “A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God,” he asserts; “for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:14-16). In other words, even God’s own children could not understand their heavenly Father’s Word apart from the illuminating work of His Spirit within them.

The second major way in which the Spirit leads God’s children is by their sanctification. The Spirit not only illuminates our minds to understand Scripture but divinely assists us in obeying it, and that obedience becomes another testimony to our salvation. The humble child of God knows he cannot please his Lord in his own power. But he also knows that, when he sincerely labors in the Lord’s work in accordance with the commands and principles of Scripture, the Holy Spirit will bless that work in ways far beyond what the believer’s own abilities could

have produced. It is then that our heavenly Father is deeply pleased with us, not for what we have accomplished but for what we have allowed Him to accomplish in and through us. **It is not our work in itself but our spirit of obedience to Him and dependence on Him as we do His work that brings joy to our heavenly Father's heart.** It is through our faithful obedience that we experience the gracious working of the Spirit in our lives. And, as with His divine illumination, His divine work of sanctification gives us assurance that we are indeed sons of God.

**"I say walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh,"** Paul admonished the Galatians. **"For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please"** (Gal. 5:16-17). **And because "we live by the Spirit,"** he goes on to say **"let us also walk by the Spirit"** (v. 5:25).

**As with illumination and all other divine works, we cannot understand exactly how God accomplishes His sanctifying work in us.** We simply know from His Word, and often from experience, that He performs spiritual works in and through us that are not produced by our own efforts or power. **Often we become aware of the Spirit's activity only in retrospect, as we see His sanctifying power bearing fruit in our lives from seeds planted long beforehand.** We also have the blessed assurance that, although we are not consciously aware of the Spirit's work in us at all times, He is nevertheless performing His divine work in us at all times. He not only gives and sustains our spiritual life, He is our spiritual life.

**It is our heavenly Father's great desire for His children to submit to the leading of His Spirit, for the sake of His glory and for the sake of their spiritual fruitfulness, well-being, and peace.**

MacArthur Commentary on Romans

He can walk and be "led of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:14). **The verb here means "willingly led."** **We yield to the Spirit, and He guides us by His Word day by day.** We are not under bondage to Law and afraid to act. We have the liberty of the Spirit and are free to follow Christ. Wiersbe

**"Led by the Spirit implies that they are governed by the Spirit** and the emphasis is placed upon the activity of the body (vs. 13) emphasizes the activity of the believer. These are complementary. The activity of the believer is the evidence of the Spirit's activity and the activity of the Spirit is the cause of the believer's activity. Murray

Title: The Expositor's Bible Commentary, New Testament

**The Spirit's ministry set forth in these verses may be thought of as his attestation, in which he confirms for the believer the reality of his position as a son of God based on adoption into the heavenly family.** Though this ministry is mentioned after that of mortification, it is basic to it, because to be successful in contending against the flesh one must be assured that he has been claimed by God and equipped with his infinite resources.

The relation of the Spirit to the sons of God is presented as being much like that of a shepherd to his sheep. They are “led” by him as their guide and protector. In Galatians 3:24 [the law is pictured as having a responsibility to “lead” men to Christ. Once this goal is achieved, the law must hand over the guiding role to the Spirit, who guides into the truth](#) (John 16:13) and, as in the present passage, into holiness. Unlike sin, which may at first only gently seduce, then deceitfully begin to drive as a hard taskmaster, the Spirit relies on persuasion rather than force. In fact, Paul goes to some pains to avoid misunderstanding on this very point, assuring us that [the Spirit’s leadership does not involve a new bondage](#) that is no improvement over the old in which fear ruled the life (probably a fear of the consequences of sin and a fear of death, as in Heb 2:15). The new title given to the Spirit, namely, “the Spirit who makes you sons” (literally, “Spirit of adoption”), [emphasizes the vast gulf between slavery and family relationship](#). By the Spirit believers cry, “Abba, Father.” The two terms are equivalents, the first being the Aramaic word Jesus used in prayer (Mark 14:36). Paul’s use of the Aramaic alongside the Greek both here and in Galatians 4:6, a closely related passage, may well indicate that the tradition concerning the prayer life of Jesus filtered down through the church even before Mark wrote his Gospel. J. Jeremias notes that in permitting the Twelve to use the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus “authorizes his disciples to follow him in saying Abba. He gives them this address as the token of their discipleship” (The Central Message of the New Testament [New York: Scribner’s, 1965], p. 28). The “cry” refers to calling on God in prayer.

Title: The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament

Paul then continued his explanation. Those who are led (pres. tense, “are being led”) by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Many Bible students see no difference between the word translated “sons” in 8:14 and the word translated “children” in verse 16. However, in verse 16 the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence attests the believer’s birth relationship to God (, “children,” is lit., “born ones”). But in verse 14 the Holy Spirit’s control and direction attests the believer’s privileges in God’s family as a “son” ( means a child mature enough to take on adult family privileges and responsibilities). A son in God’s family is led by God’s Spirit.

the leading of children and teaching them to go; which supposes life in those that are led, and some degree of strength, though a good deal of weakness; and is a display of powerful and efficacious grace, and is always for their good: the Spirit of God leads them from sin, and from a dependence on their own righteousness, in paths they formerly knew not, and in which they should go, in the paths of faith and truth, of righteousness and holiness, and in a right, though sometimes a rough way; he leads them to the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and to the fulness of grace in him; into the presence of God, to the house and ordinances of God; into the truths of the Gospel, from one degree of grace to another, and at last to glory; which he does gradually, by little and little he leads them to see the iniquity of their hearts and natures, to lay hold on Christ and salvation by him, into the doctrines of grace, and the love and favour of God,

and proportionally to the strength he gives: now such persons, Gill

Being "led by the Spirit" does not refer here to service, nor to "guidance" in particular paths. It refers to that general control by the blessed Spirit of those born of the Spirit, living by the Spirit, in the Spirit. He is the sphere and mode of their being, and is their seal unto the day of redemption.

3. That our being thus in the Spirit's sphere and control is the proof of the reality of our sonship, is evident from what has been said; but let us avoid the thought that assurance of our sonship is based on our perfect obedience to the Spirit. Nothing is based upon us. If one of God's true saints disobeys, it is the office of that same Spirit to convict him of his sin, interceding in Him "according to God" (#Ro 8:27), while Christ intercedes for him above (#1Joh 2:1). Newell

This proves the latter part of the foregoing verse: Such as by the Spirit do mortify sin, shall live, for they are the sons of God; and that appears, because they are led by the Spirit of God. **He doth not say, as many as live by the Spirit, but, as are led by the Spirit;** to show (says one) that the Spirit must be the guide and ruler of our life, as the pilot is of the ship, and as a rider is of his horse. The phrase is borrowed (says another) either from those who are guided and directed as a blind man in his way; or from those who, wanting strength of their own, are borne and carried of others: so we are both ways led by the Spirit, for we can neither see our way, unless the Spirit direct us; nor have we strength to walk in it, unless the Spirit assist and draw us along. **The Spirit leads and draws us irresistibly and necessarily, and yet not violently or against our wills; though we were unwilling before, yet we are made willing afterwards; so willing, that we desire and pray to be led by the Spirit.** See #Ps 25:5 143:10 So 1:4. Poole

Ro 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Ro 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Ps 143:10 Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.

Pr 8:20 I traverse the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice,

Isa 48:16 ¶ "Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit Have sent Me."

Isa 48:17 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go.

Ga 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

Ga 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Ga 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Ga 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Ga 5:23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Ga 5:24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Ga 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Eph 5:9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

8:14 Another way of describing true believers is to say that they **are led by the Spirit of God**. Paul is not referring here to spectacular instances of divine guidance in the lives of eminent Christians. Rather, he is speaking of what is true of all **sons of God**—namely, that they **are led by the Spirit of God**. It is not a question of the degree in which they are yielded to the Holy Spirit, but of a relationship which takes place at the time of conversion.

Sonship implies reception into God's family, with all the privileges and responsibilities of adult sons. A new convert does not have to wait a certain time before he enters into his spiritual inheritance; it is his the moment he is saved, and it applies to all believers, men and women, boys and girls. MacDonald, William ; Farstad, Arthur: Believer's Bible Commentary

8:14 led by the Spirit. Believers are not led through subjective, mental impressions or promptings to provide direction in making life's decisions, something Scripture nowhere teaches. Instead, God's Spirit objectively leads His children sometimes through the orchestration of circumstances (Acts 16:7) but primarily through: 1) illumination, divinely clarifying Scripture to make it understandable to our sinful, finite minds (Luke 24:44, 45; 1 Cor. 2:14?16; Eph. 1:17?19; cf. Eph. 3:16?19; Col. 1:9); and 2) sanctification, divinely enabling us to obey Scripture (Gal. 5:16, 17; 5:25). MacArthur, John: The MacArthur Study Bible

**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God [Rom. 8:14].**

That makes sense, doesn't it? **God does not drive His sheep**; He leads them. When our Lord told of the safety and security of the sheep, He made it clear that they were not *forced* into the will of His hand and that of the Father. He said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them [*and I drive them out!* Oh, no] and they follow me" (John 10:27). They are the ones who are safe and secure; they follow Him. They are led by the Spirit of God. **They hear His voice because they have a new nature, and they follow Him.**

I have been preaching the Word of God for a long time. I have found that those who are His sheep will hear His voice. The others—they hated me and wanted to get rid of me. Why? They

were not His sheep. The Lord Jesus said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18). A young pastor came to me and said, “I’m having all kinds of trouble!” I asked, “Who is giving you trouble?” He said, “My church officers and my Sunday school teachers.” So I asked him what he had been doing. He said, “Well, I’ve been preaching the Bible, following your Thru the Bible method.” I said to him, “Well, thank God. You will find that a lot of your folk are not really His sheep.” Friend, [His sheep will follow Him—they have to because they are His, you see](#). That’s what Paul is saying here. McGee, J. Vernon: Thru the Bible Commentary.

The Holy Spirit thus leads those in whom He dwells to the mortification of sin. He takes of the glory of the person of Jesus, as God manifest in the flesh, and of His office, as the one Mediator between God and man, and discovers it to His people. Convincing them of their sinful condition, and of Christ's righteousness, He leads them to renounce everything of their own, in the hope of acceptance with God. He teaches them as the Spirit of truth shining upon His own word, striving with them by it externally, and internally by His grace conducting, guiding, and bringing them onwards in the way of duty, and, as the promised Comforter, filling them with Divine consolation. Thus He leads them to Christ, to prayer as the spirit of grace and of supplication, to holiness, and to happiness. This shows us the cause why the children of God, notwithstanding their remaining ignorance and depravity, and the many temptations with which they are assailed, hold on in the way of the Lord. 'Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day.' 'Thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.' This leading is enjoyed by none but Christians; for 'as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' Haldane

[Those who faithfully engage in this daily work of mortifying the flesh enjoy the assurance that they are indeed sons of God.](#) For as many as are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. [The believers submission to the leading of the Spirit in the fight against indwelling sin is thus a sure mark of true Sonship.](#) Paul had pointed to the very fact of this conflict as a banner a hope. For he identifies the fact of the conflict with the presence of the Holy Spirit working in the soul and in the presence of the Holy Spirit is the earnest of victory. The Spirit would not be found in a soul which was not purchased for God and in the process of fitting for the heavenly kingdom. Let no one talk of living on a low plane of the seventh chapter of Romans. Low plane, indeed! It is a low plane where there is no conflict. [Where there is conflict-with the Spirit of God as one party in the battle-there is progressive advance towards the perfection of Christian life.](#) So Paul treats it.

[This leading of the Spirit can never contradict the testimony of God’s Word](#) what is always in conformity with it. It excludes all fanaticism, all auto-suggestion, all hearing fictitious, imaginary inward voices. [We have the written word with which to test every inward word that we have absorbed.](#) (Lenski) It is of the greatest importance to note that the Spirit who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted also helped him to gain the victory over the devil by bringing God’s written word to his remembrance. Luke 4:1, 4, 8, 12, 14; Ephesians 6:17. Geoffrey Willson