

# Romans 6... 7... 8

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE  
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

**Romans 8:12** Therefore, brethren, we are debtors - not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

**Romans 8:13** 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.

When my mother-in-law died she left a little bit of debt behind. She had balances that were owed to several credit cards. Since we were handling her affairs we let her debtors know she had died. They began to harass us about paying off her debts.

We made an appointment with a local attorney to find out what our obligations were. He let us know that in her case, with no estate, her death ended her obligation to pay off her credit card debt. We had no responsibility or obligation to even talk to her creditors.

Paul said **we are debtors**. There **is** something we owe; something we are obligated to pay. But there is also a creditor that tries to collect when we have no obligation.

This wasn't the first time Paul used the term **debtor**. It might help us to understand who or what we ought to be in debt to. In the first chapter of Romans he said,

**Romans 1:14** I am a **debtor** both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise.

**Romans 1:15** So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

**Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Paul thought of himself as having a debt to pay. He was talking about his calling as an apostle. This obligation arose from the favor that God had shown him in appointing him to this work. He was specially chosen as a vessel to bear the gospel to the Gentiles and he would not feel that he had discharged the obligation until he had

made the Gospel known as far as possible among all the nations of the earth.

His debt was a moral obligation to carry out his commission. We, too, should see ourselves as having a moral obligation – a debt – to carry out our commission from God. Our commission is the Great Commission – to share Jesus with others as we are traveling through our lives. It is to ask for and then exercise spiritual gifts in a fellowship of believers. It is to give and to fast and to pray. In short, we are debtors to live out the Christian life. It's a debt we are only too glad to pay!

There is also a debt we should *not* pay:

**Romans 8:12** Therefore, brethren, we are debtors - not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

As we press forward in the Christian life we are hindered by a disturbing creditor. It is the **flesh** – that principle within us that tends toward satisfying natural lusts in sinful ways. Like any creditor who hasn't been paid the **flesh** seems to bother us and harass us all the time – at home, at work, in school.

If you've ever been harassed by creditors for a debt you owed you know how relentless they can be. You offer to pay a little; they accept it. But the harassment continues.

Your **flesh** is like that. If you give in to it just a little it is not satisfied. It only whets its appetite for more indulging in sinful lusts.

We no longer owe anything to the **flesh**! It no longer has a valid claim on us. Why not? We've learned as we've gone through Romans six, seven, and eight that those who are saved and in Christ have died to sin and the flesh.

It's exactly like the situation with my mother-in-law. Her death cancelled any obligations she had to her creditors. My death with Jesus Christ cancelled any obligations I have to satisfy my flesh.

The **flesh** harasses you. What the flesh wants is for you **to live according to the flesh**. The flesh wants to remain your creditor in order to have its lusts satisfied.

When you are tempted by the **flesh** to give in to its demands you can tell yourself you are under no obligation and ignore its demands. **You're dead!**

**Romans 8:13** 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.

Paul was addressing believers. In what sense, then, will you **die** if you **live according to the flesh**? Here are a couple of ways we can understand this:

1. Paul might be reminding us that before we were saved we had no choice but to **live according to the flesh**. We were headed toward death. We were going to die physically and then die a second death at the Great White Throne Judgment. We would have been cast alive for eternity into the Lake of Fire. That being the case, why would we feel any obligation to pay the flesh as a creditor?
2. Paul might be telling us that when we, as Christians, are **debtors to the flesh** what we bring forth through our lives kills rather than blesses. It is dead works.

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Here's a unexpected twist on the debtor analogy. When the flesh 'calls' in a debt and urges you to indulge your body in some lust, there is a part of you that wants to go into debt! Sin is pleasurable for a season – though in the end it brings forth death.

When the flesh 'calls' demanding to be paid, **by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body**. You follow the influences and impulses of the indwelling Holy Spirit. You refuse to do the **deeds** the flesh is demanding.

You can refuse because, as we saw last time, the Holy Spirit who is in you is powerful. We think of the outcome of the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit as doubtful when in reality the flesh is no match for the Spirit.

## **Unless we decide to yield ourselves back as debtors!**

**You will live**, Paul said. He was talking about really living – living the way God intended for a man to live.

The flesh and death or the Spirit and really living. It seems an easy choice.

I'll close with this quote from Jon Courson:

Just love the Lord. Get up tomorrow morning and before your feet hit the ground, drop to your knees, and give your life to Him. When He whispers in your heart during your coffee break, "Pull away and talk with Me," do it. When you're deciding which dial to press on your radio during lunch, just do what the Spirit tells you to do. Allow the Spirit of God to fill your heart, and you know what will happen? You'll lose interest in the stuff that dominated and controlled you...

That's why Romans 8 is so thrilling! Too many believers are trying to fight evil habits and tendencies on their own - and it's exhausting. If you walk into a dark room, you don't scream, karate chop, give teachings about, or rebuke the darkness. You turn on the light.



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