

Sin cannot control you

And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:3c-4)

Sin cannot control us. Although we struggle with sin, we have the victory, because we are in Christ, and also because God is at work in us. It is not only because Jesus carried the punishment for our sins on the cross that we are able to live in freedom. God is now at work in us. Sin cannot control us because God is at work in us in order to change us.

What God wants to give us now is clearly stated in Romans 8:29, *“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.”* Part of God's work in us is to change us to Christ's likeness. God desires for us to be more and more like Christ, and that we would live our lives more and more like Jesus lived his. That is what it means to live not according to our sinful nature, but according to the Spirit.

Living according to Spirit means that we live our lives in complete dependence upon the leadership of God. We see this clearly in the life of Jesus.

In John's gospel, we hear Jesus continually teaching that he lived by dependence on the Father's guidance and his power. John 5:19, *“Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, `Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of himself, unless it is something he sees the Father doing: for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.”* Jesus lived by his dependence on God's leadership in his life. And so must we.

We cannot by the law work our way to acceptance by God. We will always fail if we try. The law is performance based. It encourages us to work harder, depending on ourselves. But living in Christ is exactly the opposite of trying to please God through the law. Living in Christ means that everything I do comes from God, and not from me.

Jesus frees us from the obligation to try to be perfect by depending on our own strength. Jesus sets me free to live by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

To live according to the Spirit means that we consult with God about our choices, values and concerns. Living according to the Holy Spirit means that we give up trying to do it on our own because we rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us. The Spirit liberates from self reliance. The Spirit makes God our highest priority as we receive the gift of loving God so much that we concentrate on pleasing him. Not by keeping the details of a law, but by belonging to him and living in a renewed relationship with him.

By Christ's death on the Cross, he has freed us to only belong to our faithful Saviour.