



# Study Guide - Week 4

## Sermon Recap 🎬

Josh shares the story of Elizabeth Smart's kidnapping, drawing parallels to the concept of identity in Christ. He emphasizes how many individuals unknowingly accept false identities that differ from their God-given worth, leading to feelings of inadequacy and fear. By recognizing that through the Holy Spirit, believers are given a new identity as children of God, they can experience freedom and empowerment. The sermon encourages everyone to evaluate their self-perception and embrace the truth of their identity in Christ, ultimately inviting them to surrender any false identities they may have accepted.

## Ice Breaker 🧊

If you could invent a holiday dedicated to one of your silly quirks or habits, what would it be called and how would we celebrate it?

## Discussion Questions

▼ Josh talked about how Elizabeth Smart was manipulated to believe she was someone else, highlighting the importance of understanding our true identity in Christ as described in Romans 8:16-17.

- How can we evaluate our own identity to ensure we are not accepting a false identity that differs from what God says we are?
- What are some ways you can remind yourself of your true identity as a child of God in your daily life?

▼ The sermon discussed how the Holy Spirit confirms our true identity in Christ and empowers us to live in freedom, reminding us that we have the capability to become the best version of ourselves.

- What does it mean to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, and how can we recognize this empowerment in our own lives?
- Can you share a time when you felt empowered to make a positive change or decision? How do you think the Holy Spirit played a role in that?

## Read Scripture

### ***Romans 8:5-17 NIV***

<sup>5</sup> Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. <sup>6</sup> The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. <sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup> 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.*” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. <sup>17</sup> 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.

## Discussion Questions

▼ Josh mentioned the power of deception and how the enemy convinces us we are less than what God says we are, which can lead to accepting a false identity.

- In what ways might negative self-talk or believing in lies prevent us from living out our God-given identity?
- What are some specific strategies you can use to combat deception and affirm your true identity?

▼ The sermon emphasized how our mindset toward God—whether we run to Him or from Him—affects our relationship with Him, especially when we struggle or sin.

- Why is it important for Jesus followers to approach God as a loving Father rather than as someone who will punish them?
- How does viewing God as a loving Father change the way you pray or seek Him in hard times?

▼ Josh shared about how prayer and faith are crucial in seeking healing, mentioning James 5:14-16, which encourages the faithful to pray for those who are sick.

- What role does prayer play in seeking healing, both physically and spiritually, according to the examples shared in the sermon?
- How can you incorporate prayer into your life to seek healing for yourself or others you care about?

## Prayer

- Ask for prayer requests from the group.
- Pray for guidance in recognizing and accepting your God-given identity.
- Ask God for strength to resist any false identities that have been accepted.
- Seek help in living out the truth of who we are in Christ throughout the coming week.

## Rewatch the Sermon

Visit [victorycc.life/watch](https://victorycc.life/watch) for on-demand access to all of our sermons.



# 5 Day Reading Plan - Week 4

## Day 1

*Luke 22:39-46*

Jesus, knowing He was about to suffer, went to the Mount of Olives with His disciples. He told them to pray so they wouldn't fall into temptation. Then, He withdrew, knelt down, and poured out His heart to the Father, asking if there was another way. Yet, He surrendered to God's will. An angel appeared and strengthened Him, but He was still in deep agony, praying earnestly until His sweat became like drops of blood. Meanwhile, His disciples fell asleep, unaware of the gravity of the moment. Jesus shows us what true surrender looks like. Even in His darkest moment, He trusted the Father's plan. Sometimes, we want God to remove our pain, change our situation, or give us an easier way out. But like Jesus, we must say: "Not my will, but Yours be done."

- Think of a situation where you're struggling to trust God's plan. What about that situation makes it so difficult for you to trust God's plan?
- Is it easy or difficult for you to pray "Not my will, but Yours be done" in your situation? Why?
- Write a prayer of surrender, asking for His will to be done, even if it's different from what you want.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the peace to relinquish control.

# Day 2

*Galatians 5:16-25*

Every day, there is a battle between the desires of the flesh and the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The “flesh” represents our natural, sinful tendencies—selfishness, anger, jealousy, and indulgence. But God has given us His Spirit, and when we walk with Him, we start to reflect His character instead of our old nature. Paul contrasts the acts of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. Notice that “fruit” is singular—this is not a list of individual qualities we can pick and choose from. Instead, these qualities grow together as the evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work in us. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are not produced by human effort—they come from a life surrendered to God. Walking in the Spirit is not about trying harder but about staying connected to God. A tree doesn’t strain to produce fruit—it happens naturally when it is healthy and nourished. In the same way, when we stay rooted in God’s Word, prayer, and obedience, the Spirit transforms us from the inside out.

- Read through the fruit of the Spirit list. Which qualities do you see growing in your life? Which ones feel weak or missing?
- Look at the acts of the flesh list. Is there a specific area where you struggle? What triggers this behavior?
- Ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen the fruit that needs to grow in you. Each morning this week, pray:

*“Holy Spirit, guide me today. Help me to walk in love, joy, and peace. Help me to be patient, kind, and good. Grow my faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”*

- If you struggle with patience, ask God to show you an opportunity to practice it today. If self-control is difficult, create a small action plan to surrender that area to God.

The more we walk in step with the Spirit, the more we will experience true freedom and transformation.

# Day 3

*Ephesians 2:1-10*

Before we met Christ, we were spiritually dead—completely unable to save ourselves or earn God’s favor. Paul describes how we used to follow the ways of the world, trapped in sin and deserving of wrath. But then comes the most powerful truth: “But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ.” We are not saved because of anything we have done, but because of what Jesus has done. It is by grace—God’s unearned, undeserved favor—that we are saved through faith. This means that our salvation is a gift, not something we can earn by trying harder or being “good enough.” However, Paul doesn’t stop there. After reminding us that we are saved by grace, he tells us that we are God’s handiwork—His masterpiece—created for a purpose. God has prepared good works for us to walk in, but these works don’t save us. Instead, they are the fruit of a transformed life - fruit that comes only from His Spirit. When we truly understand who we are in Christ, we naturally begin to live out His purpose for us.

- Do you ever feel like you have to earn God’s love? Take time today to thank God for His grace and remind yourself that your salvation is secure in Christ.
- Paul says we were created for good works that God has prepared in advance. What unique gifts, passions, or opportunities has God given you? How can you use them to serve others today?
- Choose one good work to walk in this week—whether it’s encouraging someone, serving in your church, or meeting a need in your community.
- Memorize Ephesians 2:8-9: Let this truth sink into your heart:

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

When we understand that we are saved by grace and created for a purpose, we begin to live with confidence, joy, and freedom.

## Day 4

*Ezekiel 36:16-38*

The promise of a new heart and a new spirit signifies a profound transformation believers undergo through Christ. Just as the Holy Spirit empowers us with a new identity, so too does He provide the strength needed to live out that identity. When we face struggles and challenges, we can lean on the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us in making choices that align with our new nature, leading us toward sanctification and growth. As we embrace this transformation, let’s commit to yielding to the Holy Spirit’s leading in our lives. The journey may be filled with trials and tribulations, but we have the assurance that God’s spirit is with us, enabling us to navigate the challenges and affirm our identity as His children.

- In what areas of your life do you need to experience a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit?
- How can you cultivate a heart that is open to God’s transformation?
- What does it mean to you to have a new spirit from God?
- Pray for God to renew your heart and spirit daily.
- Seek the Holy Spirit’s direction in specifically challenging areas of your life.

## Day 5

*James 5:13-20*

Prayer is a crucial aspect of our relationship with God and a means through which healing can manifest in our lives. As we have explored the themes of identity and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, we also recognize that prayer plays a significant role in confirming our identities and empowering us to live fully as God’s children. Engaging in prayer allows us to bring our struggles and needs before God and trust in His healing and transformative work. As we conclude this devotional, let’s take time to reflect on the importance of community in prayer. Just as we are encouraged to pray for one another, we must also engage others in our spiritual journey to remind us of the truth of our identity in Christ, fostering support and encouragement as we grow together in faith.

- How often do you include prayer as a means of seeking healing in your life?
- What role does community play in your spiritual journey?
- In what ways can you strengthen your prayer life?
  
- Pray for your community and the needs within it.
- Reflect on how God might be calling you to engage more deeply in prayer.





# Want To Go Deeper? - Week 4

## Historical Context

Romans 8 is a chapter in the New Testament of the Bible, part of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans. This letter is one of the most theologically rich and influential books in the Christian canon. Here's some historical background to help understand Romans 8:

1. **Authorship and Date:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Romans. It is generally dated to around A.D. 57, during Paul's third missionary journey. He likely wrote it from Corinth, as he was preparing to visit Jerusalem with a collection for the impoverished church there.
2. **Audience:** The letter was addressed to the Christian community in Rome, which was a mix of Jewish and Gentile believers. The church in Rome was not founded by Paul, but he had a strong desire to visit them and impart spiritual gifts to strengthen them (Romans 1:11).
3. **Purpose:** Paul wrote Romans to present a comprehensive explanation of the gospel. He aimed to unify the Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome by explaining how the gospel applies to both groups. He also sought to prepare the Roman church for his visit and to gain their support for his planned mission to Spain (Romans 15:24).
4. **Themes in Romans 8:**

- **Life in the Spirit:** Romans 8 emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers. Paul contrasts life in the flesh with life in the Spirit, highlighting the freedom and empowerment that come from the Spirit.
- **Assurance of Salvation:** The chapter provides assurance of salvation and the security of believers in Christ. It speaks of the Spirit's testimony that we are children of God and heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16-17).
- **Suffering and Glory:** Paul addresses the reality of suffering in the present world but assures believers of the future glory that will be revealed in them (Romans 8:18-25).
- **God's Love and Sovereignty:** The chapter concludes with a powerful affirmation of God's love and sovereignty, declaring that nothing can separate believers from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:38-39).

5. **Cultural Context:** Rome was the center of the Roman Empire, a place of significant political and cultural influence. The early Christian community in Rome would have been navigating a complex environment of Roman paganism, Jewish traditions, and emerging Christian beliefs.

Romans 8 is often considered one of the most encouraging and theologically profound chapters in the Bible, offering deep insights into the Christian life and the work of the Holy Spirit.

## Linguistic Context

This letter was originally in the Greek language, and while there are several different English translations of it, it can be easy to miss some of the richer meaning behind the original words and what they meant when Paul used them. So here's some extra information on a couple key words from this passage:

1. **Κατάκριμα (Katakrima) - "Condemnation":** In Romans 8:1, Paul states, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." The Greek word "katakrima" refers to a judicial verdict of guilt. Understanding this term highlights the complete freedom from guilt and penalty that believers have in Christ. It emphasizes the legal standing of believers as justified and not subject to condemnation regardless of the reality that we all still sin even after coming to Christ as Paul talked in detail about in the previous chapter.
2. **Υιοθεσία (Huiothesia) - "Adoption":** In Romans 8:15, Paul speaks of believers receiving the "Spirit of adoption" (huiothesia). This term refers to the legal process of being made a son or daughter. In the Roman context, adoption conferred full rights and privileges of sonship. This word underscores the intimate relationship believers have with God as His children.

## Deeper Application

1. **Identity in Christ:** Romans 8:1 declares that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. This is foundational for understanding our identity as believers. We are not defined by our past sins or failures but by our relationship with Christ. This truth should lead us to live in freedom and confidence, knowing that we are fully accepted and loved by God.

2. **Life in the Spirit:** The chapter emphasizes living according to the Spirit rather than the flesh (Romans 8:5-9). This means allowing the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts, actions, and decisions. Practically, this involves daily surrender to the Spirit's leading, seeking His wisdom in prayer, and aligning our lives with God's Word.
3. **Assurance and Hope:** Romans 8:16-17 speaks of the Spirit's testimony that we are God's children and heirs with Christ. This assurance gives us hope, even in the midst of suffering. We can endure trials with the confidence that they are temporary and that future glory awaits us. This perspective encourages perseverance and faithfulness.
4. **Purpose in Suffering:** Romans 8:28 assures us that God works all things together for good for those who love Him. This doesn't mean that everything that happens is good, but that God can bring good out of every situation. Understanding this can transform our approach to suffering, helping us to trust God's sovereignty and seek His purpose in our pain.
5. **Victory over Sin:** Romans 8:37 declares that we are more than conquerors through Christ. This victory is not achieved by our own strength but through the power of the Holy Spirit. We can overcome sin and temptation by relying on the Spirit's power, confessing our weaknesses, and embracing God's grace.
6. **Unshakeable Love:** The chapter concludes with a powerful affirmation of God's love (Romans 8:38-39). Nothing can separate us from His love—not trials, persecution, or any other force. This truth provides deep security and peace, encouraging us to live boldly for Christ, knowing that we are eternally loved and held by God.

In applying these truths, it's important to regularly meditate on Scripture, engage in prayer, and participate in a community of believers who can encourage and support you in your walk with Christ. Romans 8 invites us to live out our new identity in Christ, empowered by the Spirit, and anchored in the unchanging love of God.