

Spirit of Sonship

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[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and turn to the book of Romans again. Romans chapter 8. Pastor John has asked me to read the first 17 verses. Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do and that it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.

And so he condemned sin and sinful man in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what that nature desires. But those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

The mind of sinful man is death. But the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. The sinful mind is hostile to God.

[1 : 14] It does not submit to God's law nor can it do so. Those controlled by the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the flesh but by the Spirit.

If the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

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 through his Spirit who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation, but it is not to the flesh to live according to it. 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.

Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you do not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear. But you receive the Spirit of sonship.

[2 : 24] And by him we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs.

Heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. If indeed we share in his suffering. In order that we may also share in his glory. Behold.

Wow. What kind of love is this that the Father has lavished on us? That we should be called children of God. And that is what we are.

That he who loved his own one unique eternal son far more than we've ever loved our children. Gave him up to be the atoning sacrifice that turned God's wrath away from us.

Because he poured it out on his own son. What kind of love is this? We're spending more time with this identity of the Christian being a child of God.

[3 : 38] More time with this identity than any other. Because I do believe if it is one of the dominant identities of a man or woman, boy or girl who is in Christ.

If not the dominant identity. J.I. Packer wrote a wonderful book called Knowing God. And in it is a chapter called Sons of God that's worth the price of the whole book.

And I've profited greatly from it. It's taken me some five weeks to cover what he covers in a chapter. I commend that chapter to you.

Much of what I've shared with you has found it there in that chapter. But Packer says if you want to judge how much a person understands of Christianity.

Find out what he makes of the thought of being God's child. Of having God as his father. That's a searching idea.

[4 : 42] And I was gripped by that. If this, you being a child of the heavenly father. This is not the thought that prompts, that controls his worship, his prayers.

And his whole outlook on life. It means he does not understand Christianity very well at all. Now, that's either an exaggeration or it's true.

And if it is true, then I need to know more of that outlook on life as a child of the heavenly father. And I think just to read the Sermon on the Mount is to find that this is not an exaggeration.

But it is the reality. The Sermon on the Mount is an important sermon. We have three chapters here given to this one sermon of Jesus. It is selected as the sermon for us to really examine in depth and understand.

It's Christ's manifesto of God's kingdom, as someone has called it. It's all about the kingdom of God that he came to bring to earth. And he came preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

[5 : 51] And it's unlike any other kingdom because to belong to God's kingdom is to belong to God's family. That's what we find in this chapter, this sermon of Jesus.

To belong to the kingdom of God is to belong to the family of God. Because in this kingdom, every citizen is a child of the king.

A child of the heavenly father. And our overall calling in the kingdom is just this, to imitate the heavenly father. Do you belong to the kingdom of God?

Then your overall calling is to imitate father. This is something that is quite natural in human families, isn't it? Kids want to be like dad. And it's really quite natural or slash supernatural in the family of God as well.

That the children of God want to be like father. Indeed, Paul says the same in Ephesians 5, 1. That we're to be imitators of God as dearly loved children.

[6 : 56] And to live a life of love. Even as Christ laid down his life as a sacrifice for us. So, to imitate father. That's the essence of our calling.

As he says in the Sermon on the Mount at the end of chapter 5. Where he says, so you be perfect even as your father in heaven is perfect. That's your calling.

And that means loving as he loves. And that includes your enemies. Just as it does with him. Because you've heard that it was said, love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

But I tell you, love your enemies. And pray for those who persecute you. Why? So that you may be sons of your father in heaven.

Because he causes his son to rise on the evil and the good. And he sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you just love those who love you.

[7 : 59] What reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers. What are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?

So be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect. In your love, be like the father. And let your arms and your prayers embrace your enemies.

That's what we were. When the father loved us in Christ. So to be like father is to love like him. To be like father is to be peacemakers like him.

Blessed are the peacemakers. For they will be called sons of God. Again, we're in the sermon on the mount. And we're seeing how central this idea of being a child of the king is to the whole kingdom.

Our whole purpose in the kingdom of God is to bring glory to our father. To be like him. To bear that family resemblance. So when people see you, they see something of the father.

[9 : 06] And so to so let your light shine that men might see your good deeds. And what? And glorify. Praise your father who is in heaven.

That's why we live. That's why we draw breath. That's why we get up in the morning. For the glory of father. Just as children are to be an honor to their parents.

So we are to be bringing honor and praise to our heavenly father. That he has such kids as these. Jesus goes on to say that the way we worship.

The way we practice our godliness. Our righteousness. In giving of our money. In praying. In fasting. This is all chapter 6 of Matthew.

In the sermon on the mount. That the way we go about this is to be done to our unseen father. And not to be putting it on parade before man.

[10 : 10] It's the motive. That we live unto our father. Father. And so when you pray. Go into your room and close the door. And pray to your father. Who is unseen.

And then your father who sees what's done in secret. Will reward you. So life in the kingdom of God. Is life lived consciously. Consistently.

Under the eye of father. We teach this to our children. In the little. Song. Be careful little eyes. What you do. Be careful little hands.

Little feet. And. Why? Because the father. Up above. Is looking down in love. So be careful. We live. We do our.

We practice our righteousness. Before the sight. Of our heavenly. Father. And when you pray. Do not keep on babbling. Like pagans.

[11 : 04] Who think they'll be heard. For their many words. Do not be like them. For your father. Knows what you need. Before you ask him. This then. Is how you are to pray. Our father.

Who art in heaven. And every request. After that. Is made to the father. We want to see your name. Lifted high. We want to see your kingdom come.

And your will being done. On earth. As it is in heaven. And I need food. And I need forgiveness. And I need deliverance. From the evil one. Father. You're the one. That gives food.

Forgiveness. And deliverance. And I do it. In the awareness. That if I do not forgive. Others. When they sin against. Me. That father.

Will not forgive me. Either. Your security. In the kingdom of God. Is based on the fact. That the king. Is your father.

[11 : 57] So. That's why you're not to worry. You're not to worry. About your life. About your body. What you'll eat. What you'll wear. What. Those were things.

That consumed. People. In those days. It's hard. Eking out a living. And people could worry. About what they'd eat. Or wear. Or drink. Their basic needs.

But. But we're. We don't have to worry. Because if your heavenly father. Feeds the birds. Will he not feed you. Who are much more valuable. Than they. Would he really feed his parrots.

And starve his children. No. So. Because we have such a father. We can. Say to. Our worries. Be gone with the wind.

Even as we sang. If he clothes the grass. Of the field. With lilies. Will he not. Clothe you. So much more. So don't worry. About these things.

[12 : 57] Don't. Don't let. Them consume you. Like the pagans. Just look out your window. And your drive to work. And see how they rush. To and fro. All about getting.

And providing. For our needs. They're worrying about. Having enough. No. Don't. Run after these things. Preoccupied with them. Because your father.

Knows what you need. Your father knows. So instead of being caught up. In. Such worrisome. Preoccupations. You seek first. The kingdom.

Of your father. And the righteousness. Of your father. You see. We're freed up. From other. Preoccupying worries. That we might give ourselves.

To the priority. Of the kingdom. And that's to see. Our father's kingdom. Spread. And grow. Increase. In our hearts. And around the world. And to see.

[13 : 51] His righteousness. Fulfilled. And lived out. In our lives. And in our world. That's our priority. And instead of worry.

Ask. And it will be given to you. Because after all. It's your good heavenly father. That you're asking. Because if you men. Being evil. Know how to give good gifts.

To your children. How much more. Will the father. Give good gifts. To his. His children. Those who ask him. So. So according to Jesus.

Kingdom living. Is living. As a child. Under the care. Of our good. And gracious. Father. And that identity.

Is to influence. Everything we think. And do. It's to affect. The way we pray. We're having a talk. With father. It's to replace. Worries. With a calm.

[14 : 43] Trust. In the father's care. It's to affect. The way we read. The Bible. As sitting. At the feet. Of our father. You have forgotten. The word of encouragement. Is that. The word of encouragement.

That addresses you. As sons. That's the Bible. It influences. The way we receive. Hardship. And trials. In this life. Without losing heart. This is all part.

Of the. The child training. Of the father. Bringing up his children. And he knows best. How to work. That. Harvest. Of righteousness. And peace. In our lives. It changes.

The way we treat. Our fellow Christians. Oh. If. If. If he's my father. And he's your father. Then. I. I treat you as brother. I treat you as sister. I treat you with a special love.

A tender love. It's brotherly love. All because we're. We're. We're children of the father. You see. There's nothing. That we do.

[15 : 40] That is not to be. Tinctured. And influenced. By this. Identity. As being children. Of the living God. Do you not agree.

That we live best. When we're amazed. At the love. That the heavenly father. Has for us. Is it not a proven fact. That children.

Develop. Best. And live best. When they know that. Dad loves them. Or mom and dad. Love their parents. Love them. Should we be surprised. That we function best. As.

As Christians. When we know. We are dearly loved. Children. Of the heavenly father. And so. Since this identity. As children. Of the heavenly father. Is so important.

To be. To living. As we ought. God. Has put into the heart. Of every one. Of his children. The spirit. Of sonship. Whose job.

[16 : 34] It is. To so. Persuade us. And convince us. That we are. Children. Of. The father. That we live. Like it. It does change.

The way we live. He hasn't just left it. To ourselves. He's put his spirit. Of sonship. In us. With that very assignment. To make. This sonship.

So real. To us. That it changes. The way we live. Now this work. Of the indwelling. Holy spirit. Is necessary. For three reasons. We're going to look. Then today. At the holy spirit.

Is. Is bearing witness. To our sonship. The fact that we're. Children of God. And that work. Is necessary. For at least. Three reasons. First. Because of our own. Unbelief.

Before such. A wonderful truth. This is something. That. Should stagger us. It's almost. Unbelievable. That we should.

[17 : 29] Be children. Of God. It's. It's really. So amazing. That it. It can be hard.

To sink in. That we're no longer. Children of the devil. But now. The love. Children of God. We're so aware. Of our remaining. Sinfulness. We're aware.

Of our. Of our shortcomings. That we don't measure up. In our lives. We're not yet perfect. That we might doubt it. We might. Wonder. If we're. Really children.

Of the living God. Or else. We think little of it. As if. Well. Yeah. Father. He just puts up with me. But. He surely doesn't delight in me. So.

We need the Holy Spirit. To be there. To convince us. And it's a. It's a continuous. Present. Work of the spirit. It's not like he convinces you once.

[18 : 24] And that's. No. Just. He's there. He's there. Constantly. To convince you. God's your father. Now live like it. And so he pours out.

His love. The father's love. In our hearts. Romans 5. 5. So that's why we need. Because of our own unbelief. To have the spirit. Doing this work in our hearts. Secondly. Because of the world.

It's not treating us as if. Being a child of God. Is anything special. Are you receiving. VIP status. From the world. Oh. You're a child of God. No. One day you will be.

That's what John says. The reason they don't know you. Is they didn't know him. But one day when he's revealed. Then it will be seen who you are. But for now. The world. Gives us no.

VIP status. And then last. Because of Satan's temptations. To make us doubt. That God is our loving father. He is called the accuser.

[19 : 20] Of the brothers. That's. That's the people in God's family. The brethren. And he's. He's the accuser of them. And since being. Children of the living God.

Is. Is right at the center. Of how we live the Christian life. And. And we never live better. Than when we are most convinced. That the father loves us. Is it any wonder. Why Satan. Goes after that.

Why he would make that the target. I want to sow some. Some doubt. About. Whether. She is. Really. In the father's family. Or. Whether the father is really. Loving.

And pleased with her. Or. Or just to get her to forget it. Consider Jesus. The unique. One and only. Eternal.

Son of God. That's his identity. And that is baptism. Heaven. Boomed. In words. His identity. This.

[20 : 17] Is. My. Beloved. Son. That's his identity. That's who he is. Son whom I love. With him. I'm well pleased. And right away. What do we have? We have Satan.

In the wilderness. Testing. Challenging. That very point. If you are. The son of God. Then. Tell these stones. To become bread. If you are. The son of God.

Then throw yourself. Off. Of this. High point. In the temple. And he will catch you. And his angels. Will. Will keep you. It was at the point. Of his identity. As the unique.

Son of God. That he received. Temptation. And here you are. Suffering with hunger. And nothing to eat. You can't. You can't tell me. God's your father. You can't tell me. He cares about you. To leave you.

In such condition. You can't trust him. To provide. You're going to have to. Take things. In your own hands. And if you're. The son of God. You're going to have to. Use your. Supernatural powers.

[21 : 11] To turn a rock. Into bread. And Jesus. Proves. That. No. I don't need. To do that. All father needs. To do is. Speak the word. And I will live.

For a man doesn't live. On bread alone. But in every word. Proceeds. From his mouth. And that was the test. Of Israel. In the wilderness. Wasn't it? Would they trust.

God. To provide for them. And Jesus. The. The perfect son. He. He succeeds. Where. Israel. The firstborn son. Is what God called them.

Where they failed. And Jesus. Refuses. To use supernatural powers. To provide. But trust father. To provide. And. Three years later.

As he's hanging on the cross. In the hour and power of darkness. Satan and his hordes. Are doing their worst. Against him. He puts his temptations. Into the mouths.

[22 : 09] Of the mockers. At Jesus lowest point. When he's hanging on the cross. And everything. Looks against him. And he's even wondering. Why? Why? Have you forsaken me? We hear Satan's words.

Put in the mouths. Of the mockers. Come down from the cross. If you are the son of God. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now. If he wants him.

For he said I am the son of God. Again. We see that no small part. Of Satan's temptations. Of Jesus. Center on his identity. As the son of God.

And though we are not. The eternal sons of God. We are the adopted. Children. Of God. And he was tempted. To doubt it. Because of his troubling.

[23 : 04] Circumstances. And his suffering. Sure doesn't look like. God gives a wit. About you now. Doesn't look like. Even once you. Some son of God.

You are. Some father. You have. Do something yourself. Come down. But though Jesus. Is a unique son. We adopted sons.

Get attacked. At the same point. Are you really? The son of. Of God. A child of God. Are you really? Does he really love you.

Like his own. Child. What kind of father. Leaves his children. In such suffering. As he's left you. And when we lose that.

Vital sense of sonship. That heart. That is. Yes. But father loves me. When we lose that. It's no small loss. Is it? In our trials.

[24 : 00] To lose that. Oh my. We really are. At a loss. Then. No wonder Satan. Attacks us there. And he has no qualms. About kicking us. When we're down.

And. Attacking. At that very point. He doesn't want you. To make much of the fact. That God is your father. Now. Turn with me. To Romans 8. I want us to see.

Then. How precious. It is. That God. Has put in the hearts. Of every one of his. Children. A witness. To continually. Be persuading. And convincing us.

That he is our father. And here in Romans 8. Last week. Pastor Hank Rast. Demonstrated. This explosion. Of the spirit. In. In Romans 8. The Holy Spirit.

Is mentioned. Only three times. In chapters 1 through 7. Now in chapter 8. 18 times. He's mentioned. And. And the manifold. Aspects. Of his ministry. To us.

[24 : 54] Are stated. In this chapter. But right at the heart. Of this chapter. We're told. That the sons of God. Have received. The spirit. Of sonship. He's called. The spirit.

Of adoption. Or the spirit. Of adopted sons. To tell us. That central. To the Holy Spirit's. Work in the believers. Life.

Is his work. As the spirit. Of sonship. And we want to look at this. More carefully. From Romans chapter 8. Verses 12 to 17. So verse 12. Says.

Therefore brothers. We have an obligation. Based on the fact. That the spirit. Of God. Has come to dwell. In us. To do his manifold. Work. We have an obligation.

Now. Notice. Therefore brothers. That's a family. Of God. Words. So right away. We're thrown. Into this. Father. Child.

[25 : 48] Relationship. Brothers. In the children. Of God. In the family. Of God. We not only have privileges. We have responsibilities. We have an obligation. Then. And here.

The obligation. That we owe. Is not to the flesh. Those sinful urgings. Within. To live according to it. Because if you do live. According to the flesh. You'll die. But rather.

Our obligation. As God's children. Is to the spirit. To live according. To what he desires. And we're not left. To guess. At what he desires.

This whole passage. Points out. It's his law. That sets forth. His desires. And. And verse 13. Says. What it is. He desires. He says.

If you live. According to the flesh. You'll die. But. If by the spirit. You put to death. The misdeeds. Of the body. You will live. These misdeeds. Of the body. Are things. That we do.

[26 : 41] That. That are. Contrary. To God's law. And. And that's. What we are. Obligated. To do. We have an obligation. To the spirit. To do those things. That is.

That are revealed. In God's law. And that means. Putting to death. Killing. The sinful urges. That would make our bodies. An instrument. Of. Of unrighteousness.

That would make our tongues. To be an instrument. Of gossip. And deceit. And slander. Make our eyes. To be the instruments. Of sin. Our hands. Our feet.

All of it. We are. So. That's. The obligation. We have. To the spirit. To be killing. Sin. As Owen said.

Be killing. Sin. Or it will be killing. You. And that's what he says. Because if you live. According to. To please the flesh. You will die. So you need. To be killing. Sin. And you'll only do that.

[27 : 35] By the spirit. You see that. It's by the spirit. That you put to death. By the spirit. You have grace. And power. But you must. Take the dagger out.

And stab your sins. You must put your feet. On the necks. Of your sin. And its desires. You must do it. But you only can do it.

By the spirit. And those who please. Sow to please the spirit. From the spirit. Reap everlasting life. Galatians tells us. So.

That's the way to life. Fulfilling that obligation. To the spirit. Because. Verse 14. Those who are led. By the spirit of God.

Are sons of God. There's our identity. As sons of God. And. Those who are led. By the spirit. Are sons of God. Now very often. This verse is. Quoted as.

- [28 : 29] As if it. Was a promise. That the sons of God. Will be led by the spirit. That. In receiving guidance. In matters of. Where I should go to school.
- What I should study. What job I should take. Who I should marry. Where I should live. Where I should go to church. And so on like that. And. The passage is not talking about. Such things.
- Other passages. In the word of God. Show how God helps us. To come to decisions. On such matters. But rather here. When it says. That those who are led. By the spirit of God. He's talking about.
- The spirit leading us to do. What he's just talked about. To put sin to death. Those who are thus. Led by the spirit. To put sin to death.
- They are the sons of God. They and they only. Are the sons of God. There are no sons of God. That are not involved. In this work of. Putting sin to death. Because that's. One of the reasons.
- [29 : 22] That the spirit. Dwells within us. That by the spirit. We might. Put to death. The misdeeds of the body. And so. Live.
- Have eternal life. Life now. And life. To come. So. These are marks. Of. The sons of God. They. They're led by the spirit.
- To. To fulfill. The requirements. Of the law. Verse. Four. They're led by the spirit of God. To submit to God's law. Verse seven. And they're. Led by the spirit of God.
- To put to death. The misdeeds of the body. Verse 13. This is what it means. To be led by the spirit. Spirit. And if that's happening. It's a proof. That you are. A son.
- Of God. Those who are led by the spirit of God. Are sons of God. That's how you know. Who those. Children of God are. There's an ethical.
- [30 : 18] A moral. Aspect of their life. That is produced by the spirit of God. It's the same ethical test. That we find in first John. How do we know those who have been born of God. Into his families. That same test.
- Do they do righteousness. Do they obey God's law. That's the mark. One of the marks. Now we come to it. This is why we turn to this passage.
- Well what kind of a spirit is it. That God puts into the hearts. Of every one of his child. Every one of his children. What kind of spirit. And he says. Well you did not receive a spirit.
- That makes you a slave again to fear. Can you remember when. As an unconverted man or woman. Your thoughts of God. Were full of dread and fear.
- When you thought of God. You thought oh no. That was your instinctive response. You were full of dread and fear. Because. You knew his wrath was against you. You knew you were condemned.
- [31 : 13] And you were just waiting. For the day of judgment to arrive. That's the way it used to be. Before Christ. Christ. Now the Holy Spirit. Doesn't come in as another. Spirit of fear.
- It's not like. Oh more of the same. Not at all. You didn't receive. A spirit. Of fear. That. A spirit. That makes you a slave.
- Again. To fear. Not. Not more of the same. But rather. You receive. The spirit. Of sonship. The spirit. Of adoption. And by him. We cry. Abba.
- Father. That's the spirit. We receive. Notice he's called. The spirit. Of sonship. The spirit. Of adopted. Sonship.
- He's there. To. To prove. To you. To convince you. To persuade you. That you. Are the adopted. Child of God. That's why he's called.

[32 : 10] The spirit. Of sonship. He makes real. To us. The fact. That we are. Loved. And accepted. As sons. Through the saving. Work of Christ. He's.

There. In our hearts. To make us. Feel at home. In the father's. Presence. Not. Dreading. And fearing him. In the way. That we used to.

As unconverted people. No. He's there. To assure us. That when we talk. To this almighty. God. The God. That created us. As we saw.

On the Sunday school hour. When we talk. To that God. God. We can come. Without any of that. Slavish fear. That we used to have.

Make us cower. And turn away from him. But we can come. With confidence. And. And. Boldness. To know that. He accepts me. As his own child.

[33 : 02] He loves me. He's waiting. To listen to me. I belong here. This is home. To have a talk.

With father. And I get to use. The most intimate. Of terms. Even the terms. That Jesus used. In the garden. Of Gethsemane. As he poured out. His heart. To his heavenly father. I can say.

Abba father. To that God. Now he's there. To do that. To make that. Reality. In me. It's by him.

That we cry. Abba father. It's because. Of his work. As the spirit. Of sonship. That when we. Pause to pray. We realize. He's my dad.

He's my father. And I can pour out. My heart to him. Knowing. That he loves me. Now is that true. Of you. Is that how you.

[33 : 55] Relate to God. Are you assured. Are you confident. Are you persuaded. That. That he's your father. And you're a child.

Of God. And is it seen. In the way you talk. To him. In the way you feel. At home. In his presence. You. Do you.

Have the assurance. Of being a child. Of the living God. You say yeah. Really. You. You were a child of the devil.

You walked for years loving to imitate the devil. You? You actually now are confident?

Are you kidding that you're a child of God? Where'd you get that idea? Well, you can say, well, I got it from the spirit of sonship. It's by the spirit that I relate to God as Abba Father.

[34 : 58] It's a supernatural work. The spirit of God in me is convincing me of that reality. He comes on assignment from the Father to assure me that it's so. And I want us this morning, if we don't get anything else, to go away from here not missing our Father's heart in all of this.

What's the Father's heart toward his children? If you're any kind of a father at all, you want your children to know that you love them. And if you've got adopted children, it's all the more important that you want them to know that you love them.

And God is no different on that point. He wants his children to know that they are his. His children, his beloved, well-accepted children.

Adopted parents work hard to assure their children of their love for them. And so does the Heavenly Father. And he does it by putting his Holy Spirit in us with that assignment.

Make them know they're my child. What an assignment for the Holy Spirit. The spirit of sonship. He wants you to know and rely on the love that he has for you.

[36 : 14] He wants you to rest secure. You know how you are when you come home. You're not really loved out there in the world. But you come home and you're loved and accepted here. That's how he wants you to feel in his presence.

To know it. Not guessing. No, he wants all guessing and doubting gone. He wants you to know it and live in the light and enjoy the enjoyment of it all day.

Every day of your life to be confident of it so that it influences everything that you do. Father loves me. Father loves me. This may be happening, but Father loves me.

He's for me. Now, how does the spirit do that? How does he assure us that we are children of the Heavenly Father? Well, the closest we get to that here is verse 16.

The spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now, you know what a witness in court does. He tells what he knows.

[37 : 11] And the Holy Spirit is the spirit of sonship. And he's in our heart to tell us what he knows. And so he's testifying as if your heart is the court, is the courtroom.

And there's the question, is this person a child of God or not? So there's two witnesses. Because it says that the spirit himself testifies with our spirit.

So if he's with our spirit, there's two witnesses, aren't there? So the first witness is your own spirit. By examining ourselves in the light of what God says is true of his children.

You have 1 John. You have statements in chapter 8 here and all throughout the Bible. We see what God says is true of his children. And as we examine that and examine our hearts, we say, well, I believe that's true of me.

I love the brother. I believe that Jesus alone is my Savior. And I wasn't like that. But I've come to the conviction that I'm a child of God.

[38 : 27] That's one witness in the courtroom. Ourselves, our own conscience, our own spirit. And we come to the conviction that we are children of the Heavenly Father.

We have the fruit of the Spirit that loves our brethren. Obeys God's law and so on. So seeing those marks of the family likeness, I deduce, well, that I'm in the family of God.

Well, that's a powerful witness. But by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every matter must be confirmed. And so another witness takes the stand in the courtroom of my heart.

And he's the spirit of sonship. And he adds his witness to mine. He's not giving a different conclusion. No, he bears witness with my spirit.

He comes alongside and says, yes, John, that's right. You are a child of the Heavenly Father. Not as if he's whispering those words in my ear. I don't mean anything of the sort.

[39 : 30] But he is the one who is giving a witness in my heart to assure me that that is true. That I'm not only going on my own assumptions from the Word of God, my own evaluation, but that I have the Spirit of God bearing witness that God really is my Father.

And it's something that is really quite precious. And it's interesting that Paul just assumes that these believers in Rome, like himself, are experiencing this work of the Spirit, assuring them that they are God's children.

He says, the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we, you and me, we are God's children.

He just assumes it of the church there in Rome. I don't even know that he'd been there yet. But he knows this much. If they're in Christ, they have his Spirit. And he's in their hearts as the Spirit of Sonship on this task to assure them that they are children of God.

So he just assumes it. This is norm for life in the family of God. It's not saying that Christians never struggle with assurance. Indeed, God may even withhold temporarily, for good and wise purposes, a sense of our Sonship.

[40 : 57] But those are exceptions and usually very temporary. But the rule is here stated that the Spirit of adoption assures us that we are God's children. It's one of the blessings of being in Christ.

We get his Spirit as the Spirit of Sonship. And he so convinces us. It's not just a mental thing of deducing. No, it goes beyond that.

He reaches our affections. He reaches our hearts. And we just know. I think it was Packer said, Some things are better felt than tellt.

And this is something that we can actually feel. I am at home with God as my Father. I find it quite inviting to go talk with Him, actually.

I find I'm at home there. He is my Father. He is my Father. He takes those gospel promises. And He says, Yes.

[41 : 59] That belongs to you, John. For whoever receives Jesus Christ and believes on Him has the right to become the children of God. You have received Him.

You have believed on Him. You're hanging on to Jesus Christ. This is true of you. You have become the children of God. And He assures us. He sheds abroad in our hearts the love of God.

Again, that's talking about feelings. And that's talking about emotions. It's not just talking about just the mind game. He says He sheds. The Spirit sheds abroad in our heart the Father's love for us.

So that we know it. We know that Father loves us. Romans 5.5 What a privilege to have the Spirit of Sonship to convince us of this amazing reality.

That the Father has so loved us that we have been called His children. Indeed, this is what we are. Now, let me just conclude by saying this.

[43 : 03] If the whole Christian life is to be lived as Jesus teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount. That the whole of the Christian life is to be lived as a child of the Heavenly Father. And that that identity is to cast its influence on everything we do from the moment we rise to the moment we lay down and sleep.

And if the world, the flesh, and the devil combine to cast doubt upon our Sonship. And to get us to forget it or to diminish it. So that we make little of it.

Then how much do we need this Spirit of Sonship? To be in our hearts right there on site every day, all day. To convince us He's your Father, John.

He's your Father. And all that that means. Such power and revelation to my heart that I will actually live in the reality of it.

And when I pray, I will say, Abba, Father. He is my God. He is my Father. How important is this work? What a gift from the Father is the Spirit of Sonship to all of His children.

[44 : 07] Three closing applications. Number one, then surely we ought to thank God, shouldn't we? What a gift is this? Thank Him for the Spirit of Sonship.

Now you might be confessing this morning, as I often must as well, that my sense of Sonship is not always what it should be. It's weak. It's faltering.

So much of the time I'm not aware of this fact. Oh yeah, I remembered that three days ago. But I haven't even thought about it since then. And I'm certainly not living differently today because of that.

That reality is not sharp front and center stuff with me. Then think what it would be like to be without the Spirit of Sonship.

If it's already that weak and that faltering as one who has the Spirit of Sonship, think what it would be like to be without Him. To be under constant dread of the Father's wrath.

[45 : 11] Thinking that I must surely pay for all my sins. And He can't be loving Father to me. To be left without the Spirit of Sonship.

What a mess we would be. Under a spirit of fear and dread of God's judgment. Never knowing when the next second might land you in hell.

No one to answer our haunting doubts. No one to counter our accuser. The accuser of the brother. No one to remind us of what we so often forget. That we are indeed children of the living God.

What a gift. Thank your Father. The second, don't grieve the Spirit of Sonship. We need this work of the Spirit.

Constantly bearing witness. It's a present active continuous action that He's doing. Constantly reminding us, assuring us of this. And we need that as children of God.

[46 : 11] We don't do anything as we ought without this sense of Sonship. As we showed. So we simply can't afford to grieve or quench the Spirit of Sonship away. So that He suspends His witness to our hearts concerning our Sonship.

We have it in Ephesians 4 and verse 30. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. He's a person. He's not an influence, a power, an impersonal force.

No, He is a person. As much a person as Jesus is a person. As much a person as your Heavenly Father is a person. Persons get grieved.

And the Spirit of God is grieved. Can be grieved by the children of God. And the verses that follow Ephesians 4 30 show that He is especially grieved when we sin against the Father's family.

When we're not loving our brothers and sisters as we ought. With kindness and compassion and forgiving each other just as God Christ. In Christ God forgave you.

[47 : 23] Instead we have bitterness against one of God's other children. Imagine that. We have rage and anger against them. We have brawling, slander, gossip and malice.

It's failure to imitate the Father's love. In the way that He loved me, His child. And when we act like the Father's laws are optional and unimportant.

He may withhold His witness from us. We may not have that clear vital sense of sonship as we have at other times.

Haven't you found that that sense of that knows its ups and downs and might be waning and waxing? We have this variation. Not in our salvation. But in our sense that God is our Savior and Father.

And sometimes it is the cause of a grieved spirit of sonship. So be aware of the Spirit's work in your life. When you see a bird eating seemingly without anybody feeding it.

[48 : 28] Remember it's your Heavenly Father that's feeding it. And how much more valuable you are. And as you sense that, realize that's the Spirit assuring you.

You're a child of the Heavenly Father. He cares for you. Treasure His presence and ministry. Be sensitive to this spirit of sonship. And what He desires. Don't do anything that would hinder or grieve Him in His work.

For a grieved spirit is a quiet spirit. And oh how we need Him bearing witness with us of our sense of sonship.

So we confess to the Spirit of sonship. Our sins that have grieved Him. And we cling to the blood of Christ to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And we go on walking with the Spirit of sonship. Assuring us in our hearts that we're the Father's. And then lastly, thank God for the Spirit of adoption.

[49 : 29] Don't grieve Him. And thirdly, ask the Father for the Spirit of sonship in greater measure and power. You know that passage in Luke 11.

Or having told us to pray. Actually, it was in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, wasn't it? Having told us to pray to our Father in Heaven that we might receive. Jesus then says, Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?

If he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? No. You dads, you give something good rather than something harmful. And then the question and application.

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

In one passage, it says, How much more will he give good gifts to those who ask Him? In this passage, will he give the Holy Spirit? Is he not a good gift?

[50 : 35] This work of the Spirit in our hearts, and especially this work of convincing us of our sonship. Ask. When's the last time you've asked the Father for the help of the Holy Spirit?

For more of His witness of this amazing truth, to keep you under a sense of His fatherly love all the day long, and to live up to that reality.

Dads, there's a lot of asking and giving that goes on with dads and children, isn't there? A whole lot of it. Let this be a reminder to you.

The next time you're asked for something from one of your children, and you give something, remember your Father in Heaven. It's a how much more.

You love giving good things to your children. Some of your hard-earned money. You love giving. How much more does he love to give?

[51 : 39] Good things. Yes, even the Spirit of God. Ask for more of it. More of His work, bearing witness with you.

Tell your Father in Heaven, I'm so forgetful that I'm your child. I get flustered, I get worried, and I forget that you are my Father. And I forget the difference it's to make.

I'm so slow to believe it and live on it. Give me the Spirit of Sonship to make it all real to me. More and more that I might walk in the light of this glorious reality that is mine in Christ, that I am a child of the living God.

More and more, every part of my life would be lived with my Heavenly Father, lived upon His promised help, before His attentive eye, lived for His pleasure and to His glory.

That's the life to which we're called, a life of sonship. To the Heavenly Father. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, You really do know us, and You know just how weak we are to grasp and to hold on to the fact that we're Your children, and Your heart toward us being to want us to know that and rest in that.

[53 : 05] How kind of You to have put Your Spirit in our heart with that very assignment to convince us. Oh, give us then more and more of His work. Forgive us that we haven't even been that concerned about it, that we wouldn't be thinking about these things, that we would just get caught up in our day and forget that You're our Father.

Give us more of the wow, the behold of 1 John 3, 1, that would take hold of us and grip us and hold us in Your love all the day long.

to the praise of You, our Father in Heaven, to the praise of Your Son, who by His sacrifice on the cross has reconciled us to God as our Father, and who by the Spirit of Sonship assures us that these things are true.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.