



## **“The Spirit”**

### **Romans 8**

### **Small Group Plan**

Someone in the group read this quotation aloud.

*When was the last time you felt it – your own longing, that is? Your longing for love, your longing for God, your longing to live your life as it is meant to be lived in God? When was the last time you felt a longing for healing and fundamental change growing within you? Do not rush past this question; it may be the most important question you ever ask. But this is hard, I know. In religious circles we are much more accustomed to silencing our desire, distancing ourselves from it, because we are suspicious and afraid of its power ...*

*When we pay attention to our longing and allow questions about our longing to strip away the outer layers of self-definition, we are tapping into the deepest dynamic of the spiritual life. The stirring of spiritual desire indicates that God’s Spirit is already at work within us, drawing us to himself. We love God because he first loved us. We long for God because he first longed for us. We reach for God because he first reached for us. Nothing in the spiritual life originates with us. It all originates with God.*

— From *Sacred Rhythms* by Ruth Haley Barton

### **OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- What does longing for God feel like?
- Why do some people ignore the stirring of spiritual desire?
- What do we risk by doing so? What dangerous talent are we learning?

## LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

### — A NEW POSITION —

#### Romans 8:1-8

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <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.

- Our new position is “in Christ” (v. 1) contrasted with being outside of Christ.
- What does this new position look like – “live” (vs. 4-5)?
- What does this new position think and feel like – “mind” (vs. 6-7)?
- Describe how the Spirit “gives life.”
- Using verses 3-4 define the term “Atonement.”

### — A NEW GUEST —

#### Romans 8:9-14

<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.

- Look through the entire text (vs. 1-17) and find each use of the terms “Spirit” and the “flesh.”
- What is the difference between “the realm of the flesh” and the “realm of the Spirit” (v. 9)?
- How would you describe a life of the person who is living “according to the flesh” (v. 13)? What does their life look like?
- What is such a lifestyle deadly – “you will die”?
- How would you describe the life of the person who is “led by the Spirit” (vs. 13-14)? What do they look like inside and out?
- Why are they called “children of God” (v. 14)?

**— A NEW FAMILY —**  
**Romans 8:15-17**

<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.

- “Abba” is an extremely personal term for “father” comparable to “daddy.”
- What are the benefits of “adoption” “sonship” “children” “heirs” “co-heirs”?
- How did Christians then and how to Christians today “share in his sufferings” (v. 17)?

**USE IT / APPLY IT ...**

- How have you seen the Spirit of God work in a person’s life?
- How does living for Jesus change the desires of our heart?
- Is your conception of God the more official Father of the universe, or the more intimate Father of my personal life? Explain.
- How does seeing and experiencing God as a loving Father, change your understanding of what it means to be a Christian?
- Close with prayer of release, committing again to give God’s Spirit control?