

The Relationship Between Justification and Spiritual Fruit in Romans 5–8¹

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Of the many questions currently surrounding the discussion about justification, the relationship between justification and spiritual fruit merits attention. In particular, once the declaration of righteousness has been pronounced upon the sinner when personal faith is exercised,² does this reality have any effect upon the lifestyle of the new believer? Dogmatists would tend to phrase this question in relation to the doctrine of perseverance and how progressive sanctification relates to justification.³ But in the present essay I would like to deal with this question exegetically by looking at Paul's treatment of justification and its fruit in Romans 5–8. Admittedly, the question raised has usually been addressed in a more systematic-theological fashion, but I hope the approach followed here will be a helpful addition to the typical systematic treatments of this issue.⁴

While all would acknowledge that justification should affect one's production of spiritual fruit, not all would agree that it *necessarily* will affect it.⁵ This revelation may come as a surprise to some, but

¹This article is an updated condensation of Jonathan R. Pratt, "The Relationship between Justification and Sanctification in Romans 5–8" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1999).

²This is the traditional view of justification in contrast to that of the New Perspective on Paul which would argue that justification is "God's acknowledgement that someone is in the covenant" (James D. G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," *BRL* 65 [1983]: 106). Also see Tom Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (London: SPCK, 2009), 96. The traditional view on Pauline justification finds support in John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007); Simon Gathercole, "The Doctrine of Justification in Paul and Beyond," in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* (ed. Bruce L. McCormack; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 219–41; and Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000).

³I do not intend here to discuss the intricacies of justification and sanctification in relation to systematic formulations except to say that justification speaks to the time believers receive the declaration of righteousness imputed to their account when they exercise faith in Christ (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* [ed. John T. McNeill; trans Ford Lewis Battles; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960], 3.11.2).

When systematicians speak about sanctification, they are usually referring to *progressive* sanctification because they recognize that the doctrine of sanctification can be used by NT writers to speak of any of the tenses (past, present, and future) of salvation. David Peterson (*Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness* [New Studies in Biblical Theology 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 13) suggests correctly that words like "renewal" and "transformation" are more accurate NT terms to describe Christian growth. At the same time he argues that the NT primarily uses "sanctification" in its definitive (past) sense. While he has offered a helpful corrective to the tendency to equate the majority of "sanctification" uses with Christian growth (when only a minority truly function in this way), still several passages appear to use "sanctification" to speak of growth in holiness (e.g., 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thess 4:3, 4, 7; 1 Tim 2:15; and 2 Tim 2:21).

⁴In the paragraph that follows I will be providing a listing of theological perspectives that pulls us back into the systematic-theological treatment of the question. This is necessary in order to give the reader a survey of the theological landscape with regard to the question of justification and its fruit. With this grid in place the reader ought to be prepared to see how the exegetical treatment of Rom 5–8 leads to the support of one of these theological groupings.

⁵The question being raised here, then, has to do with the existence or non-existence of righteous deeds or acts of

it is a reality nonetheless. On the one hand, some would argue that the justified sinner may possibly or potentially live righteously. Bible teachers supporting this perspective include those of Wesleyan,⁶ Keswick,⁷ Pentecostal,⁸ and Chaferian⁹ persuasion. On the other hand, several (typically from a Reformed viewpoint) suggest that the justified sinner will certainly or necessarily give evidence of an obedient lifestyle.¹⁰

obedience in the life of the justified sinner. Thus, this question is prior to another question also found in current discussions of Pauline justification that relates to the place of righteous deeds in final justification. For more on that discussion see Piper, *Future of Justification*, and Wright, *Justification*.

⁶ John Wesley separated justification from sanctification (obedience), suggesting that both are received in distinct acts of faith. Wesley described this sanctification as “entire sanctification” or “perfection” (John Wesley, “Scripture Way of Salvation,” in *Sermons on Several Occasions* [ed. T. Jackson; New York: G. Lane and C. B. Tippet, 1845], 1:386, 390). The experience of receiving “perfection” has five specific elements: (1) it is instantaneous; (2) it is distinctly subsequent to justification; (3) it is only received by those who seek for it; (4) it defines sin as “conscious, deliberate acts”; and (5) it may be lost (John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* [Chicago: The Christian Witness Co., n.d.], 25–28, 35, 46, 52, 104).

Other Wesleyan theologians supporting this idea include: Frank G. Carver, “Biblical Foundations for the ‘Secondness’ of Entire Sanctification,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22 (1987): 11; William M. Greathouse, “Sanctification and the Christus Victor Motif in Wesleyan Theology,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 17 (1982): 51; and W. T. Purkiser, *Conflicting Concepts of Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1953), 30–31.

⁷ Keswick views sanctification and justification as two distinct gifts from God to be received in separate acts of faith. Believers receive the gift of sanctification through a “crisis” decision (Steven Barabas, *So Great Salvation* [Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1952], 84–86, 115; J. Robertson McQuilkin, “The Keswick Perspective,” in *Five Views on Sanctification* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987], 178). Before this decision believers find themselves in the position of the “carnal Christian,” and after it they enjoy the privileges of the “victorious life.” This victorious life is considered “normal,” and Christians are encouraged to live accordingly. McQuilkin (“Keswick,” 159) writes with regard to this type of behavior, “Christians may not behave in this way, but such is their true condition and potential.” For a helpful survey of Keswick, see Andrew David Naselli, “Keswick Theology: A Historical and Theological Survey and Analysis of the Doctrine of Sanctification in the Early Keswick Movement, 1875–1920,” (Ph.D. diss., Bob Jones University, 2006).

⁸ Following the model begun by Wesley, Pentecostals have shifted the emphasis from entire sanctification to baptism in the Spirit (Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970], 38; Timothy L. Smith, “The Doctrine of the Sanctifying Spirit: Charles G. Finney’s Synthesis of Wesleyan and Covenant Theology,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 13 [1978]: 100–103). The result of this Spirit-baptism is empowerment for service rather than the Wesleyan concept of perfection in love (Stanley M. Horton, “The Pentecostal Perspective,” in *Five Views on Sanctification* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987], 130). Pentecostals understand the experience of baptism in the Spirit as an event subsequent to and distinct from justification and as something that should be sought by all believers (Howard Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Critique of James D. G. Dunn’s Baptism in the Holy Spirit* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984], vii; Horton, “The Pentecostal Perspective,” 128–34).

⁹ “Chaferian” is Charles Ryrie’s suggested title for this model of sanctification (Charles C. Ryrie, “Contrasting Views on Sanctification,” in *Walvoord: A Tribute* [ed. Donald K. Campbell; Chicago: Moody, 1982], 191). Chaferians teach that victory over the sinful nature is accomplished by yieldedness to the Spirit in an act of dedication or surrender (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual* [rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967], 22; J. Dwight Pentecost, *Designed to Be Like Him: Fellowship, Conduct, Conflict, Maturity* [Chicago: Moody, 1966], 127–30; and Charles C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* [Chicago: Moody, 1969], 186–91). While seeking to distance themselves from Keswick’s teaching that justification and sanctification are two distinct gifts of God (Ryrie, “Contrasting Views,” 195–97), Chaferians still maintain the need for an initial decision of dedication or yieldedness that helps to begin the process of sanctification (Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual*, 68; Pentecost, *Designed to Be Like Him*, 130; Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life*, 186; John F. Walvoord, “The Augustinian-Dispensational Perspective,” in *Five Views on Sanctification* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987], 235). Cf. Jonathan R. Pratt, “Dispensational Sanctification: A Misnomer,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 7 (2002): 95–108; available online at <http://dbts.edu/journals/2002/Pratt.pdf>.

¹⁰ The inevitable connection between justification and fruit-bearing is affirmed by this sampling of Reformed writers: Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.3.1; A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (rev. ed.; n.p.: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1878; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1928), 522; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981–89), 3:215–16; and B. B. Warfield, *Perfectionism* (ed. Samuel G. Craig; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 356.

While a descriptive historical study of this issue might prove fruitful,¹¹ this essay seeks to be more prescriptive by providing an exegetical treatment of Romans 5–8.¹² Most recognize that in these four chapters Paul specifically addresses the issue of justification as it relates to the believer’s new life.¹³ Thus, an investigation of these four chapters should reveal many clues that will help point us toward a solution regarding the relationship between justification and spiritual fruit.

I believe the solution to this problem is that Romans 5–8 demonstrates that an obedient lifestyle inevitably and necessarily flows from justification. This essay will pursue this thesis in three steps. First, I will give criteria used to determine whether or not fruit-bearing is present in the life of believers. Second, I will delineate evidences of fruit-bearing found in Romans 5–8 by using these criteria; this step will also require an exegetical overview of Paul’s argument. Finally, I will investigate these acts of fruit-bearing in order to determine whether they are shown to be necessarily true in the life of the believer.

1. Criteria for Identifying Spiritual Fruit-bearing

1.1. Positive Criteria

Identifying the criteria used for determining evidences of fruit-bearing in Romans 5–8 is crucial for the defense of the stated thesis. Whenever Paul provides explanations of the believer’s new life in Christ in these chapters,¹⁴ he gives information that may pertain to fruit-bearing and so to the issue at hand. If his description of the Christian involves a righteous *response* such as an action, attitude, or thought as opposed to a *possession*, then Paul provides descriptions that can be considered as applying to the concept of spiritual fruit-bearing.

It may be helpful to define my terms and then illustrate them. First, I understand “fruit-bearing” to refer to believers’ righteous responses to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in their earthly lives. These responses are “righteous” as opposed to “sinful” in that they conform to God’s standard of holiness. But “fruit-bearing” may be preferred to “righteous response” in that it comes from Paul’s own terminology (καρπός in Rom 6:22). Throughout this essay I will use the following terms synonymously (and the first term most frequently): fruit-bearing, obedient actions, and righteous responses.

Second, what does it mean to distinguish between “righteous response” and “possession”? When Paul states that believers enjoy peace with God as a result of being justified in 5:1, he is speaking of a possession of believers. This peace with God is a blessing they enjoy, but it does not speak about their

¹¹Cf. William W. Combs, “The Disjunction between Justification and Sanctification in Contemporary Evangelical Theology,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 6 (2001): 17–44; available online at <http://dbts.edu/journals/2001/Combs.pdf>.

¹²The only significant structural debate that takes place in the study of Romans is in regard to the location of chapter 5 in Paul’s argument. Should it be included with 1:18–4:25 or with chapters 6–8? I have opted for the latter primarily because of the occurrence of the formulae “through our Lord Jesus Christ,” “through Jesus Christ our Lord,” and “in Christ Jesus our Lord” at the beginning, middle, and end of chapter 5 (5:1, 11, 21) and at the end of each of the three succeeding chapters (6:23; 7:25; 8:39). See C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:254.

¹³Cranfield (*Romans*, 1:102) suggests that Paul’s argument in chapters 1–8 builds on Paul’s thematic statement in 1:17 (“the just by faith shall live”). In 1:18–4:25 Paul expounds upon the phrase “the just by faith,” and in chapters 5–8 he delineates the meaning of “shall live.”

¹⁴Paul does so by using contrasts (5:12–21 [in Adam/in Christ]; 6:16–7:6 [enslaved to sin/enslaved to God]; 8:1–11 [in the flesh/in the Spirit]), direct statements (6:6, 7; 8:15, 28), and subordinate clauses of purpose and result (6:4; 7:4, 6; 8:4). This list is not meant to be exhaustive but merely representative of the ways in which Paul narrates the believer’s new existence in Christ.

righteous responses. Connected to this result of peace with God (a possession) is the result of boasting in hope and tribulations in 5:2–3 (a response). This result of justification is a description of an action (boasting) which believers perform. As such it provides an example of spiritual fruit-bearing, that is, a righteous response.

1.2. Negative Criteria

Three negative criteria can be used to limit the possibilities. First, any description of believers found in imperative¹⁵ or subjunctive¹⁶ statements will not be used since these do not express certainty with regard to the reality of a given action.¹⁷

Second, blessings provided for believers that speak of the believer's passive reception of them will not be used. Believers enjoy such blessings as peace with God (5:1), access into grace (5:2), and death to sin (6:2), but such gifts do not qualify as fruit-bearing because they do not indicate any type of moral activity on the part of the believer. These gifts may effect righteous responses, but in and of themselves they do not speak about acts or attitudes demonstrated by believers.

Third, any description of believers found in future tense statements must be considered as highly suspect. Unless there is evidence that Paul uses the future tense for rhetorical reasons or unless he shows that the blessing in question also has present ramifications, future tense verbs have application to blessings that believers will enjoy in the future. Such blessings as future salvation (5:9–10), eternal life (6:23), and resurrection (8:11) relate to gifts that will be enjoyed by believers in the future. The present expression of fruit-bearing is not in view in such statements.

Thus, any indicative, non-future verb that relates a righteous response by the Christian to the promptings of the Holy Spirit will be considered for inclusion. With these criteria in mind an admittedly succinct exegesis of Romans 5–8 follows in order to delineate the spiritual fruit-bearing Paul describes in the new life of the believer.

¹⁵Imperative ideas are not limited to the use of the imperative mood. Such instances as the hortatory subjunctive and future indicative can function as commands. See BDF §387.

¹⁶There are, of course, instances when the indicative does function in a conative or tendential sense in which case the action related by the verb is not realized but is only desired or attempted. Also, the indicative in conditional sentences (e.g., Rom 8:13) does not demonstrate the actual reality of the statement in the apodosis. Likewise, there are times when the conventions of the Greek language demand the subjunctive even though the logic of the sentence indicates the certainty of the action described. This is particularly true with regard to the ἵνα clause which must take a subjunctive verb but which might be expressing an action as certain, especially when God is the subject of the main clause to which the ἵνα is related. Regarding this function of the ἵνα clause, see BDAG, s.v. “ἵνα,” 477: “In many cases purpose and result cannot be clearly differentiated, and hence ἵνα is used for the result which follows according to the purpose of the subj. or God. As in Semitic and Greco-Roman thought, purpose and result are identical in declarations of the divine will.” See also Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 473–74.

¹⁷This is the nature of the imperative mood in Greek. Wallace (*Beyond the Basics*, 485) defines the imperative as the “mood of *intention*” in that it “moves in the realm of *volition* (involving the imposition of one’s will upon another) and *possibility*.” The same idea of uncertainty is also related by the subjunctive mood. See idem, 461: “The subjunctive can be said to represent the verbal action (or state) as uncertain but probable.”

2. *Spiritual Fruit-bearing in Romans 5–8*

2.1. Exegesis of Romans 5–8

Paul gives the purpose for writing the epistle to the Romans in his introduction (1:1–17).¹⁸ He intends to give an exposition of the gospel about Jesus Christ that reveals the righteousness of God. The first major section of the book (1:18–4:25) develops this thematic statement on the gospel by showing Jews' and Gentiles' need for God's righteousness that can be received only by faith alone. Chapters 5–8 provide an explanation of the certainty of the justified sinner's glorification.¹⁹

2.1.1. *Romans 5*

Chapter 5 divides into two paragraphs (5:1–11 and 5:12–21). The first describes three benefits that believers enjoy because of their justification: peace with God (v. 1), access into grace (v. 2), and boasting in hope and tribulations (vv. 2–3). The remainder of this paragraph (vv. 4–11) further explains the benefits of peace and boasting.²⁰ Paul expands upon this subject in the second paragraph (5:12–21) by providing a reason (διὰ τοῦτο in v. 12) for those who have been justified and reconciled to have confidence in the promise of their final salvation: Christ's act of obedience in contrast to Adam's act of disobedience ensures eternal life for those "in Christ."²¹ Using a typological connection between Adam and Christ, Paul compares and contrasts the effects of Adam's and Christ's activities upon the human race to make this point. Paul's mention of the law in contrast to grace in 5:20–21 serves to conclude his argument in the chapter while laying the foundation for the discussion of chapters 6 and 7. Paul will return to the benefits of justification in chapter 8 after answering the questions raised by this law-grace contrast at the end of chapter 5.

2.1.2. *Romans 6–7*

In 5:20–21 Paul implies that both law and sin belong to Adam's realm in contrast to God's superabundant grace that belongs to Christ's realm. Mention of these three important concepts (law, sin, and grace) prompts Paul to expound their ramifications in chapters 6 and 7. He does so with a series of four rhetorical questions (6:1, 15; 7:7, 13). The similarities in the form and function of these four

¹⁸This assertion is not denying that there are other purposes for Paul's writing to the Romans. For example, his intent to raise support for his planned mission trip to Spain and his desire to heal Jewish-Gentile divisions in the church are two additional purposes often mentioned. For a survey of the many aspects of this discussion, see Karl P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate* (rev. and expanded ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991) and A. Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

¹⁹The truth of the Christian's sharing in Christ's glory brackets this entire section as Paul develops the theme in 5:1–11 and 8:18–39. See Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 293, and N. T. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Louisville: Abingdon, 2002), 10:509–10.

²⁰Don Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1994), 75–76.

²¹Charles B. Cousar, "Continuity and Discontinuity: Reflections on Romans 5–8 (In Conversation with Frank Thielman)," in *Pauline Theology, Vol. III: Romans* (ed. David M. Hay and E. E. Johnson; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 203; and Moo, *Romans*, 316.

questions are undeniable,²² and we can easily trace Paul's argument by following the points made in each of the "rounds" of debate they introduce.²³

In Round One (6:1–14), Paul responds to the first question ("Does reliance on grace result in a sinful lifestyle?") by showing how believers have died with Christ so that they are no longer enslaved to sin but instead are given the freedom and ability to demonstrate spiritual fruit. Believers now "walk in newness of life" (6:4), are "free from sin" (6:7, 11), and are "alive unto God" (6:11).

In Round Two (6:15–7:6), he answers the interlocutor's question ("Does the era of grace encourage the practice of sin?") with a description of life under grace and not under law. In the realm of grace Christians are enslaved to righteousness rather than to the power of sin (6:16–23), and, since they are no longer "under law," believers live in the age of the Spirit, who enables them to bear fruit unto God (7:1–6).

In Round Three (7:7–12), Paul responds to the question, "Is the Mosaic law to be equated with sin?" He shows that the law, though bringing the knowledge of sin, is not responsible for deception and sinful conduct bringing death—sin is.

Finally, in Round Four (7:13–25), the relationship between the law and death is broached ("Is the law the direct cause of spiritual death?"). Paul answers this question by showing that sin, the real culprit, exploits the law and brings death. Additionally, the law is unable to help the individual overcome sin.

2.1.3. Romans 8

After concluding his discussion of the ramifications of sin, law, and grace with respect to the believer, Paul moves on in his discussion to the results of justification begun in chapter 5.²⁴ In returning to this topic he introduces a key ingredient touched on only briefly in chapters 5–7 (5:5; 7:6): the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In chapter 8 he organizes his discussion into three major sections (8:1–17; 8:18–30; 8:31–39).

In 8:1–17, Paul shows that life in the Spirit is based upon the cross-work of Christ (v. 3), which results in freedom from the condemnation of the Mosaic law (vv. 1–2) and results in the satisfaction of the demands of the Mosaic law fulfilled by Christ and appropriated by believers through faith (v. 4). Those who have been freed from the law's condemnation walk according to the Spirit, which is diametrically opposed to the walk that is according to the flesh. Paul contrasts these two walks in verses 5–13. The reason that believers will walk according to the Spirit is provided in verses 14–17, where Paul shows that all believers are led by the indwelling Spirit. This leading indicates their sonship (vv. 14–16), and this sonship is certain to include suffering (v. 17).

²²Several similarities can be noted: (1) all four demonstrate a false conclusion to a Pauline statement; (2) each question is introduced with οὐ; (3) Paul responds to the false conclusions with μή γένοιτο in each instance (Abraham J. Malherbe, "MH ΓΕΝΟΙΤΟ in the Diatribe and Paul," *HTR* 73 [1980]: 232); and (4) the supporting statement that follows μή γένοιτο introduces the theme that Paul develops in the following verses. For detailed discussion of the diatribe method used by Paul in chapters 6 and 7, see Stanley K. Stowers, *The Diatribe and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (SBLDS 57; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1981), 133–49.

²³D. B. Garlington, "Romans 7:14–25 and the Creation Theology of Paul," *TJ* 11 (1990): 206–7.

²⁴Many have written about the connections between chapters 5 and 8, making note of the chiasmic structure of Paul's argument. Some of these include N. A. Dahl, *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 82–91; James D. G. Dunn, "Paul's Epistle to the Romans: An Analysis of Structure and Argument," in *ANRW, Part II: Principat* (ed. Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini; New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1987), 25.4:2,865–66; Charles D. Myers Jr., "Chiastic Inversion in the Argument of Romans 3–8," *NovT* 35 (1993): 42; idem, "The Place of Romans 5:1–11 within the Argument of the Epistle" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1985), 122–26; and Moo, *Romans*, 469.

Paul takes up the subject of suffering and glory in 8:18–30. It is the reality of the present age that both creation and believers groan and eagerly anticipate the reception of future glory. The intercessory ministry of the Spirit (vv. 26–27) and the certainty of the fulfillment of God’s plan (vv. 28–30) substantiate this hope. The final paragraph (vv. 31–39) summarizes the magnitude of the blessings of justification. Here Paul explains that the elect are guaranteed future vindication in the final judgment (vv. 31–34) and present victory over evil based on the love of God (vv. 35–39).

2.2. Delineation of Righteous Responses in Romans 5–8

This condensed overview of Rom 5–8 provides the foundation for a delineation of the evidence of spiritual fruit-bearing found in these chapters.

1. Boasting in Hope, Tribulations, and God (5:2, 3, 11). One of the benefits that justification brings to the believer in 5:1–11 is boasting in hope and tribulations (vv. 2–3); this is clearly a righteous response.²⁵

2. Demonstrating Love for God (5:5). Verse 5 describes another: believers enjoy the outpouring of the love of God in their hearts. This phrase (ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ) appears to be a “plenary genitive,”²⁶ which carries both a subjective and objective thrust. Hence, believers receive the blessing of loving God as the result of God’s outpouring grace.²⁷

3. Reigning in Life (5:17b). A third response is located in the second paragraph of chapter 5 where Paul states that those who have been justified receive grace (v. 15b) and the promise of reigning in life (v. 17b). While this first blessing is clearly a possession, the second is likely a present action as well as a future reality (Paul uses a “logical future” here,²⁸ and the idea of reigning in life demands the exercise of ethical actions).²⁹ So believers presently enjoy reigning in life as a result of their connection to Christ

²⁵Paul mentions this boasting (καυχώμεθα) in hope and tribulations in v. 2 and v. 3. That he sees it as a significant blessing is clear as he concludes this paragraph with a reference to peace (reconciliation) and boasting in v. 11.

²⁶This category comes from Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 118–21. Wallace states that the NT writers were sometimes “intentionally ambiguous.” He also says, “The instances of double entendre, *sensus plenior* (conservatively defined), puns and word-plays in the NT all contribute to this view.” See Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek: Illustrated by Examples* (trans. Joseph Smith; Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici; Rome: Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1963), 114:13.

²⁷Arguments supporting a subjective genitive meaning are quite strong, the best being that God’s love for believers is spelled out in the next three verses (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:262). However, the objective genitive also has several points in its favor: (1) the believers’ love for Christ provides a good explanation for the security of their hope (the causal ὅτι introducing the second phrase of v. 5 gives the reason that believers can be certain of blessing at the final judgment: their love for Christ is evident in their Spirit-motivated actions); (2) the perfect passive ἐκκέχυται indicates that ἡ ἀγάπη is the object that God (the assumed subject) has poured out through his agent, the Holy Spirit (Cranfield, 1:262, makes this point even though he does not support the objective genitive idea), and gifts received from the Spirit are generally accompanied with external acts in the NT; and (3) the fact that love for God has been poured out *within* (ἐν) our hearts (as opposed to “upon” or “toward” us) suggests that this love is the source of acts of love generated from within the life of the believer by the Spirit (Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 121).

²⁸Moo (*Romans*, 340) refers to the use of the future tense here as a “logical” future in which the reigning is future “from the standpoint of the reign of death in Adam”; also see John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 198.

²⁹Paul uses ζῶν twelve times in chapters 5–8 with nine of these uses related to eschatological life (5:17, 18, 21; 6:4, 22, 23; 7:10; 8:6, 10), i.e., life that is already possessed but that waits for the full and final benefits yet to come. Thomas R. Schreiner (*Romans* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 286) states, “The *eschaton* has entered the present for Paul, and hence believers ‘walk in newness of life’ now (6:4).” He suggests two aspects about this “life.” First, it fulfills the mandate given to Adam in Genesis (anticipated in the renewal of creation in Rom 8:18–25). Second, it points back to the eschatological life belonging to all God’s people in 1:17.

Another aspect of this “life” can be discerned from O’T prophecies about life in the “age to come.” One of the blessings of this future age is obedient lives that flow from the new heart that God will give to his people (Ezek 36:26–27), particularly when they receive the blessing of his Spirit (37:14, 23–28). Clearly the idea of moral transformation is a part of the expectation of this eschatological life.

4. Walking in Newness of Life (6:4). In chapter 6 Paul's response to the foolish assertion that believers can sin with impunity includes a reference to their death with Christ (signified by the burial picture of baptism in the first phrase of v. 4). "Death with Christ" comes as a result of the believers' death to sin (v. 2) and is one of the metaphors Paul uses to describe the transfer they experience when they leave the old aeon of death "in Adam" and enter the new aeon of life "in Christ."³⁰ The ἵνα clause of 6:4b indicates that this death with Christ results in a new practice for believers: they now walk in "newness of life."³¹

5–6. Being Ashamed of Past Sin (6:21) and Producing Fruit Leading to Sanctification (6:22). In 6:15–23, Paul twice provides a description of life prior to salvation in contrast to the new life that believers enjoy after salvation (vv. 17–18 and vv. 20–22). In the second of these contrasts two righteous responses are revealed. In verse 21 Paul describes the Romans' past existence in the old realm, and he states that they had formerly (τότε) produced worthless fruit. Now that they have become believers, these old practices presently (νῦν) bring shame to them. Thus, one finds an expression of fruit-bearing: believers are ashamed when they think about the sinful practices that characterized their past lives.³² The other response comes as Paul gives the reason that Christians can obey the imperative of verse 19. In contrast to the days when they were enslaved to sin (v. 20), these believers are now free from sin and enslaved to God so that they produce fruit leading to sanctification (v. 22).³³ Paul contrasts the inevitability of their sinful actions prior to salvation with the inevitability of their righteous actions after salvation.

7–8. Bearing Fruit to God (7:4) and Serving in Newness of the Spirit (7:6). As Paul continues his answer to the rhetorical question of 6:15, he employs another purpose-result ἵνα clause in 7:4 with the same force he used in 6:4 to show the purpose-result of the believers' dying to the law and being with Christ: they are to bear fruit to God. Dying to the law is accomplished through the work of Christ, who also ensures that his purposes are manifested by the righteous fruit-bearing of those who belong to him. That this was Paul's intention is demonstrated in verses 5–6, where Paul describes the meaning of verse 4 in greater detail. In verse 5 he states that prior to the believers' salvation, their sinful practices produced fruit unto death. Verse 6 shows that once they became Christians, the result was that they served in newness of the Spirit (another righteous response).³⁴ Consequently, the result of being joined with Christ (εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἑτέρω) is that Christians produce fruit unto God.

³⁰A representative sampling of those who have contributed to this understanding includes the following: Daniel P. Bailey, "The Crucifixion of 'Our Old Man': Romans 6:6 in the Indicative and Imperative of Salvation" (M.A. thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1990), 5–12; Florence A. Morgan, "Romans 6.5a: United to a Death Like Christ's," *ETL* 59 (1983): 270; John Murray, "Definitive Sanctification," *CTJ* 2 (1967): 7; and Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (BZNW 32; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1966), 14–20, 39–43.

³¹The ἵνα is most likely functioning as a purpose-result ἵνα (see n. 16) since God is the one who is causing the believer to die with Christ with the purpose-result that the believer walks in newness of life.

³²As opposed to most of the expressions related to sanctification in Rom 5–8, the response of shame with regard to past actions is not an action but an attitude. As such, it is a moral response that could occur only in the lives of those who are being made holy by the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

³³Peterson, *Possessed by God*, 103, 139–42, argues that ἁγιασμόν in v. 22 is "sanctification as a dedicated state." His view supports the thesis of his book that "sanctification is primarily another way of describing what it means to be converted or brought to God in Christ." While his view provides a necessary corrective to the mistaken notion of NT sanctification as *primarily* a process of moral renewal and change, it appears that the connection of ἁγιασμόν with καρπὸν indicates that the sanctification spoken of here is experiential or ethical in nature. See 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thess 4:3, 4, 7; 5:23; 1 Tim 2:15; and 2 Tim 2:21 for other examples of this ethical aspect of sanctification in Paul's letters.

³⁴The Greek phrase here clearly indicates result: ὥστε δουλεύειν ὑμᾶς ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος.

9–10. Walking according to the Spirit (8:4) and Minding the Things of the Spirit (8:5). The next righteous response is located in 8:4. Paul begins chapter 8 by declaring that Christians are no longer under condemnation because of their relationship with Christ (8:1). He supports this statement with a reason: the Spirit has set believers free from the slavery of sin (v. 2).³⁵ Verse 3 gives the basis (γάρ) for this Spirit-induced freedom: it is the sin-condemning work of Christ (on the cross). The ἵνα clause of verse 4 provides the purpose for Christ’s work: the fulfillment of the righteous requirement of the law in believers. As argued previously in reference to Rom 6:4 and 7:4, the purpose behind God’s actions will be manifested in results. Thus, if God through Christ has condemned sin in order to see the righteous requirement of the law fulfilled in believers, this will certainly take place.

In 8:4b–11 Paul provides three descriptions of believers who experience the fulfillment of the righteous requirement of the Mosaic law. The first two of these are examples of fruit-bearing. First, in opposition to those who walk according to the flesh, believers walk according to the Spirit.³⁶ Second, these Spirit-directed people are defined in verse 5 as those who mind the things of the Spirit in contrast to those who mind the things of the flesh.³⁷ Third, Christians are indwelt by the Spirit (vv. 9–11).

11. Being Led by the Spirit (8:14). Paul follows his imperatival comments of verses 12 and 13 with a substantiating reason (γάρ) showing why believers can obey these directives: they are sons of God (v. 14b). Verse 14a describes the primary characteristic of those who are sons in that they are led by the Spirit. The present passive ἄγονται indicates that the Spirit actively leads the believer,³⁸ and verse 13b shows that the activity which the Spirit leads the believer to accomplish is the defeat of the sinful deeds of the body.³⁹ The implied response of following the Spirit’s leading constitutes yet another example of righteous responses in this chapter.

³⁵This statement on freedom is a common theme repeated several times in chapters 6 and 7 (6:6, 7, 14, 18, 22; 7:6).

³⁶The pronoun ἡμῖν in v. 4a is modified by the participial phrase τοῖς περιπατοῦσιν κατὰ πνεῦμα. For Paul the concept of walking has a moral connotation. On this point see T. J. Deidun, *New Covenant Morality in Paul* (AnBib 89; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 75–76; and Joseph O. Holloway, III, *ΠΕΡΙΠΑΤΕΩ as a Thematic Marker for Pauline Ethics* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 128–29. A note regarding the use of σὰρξ and πνεῦμα is also important at this point. Moo (*Romans*, 485) provides a helpful summary of the meaning of these terms: “‘To walk according to the flesh,’ then, is to have one’s life determined and directed by the values of ‘this world,’ of the world in rebellion against God. It is a lifestyle that is purely ‘human’ in its orientation. To ‘walk according to the Spirit,’ on the other hand, is to live under the control, and according to the values, of the ‘new age,’ created and dominated by God’s Spirit as his eschatological gift.” Also see Trevor J. Burke, “Adoption and the Spirit in Romans 8,” *EvQ* 70 (1998): 313; idem, *Adopted into God’s Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 22; Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), 159–72; and R. David Kaylor, *Paul’s Covenant Community: Jew and Gentile in Romans* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1988), 143–48.

³⁷The verb φρονέω in Paul’s usage carries more than a simple reference to intellectual assent. The ideas of intending, purposing, and willing are also included (Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, 76; and Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 219). This is substantiated in the text by Paul’s use of φρόνημα in v. 6. Deidun (76) describes the interplay between the work of God in creating a new will and the behavior of the Christian who exercises that will: “What the Spirit does is to endow man with a new will, of which it itself is the *constant* source and by which, therefore, the Law’s demand for an obedience pleasing to God . . . is fulfilled. The gospel is not a means given to man by which *he* can fulfil the Law’s demand, but the means *God* himself uses in order to . . . fulfil this demand in man. . . . But this does not mean that the activity whereby God fulfils the Law’s demand in the Christian does not *then* become the Christian’s *own* activity; for the new will with which he is endowed, and which constantly flows from the activity of the Spirit, is now truly his own.”

³⁸While the passive voice may suggest a lack of activity on the part of the subject (the believer), quite the opposite is implied here. For someone to be led by another, the righteous response of following must take place. The emphasis in v. 14 is upon the Spirit’s inevitable work of leading the Christian (only those who are led are “sons of God” and the context indicates that “sons of God” are children, heirs, and joint-heirs—vv. 16–17). The implication of this leading, however, involves the believer’s response of actively following.

³⁹Deidun, *New Covenant Morality*, 78; Brendan Byrne (“Sons of God”—“Seed of Abraham” [AnBib 83; Rome: Biblical

12. Praying for God's Help (8:15). A further ethical response resulting from the privilege of receiving the "Spirit of sonship" (v. 15) is that believers cry, "Abba Father." Since this cry was used by Jesus (Mark 14:36) when he prayed on the evening before his crucifixion, there appears to be a connection between it and intimate association with God.⁴⁰ This is a prayer (a righteous response) that could come only from one who personally knows God.⁴¹

13. Groaning for Bodily Redemption (8:23). In the next paragraph (8:18–30) Paul takes up the twin themes of suffering and glory. While discussing these ideas, he reveals that one of the actions characteristic of being a Christian is that groaning takes place during the period between initial justification and final glorification (v. 23). This groaning is best described as the "eager expectation of bodily 'redemption' (ἀπολύτρωσις [v. 23]) from the δουλεία τῆς φθορᾶς (v. 21) at the resurrection."⁴²

14. Expressing Love for God (8:28). Paul delineates two more examples of fruit-bearing in his description of God's eternal plan (vv. 28–30). In verse 28 God works all things together for good to "those who love God" and to "those who are called according to his purpose." The two parallel participial clauses indicate those for whom God is working. While the second clause speaks of the reality of being called by God, the first reveals an action believers do: they love God.

15. Being Conformed to the Image of Christ (8:29). The final response is mentioned in verse 29 where Paul states that believers are predestined to be conformed to Christ's image. The context of this statement appears to support both a present and an ultimately future experience of this conforming work in the lives of believers (similar to Paul's statement of the present transforming work of the Spirit in 2 Cor 3:18).⁴³

3. The Nature of Spiritual Fruit-Bearing in Romans 5–8

Now that the criteria have been used to identify fifteen righteous responses in these chapters, I must investigate each of the responses to determine whether Paul sees them as inevitable and necessary or as possible and potential.

Institute Press, 1979], 98) indicates that "those who are led" not only refers back to "those putting the deeds of the body to death," but it "catches up beyond this all the various descriptions of life in the Spirit of the preceding section (vv. 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11). It sums up the way in which the Christian allows his whole pattern of life to be determined by the Spirit (cf. Gal 5:18), who creates in him a new righteousness fulfilling the Law's demand."

⁴⁰James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1988), 453–54.

⁴¹Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:398–99.

⁴²James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus* (WUNT 2.48; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992), 265.

⁴³Several reasons support the present nature of the conforming ministry of God: (1) since the purpose of this conforming work is that Christ might become the firstborn among many brothers (8:29b), it would appear that the timing of the conforming ought to precede or at least coincide with that of Christ's designation as the firstborn "among many brothers," and this relationship appears to have already begun at salvation when believers become heirs and joint-heirs with Christ (8:17); (2) conformity to the image of Christ would seem to include the present suffering and obedience demanded of believers as they seek to follow in Christ's steps (Wright, "Romans," 602, and Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:432); (3) possession of the Spirit by Christians shows that they are being led as "sons of God" (8:9–14), which suggests that they are likewise being conformed to Christ's image (Michael Neary, "Creation and Pauline Soteriology," *ITQ* 50 [1983–84]: 22); and (4) Paul speaks of conformity to the image of Christ using the μορφή word group in several places where this conformity is the present experience of the believer (2 Cor 3:18; Gal 4:19; Rom 12:2; but see Phil 3:21 which refers to future conformity). Several disagree that there is any sort of present nature to this conforming ministry of God; they argue for an exclusively future nature of this ministry. See Byrne, "Sons of God" — "Seed of Abraham," 119; Moo, *Romans*, 535; and Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away* (WUNT 37; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1990), 11.

3.1. Boasting in Hope, Tribulations, and God (5:2, 3, 11)

In 5:1–3, Paul gives at least two results of justification by using the verbs ἔχομεν and καυχώμεθα. If having peace with God is seen as a certain and inevitable blessing of all believers (a point substantiated by the certainty of reconciliation for all believers in v. 10), the grammatically parallel boasting must likewise be understood as a certain and inevitable blessing. Likewise in verse 11 the independent participle καυχώμενοι⁴⁴ is parallel to the future salvation promised in verse 10.⁴⁵ That this blessing is clearly an ethical action is self-evident, for placing confidence in God is an activity.⁴⁶ Finally, there is no indication in the context that Paul is limiting the activity of boasting to a select group of Christians. Rather, this activity is one in which he participated⁴⁷ and in which he expects all who have been reconciled to participate.

3.2. Demonstrating Love for God (5:5)

Several arguments show that ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ is a certain response made by believers. First, Paul's use of the inclusive "we" throughout this paragraph (5:1–11) is evident in verse 5 with the use of ἡμῶν, which indicates the location of this love for God, namely, in the hearts of Paul and his readers. Second, the agent who brings the ability to have this love for God is the Holy Spirit, and Paul is quite adamant in his assertion that *all* believers enjoy the indwelling ministry of the Spirit (8:9). To argue for the potentiality of believers' love for God would suggest that the Spirit produces this fruit in only some of the lives he indwells. Third, Paul uses the perfect indicative ἐκκέχυται evidencing his certainty of this occurrence as well as the continuance of the results of this action in believers.⁴⁸

3.3. Reigning in Life (5:17b)

The benefit of reigning in life is reserved for those who are in Christ as opposed to those who are in Adam. Paul sets up a contrast in verse 17 by showing that if death reigns as a result of one man's (Adam) sin, then, much more, those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life as a result of one man's (Christ) obedience. Clearly there are only two groups discussed in this verse: those who are in Christ (believers) and those who are in Adam (unbelievers). Paul describes believers in Christ as those who have received "the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness."⁴⁹ Further, these recipients are the ones who "reign in life." Therefore, on the one hand, those who accept Christ by faith are in Christ; grace and righteousness are their possessions while they reign in life. On

⁴⁴C. F. D. Moule (*An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* [2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959], 179) and Wallace (*Beyond the Basics*, 653) support the independent use of the participle here.

⁴⁵Moo, *Romans*, 313.

⁴⁶K. Barrett ("Boasting [καυχᾶσθαι, κτλ.] in the Pauline Epistles," in *L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, Style et Conception du Ministère* [ed. A. Vanhoye; BETL 73; Leuven: University Press, 1986], 368) writes, "This . . . is the kind of theological theme that cannot be viewed as an abstraction; it cannot fail to issue in psychological and thus in ethical expression."

⁴⁷Paul uses the inclusive "we" throughout 5:1–11. See Wallace (*Beyond the Basics*, 397–98) for discussion of the inclusive "we."

⁴⁸This is the basic meaning of the perfect tense in which action occurs in the past with results that continue into the present. See BDF §340. A more nuanced description of the perfect can be found in Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek New Testament with Reference to Tense and Mood* (Studies in Biblical Greek 1; New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 245–59.

⁴⁹This description prevents the interpreter from arguing for universalism in the Adam-Christ comparison. Clearly, the effects of Adam's sin are universal, but the effects of Christ's obedience salvifically benefit only those who receive the grace and the gift of righteousness *by faith*. This has been Paul's argument from 1:16 to 4:25 (note especially 3:21–28). It is also clearly stated in Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8–9; 2 Thess 1:8–9. See Moo (*Romans*, 340–44) for further insights regarding this issue.

the other hand, those in Adam are excluded from this benefit. Paul's theological argument in verse 17 demonstrates the necessary result of reigning in life for those in Christ. His discussion leaves no room for a hypothetical group of believers who fail to reign.⁵⁰

3.4. Walking in Newness of Life (6:4)

In 6:4 Paul describes the believers' death with Christ by referring to their burial with Christ in baptism. He then uses a ἵνα clause to show the purpose-result of the believers' death with Christ: walking in newness of life.⁵¹ Since God is the unnamed agent of the passive συνετάφημεν, his purpose for this action of burial is that believers live obediently, and since God is the actor, the divine purpose also becomes the result. Other indications of the inevitability of this response include the following: (1) the comparison of the believers' walk with that of Christ's resurrection proves that believers are presently walking in newness of life just as surely as Christ has been raised from the dead;⁵² (2) the imperatives of 6:11 and 13 are based on the indicative that "living" in newness of life is a present reality for believers (6:3–10);⁵³ and (3) the use of first person plural verbs and pronouns indicates the inclusion of all believers in this description.

3.5. Being Ashamed of Past Sin (6:21)

When Paul contrasts the former lifestyles of the Roman believers (6:20–21) with their present ones (6:22), he speaks of what they were (imperfect ἦτε twice in v. 20) formerly (τότε, v. 21) and what they now (νῦν, v. 21, and νυνί, v. 22) have presently (present tense ἔχετε). One of their present possessions is an attitude of shame (present tense ἐπαισχύνεσθε) regarding their sinful actions practiced prior to salvation. Along with this attitudinal response, believers presently enjoy freedom from sin's power, enslavement to God, fruit leading to sanctification, and eternal life (all are listed in v. 22). The attitude along with the blessings are all presented by Paul as necessary conditions or responses of believers. It would be quite impossible to suggest that some are conditional while the others are certain, for there is nothing to suggest a conditional element in the statement. Paul simply states facts that are true of believers (vv. 21–22) as opposed to facts true of unbelievers (these facts include being enslaved to sin and being free from righteousness in v. 20).⁵⁴ In the argument of 6:1–7:6, Paul attaches the blessing of being freed from sin and the law to the believers' death with Christ (6:6, 7; 7:6).⁵⁵ It follows, then, that all of these elements characteristic of believers in 6:21–22 should be understood as results of their death with Christ, a death that is true of all who have been buried with him in baptism (6:4). So the shame

⁵⁰Joseph C. Dillow (*The Reign of the Servant Kings: A Study of Eternal Security and the Final Significance of Man* [Haysville, NC: Schoettle, 1992], 362–63) argues for such a group. He suggests that those who reign in life are Christians who have come to experience "abundant life" as opposed to (actual) Christians who experience "emptiness, depression, and spiritual impoverishment" (357) because they have failed to take advantage of their new life in the Spirit.

⁵¹See n. 16 for references to this function of ἵνα.

⁵²Holloway, ΠΕΡΙΠΑΤΕΩ as a Thematic Marker, 120.

⁵³In v. 11 Paul commands his readers to think about (consider) the fact that they are already dead to sin (something he had stated to be true in v. 2) and alive to God (ζῶντας τῷ θεῷ). Similarly, in v. 13 he commands them to present themselves to God as those who are (already) "alive from the dead" (ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας).

⁵⁴As is often his pattern in chapter 6, Paul is reiterating a point he has just made in 6:17–18 where he states that before salvation they (Roman Christians) were servants of sin (v. 17a) and now after salvation they are free from sin and enslaved to righteousness (v. 18).

⁵⁵Again, death with Christ is a Pauline expression used only of believers in 6:1–7:6.

that believers feel with regard to their former lives in Adam is a reality for all believers and represents an inevitable, ethical response to the ministry of the Spirit in their lives.

3.6. Producing Fruit Leading to Sanctification (6:22)

The previous paragraph cited four blessings of the new life mentioned by Paul in 6:22: freedom from sin, enslavement to God, having fruit unto sanctification, and eternal life. These are presented as certain consequences true of all believers. Thus, those who have died with Christ are producing fruit leading to sanctification.

3.7. Bearing Fruit to God (7:4)

Paul concludes (ὥστε) his marriage analogy in 7:4 by stating that believers have died to the law through the body of Christ for the purpose of being united with him (εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς ἑτέρῳ).⁵⁶ Therefore, everyone who has died to the law and been united with him is included in this description. Paul is quite clear (he uses the purpose-result ἵνα as he did in 6:4) that the activity of bearing fruit to God is necessarily true for all believers in that he includes his fellow Christians (ἀδελφοί) and himself as those who bear fruit.⁵⁷

3.8. Serving in Newness of the Spirit (7:6)

Two factors support understanding the phrase “serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter” as a righteous response necessarily true of all believers. First, Paul uses a result infinitive (ὥστε δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς)⁵⁸ to explain what is true for all believers who have been released from the law.⁵⁹ Second, Paul makes a clear connection to the New Covenant and the blessings resulting from it in the lives of believers.⁶⁰ Ezekiel 36:26–27 indicates that the ministry of the Spirit in the New Covenant will result in the possession of a new heart and in the practice of obedience to God’s law. Consequently, Christians will surely respond in obedience because of the imprint made by the Spirit on the heart of all who are indwelt by him.

⁵⁶Paul treats “death to the law” in 7:4 in the same way as “death to sin” in 6:2–4 by suggesting that it occurs in the believer’s life as a result of death with Christ. When Paul states that death to the law occurs “through the body of Christ,” he is speaking of Christ’s death, and he clearly connects the believer to Christ’s death in 6:2–6. Thus, when the believer is said to die to the law through the body of Christ, he dies to the law by virtue of his death with Christ in his salvation.

⁵⁷Throughout this entire section of his argument (6:15–7:4a) Paul has been using second person plural verbs and pronouns, yet he changes to first person plural verbs and pronouns beginning with καρποφορήσωμεν at the end of 7:4 and continues this trend through verse 6. Though this does not prove that he does not consider the truth of 6:15–7:4a to apply to himself while he considers 7:4b–6 to apply to himself (particularly because he used first person verbs and pronouns in 6:1–14, which discusses many of the same ideas as 6:15–7:4a), it at least demonstrates that he includes himself in the fruit-bearing response. See Pratt, “The Relationship between Justification and Sanctification in Romans 5–8,” 218.

⁵⁸All grammars agree that the formula ὥστε + infinitive indicates result.

⁵⁹The contrast Paul makes between the former days prior to salvation spoken of in 7:5 and the present (νυνί) of the new life in Christ in 7:6 is reminiscent of the same point he makes in 6:17–18 and 6:20–22.

⁶⁰Many have written on the connection of 7:6 to 2 Cor 3:6 and the reference of these passages to the New Covenant promises of the OT. See A. Feuillet, “Les attaches bibliques des antithèses Pauliniennes dans la Première Partie de L’Épître aux Romains (1–8),” in *Mélanges Bibliques en Hommage au R. P. Béda Rigaux* (ed. Albert Descamps and André de Halleux; Gembloux: Duculot, 1970), 342–45; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993), 323, 460; Bernardin Schneider, “The Meaning of St. Paul’s Antithesis ‘The Letter and the Spirit,’” *CBQ* 15 (1953): 201–7; and Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 197–98.

3.9. Walking according to the Spirit (8:4)

The first indication of the necessity of this righteous response in 8:4 is revealed by the use of the purpose-result ἵνα; God's power in contrast to the weakness of the law produces obedience to the law in all Christians. Second, when Paul states that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us (ἡμῖν) in 8:4a, he identifies both himself and his readers as the recipients of this blessing. Third, Paul further defines ἡμῖν in 8:4b with the substantival participle τοῖς περιπατοῦσιν with both a negative and positive description: believers do *not* walk according to the flesh but *do* walk according to the Spirit.⁶¹ This contrast between “flesh”-people and “Spirit”-people continues through verse 11. On the one hand, fleshly people set their minds on the things of the flesh (v. 5); their thinking results in death (v. 6); their thinking is in antagonism to God because it is not capable of submitting to him (v. 7); and they are not able to please God (v. 8). On the other hand, spiritual people set their minds on the things of the Spirit (v. 5); their thinking results in life and peace (v. 6); the Spirit indwells them (vv. 9b, 10a, 11a, 11c); the Spirit conveys resurrection life to them (v. 10c); and their mortal bodies will be made alive in the future (v. 11). Judging from the absolute nature of the contrasts made between those in the flesh and those in the Spirit in verses 5–11, believers enjoy the ministry of the Spirit including all of the blessings described in these verses. Hence, those who walk according to the Spirit are the same as those who are indwelt by the Spirit (to use but one of the many characteristics given in the passage).

3.10. Minding the Things of the Spirit (8:5)

The context identifies the individuals mentioned in 8:5. Those who are in the Spirit, a participial phrase that differs from that of the preceding verse only in the verbal used (ὄντες rather than περιπατοῦσιν), mind the things of the Spirit. As already shown in the previous paragraph, the contrast between the Spirit and flesh in 8:4–11 indicates a solid distinction between these two groups of people. Clearly, all who mind the things of the Spirit are believers, who inevitably obey the Spirit, in contrast to unbelievers, who inevitably obey the promptings of the flesh.

3.11. Being Led by the Spirit (8:14)

The interpretation of οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ in 8:14b has a direct effect upon whether ὅσοι πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται is conditional or certain since this latter phrase is a relative clause modifying οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ.⁶² There are two reasons for taking οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ as a reference to all believers showing that being led by the Spirit is an inevitable response. First, Paul gives the statement of verse 14 as the support (γάρ) for

⁶¹There are three reasons for understanding this participle in its typical descriptive sense rather than in a conditional sense (as does Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 488). First, the aorist passive πληρωθῆναι indicates that God through Christ has fulfilled the requirement of the law in Christians; he is the main actor. Second, the purpose-result ἵνα indicates that God's purpose of seeing the law fulfilled in Christians will certainly occur. Third, the typical usage of articular participles is to modify the noun to which they are related (Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 104).

⁶²There are some who would argue that υἱοὶ θεοῦ can be defined as referring to one of two classes of believers (in this case, a more privileged, spiritual group). They suggest that this better class is not attained until one “has become loyally submissive to the operation of the Spirit” (F. Godet, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [trans. A. Cusin; translation revised by Talbot W. Chambers; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956], 309). Ken Yates (“‘Sons of God’ and the Road to Grace,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 19 [2006]: 31–32) states a similar view: “The child of God then has the option to be led by the Spirit and present his body for obedience. He can then claim the title of mature ‘son.’” Dillow (*The Reign of the Servant Kings*, 368–71) also follows this line of reasoning. This methodological scheme of interpreting Paul's indicative statements through the lens of the imperative (e.g., Dillow, 369, states, “Those Christians who are ‘putting to death the deeds of the body’ [in obedience to the command of v. 13] are sons. . .”) demands attention and refutation, but that will have to be the focus of another essay.

the imperative of verse 13; if being a son is only a possibility, then certain hope in the Spirit's ability to aid in one's obedience to the command is unavailable for any believer who reads these verses. Second, the possession of the Spirit is given as a proof of sonship in verse 15 (γὰρ . . . ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας), and all genuine believers have received the Spirit according to verse 9. So since "sons of God" describes all believers, who have received the Spirit, being led by the Spirit is an inescapable occurrence for all believers.

3.12. Praying for God's Help (8:15)

In 8:15, Paul relates that those who have received the Spirit of adoption call out to God for help. As stated in the preceding paragraph, all believers have received the Spirit of adoption (especially since Paul states [in v. 9] that all believers receive the Spirit). Thus, just as it is certain that all believers receive the Spirit (vv. 9 and 15), it is also certain that all believers cry out to God for help.⁶³

3.13. Groaning for Bodily Redemption (8:23)

Paul leaves little doubt that his statement about believers in 8:23 should be taken in no other way than as a description necessarily true of all believers. Not only does he include himself in this account (ἡμεῖς), but he also gives indications in this verse that he is speaking of all believers. He states that all who have the firstfruits of the Spirit (τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος) groan to the Lord for the redemption of their bodies. Earlier in this chapter Paul had shown that all believers enjoy the indwelling ministry of the Spirit (8:9); so all Christians who have the Spirit will also groan. This groan of anticipation flows from the believer's relationship with Christ. Even though all believers enjoy present adoption (8:15), they long for future adoption (8:23). This desire, which prompts a specific act (groaning), is an unavoidable response prompted by the Spirit.

3.14. Expressing Love for God (8:28)

The parallel participial clauses of 8:28 serve as the indirect objects of συνεργεῖ, identifying those for whom God works all things. Both clauses speak of the same group of people: believers ("those called according to his purpose"). Those who have been called (8:30 indicates that all believers are included in "those called") are also people who love God. Loving God is an inevitable and certain reality for these who have been called. To suggest that some Christians might not love God would require the interpreter to admit that some Christians might not have been called.

3.15. Being Conformed to the Image of Christ (8:29)

In the chain of five aorist verbs detailing the outworking of God's purpose in the lives of believers (8:29–30), Paul provides two explanatory phrases with reference to the second of these verbs (προώρισεν). The first of these phrases is of particular importance here ("conformed to the image of His Son"). That Paul considers conformity to be an absolute certainty is indicated by two factors. First, the fivefold linkage of verbs is presented as part of God's plan, which He is carrying forward to fruition and which culminates in the glorification of all believers.⁶⁴ Second, the lexical meaning of προώρισεν retains a

⁶³C. E. B. Cranfield ("Paul's Teaching on Sanctification," *RefR* 48 [1995]: 222) provides a helpful comment in this regard: "If we are Christians at all, we do this, though it may be only very feebly, very falteringly, and with very limited comprehension of what we are doing. The Holy Spirit's continuing work of sanctification makes us do it more and more understandingly, sincerely, confidently, humbly."

⁶⁴Dunn (*Romans 1–8*, 482) writes, "Here Paul obviously means to embrace the whole sweep of time and history, from beginning to end, within the scope of these two verses (προ- . . . ἐδόξασεν)."

strong determinative flavor.⁶⁵ Hence, with God pictured as the determining will behind the believers' conformity to Christ, it is clear that this transforming work within the lives of believers will certainly occur.

3.16. Summary

The investigation of the fifteen responses indicates contextual evidence that supports each of the fifteen as a necessary outcome of justification. While this data clearly confirms the thesis of this essay, some may not agree with either the inclusion or assessment of *every* one of these responses. Three responses might be questioned on the basis of grammatical decisions,⁶⁶ and six other responses might be rendered suspect for theological reasons.⁶⁷ Six of these responses, however, remain particularly unambiguous in their support of the thesis that fruit-bearing inevitably flows from justification: boasting in hope, tribulations and God (5:2, 3, 11); being ashamed of past sin (6:21), bearing fruit to God (7:4), serving in newness of the Spirit (7:6), groaning for bodily redemption (8:23), and expressing love for God (8:28).⁶⁸

4. Conclusion

Paul's argument in Romans 5–8 confirms the truth that fruit-bearing necessarily and inevitably flows from justification. By suggesting specific criteria and then using those criteria to sift through Paul's statements in Romans 5–8, fifteen righteous responses were identified. After investigating each of these responses, Scripture shows that spiritual fruit-bearing by believers is inescapable and certain. Nothing in these four chapters suggests that a second work of grace or a crisis experience of surrender or dedication is required to begin the process of fruit-bearing in the life of the believer. In fact, quite the opposite appears to be the case: those whom God justifies, he also transforms.

Finally, permit me to offer some final points of clarification and reflection:

1. While Paul clearly speaks in regard to the necessity of fruit-bearing in the lives of the justified, he never suggests that this growth in righteous living is completed or perfected in the earthly existence of the believer. Indeed, he gives numerous imperatives to believers and continually calls them to obedience and growth.

⁶⁵Moo, *Romans*, 534, explains that the verb προώρισεν adds the preposition πρό to the verb ὀρίζω, which typically means “to appoint” or “to determine.” The idea of the verb is “to determine beforehand,” which is substantiated by its usage in various NT contexts such as its relation to the crucifixion (Acts 4:28), to the “wisdom” now manifested in Christ (1 Cor 2:7), and to believers (Eph 1:5, 11). The meaning of πρό relates to the idea of “before the foundation of the world” as shown in Eph 1:4–5.

⁶⁶(1) The suggestion that the “love of God” (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ) is a plenary genitive in 5:5 could be understood as merely subjective and therefore not demonstrative of a righteous response. (2) Viewing the reign in life (5:17b) as both a present and future occurrence could be interpreted as referring only to the future experience of the believer. (3) Paul could very well be speaking of conformity to the image of Christ in 8:29 as a purely future event.

⁶⁷Wesleyan, Chaferian, and Keswick interpreters who disagree with my conclusions would argue that the contrasts between “the enslaved” and “the freed” in chapter 6 and the differences between “the spiritual” and “the fleshly” in chapter 8 are not intended to distinguish between believers and unbelievers but are rather given to describe two groups of believers: the obedient and the disobedient. This group of disputed responses includes the following: walking in newness of life (6:4), producing fruit leading to sanctification (6:22), walking according to the Spirit (8:4), minding the things of the Spirit (8:5), being led by the Spirit (8:14), and praying for God's help (8:15).

⁶⁸These are unambiguous particularly because no significant theological or grammatical arguments can be raised against them.

2. Romans 5–8 is not the only section of Pauline literature advocating that fruit-bearing is a necessary result of justification. I suggest that 1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 3:18; 5:16; 9:8; Eph 2:10; Phil 1:6; 2:13; and Tit 2:14 all provide further proof that Paul is consistent in his support of this truth.

3. In the larger enterprise of New Testament theology, the findings of this essay help to substantiate the doctrine of perseverance, that is, “[believers] continue in faith, love, and holiness because God freely save[s] them once for all.”⁶⁹ The many statements of Jesus regarding the necessity of fruit-bearing (e.g., Matt 13:23; Luke 6:43–45) agree with Paul. In the same way Peter (1 Pet 1:6, 8; 2 Pet 1:5–11), John (1 John 2:3–6; 3:11–18), and James (Jas 2:17, 20, 24) do as well.

4. A significant ramification of this essay is that Paul denies any teaching that would advocate two classes of Christians (e.g., the “spiritual” vs. the “fleshly”). While we all observe various levels or degrees of maturity and growth in the experience of believers, Paul gives no indication of distinct classes of Christians, and he certainly does not advocate certain types of decisions that would help to move a Christian out of one class into another.

5. This essay seeks to advocate the view that *God* initiates and brings forth fruit in the believer’s life. He does this through various means including his Word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit within the believer. The challenge remains for us who live at the “end of the ages” (1 Cor 10:11) to submit obediently to his gracious working in us (Phil 2:12–13).

While the divine-human connection in the work of Christian fruit-bearing certainly constitutes a mystery similar to others we find in Scripture,⁷⁰ we dare not stumble into the error of attaching too much value to the human part of the equation, tumbling toward perfectionism. Nor can we afford to overemphasize the divine work in our growth by advocating a type of quietism.⁷¹ No, a challenging yet theologically informed balance is required. May God give us strength to be rightly engaged in the pursuit of holiness, and may he be praised for completing what he graciously begins in the life of the believer.

⁶⁹Robert A. Peterson, “Preservation, Perseverance, Assurance, and Apostasy,” *Presb* 22 (1996): 33.

⁷⁰Paul provides evidence of the mystery of human and divine participation in fruit-bearing in 1 Cor 15:10 (ESV): “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”

⁷¹I am using this term in the sense of passively sitting back and doing nothing while expecting God to do all the work in one’s life.