

Old Letters and New Spirits

Romans 7:4-6

⁴Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. ⁵For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were *aroused* by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. ⁶But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

While we were under Law (obedience by obligation), sin just kept bearing fruit for death instead of God. Service under Law was simple matter engagement of the will- I must serve God, whether or not my heart is in it. Now that we are free from Law and joined to Christ by the Spirit, our service to God can actually bears fruit for Him. Service in the Spirit serves from a different source- its source is the water of life!

The oldness of the letter means living in the past, under old rules, regulations, formulas, and obligations. The letter leads to joyless service, and brings about death spiritually.

The newness of letter means living in a glorious present, receiving real-time guidance, and empowered obedience. The Spirit gives inspiration and joy in our work for God, which brings about spiritual life!

John 13:1-8, 12-17

13 Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

Serving in the Spirit begins with loving like Jesus- unending love, to the very end, whether it is reciprocated or not.

² During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, to betray Him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, ⁴ *got up from supper, and *laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself.

Serving in the Spirit means laying aside all rights and privileges we might assert, and taking the lowest place.

⁵ Then He *poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. ⁶ So He *came to Simon Peter. He *said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." **(Exchange with Peter)**

¹² So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined *at the table* again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³ You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for *so* I am. ¹⁴ If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor *is* one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.

What had He done *to* them? He had left them without excuse, commissioned as servants to all of mankind. If the highest of all became the lowest of all and served, then there cannot be a living person that we should not serve.

¹⁷ If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

Knowledge alone is not enough- serving in the Spirit is real, practical, tangible service- becoming the hands of Christ. Being full of the Spirit of Christ means being full of His nature, joyfully serving others for His glory!