"led by the Spirit" / "sons of God" (Romans 8:14)

Lesson 1 Study Overview by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

This study overview covers Lesson 1 of Keith Blades' series on the doctrine of being led by the Spirit as sons of God, rooted in Romans 8:14. This opening lesson provides the essential orientation and frame of reference for understanding the Father-son relationship as the capstone component of the believer's sanctified position in Christ. Keith establishes the two-component structure of sanctification—first revealed through the New Covenant and pre-described in Paul's gospel (Romans 1:1–5)—and shows how Justification (Romans 1:16–5:21) and the two aspects of Sanctification (Romans 6:1–8:39) together constitute the full measure of what God delivers to every believer in the Dispensation of Grace. The lesson places particular emphasis on the New Covenant's correlation to the Old Testament and the natural, God-designed segue from Component 1 into Component 2's teaching on being sons of God.

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Lesson at a Glance

Lesson	Core Focus
Lesson 1	Establishing the frame of reference for being sons of God — the New Covenant's two-component sanctification structure, the correlation of Justification and Sanctification, and the natural segue from Romans 8:13 into the doctrine of adoption as sons (8:14–5)

Lesson Summaries

L1

From Sanctification to Being Sons of God *Building the Frame of Reference from the New Covenant's Foundation*

- The doctrine of our sanctified position in Christ has two distinct, sequential components — not one.

Component 1 of Sanctification (Romans 6:1–8:13) — Being Able to Live Unto God

- Component 1 establishes the believer's capacity to cease living unto sin and to actively live unto God in righteousness, by walking after the Spirit rather

than the flesh.

- Grounded in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which placed the believer into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection — making the believer dead to sin and alive unto God (Romans 6:1–4).
- Conclusion of Component 1: believers are debtors not to the flesh; those who walk after the Spirit functionally live; those who walk after the flesh functionally die (Romans 8:12–13).
- The law is rendered useless as a mechanism for putting this position into practice — it is the Spirit, not the law, that enables functional holy living.

The New Covenant Connection — Romans 1:4 and the "spirit of holiness"

- Paul's gospel (Romans 1:1–5) concerns God's Son, "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).
  - "spirit of holiness" (small 's') is not a reference to the Holy Spirit — it refers to the character and standard of holiness, much as "spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10) refers to the testimony that defines prophecy.
  - The New Covenant is the specific document that embodies this "spirit of holiness" — it is the Old Testament covenant through which God pre-described the holy standing and holy living He would produce in its beneficiaries.
- The New Covenant, promised through the prophets (Romans 1:2), pre-described a two-component structure for the sanctification it would deliver to its beneficiaries.
  - The first component: beneficiaries would be given the capacity to live unto God and not unto sin.
  - The second component: beneficiaries would be given the adoption of sons — a Father-son relationship with God as Father.
  - Believers in the Dispensation of Grace are BENEFICIARIES of the New Covenant — not its direct recipients (Israel is the covenantal party). They receive what Christ's fulfillment of the New Covenant supplies.

Justification and Sanctification — The Full Scope of Paul's Gospel

- Justification (Romans 1:16–5:21): saves the believer from the debt and penalty of sin — eternal life with God; atonement established everlastingly.
- Sanctification (Romans 6:1–8:39): saves the believer from the domination of sin — functional life unto God; the capacity to bring forth fruit unto holiness.
  - These two together constitute the full "salvation" delivered by Paul's gospel and correspond precisely to what the New Covenant pre-described as its two sanctifying benefits.
  - When a person trusts Christ, God justifies them unto eternal life AND sanctifies them unto functional life simultaneously — both are gifts of grace at the moment of faith.

Component 2 of Sanctification (Romans 8:14–8:39) — The Adoption of Sons (The Capstone)

- Having concluded Component 1 in 8:12–13, Paul transitions immediately in 8:14–15 to the second component — being sons of God — without breaking his train of thought.
- The natural question arising at the end of verse 13 ("What edification guides me as I walk after the Spirit?") is answered directly by the reality of being sons of God.
  - "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:14–15).
  - Being sons of God is not a separate doctrine from sanctification — it is its crowning capstone. The first component lays the foundation; the second

completes and glorifies the whole.

- Verses 14 and 15 expect the reader to already possess a working frame of reference for being sons of God — derived from understanding the New Covenant's pre-description and Paul's gospel in Romans 1:1–5.
  - The Father–son relationship demands its own edification: the Father–son relationship creates the context and expectation for everything that follows in Romans 8:16–39.
  - The believer must cry "Abba, Father" (verse 15) before meaningfully engaging the rest of the chapter — the balance of chapter 8 is not designed to produce the Father-son relationship but to build upon it.

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

The New Covenant as the "spirit of holiness"

Keith teaches that the phrase "spirit of holiness" in Romans 1:4 does not refer to the Holy Spirit but to the New Covenant itself — the document that defines and embodies the holiness God produces in those who become its beneficiaries. Just as "the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10) refers to the testimony/character that defines prophecy, "spirit of holiness" refers to the standard and character of holiness that the New Covenant describes. It is this covenant, promised through Israel's prophets, that pre-revealed the two-component structure of sanctification Paul's gospel delivers. The New Covenant is therefore the Old Testament doctrinal foundation from which believers in the Dispensation of Grace understand what their holiness consists of.

Beneficiaries vs. Recipients of the New Covenant

Israel is the direct covenantal recipient of the New Covenant (promised and made with Israel through the prophets). Believers in the Dispensation of Grace are BENEFICIARIES — they receive the benefits that Christ's fulfillment of the New Covenant provides (justification unto eternal life and sanctification unto functional life, including being sons of God), even though the covenant itself was not made with them directly. This distinction is critical: Paul's gospel delivers to Gentile believers the same two components of holiness described by the New Covenant, not because they are under the covenant, but because they benefit from Christ's satisfaction of it.

Two Components of Sanctification — Sequential, Not Optional

Keith stresses that sanctification is not a single undifferentiated doctrine but consists of two distinct, sequential components. Component 1 (Romans 6:1–8:13) gives the believer the capacity to live unto God rather than unto sin by virtue of their position in Christ (death, burial, resurrection), activated by walking after the Spirit. Component 2 (Romans 8:14–8:39) gives the believer the Father–son relationship and the edification for living unto God as a son. The first component must precede the second: you must first know how to live unto God before you can engage in the son's edification for doing so. Neither component is complete without the other.

Being Sons of God — The Capstone of Sanctification

Being sons of God (Component 2) is not a doctrine separate from or added onto sanctification — it is its capstone. Keith uses the imagery of a crown: every component of our sanctified position in Christ is glorious in itself, and collectively they form a complete crown of holiness. The Father-son relationship is the stone that crowns and completes the structure. Because being sons of God is the capstone, it cannot be properly understood or appreciated apart from the foundation laid in Component 1. Equally, Component 1 is incomplete without the Father-son relationship that fulfills and crowns it. Together, Justification and Sanctification (both components) constitute the full measure of what Paul's gospel delivers to every believer in this dispensation.

Justification and Sanctification — Two Kinds of Salvation

Keith explains that when a person trusts Christ, God simultaneously delivers two kinds of salvation. Justification saves from the debt and penalty of sin, granting eternal life and everlasting atonement (Romans 1:16–5:21). Sanctification saves from the domination and practice of sin, granting functional life unto God and the capacity to bring forth fruit of righteousness (Romans 6:1–8:39). These are not sequential stages of Christian growth but simultaneous gifts of grace at the moment of faith. Both are pre-described by the New Covenant and together they constitute the totality of what the "spirit of holiness" — the New Covenant — was designed to produce in its beneficiaries.

Key Scripture References

Romans 1:1–5	Paul's gospel introduction — the spirit of holiness, the New Covenant's two-component structure pre-described, and the foundation for understanding being sons of God
Romans 1:4	Declared Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness — the New Covenant as the defining document of holy living (small 's' spirit, not the Holy Spirit)
Romans 1:16–5:21	Scope of Justification: from the debt and penalty of sin unto eternal life — Component 1 of Paul's gospel benefit
Romans 6:1	Baptism of the Spirit into Christ's death, burial, and resurrection — the positional foundation of sanctification Component 1
Romans 6:1–8:13	Full scope of Sanctification Component 1: capacity to live unto God, not unto sin; walking after the Spirit, not the flesh
Romans 8:12–13	Conclusion of Component 1: debtors not to the flesh; walking after the Spirit = functional life; walking after the flesh = functional death
Romans 8:14–15	Opening of Component 2: led by the Spirit = sons of God; received spirit of adoption (not bondage); cry Abba, Father
Romans 8:16–39	Balance of Component 2: the full edification and expectation of living as sons of God — presupposes the frame of reference established in 8:14–15
Revelation 19:10	The spirit of prophecy — parallel construction used by Keith to clarify "spirit of holiness" as a character/standard, not a person