

Romans 8:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Analysis

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (hosoi pneumatī theou agontai, houtoi huioi theou eisin)—Agō ("led") is present passive: being led is ongoing, not once-for-all. This is not mechanical control but willing guidance—sheep following the Shepherd (John 10:4, 27). The Spirit leads through Scripture, providence, conscience renewed by grace, and the church's counsel. Huioi theou ("sons of God") indicates mature sonship with inheritance rights, not tekna (children) of verse 16.

Being "led by the Spirit" is the identifying mark of authentic sonship. This counters both presumption (claiming sonship without Spirit-led living) and despair (questioning sonship despite Spirit's evident work). The Spirit's leading isn't mystical impressions divorced from Scripture but illuminated understanding and empowered application of God's Word. Those habitually resisting the Spirit's conviction prove they lack the new nature that characterizes God's sons.

Historical Context

The contrast between slavery and sonship was vivid in Roman culture. Slaves obeyed from fear; sons from filial love and anticipation of inheritance. The Spirit's leading transforms the Christian life from external compulsion to internal delight—the "expulsive power of a new affection" (Thomas Chalmers).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do you discern the Spirit's leading in daily decisions—what role does Scripture play?
2. What's the difference between being "led by the Spirit" and claiming direct revelations apart from Scripture?
3. How does the Spirit's leading relate to sanctification—growth in Christlikeness?

Interlinear Text

ὅσοι	γὰρ	πνεύματι	θεοῦ	ἄγονται	οὗτοι	εἰσιν	υἱοὶ
as many as	For	by the Spirit	of God	are led	they	are	the sons
G3745	G1063	G4151	G2316	G71	G3778	G1526	G5207

θεοῦ
of God
G2316

Additional Cross-References

John 1:12 (References God): But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Galatians 5:18 (Spirit): But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Galatians 3:26 (References God): For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 143:10 (Spirit): Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

Galatians 5:16 (Spirit): This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Revelation 21:7 (References God): He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

1 John 3:1 (References God): Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Romans 8:5 (Spirit): For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 6:18 (Parallel theme): And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Galatians 4:6 (Spirit): And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.