

Romans 8:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Analysis

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (auto to pneuma summaturei tō pneumati hēmōn hoti esmen tekna theou)—Summaturei means "testifies together with," indicating two witnesses: God's Spirit and our regenerated human spirit. This isn't the Spirit whispering audibly but the internal conviction produced by the Spirit's work—love for God (1 John 4:19), hatred of sin (Psalm 97:10), delight in Scripture (Psalm 119:97), and the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

Tekna theou ("children of God") emphasizes relationship, not just legal status (huioi in v. 14). The Spirit's witness is subjective certainty grounded in objective truth—not baseless emotionalism but confidence rooted in Spirit-wrought evidences. This is the "full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:22), the Spirit enabling believers to know they are known (Galatians 4:9), loved, and secure in Christ.

Historical Context

Medieval Catholicism discouraged personal assurance, teaching that claiming certainty of salvation was presumption. The Reformers recovered biblical assurance, teaching that while some believers struggle with doubt, the Spirit's witness provides genuine certainty. The Westminster Confession (18.2) affirms believers "may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace."

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish the Spirit's witness from mere wishful thinking or self-deception?
2. What specific evidences does the Spirit use to assure your heart of adoption?
3. How should pastors help struggling believers who lack assurance without promoting presumption?

Interlinear Text

αὐτὸ	τὸ	πινεύματι	συμμαρτυρεῖ	τῷ	πινεύματι	ἡμῶν	ὅτι
itself	G3588	The Spirit	beareth witness	G3588	The Spirit	with our	that
6846		G4151		G4828		G2257	G3754

ἐσμὲν	τέκνα	θεοῦ
we are	the children	of God
G2070	G5043	G2316

Additional Cross-References

1 John 4:13 (Spirit): Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

2 Corinthians 1:22 (Spirit): Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

2 Corinthians 5:5 (Spirit): Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13 (Spirit): In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

Romans 8:26 (Spirit): Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Ephesians 4:30 (Spirit): And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

2 Corinthians 1:12 (Witness): For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

1 John 5:10 (Witness): He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

Romans 8:23 (Spirit): And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.