

Spirit Within

Romans 8:5-15



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FOCAL Read Responsively Romans 8:5-15 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. **(6) For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace.** (7) Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (8) So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. **(9) But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.** (10) And if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness. (11) But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. **(12) Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. (13) For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.** (14) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. **(15) 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.**

Last week we talked about **love** and what true love is. Not only that, we talked about *who alone* can exercise the love of God. Only those who have been *born again* can love in a way that is pleasing to God. Why? Because only those who have been *born again* have God the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Only those who are born again are *led by the Spirit of God*.

What was the radical difference between the **disciples of John the Baptist** and the **disciples of Jesus Christ**?

When John began his earthly ministry many began to flock to him to be baptized. Some stayed with him – even after their baptism – and became his *disciples*. The disciples of John fasted (went without food for religious reasons) frequently (**Matthew 9:14**) but the disciples of Christ *did not fast at all*. This caused some concern among John's disciples, so much so that they sent a delegation to Jesus to ask Him why His disciples weren't fasting. Our Lord answered simply, **“How can they fast while the Bridegroom is with them? There is coming a day when I will be gone and they will fast. But now the Bridegroom is with His Bride – this is a time of joy, not sorrow”**. John the Baptist ministered and proclaimed the *Coming Christ*, therefore his disciples fasted. Jesus *Christ is the Christ now here*, and therefore His disciples did not fast. The disciples do what their Master *is*. John was not the Bridegroom, but the herald of the Coming Bridegroom. His ministry was a calling to repentance, a purifying, a waning – therefore his disciples fasted.

The disciple does as his Master bids. The disciple reflects the desires of his Lord.

Before you were saved by faith in Jesus Christ you were **disciples of the flesh**. You marched to the decree of Lord Satan and Master World. Your mind was on the *things of the flesh*, not on the things of God. You perceived all things differently.

FOCAL Romans 8:5 For **they that are after the flesh do mind¹ the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.**

Those who are after the flesh – the unbeliever or the backslidden believer - “mind” the things of the flesh. They are in obedience to the flesh. They focus on the flesh, on pleasure, on the things of this world, on satisfying self above all else. When I was growing up my mother used to say, “Now mind me, David”. What she meant by that was to *pay attention and obey her directions*. If I failed to “mind” my mother then it was certain that a less desirable thing would come into my life. My failure to obey would cause me to hurt myself, or else I would find myself a recipient of mom's discipline. While I was her baby in her house I was to “mind” her. Once I left her house and went out into the world on my own I no longer “minded” her. I was under other controlling forces.

We all “mind” someone or something. We either “mind” the things of this world or we “mind” the Lord of all. We either “mind” fleshly things or we “mind” the weightier things of the Holy Spirit. John's disciples had to decrease, because John – though a great prophet – was but a man. The disciples of Jesus Christ continue on for our Lord and Master is no mere Man, but He is God incarnate, God in the flesh, God come to live and walk

¹ Strongs: G5426, 5426 phroneo fron-eh'-o from 5424; to exercise the mind, i.e. entertain or have a sentiment or opinion; by implication, to be (mentally) disposed (more or less earnestly in a certain direction); intensively, to interest oneself in (with concern or obedience)--set the affection on, (be) care(-ful), (be like-, + be of one, + be of the same, + let this) mind(-ed), regard, savour, think.

among us. It is this One True God Who, prior to ascending to Heaven, promised to give His people the Indwelling Spirit. The Master is in Heaven, but sent another Master to guide us in His place. We who are Christ's are called to the Spirit Filled life. We have been called away from the world – **this world is not my home, I'm just passing through.**

Why should I avoid the **carnal or fleshy mind**?

1. The Carnal Mind Is Unprofitable, Because It Stands AGAINST God

FOCAL Romans 8:5-8 **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. (6) For to be carnally minded² [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace. (7) Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (8) So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.**

The carnal or *fleshy mind* is terribly unprofitable. Why? Because it is *associated with death*. If you remember, last week we defined “**death**” as **separation from God**. In our society when we say “death”, we are talking about the physical body losing its animation or its soul.. Yet the

2 4561 sarx sarx probably from the base of 4563; flesh (as stripped of the skin), i.e. (strictly) the meat of an animal (as food), or (by extension) the body (as opposed to the soul (or spirit), or as the symbol of what is external, or as the means of kindred), or (by implication) human nature (with its frailties (physically or morally) and passions), or (specially), a human being (as such):--carnal(-ly, + -ly minded), flesh(-ly). + Strongs: G5427 5427 phronema from'-ay-mah from 5426; (mental) inclination or purpose:--(be, + be carnally, + be spiritually) mind(-ed).

Scripture is very clear that “death” - insofar as God is concerned – is **separation from Him**. This is emphasized in our above passages by way of contrast. In verse 5 we read: **For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh**. Those who are saved by faith in Christ know that:

John 4:24 God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth.

We cannot worship God and worship the flesh at the same time. The Christian is called to worship God, to **worship Him in Spirit and in truth**. He fills us with His power. He enables us by His Spirit. He feeds us by His Word. The flesh cannot feed, but it can demand and consume. **They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.**

Illustrate *A selfish person is never satisfied*. He is like a bug bite that will not go away. Have you ever had such a bite? I picked up several bug bites while on mission in Belize that itched and itched. I scratched those things but, in time, they became raw and painful. The itch could not be satisfied. The best thing for me to do was to *leave it alone* and let it itch. In time the unscratched bites healed over.

They that are in the flesh do mind the things of the flesh. The fleshly person, **dead in his trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), walks according to the directions of the world and of its lord Satan (Ephesians 2:2)**. The flesh is temporal, the flesh is sin based, the flesh is

greedy – and obedience to the selfishness of the flesh is a sign of those who are separated from God. In verse 6 we read **to be carnally or fleshly minded is death**. Focus on the flesh is no-focus on God. The more you focus on the flesh and on selfishness, the *farther you draw from life*. In the Book of Galatians we are told:

Galatians 5:16-17 [This] I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (17) For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

There is a war going on between **the flesh and the Spirit**. The flesh drives toward selfishness, toward selfish things, toward self centered things. The flesh is always **all about me** – and if I dwell in the flesh I dwell in the temporary. The graveyard across from our Church is filled with tombstones. Many of the people in that graveyard left no more legacy than that tombstone, for they lived their lives *focused on themselves* and not on God. Read further in our focal text. **“Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”**. The carnal or *fleshly, selfish mind is always the enemy of God*. **To be carnally minded is death**. If you are saved, you are saved to be focused on a life like Christ's. You are no longer God's enemies, but His friends, no longer strangers but are now *sons of God*.

God calls His people to be like He is, not like the world is. God calls His people to productive thinking and productive production.

FOCAL Romans 8:7-8 Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (8) So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

The **carnal or fleshly mind** is useless insofar as God is concerned for **it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be**. What is this text talking about? What is the **Law of God** referring to?

Prior to your accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord you were under the lordship of the world and under the lordship of Satan. You did as your peers and the prince of darkness recommended, all the while satisfying your flesh. *God set over the world Ten Commandments*, each one given to convict of sin. God set over the world a Law that it continually broke. **The carnal or fleshly mind is at war with God, and cannot be subject to His Law**. The Law given through Moses was given to draw man to Christ.

Galatians 3:24-25 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (25) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

If you do not surrender your lives to Christ, do not trust Him as Savior and Lord, you are yet under that schoolmaster. Yet here's the problem: though under the

schoolmaster, you are **unable to live according to its directions**. The Mosaic Law was given to show us the *utter impossibility of saving ourselves*. The Mosaic Law was given to show us that *we are, at heart and in our minds, enemies of God*. Our minds were bound to the flesh, bound to satisfying ourselves, and not to satisfying God. We **could not please God in the flesh** because, quite frankly, the carnal mind is focused on self and not on God. **To be carnally minded is death – but to be spiritually minded is peace**. A dead thing cannot please God – but a living thing can.

God is never satisfied with darkness. The Bible says:

Genesis 1:2-3 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. (3) And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

God is light, and in Him there is no darkness (1 John 1:5). Where darkness is, God provides light. Where death is, God provides life. God is the Source of life and light. The flesh is the source of death and darkness. We who are His are called to life and light

2. The Christian Mind Is Profitable, Because It Stands WITH God

FOCAL Romans 8:9-12 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell³

3 Strong's: G3611 3611 oikeo oy-keh'-o from 3624; to occupy a house, i.e. reside (figuratively, inhabit, remain, inhere); by implication, to cohabit:--dwell. See also 3625. Tense: Present Voice: Active Mood: Indicative

in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (10) And if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness. (11) But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (12) Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

Verse 9 literally states “**You are not in the flesh, but you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God keeps on making Himself at home in you**”. The normal Christian life is to live a life that is *comfortable to the Holy Spirit*.

At the point of salvation Jesus Christ sends the Holy Spirit of God to live inside of and in partnership with every believer. **If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His**. Jesus promised us

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; (17) [Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

The world, the fleshly, the **carnally minded** cannot receive the Spirit of Christ. Yet we who are His by faith

are indwelt by His Spirit. **He shall be in you.** The Spirit of God lives in every Christian. This Holy Spirit is sent to every believer **in Christ's name.** He is our Master, our Leader, and we are His disciples. The Spirit of God teaches us the things of Christ.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Spirit lives in the Christian, directing us to the things of Christ. Our minds are led toward that which is profitable. We are led to *study and read God's Word.* The Comforter disciples us in that Word, teaching us to not merely understand its principles and doctrines, but also to put into practice what we read. It is written that the Incarnate Christ put into practice the things that He knew. He walked through this life, living and loving and lifting up all who would give of themselves to Him. Jesus taught His disciples how to direct their minds Godward, how to look beyond the moment and beyond self and to be *truly used of God.* It can be said of every believer in Christ that the **Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you.** God lives in you, is in partnership with you, and wants to lead to to be *more like life every single day.* The Christian mind is profitable because it stands in life. The Christian mind is a disciple of Christ, a lover of God, alive every moment because God – the Author of life – lives in Him. That which makes life worth living is *not longer physical life.*

That which makes life worth the living is *a life surrendered to and disciplined by God.* The disciples of John followed John because he was a great prophet. The disciples of Christ followed a greater Person, for they followed the Lord of all creation, the King of Kings, the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. *The Christian mind is profitable because it stands in God, not in the flesh.*

FOCAL Romans 8:12-13 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors⁴, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. (13) For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

To whom do I owe allegiance? The Christian is a person who is **under obligation to God.** We are not obligated to the flesh. We are not obligated to the old Sin Nature. We are not obligated to Satan, nor are we obligated to *peer pressure.*

These things all lead to death, to separation from God. We are saved so that we can live. **If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.** What a terrible thing to live chasing after the flesh. Continued separation from God for the believer *leads to physical death.* We see this in the lives of the Corinthian believers. They continued to ignore the Way of the Master while following the way of flesh. They followed after selfishness rather than following after the Spirit of Christ. The Apostle told them:

4 3781 opheiletes of-i-let'-ace from 3784; an ower, i.e. person indebted; figuratively, a delinquent; morally, a transgressor (against God):--debtor, which owed, sinner.

1 Corinthians 11:30 **For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.**

It is unprofitable to follow after the flesh, for the way of the flesh is the way of death. It is much better, dear believer, to follow Life. Follow Jesus, turning away from the things of the flesh. Turn away from the **works of the flesh**. Turn away from

Galatians 5:19-21 ... **sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, (20) idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, (21) envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar**, about which I tell you in advance--as I told you before--that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.⁵

These are dead things – and **those who habitually practice such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God**. Each of these things are selfish, self centered, Satanic, wrong in the eyes of God. They are unproductive, divisive, destructive, and without love. We are not debtors to the flesh. We are not debtors to the world. We are debtors to God. We are His disciples, called to follow Him in all that we say and do.

3. What Does God Require Of His Adopted Sons?

⁵ Holman Christian Standard Version of the Holy Scripture

a I must mortify or kill the deeds of the flesh in my own life through the **power of the Holy Spirit**. We are told in our focal text:

FOCAL Romans 8:13 ... if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

The *Holman Christian Standard* renders this verse “**But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live**”. We who are Christians are partners in life with the Holy Spirit. We do not have the power to purge our sins, no more than we had the power to *save ourselves*. The Spirit of God Who indwells us *does* have the power to purge our sins. As we live the surrendered Christian life, the Holy Spirit controls more and more of our lives. As we use the Christian disciplines – Prayer and the Holy Scripture – the Holy Spirit slowly gains ground in our lives. Piece by piece parts of the old life die, **being mortified or put to death by the Spirit**. The Christian is a person in flux, in change. This change, this growth continues until the day we stand with our Jesus in glory.

b I must follow the leading of the Spirit of God. The Bible tells us:

FOCAL Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Who are indeed the sons of God? **Those who are led by**

the Spirit of God. How do I know that I am “Spirit led”? I focus on the things that are *spiritually acceptable*. We are told:

Galatians 5:22-24 But **the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (24) And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh** with the affections and lusts.

If you want your life to be Spirit filled, then seek after the things that the Holy Spirit – and Christ – consider acceptable. Let your minds be drawn toward *all the good things of God*. If you dwell on the negative, the morose, the evil, the foolish – then your minds will dwell here as well. The Bible tells us:

Proverbs 23:7 For **as he thinketh in his heart, so [is] he** ...

Dwell on love, for **love is the fulfilling of the Law**. We are told repeatedly in the Scripture:

James 2:8 If ye **fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,** ye do well:

Romans 13:10 **Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love [is] the fulfilling**

of the law.

☪ I will live my life, rejecting fear and embracing love.

Our focal text says:

FOCAL Romans 8:15 **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.**

It is love that bore you, love that gave you life, love that went to Calvary, love that suffered and died for you. The Bible tells us:

1 John 4:18-19 There is **no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. (19) We love him, because he first loved us.**

Israel rejected the love of God. God loved them when He allowed the death angel to pass over their houses. God loved them when He allowed that nation to pass through a deep sea. God loved them when He allowed water to pass out of the rock. God loved them when He allowed the bitterness of Marah to pass away, making the water sweet. Yet Israel would not love the Lord in return. So He took them to Sinai, to a place of terror, of smoke and lightening, and gave them the terror of a law that they could not keep. They would not love, so they were bound to God by fear.

This is not the case with you, O Christian. **Perfect love**

casts out all fear. You, Beloved of God, were made to serve God. You were made to have an overcoming life. You were made to walk in victory in this present evil age. **Max Lucado** wrote:

**“You have a ticket to Heaven no thief can take,
An eternal home no divorce can break.
Every sin of your life has been cast into the sea,
Every mistake you've made has been nailed to the tree.
You're blood bought and Heaven made,
A child of God, forever saved.
So be grateful, joyful – for isn't that true?
What you don't have is much less than what you do.”⁶**

Are you saved by faith in Jesus Christ our Lord? Have you given your life to Him? If so, rejoice, love, praise Him, and look upward. If not, my prayer is that you will come to know Him as Savior and Lord this very day!



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