

The Flesh or The Spirit

Part 3 Romans Chapter Eight

Romans 8:5-8

~~For those who live according to **the flesh**, set their minds on the things of **the flesh**, but those who live according to **the Spirit**, the things of **the Spirit**.⁶ For to be carnally [fleshly] minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.⁷ Because the carnal [fleshly] mind [**the mind of the flesh**] is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, **nor indeed can be**.⁸ So then, those who are **in the flesh cannot please God**.~~

I have crossed out this passage of scripture to indicate, it is a bad translation, one which has caused many people to go back into DEAD WORKS.

*This NKJV version (from which many older Christians have been taught) seems to be saying **the way we think and live** brings us blessing or cursing – as follows ...*

***Verse 5:** The way we live causes us to think or focus a certain way. Living in the flesh causes us to think and focus on fleshly thoughts and living in the Spirit causes us have spiritual thoughts and focus on spiritual things. This puts the onus back on how we live.*

***Verse 6:** If we think fleshly thoughts we will have death but if we think spiritual thoughts we'll have life and peace ... saying 'Life and Death' are in the power of how we think.*

***Verse 7:** If we think fleshly thoughts God will be at enmity with us.*

***Verse 8:** If we think fleshly thoughts we cannot please God.*

AS A RESULT OF THIS DOCTRINE, WE TRY HARDER TO LIVE BETTER. WE TRY TO STOP THINKING BAD THOUGHTS. (Romans 7 tells us ... we actually get worse doing this).

*We eventually stop thinking altogether and end up stilted people who just **STARE AT THE WALL** so we don't sin. By now all laughing and joking has been set aside and creativity has been firmly locked away in the dungeon of our fear. **WE HAVE BECOME RELIGIOUS**.*

THIS IS NOT TELLING US WE HAVE A CHOICE TO LIVE EITHER IN THE FLESH OR IN THE SPIRIT.

NEITHER IS IT TELLING US THERE ARE TWO GROUPS OF CHRISTIANS.

There is a teaching that has come from this passage and others like it which states that there are two groups of Christians – **CARNAL CHRISTIANS AND SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANS.**

- **CHRISTIANS WHO WALK AFTER 'THE FLESH' ARE CARNAL.**
- **CHRISTIANS WHO WALK AFTER 'THE SPIRIT' ARE SPIRITUAL.**

SLIDE *The carnal Christian goes to movies, drinks wine, smokes cigarettes, has worldly friends etc. The spiritual Christian doesn't do those things because he or she is too busy witnessing, praying, studying God's Word and **staring at the Wall**.*

This same doctrine is justified by scriptures like Romans 8:28 -

All things work together for good for Christians who have two qualities -

1. They love the Lord
2. They are called according to His purpose

If you meet these two criteria then all things will work out, but if you only meet one like many Christians ...things will not work out for good.

There are some Christians who only love the Lord and live worldly lives ... things won't work out for them according Romans 8:28, this teaching says. There are some Christians who not only love the Lord but are called into ministry ...

These people meet both criteria and therefore things WILL work out for them.

SLIDE THERE ARE **NOT** TWO GROUPS OF CHRISTIANS

THESE CRITERIA DESCRIBE ALL CHRISTIANS. ALL ARE PEOPLE WHO LOVE THE LORD AND ARE CALLED.

Let's look at our text again in **the original Greek interlinear translation.**

Romans 8:5-8 **SLIDE**

*For the [ones] **being** according to **the flesh** ... the things of **the flesh** mind ... but the [ones] according to {human} spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For the mind of **the flesh** [is] death, but the mind of the Spirit life and peace. ⁷ Wherefore the mind of **the flesh** [is] enmity against God; for to the law of God it is not subject, neither indeed can it [be]; ⁸ and the [ones] **being** in **the flesh** cannot please God.*

NB: 'BEING' NOT 'LIVING' ACCORDING TO THE FLESH

Romans 8:5 **SLIDE**

*For the [ones] **being** according to **the flesh** ... mind the things of **the flesh** but the [ones **being**] according to {human} spirit, [mind] the things of the Spirit.*

NB The word is '**being**' in the flesh as opposed to '**living**' in the flesh.

The Greek 'ontes' means 'exist' or 'I am', 'they are' ...

It's a permanent state of being not a temporary activity.

*There a huge difference to someone **being a liar** and someone **lying** ... **being a thief** and someone **thieving**. One is a temporary activity ... the other is a permanent state.*

What's the difference between a pig and a chicken in ham and eggs?

The chicken is only temporarily involved in the meal.

THE PIG HAS BECOME A PERMANENT PART THE MEAL.

*Like the pig, these people 'according to the flesh' are permanently in that state ... not just performing some temporary activity ... **IT IS WHO THEY ARE.***

THESE PEOPLE ARE NON-BELIEVERS AND 'THE FLESH' HERE IS THE UNREDEEMED NATURE. THESE PEOPLE HAVE AN UNREDEEMED NATURE FROM WHICH THEY THINK AND ACT ...

*This nature is at enmity with God and they **cannot ever** hope to please him.*

They are not justified and do not have peace with God. They actually don't want to please him. A person of the flesh ... doesn't care about God ...

Cambridge School commentary says, 'Paul here expands and illustrates the difference between the past and present state of the Christian'.

Paul already used this term referring to our former lives before we were Born Again -

Romans 7:5

For *when we were in the flesh*, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

Facebook Post: There are not two types of Christians (as I used to teach and so many still do) – those who walk and live in 'the flesh' and those who walk and live in 'the Spirit'.

SLIDE THERE ARE HOWEVER, TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE ...

1. PEOPLE WITH A FLESH NATURE, 2. PEOPLE WITH A NEW SPIRIT NATURE.

EACH ONE THINKS AND ACTS IN ACCORDANCE TO THEIR NATURE.

**EACH ONE 'MINDS' THE THINGS OF THE FLESH OR THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT ...
ACCORDING TO WHICH NATURE THEY HAVE.**

Romans 8:5 **SLIDE**

For the [ones] being according to the flesh ... *mind* the things of the flesh, but the [ones being] according to [human] spirit, [*mind*] the things of The Spirit.

'TO MIND' THE VERB

'To *mind*' something is a somewhat archaic term, although we still use it today - eg 'Mind your own business,' or 'Mind your step'.

Philippians 3:18-19

Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who *set their mind on* earthly things.

THIS IS THE SAME WORD 'TO MIND'

'To *mind*' means more than just thinking or being aware of something.

It is quite comprehensive. It can be described in 3 ways ...

SLIDE The Greek *phronousin* = (1) to focus on and observe, (2) to seek and desire (3) to think and judge.

SLIDE When Eve was tempted in the Garden of Edam ... She fell in 3 ways. (Genesis 3:6-7)

1. Her focus changed from God to the lusts of the eyes.

'So ... the woman *saw* that the tree was good for food, that it was *pleasant to the eyes* ...'

2. Her desire changed from God to the lusts of the flesh.

'... a tree desirable to make one wise ...'

3. Her thinking, and Adam's, changed. Their minds became filled with thoughts about themselves.

Their eyes were opened (- they became conscious of themselves); they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. (Genesis 3:7)

Their focus ... their desires ... their thoughts became fleshly. This is 'to mind' the flesh and ever since then all human beings have had 'the mind of the flesh' because they inherited a FLESHLY NATURE FROM ADAM.

Fleshly things are all they can think about, that's all they desire, all they focus on.

THEY HAVE NO OTHER OPTION AS THEY ARE NOT BORN AGAIN OF THE SPIRIT.

There is no spiritual reservoir from which they can draw ... no spiritual power within ... no spiritual inspiration ... no desire for God at all.

But that's who they are ... THEY DO WHAT THEY ARE. They are fleshly, unredeemed, adamic sinners and **A SINNER ALWAYS SINS; IT'S IN THEIR NATURE.**

NB: It's NOT our job to try and make sinners stop sinning or the unrighteous to act righteously – to make the immoral, moral. **UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IS IN HIS OR HER NATURE.**

1 Corinthians 6:11 Berean Literal

And some of you were such. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

(Titus 3:3, Ephesians 2:2)

It's our job to preach the GOOD NEWS OF GOD concerning Jesus Christ.

KIND AND COMPASSIONATE UNBELIEVERS ARE STILL BOUND BY THEIR FLESHLY NATURE.

NB: No matter how good a person who is still in 'the flesh in Adam' is ... no matter how philanthropic ... how kind and popular they are ... they CANNOT PLEASE GOD IN ANY WAY. Even their kindness is completely fleshly.

I watched the movie, 'Bohemian Rhapsody' regarding Freddy Mercury and Queen. One of their last shows was at 'Live Aide' organised by Bob Geldof – a noble cause to help starving people; however, Queen's whole motive for doing this was to be seen by a billion people worldwide. And whilst the acts of the people may have had genuine compassion, without the Spirit of God, I suspect many did it to show they were a compassionate and caring people.

Even to have a genuine compassion and not acknowledge God is fleshly and rooted in self-attainment. IF IT'S NOT DONE FROM THE SPIRIT IT IS THE ENEMY OF GOD.

In Leviticus 2:11 NO LEAVEN OR HONEY WAS ALLOWED IN THE SACRIFICE.

Leaven = sin ... Honey = natural sweetness ... It's sickly to God.

While all their kindness is being displayed, people still with a 'fleshly nature' have a hatred for God. They have taken the beauty of God's creation and cut Him out. They claim it all

evolved from a green swamp or a big bang. They deliberately exclude any thought of God and teach their children to do so.

THE SPIRITUAL PERSON '*MINDS*' THE THINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

They take on the same focus, desires and thoughts of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:5 **SLIDE**

*For the [ones] being according to the flesh ... mind the things of the flesh ... but the [ones] [being] according to spirit, [*mind*] the things of the [*Holy*] Spirit.*

THE SPIRITUAL MAN THINKS, FEELS AND FOCUSES FROM A DEEPER LEVEL.

NB: The unredeemed fleshly man thinks from his fleshly nature. He cannot think from his spirit.

The redeemed Spirit-man now thinks from his spirit the thoughts of the Holy Spirit.

THE BELIEVER SEES FROM A DEEPER, PURER PLACE.

THE BELIEVER HAS DESIRES THAT RISE FROM A DEEPER, PURER PLACE.

THE BELIEVER THINKS FROM A DEEPER, PURER PLACE.

THE ORGANIC THINKING OF THE NEW MAN IS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BUT YOU ASK ... Can the new man still think without the Spirit ... from the fleshly brain?

YES HE CAN ... But his new life remains unaffected and unchanged deep within.

IF THE SPIRIT MAN TAKES ON THE SAME FOCUS, DESIRES AND THOUGHTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHAT IS THE FOCUS ... WHAT ARE THE DESIRES ... WHAT ARE THE THOUGHTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GREAT MISSION IS TO REVEAL AND GLORIFY JESUS CHRIST

John 16:14 **SLIDE**

He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

This becomes the focus and desire of the Spirit-man. He falls in love with Jesus ...

He honours Jesus ... He seeks more of Jesus ...

YOU CRINGE WHEN YOU HEAR THE FLESHLY PERSON BLASPHEME HIS NAME.

THE SPIRIT MAN TAKES ON THE SAME FOCUS, DESIRES AND THOUGHTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BEWARE THE CULT OF SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA WHICH DOES NOT GLORIFY JESUS CHRIST.

THIS IS *NOT* FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.

You will always know the revelation that is from the Holy Spirit by this foolproof test - HE WILL ALWAYS 'GLORIFY JESUS' and whatever He reveals will be focused upon Christ or lead to Christ.

Counterfeit revelations speak about angels ... riches ... prosperity ... ego - all appealing to either religious pride, fleshly satisfaction or sensationalism ...

Even some seemingly caring and humanitarian revelations are counterfeit and have nothing to do with Christ.

'Our Lady of Lourdes' - NO MENTION OF JESUS CHRIST THERE.

SLIDE THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH PASSIONATELY DESIRES GRACE AND TRUTH.

THE SPIRIT MAN TAKES ON THE SAME FOCUS, DESIRES AND THOUGHTS OF THE HOLY

SPIRIT.

John 16:13 SLIDE

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth ...

I remember – not long after coming to Christ at the age of 21 – my parents asking me what I wanted for Christmas. I said, 'I want a Youngs, rice-paper concordance.'

'What's that' they asked as they looked at each other in bewilderment?

I loved His word. I could not go anywhere without my Bible, a pen and notepad.

Every day at lunchtime, I'd go to a coffee-shop and order a toasted sandwich with hot chocolate and sit and read. I'd underline my Bible and write down my revelations.

You could have asked me to trade it for a luxury trip to Hawaii or a million dollars and I would have turned you down. This was my absolute delight. HIS TRUTH.

I was like an eagle in the air on a cloudless day ... a swan on a lake on a warm summer's morning ... a hungry man eating at a 5 star restaurant.

NB: THE HOLY SPIRIT IS 'THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH' AND HIS MISSION AND DESIRE IS TO LEAD US INTO ALL TRUTH.

The New Creation, Spirit-person has a deep, organic hunger for truth ... Not because they're starving, but because it tastes so good. It is their desire. **THEY MIND THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT.**

Romans 8:5 SLIDE

For the [ones] being according to the flesh ... mind the things of the flesh ... but the [ones] [being] according to spirit, [mind] the things of the [Holy] Spirit.

THE SPIRIT MAN TAKES ON THE SAME FOCUS, DESIRES AND THOUGHTS AS

THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE HOLY SPIRIT BEGINS TO REVEAL HIDDEN THINGS ... Mysteries in the Spirit ...

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 SLIDE

Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. -

¹⁰ But **God has revealed them to us through His Spirit**. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14

But **the natural man** does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; **nor can he know them**, because they are spiritually discerned.

Romans 8:6 Interlinear **SLIDE**

For the mind of the flesh [is] death, but the **mind of the Spirit** life and peace.