

**ROMANS – LIVING BY FAITH**  
**THE CHILDREN OF GOD & THE SPIRIT OF GOD – Chapter 8**

**LESSON 24 – THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH – Romans 8:5-11**

In a day when tolerance and non-discrimination are cultural buzzwords, we must never forget that God still discriminates. He draws a firm line between spiritually minded and carnally minded people.

As we've already learned, Romans seven is dominated by The Law and in contrast, Romans eight is dominated by the Holy Spirit. Paul reveals that the Holy Spirit changes our nature and gives us strength for victory over our sinful flesh.

Throughout Romans, Paul has used contrasts to get his point across. He used Adam and Christ, slavery and freedom, death and life...and now he moves on to the flesh and the Spirit.

**Two Divisions**

In God's eyes, there are only two kinds of people in the world...those who are lost and live according to the flesh and those who are saved and live according to the Spirit.

"As far as spiritual life is concerned, God takes no consideration of gender, age, education, talent, class, race, or any other human distinctions. He differentiates people solely on the basis of their relationship to Him, and the difference is absolute." – John MacArthur

The rest of this lesson is an explanation of the quality of life that belongs to those who live according to the Spirit.

**Two Dispositions**

In Romans 8:5, when Paul says, "have their minds set," he is referring to the basic orientation or thought patterns of the mind. It is the sum total of our inner dispositions that influence and determine our behavior and lifestyle. It is what motivates our outlook, our assumptions, our values, our desires and our goals. It is what we are most interested in and what we constantly talk about.

**The Fleshly Mindset** – Those whose mindset is after the flesh indulge the flesh and its corrupt desires. The flesh may be educated, refined and cultured but it is corrupt and loves the world and all that is in the world.

**The Spiritual Mindset** – Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on godly things. Even when Christians falter in their obedience to Christ, their mindset does not change.

As Paul said in Romans seven, Christians still battle with the flesh because the body...not yet redeemed... tries to lure us back into our sinful ways. But we are no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit. What Paul is saying here is important because our mindset makes all the difference in our daily living.

Galatians 5:25, "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."

**Two Destinies**

The contrast between the Spirit and the flesh reaches its peak in verse six. We learn that a mindset controlled by sin not only leads to ultimate death, it is death even now; and a mindset controlled by the Spirit is life and peace now and for all eternity.

**The Destiny of the Carnally Minded** – The carnal mind is characterized by hostility toward God. In Romans 5:10, Paul mentioned that apart from Christ we are God’s enemies. Sin and holiness are at war with each other. We are all too ready to believe that human nature is basically good. This...of course...is not the case. Human nature is fiercely hostile toward God. It honors the created above the Creator...serves self before others...loves self rather than God.

There is only one way to avoid the mistakes made by the carnal mind and that is to have the mind of Christ. The only way to have the mind of Christ is to allow the Spirit to control the mind.

1 Corinthians 2:16, “But we have the mind of Christ.”

**The Destiny of the Spiritually Minded** – The spiritual mind is characterized by peace. Scripture is filled with testimony of the peace that comes to the spiritually minded person.

Psalms 4:8, “In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.”

John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

The spiritual mind is characterized by life. Only those who have experienced new life in Christ...the life produced by the Spirit...know that life with Christ is not really life at all. The life Jesus came to give is the abundant life experienced by those who have a spiritual mindset produced by the Spirit.

John 10:10, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

John 17:3, “Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

1 John 1:2, “The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.”

## **Two Dominions**

**The Dominion of the Flesh** – The primary characteristic of being in the flesh is our absolute inability to please God. Only surrender to the Holy Spirit can guarantee that our motives will be pleasing to God since the hearts of mankind are deceitful and wicked.

**The Dominion of the Spirit** – Beginning in verse 9, Paul addresses his readers personally, encouraging them to acknowledge the Spirit in their lives.

The Holy Spirit inhabits every believer. The real test of a person’s faith is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Paul says that you can be certain of your salvation if the Spirit of God dwells in you. The Spirit is not an occasional visitor...He takes up residence in God’s people.

Paul does not deny the effect our sinful nature has on us. Our bodies carry within them the fatal flaw of sin, but there is a greater power at work within us...the Holy Spirit.

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In verse 11, Paul encourages the Romans. God counts them under the authority of the Spirit even though the Spirit's work is not completed in them.

In this section of Romans, we are brought face to face with the priority of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. Three titles are given to the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead.

We are reminded that even though we have been redeemed from the power of the flesh, we can still live fleshly lives if we do not yield to the power of the Holy Spirit. We must let Him control our lives or we will fall back into the old pattern of sin and the flesh.

Three principles from this lesson can make the difference in the believer living a victorious...or a defeated, Christian life...

1. The Holy Spirit is the Believer's Help

Twice we are told that the Holy Spirit dwells in us as believers. When we allow the Spirit to control us, we have the power to live holy lives.

2. The Holy Spirit is the Believer's Holiness

In this section of Romans we are told that we are to live according to the Spirit and to let the Spirit control us. When this happens and our whole being is turned in the direction of the Holy Spirit, purity becomes our very life.

3. The Holy Spirit is the Believer's Hope

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is associated with our future resurrection. He is the seal that God has given to every Christian that we will live forever in the presence of God.

No one can live the Christian life in their own power. It is only through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit that we can consistently live the Christian life.

Many new Christians are shocked to discover that life as a believer has more challenges and temptations than life as a non-believer. It's because where there was only the sinful nature...there is now a spiritual nature and these two are in opposition to each other.

This is a serious kind of conflict and every Christian should be aware of...and prepared for...the battle between the flesh and the Spirit.