

Abounding Grace Christian Church

A Study through the Epistle to the Romans – Part 20

I. Exposition of Chapter Eight. (Continued)

A. Verses 5-8 – Where do you set your Mind?

1. There are at least two different views pertaining to **verses 5-8**. Some argue that Paul is contrasting the unbeliever who lives according to the flesh with the believer who lives according to the Spirit. Others believe that he is contrasting a carnal believer with a spiritual believer.
2. At this point, our approach will be that these verses don't have to be an "either/or" but there is certainly application for both. Based upon the context of this epistle so far, it is possible for a believer to:
 - a. Can allow the sin nature (flesh) to reign – **6:12**.
 - b. Can present their members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin – (**6:13**.
 - c. Can do what they hate as believers and what they don't want to do – **7:15-16**.
 - d. Can walk according to the flesh – **8:4**. (cf. **I Corinthians 3:1-3; Galatians 5:16-25**).
3. **Verse 5** – **"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."** – In **verse 4**, the word "walk" is used and here the word "live" is used in some translations. It's the same meaning. It's referring to **"how one regulates or conducts their life."**¹ Paul gives a clear way for us to determine if we walk in the Spirit or walk in the flesh - to simply see where our mind is set. The mind is the strategic battleground.
4. **Verse 6** – **"For to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."** – When our minds are set on the things of the flesh (**carnally minded**) we bring death into our lives. But walking in the Spirit brings life and peace.
 - a. In applying this to a believer who is being carnally minded, what does it mean when it refers to **"death"** being brought in?
 - b. This could be referred to as **"temporal death"** in that it is a temporary condition of the believer in that due to walking in the flesh, he reaps results contrary to the abundant life Jesus came to bring us. **Romans 8:6, 13; Luke 15:24, 32; James 1:15; Revelation 3:1**. (Also see **Galatians 6:7-8**).
 - c. **"life and peace"** is the result of being **"spiritually minded"** or having our minds on the things of the Spirit.
5. **Verse 7** **"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be."** The carnal mind is against God, because it does not want to be surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ. It doesn't subject itself to the law of God.
6. **Verse 8** – **"So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God."** – Anything that the flesh produces cannot be pleasing to God. In contrast, when we walk in the Spirit, we are pleasing to God.

B. Verses 9-11 - Paul now reminds them that they, as Christians, are empowered to live in the Spirit. In these verses, Paul deals with positional truth which is the key to overcoming this battle with the flesh.

1. **Verse 9** – **"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."** - Because the Holy Spirit is given to each believer when they are born again, every Christian has within themselves a principle higher and more powerful than the flesh.
 - a. There are two foundational experiences with the Holy Spirit in a believer's life.
 - 1) When we received Jesus as our Lord, we were Born of the Spirit. **John 3:1-16**.
 - a) The Holy Spirit comes to dwell within every believer. **John 14:16,17**.
I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19,20; II Corinthians 6:14-18; II Timothy 1:14.
 - b) The Fruit of the Spirit is now possible because of being Born of the Spirit.
Galatians 5:22-26.
 - 2) The Baptism with the Holy Spirit follows the New Birth (or) being Born of the Spirit.
 - a) The Holy Spirit wants to Empower us for Service. **The indwelling of the Spirit is for fruit-bearing, and the outpouring of the Spirit is for service**.
 - b) You shall receive Power! **Acts 1:1-8**. Compare with **John 20:19-22**.
 - c) **Acts 2:1-4; Acts 10:44-48 (Ten years after Day of Pentecost); Acts 19:1-6 (Twenty years after day of Pentecost)**.

¹Confer with: Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House., 1977)

2. **Verse 10 - And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.** – This goes along with Paul’s statement back in **6:6**. Our “old man” has been crucified with Christ. Some commentators suggest that this refers to the fact that the body of the believer is still mortal and subject to death whereas the Spirit of God has given us new life on the inside.
3. **Verse 11 – “...He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”** – There are at least two different views pertaining to this verse. Some interpret it as meaning that through the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling us, we can overcome (“give life”) sin in our mortal bodies. This view corresponds with **verse 13**. Others believe this speaks of the future resurrection of the believer’s body indicating that the sin nature in our flesh will eventually be eradicated. This is referred to more in **verses 23-25**. (cf. **I Corinthians 15:50-57**).

C. Verses 12-13 - Our debt is to the Spirit, not to the flesh.

1. **Verse 12 – “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors – not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.”**
– This clearly shows, again, that believers still have an old fallen nature and that there are continuing choices to be made! Our debt is to the Lord, not to the flesh.
2. **Verse 13 – “For if you live according to the flesh you will die but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”** - Paul constantly reminds us that living after the flesh ends in death and we need the reminder because we are often deceived into thinking that the flesh offers something good. This also shows us the power of the Holy Spirit within us to give us the ability to overcome temptation and sin.

D. Verse 14 – The Leading of the Holy Spirit. (Note: The context reveals that as we’re led by the Holy Spirit, we will not be led by the flesh!)

1. How do we receive the Guidance of the Holy Spirit?

“But I say, walk *and* live [*habitually*] in the [*Holy*] Spirit [*responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit*]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings *and* desires of the flesh (of human nature without God).”

Galatians 5:16 – Amplified Bible

- a. **The Apostle Paul had Experience being Led by the Holy Spirit - Acts 16:6-7; Acts 18:4-6; Acts 19:21; Acts 20:22-23;**

“Because of impressions made by the Spirit they kept on warning Paul not to set foot in Jerusalem.”
Acts 21:4 – William’s Translation

- b. Have a Strong Spiritual Life by having a daily time in the Word and Prayer. **John 15:1-14. The more you’re in the Word, and the Word is in you, the more you will be able to recognize the leading of the Lord. I John 5:7. God’s guidance NEVER contradicts God’s Word.**
- c. After the Written Word of God, the Primary way God guides us is through the inner witness. **Romans 8:14-16; 9:1.** This inner witness is an inner sense of peace and affirmation. It is a “knowing” on the inside that something is the right thing or the wrong thing to do.
- d. Be careful with Visions, Dreams and Audible Voices. **Acts 2:14-17; 8:29; 9:10-16; 10:9-19.**
 - 1) **Don’t** seek for or pray for visions, dreams or audible voices.
 - 2) They are rare. When considering the accounts and the time periods involved.
 - 3) They were CLEAR.
 - 4) Their message was obvious.
- e. **DON’T** be led by Fleeces. **Judges 6:36,37.**
- f. What about “Open Doors”? **I Corinthians 16:8,9. Don’t make “open doors” the only criteria. Consider Acts 16:6,7.**
- g. Don’t miss the Supernatural by looking for the spectacular. **I Kings 19:11-12.**
- h. Prophecy **MUST** confirm the inner witness. ALL prophecy must be judged. **I Corinthians 14:29.**