

Romans Session 100

Life in the Spirit 5

The Spirit Changes our Nature and Empowers Us for Victory¹

Romans 8:5-13 (KJV)

⁵ *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.*

The spiritual richness, both theological and practical, of this chapter is beyond calculation and surpasses adequate comment.

When read by a believer with an open mind and an obedient heart, it is incredibly enriching. It is one of the supreme life-changing chapters in Scripture. It moves along in an ever-ascending course, concluding in the marvelous paean of praise and assurance:

Romans 8:38-39 (KJV)

³⁸ *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

³⁹ *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The Holy Spirit is mentioned but once in the first seven chapters of Romans, but is referred to nearly twenty times in Chapter 8

The Spirit is to the believer what God, the Creator is to the physical world. Without God, the physical world would not exist. It has been created and is continually sustained by the omnipotent power of God.

So, the Holy Spirit who also, of course, participated in the creation of the world is to the Christian.

The Holy Spirit is the divine agent who creates, sustains, and preserves spiritual life in those who place their trust in Jesus Christ.

It is the Holy Spirit who ultimately will bring every believer into the full consummation of his salvation by granting him eternal glory in the presence of God.

It should be made clear that the Holy Spirit is not merely an influence or an impersonal power emanating from God, He is a person, the third member of the Trinity. Equal in every way to God the Father and God the Son.

The doctrine of God's being one essence, yet existing in three persons, is one of the most certain truth in Scripture. Yet the Holy Spirit is often not respected s every bit as much a divine person as the Father and the Son.

Among the many characteristics of personhood that the Holy Spirit possesses, and manifests are: He functions with mind and emotion, and will; He loves the saints, He communicates with them, teaches, guides and comforts, and chastises them; He can be grieved, quenched, lied to, tested, resisted, and blasphemed.

The Bible speaks of His omniscience, His omnipotence, His omnipresence, and His divine glory and holiness. He is called God, Lord, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of Yahweh (or Jehovah), the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of the Son, the Spirit of Jesus, and the Comforter and Advocate for believers.

Scripture reveals that the Holy Spirit was fully active, with the Father and Son in the creation and that He has been with all believers and enabled and empowered them even before Pentecost.

He has always been convicting men of sin, giving salvation to those who truly believed, and teaching them to worship, obey, and serve God rightly.

The Holy Spirit has been the divine agent who uniquely came upon God's servants and inspired God's sovereignly-chosen men to pen God's Word.

True believers have always served God not by human might or power but by the Holy Spirit;

Zechariah 4:6 (NASB)

⁶ Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.

The Spirit was involved in Jesus' conception as a human being and in Jesus baptism, anointing, temptation, teaching, miracles, death, and resurrection.

Since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has, in His fulness, indwelt all believers, illuminating their understanding and application of God's Word as well as empowering them for sanctification in a greater way than had ever occurred before.

He fills them, seals them, communes with them, fellowships with them, intercedes for them, comforts them, admonishes them, sanctifies them, and enables them to resist sin and to serve God.

In this present passage, Paul continues to disclose the innumerable results of justification, specifically the marvelous, spirit wrought benefits of freedom from condemnation.

In verses 2-3 he has discussed the Spirit's freeing us from sin and death, and in verse 4 His enabling us to fulfill God's Law. In verses 5-13 Paul shows us that the Spirit also changes our nature and grants us strength for victory over the unredeemed flesh.

Romans 8:5-11 (KJV)

⁵ 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.

²⁰ *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

²¹ *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.*

In verse 4 Paul speaks of the believer's behavior, contending that he does not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

As in verses 2 and 3, the conjunction **for** in verse 5 carries the meaning of because.

The point is that a believer does not behave according to the flesh because his new heart and mind are no longer centered on the things of the flesh and ruled by sin.

In God's eyes, there are only two kinds of people in the world, those who do not belong to Him and those who do. Put another way, there are only **those who are according to the flesh** and **those who are 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.

Galatians 3:28 (NASB)

²⁸ *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

He differentiates people solely on the basis of their relationship to Him, and the difference is absolute.

Obviously, there are degrees in both categories. Some unsaved people exhibit high moral behavior, and on the other hand, many saints do not mind the things of God as obediently as they should.

But every human being is completely in one spiritual state of being or the other; he either belongs to God or he does not.

Just as a person cannot be partly dead and partly alive physically, neither can he be partly dead and partly alive spiritually. There is no middle ground.

A person is either forgiven and in the kingdom of God, or unforgiven and in the kingdom of this world. He is either a child of God or he is a child of Satan.

In this context, the phrase **according to** refers to basic spiritual nature.

The Greek could be translated literally as **those being according to**, indicating a person's fundamental essence, bent, or disposition.

Those who are according to the flesh are the unsaved, the unforgiven, the unredeemed, the unregenerate.

Those who are according to the Spirit are the saved, the forgiven, the redeemed, the regenerated children of God.

As the Apostle Paul points out later the unsaved not only are according to the flesh but are in the flesh and are not indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

The saved, on the other hand, not only are according to the Spirit but are in the Spirit and indwelt by Him.

Romans 8:9 (KJV)

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.

Phroneo, the verb behind **set their minds**, refers to the basic orientation, bent, and thought patterns of the mind, rather than to the mind or intellect itself.

It includes a person's affections and will as well as his reasoning.

Paul uses the same verb in Philippians, where he admonishes believers to have this attitude or mind in yourselves;

Philippians 2:5 (NASB)

⁵ Have this attitude (mind) in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

Philippians 2:2 (NASB)

² make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Philippians 3:15 (NASB)

¹⁵ Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;

Philippians 3:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

The basic disposition of the unsaved is to indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires;

2 Peter 2:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

¹⁰ and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties,

The lost are those;

Philippians 3:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

The things of the flesh, or earthly things here are false philosophies and religions, which invariably appeal, whether overtly or subtly, to the **flesh** through self-interest and self-effort.

But those who are according to the Spirit, Paul says, set their minds on **the things of the Spirit**. In other words, those who belong to God are concerned about godly things.

Jonathan Edwards was often heard saying, they have holy affections, deep longing for God and sanctification.

As Paul said earlier in chapter 7 even God's children sometimes falter in their obedience to Him.

But as the apostle said of himself, ***they never the less joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man.***

Despite their many spiritual failures, their basic orientation and innermost concerns have to do with **the things of the Spirit**.

Phronema, (the mind) is the noun form of the verb in verse 5 and like the verb, refers to the content or thought patterns of the mind rather than on the mind itself.

It is interesting to note that Paul did not say that the mind set on the flesh leads to death, he said that it is death. The unsaved person is already dead spiritually.

But the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace
Paul says that the mind set on the Spirit equates life and peace.
And having life and peace equates being a Christian.

So, the mind set on the Spirit is synonymous with Christian, a person who had been born again, given spiritual Life by God's grace working through His faith.

We will continue this comparison next time and will see that the Spirit changes our nature and empowers us for victory.