

The Carnal and Spiritual Mind

Rom 8:1-8

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 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. 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, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
NKJV

Although the last two phrases of verse one are in doubt by some textual critics, the phrase is again repeated in verse 4. Therefore it seems to flow very well here and seems to me to be original. Thus we will treat it here.

There are but two sides in this story. They sometimes take on different names but their function stays the same. Paul has continued to set forth that the flesh is opposed to God. A little later he tells us that it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Now there are a number of places where we are told to walk in the spirit and we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh; Gal. 5:16. But that is not what Paul is saying here. He is not admonishing us but describing the saint, the one on whom there is no condemnation. And the description simply states that that person does not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. But what does that mean? What does that look like?

- I. Walking according to the flesh.
 - A. This is the realm in which we were born and the nature we inherited from our parents.
 - B. This is the lever that Satan uses to get us to follow him.
 1. All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. 1 John 2:16
 - C. It means to follow the course of this world, to mind earthy things, the things that satisfy our base appetites.
 1. Gal 5:16-6:1
 - a. I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you

are not under the law.

- b. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- c. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. NKJV

- 2. Remember the words of Jesus, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matt 6:19-21 NKJV
- 3. Also remember the words of Paul, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." Col 3:2 NKJV

D. To walk according to the flesh does not mean that we are as sinful as we could be.

- 1. Everyone has their own vices & virtues.
- 2. Often we think of "fleshly" or "carnal" as the lowest parts of society.
- 3. But everyone not born of God walks according the flesh.
- 4. They live to satisfy themselves and their own family.
- 5. Now God does not want us to be in need and our family to go without the necessary things of life, but He wants us to realize these things come from Him.
- 6. That scheming and pushing to have our own way is not of God.
- 7. Many good moral men still walk according to the flesh, for that is the whole end of their thinking, their lives are built around more.
- 8. Like the rich farmer Jesus told of whose crops brought abundantly and all he could think of was himself. He tore down the old barns and built bigger ones, saying soul take your ease you have much laid up for many years, but that not his soul was required of him. God said, "then whose will those things be which you have provided?" 21 "So is he who lays up treasure for

himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke 12:20-21 NKJV

9. We might say then that walking according to the flesh then is following those things that we leave here behind, those things that are of no heavenly value.
 10. They may not be wrong in themselves but if that is all we have, then we have nothing, we are "not rich toward God."
- E. And although we all once walked that way, now the Christian does so no more.
1. Eph 2:2-3
 - a. 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath , just as the others. NKJV
 2. Titus 2:11-14
 - a. 11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. NKJV
 3. Romans 8:14
 - a. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. NKJV

II. Walking according to the Spirit

A. Being taken up with God.

1. To be a worshiper of God.
2. To desire to know Him more.
3. To be overcome with the sense of Him.
4. Spending time in His word to get to know Him better and let Him speak to you.
5. Spending time in prayer to speak to Him.

B. Being concerned with the things of God.

1. The things God is concerned with.
2. The kingdom of God and not our own.
3. Telling others about your Savior.
4. Learning and teaching the word of God to bring others to a fuller knowledge of God and the Son of His grace.
5. All of that and more, not in order to get to heaven but because that is where our citizenship is.

None keep the law so well as those who do not hope to be saved by it, but who, renouncing all confidence in their own works, and accepting the righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ Jesus, are moved by gratitude to a height of consecration and a purity of obedience which mere legalism can never know. The child will obey better without desire of reward, than the slave will under the dread of the lash, or in hope of a wage. The most potent motive for holiness is free grace. A dying Savior is the death of sin. As we have been singing, we strove against its power until we learnt that Christ was the way, and then we conquered it. Spurgeon

I want to close with a few verses from First John

1 John 3:7-11

7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. 8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. NKJV