

The Spirit of Life

Romans 8:4-15

7/ 03/ 05

Intro

Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of life in Romans 8:1. The next section, then, brings us great insight into the role of the Spirit of life in our victory over the flesh.

We know from Romans seven that the flesh is a great problem. There is no way to conquer the flesh if we are living under the Law, it cannot empower us in victory, in fact it seems to have the opposite effect of actually stirring up the sin that resides in our flesh.

There is a similar struggle for the believer in Christ. We still have our flesh and the power of sin within it, but we have something greater than the law to conquer sin, we have been given the Holy Spirit.

These are insights about the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus.

I. Walk According to the Spirit

A. Be Spiritually minded

- To walk, or to live according to the Holy Spirit, we need to be spiritually minded.
- Both the NAS and the NIV have the word, 'set' in regards to the mind, but it is not there in the Greek. It says to be spiritually minded.
- But it means the same, "set you mind on the things of the spirit."

Illus – Peter was confronted by the Lord and was told that he had his mind set on man's interests rather than God's.

Matthew 16:22-23, Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

- We need discernment to understand whether the mind is spiritually set. The answer is in the Word itself.

Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

B. Think on these things

- God knows that this is a key to our victory over the flesh. But what does it mean to be spiritually minded?
- It means to think of godly things.

Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things."

Illus – It's interesting to consider the stuff of our dreams. In many ways they are a continuation of our daytime

thoughts, or are a result of them. I remember a time when I was very much focused on memorizing scripture, I actually found myself dreaming it.

- This is a very practical key to victory.

Psalm 119:9, 11, “How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word... Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.”

C. Take every thought captive

- What if being spiritually minded is difficult?
- We know we still have our flesh with us and that there is war inside of each of us.
- If it is war, then we must be proactive in the battle – and when it comes to our thoughts, we must take fleshly thoughts captive.

Illus – I know for myself that there are times when I have to confront my thoughts. “I don’t like the way I’m thinking. This will only hurt me.” There are many thoughts that war against faith...

II Corinthians 10:3-5, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,”

- This is a very important point. Many people desire godly change, but don’t know how to bring change. It is changing the mind.

Illus – If you want to be a man of grace, you must think grace thoughts, or patient thoughts, or love, or peace.

II. Beware the Hostile Mind

A. The fleshly mind is hostile toward God

- The fleshly mind has no desire to memorize scripture; in fact, it doesn’t want godly thoughts to interfere.
- It will try to stiff-arm godly thoughts.

Matthew 15:18-20, “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and slanders. These are the things which defile the man;”

Illus – The older kids asked me the other day why I don’t drink. The answer – because it affects my mind.

- The mind can slide down to the point of depravity.

Romans 1:28-30, “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness... haters of God,”

B. It cannot submit to God

- (verse 7) It's interesting to note that the fleshly mind cannot submit to God – and therefore cannot please God.
- Therefore, it must be overtaken. This is done either by a spiritual mind, or a conscience that simply cannot take any more assaults.

Titus 1:15-16, “To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.”

Illus – one of the kids asked, “What if I don't feel like listening to God?”

Even our feelings must be overtaken for victory.

III. The Spirit is Power

A. He makes us alive

- (verse 10) We have the Spirit of God and therefore there is where we have our identity.

Illus - Even in the act of sin, if we were to be completely truthful, we would acknowledge that it is not what we truly desire in the deepest place of our hearts.

- The Spirit has made us alive to God, where we used to be dead to God. Walk in the Spirit and we will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

Romans 6:11, “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

I Peter 3:18, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;”

B. We are under obligation

- (verse 12-13) This is why we should not sin that grace may abound, because we have an obligation to the Holy Spirit within us.
- We are to put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit.
- How? By being with God. Simply by being near to Him, we receive of His glory.

Illus – Moses and the glory on Mt. Sinai.

II Corinthians 3:7-18 A comparison of glory.

- We need to renew our minds in the Lord.

Romans 12:2, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

C. We did not receive the spirit of fear

- (verse 15) The spirit of fear is the spirit of slavery.
- It is the opposite of faith.
- We cry out “Abba” Father, because that is the basis of faith. Knowing that, believing that is the foundation of faith.

II Timothy 1:7, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

Conclusion

These are very practical words that give us the keys to victory over a fleshly mind. We should not only rejoice that God has given us provision for victory, but we should also walk in it.