

18. ROMANS SERIES: Living According to the Spirit

Romans 8:5-13

The Christian often finds himself/herself struggling to keep the commandments of God, even though he/she has a strong desire to do so. He/she finds within himself/herself a principle of sin, with which he/she must constantly battle this side of glory. Having considered how the believer can in fact live according to the direction of the Lord, by having a walk not *'according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit (8:1,4),'* Paul now moves on to contrast the walk of the believer with that of the unbeliever.

Read Romans 8:5-13

Verse 5: The word *'for'* indicates that Paul will now further explain verse 4, which is the contrast between the lives of unbelievers and believers, or those ruled by the sinful nature and those ruled by the Spirit.

Those, whose lives are determined by their sinful nature, exercise a mindset determined to fulfil the determination of the sinful nature. This is their whole life, the pursuit of self and worldly desires.

Those who submit to the Spirit's direction exercise a mindset determined to live as the Spirit directs (Gal 5:17). The believer is always seeking to direct his life in accordance with the Spirit.

QUESTION: How does the believer direct his life according to the Spirit?

As a Christian, the believer is always considering what God would have Him to do, how God would have him to live and how God would have him to think. Such consideration is always rooted in the teachings of the Bible and it is upon this written Word that the Christian thinks and then determines what he will do, how he will live and what he will think. This of course is always accompanied by reliance upon the Spirit, exercised through prayerful dependence.

NOTE: INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY QUESTION HERE: What is it to be carnally minded (8:6)?

Verse 6: The use of the word '*for*,' connects this verse with the previous and therefore this verse further explains that verse. To live according to the flesh is to have a mind set on doing the things of the flesh and this results in death in all its fullness. Therefore, '*to be carnally minded*' is just another way of expressing that a person is unsaved and given over to the sinful nature (Eph 2:1-3).

To live according to the Spirit is to have a mind set on doing those things pleasing to the Spirit, which are the things of God and His Kingdom. This results in life in all of its fullness and peace, which is the inner peace of enjoying a right standing with God (Ps 119:165; 122:7; Is 48:22; 57:21; Rom 5:1; 14:17; 15:13,33; Philip 4:7). To be sure there will still be sorrow and troubles, yet there is also a peace along side these (Ps 73; Gal 5:17; Heb 12:4).

QUESTIONS: What does it mean to you, to live according to the Spirit?

What does a lifestyle of sinful indulgence suggest about a professing Christian? Why did you answer as you did?

Verses 7 & 8: These verses are a further explanation of verse 6, explaining how being carnally minded leads to death. Being carnally minded reveals a nature that is opposed to God. It is in hostile rebellion against Him, against His Law as a reflection of the nature of God and also has no ability to be anything but opposed to God (1 Cor 2:14). The unbeliever hates God, being alienated against Him. Clearly such a person given over to the sinful nature, which is every unbeliever, '*cannot please God (8:8).*'

Those who live according to the flesh, which are ruled by a corrupt nature, have no acceptance with God. Rather, these rebels are the objects of God's displeasure and wrath.

Verse 9: The recipients of Paul's letter at Rome were not those under the control of a corrupt nature, but rather under the influence of the Holy Spirit (1:6,8; 15:14). Because there is a different mindset to that of the unbeliever, there is also a different manner of living and this is clear evidence of their possession of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:25). The '*if indeed*' should rather be, '*seeing that*' the Spirit dwells in you (Jn 14:17; 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16; 2 Tim 1:14), which is the reason why they are controlled by the Holy Spirit and live in a godly manner.

If anyone lives in a manner lacking the Spirit of Christ it is because that person is not a Christian. Every person who does not have the Holy Spirit within them is unsaved and this is demonstrated by a life determined by a carnal mind.

Verse 10: The phrase, '*and if Christ is in you,*' is the same as the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, as the context makes clear. Here we see the complete Trinity at work, for

where the Father is the Son is and also the Spirit (Jn 14:23; 1 Jn 4:15).

If the Spirit of Christ is in us, then even though the body will die and indeed is dying because of sin, the Spirit is within us imparting eternal life because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to you in justification. Because we do have the Spirit of God within us, we are in fact 'living,' fulfilling the requirements of God for us because the Spirit is working in us.

Verse 11: The Spirit here is the Spirit of the Father (6:4; 8:9; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20). This was He, the same Spirit who was in Christ raising Him from the dead, who now dwells in believers and who will do for us as He did for Christ. That is, the Spirit will raise us from the dead, leading to ultimate triumph and glorification (1 Cor 6:14; 15:23; 2 Cor 4:14; 5:5; 1 Thess 4:14).

Verse 12: Here again Paul reveals something of his heart concern and feelings for the believers in Rome (7:1) through the use of the word '*brethren*.'

In view of all the blessings we have received, are receiving and will receive, '*therefore*' we have an obligation to live according to the Spirit. We have no obligation to live according to the remaining principle of sin within us, but we do have an obligation to walk in the way of the Spirit.

Verse 13: If we live according to the principle of sin, then we are doomed to die in all that death means (6:21,23; 8:6; Gal 6:8), for it reveals that we do not have the Spirit of God within us.

If however we, by the empowering Holy Spirit, put to death the sinful deeds practiced by the body (8:1,6,11-14; Mt 5:29ff; Mk 9:43ff; Gal 5:24; Col 3:5ff), we will live and enjoy life in all of its fullness.

INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY

What is '*the glory which shall be revealed in us*' in Romans 8:18?

What are the first fruits of the Spirit in Romans 8:23?