

Walking After the Flesh or After the Spirit

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Mike Miller

Pastor, Straight Paths Bible Church

Rom. 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

- I. The message is clear in this verse.
 - A. There is no comma after “condemnation” so it is one phrase: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,”
 - B. The next phrase describes the subject of the first phrase: “...who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”
 - C. Those who are in Christ Jesus do not walk after the flesh, but they do walk after the Spirit.
 - D. Therefore, no one can imagine that the verse is saying that walking after the Spirit or walking after the flesh are two options that every Christian has.

- II. Our “walk” is our way or manner of life, or what our life is about – and it is either after the flesh or after the Spirit.
 - A. It is identified by what we live for and what motivates us.
 - B. It is identified by the things and people with which we associate ourselves.
 - C. It is identified by where the affections of our heart lie.
 - D. It is identified by what comes out of our heart by way of our mouth.
 - E. It is identified by the place and authority we give to Christ in our life.
 - F. Our walk cannot be after the flesh AND after the Spirit because they are completely opposed to one another.

- III. To walk after the flesh is to be completely guided, led, and carried by carnal desires and a carnal mind.
 - A. When your purpose of life is to satisfy carnal desires you are walking after the flesh.
 - B. To walk after the flesh is to live for the same things as people without God do.
 - C. To work to obtain the necessities of life is not to live after the flesh.
 1. But to make this the purpose of our life *is* to walk after the flesh.
 - D. In Galatians 5 we are given the manifestations of both the flesh and the Spirit.
 1. This speaks of what is produced outwardly by walking after the flesh or walking after the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-18 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

- E. The fact that you cannot do both at the same time is made clear by the Scriptures.
- F. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh ...but
 1. But ...”greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)
 2. So if a person is saved they have received the Spirit of God and their body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, so the Spirit is the dominating power in their life.
- G. So that ye cannot do the things that ye would ...
 1. Almost all people are prejudiced to think of this as meaning that I cannot do the good things that I would, and always end up doing evil. (Romans 7:15-21)
 2. This is exactly the opposite of the way it should be understood.

3. In the true Christian walk we are constrained by the love of God and guided by the Spirit of God and those evil things we would otherwise do, we cannot do any longer.
4. It actually speaks of both sides being unable –
 - a) Because of the lust (desire) of the flesh, the unregenerate cannot do good, even though he knows he should and has an inward desire to do so.
 - b) The saved person, because of the desire (lust) of the Spirit that lives in him is restrained from doing the evil that is presented to him as a temptation.

H. These are the results of walking after the flesh when it comes to fruition.

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

1. These things do not define walking after the flesh.
2. However, walking after the flesh is revealed by these things
3. A carnal mind will lead a person to do these things.
4. So these works of the flesh are the evidence of a person who is walking after the flesh and not after the Spirit.

I. The same is true of walking after the Spirit.

Gal. 5:16-25 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

1. These things do not define a spiritual person.
 2. But these things will be the result of walking after the Spirit of God.
- J. Again, in these verses we see the flesh put on one side and the Spirit on the other and the fact made clear that they do not coexist, as most people think.
- K. If you are not walking after the Spirit you are walking after the flesh, and time will reveal it eventually by the manifestations of the works of the flesh.
- L. Also, it is worth noting that the “works” of the flesh is a list of transgressions, while the “fruit” of the Spirit is singular.
1. The “fruit” of the Spirit comes in one package.
 2. The “works” of the flesh may be practiced individually.
 3. A saved person will have all of the attributes of the fruit of the Spirit.
 4. An unsaved person may manifest one or more of the works of the flesh, and *some* of the attributes of the fruit of the Spirit.
 5. This makes it easier for a lost person to be deceived about their standing before God.

IV. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

- A. There is no condemnation from God.
- B. There is no condemnation from their own heart.
- C. So this promise is exclusively for those who walk after the Spirit.
- D. Those who walk after the flesh are excluded, and are under condemnation still, from God and from their own conscience.
- E. There is no way any person can read this one verse and believe that a Christian can walk in carnality and sin.
- F. A person whose purpose of life is to gratify corrupted desires, and has a carnal mind that reasons so that he can, cannot be a true Christian according to the Bible.