

Romans 8:5-11

“My Mind Is Set”

The bible is clear; there are only 2 types of people in this world, those who are saved, and those who are unsaved. You're either *in* Christ, or you're not, you either belong to Him, or you don't, you're either hot, or you're cold, for Him or against Him. You're either lost, or you've been found, forgiven or unforgiven, a child of God, or a child of Satan. There are all kinds of ways to say it but the bottom line remains the same, you've either been born again of the Spirit of God, or you're dead in sin while you live. The phrase the scripture employs here in ch 8 of the book of Romans has to do with your walk, or your way or bent of life, your lifestyle. You either live your life (or walk) according to the flesh, or according to the Spirit.

If you're in Christ than *categorically* you live your life according to the Spirit, you recall from vs 4 that Paul stated the fact that the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. and It's not to say that as a child of God that you never make a mistake *practically*, but that the perfect standard of the law is fulfilled in you *personally* by your standing *positionally*, that being in Christ. If you've surrendered your heart and your life to Christ than you're in Him and He is in you. and If He be *in* you than His righteousness is imputed *to* you, and Jesus didn't come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it, and that's exactly what He did at every point, therefore the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled *in* you who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

So understand that as we enter into this passage dealing those who live according to the flesh or according to the Spirit that Paul isn't speaking here of 2 different types of believers, one carnal, the other spiritual. He's speaking very specifically about the saved and the unsaved, that's the direct *interpretation*, we mention from time to time the fact that scripture only has 1 interpretation at any given time pertaining to any give passage. It has a specific contextual meaning, that's the interpretation, but one of the beautiful things about the scripture is that it has seemingly limitless significance/relevance in its *application*. Because we very well know that though Paul uses these terms to qualify/classify believers from nonbelievers, it's a common crisis that even the believer is given over to the things of the flesh. and Paul addressed that problem in 1st Cor 3 when he said, “...*you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*” 1 Cor 3:3 In other words even though you're a child of God you're behaving like the non-regenerate individual of the world. Because those are some of the earmarks that typify worldliness, not godliness, so though he's speaking of one's relationship to Christ; that being either *in* Christ, or not. We'll definitely be pulling out some application along the way that deals with our own personal demeanor in Christ. Do you exude a life that's led according to the Spirit, or according to the flesh?

So Paul flows out of vs 4 having established this premise, that there are 2 types of people in the world, those who walk according to the flesh, and those who walk according to the Spirit. Now here in vs 5 he begins to expound a little bit as to what it is that differentiates the 2. Not so much *positionally* because that's the given, what separates the believer from the non believer positionally is their standing in Christ, the believer is in Christ, the nonbeliever is not. But beyond that there are some things that differentiate *practically/personally* as well, primarily the position of the mind. There's a very definite and distinct difference between the mindset of the believer, and the mindset of the nonbeliever, and that mindset is established upon 2 very different foundational positions. (Look at vs 5)

Vs5

One thing you might be aware of as we read through these vs is that throughout vs 5,6,7 the mind is mentioned or implied 6 different times. The bible places a tremendous amount of emphasis upon the mind, why? Because the mind is the strategic battleground in which the war between the flesh and the Spirit rages, it becomes a key element in our lives being lived either for the things of God, or the things of the flesh. Because the way I believe will determine the way I behave, and the *way* I believe about *what* I believe begins in my mind. and Then once my mind is set a certain way it becomes fundamental in pulling out all the stops in order to achieve its own resolve. So the mind is pivotal in determining the way I'm going to live my life, therefore it really shouldn't surprise us that both the flesh and the Spirit are seeking to dominate that area of my mind. The bible tells us that we're transformed how? By the renewing of our *minds*, we'll read it later on in the book of Romans where the Holy Spirit through Paul said, "*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*" Rom 12:2 Do you see the connection there between *believing* and *behaving*? As your mind is renewed, (by taking in the *Word* of God, submitting to the *Spirit* of God) you're transformed more and more into the image of Christ, then what happens? You begin to live out (or prove) what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, translation; you begin to behave like you believe. That's why the dominance of your mind becomes so critical, because your mind seeks to (in any way possible) appease that which is dominating it, be it the flesh or the Spirit.

So the mind stays neutral (if you will) whatever's on top, it'll seek to please. You might understand it like this, when God created man, man was created after His image. God being a superior Trinity; Father, Son, and Spirit; man was created an inferior trinity, spirit, mind, and body (the mind being synonymous with the soul). Now when God created man He created him with the spirit dominating, the mind seeking to serve the spirit, and the flesh lying dormant. and Their relationship took place on the level of the spirit, however when man sinned an inversion took place, a flip-flop. So that the flesh took the dominant position, the mind now seeking to serve the flesh and the spirit lying dormant, dead, there was that immediate separation between God and man.

Now when an individual gives their life to Christ, God restores that order so that the spirit of a man is made alive, the mind is now to seek to serve the desire of the spirit (which is communion with God) and the flesh is to be put to death. The problem is that the flesh dies hard, doesn't like the idea of being crucified, so it's always fighting for that dominant position, and whichever dominates, the mind will serve. So the battle that takes place *in* the mind for that dominant position *over* the mind is the battle between the flesh and the Spirit.

Now the context with in which reading right now, there is no battle, the nonbeliever isn't fighting anything, his mind is just set on the things of the flesh. He's all about indulging the *lusts* of the flesh; his lifestyle is one that's lived *after* the flesh. Paul spoke in Phil 3:19 of the lost saying, "...*whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame -- who set their mind on earthly things.*" What does that mean, does it mean they're all about what we read there in Gal 5 where it says, "*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like;*" Gal 5:19-21 It can, and I think there are plenty of people who fit in that particular category, just all about the outlandish aspects of the flesh. But this vs isn't limited to only the worst with in the parameters of moral caliber. Remember Jesus said, "*Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek.*" Matt 6:31-32

Or to understand that another way, the thoughts of, "What am I going to eat, what am I going to drink, or what am I going to wear," are the thought patterns that typify the unregenerate. That type of thing shouldn't be consuming you as a child of God, because He's going to meet your needs. So the idea that's being communicated here is that the unregenerate continually place the emphasis of their thought life on the things of this world. Whether it be of high moral caliber, simple survival mode, or low moral caliber.

But those who live according to the Spirit are mindful of the things of the Spirit, Paul told the Colossians, "*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, **not** on things on the earth.*" Col 3:1-2 We're to be occupied with the eternal rather than the temporal, things that perish in time. John tells us, "*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*" 1 John 2:15-

Now when I speak of being *mindful* of the Spirit, or of the flesh, what do I mean by that? It might help you to think of it in the same sense as it was used when you were growing up. When one of your parents, or whoever happened to be the authority over you at the time said something like, “You better mind me!” or “Why aren’t you minding me?” or “You better be mindful of what I’m telling you!” The emphasis upon minding was what? Giving full attention *to*, being completely occupied *with*, and obedient *of* whatever direction was being given right?

Same thing here if you’re unsaved your desire is to give full attention *to* and be completely occupied *with* the things of this world. If you’re in Christ your desire is to give full attention *to* and be completely occupied *with* the things of the Spirit. That’s the aim of your heart, you don’t always hit the bull’s eye, but that’s ultimately your aim.

That’s the interpretation, as for personal application, how can you know if you as a believer are walking in the flesh, or walking in the Spirit? When I finally realized how simple the solution to that dilemma was one day it hit me like a brick. Because I want to walk in the Spirit, but how can I know that I am? The answer is right here, what preoccupies the primary emphasis of your mind?

Are you consistently occupied with the things of this world, be it things on the low moral caliber, or even simple survival mode? If so you’re in the flesh, I’m not saying its sin to think about getting a bite to eat, but if a love for food, and a desire to always have some new delicacy tantalize your taste buds is all you think about, there’s a problem. It’s not sin to want to make a good living financially, but if climbing the corporate ladder, and the desire to be rich is all you think about, it’s a problem and will serve as a snare to your walk with God. and So to with *any* of the aspects of the flesh or the things of this world, but if you’re generally in a mode that’s occupied with the things of the Spirit, be it thinking on the Word of God, how it is that you might be *pleasing* to God, singing praise in your heart to God, or just kingdom principles in general, then you’re living according to the Spirit. I suppose the bottom line is are you generally mindful of the things of men, or the things of God?

Remember that’s why Jesus rebuked Peter, he’d just heard from the Spirit, told Jesus that he believed that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Jesus affirmed that God in Heaven had revealed that to him, he’d been walking in the Spirit. Then Jesus began to speak of how He had to go to Jerusalem, be rejected of the chief priests and crucified. Peter pulled Him aside, “Listen Lord,” Peter said, “You just told me that I hear from God, so I’m telling You that You need to avoid the cross, don’t go to Jerusalem.” Remember what Jesus said?

“Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” Matt 16:23 Trying to convince Him to cater to the flesh rather than crucify the flesh, and just like that Peter slipped out of spiritual mode right into flesh mode.

So what are you mindful of? What is your mindset? Because the flesh will set your mind a certain direction, the Spirit another, I remember in the world being a “Pro Choice” kinda guy with regards to abortion. It wasn’t that I was for it, I just thought I had no business telling a lady what she could or couldn’t do, it was her choice. My mind was warped, set by the priorities and precedent of the world, the flesh. In Christ my mindset is totally different. Now I can see, that lady has no more right to end the life of her child any more than I have the right to end my child’s life, the fact that it’s still in the womb is irrelevant, it’s murder nonetheless. The only difference is my child could sort of fight back, maybe run, the child in the womb is held captive, tied down (so to speak) being subjected to whatever devices someone should choose as the torturous way in which to end the child’s life. You see the flesh will set your mind in a particular position (all about self) and Christ will set your mind in altogether other position (all about others).

Vs6

Again these are categorical statements, classifications, not consequences. In Christ is life and peace, outside of Christ, death. The carnal mind, the fleshly person knows no peace, not true peace, “*There is no peace, says the LORD, for the wicked.*” Isa 48:22 Oh they may come into a pseudo sense of serenity, but they don’t know the peace that comes from God, the peace of God that passes understanding and guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. That peace that keeps you sleeping in the bottom of the boat in the seemingly cataclysmic storms of life. You can have no peace until you *make* peace with your maker. Romans 5 tells us, “...*having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*” Rom 5:1 Apart from Christ there is no peace, nor is there life, how so? Because Jesus is the resurrection and the life, He’s the way, the truth, and the life, the words He speaks are spirit, and they are life, oh you may be breathing, but you don’t know life.

Man defines death as a separation of man’s consciousness from the body, the bible defines death as a separation of man’s consciousness from God, apart from Christ you’re dead while you live. and Unless you surrender your heart *to* Christ it’ll culminate in eternal separation from God in hell (outer darkness, the lake of fire). Not trying to be a hellfire and brimstone guy, that’s just what the bible teaches. So to be fleshly minded is death, why? Because it’s the Spirit who gives life, apart from the Spirit the bible teaches that we are dead in sin and in trespass, separated spiritually from God.

Vs7-8

Which is 1st and foremost why we were created, and you may or may not like that but the fact of the matter is that the primary reason that you were created was for God’s good pleasure. You were never meant to belong to yourself and you never have belonged to yourself. In the beginning man was subject to God, when man sinned he subjected himself to Satan, but Christ died for us that He might redeem us to Himself as was the original intent. That’s why the bible says, “...*do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*” 1 Cor 6:19-20

We were created for His pleasure, in the book of Rev ch 4 you find the 24 elders casting down their crowns before the throne and saying, *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”* Rev 4:11

Now as we mentioned earlier we meet up with God in the realm of the what? Of the spirit, our worship of God is in spirit and truth, so then those who are in the *flesh* cannot please God. Because God is Spirit, and Jesus was real clear with regards to that which is born of the flesh is flesh. Flesh and spirit are 2 totally different worlds. How then can I walk in the Spirit in the efforts of my flesh?

It can't be done, I cannot please God in the flesh, because the mindset of the flesh is, *“My will”* or *“I will”* the mindset of the Spirit is *“Thy will.”* The carnal mind is enmity against God, what does that mean? The word enmity speaks of *“hostility”* *“hatred”* the *“Vines Greek Dictionary”* defines it as, *“The opposite of agape love.”* Agape love is that *all giving, other's oriented* type of love that flows from the heart of God. That must mean that enmity is the all-consuming, self-centered type of hatred that stems from the pit of hell and has rooted itself in the recesses of our flesh. and Notice that it doesn't say that the carnal mind is *at* enmity, it's enmity in the essence, it's the quintessential expression of animosity against God, it stands for everything that God does *not*.

It's not subject to the law of God nor indeed can be, the natural man, the unsaved man cannot properly subject himself to the law of God, because the law is spiritual, the unsaved are natural, just of the flesh. It's like trying to mix oil and water, you can shake it up all you like but it'll never stay together, it'll separate, they can't coincide. We read in Jer 13:23 *“Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.”* The bible tells us that friendship with the world is enmity against God. What's your priority, what preoccupies your heart and your mind, what's your mindset? The things of this world? Or the things of Christ?

Those who are in the flesh *cannot* please God, even if the flesh camouflages itself in benevolent works so that it pleases man, our righteousness is as filthy rags before the Lord tainted by the sinful nature of our flesh, He sees right through it.

Vs9-11

One thing I'd have you see in this section of scripture is the Tri-unity of God all over this passage. In about the middle of vs 9 we have this phrase, *“The Spirit of God,”* at the end of the vs we read in reference to the same, *“The Spirit of Christ,”* now what does that tell you, it tells you that Christ is God, they're One and the same. In vs 10 we have the phrase, *“Christ is in you,”* in vs 11, *“The Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,”* and Again the bible gives credit to Christ Himself, God the Father, and God the Spirit in the resurrection, so we have here the fact that the Father is God, Jesus is God, the Spirit is God, 1 God represented in 3 persons.

Again vs 9 is a general categorization of the believer, if the Holy Spirit of God dwells in you, has your heart as His home, you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. Translation, if you're saved, you're in the Spirit, and the Spirit is in you, but if the Spirit of Christ is not in you, you're not His, you're not saved, that's not difficult to follow. Jesus either has you, or He doesn't, if the Spirit is in you, you're saved, "in the Spirit" if the Spirit of Christ isn't in you, you don't belong to Christ. Now the bible refers to this act of Christ coming in you as by the Spirit as being "Born again." We've all been born once of the flesh, but unless we're born again of the Spirit, we cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. and If we're to enter the kingdom of God we have to be born of the Spirit, why? Because God is Spirit, the flesh is enmity against God, so we have to die to self, and be born again as by the Spirit of God, that we might have a relationship with God.

Now how do I know if this has happened in my life, when the bible says, "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ he is not His," that's a pretty serious thing to be uncertain about. You're rolling some eternal dice there, the bible tells us, "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.*" 2 Cor 13:5

If the Spirit of God is in you there are some basic fundamental things that should be manifest in your life. You might ask yourself questions like; "Have I been drawn to Jesus" because the Holy Spirit will always draw you to Jesus, so the very 1st thing that needs to be addressed is, "Have I been led to Jesus and placed my faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of my sin and the salvation of my soul?" 2^{ndly} "Do I desire to *honor* Jesus?" The Holy Spirit doesn't testify of Himself, or give kudos to me, but rather He magnifies and glorifies Christ, so if the Spirit is in me there's going to be a desire within me to want to honor Jesus, to see Jesus magnified and glorified in me be it by my life, or my death. 3^{rdly} "Do I desire to be more like Jesus?" The Spirit of God wants to transform us into the image of the Son of God.

So is there a desire in me to want to be more like Jesus in my day to day life, am I taking in the Word of God, that I might become more like Christ, is it in my heart to decrease, that He might increase? You might ask, "Is the Spirit at work in my heart?" Convicting me of sin, purging me of unrighteousness, creating in me a hunger and a thirst for righteousness, am I growing in humility, when I'm aware of sin in my life do I desire to repent? Questions along those lines are a pretty good litmus test, because if the Spirit isn't in you, you really won't desire to honor the Lord, you definitely don't see the need to be more like the Lord, (I mean He may've been a good teacher and all, but there were plenty of them), and you'll have never gotten on your face and cried out to the Lord for the forgiveness of your sin and the salvation of your soul, not in truth.

The idea here is that of resurrection life both now and forever, the body is as good as dead because of sin. That's what he's saying in essence, your physical shell (outside of the rapture) will die, but to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, your spirit will live on. and In the resurrection God will give life to your mortal body, this mortal must put on immortality, for if the dead do not rise than Christ is not risen, and if Christ is not risen than your faith is futile and you're still in your sins! But Christ is risen, and if the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead dwells in You, He'll also give life to your mortal bodies *through* His Spirit who dwells in you. So much to gain in Christ, so much to lose in the world, where's your mindset? Because one thing's for sure, your mind *is* set, my mind is set. May you have a mindset on the Spirit and lead your life according to the Spirit.

Prayer Points: God thank You for the life and the peace that You've given us in Christ. Would You help us to lead our lives accordingly, according to the Spirit and not after the flesh. and God I pray for anyone here who's perhaps slid into that place of trying to walk in the Spirit through the efforts of the flesh, renew our walk in the Spirit today. May we examine ourselves soberly to ensure in fact that we do have the Spirit, and may we in the fullness thereof.

If you're here and having posed those questions to yourself you've realized, "I've never given my heart to Christ, never really though a whole lot about *honoring* Christ, but I know I need to *belong* to Christ." Than I want to pray for you today, if you want to give your heart to Jesus, God will give you a new heart and a new mind, the bible says we've been given the mind of Christ. God wants to forgive your sin and transform you by the renewing of your mind. That's what it means to repent, to change your mind, you've thought one way, now you're seeing it another. Jesus shed His blood and died for you, and He rose again the 3rd day and offers you the newness of life that can only come from Him. If any one be in Christ he's a new creation, old things pass away behold all things are made new. Jesus is making the offer to you today of new life, will you accept it, or reject it?