

No Longer Carnal # 25

Romans 8: 5-13

As we began to consider this great discourse in Romans, we discovered those who are born again in the Lord are delivered from condemnation. We are set free from the penalty of sin and the judgment it brings. As we continue to move deeper into the thoughts Paul wrote, we find that the believer is also delivered from the carnal state. We inhabit a body of flesh that desires to satisfy its lusts and cravings above all else. The fleshly body in which we dwell is not justified; it is not righteous and never will be. All believers will receive a new, glorified body when we meet the Lord, but this body of flesh is sinful and wicked.

We will discover another aspect of the Spirit's work in the lives of those who have received salvation. Although we dwell in a body of flesh that is prone to sin, we do not have to allow our flesh to dictate our lives or our existence. We can obtain victory in the Lord. In fact, once one is saved, the Spirit begins to work and transform every facet of our lives.

Our text deals with the differences in the saved man and the carnal man. These verses ought to bring joy to those who are saved, while presenting a challenge to walk closer to the Lord in order to obtain victory over the flesh. Let's take a look at the [differences](#) Paul discloses as we consider: [No Longer Carnal](#).

I. A Difference in Association (5-7) – We will discover there is a great difference in our associations, our influences, after we are saved. Notice the differences.

A. A Different Master (5) – [For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.](#) We have discussed this at length in previous studies, but we are once again reminded of the difference in who we serve. The carnal man is a servant to the flesh, seeking always to please the flesh and satisfy its great demands. The saved man, on the other hand, is now a servant of the Lord and desires the things of the Spirit. Where we once were associated with the flesh and its many desires, we now are associated with the Spirit, and desire to live according to His leading in our lives.

B. A Different Mind (6) – [For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.](#) Paul now speaks of a great difference in the minds of believers and unbelievers. The word "minded" has the idea of "*our inclination or purpose.*" It speaks of what motivates and drives us. Typically we dwell on the desires of the heart, and seek ways to please those desires. Our mind is very influential in our actions and behavior. [Prov.23:7 – For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...](#)

- There is a tremendous difference in the mind of the carnal man and the spiritual man. Their desires and purposes for life are vastly different. The carnal man dwells on satisfying his carnal nature, pleasing the flesh. Such thought, which leads to depraved action, is death. Such thinking simply reveals the true nature of the heart and the spiritual condition. These are dead in sin, being apart from Christ.
- The spiritual man is much different. His thoughts and actions reveal the great change that has taken place. He has been delivered from death, and now enjoys life and peace.

C. A Different Method (7) – [Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.](#) This speaks of the path one chooses to follow. The carnal mind stands at enmity with God, literally the enemy of God. It does not surrender to the ways of God, nor does it desire to do so. The carnal man has rejected the ways of God for righteousness, and continues to seek righteousness through his own personal, vain efforts. He has rejected the sacrifice of Christ and refuses to submit to the authority of God. In the mind of the carnal man, he is his own god.

- The carnal man does not possess the ability to please God, and in and of ourselves we don't either. However, by being in Christ, we are enabled to live a life that pleases the Lord. We are no longer an enemy of God. We can walk in a way that honors the Lord and bring forth fruit for His glory. We must guard against the desires and tendencies of the flesh, but we can overcome!

II. A Difference in Ambition (8-9) – Here Paul discusses the difference in the ambitions or motivations between the carnal and spiritual man. Consider:

A. The Truth (8) – [So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.](#) Paul reveals an undeniable fact: the carnal man cannot please God. It is utterly impossible for him to do so. Really, this should come as no surprise. He does not seek the things of God. His motives are not God-centered. His thoughts are continually on satisfying the appetite of the flesh. Since the carnal man cannot please God, and really has no desire to do so, his ambitions in life are always going to be centered around the flesh, and never the things of God.

B. The Tragedy (9b) – [Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.](#) The carnal man has never experienced regeneration through the Spirit. He has never been delivered from sin and the desires of the flesh. He has not been justified in the eyes of God and placed within the body of

Christ. He does not have the Holy Spirit within to guide and keep him. He continues left to his own desires and depravity. He does not belong to the Lord.

- There is no doubt this is a great tragedy. We often wonder why people don't do better in life. Why don't they choose a different path? Why don't they clean their lives up? I know that we all have a conscious that reveals right and wrong, but those apart from Christ in salvation are left to themselves. The truth is: they can't straighten out their lives. They don't have the desire or the ability. Coming to a saving relationship with Christ is the only hope of deliverance from the flesh!

C. The Triumph (9a) – *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.* Here Paul reveals the essential element in overcoming the flesh and its desires: being indwelt by the Spirit of God. This is only achieved in salvation. There is no other way to possess the Spirit of God and receive deliverance from the flesh.

- It is comforting to know that God made a means of escape from the flesh. We do not have to live life apart from the Lord, continually failing in life by indulging the flesh. We can be set free in Christ the Lord and experience victory over the flesh! At the moment of salvation we are baptized into the body of Christ, receiving the Spirit, and enabled to live triumphantly in Christ. *1 John 3:24 – And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

III. A Difference in Action (10-13) – Our associations and ambitions ultimately affect our actions. Paul discusses the outward results of inward desires. Consider:

A. The Transformation (10-11) – *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* ^[11] *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* Here Paul discusses the radical and complete transformation that takes place when one comes to salvation in Christ. The body of sin is dead as we are resurrected in new life through Christ. The old man of sin dies and we become a new creature in Christ. The awesome power that raised Jesus from the dead now dwells within us through the Spirit. When the old man of sin dies, we are made alive in Christ through the Spirit.

- Now I know all of this happens within the believer, but I can assure you that such a radical change within will completely transform the outward appearance and behavior as well. People act based on their inward desires. What we possess in the heart will eventually be acted upon. When the depravity of sin is replaced with the righteousness of Christ, our behavior will change!

- Paul does not imply that we will live our lives completely free of sin, but that our desires have been changed forever. The things we used to despise, we will desire, and the things we used to desire, we will now despise.

B. The Separation (12) – [Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.](#)

Again we are reminded of the change in servant-hood. We are no longer enslaved to the flesh, but have become the servants of Christ. We have been bought with a price and are now debtors to Christ. Our lives should be lived with the desire to honor Him. Why would anyone want to return to a life of bondage? We must seek separation from the desires of the flesh as we live for Christ.

C. The Admonition (13) – [For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do](#)

[mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.](#) This further confirms the eternal truth of life and death.

Those who remain in the flesh, enslaved to sin will die a spiritual death, while those who put to death the deeds of the flesh will live eternally. Being delivered from the flesh affords eternal life in Christ when this physical life is over.

- Paul also speaks of a very practical application as well. We know that none of us live perfect lives, but we must strive to reach it. Since we have been delivered from the flesh and sin in Christ, we must crucify the flesh and its desires. If we continue to live a carnal life even after we are saved, we can expect to face the chastening hand of God. Unrepentant sin will be dealt with of the Lord. Every believer ought to desire a life that honors the Lord and bears witness of the great change He has wrought in our lives. We have all we need to live victoriously in Christ.

Conclusion: There is no doubt each of us can identify with the passage we have considered. Each of us is in one of these categories. Our associations, ambitions, and actions are driven by the inner man. Those who are in the flesh seek the ways of the flesh while those in the Spirit seek the ways of God. Where do you stand today? Are you carnal, seeking to satisfy the flesh or are you spiritual, seeking to satisfy the Lord?

The believer must be aware of the continual battle that rages within. Although we are saved, resurrected a new creature in Christ, we continue to face the desires of the body in which we dwell. We must crucify those desires in order to live for the Lord. If there are needs in your life, Jesus is the only solution. He alone can deliver from sin and enable you to live for Him!