

“The Mind Of The Flesh And The Spirit”

“For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:5). In verses five through eight of the eighth chapter of Romans, Paul contrasts two different mind sets or attitudes: the mind of the flesh and the mind of the spirit. These two minds are in exact opposition to each other and lead to two different destinations. The apostle has already shown that they who have the mind of the flesh will be condemned; those who walk after the spirit will not be. Notice that in verse six the apostle shows that the mind of the flesh is death. In verse seven he shows that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; is not subject to God’s law, nay verily it cannot be. He shows that those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom. 8:8). Since those who have the mind of the Spirit are the exact opposite of those with the mind of the flesh, it may be reasonably seen that the mind of the Spirit is life and peace; makes one God’s friend; can be and is subject to God’s law and those in the Spirit can and do please God.

Then Paul writes, *“But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His”* (Rom. 8:9). In verse eight the apostle spoke of those who were *“in the flesh;”* in verse nine he tells of those who are *“not in the flesh.”* Obviously when he speaks of *“flesh;”* he does not refer to our bodily frame. We can please God in our body and the Hebrew writer speaks of the this possibility when he wrote, *“And without faith it is impossible to please God,”* leading to the conclusion that with faith one may please God! To live in the flesh is to live and pursue solely our carnal appetites. Some of the Ephesians had been dead because they lived in *“the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind”* (Eph. 2:3). When are we in the Spirit? According to Paul, we are in the Spirit when *“the Spirit of God dwells in us”* (Rom. 8:9). We are in the flesh when we *“have not the Spirit of Christ.”*

These verses are sometimes used to teach that the Holy Spirit personally dwells in God’s children. These verses speak not of the Person of the Holy Spirit but rather of an attitude gendered by the Holy Spirit. The Philippians were urged to *“have this mind in you which was also in Christ”* (Phil. 2:5). The writer could have as easily and properly written, *“Have this spirit in you.”* Those who possess the mind of Christ are those who have the attitude that results for following the Spirit’s teaching. In short: it is in such people that the *“Spirit of Christ dwells.”* Notice the various things which results if one *“has the spirit of Christ.”* If such is the case then 1) such are not in the flesh; 2) the body is dead because of sin; 3) the spirit is life because of

righteousness and 4) the spirit gives life to their mortal bodies (Rom. 8:9-11).

If Christ is in us, the body is dead because of sin. Once more may we be reminded that the "*body*" that is dead, stands for the desires of the flesh. The body, the flesh, is crucified because living after flesh brings death. But, when the body is "*dead*;" the spirit is life, the ruling force in the heart which brings righteousness or justification. And, if all that is true, if that attitude of him who raised Christ from the dead is in us, then that gives purpose or direction to the life we live on this earth. NEXT: "We Are Debtors."

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