

SANCTIFICATION VERSUS CARNALITY

TEXT: ROMANS 8:5-11

INTRODUCTION:

1. Romans chapter 8 deals with our deliverance from the power of indwelling sin. Union with Christ means victory over indwelling sin.
2. Being “in Christ” (8:1) means we are identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. We enter into union with Christ by faith.
3. Being “in Christ” means to be resting in Him, depending upon Him, trusting in Him, and believing in Him.
4. Romans 8 teaches there is no more condemnation for sin (8:1); no more control by sin (8:2); and no more continuance in sin (8:3, 4).
5. When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are born again, we receive a new power – the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit delivers us from the law of sin and death (8:2). The “law of sin and death” is the authority that sin had over us before we were saved.
6. In Romans 8:2, the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” It is on account of the Holy Spirit’s acting as a law of life, delivering us from the law of sin and death, that there is now no condemnation for sin, and no more control by sin.
7. This does not mean that the original "law of sin and death" (8:2b) has ceased to operate.
8. What the Bible teaches is that a higher law has come into force -- "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (8:2).
9. The former overcomes the latter by the principle of counteraction.
10. An airplane should fall from the sky by the law of gravitation, but it is upheld by the law of aerodynamics. This is the law of counteraction, and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" is a higher law than "the law of sin and death" (8:2).
11. The higher law sets us free from the lesser law.
12. Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary says, "To walk after the flesh means to indulge sensual appetites, and to live in sin (Rom. 8:4)."
13. We are not to walk after the flesh. We are to walk "after the Spirit" (8:1, 4). The conflict described in Romans 7 is not the normal Christian life (cf. 8:5-11).
14. My outline is adapted from W.H. Griffith's commentary on the book of Romans. In my opinion it is the best commentary on Romans.

I. THE TWO NATURES (8:5)

1. Two groups of people are described here -- "they that are after the flesh" and "they that are after the Spirit" (8:5).
2. In Romans 8:1-4, the apostle Paul has shown that unless a man is justified he cannot possibly be sanctified. Those who are "in Christ Jesus" (8:1) are not condemned (they have been declared righteous; they are justified). They walk "after the Spirit" (8:1).
3. Now in Romans 8:5-11, Paul shows that if a man is not sanctified, he cannot possibly be justified (cf. 8:8, 9) because sanctification is the evidence of justification.
4. The word "flesh" (8:4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13) refers to our old Adamic nature. The unsaved, unregenerate man who lives his life without God, "minds the things of the flesh" (8:5), and is "carnally minded" (8:6).
5. Regarding the reference to the "flesh" in Romans 8, W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "It implies the entire unrenewed life lived apart from God; and it should be carefully observed that this does not necessarily mean a gross, vicious life, for the flesh as unrenewed may be educated, refined and cultured" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).
6. The flesh can be very religious too, but it is unacceptable to God (8:8).
7. Our Lord said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:6, 7).
8. Therefore, those who are born again "are in Christ Jesus," and they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

II. THE TWO TENDENCIES (8:5, 6)

1. Romans 8:5 says, "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." A man lives according to his nature, and if he lives his life in the flesh, he will "mind the things of the flesh" (8:5).
2. The whole bent and tendency of a man's nature will be towards that which actuates him and drives him.
3. If a man is "carnally minded" (8:6), then his life is occupied with the things of the flesh. And if a man is "spiritually minded" (8:6), then his life is centered around the things of God -- the Bible, prayer, church, winning souls, etc.
4. Genesis 1:11 refers to "the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind," and in Genesis 1 we see the phrase "after his kind" ten times.
5. This is true in the spiritual realm as well as the physical realm. Regarding man's character and conduct, fruit always comes according to its kind (Thomas, *Romans*).

6. The outcome of carnality is death, and the outcome of godliness is life and peace (8:6). "Death" in the Bible often refers to separation from God. Those who die without Christ suffer the "second death" (Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8).
7. "Life and peace" (Romans 8:6) refers to everlasting life -- not just eternity in heaven, but to the quality of life in this life.
8. Three times in the Gospel of John, Jesus said, "He that believeth on me hath (present possession) everlasting life" (John 3:36; 5:24; 6:47).
9. John 3:36 says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."
10. Not "will abide on him," but "abideth on him" right now. John 3:18 says the lost sinner is "condemned already."
11. Romans 8:7 says, "Because the carnal mind (the mind of the flesh) is enmity against God..." "Enmity" refers to the sinner's hostility and opposition and hatred for God and for the things of God.
12. Romans 1:30 refers to sinners as "haters of God." They are not only lovers of sin, they are haters of God.
13. The carnal mind is "not subject (in submission) to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7b). It is unable to submit to the law of God because of the power of the flesh.
14. Only the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit can deliver a sinner who is controlled by the flesh (Romans 8:2).
15. This inability to please God in the flesh was vividly described in Romans 7:15-21.
16. Inability and hostility (enmity -- 8:7) characterize the carnal mind.

III. THE TWO SPHERES (8:8-11)

1. Two spheres are described as "in the flesh" and "in the Spirit" (8:8, 9). "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (8:8).
2. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (8:9b). A man who is not indwelt by the Holy Spirit is not saved.
3. Referring to the phrase "the body is dead" in Romans 8:10, Frederic Godet said, "The human body bears within itself from its formation the germ of death; it begins to die the instant it begins to live."
4. "The body of this death" (Romans 7:24) is "the body of sin" referred to in Romans 6:6. Romans 5:12 explains the introduction of sin and death. Since the fall, man's body is a body of sin and a body of death.

5. In Genesis 2:17, the LORD said to Adam, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
6. That has not changed -- "the body is dead because of sin" even "if Christ be in you"(Romans 8:10).
7. "But the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (8:10b). Christ is in us, and we are in Christ. Our Lord said in John 14:20, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."
8. And because we are in Christ, and Christ is in us, we have victory and power and peace and eternal life (Romans 8:11).
9. Some have taught that "the Spirit" in Romans 8:10 is man's spirit, specifically the spirit of the regenerate man. However, the King James Bible translators used the capital S to indicate this is the Holy Spirit, and the context indicates it is the Holy Spirit (cf. 8:9, 11).
10. In any event, when a man is born again, his human spirit is indwelt, sealed, possessed, directed, and governed by the Spirit of God.
11. Because of God's imputed righteousness (8:10b), a believer is alive spiritually. The eternal, spiritual life of God is implanted by the indwelling Holy Spirit, even though a believer's body is "dead," that is mortal and subject to death.
12. "Quicken" (8:11) means "to cause to live, make alive, give life." The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is our guarantee of the future resurrection of the body.
13. Second Corinthians 1:22 says God "hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." The "earnest of the Spirit" is the guarantee of the future resurrection.
14. Second Corinthians 5:5 also refers to "the earnest of the Spirit."

CONCLUSION:

To summarize:

- The Holy Spirit delivers the believer from the condemnation of the flesh (Romans 8:1, 2).
- The Holy Spirit delivers the believer from the power of the flesh (Romans 8:3-8).
- The Holy Spirit delivers the believer from the power of death (Romans 8:9-11).