

Romans 8:4–9

4[In order] that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

In the Flesh or in the Spirit

Romans 8:4-9

The Lord wants us to recognize living the Christian life is not easy. It requires supernatural power from God Himself. We do not remain the same after God justified us because the third person of the Godhead took up residence in our lives. This is the major point of this discussion in our text today.

After stating the basis of our righteousness, the death of Christ, Paul described who these are who are justified. We can know we belong to the Lord and have no condemnation because ***“He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)***

How do we know if we are one of those people? The Apostle answered the question by describing the difference between those who are ***“in the flesh”*** and those who are ***“in the spirit.”***

I. The Contrast between Those in the Flesh and Those in the Spirit (v. 4-6)

II. Why Are They So Different? (v. 7-9)

I. The Contrast between Those in the Flesh and Those in the Spirit (v. 4-6)

“[In order] that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, Who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. (Romans 8:4-6)

A. The second phrase in **verse 4** does not indicate we will somehow become sinless. Rather, it tells us how we can know whether we have been justified or not. God does not save people and then leave them alone to flounder. He changes all

those He saves. There are only two kinds of people in the world. Those who are in the flesh, the unsaved, and those in the Spirit, those whom God saved.

B. There are three differences between those who are in the flesh and those in the Spirit. First, those in the Spirit walk differently from those in the Flesh. ***“Who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”*** How do their walks differ? Do you remember ***Galatians 5:18? “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”*** Then Paul included two lists. Galatians 5:19-21 defines what the flesh produces. On the other hand, 5:22 describes what the Spirit of God produces, if we are walking in the Spirit of God. We call this the Fruit of the Spirit.

C. Second, in ***verse 5***, Paul wrote that those who are in the flesh and those who are in the Spirit think differently. ***“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”***

The word translated “set their mind upon” is a little difficult to translate. It means to focus one’s mind, heart, and spiritual reality on something.

The person who lives according to the flesh spends his or her life concentrating on the things of the flesh (physical realities), while those who live according to the Spirit focus on the things of the Spirit (spiritual realities like our relationship to Christ and sin).

This is to help us identify if we are in the flesh or in the Spirit. ***“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 2:15–17)***

D. Third, those in the flesh and those in the Spirit find two different qualities in their lives. ***“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.” The end of a life lived in the flesh is spiritual death, separation from God for all eternity. There is only emptiness and hopelessness for the unconverted person. However, the person in the Spirit finds “life and peace.” (v. 6)*** The saved person finds eternal life and peace that transcends all knowledge guarding his life.

II. Why Are They So Different? (v. 7-9)

“Because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” (Romans 8:7-9)

A. To accent the major difference between these two states, Paul paints a horrifying picture of ***“those who are in the flesh.”*** He wrote three things.

1. ***“The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God.”*** People in the flesh are not neutral in spiritual areas. They are against God because they want to be God.

2. The reason the one who is in the flesh is hostile to God is because ***“[The mind-set of the flesh] does not submit itself to the law of God.”*** Not only does he not try to keep the Law of God, he does not want to submit to God. This is because he is not able to submit to God.

3. This leads to the horrible truth. ***“Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”*** Because this is true, they cannot enter into the praise in ***Revelation 4:11***. Those in the flesh cannot do what the creation was created to do. ***“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And for Your pleasure they exist and were created.”***

B. Now Paul turns the coin over. ***“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” (v. 9)***

There is such a remarkable difference between those who are saved and those who are lost because when God saved us, He gave us the Holy Spirit to live in us. The Holy Spirit took up residence in our lives at our salvation. We know He lives in us because God keeps working on us.

Application

1. Salvation is vitally important. If you never took Christ at His word and trusted Him alone for salvation, you are still in the flesh. You are on the road to a Christless eternity and no matter how you try, you cannot please God.
2. How is your walk? If you are one who is saved, do you see the evidence in your walk? Although you constantly battle sin, is the fruit of the Spirit becoming more pronounced in your life?
3. Do we recognize the wonder of this blessing? The Holy Spirit is our seal and down-payment. He constantly is using the scalpel of the Word of God on us. He weighs the thoughts and intents of our hearts and gives us life and peace when nothing else avails.

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