

Walking after the Spirit

– *What minding the things of the Spirit looks like* –
Romans 8:2-6
2/21-2016

“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. (:5)

REVIEW

The central idea: if we are Christians, our way of thinking should be utterly *revolutionized!*

Paul says that when he was a child he thought like a child. Since then he put away childish things (I Cor. 13:11). Recall, for example, how a child might think about:

1. What made for a good day – when simple personal interests were met.
2. Irritations – the way to respond is to cry and complain.
3. Unseen dangers – not known or considered. Example: propane leak.
4. Preparations for the future – no thoughts. Live for the moment.
5. Pleasure of God – never enters the mind. Interest is in personal pleasure.

Our new way to think: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 2:5)

Our new perspective: from the throne of God (Col. 3:1-3).

Our new help: “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” (Phil. 3:15)

Yes, a revolution is occurring in Christians. God has “delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” (Col. 1:13) What has been the interest of “the power of darkness”? Not savoring not the things of God, but “those that be of men.” (Matt. 16:23) See:

1. “But the natural man receiveth the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Cor. 2:14)
2. The enemies of the cross of Christ “mind earthly things.” (Phil. 3:19)
3. We are warned, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” (Col. 2:8)
4. So we read in our text today: Rom. 8:5a, 6a, 7-8.

What does “minding the things of the Spirit” look like in normal, everyday life? Here are 7 answers:

1. Always look for the biblical principle involved.

A. Small minds discuss people; average minds discuss events; great minds discuss ideas.

B. So discern the ideas. Ask questions such as:

1. Is God being glorified? (I Cor. 10:31)
2. Are the Scriptures being honored? (II Tim. 3:16)
3. Is the heart being guarded? (Prov. 4:23)

C. For example, look for the issue behind evolution: Ps. 95:6.

2. Always look for how to pray for people.

- A. Every interaction, especially every conflict, is a revelation on how to pray.
- B. For believers – “Brethren, pray for us.” (I Thess. 5:25). For example, if love is perceived in the church – Col. 1:8-12.
- C. For enemies – “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (Matt. 5:44)
For example, if a hornet's nest of enemies is disturbed – Acts 8:23.

3. Always look for opportunities to witness with our speech.

- A. To the saved – “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” (Eph. 4:29)
- B. To the lost – “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” (Col. 4:5-6)
- C. For example, a religious leader defining a presidential candidate to be non-Christian because he would build a wall on our southern border. Be ready with verses such as Eph. 2:8-9, John 3:36.

4. Always look for ways to serve people.

- A. Remember, God puts the highest priority on our being servants: “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.” (Matt. 23:11)
- B. Being a servant requires an active, willing, others-oriented mind: “For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”
(Matt. 25:36-37)
- C. For example, a man comes with a pressing need for a listening ear – Isa. 61:1-3.

5. Always look for promptings to examine self.

- A. An effective way to stay mindful of spiritual things is to take the issues that arise as opportunities for personal review and growth.
- B. The Scriptures teach: “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.” (Rom. 2:1)
- C. See also: “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Matt. 7:3)
- D. For example, if someone's priorities appear inconsistent, the Spirit's prompting is, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” (II Cor. 13:5a)

6. Always be on watch for the enemy.

- A. Our charge is: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” (I Pet. 5:8)
- B. That means we must not be “ignorant of his devices.” (II Cor. 2:11b)
- C. Therefore, we must “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.” (I Thess. 5:21-22)
- D. So we make the tough and careful choices about radio, music, commercials, movies, work, friendships, partnerships, leisure time, cultural standards, etc.

7. Always look for cause to worship God.

- A. David worshiped when he looked up – “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained....” (Ps. 8:3)
- B. He worshiped as he considered *all* God's works – “Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” (Ps. 107:8)
- C. So whether we are looking at a baby, or snow, or birds, or our church ... “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.” (Ps. 95:6)

DISCUSSION

1. This sermon begins with a list of 5 ways that children think. For each of those ways, make the application to how an adult may still think wrongly and to how a Christian should think. Also, can you list additional examples of childish thinking that a Christian should shed?

2. What biblical principles are involved in some issues currently before the public? (Example topics: presidential primaries, climate change, gender bathroom use, definition of a Christian, etc.)

3. Please give an illustration from your life (something that has happened or you imagine can happen) for each of the 7 guidelines on how to walk through a day minding the things of the Spirit.
- A. Look for the biblical principle involved.

 - B. Look for how to pray for people.

 - C. Look for opportunities to witness with your speech.

 - D. Look for ways to serve people.

 - E. Look for promptings to self-examine.

 - F. Look for spiritual danger.

 - G. Look for cause to worship God.