

LIFE OR DEATH

Romans 8:6-7

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.
Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be.

REVIEW

I. Comments on :6

“To be carnally minded is death” – Literally, “to mind the things of the flesh.” Cut open that mind, as you would a gizzard, and you will find the gravel of the world that does not know God. It is thinking and desiring and submitting to the impulses of the sinful flesh. It is ...

1. Not trusting in the Lord with all your heart
2. Not counting all the trials in life joy
3. Not giving thanks in all circumstances
4. Not only saying that which builds up
5. Not praying for your enemies
6. Not loving God with all your heart or your neighbor as yourself
7. Not love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance

But instead, it is a confusion of belief and unbelief, commitments and concessions. It is thinking on adultery, fornication, uncleanness, the world's idols, hatred, gossip, slander, drinking, partying, revelings, pursuit of pleasure and the like.

Carnal mindedness not only *ends* in death, but now *is* death. Such souls are *dead while they live* (I Tim. 5:6). See: “And you hath he quickened, *who were dead* in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. 2:1)

Look at any death and what do you see? Something unnatural, wrong, disturbing, bizarre, cut off, cold, distant, unproductive. So is carnal mindedness. It is shown here to be everything contrary to God's intention. It is not up but down, not good but evil, not building up but tearing down, not life but death.

“To be spiritually minded is life and peace” – Literally, “to mind the things of the spirit.” It is to think on things that the Holy Spirit of God is promoting, to follow the flow and impulses and longings of the Spirit of God. It is having the peace of God which, passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ so that whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, we think on *these* things (Phil. 4:8). That is life as it should be. That is true life. That is peace with God.

II. Comments on :7

“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be.” – Here is a verse that should sober up a person. The carnal mind is enmity against God! What is enmity? It is the state of being an enemy. It means to be against, opposed, hostile towards. It means a fixed and rooted hatred. It is animosity, antagonism, antipathy, bitterness, loathing, malice, venom. It is bad blood. Examples: the Catholic–Protestant conflict in Northern Ireland or the Muslim–Jew conflict in the Mideast.

Friends, that is what carnal mindedness is toward God. Compare: “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” (James 4:4)

Do we see this? Do we know enemies of God? Are we one? How could this be so?

1. Sin is an assertion of self-supremacy. Sin's claims on a soul are in *rivalry* with those of God. This is like a tug of war or a duel. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." (Gal. 5:17)
2. But this is not like a friendly game of football. There is true hatred, true loathing, here. Jesus says the world *hates* Him "because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." (John 7:7) And Jesus says to His disciples, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19)
3. See II Kings 22:31 (Syrians after Ahab). Sin says something very similar to this. Here is how sin is to be understood as it relates to God. Sin's opposition is not so much against any command of God but against God Himself who would command man. "The carnal mind is enmity against God."
4. The carnal mind's message to God is what we find in Job 21:14 – "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Listen:
 - A. "Fools *despise* wisdom and instruction." (Acts 1:7)
 - B. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil *hateth* the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." (John 3:19-20)
 - C. How else do you explain people holding to the ideas of evolution, abortion, or gender confusion? These are not matters of logic. They are matters of people at enmity with God saying, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."
5. In fact, let's look at how all violations of the law are essentially offenses against God ...

I. THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME. Primary application: sun god, fertility god, family gods, etc. Secondary: a god is any person or thing whose desires we honor over God's. Exs:

- A. The god of pleasure – "whose god is their belly" (Phil. 3:19). People with this god are called "the enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18). In another place, they are called "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:4); there they are "traitors." In yet another place they are called "servants of sin" in contrast to servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:16). Gluttony, sensuality, etc. all are jabs at the sufficiency, the desires, and the power of our God.
- B. The god of popularity – lovers of "the praise of men more than the praise of God." (See John 12:42-43 for a fuller picture).
- C. The god of philosophy – "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy...and not after Christ." (Col. 2:8) Here is a jab at the intelligence of God.
- D. The god of possessions – See Mark 8:36-38. Note that materialism here is linked to being ashamed of Christ and His words.

II. THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE. Primary application: fashioning a likeness of God according to one's perceptions or desires. The offense: out of ignorance or bias rejecting God as He *is*. Examples of self-designed gods:

- A. A neutral god – who doesn't have an opinion on issues where we want unchecked liberty.
- B. A works-oriented god – whose gift of Christ was insufficient, so our works must be added to influence his treatment of us.

- C. A time-flexible god – who condones our priorities and delays, whose warnings are idle.
- D. An elusive god – who can't seem to be found or experienced, so the assurance of his availability is a cruel hoax.

III. THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN. We are not to curse, granted. But ignorance of the names of God or thinking and acting contrary to their message about God are also offenses against Him. For example:

- A. If we can't get over sorrow: we misrepresent "The Balm of Gilead."
- B. If we view immorality: we mock "The Sun of Righteousness."
- C. If we fear what people can do to us: we take lightly "The Almighty God."
- D. If we live hypocritically in private: we dis "The All-seeing God."
- E. If we are bored: we take in vain the One whose name is "Wonderful."
- F. If our souls are in turmoil: we reproach "The Prince of Peace."

IV. REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY. We dishonor God if by our actions we communicate that He has not provided sufficiently for us to get our work done when we should or, more importantly, for us to rest in His completed work. Jesus Christ has finished the work of our restoration of God, and it is ours but to rest in what He finished. Otherwise we may be:

- A. Rejecting God's design
- B. Rejecting God's authority
- C. Rejecting God's necessity

V. HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER. If we disobey, resist, or murmur in our hearts against any God-delegated authority or if we do not proactively honor these authorities...

- A. We refuse to have God reign over us.
- B. We assert our own "god-ness."
- C. We thus rank our own merit over God's to reign. We are saying, "He is not worthy. He does not warrant my willing submission. I will be as a god. I will know what is good and what is evil."

VI. THOU SHALT NOT KILL. Any censorial spirit against people is a reaction against their Maker, for in the image of God made He man (Gen. 9:6). "Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker." (Prov. 17:5) "If they hate you, know they're hating me. They who hate me hate my father." (John 16:18, 23) "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20) "Inasmuch as you do it unto these the least of my brethren, that you do unto me." (Matt. 25:40)

VII. THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY. Any and all sensual sin is included here. It says:

- A. God's design for habitation is unjust and unrealistic.
- B. God has failed to provide sufficient "legal" relief.
- C. He does not see or, worse yet, does not exist.

VIII. THOU SHALT NOT STEAL. What does thievery say but ...

- A. God is not alert enough to see through my subtle trickery.
- B. Or, if so, God is not a requiring Judge.
- C. God is not a sufficient Provider, so I need to steal.
- D. God does not merit all credit, so I will take it for some things.

IX. THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS. This command prohibits not only blatant lying but also misrepresenting what life is about or who God is. We might be communicating that:

- A. God is not honest.
- B. It's not important to reflect what is true about Him.
- C. It's not important to fulfill what He gave us as our life calling (to bear true witness to Him).

X. THOU SHALT NOT COVET. Coveting displays dissatisfaction with the person, provision, and methods of God. It presumes that something more or something other than God will give us what we need. Really, we're just saying Christ is not enough. See Deut. 32:15, Eze. 16:49-50, Amos 6:4ff, Isa. 3:16ff, and our culture today.

Closing analogy: boys beating on a snowman actually strike the maker of the snowman. So, all sin is enmity against God. So we see in Ex. 20:5b, Num. 14:2, 27. To fight against the Lord is death. To accept His means of forgiveness is life and peace. Our decision today is a statement on God.

DISCUSSION

1. What is a carnal mind? Give illustrations.

2. What does it mean that the carnal mind is enmity against God? Be sure to define "enmity."

3. Why is a carnal mind at enmity with *God*? Why can't a person just not like some of God's rules but still like God Himself?

4. Memorize the 10 Commandments. Be prepared to discuss how you have broken each of them and how each failure has involved enmity against God.