

Title: How To Be Spiritually Minded

Series: *Living Free*

Text: Romans 8:3-11

NOTE TO LEADERS: This is a slightly abridged version of Pastor Dan's sermon notes, with the addition of potential discussion questions, for your own personal study and to use in your life group meeting. Please review these notes well in advance of your meeting, add your own questions and direct the discussion as you see fit. The key to a good discussion is to keep it simple, to ask several "open-ended" questions and to give opportunity for everyone in the group to contribute.

Romans 8 describes Spirit-filled, Spirit-led living that is takes the *positional* truth of Romans 6 and makes it a daily experience.

Text: Romans 8:3-11 – Ask someone in the group to read these verses.

3. *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,*

- "God did" what mankind could not do
- The likeness of sinful flesh did not mean that Jesus was like sinful man – but He actually was flesh (**John 1**) and "*God made Christ Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*" **II Cor.5:21**

4. *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.*

- The law has a requirement of perfect fulfillment
- *Do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit* is used also in **8:1**

5. *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.*

- Two lives that have nothing in common: one set on the flesh and one set on the Spirit

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

- Two lives: one leads to death and the other to life and peace
- Life and peace are common OT themes. All the good things God has are summed up in the word "life" and "peace." This is the idea of shalom.

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

- God's law is spiritual, good and righteous and to disobey it causes enmity with God.

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

- Those who walk according to the impulses and desires of the flesh – our lower unredeemed nature – can never please God.
- **Eph 5:10** *trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord*
- The question is not always "Does God accept me?" but "Am I pleasing the Lord?"
- All things are acceptable but not all things are profitable.

9. *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.*

- When we are saved the Spirit of Christ comes within us. It qualifies us and establishes us.
- Spirit of Christ is the same thing as the Holy Spirit and Spirit of God.

10. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

I. The body is death – i.e. the flesh is death while the Spirit is ‘life’.

11. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

II. This certainly speaks of a future resurrection where we receive glorified bodies but it also speaks of a promise for today of divine healing. Quicken implies to shake to life, resuscitate, and rescue.

I. Shaping our Mind-Attitude-Set

Paul says in **Romans 8:6**, “To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.” Being spiritually minded is a matter of life and death.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Turning to our text today, what does Paul mean when speaks of the “mind” in these verses?
- What does it mean in common, every day terms to have a “mind-set”? Give an example from your own life?
- In Paul’s terms then, what does it mean to have a “mind-set” – a mind “set” on the flesh; a mind “set” on the Spirit? Discuss this.
- Paul writes in 8:6 that the mind set on the Spirit is “life and peace.” Can anyone share a testimony of how God transformed a particular pattern of thinking in your own life that led to life and peace for you? Tell us about how this happened and your role in this process.

Mind - Phronema – is best translated Mind set – what one has in mind. It is the act of understanding and of will. It describes a way of thinking.

The phrase “set the mind on the Spirit” translates a phrase, *phronēma tou pneumatōs*— meaning “mindset of the Spirit.” There is no good one-word English equivalent for *phronēma*. It is not just “mind” but also “attitude.” It is “mindset” but also “attitude-set.” **It is the total disposition of our mind.**

To say that we have a “*phronēma* of the Spirit” is to say that the Spirit is shaping our mind-attitude-set according to his own. It exalts Christ and values God and cherishes the Word of God and sees people and things with an ever-present God consciousness

Four verses using *phronema* (mindset) in Romans 8

- **8:5** those who live according to the flesh set their **minds (phronema)** on the things of the flesh
- **8:6** to be carnally minded (*phronema*) is death, but to be spiritually **minded (phronema)** is life and peace
- **8:7** because the carnal **mind(phronema)** is enmity against God
- **Romans 8:27** And he that searches the hearts knows what is the **mind of the Spirit**, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God

A. Translations of Romans 8:6

- *Now the mind of the flesh [which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit] is death [death that comprises all the miseries arising from sin, both here and hereafter]. But the mind (of the [Holy] Spirit is life and [soul] peace [both now and forever] Amplified Bible)*
- *To be absorbed in worldly human things is death; but to be absorbed in the things of the Spirit is life and peace (Westminster Press)*
- *If your sinful nature controls your mind, there is death. But if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace. (NLT)*

II. The mind set on the Spirit –

More literally this phrase is “the mind possessed by the Spirit.” This describes a mind which is controlled by or dominated by the Holy Spirit

- *"do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit" Eph 5:18*
 - *Be filled* = to be controlled by and to occur continually - present imperative

A person with such a "mindset" of the Spirit is the one who will enjoy the life and peace of God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Is it contradictory to be “spiritually minded” while at the same time using the full capabilities of our intellect? Explain
- How can we be “spiritually minded” in the routine activities of our daily life (e.g. in the workplace, at school, at home, etc.)? Can you share an example from your own life?

A. It is not anti-intellectualism

At many times in history, Christians reacted against the lifelessness of theology. This led to the Great Awakenings, the rise of Pietism, Kierkegaard's rejection of state Lutheranism, and the charismatic renewals. Sometimes, however, Christians today replace dead orthodoxy with a spirituality that can be anti-intellectual activism.

- E.g. We need good theologians/scholars and well-trained pastors in the body of Christ. In the world of ideas we need our best minds – but never at the expense of the Holy Spirit

B. It is not Gnosticism

The mind set on the Spirit is not the belief that the human body is sinful or that the desires of the body are inherently evil. It is not supra-spiritualism.

- E.g. You can be spiritually minded while working a job, serving your family, and living responsible lives.

III. The Role of the Holy Spirit

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Pastor Dan mentioned two roles of the Holy Spirit in our lives – to *monitor* our heart and to *mentor* our heart.

- What do you think it means for the Holy Spirit to *monitor* to our heart? To *mentor* our heart?
- Is there a difference between these two roles? Discuss this. Why are both roles important?
- Can you think of some examples that illustrate how the Holy Spirit has worked in these two ways in your own life?
- What is *our role* in allowing the Spirit to function in these ways in our lives?
- When you think of the Holy Spirit as your *mentor*, what kinds of things come to mind? How might this influence the way you go about the daily routines of your life? How can we further develop this *mentoring* quality in our relationship with the Spirit?

A. **The Holy Spirit *monitors* our heart**

The Holy Spirit discerns the motives and desires of any heart that is open and convicts us of our sins. It warns us of approaching temptation and provides a way of escape.

The Holy Spirit inhibits sinful behavior by enhancing our internal resistance.

The mind-attitude set that is spiritual is one where the Spirit is keeping watch over your heart continually.

- E.g. Like a heart monitor on a hospital patient, the Holy Spirit monitors our attitudes, actions, responses, motivations, etc

B. **The Holy Spirit *mentors* our heart**

The Holy Spirit brings gradual movement from mental rules and disciplines to an obedience rooted in the heart's judgments and convictions. Jack Hayford

- E.g. The Bible teaches “husbands are to love their wives”. This is His will for all husbands in all cultures at all times. But what are men to *literally* do fulfill this command? This is where we must have the Holy Spirit as a mentor.

IV. The mind set on the flesh

This is the attitude that is self-seeking, prideful, lusting, covetous, etc. This is at its base natural and relies on the world's wisdom.

- E.g. A pastor can be carnally minded by manipulating people, loving money or being intoxicated by the respect his/her office affords – all the while being a good preacher, visionary and leader!

→ No one is above the gravitational pull of the flesh.

I Corinthians 3:1-3

1. And I brethren could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.
2. I fed you with milk and not with solid food fro until now you were not able to receive it and even how you are still not able.
3. for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among are you not carnal and **behaving like mere men?**

A. It ends in destruction

- **Philippians 3:19** whose end is destruction, whose go is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their **mind (phronema)** on earthly things and not upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

B. The things of God are deemed foolish

- **1 Cor. 2:14** But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God (pneumatika), for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

V. How to be Spiritually Minded

DISCUSSION QUESTION: What are some practical ways you can grow to become more “spiritually minded?”

A. Reflect on Eternity.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

B. Take radical steps to keep your mind pure.

You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.” But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.

Matthew 5:27-29

- Impurity dissipates your spiritual life. You certainly can be forgiven but it will erode your spiritual sensitivities.

C. Make God your delight.

Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God.

Psalms 43:4

- Fellowship with God often
- Thank God often
- Worship God often

D. Be friends with spiritually minded people.

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

Proverbs 13:20

E. Remember you have identified totally with Christ

For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me.

Galatians 2:19-20

VI. Closing

Realize that millions of people in the other religions of the world are not looking for people with more American cultural coolness or techno savvy. They are looking for *spiritually-minded* people who truly know God.

The question will not be, “Is he quick-witted and fast-talking and clever?” The question will be: “Is he a man of prayer? Does he know his Bible? Is he focused on God? Is he powerful in his weakness?”

APPLICATION: Break up into groups of 2-3 (men with men; women with women) and share personally your responses to these questions.

- What is one area in your thoughts, thought patterns, attitudes, etc. that you are asking God to transform and to align with the truth of His word?
- What is one practical step you could take in this coming week to allow the Spirit to *monitor* or *mentor* you in this area?

Once everyone has shared, pray for each other in these areas.