

**RESTORE**  
**STUCK IN A RUT**

Monday, June 1

Reading: Romans 8:5-9

**Romans 8:5** *Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.*

Many of you may remember the old TV Public Service announcements where a man cracks an egg into the frying pan and it begins to sizzle. The tagline was “This is your brain. This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?” Today, we are going to modify that thought to say: “This is your brain. This is your brain on sin. Any questions?”

The Bible has a lot to say about “renewing our minds” (Romans 12:2). We are commanded to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your MIND and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). We are to “set our minds on things above, not on earthly things” (Colossians 3:2). “Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh” (Romans 13:14).

Romans 8 reminds us that we cannot have victory over our sins and addictions by mere outward effort. We must allow the Holy Spirit to change our minds. Our natural sinful desire is to live to please ourselves. We do not want to live by God’s standards or obey God’s will. These verses indicate that this attitude reveals the absence of the Spirit in our lives. If we are truly children of God than our new desire is to please Him and not ourselves.

In his book *Restore*, Vince Antonucci talks about starting new ruts. Here is how he describes a rut: “The more you do something, the more natural it becomes because you are literally forming a neural pathway in your brain. You’re developing a rut that will become very easy to fall into. In fact, it will eventually become very difficult *not* to fall into that rut.”<sup>1</sup> We usually think of ruts in a negative way such as “I’m stuck in a rut.” But ruts can be both negative and positive. The reason addictions have such a grip on us is because we ARE stuck in their rut. We have done it so many times that it has become a pattern into which it is natural to fall. We have trained our minds by repeating the action over and over again.

But the Holy Spirit can do the same thing with the spiritual weapons God has given us. We can train ourselves to get stuck in godly ruts that develop the “life and peace” Romans 8 talks about. We can form holy habits that are pleasing to God and allow the Holy Spirit to work in and through our lives.

The rest of this week we will discuss three important godly ‘ruts’ that will help us have victory over the hurts, habits, and hang ups in our lives. But remember we can only do this if we submit to the Spirit of God who lives in us. “I can’t. God can!” Pray and ask your heavenly Father to strengthen you for the battles ahead.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2)

<sup>1</sup> Vince Antonucci. Restore, p. 223