

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Romans: God's Power for Salvation
TITLE: Walking According to the Spirit (Part 2)
SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:5-17
DATE: February 25, 2018
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The book of Romans is a masterfully written exposition of the gospel of God. Without a doubt, it is the foundation of authentic Christianity and the most articulate, systematic understanding of our faith found in the Bible. Countless lives have been changed by the truth found in this ancient letter, and it continues to change lives today. Interestingly enough, Romans was written to Christians. So, while the good news found in Romans can certainly bring people to faith in Jesus, the actual focus is on how the gospel helps Christians think rightly about God, life, faith, and Christian community. If you want to grow to know God more personal and intimate way, this letter is for you!

How do you see yourself when you look in the mirror? What's your identity? Most of us think of ourselves in terms of the various roles we live out every day—father/mother, wife/husband, parent/child, single, student, athlete, UPS driver, policeman, doctor, construction worker, so on. No doubt many of us would define ourselves as “Christians.” The point is this: just as you choose an identity that defines you, in the same way, your Heavenly Father wants you to see that when you become a Christian, he gave you a brand-new identity. And, if you and I can learn to see ourselves the way God sees us—if we can come to a place of truly embracing our new identity in Christ—it would impact every area of life—marriage, parenting, singleness, school, sports, work, finances—it would impact everything about you—especially how to live as a Christ-follower. The Christian life is not an exercise in trying hard to obey God's rules and laws. No, the Christian life is simply an expression of living out who you really are in Christ.

And when sin, (that lives in this mortal body of ours), tempts us to satisfy the desires of our flesh—if *in that moment*—you can distinguish between the pull of sin in the flesh and the new you God has made you to be, then you can learn to say “No” to the flesh and experience the life and peace Jesus died to give you.

Walk through Romans 8:5-11. What you “set your mind” on is what your mind is preoccupied with. In this passage, Paul contrasts two mindsets—one set on what the flesh desires; the other set on what the Spirit desires. Let's unpack these contrasts this way.

First, the flesh urges you to build your identity solely around what you want and what you need. The Spirit encourages you to give yourself to the things that satisfy the new you.

Second, the flesh is fueled by fear of what might be. The mind set on the Spirit is fueled by what is.

Third, the flesh pushes you to establish your identity. The Spirit calls you to rest in your identity.

These two mindsets will lead you in very different directions—the mind set on the flesh leads to death—a death-like life in the here and now. The mind set on the Spirit leads to life and peace.

Think: If you've got a dead, dying body that's attracted to sin, but at the same time, you've got a brand-new spirit that the Holy Spirit has made alive, which one is the Real You? The fact is, the Holy Spirit has installed in you the actual, risen life of Christ. The same power that raised Christ from the dead—that gave life to his dead body—lives in you to give the New You, new life—meaning, power over your dead, dying body!!! The Holy Spirit gives you the power and desire to live out your new identity in Christ so that you can say “No” to sin when you are tempted. *So, how does that actually work out in real life?*

Walk thru Romans 8:12-17. First, I have to understand that I am under no obligation to give into to sin and the desires of the flesh (8:12) *I am not under obligation to the flesh to obey its desires.* Second, I must “put to death the desires and deeds of the flesh *by the Spirit*” (8:13). Notice Paul does not say, “Try really hard to

pile on lots of rules in order to put to death the deeds of the flesh." No, he says, "By the Spirit, put to death the deeds of the flesh." *How do we do that?* Third, the Spirit bears witness with our Spirit that we are no longer slaves to fear, but that we are beloved children of God (8:14-17). BIG IDEA; *We put to death the deeds of the flesh as we live into our new identities as children of God.* And, we are not just children, but heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Meaning, we have been given all the rights and privileges and authority to say "no" to the pull of sin in the flesh by saying "yes" to the Spirit bearing witness with our Spirit that we are sons and daughters of God. And we will experience this new life as children and heirs provided that, in times of suffering, when we are tempted to sin, we don't run back to the sinful desires of the flesh as our hope for rescue—as our hope for life and peace.

For Discussion:

When you listen to Bible teaching, you should be listening with an ear to learn, but also with an ear to share with others what you are learning. Keep that in mind as you discuss today's message. How do you need to internalize this message so you can share this Good News with someone God might bring across your path this week who needs to hear it?

Have someone read Romans 8:5-11.

- Talk about the contrasts between the flesh and the Spirit highlighted above. How do these contrasts manifest themselves in your daily life? Which of the "fleshly" mindsets do you struggle with the most.
- One problem most of us face is that very often there's no gap between the stimulus to sin and our giving into sin. No "gap" to distinguish between the desire to sin and giving in to sin. Talk about how things you can do to create that "gap" in order to distinguish between the pull of sin in the flesh and remembering your new identity in Christ.

Have someone read Romans 8:12-17.

- What gets in the way of believing that we are not under obligation to give in to the desires of the flesh?
- How do you "put to death the deeds of the flesh *by the power of the Spirit?*" What are some ways we normally try to "put to death the desires/deeds of the flesh?"
- I think all Christians know we are children of God. Why is anchoring our identity in the fact that we are God's children so important to overcoming sin in the flesh? How do we take this great Gospel truth—that we are sons and daughters of God—and use it to "put to death sin in the flesh?"

OR try this approach...

Have someone read 8:5-17, then ask: From what you heard in Charlie's message or what we just read right here--*What are some of the "AHAs" you took away from what you learned?*

When someone volunteers an "AHA" ask follow up questions to dig deeper and to keep the discussion going. Ask the group, "*Anyone else have this same "AHA"--what do you think about this insight?*" After you've exhausted topic. Throw the original question back out to the group--"*Who else had an "AHA?"*" Repeat the pattern above. Follow up questions then get input from the group.

If someone says, "*I didn't really have an "AHA," it's more that I don't understand.*" Then go that direction. Ask follow up questions to help them clearly articulate the issue then ask the group for input. "*Anybody else think about that/struggle with that?" "So, how would you answer that question?"* Whoever answers--ask follow up questions, ask for input from the group on that answer (*What do you think about that?*), etc.

It's been my (Charlie) experience that you can have a great discussion around this approach to community group conversations.