

Walk in the Spirit—Pray in the Spirit

Sermon #3: Life and Living by the Spirit

Study Text: Romans 8:1–17

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Preacher: Debbie Whaley

Bible Study Introduction:

It is not hard to find Scripture passages where there appears to be a split between the spiritual and the material. With a first blush glance, it is easy to assume that Christianity shares the “spirit is good” but “matter is bad” dualism we easily find in Greek philosophy and other religions. Yet Scripture also affirms the essential goodness of our bodies and of the “stuff” around us. In God’s sovereignty, spirit and the material world work together for God’s glory.

So then, how are we to understand passages like Romans 8 (and 7, too) where the Spirit and the flesh are so obviously opposed to one another? It may help to consider the word “flesh” to not mean our bodies, but instead to mean a disoriented attitude of the heart, one where we are our own lord. Clearly, if that is what it means to be in the “flesh,” then God will be opposed to flesh.

This week’s passage has something for us to consider and live by as we wrestle with our fleshly idolatry of ourselves: the gift of living by the Spirit.

Opening Questions:

- There are several different personality type tests. Do you know what you “are” according to one of them (i.e. Myers-Briggs)? What does that say about you?
- Who in your life do you personally consider the “holiest” person you know? What is it about their life in the Spirit that made you think of them?

Read Romans 8:1–17

- Below are four statements meant to summarize this passage. Put them in idea order so they match the passage and are no longer shuffled:
 1. Embrace your new identity
 2. Spirit people reorient their mind to the Spirit
 3. Spirit people receive new life
 4. Christ accomplished what you cannot
- As you examine the passage, what statement or phrase would you add to those four? What makes you want to add that phrase?
- Find the passages that specifically address identity. What can you say about them that Christians today still need to grasp?
- Taken in conjunction with Romans 7, what is the implied human condition, or what is the unasked question, that Paul is seeking to answer here? Why is that an important issue to address?
- List the various things being affirmed about the Holy Spirit in this passage. Which do you need to grab hold of more intentionally for yourself?

Group or Personal Reflection

- What does it mean to you to take on a life of the Spirit and let go of the flesh? How can that start this week?
- In what relationship, circumstance, or setting do you already feel like you are growing in your ability to live by the Spirit? How have you allowed that to happen? What about that experience can transfer to other areas of your life?