

Live in the Spirit

A Disciple's Identity

In order to be a follower of Christ, it is essential that we learn how to live spiritually. God is spirit, and in our essence, so are we! We are spiritual beings who possess physical bodies that enable us to live in God's physical creation.

In the lesson on 'Spiritual Living' in Discipleship Study Book #2, we learn that when we are 'born again' through faith in the vicarious death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins, our spirits are reborn in a new spiritual relationship with God. His very Spirit comes to dwell within us infusing us with His divine nature, power and passion. This is evidenced by a new found love for God, for His Eternal Word and for His Perfect Plan for our lives. Our eyes and hearts are opened to a new world and an eternal hope, and like newborn babies, we begin the process of learning to live this spiritual life that is so foreign compared to the one we have become accustomed to.

And that is where our problem lies. Though our spirit is reborn with God's new nature, our bodies are still infected with the old sinful nature. Our spirits are drawn to the eternal joys of heaven while our bodies are shackled to the momentary thrills of this world. Paul outlines our predicament in Romans 7:14-8:2.

- 14 For we know that the Law is spiritual,
but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.
- 15 For what I am doing,
I do not understand;
for I am not practicing what I *would* like to do,
but I am doing the very thing I hate.
- 16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do,
I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good.
- 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it,
but sin which dwells in me.
- 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me,
that is, in my flesh;
for the willing is present in me,
but the doing of the good *is* not.
- 19 For the good that I want,
I do not do,
but I practice the very evil that I do not want.
- 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want,
I am no longer the one doing it,
but sin which dwells in me.
- 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me,
the one who wants to do good.



John 1:12-13
Ephesians 2:1-10
Romans 6:4

Romans 7:14-25

Circle or Underline:

- v 14 What the Law is.
What I am.
To what I am sold.
- v 15 What I don't understand.
What I am not practicing.
What I am doing.
- v 16 With what I agree.
- v 17 Who is no longer doing
what I hate.
What is doing what I hate.
- v 18 What I know dwells in my
flesh.
What is present in me.
What is not present in me.
- v 19 What I do not do.
What I practice.
- v 20 Who is no longer doing
what I do not want.
What is doing what I do
not want.
- v 21 What principle I find.
How 'me' is described.

22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,
 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body,
 waging war against the law of my mind
 and making me a prisoner of the law of sin
 which is in my members.
 24 Wretched man that I am!
 Who will set me free from the body of this death?
 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!
 So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God,
 but on the other,
 with my flesh the law of sin.
 1 Therefore there is now no condemnation
 for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 2 For the law of the Spirit of life
 in Christ Jesus
 has set you free
 from the law of sin and of death.

Memorize



Interpretation

1. Describe the predicament Paul finds himself in. (vs 14-15) _____

2. Explain Paul's thinking in vs 16-20. _____

3. Where does Paul locate the evil principle in him? (vs 21-23) _____

Where does Paul locate the his desire to obey God? _____

4. Describe what Paul is expressing in v 24. _____

5. What is Paul's conclusion in v 25 & 8:1-2? _____

v 22 Where I joyfully agree with God's law.
 v 23 What I see in the members of my body. What that 'law' is doing. What it makes me a prisoner of.
 v 24 How this predicament makes me view myself. What I want to be set free from.
 v 25 Who sets me free. What I serve in my mind. What I serve in my flesh.
 v 1 What there is no longer for those in Christ.
 v 2 What the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ has done.

Every true Christian ought to identify with Paul here. If you do not, perhaps it is because you are not truly born again by God's Spirit and do not possess His new nature within you.

But if you are, you will experience two opposing desires. One toward God and the other toward this world. The desire to love and serve God is evidence of God's Spirit in your heart and represents the new you in Christ. The lust for fleshly and worldly things is the remnant of our old self which still resides in our flesh.

When a true Christian sins, it is never what he truly would like to do as a new person in Christ. God, in His grace, has separated true Believers from their sin natures so that He does not condemn them. It is an incredible picture of God's grace and our freedom in Christ!

Did you follow Paul's argument? It is the key to living spiritually. We must understand that:

- ✓ There are **two natures** existing within us.
- ✓ God's nature by His Spirit in us is our **new nature** that is **who we truly are now**.
- ✓ The **sinful nature** in our flesh is our old nature that was **who we once were**.
- ✓ God's nature **always desires** to fulfill His Plan and Purpose.
- ✓ The sinful nature **can never** fulfill God's Plan and Purpose.
- ✓ **When I live in the spirit**, I fulfill God's Plan and Purpose for my life.
- ✓ **When I live in the flesh**, I live in **opposition** to God's Plan and Purpose.
- ✓ As His child, **God knows** it is the sin in my flesh that causes me to oppose Him.
- ✓ Through Jesus Christ, God has **separated me from the sinful nature**.
- ✓ **In Jesus Christ**, I am freed from the condemnation incurred by the sin nature!

When God removed the condemnation of sin from His children, He did this not so that they would then be free to sin, but so that they might be **free to live in the spirit**. We have inherited from God our Father a new nature that desires to glorify Him, and a new freedom to express that nature through our bodies. **With freedom comes responsibility and choices**. As a true Believer in Christ, don't you really want to live a life glorifying to your Heavenly Father, fulfilling His Purpose and Plan for your life? Of course! Then live in the Spirit, not the flesh! It's as plain as that!



Ezekiel 36:26-27
2 Peter 1:4
Galatians 5:13-14

Memorize

- 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit,
and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.
- 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit,
and the Spirit against the flesh;
for these are in opposition to one another,
so that you may not do the things that you please.
- 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.
- 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are:
immorality, impurity, sensuality,
20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger,
disputes, dissensions, factions,
21 envying, drunkenness, carousing,
and things like these, of which I forewarn you,
just as I have forewarned you,
that those who practice such things
will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Memorize

- 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is
love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness, self-control;
against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:16-23

Galatians 5:16-17

Circle or Underline:

- v 16 What Paul instructs us to do.
What we will not carry out if we do.
- v 17 What the flesh does.
What is against the flesh.
What results from their opposition.
- v 18 What those led by the Spirit are not under.
- v 19-21
The 'deeds of the flesh'.
What those who indulge the flesh will not inherit.
- v 22-23
The fruit of the Spirit.
What is against 'such things'.

Interpretation

1. Describe the relationship between the Spirit and the flesh in vs 16-17. _____

2. Why are those who are led by the Spirit not under the Law? v 18 _____

3. Use a dictionary to define each of the 'deeds of the flesh' in vs 19-21.

What does the warning at the conclusion of v 21 mean? _____

4. Use a dictionary to define each part of the 'fruit of the Spirit' in vs 22-23.

Why does Paul include these qualities? _____

What does Paul mean when he writes 'against such things there is no law'?

Understand that your flesh wants to dominate your life! It has had its way from the beginning and will not yield itself easily, even though you are now a new person in Christ. And it is not alone in its efforts to conquer and keep you in its power. Satan, his demonic horde, and this world system of which he is still prince and ruler, combine to tempt and entrap Believers who are weak in faith or ignorant of his evil schemes. That's why we are admonished to be 'alert' and 'steadfast' against our enemy who will use every weapon in his arsenal to 'kill, steal or destroy' our new life in Christ. Only those Believers who are Living in the Spirit will be able to *detect* and *thwart* satan's evil schemes.

To learn more about Living in the **Spirit's Power**, study Lesson 3 in Discipleship Study Book 1.

To learn more about **Spiritual Warfare**, study Lesson 4 in Discipleship Study Book 2.

Christian discipleship demands that we continuously live in the Spirit. Every moment a Christian lives dominated by the flesh is a moment of **spiritual blindness** in which satan has free reign to tempt, deceive and influence us away from God. Now, why would we want to give him that opportunity? When we live in the Spirit, our mind, emotions and will are in unison with God's Purpose and Plan enabling us to discern what is 'good, acceptable and perfect'! When we are living in that spiritual state, we are truly disciples of our LORD!

Live in the Spirit

List key Truths and Principles you learned from this study:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

In light of what you have learned, list what you will do.

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

*‘If we live by the Spirit,
let us also walk by the Spirit.’*

Galatians 5:25

The spirit world holds more sway on the physical than most people may be aware. The Bible teaches that demonic spirits may influence the way individual people, and even entire nations, live and act. Demons continually assail Christians seeking to destroy their faith and testimonies. They work to develop strongholds in the lives of people, groups and nations through deception in order to destroy the true knowledge of God and keep people from the liberating truth of God's salvation through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.