

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 8:5-8 (continued)

Student Notes

Paul's broad demarcation between two sets of spiritual realities:

1. There are two categories of people -- the unregenerate who are 'in the flesh' and the regenerate who are 'in the Spirit'.
2. The two categories of people have two perspectives or mindsets -- "the mind of the flesh" and "the mind of the Spirit".
3. The two categories of people have two patterns of conduct: Living according to the flesh or the Spirit. That conduct affects their final destiny.

Our mindset, then, determines our desires and two other very important things: 1. Our basic attitudes towards God and his Moral Law. 2. Our experience of eternal consequences.

1. Our Basic Attitudes Towards God And His Moral Law.

Our mindset determines our fundamental attitude towards God and his Moral Law: "The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so." vv. 6-7

- Governed:

Paul speaks about the "mind governed by the flesh" and the mind "governed by the Spirit". Humans imagine that we are in control -- that we are independent agents choosing right and wrong. Paul says

the reality is just the opposite. We are being “governed” or “controlled” – either by the mind of flesh or the Spirit of God.

- The Mind of Flesh and Death:

The mind of flesh is death: Why is that the case? Paul says the mind governed by the flesh is “hostile to God. John Stott: “It cherishes a deep-seated animosity against him. It is antagonistic to his name, kingdom and will ... his Word, his Son, his Spirit and his glory.”

The mind dominated by the flesh rejects two things: 1. That there is a God. 2. That he has the right to expect anything of us morally.

- The Positive Contrast:

Those who have come to know God through Christ “delight in God’s law”. What is the source of this delight? It can only be that the mind controlled by the Spirit of Life sees a great value in God’s Moral Law.

Verse 6: “... The mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.” That’s the key to loving the Moral Code:

- **Hostility or “Life and Peace”?**

Verse 7: “The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.”

The mind that is governed cannot submit to God’s Moral Code. Why? It is operating on a different level. It is operating by a different code – the code of the flesh. The unregenerate person really can’t keep the Moral Code – because he or she is hard-wired to operate by a different system.

2. Our Experience Of Eternal Consequences:

- The “Fleshly” Mind’s Inability:

“The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. **Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.**”

People who are under the power of Sin and are controlled by the basic instincts of the flesh cannot please God. They are “governed” by a mind that: 1. Rejects that there is a God. 2. Rejects the premise that He has the right to expect anything of you morally.

- The Great Contrast:

Those who have a mind governed by the Spirit CAN please God. Being governed by the Spirit involves living as the Spirit would want us to. The Spirit has no disagreement with God. He’s going to lead us to do what pleases God.

- I Thessalonians 4:1-3: “.... We instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.”
- Romans 12:1: “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.”

- **The Eternal Implications**

The mind of sinful man is Death. The mind controlled by the sarx, the flesh, produces death. It is hostile to God, yet it embraces the Power of Sin and the One who stands behind the Power of Sin.

The reality: The mind controlled by the flesh produces death here and cannot produce eternal life later. John Stott: “The mindset of flesh-dominated people is already one of spiritual death and leads inevitably to eternal death, for it alienates them from God and renders fellowship with him impossible in either this world or the next.”

- **The Last Contrast:**

While the mind governed by the flesh alienates us from God and prevents relationship to Him, the mind governed by the Spirit entails life and peace.

- Two Levels of “Life and Peace”:

1. Current “Life and Peace”. Romans 5:1: “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”

2. Eternal “Life and Peace”: If we have life and peace right now -- through being governed by the Spirit – what will we have later on? We will have the same thing.

We have relationship with God now – and that will render us able to have relationship with God in eternity.

- **Summing Up Romans 8:5-8:**

1. There are two categories of people: The unregenerate who are “in the flesh” and the regenerate who are “in the Spirit”.

2. There are two mindsets: The mind of the flesh” and “the mind of the Spirit”.

3. These mindsets lead to two patterns of conduct: “Living according to the flesh or living according to the Spirit.

4. These mindsets have two operating systems and result in two different eternal spiritual states: One produces Death, the other produces Life and Peace.