

Where Is Your Mind?

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[0 : 00] Welcome to this week's message from Faith Bible Church of Lake Charles.! We're excited to share a practical Bible-based teaching and, you know, most of the answers to the Sunday School questions.

But along the way, another question sometimes shows up, am I really right with God? Or am I just going through the motions like others might be?

And I know that question can be uncomfortable. And as we ask that, the Apostle Paul is going to touch on that this morning.

And he's going to answer that question in terms of what do we think. And he gives us a diagnostic tool in Romans chapter 8, verses 5 and following.

And as we start together in verse number 1, excuse me, verse number 5, we're going to be continuing where Paul has been going. In chapter 7, Paul has been being very transparent about his struggle with sin and the law.

[1 : 34] And as he moves into chapter 8, verse 1, he finds that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And then verses 2 through 4 of Romans chapter 8 explains why we are not under any condemnation through Christ.

Now, in verses 5 through 8, what the Apostle Paul is going to do, as we've said, is he's going to give us a diagnostic tool. He shows us how to tell two different kinds of people from their mindset.

And the issue is, and the mark is, where do their minds live? What is our focus? Where is our attention? So this morning, let's open our Bibles this morning to Romans chapter number 8.

And we are going to be going through verses 5 through 8 this morning. And he shows us how to tell these two different kinds of people. Let's start with verse number 5.

Paul says in verse 5, For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

[2 : 51] Paul opens with a very, very simple contrast. And he's going to be contrasting in verses 5 through 8, flesh and spirit, death and life.

And he's talking about people who live according to the Spirit. And you tell them apart by where their minds are.

As we look at verse 1, he uses that word minds here. And the word set their minds comes from the Greek word phronao. And it means more than just thinking about something.

As you go through your day, there are some thoughts that go through your mind. And you think on something. And then it's a fleeting thought. And it goes somewhere else.

And the older I get, those thoughts are more and more fleeting. Yesterday I was in my study. And I was working on this morning's message. And I got up to get something. By the time I got to the kitchen, I forgot what I got up to get.

[3 : 54] And that's the way our minds work sometimes. But that's not the word Paul is using. He's not using about just thinking about something. It means to have your aspirations and have your affections, have your minds pointed toward something.

It's the difference between casually noticing a billboard as you're driving down the highway and actually wanting what it's advertising.

That's the difference Paul is talking about. It's not just thinking about something. It's thinking about it and wanting it and becoming obsessed by it. That's the difference that Paul is talking about.

And notice what Paul doesn't say here. He doesn't say that the fleshly mind never has a good thought because there are people who don't know Jesus. There are people who are dead in their sins who have good thoughts and who have good deeds.

And the apostle Paul is not saying that people who are in Christ and have a spiritual mindset never have a bad thought. I mean, because there are days when our minds may go somewhere and we may set our affections on things that are not Christ-like.

[5 : 09] We may be moving toward and our mindset might be focused on something that is not good for us. So that's not what Paul is saying. Paul is saying is that's the bent of our life.

There's a person who their mind is set on things that are not godly or that are just not necessarily things that are about God.

They're just set on ourselves. We are self-focused. And then he says there are those who are spiritually minded. We are okay with what God tells us to do.

And those are different mindsets. So where does our mind keep going when there's nothing forcing it to go anywhere? Think about that. Where does your mind go when there's nothing forcing your mind to go anywhere?

Here's a small test. You look at your phone screen. And that little app that you tap when there's a five-minute wait. Well, maybe longer. The doctor's office.

[6 : 12] When you are in line somewhere. And where does your mind go? Or when you can't sleep at three o'clock in the morning and you reach for your phone.

That move can tell you where your mindset is and what you focus on. For some of us, that little glowing rectangle has become a confession booth that we may not be very, very comfortable with. And also, pay attention to your daydreams. Where does your mind go when you're daydreaming? Does it go towards things that are worldly? Does it go towards things that are just focused on you, on ourselves?

Or is our mind saturated with the things of God? That's the difference that the Apostle Paul's talking about. And when you're bored, where does your mind go?

Where do you spend your money when you don't have to pay a bill and when you don't have to spend it? See, that's your mind telling you about who you are.

[7 : 18] One commentator puts it this way. The unsaved person lives in the flesh and for the flesh. The Christian lives in an entirely new and different sphere.

One person lives for the flesh. The other lives for the spirit. Same world, two completely different orientations.

And this is what we can remember today. Where your mind goes, your life follows. Where our mind is, where our mind goes, is ultimately where our life is going to follow.

If you focus on something long enough, that's where you're going to end up or that's how you're going to end up acting out. If your mindset is always on maybe greed and wanting more money, then that's where we're going to go.

If our mindset, however, is on spiritual things and we're concerned about other people, then we are going to follow up with serving others, with sharing the gospel with others, by encouraging others.

[8 : 27] And so we know by where our mind goes, where we set our mindset, where we set our affections, what we're thinking about. And then the Apostle Paul goes on in verse number six, and he talks about a destination.

Verse six, for to be carnally minded. When he uses that word carnal, it's fleshly, just our bodies. For to be carnally minded is, what's that word?

Death. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Now Paul moves from the consequence, the consequences of having a fleshly mind.

To be carnally minded, Paul says, is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and it's peace. Look at what Paul says.

The flesh mind already is death. Right now, the mindset of the flesh is a dying mind headed toward a death that has no end.

[9 : 37] And the word that Paul uses is the noun form of the verb he used in verse number five. And it means a mindset.

It means a way of aiming our inner life. Paul is saying that this mindset itself has a built-in destination.

Where your mind aims, your life arrives. But the mindset that's set on the spirit, Paul says, is life and peace.

You know, think about it. If your mind is focused on things that won't last. Let's say our mindset for a young person, our mindset might be on finding the right person.

Just finding the right mate. And we need to understand that that's not everything. Yes, God has, I believe, that person that he wants us to spend the rest of our life with.

[10 : 38] But sometimes relationships don't work out. Sometimes if we set our mind on earthly things, it doesn't take much sometimes for the rug to be pulled out from under us.

And we no longer have what we were aiming for. And if we set our affections on things above, as we read about earlier this morning in the book of Colossians, we set our affections, we set our mind on things above, it's things that last.

When God's in our life and when he is our foundation, no matter what happens in life, we're living real life now. We don't have to wait for real life when we close our eyes in death and we get to heaven.

So Paul says that to be spiritually minded is life and peace. To have peace with God is something that can be so fulfilling, something that is just, we can rest in that fact.

There are many people walking around today that don't have peace with God. And if we don't have peace with God, we will not be able to appreciate the peace of God that guards our hearts, guards our minds.

[11 : 58] So Paul says the spiritual mind is life and peace. What is he doing? He's giving us a way to diagnose our soul again. Life that's more than breathing.

Peace that doesn't depend on our circumstances. See, we don't have to wait till we die to find out where we're headed. There are many people who wonder, well, I don't know.

And there's no way that we can know. There are some that say that's a sin of presumption. That if we claim to know where we're going when we die. The apostle John writes, I write these things that you may know that you have eternal life.

Not that you may wonder. And so Paul's talking about a way of knowing where we are, where our mindset is will determine our destination.

And we can look at where our mind lives today and know, to know our destination. Imagine two people sitting on an airplane. One person is going on vacation.

[13 : 04] The other person is going to a funeral. They are. They're breathing the same cabin air. They're eating the same stale airline peanuts.

But one is going to, hopefully, a great destination. And the other one is going to a place of death, is going to a different destination.

Two people sitting in the same pew, wearing the same kind of clothes. From the outside, they may look identical, but their minds live in different places. Someone who does not belong to Jesus Christ, their mind's not focused on things above.

Their mind is focused on what's around us. Now, Paul's not saying that we shouldn't ever think of things that are of this world. I mean, we have to work. We have to live.

We have to make a living. That's a biblical concept of working for our living. We're not in the Bible 24-7.

[14 : 02] We're not always sharing the gospel. Sometimes we are talking about sports. Sometimes we are talking about hobbies or our vacation. But the reality is, that's not the bent.

That's not the focus of our life. That's not all-consuming to us. We're a person who knows Jesus Christ. Our mindset should be set on things that matter, things that ultimately have to do with God. Where our mind goes, our life follows. And then we go to verse 7. Now Paul gets pretty blunt. Verse 7 says, The fleshly mind, the flesh mind, is enmity.

Enmity is a really, really strong word. It means hostility. It means to be at war. And this is one of the hardest things in the New Testament for modern people to hear.

The natural mind is not neutral about God. The person who's not in Christ is not really neutral about God. Because the fleshly mind is at war with God.

[15 : 19] That word enmity is a word for an enemy, an enemy soldier, what they feel in battle. They are fighting against an enemy.

And it's either you die or I die. It's one of those things. And that's the fleshly mind. We see it play out in some pretty specific ways.

The fleshly minded person doesn't want to submit to the laws of God. Because the flesh mind want to be the law of their own life. For those of you who can remember before you trusted Christ as your Savior.

If you were older, if you were an adult before you came to Christ, you didn't really think about God very, very much probably. And if you did, you thought about how you can get to God your own way.

Or how your religion said you could come to God. Those who are fleshly minded, Paul says, are not neutral.

[16:17] He says they want to do what they want. And they want God to be okay with it. There's so many people walking around today. They believe God and they say they love God. But they want to live the way they want to live.

And they want God to be okay with the way they live. And there are many who orient their life that way. Well, yeah, I love God. But I want to do this. And I want to do that.

And they want God to be okay with it. That's not a spirit-filled mind. A spirit-filled mind is where Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus said, not my will, but yours be done.

I don't want to do this. God, if you can find any other way to get these people right with you, go for it. But nevertheless, not my will, but your will be done.

That's the spiritual mindset. That's the mindset that says, it's not about me. My life is not about getting what I want. My life is about serving him.

[17:17] And the whole point of life is, and I learned this when I was going through training in counseling, in spiritual counseling.

And the professor said, people, we need to get to the point where we understand that all we need is God and what he chooses to provide. He says, that will help so many people, especially for those of us who know Jesus.

Now, yes, there are other things at play. There are other issues. But as far as for the person who maybe just simply deals with some anxiety, deals with some fears, deals with certain things that if we would be able to surrender and say, God, you take care of it and fill our minds with, as God's word says, with the things that our minds are set on things above.

He said that would take care of so many human ills just to come to the point where we are okay with whatever God chooses to provide, because he's really all we need.

People are going to upset us. People are going to let us down. Jobs will sometimes go away. Our health will sometimes go away.

[18:42] There's literally nothing in this life that's permanent. You know, Catherine and I were talking just this week about, you know, her for the next foreseeable future, for another six or seven weeks, she'll be no weight, no weight bearing.

And we just looked at each other and say, you know, this too shall pass. No, that's the way it is. I had someone tell me one time, and it was a pretty serious thing.

He said, either it'll pass or I'll pass. Either way, he said, I'll be okay. Because like Paul said, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Either this thing that is bothering me right now will pass, or I'll pass on and be with the Lord.

So either way, it's not going to last forever. So Paul says that the fleshly mind, he says, is an enemy of God.

It's not subject to the law of God. He says, neither can it be. Then he says, what he says is even stronger. The person not only doesn't submit to God's law, he says they cannot.

[19:51] The problem runs deeper than effort. The flesh mind has no power to please God. Some of you may have heard of William Wilberforce.

He was an English abolitionist during the late 1700s. Wilberforce was a very strong follower of Jesus Christ. And he was friends with William Pitt the Younger, the English prime minister who was in the Church of England, but was a nominal Christian.

And Wilberforce really wanted his friend Pitt to know God and to understand God and to begin to follow Christ. And so one day what he did was he offered to bring Pitt to hear a very powerful message from a preacher during that time to hear from a minister.

And he wanted his friend to come to hear the great preacher Richard Cecil, hoping that Pitt would hear the gospel and trust Christ. And finally, Pitt agreed to go.

And the two of them sat under a powerful and a very, very mighty preaching of God's word. And Wilberforce was sure his friend would catch it and his friend would understand.

[21:15] As they walked out, Pitt turned to Wilberforce and said, you know, Wilberforce, I have not the slightest idea of what that man was talking about. And that's the difference between someone who has the mind of Christ and hears God's word proclaimed.

Because the Bible says that the things of God are spiritually understood. The things of God are spiritually discerned. And I've heard, literally heard people say that.

They've heard someone preach. They've heard a message. They heard a teaching. And they said, man, I couldn't follow what they were saying. I didn't have a clue what they were talking about. And yet you have someone who knows the Lord, who knows Christ, who knows God's word. And they said, that was awesome teaching. And it fed my soul. And it was something that I needed to hear. That's the difference between having the Holy Spirit and not having the Holy Spirit. Because what the Holy Spirit does is He illuminates our minds. He opens our minds to hear the things of God. You know, that's like going to a medical conference if you are not in the medical field. [22 : 23] And they throw out the jargon. They throw out these words. They throw out these procedures. And you're looking at them like, I don't have a clue what you're saying. I mean, I don't even have a beginning frame of reference to understand what you're talking about.

That's the difference between someone who has the Holy Spirit and someone who has not. And that's what Paul is talking about here. And then he goes to verse number eight.

So then those who are in the flesh cannot please God. That word, that verb cannot please, it's in the present tense. It's not just a one-time slip.

It's an ongoing inability to please God in any way. No amount of religious activity, no amount of religious effort can change that fundamental orientation.

No amount of work can take someone who is not in the family of God and just work hard enough to say, okay, I made it and I arrived and now I'm okay with God.

[23 : 28] That doesn't happen apart from coming to the point where we fully understand the Bible says that we are a sinner and we cannot be good enough.

There is none righteous, no, not one, the Bible says. And the Bible says that the only way is for us to come to an understanding of who Jesus is and trust what he did on the cross of Calvary as being the full payment for our sin.

That's how we come into the family of God. That's how we can please God. Why? Because Jesus Christ, the righteousness of Christ is applied to our account.

And when God looks upon us, he sees Jesus. He sees the righteousness of Christ. Where our mind goes, our life follows. So what do we do with this as we wind this down to a close this morning?

Pay attention to where your mind goes when there's nothing making it go anywhere. Take inventory. What am I thinking about? Where does my mind go?

[24 : 30] Possibly one of the most important diagnostic we have in our spiritual life. The songs you sing on Sunday really don't tell the truth about you because you can be dead in your sin and singing about Jesus.

Where does your mind drift when you're stuck in traffic or when you are waiting somewhere or you're alone in the kitchen at 11 o'clock or you wake up in the middle of the night?

Where does your mind go? If your mind keeps going to the things of the flesh, that may be telling you something. Maybe it's telling you you never trusted Christ before.

Maybe it's like the Apostle James in his book is saying, show me. You say that you're right with God, show me your works.

Because if we say that we are a Christian, our life should show it. Our life should be different in some way. We should speak differently. We should think differently. Our actions will be different.

[25 : 31] Maybe you've been going to church. Maybe you were baptized. Maybe whatever, but you don't have God's Holy Spirit within you. If that's you today, I trust that today is the day that you say yes to Jesus Christ.

Trust Christ. Receive his Holy Spirit. And the Spirit will change what your mind reaches for. The Holy Spirit will renew your mind, as God's Word says.

Or maybe this morning you are a follower of Christ. And maybe your mind has drifted away. That happens. That happens. The Bible says that our fleshly nature is still there.

It's been rendered inoperative. But if we feed it, it will rear its ugly head. And it will want to take over your life again. So where is our mind?

And Paul will then go on as we come back. He will spend the rest of Romans chapter 8 helping believers to walk in the Spirit. That daily life as we follow Jesus.

[26 : 31] The cure is to set our minds on the Spirit again. Without piling on shame, the Apostle Paul is going to tell us how we can live in the Spirit.

We open our Bibles. We pray. And we set our mind on Him. You know, one specific thing, maybe this week. Pick one thing. Your mind's been chasing that the Holy Spirit's not, that doesn't belong to

the Holy Spirit.

And replace it. It might be a recurring thought. It might be a recurring fear. It might be a recurring anxiety. Don't just try to stop thinking about it. Because it's like the wet paint sign.

The more you try not to, the more you want to. And it's when you're thinking about something, don't try not to think about it. Because again, probably the way our minds work is the more we try not to think of it, the more we think of it.

Memorize a verse. Read a chapter before you go to bed at night. There's a Scottish pastor from the 1800s named Thomas Chalmers, who preached a famous sermon called, The Expulsive Power of the New Affection.

[27 : 38] Hey, it was the 1800s. They spoke differently. But in this message, his main idea was really, really simple. He said, you can't drive a love out of your heart by trying to stop loving it.

He said, the way to drive a love out of your heart is to find something better to love. You ever taken a toy away from a child? What do you get?

You get a temper tantrum, right? But what if you want them not to play with something dangerous? You take something that is better and you trade.

Here's something better. What Chalmers found out is that's the way we work. That's the way we operate. Don't just try to quit something. Replace it with something else.

Replace it with something better. He says, don't try to drive your love out of your heart by stopping loving it.

[28 : 39] He says, give it something better to love. The way to defeat a wrong affection is to replace it with a stronger one. That's exactly what Paul's talking about here in verses 5 through 8.

Fill your mind with the things of God and the things of the flesh will begin to lose their grip. Where your mind goes, your life follows.

So if you're here today and your mind has been chasing the flesh, you're tired of it leading you, Christ is offering you something better. Life and peace. Not just one day, but every day.

If you haven't trusted Christ, if you're listening to this message, and if you have not trusted Christ as your Savior, trust Him today. Receive His Holy Spirit and receive a brand new life and receive a brand new mind.

Let's pray. Father, we come to You today. We're so thankful. Thankful for our new life available in Christ. We thank You that You can give us a brand new mindset.

[29 : 46] You can give us new affections. You can give us a brand new bent of our life that we are more in tune with what is good, what is honorable, what is just.

So Father, we pray today, if there's anyone that does not know Christ as their Savior, they would trust Him. Trust Him today and receive His Holy Spirit and receive forgiveness of sin. So Father, we thank You for what You're going to do.

We pray all of this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thanks for joining us today. We hope this message encouraged you and gave you something to apply to your life this week.

If you'd like to learn more about Faith Bible Church or connect with us, visit our website at meetfaith.org. We'd love to hear from you. Have a great week and we'll see you next time.