

If You Live After The Flesh

Rom 8:12-13 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. (13) For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Romans chapter eight is written to born again Christians. It spells out in fine detail that the power of the new birth sets a person free from the slavery of sin. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death which continues to reside within our members [Rom 7:23].

Rom 8:1-2 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

We have been set free from slavery to sin. We no longer have to serve sin. But God did not take away the power of our own will. We can choose to sin if we want to. But the warning in scripture is so clear. If we decide to live “after the flesh” by choosing to commit sin voluntarily, we will die. The death being referred to is not physical death because both saint and sinner all die physically. It is talking about spiritual death. The sinner is born spiritually dead. Sin does not cause them to die. They are already dead. The warning is to Christians. If you choose to live after the flesh, you ... Christian ... will die spiritually again.

Rom 6:16-23 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (17) But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. (18) Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. (19) I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. (20) For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. (21) What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. (22) But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. (23) For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“The wages of sin is death.” “If you live after the flesh you shall die.” Knowing that these dire warnings are spoken to Christians, it is absolutely imperative that we know what “living after the flesh” is. The New Testament is not ambiguous about its definition of sin and what constitutes living after the flesh. Mankind is always trying to define sin based on culture and logical reasoning. But God alone is the Judge. God alone decides what sin is. It is God we will stand before on Judgment Day, not a council of human beings. The New Testament gives us clear instruction regarding what it means to “live after the flesh.” This lesson will not be exhaustive but it will be sufficient to give guidance for those pursuing to live godly in Christ Jesus.

1Co 6:9-10 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of

themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

DEFINITIONS

- Fornicator : [Greek Word = Pornos] Unlawful sexual intercourse. (Strongs)
- Idolators: An image-servant [worshipper]. (Strongs)
“The warning is to believers against turning away from God to idolatry, whether openly or secretly, consciously or unconsciously.” (Vines)
- Adulterers: One who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another. (Vines)
- Effeminate: A catamite (Strongs), one who engages in anal intercourse, especially with a boy (American Heritage Dictionary).
- Abusers of themselves with mankind: A sodomite (Strongs). 1. Anal copulation of one male with another. 2. Anal or oral copulation with a member of the opposite sex. (American Heritage Dictionary)
- Thieves: A stealer. (Strongs)
- Covetous: Eager to have more of what belongs to others, greedy of gain, a defrauder. (Vines)
- Drunkards: To be intoxicated. (Vines) To be chronically drunk. (Strongs)
- Revilers: Abusive, railing, reviling. (Vines)
Abusive - To wrongly or incorrectly use or treat someone. (AHD)
Railing - To condemn or attack in bitter, harsh, or abusive language. (AHD)
Reviling - To denounce with abusive language. (AHD)
- Extortioners: Rapacious (Vines & Strongs).
Rapacious - 1. Taking by force; plundering. 2. Greedy, ravenous (AHD)

Gal 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, (20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, (21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

- Uncleanness - Impurity, physically or morally. (Strongs)
- Lasciviousness - Excess, absence of restraint, indecency, shameless conduct. (Vines)
- Witchcraft - [Greek = Pharmakeia], The casting of spells, the use of charms, appeals to occult powers, seances, the use of hallucinogenic drugs. (Vines).
- Hatred - Hostility, enmity. (Strongs)
- Variance - Quarreling, strife. (Strongs)
- Emulations - Jealousy, envy. (Strongs)
- Wrath - Hot, fierce anger [with hard breathing]. (Strongs)
- Strife - Denotes ambition, self-seeking, rivalry, self-willed. (Vines)
- Seditions - A standing apart, a dissension, a division. Those who cause divisions (Vines)
- Heresies - A self-willed opinion which is substituted for submission to the truth. (Vines)
- Revellings - A “letting loose,” often the consequence of drunkenness. (Vines)

Eph 5:3-7 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean

person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

Foolish Talking - Silly talk, buffoonery. (Strongs) Dull, stupid talk, foolish talk. (Vines)

Jesting - Facetiousness, quick witted & ready for a spirited retort. Dirty Jokes. (Vines)

Heb 12:14-17 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Bitterness - Intense hatred. (Vines)

Defiled - Contaminated. (Strongs)

Profane - Lacking all relationship or fellowship with God. Unholy. (Vines)

Notice how all of these things originate from within us. These are the stones and the thorns that Jesus said keep the Word from penetrating deep within us to produce good fruit. It is impossible for man to change his nature by his own efforts. Thank God for the new birth and the work of the Holy Spirit:

Rom 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Notice the word “live.” It is talking about your life, your lifestyle, your habitual pattern of living. In all of history there has been only one sinless being, and that is Jesus Christ. Jesus taught us to forgive “seventy times seven” those who transgress against us. Surely God’s capacity to forgive far exceeds our own. But what are we living for? Is our life about serving the appetites of the flesh? Is self-gratification our driving force? Or are we living after the spirit? Is our life about walking in fellowship with our Lord who purchased us with His own blood? We have been born of God’s own Spirit. We have the power within us to live a lifestyle of holiness and purity. Since we have been empowered by His grace to live free from sin, our response should be to gratefully “walk” in the power of that new nature. The fruit produced by the new nature is in direct contrast to the nature of the flesh:

Gal 5:22-25 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (24) And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. (25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.