

Life In The Spirit
Romans 8:5-13
Pastor John Miller

I'm going to read Romans 8:5-13, so that you get the feel of the whole passage.

Paul says, "For those who live according to the flesh..."—or "after the flesh"—"...set their minds..."—there's our key word—"...on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if..."—or "since"—"...the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He..."—that is, the Spirit—"...who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."

Backing up to verse 4, Paul said, "...the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." To be a Christian is to have a new life in the Spirit. Before your conversion, Paul says you were in the flesh; after conversion, you are in the Spirit. Before you were a Christian, you had only one life and one walk, and that was in the flesh—the sinful, carnal nature.

There are two ways to live—and we'll see them contrasted in this passage. You can live after the flesh, which is the life of the unregenerated, the unsaved, or you can live after the Spirit, which is the life of the believer, who has been born again of the Spirit. He has been filled with the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit and now we can walk in the Spirit and live a life that pleases God. So this is the focus of our text today.

Verses 5-13 is actually an expansion of verses 1-4. We learned in verses 1-4 that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ, verse 1; and that we now have a new liberation in Christ, verse 2. Verse 2 says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." So we saw we have no condemnation, and we have a new liberation.

Now in verses 5-13, Paul is going to delineate more and explain more that the new liberation we have is because we are born of the Spirit. We are indwelt by the Spirit. We live in the Spirit. The Christian life is the Holy Spirit life. It cannot be lived apart from the Holy Spirit.

Paul now tells us that the Holy Spirit wants to do two things. First of all, the Holy Spirit wants to control our minds, verses 5-8. He wants our minds under His control. Secondly, He wants to

mortify our members or our bodies. He wants us to crucify the flesh and to walk in the Spirit, verses 9-13.

Let's look first at the fact that the Holy Spirit wants to control our minds, verses 5-8. In verse 5, Paul contrasts two mindsets. "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." The inference there is that there is one kind of individual who follows the dictates of the flesh, minding the things of the flesh. The other individual is one who follows the things of the Spirit.

The question is, who are they who are after the flesh? I think it is best to see them or view them as being non-Christians.

Let me give you a little footnote here. It is possible for a Christian to be in the flesh or to lapse into the flesh. You can be born again and still be carnal. Just drive the freeways of Southern California and find that out. It's hard to live the sanctified life in Southern California when you drive these freeways. So it is possible for a Christian to be in the flesh and sin. But the dictates and control is not the flesh; you're not dominated in your mind, your outlook and your attitude. You might say that your orientation or your inclination or the bent or your life, the tenor of your life, is spiritual now rather than carnal. You're not controlled by the old, sinful, Adamic nature. So it's possible, but it's not in the context.

One of my goals, by the way, in my preaching is to convey the actual meaning of the text, not to impose on it what I want it to say. It would be very easy to preach a sermon on carnal Christianity here, but that's not what Paul is talking about. He's talking about non-Christians, so I believe that when he says "those who are in the flesh" are the unsaved, non-Christians, unbelievers, those who haven't been born again.

Notice it says here that they are "after the flesh." The word "flesh" here means their "sinful nature." When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, he brought sin and death on the whole human race. He was acting as a federal head and brought sin and death to the whole human race. So everyone born is born with an Adamic, sinful, bent or nature or capacity. That's what he means by "flesh." He's not talking about our physical bodies; he's talking about our sinful capacity or our sin nature.

Notice what it says about these people: They mind "the things of the flesh." In other words, they have a carnal mind. They think about physical, sinful things only. The carnal man cannot understand the things of the Spirit. Paul says in Corinthians that is so because they are "spiritually discerned." So a person who is not a Christian does not understand the Bible or the Holy Spirit or heaven or hell or the things of God. He doesn't understand the things that have eternal value. He is only temporal minded. He is absorbed in the mundane and the physical.

Jesus described him in Matthew 6, where He tells us not to worry, because we are God's children. He said that worry is something that non-Christians do. They worry what they're going to eat, what they're going to drink and what they're going to wear. Jesus said that those

are the things that unbelievers worry about. You know, people come to church and they don't even hear the sermon, because they're thinking, Where are we gonna go to lunch after church? Some of you are busted right now. You've already kind of floated off. You're somewhere else. Come back. You're in church right now. Hear the Word of the Lord. "What are we gonna wear? Where are we gonna go shopping? Who's gonna mow the lawn? How am I gonna pay the bills?" These are the things that the natural man is consumed with and worried about.

By the way, if you are a child of God, your Father in heaven knows that you need these things. He'll take care of you. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." He'll take care of what you eat and drink and the clothes that you wear.

In 1 John 2:15-16, I think he describes the natural man, the unbeliever, the man or woman in the flesh, when he warns us, "Do not love the world..."—the word is "cosmos," the evil world system apart from God, the way the world operates—"...or the things in the world." Then he breaks it down into the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life." I like to think of the lust of the flesh as your passions. The unbeliever is governed and controlled by his passions, his body appetites. The lust of the eyes is your possessions. "If I could just have more things. If I could just have a bigger house or more houses or a new car or nicer clothes. We think that somehow life is in the abundance of the things that we possess. The pride of life is your position. "Look what I've accomplished; I'm a self-made man." He made himself and he worships himself. We're proud of who we are.

You can be a moral person—you're not a wicked person by the world's standards—but you can still be in the flesh. You're dominated by the flesh and the body appetites and the things of this world. Whether you're sinful or you're a moral man, maybe you go to church, maybe you're religious—the worst kind of "in the flesh" are those who are religious. They take pride in their robes and their rites and their rituals and then in their religion. "Look who I am! Look what I've done!" They think they're wonderful because they've been confirmed or they've been baptized or they take communion or they have a particular religious persuasion. We're going to learn today in this passage that those who are in the flesh cannot please God. If you're not a Christian, nothing you do brings pleasure to God or earns you merit or favor with God.

There is another characteristic of these unsaved people, verse 6. It says, "To be carnally minded is death." They are dead in their sins and separated from God. It's the kind of death that is dead to spiritual realities. That's why when they read the Bible, they don't see it as any big deal. When you're born again, you love God's Word. When you're not born again, it's like, "Whatever. I'm not into the Bible. To go to church, that's boring. Sing songs, that's boring. Worship and pray—I don't want to do that." That's because they're dead spiritually. There's no spiritual life.

Then notice in verse 7, also, the carnal mind, which is the fleshly mind, is at war with God. Whether you realize it or not, if you're not a Christian, you're actually an enemy of God. You're

at war with God. God is not at war with you, but you are at war with God. And notice that you have no peace, because you are warring with God.

As an aside, this repetition of the word “mind” or “minded” is actually Paul talking about our attitude, our outlook or our focus on life. He’s talking about our inner personality, who we are—our mind, our emotions, our will—the real you. So the real you is not your physical body. The real you expresses who you are. You are an immaterial person inside a material body. When you die, you leave your body and go to heaven. The mind, the outlook and the attitudes live according to the dictates of the flesh in a nonbeliever.

Look again at verse 7. “The carnal mind...is not subject to the law of God.” So you are at war with God, you’re not subject to the law of God and Paul says, “nor indeed can be.”

Then verse 8 says, “Those who are in the flesh...”—these unbelievers and non-Christians—“...cannot please God.” That’s an important statement; don’t forget that.

“Well, maybe they’re a good person.”

They “cannot please God.”

“Well, maybe they’ve been baptized.”

They “cannot please God.”

Years ago there was a man in my church who sat under my preaching for some time. He kind of shocked me one day. There was a big accident on the freeway near our church. A large motorhome caught on fire. A good Samaritan pulled up behind it, got out of his car and ran into this motorhome and pulled the family out just in time to save them from certain death. Then the motorhome blew up.

This parishioner said, “Well, Pastor John, certainly because of the good thing that guy did, he’s going to go to heaven; isn’t he?”

I thought, Where have you been? You’ve got to run into a burning motorhome and save people so that God will let you into heaven? I don’t think so. The Bible says that there is nothing that we can do to earn, merit or deserve heaven. People think that if you give your life for your nation in war that certainly God will let you in heaven. This is hard to swallow, but it’s in the Bible. You need to listen carefully. “Those who are in the flesh cannot...”—I repeat, “cannot”—“...please God. I don’t care who you are or what you’ve done, your best before a holy God is like “filthy rags.” “There is no one righteous. No, not one.”

Maybe you come to church. Maybe you come to Revival Christian Fellowship. Maybe you say, “Okay, I’m going to endure this guy’s sermon. If I really do it every week, then God will let me in heaven because I suffered so much on earth.” When you stand before God, you say, “You better let me in heaven; I listened to John Miller’s sermons for six years! Every Sunday!

Anyone who endures that deserves to go to heaven!”

That won't get you there. The only thing that will get you there is that you reach out by faith and take the hand of Jesus Christ, who died on the Cross, was buried and rose from the dead. So be clear about this: unsaved people cannot please God. Only true Christians can please God.

Now let's look at the contrast in verse 5. It says, "...but those who live according to the Spirit" or "the orientation of the Spirit" or "the inclination of the Spirit" or "the direction of the Spirit." These are Christians. This is talking about people who have been born again into God's family. Notice what it says about them: They set their minds on "the things of the Spirit." So the contrast is that the man of the flesh "minds...the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." Their mind set, their focus, the tenor of their life is of "the things of the Spirit" if they are believers.

In Colossians 3:1-3, Paul says, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above" or "set your mind or affections on things above." You should set your mind on things above and not on things of the earth. For you are dead, and "your life is hid with Christ in God."

Some people say, "You Christians are so heavenly minded, you're of no earthly good." That's really not the problem in the church today. The problem is that Christians are too earthly minded to be of any good to heaven. I pray to God that we were more heavenly minded. Now being spiritually minded doesn't mean that you put on a white robe and sit on Bell Mountain waiting for the rapture. It doesn't mean you sit all day and pray, talk to God, fast and you're a holy man. I've met people who think that if you talk softly, that's more spiritual. "Praise God, brother" [spoken softly]. Slap that dude! What's your problem?! Or they get very loud. "Praise God! Hallelujah!" [spoken loudly]. They're in the deeper-life club. That hasn't anything to do with being spiritual. It's the work of the Spirit in your life. God doesn't change you that radically that your personality gets weird. Why are people who have the Holy Ghost weird? People are afraid and say, "I don't want the Holy Ghost. It's going to make me weird." I don't think so.

By the way, the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer has one goal in mind: to glorify Jesus Christ. That's all He wants to do. He wants to make you more like Jesus so Jesus gets the glory. That's why the Holy Spirit has come. Not to glorify you.

Paul used this same word "mind" in Philippians 2 where he said, "Let this mind..."—this attitude, this outlook—"...be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God." It was not something to hold onto or cling to, but He emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant "and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the Cross." It's saying that Jesus, who is God, humbled Himself and took on humanity, and He became a servant and obedient to even death on the Cross.

So when the Spirit is working in our lives, not only does He glorify Jesus, but He makes us like Jesus and gives us a servant's heart, so that we put others first; we consider others more important than ourselves.

They who mind the things of the Spirit have, number one, a real appetite for the Bible. I'll never forget when I got saved. I was just out of high school, 19 years old, and even though I was raised in Sunday school and church, I was a prodigal; I fell away. I got a little wild for a few years, then got out of high school. God convicted me and I got saved. For the first time in my life, I started reading the Bible. And I'll tell you something else that's a little embarrassing. I was almost illiterate when I got out of high school. I bluffed my way through high school. I literally almost couldn't read. I actually came up short in credits. They kicked me out of school; they didn't want me around anymore. But when I got saved, I learned to read the Bible. I actually learned to read after high school by reading the Bible. And I couldn't get enough of it.

One day I was home—I was living with my parents—and I was in my bedroom reading the Bible when my mom opened the door, saw me, and about died and went to heaven. "John's reading the Bible!" She just started praising the Lord. "I thank You, Jesus! There is a God in heaven!"

And then I started to pray. I freaked myself out. I pinched myself. "This is me?!" I'm reading my Bible and liking it, I'm praying and talking to God and hearing His voice. This is amazing. Then I actually went back to church. That really blew my parents' minds. I had long hair and a big beard. They took me back to our little Pentecostal church with about 60 people. Everyone was over 80 years old. When I showed up, they freaked out. They thought Jesus came. "Wow! Praise God! Hippie John got saved and came to church!" Then they would sing and worship God and I liked it. We hugged and it was a blessing. It was amazing!

"What's happened to me?!" What happened to me is that I actually got saved. I got born again. The Bible says, "Old things pass away. Behold all things are new." The things I used to hate I now love, and the things I used to love I now hate.

Notice verse 6 says that for those who are in the Spirit or "spiritually minded is life and peace." If you haven't been born again, you don't know what you're missing; you don't have life. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." Everlasting life is life in a new sphere. It's life with a new quality. It's not just living in heaven forever; it's life right now with a new quality. It's life in a new dimension. It's spiritual life. Before you were a Christian, you were in the flesh, dead in your sins, separated from God. Now you have the life of God in your soul. I think that's the best definition of a Christian: one who has the life of God in their soul.

Then notice also that a Christian has peace. That's peace with God—the war is over—and now you have the peace of God. This is why if you're not a Christian, it's difficult in marriage, because all you know is the flesh and the dictates of the flesh. When someone comes to me with marriage problems, the first thing I want to know is whether or not they know Jesus. Have they been born again? Have they trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior? There's nothing I can really do to help them unless they first give their heart to Jesus Christ. When you know Jesus, the Bible says that "a threefold cord is not easily broken." It's not just a husband and a wife; it's Jesus in the middle of that relationship. He's the foundation of that relationship.

That doesn't mean that Christians have no problems in their marriage. We, too, can yield to the flesh. But when the Lord is in your heart, you have the Holy Spirit in you to be able to love one another and serve one another and you want God's glory. You want Jesus to be glorified in that relationship, and you have the capacity to obey God's law.

Now notice verse 8: "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God." The converse or the inference is that those who are in the Spirit can please God. It only gives you the negative in verse 8, but the inference is that if you're in the Spirit, you can now actually live a life that pleases God.

So your mind matters. From verses 5 to 13, ten times the Holy Spirit is mentioned. The Holy Spirit wants to control your mind, your attitude, your outlook. The thing to do is found in Romans 12:1-2 where Paul says, "I beseech you...by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world..."—one translation has "don't let the world press you into its mold"—"...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Our minds are renewed by the Word of God and prayer. You want to walk in the Spirit as a believer? Then spend time in God's Word and spend time in prayer. It will transform your life.

Now there is a second main division in verses 9-13 where Paul says that the Holy Spirit wants to mortify our members. He wants to control our mind. In doing that, He wants us to take a step of faith, present our bodies and realize our old life is dead. We need to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts.

Notice in verse 9 that a Christian is a person who has the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. "But you..." Notice it starts with "but you." Paul is contrasting the people of the flesh, verse 8, with the man or woman of the Spirit, the believer, in verse 9. "But you..."—talking to Christians—"...are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ..."—another reference to the Holy Spirit—"...he is not His." Paul is making it very clear here that if you do not have the Holy Spirit, you are not a Christian, a child of God. You don't belong to God. So, again, the inference is that every Christian has the Holy Spirit.

Don't ever let someone tell you that you can be a Christian and not have the Spirit. All Christians have the Holy Spirit. But not all Christians are under the control of the Spirit. I like to say that it's not whether you have the Spirit, but whether the Spirit has you. The question is not whether you have the Holy Spirit inside you; that's true of all Christians. But does the Holy Spirit control you and empower you? If you don't have the Spirit, then you are not a Christian.

How do you know if you have the Spirit? You're going to want to read the Bible. When I meet someone who says, "I'm a Christian, but I don't read the Bible," I think, How can you be a Christian and not want to read the Bible? It's your spiritual food! It's how you hear God speak. It's how you grow. God uses His Word to sanctify us. When Jesus prayed in John 17 in His great high-priestly prayer, He said in verse 17, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is

truth.” To be Spirit filled, you have to be Word filled. The Bible and the Word of God have to work together to make you like the Son of God.

Then you will want to fellowship. It’s a contradiction in terms to say, “Well, I’m a Christian, but I don’t go to church.” Again, when I got saved, I didn’t care if the church people were old, that they didn’t look like me, that they weren’t into what I was into. We’re all into Jesus, and we’re brothers and sisters in Christ. There was sweet communion and sweet fellowship there. The family of God.

Some people say, “I don’t go to church because there are too many hypocrites there.”

“Well, we can always use another one. Come on.”

“I went to church, and there were some weird people there.”

“Well, where isn’t there weird people?”

“I’m looking for the perfect church.

“Well, if you find it, don’t join it, because if you join it, it won’t be perfect anymore. You’re going to mess it up.”

We come together, us sinners who are saved by grace. We’re forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ. We stumble and fall, but the tenor of our lives is to walk in the Spirit and to glorify God.

We also like to pray. We like to sing. I love Ephesians 5:18-19 where it says, “Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

I don’t understand when someone says, “I’m a Christian, but I’m not one of the singing kind. I came to Revival, and you sing way too much for me. I’m uncomfortable.”

“Then you’re not going to want to go to heaven, because that’s all we’re gonna do up there.”

This Scripture about “singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,” in the Greek means the Holy Spirit is plucking strings in your heart. It’s the word used for a stringed instrument. It’s like your heart is a stringed instrument. The Holy Spirit plucks the strings. One of the indications that you are a Christian is that you have a song in your heart. Now it may not be a good song, but it’s a song. That’s why the Bible says, “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.” Sometimes we just kind of groan or bark or whatever, but we still have a song in our heart. There’s something wrong with a person who says, “I’m a Christian, but I’m not the singing kind,” because the Holy Spirit puts a song in our heart.

The Spirit even gives us songs in the night. How about Acts 16 when Paul and Silas were beaten and put in prison? At midnight they began to sing praises unto God, and the prisoners

heard them.

When you lay in bed at night, God puts a song in your heart. When you get up in the morning, God puts a song in your heart. Through the day, God puts a song in your heart.

When I got saved, I went everywhere with two things: my Bible and a hymnal. A. W. Tozer said that those are the two most important books to the Christian. I remember when I would take my lunch breaks, I would go outside, open the Bible, read, and then I would open the hymnal and sing. As a young Christian, the first time I opened up the song Amazing Grace—even though I had heard it all my life, but I never sang it as a Christian—and came to the stanza that says,

“When we’ve been there ten thousand years,

Bright shining as the sun,

We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise

Than when we first begun.”

I just began to weep like a little baby because of the reality of heaven. I’m going to heaven! God has saved me! I love the Word and I love to sing and I love to pray and I love to go to church. I think, “God, how good You are!”

I could be out living in darkness. All my friends were going to prison for doing drugs, but God reached out and saved me by His grace. What an awesome thing! He puts a new song in your heart, and He puts you on a rock. What a blessing that is!

There is another mark of a true, Spirit-filled, indwelt believer, and that is that they love Jesus and seek to glorify Him. Notice in verse 9 that the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of Christ.” He comes to glorify Jesus Christ. He gives you a love for Jesus Christ and a longing to spend time with Christ.

Now moving to verses 10-11, we see that after having affirmed that the Spirit is the distinguishing mark of a Christian, Paul now gives two consequences of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling. Notice that verse 10 opens with “And if...” Then verse 11 opens with “But if...” These are actually two consequences of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling. The first one is in verse 10. “And if Christ is in you...”—or it could be translated “since Christ is in you”—“...the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

Paul said it another way in another passage. He said that the “outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.” The older you get, the more your body weakens and begins to perish. If you don’t believe me, go back and look at your high school annuals. And weep. “That was me; I actually had hair.” You look at those photos and you say, “Wow! What happened?!” The outward man is perishing. But the inward man is getting stronger and being renewed day by day. So you have a future and a hope as a believer. The body is dead,

but the Spirit brings life.

In verse 11, we see the second consequence. Paul says, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you...”—and He does—“...He...”—that is, the Holy Spirit—“... who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” The inference there is that the Holy Spirit raised Christ from the dead. The Scripture says that the Father raised Jesus from the dead, the Scripture says that Jesus raised Himself and the Scripture says that the Holy Spirit raised Jesus. All three—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—raised Christ from the dead.

I wish I could do a whole sermon on verse 11. Paul is saying that because you have the Holy Spirit in your body, which is dead because of sin, one day it's going to be resurrected. The same Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is one day going to raise your body from the dead. If you get raptured, it will happen then. But if you die before the rapture and you're buried or you're cremated or thrown into the sea, one day the Lord's going to come “and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” Our bodies are going to be metamorphosized and changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” Our bodies will be reunited with our soul and spirit, and we will have a brand new, glorified body in heaven. It's going to be a new and improved body.

I said this with a lot of excitement in first service, and a grandmother and her grandson, probably eight, nine or ten years old, came down the aisle to say hello to me. This little boy had a big smile on his face. He was missing his right leg from his knee down and was walking on a blade. He was just glowing and beaming. She said to me, “My grandson and I were in the loft listening to the sermon, and when you said, ‘We're going to get a new body,’ he turned to me and just smiled and beamed real big. He wanted to come to say thank you for your sermon.” What an awesome thing. I gave him a hug and we talked and said hello. I said, “You're going to have two legs, and you're going to run and leap and walk in heaven.” What an awesome thing that is! What an awesome thing that someday we're going to have new bodies.

I don't know where you get hope like that outside of Christ. I don't know where you get hope like that in the world. Certainly not in the flesh. But when you come to know Christ, you have that assurance. What a blessed thing that is. So we also have our bodies being renewed right now by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Then Paul closes in verses 12-13. Notice it starts with “Therefore...,” indicating his conclusion. He says, “Therefore, brethren...”—speaking of the believers—“...we are debtors—not to the flesh...”—you owe the old, sinful life nothing—“...to live according to the flesh. For...”—here's the reason—“...if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body...”—your physical members—“...you will live.” So that body of death, which exercises itself through our body, we reckon it to be dead indeed unto sin. We owe nothing to that old, sinful life.

The Bible tells us that we “mortify” or “put to death” the deeds of the body. How do we do it? The Bible tells us in verse 13, “by the Spirit.” You cannot live the victorious Christian life without

the oHHHoly Spirit.

Jesus said, "If your right eye offends you..."—if it causes you to sin—"...pluck it out." Not literally. "If your right hand offends you, cut it off." Certainly not literally. But again, he's saying that sin is a serious matter. You can't play with sin; you have to be aggressive against it.

You might have a relationship that is sinful. It needs to be cut off. Maybe there are things you're looking at on your computer that are sinful and need to be cut off. That's that right hand that needs to be eliminated. Maybe there are passions or desires that you have that are sinful. They need to be cut out and eliminated. If it causes you to stumble, don't go down that street. Don't go to that place. Don't go to that restaurant. Maybe you're in an office that you need to get out of. Maybe you need to get a new job, because you can't stand against the temptations that are facing you.

So the Spirit must control our minds, and the Spirit wants to mortify our members, our flesh.

Galatians 2:20 pretty much summarizes this entire passage. Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."