

# Maintaining a Spiritual Mind

## INTRODUCTION.

- A. Every person needs some sort of pattern for their life. These patterns help determine how a person will act and re-act to the challenges and changes of life.
  - 1. A child who is raised by a hypercritical parent may grow up to always respond according to his hypercritical raising.
  - 2. A child who is raised by an angry and / or abusive parent may grow up to always respond with anger and / or abuse.
  - 3. A child who is raised by loving, caring, understand, patient, yet strict parent, may grow up to respond with love, care, understand, patience, yet sternness.
  - 4. In short, we all have patterns by which we live our lives. We have patterns which determine how we will respond to love, pain, hurt, challenges, etc.
- B. The question for you and I is this: Upon what is our pattern of life and response based? Is our pattern based upon all things that are spiritual or physical?
- C. With this lesson, we will example two passages from God's Word to show why we should be focusing our efforts and attentions upon that which is spiritual.

## I. LESSONS FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 2 & 3

- A. Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.
  - 1. Paul came carrying the wisdom and power of God. He did not come to them to deal with extraneous matters. He came to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
  - 2. Paul's preaching was not with "*persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*" In other words, Paul did not try to convince them through persuasive words of human wisdom. He did not try to appeal to human wisdom to convince them. He stuck with the word of God and the demonstration of power. (v. 4)  
**Key Verse:** "*And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,*" (v. 4, NKJV)
  - 3. According to verse 5, Paul did not use persuasive words of the wisdom of men because if he had, their faith would have been in the wisdom of men or in the words of the wisdom of men. (v. 5)
    - a. Paul knew that it was important that the faith of the Corinthians be

founded upon the power of God and His word.

- b. We must take care that our faith is founded in the word of God and the power of the Word, and not in the persuasive words of the wisdom of men.

B. Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-12.

**Key Verse:** *“However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.”*  
(v. 6)

1. What was Paul speaking? The wisdom of God. To whom was Paul speaking this wisdom? To the mature. Paul did not teach the wisdom of the ages. Paul did not teach the wisdom of the rulers, because they all would come to nothing. (v. 6)
2. Paul taught the wisdom of God in a mystery, the wisdom which God ordained before the word began, Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (v. 7-10a)
  - a. This mystery was the redemption of man, the salvation of man.
  - b. Some people are unwilling to accept this wisdom because it is not fashioned after man’s wisdom. (1 Corinthians 1:19-25)
  - c. This mystery was revealed by the apostles.

C. Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-16:

1. Paul talks about God having revealed these things to them through His Spirit. He explains why this was possible in verses 10-11.
2. Paul said that the apostles had not received the spirit of the world. The apostles did not teach what the world finds important. Instead, the apostles were bringing that which they had received from the Spirit of the Lord. (v. 12)

**Key Verse:** *“These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”* (v. 13)

3. The problem is that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God because they are foolishness to him. Nor can the natural man know them because they are spiritually discerned. The natural man is focused upon the physical problems and elements of this world. As a result he will not be able to discern that which is spiritual. (v. 13-16)

- D. Now, why did Paul say all this? What was Paul attempting to deal with? Paul was leading up to a problem faced by the Christians in Corinth. Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-4.
1. Paul needed to speak to the Corinthians as to spiritual, mature Christians. Instead, he had to talk to them as to carnal people, as babes in Christ. (v. 1)
    - a. There is nothing wrong with being a babe in Christ, as long as you have just been born again. (Cf. John 3:2-6)
    - b. However, you are to desire the sincere milk of the word that you can grow and no longer be a babe. (1 Peter 2:1-2)
    - c. The Christians in Corinth had failed to study and grow. (v. 2)
    - d. Their spiritual growth had been halted. They were much like the recipients of the Hebrew letter. (Cf. Hebrews 5:12-14)
  2. What had stunted the Corinthian's growth?
    - a. In verse 3, Paul stated that the Corinthians were carnal. They had their mind focused on carnal things.
    - b. Paul defined the carnality by saying, "*For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*" (v. 3)
    - c. They were not focusing on the spiritual, but on the physical. They were looking to the man, not the word. They were looking to the person who had either taught them or baptized them, and not that which was spiritual. (v. 3-4)
    - d. The Corinthians were focused on the physical, not the spiritual, hence the resulting envy, strife, and divisions.
    - e. They were focusing on physical things, physical concerns, and physical problems.
- E. When we begin to focus on those things which are spiritual, we begin to realize, that the physical problems will eventually pass away.
1. The physical problems will come to pass and move on. That is the way of life.
  2. Life is like a wheel, it keeps on rolling. It began rolling the day you were born and it will stop rolling the day you die. Life passes on.
  3. Today's problems will become yesterday's problems. Tomorrow's problems will be dealt with tomorrow.

4. Sadly, we get caught up in the particulars of this life and we cannot look past the challenges and the problems that we currently face. We end up losing sight of that which is truly spiritual. This lack of focus may very well spawn actions resulting from such emotions as envy, strife, and division, just as the brethren in Corinth.
- F. What about us? Are we listening to:
1. The persuasive words of human wisdom? Are we focusing more on the man than on the message? Do we believe and advocate a particular position, not because we were convicted by scripture, but because of WHO taught us the position?
  2. Are we mature and capable of handling the wisdom of God's word? Are we too busy being influenced by the reasoning and wisdom of this world?
  3. Do we compare spiritual things with spiritual? Are we so consumed with the problems and influences of this world that we are trying to compare spiritual things with physical things? Are we leaving our spiritual paths to walk a worldly and carnal path?
- G. We must focus on that which is spiritual.
1. It does not matter how much Bible knowledge we have. It does not matter how greatly we understand some of the more meaty Bible sections. If we are still quibbling and arguing and gossiping and allowing ourselves to be divided by those who are without and those who are within, then we are still carnal, being babes in Christ.
  2. It is not the knowledge that makes us strong. It is the application of that knowledge which makes us strong. It is not the knowledge that makes us mature, it is the application of that knowledge which makes us mature.

## II. LESSONS FROM ROMANS 8:1-11.

- A. Read Romans 8:1-11 and see what lessons can be learned which could have helped the church in Corinth.
1. According to verse 1, there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ, who walk according to the Spirit. What guides our lives? The Spirit through the word or the standards of the flesh?
  2. When you become a Christian, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus will set you free from sin. The law of sin and death did not set you free, it was the law of Christ. (v. 2-3)
  3. Notice that "the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who . . . walk . . . according to the Spirit." (v. 4) This is the same phrase as in

verse 1: “walk . . . according to the Spirit.”

**Key Phrase:** “*walk . . . according to the Spirit.*” (v. 1, 4)

- a. When we walk according to the Spirit, there is the application of God’s word within our lives. Knowledge does nothing for us if there is no application of it in our lives.
  - b. We are to walk according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh!
4. People who have their mind focused on physical things will respond in physical ways. The person who is focused on spiritual things will respond and react in spiritual ways. (v. 5)
- a. Those who live according to the Spirit, will set their minds on the things of the Spirit. They set their mind on those things which are above, not on that which is below. (Cf. Colossians 3:1-4)
  - b. For instance: When someone does us wrong, how do we respond? Now, let us say that the sinning person has repented, how then do we respond? The world may dictate that you have a right to make them pay for their actions? However, does God give you that right?
5. In verse 6 we read, “*For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*”

**Key Verse:** “*For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*” (v. 6)

- a. This was the problem with the church in Corinth. The Christians in Corinth were carnally minded. It was leading to their spiritual death. Consider the example of their abuse of the Lord’s supper. (1 Corinthians 11:27-30)
  - b. The person who is always focusing on that which is physical will never find life and peace. They may focus on physical pleasure, physical retribution, physical pain, etc. In the end, all they will be spiritually dead. They will face eternal death in Hell.
  - c. On the other hand, those who live according to the Spirit, will focus on the things of the Spirit. The Word of God will be important to them and it will guide their lives. The end result will be life and peace.
- B. Read again Romans 8:7-11.
1. It is important to remember that the “carnal mind is enmity against God.”

Those who are focusing on the physical (carnal) life cannot please God. (v. 7-8)

2. The Spirit dwells within us through the application of the Word of God. That is how we have fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (v. 9-10)

**Key Verse:** *“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”* (v. 11)

3. If we walk in the fellowship of the Spirit, we will have life. God will give life to our mortal bodies through His Spirit. This newness of life is seen when one is born again. (Cf. Romans 6:3-4)

### III. WHAT MUST WE DO?

- A. **Key Verse:** *“And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,”* (1 Corinthians 2:4) Let us be convicted by the message from God’s word, not the messenger.
- B. **Key Verse:** *“However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.”* (1 Corinthians 2:6) Let us study daily the word of God so that we will be mature and able to understand the wisdom that comes from God’s word.
- C. **Key Verse:** *“These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”* (1 Corinthians 2:13) When we face the various challenges of life, let us always remember to compare spiritual things with spiritual things. Let us always address physical problems and challenges in spiritual ways, never behaving like the world.
- D. **Key Phrase:** *“walk . . . according to the Spirit.”* (Romans 8:1, 4) Let us always remember to walk according to the Spirit in everything that we think, say, or do. Let us not walk according to the standards and practices of the world.
- E. **Key Verse:** *“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”* (Romans 8:6) Walking according to the standards of the world will result in our being carnally minded. This will only bring spiritual death, a separation from God. However, if we will be spiritually minded, then we will enjoy life and peace, both now and in eternity.
- F. **Key Verse:** *“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”* (Romans 8:11) If we will focus our minds and efforts on spiritual things and spiritual ways, then the Lord will dwell in us. He will

give us spiritual life through His Spirit, through His word. We will no longer be slaves of sin. We will be freed to serve the Lord, wholly setting our minds upon things above, not on the things below.

**CONCLUSION.**

- A. As we consider the problems that many churches face today, we may find that at the heart of many of problems are no doctrinal issues. Instead, the problems have as their root, members who are carnally (physically) minded. This was the problem with the church in Corinth.
- B. As you examine your service to the Lord, you must ask yourself if you are maintaining a spiritually mind set at all times. If you say that you are, then examine your actions, words, and thoughts. They will be the test of whether or not you are living with a spiritual mind set or a physical mind set.

-----  
Maintain a Spiritual Mind -- March 9, 2003 -- File # 1035 - Christian Living  
by John M. Duvall -- Lawton, OK