

Spiritually Minded

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”
Romans 8:6

Introduction:

1. What is the goal for our lives and church? To be the most pleasing to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
 2. If this is the case, then we must avoid the warnings given and horrible temptations seen of a carnal generation.
 3. Can we truly walk with God and be filled with all the fullness of God, as Paul prayed for Ephesus (Eph 3:14-19)?
 4. We are commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ to prove our own selves, whether we are in the faith (II Cor 13:5).
- I. **The Doctrine:** What does this text mean in both its small context and its large context.
- A. The large context is 5:1 – 8:39 and teaches that our glorious salvation by the work of Jesus Christ is not grounds for a careless or sinful life in the expectation of God’s grace.
 1. God’s grace in Christ, the Second Adam, does not grant presumption (5:1 – 6:2).
 2. We are dead to sin legally and free to righteousness practically (6:2 – 7:6).
 3. The law manifests our great sinfulness, but Jesus saved us from it (7:7 – 8:17).
 4. As the sons of God, we are waiting for our certain, final deliverance (8:18-39).
 - B. The small context is 8:1-16 and teaches that eternal life and deliverance from our just condemnation for sin is shown by desire and activity in spiritual things by the Spirit.
 1. God chose us in Christ for salvation, but our spiritual walk is the evidence (8:1).
 2. Our legal and vital salvation in Jesus Christ is evidenced by our walk (8:2-4).
 3. There are fleshly and spiritual men, and they are known by their interests (8:5).
 4. Our interests are the visible evidence of the condition of our souls, and these interests lead to the certain consequences of their nature – death or life (8:6).
 5. There is a violent enmity between our flesh and God – the rule is certain (8:7-8).
 6. The absolute identifying mark of a child of God is the Spirit’s Presence (8:9).
 7. We are in debt, not to our flesh, but rather to the Spirit of life (8:10-12).
 8. Whatever is leading our conduct produces the evidence of our future (8:13-14).
 9. The Spirit, Who leads in spiritual things, is also an internal Witness (8:15-16).
- II. **The DANGER:** Why is this subject important for us at this time in America?
- A. The grave peril for professors is to deceive themselves and end up lost (Matt 7:21-23).
 - B. The grave peril of Christianity in the last days is carnal Christianity (II Tim 3:1 – 4:5).
 - C. The grave peril of our own souls is carnal Christianity, which is hypocrisy (II Peter 1:9).
 - D. Every church has carnal members of both varieties – elect and reprobate, which have crept in with their words and show; and we have our share, though we don’t want them.
 - E. Satan is devouring Christians in our nation with peace, prosperity, and pleasure.
 - F. Persecution, poverty, and pain, ordinarily undesirable, provoke greater spiritual zeal.
- III. **The DEFINITION:** What is spiritually minded and how do I measure myself and others?
- A. Every person either minds fleshly things or spiritual things, but not both (Rom 8:5-8).
 1. **Mind.** *verb.* To perceive, notice, be aware of; to have one’s attention attracted by (something presented to one’s eyes or outward perceptions).
 2. Spiritual things are the Lord and His Word, kingdom, church, and righteousness.
 3. Fleshly things are those of this world, of physical life, of nature, of money, etc.
 4. You can tell by their passion. What are they most energized and excited about?
 5. You can tell by their works. Where do they apply their time and energy most?
 6. You can tell by their words. What do they talk about freely and voluntarily?

7. You can tell by their fruit. What are their evidence, character, and marks?
8. You can tell by their influence. What affect do they have on those around them?
9. You can tell by their family. What is the character of their spouse and children?
- B. It is a matter of priority. What do you emphasize? How do you order your free life?
 1. He has a set of priorities for saints, which should establish our rankings.
 2. We are to seek His kingdom and righteousness first, not second (Matthew 6:33).
 3. Truly seeking it will have no problem cutting off temptations (Matt 5:29-30).
 4. Would you rather be a spiritual doorkeeper than dwell with the rich (Ps 84:10)?
 5. David chose one preeminent thing – to behold the beauty of the Lord (Ps 24:4).
- C. It is a matter of direction. Are you aimed toward heaven? Or much earthly emphasis?
 1. We are to lay up treasures in heaven by our investments there (Matt 6:19-21).
 2. We focus our efforts toward those things which cannot be seen (II Cor 4:18).
 3. The Thessalonian saints were waiting for Jesus from heaven (I Thess 1:9-10).
- D. It is a matter of passion. What do you love? Where are your preferences and delights?
 1. We are to set our affection on things above, not on earthly things (Col 3:1-3).
 2. We are to love the Lord God with our complete being above all else (Mk 12:30).
 3. We are to love Him with our first love, not with casual interest (Revelation 2:4).
 4. The Lord prefers cold infidels to lukewarm Christians (Revelation 3:15-16).
 5. Holiness and separation from the world are loved by spiritually minded saints.
 6. What do you glory about? Strength, riches, or wisdom? Consider Jer 9:23-24.
- E. It is a matter of prosperity and success. For the measure of success reveals the man.
 1. It is ignorance that falsely believes gain is a reflection of godliness (I Tim 6:5).
 2. Godliness with contentment is great gain, regardless of prosperity (I Tim 6:6).
 3. What if you gain the whole world? Is that a big accomplishment (Matt 16:26)?
 4. What if you were living in poverty, but you were breathing the Spirit of God?
 5. A spiritually minded person is content regardless, for he has the Lord (He 13:5).
- F. It is a matter of contrast. There should be clear delineation in our lives between them.
 1. Since the two things are at enmity, there cannot be carnal-spiritual Christians.
 2. Everything we do, no matter how mundane or natural, is to Him (I Cor 10:31).
 3. And we cannot allow even noble matters to crowd Him in our lives (I Cor 7:32).
 4. If we save our fleshly lives (to have both), we lose them both (Matthew 16:25).
- G. We err by defining “things of the flesh” as base and abominable sins, which we hate.
 1. Sins like sodomy and witchcraft are works of the flesh, but not all (Gal 5:19-21).
 2. So are spirit sins like unthankfulness, hatred, anger, envy, debate, and bitterness.
 3. So are “good sins” like covetousness, greed, emulation, extortion, and boasting.
 4. Then there are noble things that distract like marriage, job, children, and hobby.
- H. There are examples in the Bible to help us by visualization and emulation in this matter.
 1. Jesus was clearly as spiritually minded as a Man could possibly be (John 3:34).
 2. Anna was an extreme holy widow, who did not leave the temple (Luke 2:36-38).
 3. There are widows indeed and widows, yet they live very different (I Tim 5:5-6).
 4. Are you as conscious of God’s pleasure and family sinfulness as Job (Job 1:4-5).
 5. David and Paul, described in detail, passionately preferred spiritual things.
- I. The definition is neither so high we cannot reach it, nor so low it has no significance.
 1. It is not living in a monastery, wearing a brown robe, and fingering beads all day; or working minimum wage and reading and praying every spare minute.
 2. It is an independent, voluntary, and zealous performance of the above definition; which will manifest itself as someone constantly craving things of the Spirit.

- IV. **The DIFFICULTY:** Why is it so hard to keep my soul and life spiritually minded?
- A. Your fleshly spirit and body have the consequences of sin – loss of love toward God.
 - B. The world - entire economic, educational, and entertainment system - loves the flesh.
 - C. Satan, as a roaring lion, seeks to devour any spiritual effort to honor Jesus; since loving God is the first commandment, he labors mightily to direct our affection elsewhere.
 - D. Satan, the world, and your flesh have conspired together to keep you from being so.
 - E. Since most Christians are very carnal, we relax by their tempting and popular example.
 - F. Evil communications corrupt good manners, and we are bombarded by it (I Cor 15:33).
 - G. We cannot love both, even though we so desperately want to (I John 2:15; Matt 6:24).
 - H. Even good and noble things like a spouse take us away from the Lord (I Cor 7:32-35).
- V. **The DILEMMA:** What can I do to arouse and increase my spiritual mindedness?
- A. First, admit and accept that as Creator **and** Saviour, He deserves all we are and have.
 - B. Second, remember the warnings we cannot be both carnal and spiritual, though we try.
 - C. Third, understand carnal things include even those things you may admire and desire.
 - D. Fourth, believe you truly can be more spiritually minded by rearranging your lifestyle, as you can keep yourself in the love of God waiting for eternal life (Jude 1:21).
 - E. Stop the fleshly inputs in your life. Do you know what and where? Books, magazines, friends, television, radio, music, sports, hobbies, and family are often fleshly inputs.
 - F. It is the duty of fathers to arrange their family's life to be spiritually minded, and it is the duty of husbands to encourage and help their wives; and wives can also encourage.
 - G. You will read God's Word more, which will effectually work in you (I Thess 2:13).
 - H. You will pray more, which is the lifeblood of the saints (Eph 6:19; I Thess 5:17).
 - I. You will choose the fellowship of saints over most anything (Ps 119:63; Mal 3:16-18).
 - J. You will crave assemblies, which require prep and priority planning (Heb 10:23-25).
 - K. Choose to have less carefulness in your lives, even with spouses (I Cor 7:32,29-35).

Conclusion:

1. If you have not been as spiritually minded as you should be, then confess, repent, and reform. It is easy.
2. The Lord is faithful and just to forgive all unrighteousness, and He will increase your spiritual strength.
3. Walking after the Spirit, you will find the greatest joy, fulfillment, and peace you have ever known.