

# I Want to Please God

by Shane Idleman

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of living to please God by walking in the Spirit and understanding the struggle against sin.*

**Duration:** 50:13

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Victorious Living"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of rising each time we fall in our Christian walk, highlighting the need to get back up and finish the race despite setbacks. It discusses the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, the choice to set our minds on godly things, and the significance of being filled with the Spirit of God to overcome challenges and live victoriously.

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## Transcript

So let me just read Romans 8, but before I do that, I want to give just a brief introduction. The message, the title of the message is, I want to please God. I want to please God, and I don't know about you, but do you want to please God? Okay, good.

Everybody should be shaking their head. If not, you probably found the wrong church, and you might want to get up during the bathroom break and just quietly exit, but we all want to please God. And Romans 8 says, Romans 8 says, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

So those who are in the flesh cannot please God. It's impossible. And the context of Romans 8, if you were to read Romans 5, 6, 7, I would encourage you to do that.

The context is that the law cannot save. The law of God cannot save us. That was the dilemma of having the law.

It cannot save us. We're in trouble. Hence the need for Christ.

So Paul then goes on to say, O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin and death? I struggle, and there's an ongoing struggle, and we all know it, right? There's a struggle between the flesh and the spirit. The flesh wants something the spirit does not want. And the spirit wants something the flesh doesn't want.

There's this struggle. So Paul says, O wretched man that I am, who is going to deliver me from this body of sin and death? For with the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. So that's the context of what is going on.

But also many use this verse as an excuse to yield to sin. So when Paul, they quote Paul, O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin? See, Paul had a struggle. And see, that's my excuse to sin.

But that's really not the point of the verse. The point of the verse is Paul saying that he's a wretched man. He's got this war in between.

But with the mind I serve the law of God. With the mind there's victory. There's victory in Christ.

We walk in victory. So it's a victory verse, not a verse to just say, Oh well, forget it. This struggle is too hard.

Have you ever done that? You try dieting for a week, and then a week into this you just say forget it. This is too hard. Or people give up on Christianity.

This is just too hard. And really, I think the reason why it's too hard sometimes is they have a whole bunch of rules, and it feels like they've got to follow this rule, and they can't go out this boundary. They've got to follow this rule.

And really the Christian life is freedom in Christ. There's freedom to walk in what God has called us to do. But yes, there's guardrails.

But those protect us. They don't prevent us from enjoying life, as I said many times before. So Romans 8. There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Thank God for that verse. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin. He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Paul's really wanting to get that point across, isn't he? Those who do not walk according to the flesh.

And interestingly enough, this has caused some people, I remember Chuck Smith teaching on this. He even suggested that maybe this part was not in the original manuscript where it says, who do not walk according to the flesh. So let me read that again.

There's therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. And that's, they say you should just leave it at that. Because we don't have a works-based salvation.

It shouldn't be, there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus if you don't walk according to the flesh. Okay, there's no if there because it's been done at the cross. But I don't really, I don't read the same thing I guess that he did into this.

What I'm reading into this is there's therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. How do you know if you're in Christ Jesus? You don't walk according to the flesh. So it's really showing genuine salvation.

It's not saying there's no condemnation, but make sure you walk in the flesh and adding a work. He's just saying if you're under Christ, you're not going to walk in the flesh. Now I'm going to qualify that hopefully pretty soon because there's a big difference between, and I've explained this many times before.

Sometimes I say I have to say this again. Yeah, I have to say this again. It's a whole new group of people usually from a year ago or whenever we talked about this.

But there's a difference between a lifestyle and a struggle. Okay, there's therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. If you're walking in the flesh, which means if sin is a lifestyle for me, I'm walking in the flesh.

That's a lot different than somebody who struggles with something. There's no condemnation in that person. But if somebody's made sin a lifestyle, that's why Paul said, don't you know that drunkards or thieves or covetousness or adulterers or homosexuals or boom, boom, you feel, don't you know that they will not inherit the kingdom of God? That applies to pretty much everybody that struggles with something.

But that's why Paul says, do not practice these things. If a person says, yep, I enjoy the sinful lifestyle. I don't care what God's Word says.

I'm going to practice this. That tells me they're not walking with Christ. They're walking in the flesh.

But somebody who's walking in the Spirit says, Lord, I want to please you and this sin just tripped me up this week. I lied or I deceived and I struggled. Lord, would you help me with this? And that's different than a person blatantly walking in that sin.

And as we all know, condemnation is a death sentence. Condemnation is a death sentence and the fulfillment of that sentence. So this is the part of the Bible that nobody likes, in case you weren't aware of that.

They like the good stuff, but this is the stuff they don't like, that the wages of sin is death. That God set in motion thousands of years ago, for those who believe in a young earth. I'll say billions of years ago for those who don't.

But I'm going to talk about that hopefully a little bit Monday. But God set in motion truth and the wages of sin is death. There's no way around it.

You can't twist it. You can't take this out. You can't remove this.

You can't try this. No, the wages of sin is death. Condemnation.

And what condemnation is, it's a death sentence and the fulfillment of it. So people are under the condemnation of God. Do I like that? Not really.

I'm being honest with you. I would have chose that path, but I'm not God and He knows a lot more than I do. He's a much better judge than I am.

He's just. He's fair. He's righteous.

All those things. But humankind is under the condemnation of God. But the only way to get out of that is through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

So that's why He says there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Well Shane, how do I know if I'm in Christ? You walk according to the Spirit. And even the fact that there's a struggle is a good thing.

It tells you there's a battle going on. If somebody doesn't have a struggle and they're on the enemy side, you might want to reconsider where your heart is at. Christ set us free and those who are set free will walk as free men.

That's my point. If Jesus Christ has set a person free, they will walk as a free person. Right? They will walk in that freedom.

When a person's not, they might have all the bells and whistles. They might have the bumper sticker on their car and they might walk a certain way. I mean you can even teach a monkey about the things and put on a little hat and do funny things but put them back out in the jungle, what's going to happen? He's going to be a monkey.

Why? Because that's what he is. So you can dress a Christian up temporarily, but at some point the heart is going to come out. And that's why I often say when a vessel is struck, what's inside comes out.

And a person comes, they'll take communion, they'll listen and they'll show up for church, but their heart hasn't been changed. But Christ will set those free who truly have their minds focused on him. So of course the question comes up, which way do you walk? Which way does a person walk? Are they free or are they bound? Those are the two options.

Either a person walks in Christ, has to struggle, but they're free, or they're bound in sin. And this person usually knows they have religion and not a relationship. They're bound.

They're bound in sin, but I want to put on a Christian hat and maybe that will change me. That doesn't change you. And that's one of my concerns for, say, younger adults.

There's a lot of times, and I was one, of course, many years ago, but you think you can just ride your parents' coattails. You know, I was raised in a Christian home and I was taught the Bible and, no, you have to come to a point on your own where you acknowledge what Jesus has done. And you say, Mom, Dad, I'm under the condemnation of God and I need Jesus.

It's a wonderful thing. And baptism takes place and we see that quite often. A.W. Tozer said, the church is notorious.

See, I knew I got this from somebody. The church is notorious in using outside pressure to make a sinner act like a Christian. You can teach anybody to do almost anything.

Baptize them, confirm them, and feed them the Lord's Supper, instruct them in the faith, and after a while, he begins to act like a Christian. But see, he's not a Christian because an inward change, an inward renewal hasn't ever happened. And that's why you'll see a lot of times, especially in America, because in China, in the persecuted church, or in Iran, in Pakistan, you see those churches being blown up.

Nine times out of ten, those are true believers. They know what's at stake. They know why they're there.

They're not playing church, really. When you have to go to a 4 a.m. worship service on Friday in a cave, you're not playing church. But in America, we have a lot of wheat and tare growing together.

And I have a passion for those people. I see them all the time. They come and you can ask them, you know, are you a Christian? Oh, yeah, I've been a Christian all my life.

Okay, well, when did you repent? And when did you believe? And when did you, well, you know, back when I was young, I always had a sensing of God. They'll keep avoiding that question. You know, my mom believed in God.

I've seen great miracles by God. I've just been a Christian all my life. But when did you ever repent of your sin? And, you know, what the Bible says, confess that He's your Lord and He's your Savior.

Oh, my goodness, I've just been raised in a Christian. And they avoid that question. And it's when you bring up the difficult things like this, that's when people squirm.

That's when, you know, light and darkness, because the darkness can hide in the light as long as the darkness isn't challenged. But when the darkness is challenged, that's when they get exposed and things happen. You hear of demonic influence.

And actually, for those of you who are at the service Sunday in Leona Valley, I believe that's what happened. Right at the end of service, I'm telling people prayer, repentance, and what happens front row? Seizure. On the floor, get paramedics, get the fire department, everything.

And ironically, a week ago, I talked to her, and she's not a believer. She's seeking. And what happens right at this final message on Easter and repentance, and I just hate this.

Now, it could be, I don't know, people are asking me, and I mean, I don't know, but I wouldn't, it would not be beyond the scope of reality for Satan to, there'd be a demonic type of influence, a manifestation that, because the dark, you can only sit there so long, and the light penetrate. I've had it, it happened at Grace Fest when I spoke at a prayer rally. Somebody was there, they just got up, and they just, they just, people are holding her down, they're praying for because that, the light's exposed.

That's what people sometimes want to, you know, where's my car keys? I have to get out of here. I was playing church for many years until this guy came to town. And that's what, darkness does not like that.

And I've seen it, I'll talk with people, it happened Sunday again. He was leaving, might not be able to choose this video to be on a website in case these people watch this, but he was actually, on that call of repentance and faith, he was going down the balcony, going about the back exit, getting ready to leave. Well, here I come on the side wanting to pray with people, and I go to the back corner, and guess what happens? Oh, do you need a prayer for something? And no, he did not need a prayer at all.

He needed to tell me just how much he did not like the sermon, how can God, God loves everyone, and just for five minutes, I'm like, oh, this is going to take a while. So I gave him the number of the church, said, let's get lunch this week. I love to sit down, I explain all these questions, and he hasn't called yet.

But you can, but why, he was just, he was getting out of dodge. He didn't want to sit there, I mean, they're just upset. He just so, like, why are you so upset? Well, God's not like that.

Why? Because they know, they know that they don't have that relationship. So darkness hates the light. Why did Jesus say if the world hated me, they'll hate you? If they persecute me, they're going to persecute you.

Now, obviously, we don't look for that. It'll find you. So I have a concern sometimes for people, or pastors, or churches that never offend anybody ever.

No, we shouldn't. But if you never offend, what are you preaching? I mean, you can only talk about God's love and grace and mercy so long. You can only paint so many houses and have community outreaches and help the homeless so long before some point you're going to have to get into repentance and the need for Christ and salvation and hell and damnation.

And you have to, you have to. And I don't know some of you, if you've been on Christian Post or the Charisma News, a lot of the websites picked up an article I wrote, not bashing Joel Osteen, but just talking about, because he recently went on, again, went on TV, said, no, no, I'm just an encourager. I don't talk about any of the hell stuff and damnation, and I don't talk about any of that stuff.

Okay, wait a minute here. That's a motivational speaker. That's a motivational speaker.

And you see the threads, you know, just everybody says, ah, he's a false teacher, he's a false prophet. I don't know the guy. I would say he's a motivational speaker.

And if you keep avoiding all the difficult things, I don't really think you're encouraging people to the best you think you are. Because the single mom at home hooked on painkillers, it's angry outbursts at her children. You can't just tell her to think happy, positive thoughts.

You've got to tell her to repent. And that's where the encouragement comes. So you see, that's the dilemma.

And that's what's happening in our church. People say, why are you bashing him? I'm not bashing him. But if he's going to go on TV and say, no, I don't talk about those difficult things, I have to say, yeah, we need to talk about those difficult things from time to time.

Of course, you can encourage and build up. I just did that twice yesterday and today. Somebody who'd been hooked on drugs and this, and encourage, God can move, fall forward, God can do, and you build them up, but you don't avoid all the other stuff that can help.

And the bottom line is, I think a lot of times we just don't want to offend people. We want to be a cheerleader, not a coach. Because coaches aren't always popular.

Was Vince Lombardi popular? Or just Notre Dames and Lou Holtz? I mean, they were coaches. They were bringing out, because really the word encourage is to bring out of you something that's already in you, to put in courage, to put in a motivation, and to encourage. And many times, the best way to encourage a person is to help them get back on track with God.

So that's what I'm wondering about, to him preaching to thousands, millions of people, and you wonder how many people is he preaching to that are addicted to drugs, addicted to different things, and they're hooked to porn, and they go, yeah, that's true. I'm ahead, not the tail. I'm above and not beneath.

I'm more than a conqueror. And God, gosh darn it, thank you, Lord. And nothing changes.

And they continue on. See, that would hurt me. That would hurt my, I would feel sad for those people, that they just keep, they can never get off this rollercoaster because they're always being encouraged and never challenged.

And the word of God is a perfect mixture, because you have to have both. You have to have both. That's what Paul said, preach the difficult truths, and preach the glorious ones.

Preach heaven, but preach hell. Preach the new life, but don't forget about the cross. Preach mercy, but don't forget about repentance.

Preach holiness, but don't forget about love. I mean, it's the totality of the truth that really changes the heart. So a person is not a Christian unless there's an inward change compelling him to live for Christ.

See, that's important, because you can have outward change. I call that reformation. But there has to be inner change that's compelling a person to live for Christ.

Not perfectly, but when you fall off the horse, you want to get back on the horse. That's the difference. When you, okay, devil, you got me last week, and you got me last month, but that's over.

I'm getting, and your heart's set towards God. There's an inward, it's like a magnet. I mean, if you know a person who's a genuine believer, you can't stay in sin very long without being miserable.

Just miserable. You can't hold on to a sinful lifestyle, and be joyous, and happy, and come to church. That's why I think a lot of people come to church with frowns.

And they're not pleasant to be around, because they're caught in besetting sin. The prodigal son was not happy when he was eating with the swine. When he was living with the pigs, he was not happy.

And that's what happens. I know myself, if I've, you know, me and Morgan have maybe not said the right things, and kind of left mad, and I'm not going to forgive this person. I can't believe they did that.

And I just hold on to that. You do not want to be around me. You do not want to hear me preach.

You do not. So you have to get all that stuff out. And you can't stay in this habit of habitual sin, and be joyful.

The Bible says, hard is the way of the transgressor. So this is just a healthy thing. Verse 3, for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin.

Now, in case you don't know what that means, go listen to the last two weeks. That's what that means, that God sent His Son, took the place of our sin. Many of you remember what I read from Johnny Erickson Tata.

That is absolutely true, that God, that He took on every sin ever committed, and He took that on, and abolished the law. Basically, the law was asking us to do what we cannot do. The law said, you must do this, this, this, this, and I can't.

And Paul will go on to say, it's a schoolmaster. It shows you your need for Christ. So the purpose of the law, the Jews should have said, this is impossible.

Was Abraham saved by following the law? He was saved by faith, because he believed in God. God counted it to him as righteousness. Noah believed in God.

Noah, being warned by God, moved with fear, moved with reverence, and he built an ark. So it's that faith, we see that faith in action throughout. You can't do all these things and be in right standing with God.

So in a nutshell, there's not five points to the sermon on how to please God. There's one way to please God, and it's right here. That's what he just said.

I'm getting to it in a minute. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But the encouragement there is in the flesh.

That's a lifestyle. That's weeks or months or years of just staying in the flesh. You cannot please God by staying in the flesh.

So our thought life is what pleases God. And then people say, wait a minute, hold on, what about our actions? Well, as we all know, where did the actions start? Come on, this isn't, you know, right. Right here.

This is where the actions start. I talk about this all the time, but it fits right into Romans 8. Now on that note, don't condemn yourself because there is a struggle. That's normal.

See, I don't want people to leave here, oh my God, I'm just condemning myself, condemning myself. The struggle is normal. Romans 8 is really about victory.

If you look at it from Paul's viewpoint, Paul's not writing from a position of defeat, he's writing from a position of victory. That's why he says, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin and death? Nothing will, but with the mind I serve the law. Thank God that Christ Jesus, through him, I can serve Christ.

Now there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ who do not walk according to the flesh, but walk according to the spirit. So that's where the freedom is. That's where the victory is found.

So I can tell, see, this is an interesting thing too. We've had many discussions I've had with others, but technically it's possible to walk in the spirit, I mean your whole life, and just walk, but it's possible, but it's not feasible because there's too much sin involved in the way. Even though the ability to walk in the spirit, I can make right choices all day long, but we fall short because that sinful nature pulls us away from God.

So the ability is there. Moses, I like what L. Morris said, he was a commentator on this passage. Moses' law had right, but not might.

Sin's law has might, but not right. And the law of the spirit has both right and might. So let me break that down for you real quick.

Moses' law had the right, had the right. Here's the ten commandments of God, you have to do this, but it did not have the might, it did not have the strength for man to save himself. But sin has the might, you're under the condemnation, but it doesn't have the right to lead us astray because we're under God's covering now, as children of God.

So as a spirit you have right to be in right relationship with God, and you have might, you have the power to walk into that victory. So this should be really encouraging, and that's what you can encourage

somebody caught in sin. You never have to discourage, you can encourage them by saying, listen, here's how you get back on the right track.

You remove that and you begin to feed your mind, begin to walk in the spirit. Good reminder as well, walking in the spirit is not easy. It's like walking up Mount Whitney.

For those of you who are prepared, I've never done it, I don't have any desire to walk up Mount Whitney. The highest, what is it, the highest mountain in maybe the United States, I think. So people think, oh, walking in the spirit is just not, no, it's not a nice peaceful walk.

It's like the Pilgrim's Progress. You're walking and then the enemy's shooting fiery darts, and then the flesh wants to sit down and sleep, and the world's, oh, look at that, and the world's pulling. It's not a comfortable walk.

It's a very difficult walk, but it can be done if we encourage people to keep walking. That's why the Bible, does the Bible ever talk about endurance? Often, developing patience and endurance, those who endure to the end. Endurance, it's part of the walk.

I wish it was an easy walk. Then verse five, for those who live according to the flesh, so if you want to know how to do this, for those who live according to the flesh, they set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who walk according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit. Listen, this is not rocket science.

This is not here's 20 things you need. Very simple. If you want to walk according to the flesh, set your mind on the things of the world.

If you want to walk according to the spirit, set your mind on the things of the spirit. Very easy. What's that old saying? It's simple, but not easy.

There's your choices. I mean, it's right there. You can set your mind on the things of God or set your mind on the things of the world.

Now, the word set there, if we had time, you can look it up in the Greek language and what it means. It's, well, you know, like setting, have you ever broken a bone? Hopefully not, or your kids. What do you have to do to that bone? When you set it, what are you really doing? You're not growing it back.

You're setting it back so it can grow back healthy. People think, okay, I set it, I fix it. You didn't fix it.

You just positioned it now to where it can grow healthy. Talk to a doctor and ask them what happens if you don't set the bone? Nerve damage, bone damage, not use of the arm anymore, because you're not setting it, you're allowing it to. So that's what he's saying.

You've got to set your mind in a healthy spot with God so you're able to grow and thrive spiritually. You're setting your mind horizontally with God. You're setting your mind on that.

I mean, think about this. This is so simple. I sit here and go, I don't want, we don't, we know this, right? You get home, you're going to put on worship music or the Fast and Furious series.

Hello? Worship music or Fifty Shades of Garbage? Encouraging things or the evening news? I mean, I can go through Netflix and I'll say, flesh, flesh, flesh, flesh, flesh, oh, spirit, maybe. Flesh, flesh, flesh,

flesh, flesh. I mean, everything, the whole world's catered to the flesh.

So we make a choice. Let me think here, what is that one? I know it's rated R, but it sure looks good. And then two hours later we're like, oh, I'm just so depressed, and so this, and what happened? Oh, the world's falling apart, and Obamacare, and Obama this, and Trump this, and oh God, what's happening? We're just, we're a mess.

Why are we a mess? Because we set our minds on things that are not godly and encouraging. And people get mad at me when I say this, but I don't think you should be on the news very often. Murder, mayhem, and chaos.

What's Chicken Little? The world is, I mean, I get scared if I watch that, and that usually doesn't happen very easy. I'm like, unbelievable. ISIS now, with nuclear capabilities and beheadings, and they're blowing up churches, it's like, Lord, set your mind on the, that's not, it's not, we're not supposed to fear, well, people say, well, shouldn't we know what's going on? Yeah, you kind of know what's going on, but I don't need to know what's going on everywhere.

What's going on in the Yellow Valley? It's going to affect me, because I'm all shut down. Because I know, you start to, so we know how to set our minds on that, and I know I really shouldn't watch this, but, and we get into this, like, alright, here's another one. I know I shouldn't call that person, but.

We set our mind, oh, oh, there's a lot of laughs on that one. You know the person who's not encouraging, they're discouraging. Did you see what Trump tried this week? Did you see what Hillary said? Did you see those, those trails up in the sky? Those are chemtrails, and they're seeding the atmosphere with iodine, and it's falling on us, and we're breathing it, and we're all going to die with cancer, and we're gone here pretty soon, and did you know that they're trying to, now, martial law, Obama's going to declare martial law, and then there's no election, and you, do you have enough ammunition? They shut down all the gun stores, and what's happening? Like, I'll talk to you later.

Oh, my goodness, I am a mess. I'm a wreck. That's, but, see, that's, we don't see it, folks.

That's what's happening. I've never seen more scared Christians in my life. I've never have.

It's, we're paralyzed. We're paralyzed to the point of not being able to accomplish anything, because the human mind, you're not supposed to feed on that. You're supposed to feed on things that are pure, and noble, and godly, and upright, and have a good report.

Paul told the church in Philippi, whatever things are pure, so try it. I know it's difficult, but try it, because that's the only way you're going to find true joy and peace, is to set your mind on the things of God, and it's hard sometimes. I know I get up, you know, I get up pretty early sometimes, and I'll get up, and just, okay, worship music, or better check my email, and text, and Facebook, make sure the world's not falling apart.

You know, what is, and then you get on, you know, let me, I've got two minutes. Oh, golly. Oh, what's happening? We got this person's dying, and this person's dead, and now 14 holistic doctors have died in the last year, and they found a cancer treatment, and the world, and it's, you know, all this negative, negative, negative, negative, and then I can't, then it's hard to get back on track, and I would just encourage you, stop it, because, and I know when I talk about this, the majority of people aren't going to stop it.

They're going to continue in setting their mind on the things of the flesh. So that's why there's a broken relationship with God. That's why we're not pleasing God.

We're setting our minds on the things of the world, and that's what's lining up. So that's really how you please God, is what you set your mind on. 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.

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. If you want life and peace, be spiritually minded. Focus on the things of the Spirit, because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be.

So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. In a nutshell, I guess I should have just said this at the beginning and just went into a big long worship set. Your mental diet determines how healthy you are spiritually.

You want to know how healthy you are spiritually, show me your mental diet. Ongoing, ongoing, what are we putting in? We have to be very careful. Now, I want to talk about briefly this word carnality, because it's used two different ways.

Unbelievers, a person who does not believe in God, they are dead spiritually. We all know that. If you're one of those people, I want to encourage you, you don't have to stay there.

You don't have to stay dead to the things of God. So an unbeliever, dead to the things of God, is often called carnal. They're carnal.

That means basically against God. However, Paul also calls Christians carnal. Things that make you go, huh? Well, there's a solution.

Carnal Christians are not yet dead. They're sick and they're dying spiritually. So here's the difference.

In an unbeliever, the carnal nature is ruling and reigning in their life. They're dead to the things of God. The carnal nature is their master.

But, in a carnal Christian, carnal influence is ruling and reigning in the heart. So you can have a Christian, but they'll be carnal because they're allowing their carnal nature to rule and reign. That's why they fly off the handle.

That's why they can't get along with anybody. That's why they're angry all the time. That's why they're hooked to this and addicted to that.

That's why they have no time for God, because the carnal, although they're a Christian, the carnal nature is ruling and reigning. So it's a big difference. But it's the same thing.

With the unbeliever, the carnal nature is condemning them to death because they've never repented of that nature and it's their master. But in a Christian, you can become very carnal. And that carnal nature is influencing you to the point to where, because see, a person is either effective for God or they're not.

And as a carnal Christian, you're not, because you're ruled by the carnal nature. You'll gossip, you'll fight, you'll bicker, you'll never apologize, and you're living in this carnal nature. But a Christian on fire for God will say, you know what? That wasn't good.

That was carnal. That was wrong. And they apologize.

They get back on track. So all of us struggle with that. And it's interesting.

He says the carnal mind is at enmity with God. And enmity is this very strong word. It's not an enemy, because enemies can be reconciled.

Right? You can have, through human effort, enemies can be reconciled. But enmity is basically so opposed to God that nothing can reconcile it. Come on, carnal nature.

Let's reconcile. You can't. Anytime you obey the carnal nature, it takes you away from God.

It leads you away from God. It's not a friend of God. It's two opposing natures.

So that's the difference between a carnal person who's dead in their sins and a Christian who is carnal. I'm going to quote A.W. Tozer again. He said something probably 50, 60, 70 years ago about the Holy Spirit and being carnal in our carnal nature.

Because I'm assuming most of you want to stop being carnal, right? Well, here's what he said. It may be said without qualification. It may be said without qualification that every man and woman is as holy and as full of the Spirit as they want to be.

That's true. Now, he goes on to say, he may not be as full as he wishes he were, but he is most certainly as full as he wants to be. All of us, including me and you, are as full of the Holy Spirit as you want to be.

Because being filled with the Spirit is an act of submission. Now, you might want more of the Spirit, and you might want this, but you're as full of the Holy Spirit as you want to be. It goes into submission and submitting your what? What are you submitting to the Holy Spirit? Because you know when I told you my story many times before, in my 20s, I was, I go back and forth sometimes because I was like, oh, I would have hated to die in that situation.

But I was convicted. I felt God, and I wanted, I knew it, but I was caught in the carnal nature. Drank too much, ate too much, followed the world's mindset, money was my God, I wanted to retire at 40, carnal, carnal, carnal, carnal.

That was the carnal nature that was controlling me. And finally when all of that changed, when I said, Lord, I'm giving you everything, I killed the carnal nature, basically, and filled, God filled me with the Spirit. So now, now I don't set my mind on those things anymore.

Now I don't, that doesn't, that's, the party scene was disgusting. I never thought I'd ever say that. I mean, people say, I'm going to Laughlin, I've got this and jet skis, and I'm like, you know what? It just, it just makes me sick, kind of, because my nature was no longer carnal, and wanting those things.

I was setting my mind, well, the reason was I was in the Word of God two hours a day. I was putting on worship all day long. I was hanging around people that built me up, not pulled me down.

I was in church on Sunday and on Wednesday and driving to a Friday meeting, and I was setting my mind on the things of God. As a result, I didn't want those carnal things as much. So it has every, he's absolutely right, you're as full of the Holy Spirit right now as you want to be.

And if we could go around the room, we all had tanks, right? Full, empty, down to here. It's all based on right here. The full, the filling of the Holy Spirit.

And all you have to do is say, God, I want to give you 100% of my life, but hold on, sit down and put on your seatbelt, because he's going to change things. He might take that job away from you. He might hurt, he might bring a health issue.

He might do something to where full submission takes place. Or, you know, he might just say, okay, I'm going to use that and keep you where you're at. And you say, Lord, I'll give you my entire life.

That means everything has to change. That means your mental diet has to change. I mean, like I've said before, if we're on the board of God as much as Facebook, you'd see revival.

If the church was in the Bible as much as they're in, so you have to change that to be filled with the Spirit. And then verse 5 says, for those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. And we already talked about that.

What you're doing is you're setting the eye gate and you're setting the heart gate. I'm setting my mind on the things that are pleasing to God. I mean, I struggle with this too.

I mean, if the kids and my wife go out and they're going to go to somebody's house and I've got three hours, okay, do I put on Netflix, right, and watch Bo Jackson biography and how they filmed this and how they made this and you see all this stuff and it doesn't edify me, it doesn't build me up, or do I choose things that are going to build me up spiritually? That's the choice. It's an eye gate, what we put in that allows our heart to also be changed. So you look at what we're eating spiritually and you wonder why we're unhealthy.

Look at what we're eating spiritually. And if you go back 100 years before the media, what were people, there wasn't, I call it an onslaught. We were never designed to absorb this much negativity and this much bad news and deal with it.

There's no way, that's why antidepressant medication is skyrocketing, buy stock in it, you know, and that's what they say, because everybody's dealing with it with man-made, man-made remedies. And it reminds me of a verse I read a while back in Isaiah 30. God says, woe be to the rebellious children.

Woe be to the rebellious children who take counsel but not of me and who devise plans but not of my spirit. And what the children of Israel decided to do is align themselves with Egypt. And they said, Egypt will save us, their horses, their strength, their military might, that will save us.

And God says, no, woe be to you rebellious children. You're taking counsel but not of my spirit. You're devising plans but not of my spirit.

So where do we take counsel from and how do we devise our plans? How do we make lifestyle changes? Are we looking to God or the world? That's what it boils down to. And then verse 7, because the carnal mind is enmity against God, there's darkness there. And darkness is often used of those in great distress.

William Grinnell, he was a Puritan, a few hundred years ago wrote a great book I'd recommend entitled The Christian in Complete Armor. It's very thick and you can actually get the abridged version that talks about, puts into our modern language. He said this, darkness fills the heart with terror.

The wicked have no peace even when they sleep. They eat in fear, they drink in fear, they celebrate in fear. They do not have a single pleasure in this life that is not tainted by its putrid stench.

That being the darkness. And C.S. Lewis said a man's spiritual health is exactly, is in exact proportion to his love for God. You don't have to think about that, let's think about it, it's true.

Your spiritual health is in direct proportion to how much you love God. How much we love God and our spiritual health go together. Verse 9, but you are not in the flesh but in the spirit.

He's talking to Christians, you're 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 alive, is alive because of righteousness. 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. So when he says, but if, but if the spirit of him is in you, but the spirit of God who is in you, he gives us life but we have to choose it.

So he gives us life eternally, you have to choose it, right? I've told you many times before, you have to choose eternal life, but you also have to choose to be filled with the spirit. You have to choose to walk in that abundant life that Christ spoke of. There's a choice there.

And then he goes into verse 12, therefore brethren we are debtors, not to the flesh to live according to the flesh, but we are debtors to God. Think about this, if we're truly indebted to God, if you truly believe he saved you as I do and I've talked about that last week, we're indebted to him, shouldn't we live differently? I mean, you live according to your debt. Why do most people have to work their entire life and barely get by? Because there's something called Visa, MasterCard, Mortgage.

They're in debt to truck, Harley, boat, jet skis, let me keep going. The more debtors you have, the more you will work to pay them off. So we're indebted to Christ, we should live a certain way.

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the spirit of adoption by whom we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children then we are heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

This is huge. This is huge. The spirit bears witness, the spirit in a believer bears witness that we are children of God.

This is what separates Christianity from all other religions. Another thing that they don't have, all of the religions don't have the spirit of God inside of them, bearing witness to the truth, bearing witness to God as my father, bearing witness that I am a children of God. That's how they can get through life.

That's how they can succeed is because it bears witness to them. So begs the question, is the spirit bearing witness to you? Is there something in you bearing witness to God? If you say, no, there's not, then I would submit that you're probably dead in your sin and trespasses and you need to repent and be rejuvenated by the spirit of God so he will cry, Abba, Father. That's how it works.

And I'm going to end with a quick, I say quick, don't worry it is, a quick excerpt of a story that I came across this week. Because a lot of times on a sermon like this we can get a little sometimes negative or feel condemned or I can never measure up. And I want to encourage you, that's not the Christian walk.

And it's a story I read, I think, when the church first started. It's actually a poem about this little boy. All these kids are lined up to race and their dads are watching and they're watching and this little kid keeps falling.

He's falling like three different times. So he's not going to win the race and he knows his dad is going to be disappointed. It reminded me of the Christian walk, isn't it? We're not winning the race, we're falling.

We keep falling. So this is his third time, he fell on the ground on the track and this is what it says. Defeat, he lay there silently, a teardrop from his eye.

There's no sense in running anymore. Three strikes, I'm out, why try? The will to rise had disappeared and all hope had fled away. So far behind, so air prone, I'll never go all the way.

I've lost, so what's the use, he thought. I'll live with my disgrace. But then he thought about his dad, who soon he'd have to face.

Get up, an echo sounded low, get up and take your place. You were not meant for failure here, get up and win the race. With borrowed will, get up, it said, you haven't lost at all, for winning is no more than this, to rise each time you fall.

So up he rose to run once more in a new commit. He resolved that win or lose the race, at least he wouldn't quit. Three times he'd fallen, stumbling, three times he rose again.

Now he gave it all he had and ran as though to win. They cheered the winning runner as he crossed the line first place, head high and his head was high and proud and happy, no failing, no falling, no disgrace. But when the fallen youngster crossed the line last place, the crowd gave him the greatest cheer for finishing the race.

And even though he came in last with head bowed low and unproud, you would have thought that he won the race to listen to the crowd. And to his dad he sadly said, I didn't do so well. To me you won, his father said, you rose each time you fell.

And now when things seem dark and hard and difficult to face, the memory of that little boy helps me in my race. For all of life is like a race with ups and downs and all, and all you have to do to win is rise each time you fall. Folks, that's the Christian life.

Don't become discouraged. Don't leave here condemned. That's the Christian walk, to get up.

Every time I fall, I get up. The Christian walk, who told us it's a perfect walk of pleasantries and roses and I just walk a straight and narrow line. It's warfare.

It's the enemy's coming after our homes. He's coming after our families. He's coming after your soul.

He's not only shooting fiery darts, he's bringing in the enemy. He's bringing in demonic influence. And the Christian walk is one where you're carrying the warfare and you're falling and you're stumbling and you're getting back on track.

Don't stay down. Don't stay down. That's the Christian walk.

All of life is like a race with ups and downs and all, and all you have to do to win is rise each time you fall. And that's what people who have fallen, that's what they really need to know. They don't need the Word of God pounded on them like a sledgehammer.

They need to be encouraged and get back up. Yes, you fell. Yes, you hurt this person.

Yes, you hurt your kids. Yes, you hurt your spouse. Yes, you hurt your church.

But you get back up and you finish the race. That's a man of God. That's a woman of God to get back up and say, I might have been beaten.

I might have been down, but I'm not staying there. Enemy, you had me for a week. You had me for a month.

You had me for two years, but I'm not staying here. I'm getting up and I'm finishing my race. And that's a Christian walk, right? I just hope I can remember all that for the next service.

That's always a challenge. But I did want to encourage you because I beat myself up, don't you? And the enemy loves for you to beat yourself up. You're defeated.

You'll never overcome that. You're nothing because he knows that God can use you in a powerful way. And I think God is wanting to use many people, and he'll use a broken vessel, but that broken vessel has to cement.

That broken vessel has to be filled with the Spirit of God. And I see many people are fighting God. I'm going to use you.

I'm going to use you, but you got some changes to make. Because when you're filled with the Spirit of God, it requires submission. It requires obedience.

Get up and win that race.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/bLf-3PL7kkg.mp4>

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