

Romans (8:5-8)

Two Mindsets

Part 29 – March 13, 2005

MINDSETS

Paul notes the differences between believers and unbelievers.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their **minds set on what that nature desires**; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their **minds set on what the Spirit desires**. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. – *Romans 8:5-8 NIV*

Notice first, that there are two different kinds of mind sets:

1. The mind set on self centered desires
2. The mind set on what the Spirit desires

This is the first big difference between a *genuine* believer and an unbeliever (or a disingenuous believer).

Q: Do *you* have your mind set on what the Spirit desires?

Q: In other words: do you appreciate, cherish, and esteem the truth and value of the things of God's Spirit?

There's a quick check for determining this in ourselves:

Think about a sailboat race. The same wind hits all of the boats, yet they're all going different speeds and directions.

- It's the same wind, but their course and pace are determined by the *set* of the rudder and the *set* of the sail.

Likewise, people experience the same basic situations: calamities, tragedies, misfortunes, and heartbreaks.

- Matthew 5:45 says the rain falls on the righteous and unrighteous.

Q: When the rain falls and the winds blows, do you find yourself being drawing closer to God drifting further away from him?

- The set of my mind determines which way I'll be carried.

The way that we think tends to determine the way that we feel; and the way that we feel will often determine the way that we act.

God has given us this incredible power to influence the direction of our own lives, based on what we focus our minds on. Focus on immoral thoughts, produce immoral actions. Focus on godly thoughts, and produce godly actions.

- Whatever I focus my mind on will be reproduced in my life.

The true believer (Paul is saying) is *focused* on what the Spirit desires (what God wants) because he/she trusts that it's best.

THE LIVING DEAD

I want my mind set (core beliefs, thought stream, life philosophy, perspective, principles, and deeply held values) to come from God's Spirit through his Word.

Q: Why?

A: Because ...

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace ... - *Romans 8:6 NIV*

The peace Paul is referring to is not "peace of mind" (though that's a byproduct); he's referring to peace (and relationship) with the ruler of this universe.

Q: But what is the life he's referring to?

A: It's the love, joy, and satisfied sense of well-being and intentioned purpose that comes from being at peace with God.

- There's a huge difference between living and existing.

Get up; go to work; come home; watch TV; go to bed; party on the weekend or go to a ballgame ... earn money; spend money; repeat. It's like the Night of the Living Dead! They're *physically* alive (going through life's motions) but they're *spiritually* dead.

But when my mind is set on the Lord, the Spirit reshapes my core values and my motives; he doesn't just bark orders, he imparts *life* by writing God's laws on my heart.

- He creates a life that *delights* in God and *treasures* Christ.

Those who have "set their sail" without concern for God, ignore how we've been "hard wired" to interpret fulfillment. They think happiness will stick if they can just get everything that they want. But it's like chasing a carrot on a stick.

- Self-focus ultimately ends in self-loathing.

It's impossible to have life without peace with God.

WAR LORDS

And without the Spirit's work in us, we're *at war* with the Lord.

The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. - *Romans 8:7 NIV*

Now this gets very interesting.

Q: Is Paul talking about unbelievers who are aggressively opposed (hostile) to God ... or is he referring to *every* "sinful mind"?

A: He seems to be describing anyone who is not Spirit-focused.

Q: So, why does he use the word: hostile?

Q: And why does he say that it *can't* submit to God's law?

I know some unbelievers who aren't *angry* with God. They even think about religion, and talk favorably about God.

But by declaring (with the set of their mind) that they're in *submission* to self versus Spirit, they've elected to replace God as rightful ruler of their life.

- God has drawn a line; to step over it *is* to become his enemy.

They are stealing from him his most treasured possession ... their own companionship and worship and relationship, for eternity.

- Even on their best day they are God's *rival*!

And when they do think about religion, it's usually about what it can do for *them*. There may be thoughts about God, but it's how to approach him on *their* terms.

People with minds set on "self" don't seek the will of God; they search for the "secret" of influencing, manipulating, and/or controlling him (to get what *they* want).

PLEASING GOD

And so, Paul comes to an obvious conclusion:

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. - *Romans 8:8 NIV*

They can't simultaneously please God and reject his Son.

Here's an incredible truth:

- If I live to please me, I can't please God *or* me.
- If I live to please God, I please him *and* myself!

A self-ruling, self-reliant spirit has a suicidal love affair with independence and self-determination.

Believers are pleasing to God, not because they're perfect, but because they have their minds set on Christ.

- Though we stumble and fall, we're at peace with God.