

FREEDOM FROM SIN – PART 3

Romans 8:5-8 ... “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. 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.”

Our study of Romans 8 continues with the topic of carnality. Our studies of verses 1-4 can be found in parts 1 and 2 in this series. The word “carnal” is defined as a lifestyle that satisfies your own worldly or fleshly thoughts and desires. As used in today’s passage, it is the opposite of a spiritual lifestyle that pleases God.

The first verse of today’s passage is easy to understand. We all have, at one time or another, lived according to our own desires. Many people claiming to be Christians, live in this manner most of the time. They may take a short break from carnality to attend a church service or pray over a meal, but the rest of the time they are focused on pleasing themselves, which often leads to sin.

If you believe that living by your own passions – rather than God’s instruction – is simply a small sin, then look at the statement in today’s passage that reads: “to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” The Word of God tells us that living by our own rules robs us of the peace found only in a personal relationship with Christ.

Why is sin such a problem for us? Are there some sins God overlooks; are some sins worse than others? We sin when we make a conscious decision to violate God’s commands. So, in that context ALL sin produces death if we do not confess and repent of it. This is because of the next sentence in today’s passage: “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” The definition of enmity is a deep-seated hatred. I bet you have never thought that your sins represented a hatred for God, have you? You probably considered the little lie you told someone, or the profanity that came across your lips when you were angry, or when you chose to not return something you borrowed, as a small thing. Just a slight little sin that God really does not want to be troubled with.

Romans 8 teaches us that our flesh and the desires of our own minds, pit us against God and make us his enemy no matter how large or small the sins are we commit. Today’s passage ends with: “those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” There is nothing you can do to make God love you more. However, your behavior will either please God, or not. When you please God, you benefit from his blessings. When you displease God, which is an act of hatred (enmity) against him, you will miss out on his blessings. If you live a lifestyle that continually makes you God’s enemy, you probably are not saved because salvation produces fruit in our lives that honors God. Freedom from sin, which is only possible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is your only life insurance.

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