

Just A Minute! With Scripture

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be made bold or numbered for emphasis.

Newsletter Theme: Application of Romans 7

Walking After the Flesh Has Consequences

If we walk 'after the flesh' or 'according to the flesh,' it means we're allowing the flesh to be in the lead position, controlling us. It trains us to feel comfortable living to please ourselves, doing it in 'our' power. Could we be lulled to sleep, allowing our flesh to pull us around, not being spiritually minded? This way reaps ungodly behaviors, feelings, & motives, whether we know it or not.

As we walk after the flesh we do NOT focus on the Spirit to live as God desires. Instead, we exalt and mind fleshly things: *"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."* (Rom. 8:5) The result is being slaves to our lusts: *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* (Rom. 7:24)

Thus, the fruit of man's ways is fleshly (carnal) thinking and works: *"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal sold under sin."* (Rom. 7:14) Paul explains that even when we try to do our very best, our flesh cannot perform anything acceptable to God: *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth **no good thing**: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."* (Rom. 7:18) The result is frustration and failure, even becoming angry, blaming our loving Father.

At times, saints believe they do attain God's righteous standard. They don't realize that in their mind they have a faulty standard. In reality, God's ways are far above ours (Is. 55:8-9). Many are fooled into thinking God wants them to try hard to produce 'good works.' He does not! They are all tainted with sin: *"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."* (Job 14:4)

The saddest consequence is not pleasing our Father. *"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."* (Rom. 8:8) After all He has done, we waste the precious time and resources He has given, not walking as who we are in Christ. *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* (Eph. 2:10) We can choose to work together with God (I Cor. 3:9), walking in the Spirit to allow Christ to live: *"When Christ, **who is our life**, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."* (Col. 3:4)

To Do: Take a moment to reflect upon where you are functioning. Are you allowing your flesh to rule? *"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."* (I Cor 6:12) God has given us free will. **You have choices!**

Could I Be Putting Others Under the Law?

Saints naturally function under the law. So, knowing when we put others under a works-based performance system (a law) is helpful.

Deep down most believe we know best, not only for our own life, but others too: "If only they would do things my way they'd be right." Yet this isn't realistic, nor grace. We are all individuals with unique ways of thinking and doing things, maturing differently. Hold forth the Truth, but allow others to live their convictions, even if they're wrong. This is respecting them and God. (Rom. 14)

Everyone has expectations, but pressuring others to do what we believe they 'should' do is putting them under law. The person will feel controlled or manipulated. Eventually they will become frustrated, angry, or disengaged, producing a turbulent relationship.

Thus, share the Truth from your heart, yet in love, accept their decisions, even if you don't agree. This is dealing with them in grace. *"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."* (I Tim. 1:5)

Think on this: Each saint is called to stand on what 'they' believe by the Word, and not live by another's faith: *"...Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."* (Rom. 14:5) If respecting where someone is means you don't get your way, can you allow God's grace to help you patiently accept the situation? Is His grace (II Cor. 12:9) really sufficient? *"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."* (Rom. 14:4) **We walk by faith!**



Search it out!

Choose Something to Study in This Section

Romans 7: Reading...The Most Important Study ToolExamine verses! 

Many saints wonder how to approach the Bible. There are many study methods and skills, yet the most simple approach is the most powerful. Just read. Begin with Paul's epistles: Romans through Philemon. They are written to us Gentiles for our time period, the dispensation of grace (Eph. 3:1-10) This study tool is on P. 23 of "Exploring the Bible Using Study Tools," available on Amazon.

1. God's priority: He desires for us to know the Word and think about it throughout the day. The best way to start for a saint who does not yet study the Bible is to make time to read a little everyday, increasing it over time. *Romans* is the most profitable book to begin with as it establishes a believer. (*Rom. 1:11*).

2. How/Where: Set aside a time and place to do your

reading. Decide ahead of time how to wisely deal with potential interruptions. Approach Scripture with an open mind to see what God, by the Spirit, can teach.

3. First time reading: Prayerfully, read and reread the book of Romans. Slowly read one chapter through a few times, defining unfamiliar words. Be Prepared: You may need to reread sections many times to understand. Why? It's God's Book, the Living Word.

4. Study: Reading naturally causes curiosity to seek out more clarity, transitioning us to study. A student may be reading the Word and suddenly find he's on a journey exploring new facets of a word, verse, or topic. A dictionary and concordance are good resources.

5. To be further edified: Read three chapters of Paul's epistles per day, to obtain familiarity and an overview. It should take a month. Do this for a year as it can have a powerful impact on your spiritual growth!

**Newer students: Focus on 'reading' Scripture rather than on using many new study insights.*



Realizing When You Are Put Under a Performance System by Others or Even Yourself

Others can regularly put us under their law, that is, place uncomfortable expectations on us. Their goal may be to get us to think 'their way,' or do or not do things at particular times. They may think or say: "I hope you never...," "Don't do..." "You can't believe that?" or subtly, "A real friend would..." It feels like pressure or being boxed in. Many times it produces a heavy feeling, with frustration. It can cause us to become quiet and inward, have anxiety, or cause arguments, without knowing why.

Begin to examine these type of feelings and think about what preceded your mood change. You may sense pressure to perform or that you're not measuring up, indicating you are under 'the law'. If you try to keep their law, you will fall short, producing consequences: "*For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*" (*Rom. 7:5*) If we do not perform, we may be subtly humiliated, ignored, or punished. Sometimes it can be a deep disappointment expressed in non verbal ways. It's an 'if-then' approach: "If you do what I say, I'll be happy, if not, there will be ramifications." Quietly reflect on your thinking, feelings, and circumstances to realize if you've been put under the law. Yield to God in love and forgiveness, with prayer.

We can also have high expectations on ourselves. Reflect upon when you feel disappointed in yourself or frustrated. It may indicate you didn't meet 'your own' standards. Typical phrases or thoughts: "I messed up again!" "How could I have done that?" or "No wonder I don't have friends." This is negative self-talk and condemning oneself. Recall that God doesn't condemn you. Yield to God's Word in you to remind yourself that you have a new identity in Christ, and are already forgiven... "*And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.*" (*Col. 3:10*).

To Do: Changing this negative mind record takes time, but God's able. He desires us to think on His Word to apply it. Become self-aware to allow God to replace negative thoughts, renewing your mind each time you have a punishing thought. Think it out by the Word and remember that God can work this for your good as you learn and grow in sound doctrine." This love attitude toward yourself, expects the best, giving time and a wide space for growing through mistakes and to mature spiritually. This is what God does with us. It's grace and love. Make time to think on these things.



An expectation is a strong belief or hope that something will be done or happen. These are normal and we all have them. However, when we passionately desire that something will occur or someone will change, becoming a condition for you to be satisfied or happy, this is 'the law.' Frustration is inevitable i.e. "If I don't win the prize, I will never get over it." "My boss better give me that raise this month or I am quitting." or "My husband needs to help with the cleaning or I'll be angry." Here, expectations are held tightly, becoming a requirement on self or others...this is legalism (the law).

While goals and hopes are part of life, holding them loosely reduces the tendency to put ourselves or others under a performance system i.e. "I hope it happens, but trust God, knowing others have free will." Learn contentment and offer grace: *"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."* (Philippians 4:12)

Though we have legitimate personal desires and needs, we also have the opportunity in grace to lay aside ourselves, to accept and prefer others. What does this look like? Discuss and resolve issues in love, not demanding our way. *"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."* (Romans 12:10)

God uses Paul as our example to approach others in a way that is best for them: *"To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."* (I Cor. 9:22) Our expectations are not to be the focus. Instead, kindness is the motive. We do not have to deny ourselves of everything, nor feel we can't have desires and expectations. However, as a living sacrifice, love along with honoring others is the priority in relationships.

Think on this: Become aware of your thinking, expectations, and motives. Take time to realize who is benefiting from your words and actions. Who is in the exalted position, and are you caring for the other person's welfare or focused on your own? Choose to hold your personal expectations loosely, to exalt others. *"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."* (I Tim. 6:6-7) It is clear, only God can do this in us!



When someone is labeled carnal, this means the person is focused on fleshly, earthly things. It is thinking more like a natural, unsaved, man who pleases himself. As believers retain this mindset they are bought and sold under sin, held captive by Satan and his ways. They live in their own power/wisdom, not yielding to God in their walk, especially in challenges.

This was set in motion when Adam fell in the Garden, in Genesis 3. Since that time, man has been sold under sin, ever trying in his own effort to please God. *"But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held: that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."* (Romans 7:6)

Why would we choose to continue to walk after the flesh? This would maintain and exalt carnal thinking patterns. To be carnally minded means we are placing our mind on things of the body and flesh: our emotions, lusts, physical needs. It is basically living a self-centered life. *"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh: but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."* (Romans 8:5)

As saints, we do not have to perpetuate this attitude. God has changed things. Because Christ died on the cross, paying for all our sin, He places believers in Christ, which gives us a new identity. We are a new creature (II Cor. 5:17) and were given the Spirit to teach us His wisdom/power.

We are now free and no longer sold under sin, unless we unwisely choose to yield to it. *"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."* (I Cor. 6:19-20)

Choose to live unto God by faith in the Word!

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Stamp

To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)

To Know His Word Is To Know Him By Carol Fisher

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:1,14) Jesus is the living Word of God and through His written words we can now have contact with Him.

God’s words are preserved for English speaking people in the King James Bible. *“For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12)* God’s words are alive, speaking directly to our mind & heart. These words can bring comfort to the comfortless, courage to the weak, understanding to those who are troubled, strength to those who have no strength, hope to the hopeless, and love to the unlovable.

When we read God’s words written to us, the Body of Christ by the Spirit in us, we commune with the Creator of the Universe and understand that which cannot be understood. By faith we hear and rejoice in hearing our God who is alive and knowable. By faith we obey His words, and even if we fail, we are comforted by His love. How wonderful is our God who is so far above our understanding, yet so personal and able to be known unto us, His dear children. As God is real and worth all of our love and attention, so is His Word.

As we absorb God’s words and learn to apply sound doctrine, our lives take on new meaning, value, and joy. Only God’s Word can do this. To know His Word is to know Him. Thank you Lord for this wonderful gift.

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Periodical

Just A Minute: Monthly Grace newsletter providing Bible study, edification, and life application with sound doctrine.

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