

STUDY 15 – GRAPEFRUIT AND CROSSROADS

PART 1A – WHAT TO CHANGE

This morning we want to look at another important area of the Christian life that may need some changes and adjustments in our lives and it comes from [Romans 8:6](#),

Ro 8:6 (NKJV) **For to be carnally minded is death, BUT to be spiritually minded is life and peace.**

Today I am only going to look at the idea of what it means to be “**carnally minded**” and I will refer to the term as being “**worldly minded**” just because I think it may be easier to relate to and understand. Next week I will finish teaching on being “**worldly minded**” and then focus specifically becoming “**spiritually minded**”. Now, I want you to notice that this verse uses what I refer to as “MIND WORDS” – “**to be carnally minded, to be spiritually minded**”. This is very important to see because everything that we do is related directly to what and how we think. Some translations use the term “**mindset**”. We all have mindsets. A mindset is the way that we see life and think about life. Our mindset is often called our “**worldview**”, and it affects critical things about our life. It affects our attitudes, our outlooks, our approaches, our beliefs, our convictions, and our faith. It represents our way of thinking and our state of mind. So, I love the terms “**carnal mindset**” and “**spiritual mindset**”. Everyone has their own peculiar mindset and it is either worldly or spiritual. It is either pleasing to God or not pleasing to God. There is nothing in the middle here. Paul said it this way in [Philippians 2:5](#),

Php 2:5 (NKJV) **Let this mind (thinking – Gr. Interlinear) be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,**

Whatever was in the mind of Christ is what God wants to be in our mind.

So, what does the word “**carnal**” actually mean? Well, the Greek text translates it best - as “**belonging to the flesh**”. I really like that translation. Look at how Paul described his “**flesh**” in [Romans 7:18](#),

Ro 7:18 (NKJV) **For I know that IN me (that is, IN my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find.**

The Greek word for “**flesh**” is “*sarx*” and it represents the seat of sinful appetites and desires, of sinful passions and affections.¹ **Paul could not find one good thing to say about his flesh**. Here is the most spiritual man on the planet and he makes an assessment of his flesh and says that it has “**nothing**”, absolutely “**nothing**” to offer him that has any spiritual value whatsoever - not one idea, not one choice, not one option, not one prompting, not one opinion – not one single thing of any spiritual value.

So, I must recognize that whatever my flesh is prompting me to do will never be what God wants me to do. Most people simply do not believe this. They believe that whatever “*they want to do*” is the best thing for them, but rarely is that the case. They may actually be very successful at what “*they want to do*”, but that does not mean that they are successful at what God wants them to do – and that is a very critical difference – a crossroad in their life. Listen. The enemy does not care how successful we may become in our life as long as that success distracts us from what is spiritually important. Worldly success can easily become what actually draws people away from God. The enemy does not care if you win the lottery or achieve success at the highest level as long as it kind of undermines your relationship with

¹ Harris, *sarx*, ep.

God. He gets you to work so hard for earthly things that you have no time for the spiritual. He loves that. Listen carefully. This is so super, super important.

Whatever the flesh prompts you to do is always the exact opposite of what God wants you to do.

How do we know that? Well, because the Word of God says that “**nothing good dwells**” in our flesh. Paul repeats this same reality in [Romans 8:13](#) where he is just saying the same thing in a different way.

Ro 8:13 (NKJV) **For IF you live according to the flesh you will die; but IF by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**

The word “if” means that what Paul is saying is a “conditional clause”. **I.e., “if” you fulfill this condition, you will experience this result.** For example, if we treat people with disrespect, they will treat us with disrespect. “**If we live according to** (the promptings of) **the flesh**”, God says in a way that I cannot clearly define that we “**will die**”. “**Will die**” to what? I simply am not sure. Many theologians think that Paul is saying that this refers to eternal death, and certainly that may be the case for the person who is not saved. However, we are saved, but that does not guarantee that we will always experience God’s best for our life. If I follow the promptings of my flesh, it immediately starts me on a trajectory that is driving me away from God, and there is something in me that will begin to die. It may be my love for God, or my commitment to Christ, or my desire to be in His Word, or my aspiration to love my wife like Christ loved the church, or my desire to even come to church. Constantly yielding to my flesh will quickly eat away and destroy anything spiritual in my life and create a trajectory for my life that is not towards God and not spiritual.

Now, I want you to stop and consider whether or not you are “**worldly minded**” or “**spiritually minded**”. All of us are one or the other. Think of it this way. What drives you? What are you always thinking about? What do you want the most in your life? What do you think you simply cannot live without? Is it a new this or a new that? Do you want to have your way more than you want to become Christlike? Are you fascinated with worldly things and bored with spiritual things? Do you even think about spiritual things or even care about God’s Word or His church? You **MUST** be honest with yourself. [2 Corinthians 13:5](#) says,

2Co 13:5 (NKJV) **Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are (even) in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? - unless indeed you are disqualified.**

The Phillips translation says “**You should be looking at yourselves to make sure you are really Christ’s.**” If you will just be honest with yourself, **THEN** the Holy Spirit will help you determine if you are “**worldly minded**” or “**spiritually minded**”. If He helps you to see that you are “**worldly minded**”, then you are at **a critical crossroad** for your life, and **you will have to decide** whether or not you are going to choose God and how He thinks, or just continue along like you currently are.

So, what will happen if you decide not to choose God? Well, once again, I do not exactly know, but I do not think it is a good thing. What I do know is that the enemy wins and you lose. Honestly, I do not want to miss the obvious in [Romans 8:6](#). The obvious is that this verse is **talking about two OPPOSITE ways of thinking.** The word “**but**” is our clue because it is a “contrasting conjunction”, and when it is used, it is telling the reader that what is to follow is in direct contrast to what was just said. For instance, “*The summer is hot, BUT the winter is cold*”. Here is the obvious, so listen carefully.

There are only two ways of thinking and both produce the exact opposite results in our life.

So, here is what we need to embrace and accept. **At this point in our lives, we all have chosen which one of these two ways will govern how we think.** That is a given. You have a real mindset, a real worldview that is driving you. You would think that most people would choose the second way of thinking – that of being “**spiritually minded**”, but that would be a terrible miscalculation. Unfortunately, the vast majority of people have chosen the first way of thinking - of being “**worldly minded**”. They have chosen the things of the world over the things of God. They love the world and the things of the world much more than they love God. Their affection for what the world offers is much greater than their affection for what God offers. So, once again, how do you think? If you want to know which way you have chosen to think, then you **MUST** simply reflect on how much you actually think about God on any given day. You must think about how His Word impacts your decisions, your choices, the words that you use, and how you treat people. Here is the principle.

You cannot disconnect how you live and the choices you make from how you think.

Everyone of us is living out HOW we think. Our life is always a reflection of HOW we think. In fact, I would go so far to say that to not think like God thinks **when you actually can** is one of the most tragic things that can happen in your life. Knowing what God has for you, but **NOT** “**embracing**” it is literally “*wasting your life away*”. So, if we are “**worldly minded**”, it literally means that we are always thinking about worldly things – our creature comforts, the things that make our life convenient, our money and how much we have and how much we want, our personal ambitions, our image. Stated another way, we are **NOT** primarily and consistently thinking about God, and Paul says here that the result is “**death**”. What in the world does that mean? It means exactly what it says. **It means that our worldly way of thinking is always leading us toward the death and ruin of what is driving and controlling us.** Nothing is off of the table when it comes to this verse, and obviously the **WORST DEATH** is eternal death because you refused to come to Christ on His simple terms.

I am always amazed at how difficult it is for people to really trust God with their life. Many people think that they are very smart, extremely intelligent, and so perceptive about life that they do not need God. They read some book, they listened to some speaker, they went to a bad church, and they have decided that they just do not want God controlling their life. They think that they have the whole salvation / God thing figured out and that they can live however they want to live, and in the end it all works out in their favor. **Honestly, that is utter nonsense.** It is what we could call “*gobbledygook, poppycock, spiritual baloney*”. Paul declared the following in **Philippians 3:8**,

Php 3:8 (NKJV) **Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.**

Paul’s way of thinking is very repulsive to the natural man who does not know Christ. The lost man believes that he is smart enough to figure all of life out. That is a complete joke and the worst lie they could believe. Let me give you the real picture that someone should see. Your brain weighs about 3 pounds, is the size of a **grapefruit**, and is 70% water – and you believe that you have eternity, salvation, God, and the universe all figured out because you believe you are a smart, intelligent person. That is so non-sensical that it reveals how deeply ignorant a man actually is. Listen to what **Romans 1:20-22** says,

Ro 1:20 (NKJV) **For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,**

To be “**futile in their thoughts**” means that someone becomes vain, destitute of any wisdom, and because of that, the lost man “**becomes a fool**”. He makes the wrong decisions. He sets his life on a collision course with spiritual death and he misses knowing the only true God that there is. He loses his very life – both now and later. That is exactly what it means when it says that “**to be carnally minded is death**”. Jesus said these incredible words in [Luke 17:33](#),

Lk 17:33 (NKJV) **Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.**

If you believe that your thinking is better than God’s thinking, then you lose everything that is important in life – EVERYTHING. If for any reason a man dies without Christ BECAUSE he just had his own foolish ideas about God and life, he cannot reverse the consequences of those foolish choices and rationalizations. He cannot do it. It is spiritually and eternally impossible. Listen carefully.

THE ONLY THING THAT YOU CAN EVER KNOW ABOUT GOD IS WHAT GOD HAS CHOSEN TO REVEAL TO YOU, AND NOTHING MORE.

You cannot redefine salvation to suit how you want to think. You have never seen God and never heard His voice. You have no idea what it means to be omnipotent, omnipresent, or omniscient, without beginning, and without ending. You do not know what God looks like or where and how He lives. Some people ignorantly believe that they evolved from some kind of cosmic slime or were created by some big bang that happened in the universe trillions of years ago, and that out of complete chaos came utter perfection. Both of those are so foolish to believe that it is mind boggling that people can even consider them – and yet they make fun of us because we have our silly “faith in God”. Honestly, I just do not have enough faith to believe what the lost man believes. It is so far removed from reason, intelligence, and common sense that it is not even a consideration. “*Cosmic slime, big bang theory, monkeys*” – please give me a break!

Listen. We should be so thankful that **GOD HAS CHOSEN** to reveal Himself to us, and that He has called us and saved us. We should do whatever we have to do to ensure that we are always going to glorify Him in every single area of our life. We are going to always CHOOSE to be “**spiritually minded**” and not “**worldly minded**”. Every day we are going to choose God’s best for our life. Every day we are going to yield our life to His Word and its authority over our life. Every day we are going to glorify God in every way possible – in how we think, in how we talk, and in how we live. I pray God will always give you the grace you need to STOP, RECKON, and CHOOSE GOD. Amen?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Harris, Ralph. W., ed. *The Complete Biblical Library: Greek English Dictionary*. Springfield, Missouri: World Library Press Inc., n.d.