



# HOMESWORD

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...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua

## Walk After The Spirit

**G**od's Word sets in contrast walking after the spirit and walking after the flesh. To walk after the flesh is to live and behave by the old nature that we received in our identification with Adam. To walk after the spirit is to live and behave by the new nature that we received in our identification with Christ.<sup>1</sup> Romans chapter eight talks about this subject.

Romans 8:1

*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. [The second half of this verse is not in the text.]*

**I**f you are born again of the spirit of God you are in Christ Jesus. And right now there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. We are judged righteous right now in Christ Jesus. Our being judged righteous is not based upon our walk. We do not need to wait until we die or until Christ comes back in order to find out if we have been judged righteous.

Romans 8:2

*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

**T**his verse talks about two laws, with one superceding the other. The law of the spirit of life in Christ

Jesus sets us free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:3

*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*

**T**he law that was given to Israel was not bad, it just could not accomplish the task of making man righteous because of the weakness of the flesh. It is not the law itself that fell short but man's inability to keep the law. Man by his old nature of the flesh is not strong enough to keep the law in order to obtain righteousness. Because of this and because God so loved the world, God sent His only begotten son to take care of man's inability to obtain righteousness.

**J**ust because man could not keep the law because of the weakness of the flesh does not mean the law is bad. The law can teach us things about living righteously. We do not need the law to obtain righteousness but we can learn things about living righteously from the law. The law can show us areas in our life that may need some work, not to become righteous but to walk in righteousness.

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Romans 8:4

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

**W**hen we walk after the spirit (by the new nature that we received in our identification with Christ), we fully meet the just requirements of the law. When we walk after the spirit, not only are we righteous in Christ but we also live and behave righteously. The question then becomes, how do we walk after the spirit? For one thing, it is not the same as walking after the flesh.

**P**art of walking after the spirit is walking in the righteousness of Christ Jesus. It is getting past the need to be made righteous because you are righteous in Christ Jesus. It is also getting over feeling righteous because of your actions, because your righteousness is in Christ Jesus. When the things you do in life and your behavior is focused on becoming righteous, you are walking after the flesh. When your feelings of righteousness are based on your actions, you are walking after the flesh.

**T**o walk after the spirit and not after the flesh implies that what you do does not count for righ-

teousness. All your good deeds and righteous acts do not add to your righteousness. How can a person add to the righteousness of God that they have in Christ Jesus? They can not! So there must be some other reason to do good deeds and live righteously. And that reason is love. To walk after the spirit is to walk in love.

II Timothy 1:7

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

**T**o live and behave by the new nature that we receive in our identification with Christ is to live and behave in love. This is the nature of the new birth spirit. This is the nature of God.

Romans 8:5

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.

**I**f your life is about the things of the old nature of the flesh, that is what you will direct your attention and desire towards. If you are after the flesh, that is what you will spend your time thinking about and that is how you will fashion your life. If your life is about the things of the new nature of the spirit, that is

what you will direct your attention and desire towards. If you are after the spirit, that is what you will spend your time thinking about and that is how you will fashion your life.

**T**he way to be more than a conqueror in the fleshly or carnal realm of life is to operate in the spiritual realm. When you use carnal means to deal with carnal matters you will get carnal results. But when you use spiritual means to deal with carnal matters you will get spiritual results which will enable you to overcome the flesh.

**W**hen we are born again we receive spirit life which is a new nature. But it is up to each of us to walk after the spirit and to think spiritual thoughts. We are righteous in Christ Jesus. But it is each of our responsibility to live righteously and to direct our attention and desire towards the things of the spirit. And a part of directing our attention and desire towards the things of the spirit is to know and believe what God says about us in His Word.

Romans 8:6

For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

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The thoughts, purpose or will of the flesh is death but the thoughts, purpose or will of the spirit is life and peace. This is one of the great benefits of being spiritually minded and walking after the spirit.

Spiritual thoughts are thoughts that agree with God's Word. Thoughts like: I am righteous in Christ Jesus, I am a son of God, or I have eternal life – those are spiritual thoughts. Thinking spiritual thoughts and having purpose and will that is based on spiritual thoughts will give you life and peace. But unless you are spending time in God's Word you will have a hard time distinguishing spiritual thoughts from thoughts of the flesh.

When things are not going quite right in your life and you find yourself not having much life or peace, you may want to consider how much time you have been spending in God's Word and how much time you have been thinking about the things of God. You may find that what you thought were spiritual thoughts do not exactly agree with what God's Word says. You may be getting robbed of life and peace due to ignorance.

Romans 8:7-8

Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

The carnal mind does not think thoughts that agree with God's Word. They that are in the flesh may please themselves but they do not please God.

Romans 8:9-11

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

To dwell is to inhabit, to abide, to occupy as a place of settled residence. The word "dwell" in these verses is related to house, to build a house, to steward a house, a household. Dwelling does not happen by just being present. Dwelling takes time and getting comfortable with. When you dwell in a house you are not just there. You fix up the house so you are comfortable being in it. The house takes on the character of the person dwelling in it.

When the spirit dwells in us, we are comfortable with the new nature of the spirit. The spirit dwells in us when we decide to live according to the purpose and will of the spirit. Unlike a house, we have to decide to change. But just like an occupant of a house, the spirit wants us to change and take on its character. And when we do change according to the spirit (renewed mind), we take on the character of the spirit that dwells in us, a big part of which is love.

We are righteous in Christ Jesus. We do not need to condemn ourselves for what we are not doing. We just need to make a conscientious effort to have spiritual thoughts and to let the spirit dwell in us. The spirit wants to dwell in us, we just need to walk after the spirit. We do not need to worry about making mistakes and falling short – we will. We just faithfully do our best to do what is right according to God's Word, not to become righteous but because we are righteous.

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In God's Love

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<sup>1</sup>Ken Petty, *Romans: The Foundation of Freedom, Volume II* (Greenboro, NC: Dynamics of Christian Living Press, 1998) p.100