



Freedom in Christ

Pastor Michael Cranford

Copyright © 2023 Michael Cranford

Schedule

- Sept 10 Lecture 1: What we lost in the fall
- Sept 17 Lecture 2: What we regain in Christ
- Sept 24 Lecture 3: Walking by the Spirit /
Renewing the Mind
- Oct 1 Lecture 4: Renewing the Mind /
Strongholds
- Oct 8 Lecture 5: The vulnerability of the
believer



Freedom in Christ: Salvation as Present Reality

You are created to be free!

3. The reason we continue to sin is because, while we are new people, not everything about us is new. The flesh (sarx) is described both as a realm of existence (Rom 7:5) and as a tendency within our physical bodies (Gal 5:16). As children of God, we are not in the flesh any longer (Rom 8:9), but we still can still obey it (Rom 13:14; Gal 5:13).

For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were brought to light by the Law, were at work in the parts of our body to bear fruit for death. (Rom 7:5; NASB)

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the desire of the flesh is against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, in order to keep you from doing whatever you want. (Gal 5:16-17; NASB)

What is the flesh?

Fundamental channels for the flesh:

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. (1 Jn 2:15-17)

- Lust of the flesh: Physical appetites
- Lust of the eyes: Coveting
- Boastful pride of life: Pride/ego



What is the flesh?

Fundamental channels for the flesh:

- Lust of the flesh: Physical appetites
- Lust of the eyes: Coveting
- Boastful pride of life: Pride/ego

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. (Gen 3:6)

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Gal 5:24; NASB)



You are created to be free!

4. The way we resist our learned habits of disobedience is to walk according to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells within us and gives us the ability to resist the flesh.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the desire of the flesh is against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, in order to keep you from doing whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. (Gal 5:16-18; NASB)



Walking according to the Spirit means:

- a) Active response to the Holy Spirit. The picture is the Spirit leading and us following (Gal 5:25).
- b) It is up to the Spirit to reveal and change us, but it is up to us to cooperate in the process.
- c) The Spirit (functioning in this regard) is set in contrast to the law. The law was simply a pointer to holiness that triggered the flesh; the Spirit makes it possible to resist the flesh and become holy. (This is also known as sanctification.)

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

(2 Cor 3:17-18; NASB)

Walking according to the Spirit means:

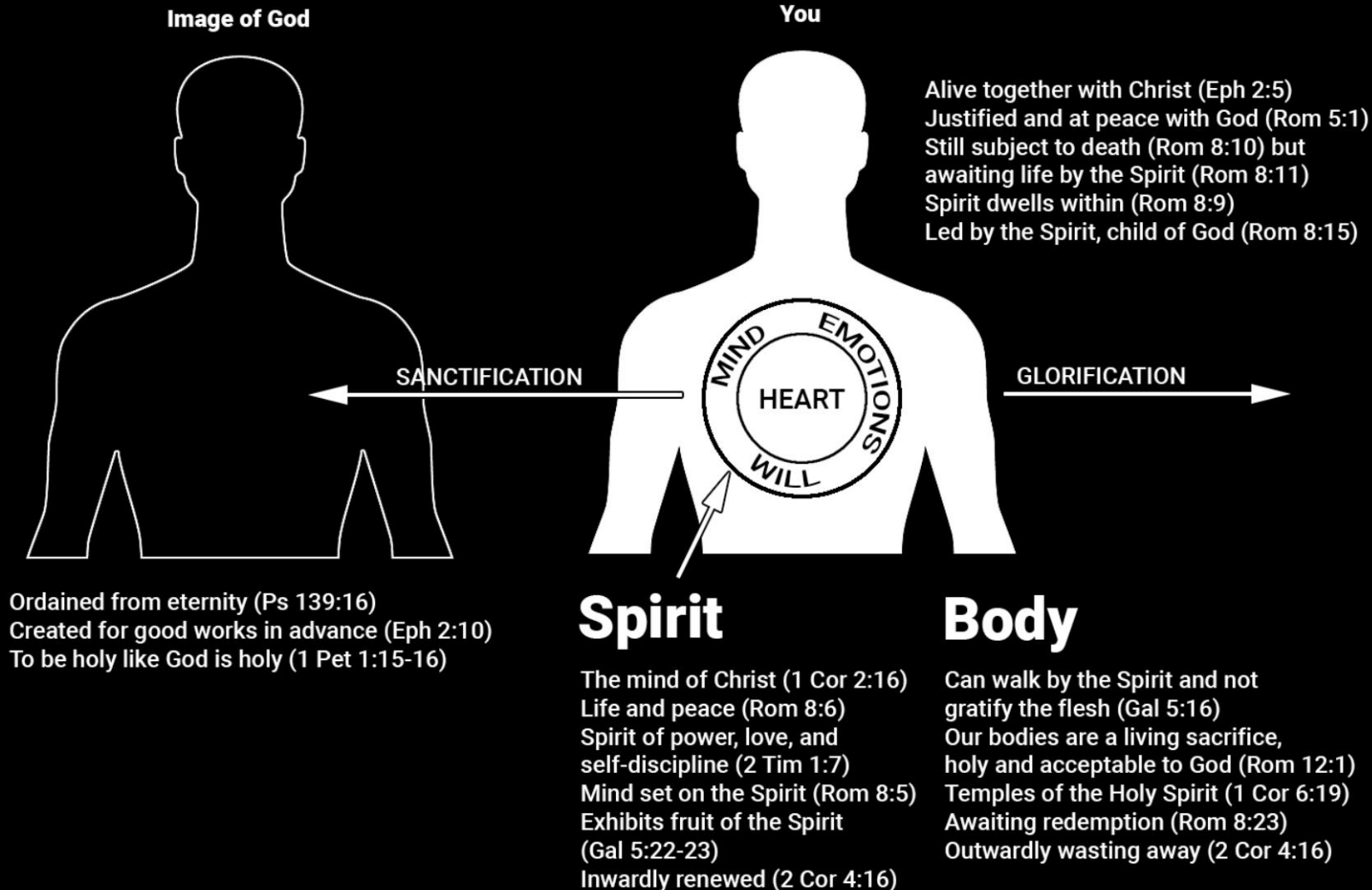
d) To the degree we follow the Spirit's work within us, we see fundamental changes in who we are. This looks like tangible character traits that emerge consistently in our lives (Gal 5:23).

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)



Walking according to the Spirit means:

In the Spirit



Walking according to the Spirit means:

- Flesh – We are to crucify the flesh and consider ourselves dead to sin (Rom 6:11)
- Body – We should offer our bodies as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1), not allow sin to reign and not continue submitting our bodies as instruments of unrighteousness (Rom 6:12-13)
- Mind – We should let our minds be transformed and renewed (Rom 12:2) and focus them on heavenly things (Phil 4:8). This is also described as having the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16)

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Phil 4:8)

- Emotions – We should keep negative emotions in check (Eph 4:31) and allow the Spirit to replace them with peace and joy (Col 3:15; Phil 4:4)
- Will – We should use our will to obey God and choose holiness (Phil 4:9; 1 Pet 1:15-16)

Walking according to the Spirit means:

- e) To the degree we do not submit to this work and instead indulge the flesh, we undermine the work of the Spirit and resemble the old self and identify ourselves with the present kingdom of darkness. We become less like the people we are supposed to be and fall under the control of our pride and impulses.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, indecent behavior, idolatry, witchcraft, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal 5:19-21)



Walking according to the Spirit means:

- Flesh – Allowed to control us and run free by indulging its desires (Rom 8:5-8)
- Body – We submit the members of our body to sin, which results in death (Rom 8:12-13). Even for a Christian, we can experience separation from God and real physical consequences (disease, heart failure, stress-induced trauma, etc.), including death.
- Mind – We can lose our focus and spend our lives in bitterness and unforgiveness (Eph 4:31). Satan's primary attack against us is through the mind (Eph 6:11-15; 2 Cor 10:3-5)

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Cor 10:5)

- Emotions – We are ruled by negative emotions (Eph 4:31)
- Will – We use our decisions to find paths to behavior that is self-destructive and undermines the work of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:18; Eph 4:30)

Freedom in Christ: Renewing the Mind

Renewing the Mind

The journey to freedom begins with the mind.

Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom 12:1-2; NASB)



Renewing the Mind

1. Faith is the operating principle of the life God wants for us. The first step in renewing the mind is changing the object of faith.

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him. (Heb 11:6; NASB)



Renewing the Mind

a) Faith is dependent on the object of faith. (Rom 10:2-3).

For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. (Rom 10:2-3; NASB)



Renewing the Mind

b) Faith requires knowledge of the object (Rom 10:17; John 4:22-23; 2 Tim 1:12)

You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. (John 4:22-23)

That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. (2 Tim 1:12)



Renewing the Mind

c) Faith is demonstrated and validated through action. (James 2:17-18)

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. (Jam 2:17-18)



Renewing the Mind

2. Wanting what God wants: the subordination of the will is critical in the renewal of the mind.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom 12:2; NASB)

“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’” (Matt 6:9-10)



Renewing the Mind

a) Learn what God wants for you and pick it, as much as possible. (Matt 26:39)

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matt 26:39-41)



Renewing the Mind

b) Learn to be content; unnecessary need is a pathway to control. (Phil 4:11-12)

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. (Phil 4:11-12)



Renewing the Mind

c) Learn to be patient; God's resolution to your need may be dependent on timing (Ps 37:7; Rom 12:12; Jam 1:12; Titus 2:11-12).

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. (Rom 12:12)

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. (Titus 2:11-12)



Renewing the Mind

d) Focus your mind on holiness; God's plan for you is good and pure. (Phil 4:8).

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Phil 4:8)

