

## BEING SPIRITUALLY MINDED - THE HOLY SPIRIT'S INFLUENCE

Many believers think that to be spiritual you must suppress the mind, or at the very least disassociate or disengage it. And as a result, their actions are often strange or confusing, and they become a stumbling block to those around them. The apostle Paul said that your spirituality must be edifying [uplifting] - not embarrassing! Note, your mind plays an important and vital role in your spirituality! It's one thing to listen to the *mind of your flesh* [those carnal promptings or selfish influences], but it's another listening to the *mind of the Spirit* [taking direction from God's own Spirit].

Every believer is encouraged to fulfil God's righteousness by living in the power of the Spirit and according to the Holy Spirit. A life energised by the Spirit will renew your mind and overcome every principle of sin and death. In other words, when you live in harmony with the Holy Spirit's promptings, you will find that He controls the sinful nature within. **“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord”** [Zechariah 4:6] Only the Spirit of God within you, who raised Jesus from the dead, is able to lift you up to a new and righteous kind of living. His resurrection power quickens, or gives life, to your mortal body! And this includes your mind!

God does not want you to lose your mind but rather to renew it! Putting off the old man by changing the way you think, is the first step in being liberated from the deadly nature of the carnal past. **2 Corinthians 10:5** states that you should bring *every disobedient thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*. **Ephesians 4** also insists that you *“put on the new man,”* and this new person is renewed in his mind by the Spirit of God. The mind is where it all takes place!

The thoughts that fill your mind each moment throughout each day are very important to God! He expects them to be in perfect harmony with His thoughts, and His thoughts are revealed in His word. But this process requires you *not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God* [Romans 12:2]. Here Paul urges you not to let the world around mould you into its way of thinking. Because you are in God's family you are expected to abandon the thought patterns and lifestyles of the world system. Even superficial conformity to its fleshly tabloid morality would be fatal. You may be in the world, but you are not of this world!

The world, as used here, means the model, society or system that man has built in order to make himself happy without God. This system seeks to attract and hold people captive through the lusts of the eyes, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life [1 John 2:16]. The world has its own politics, art, music, religion, philosophies, amusements and lifestyles, and it seeks to get everyone to conform to its culture and customs by controlling people's thought patterns. The battle field is the mind! It is the arena of faith!

Notice, you should not only be separated from the world; you should be transformed by the renewing of your mind! This means that you ought to progressively think the way God thinks, as revealed in His word. It is only when you have experienced the direct guidance of God in your life that you find out His will is good and acceptable and perfect. Where do you find this out? In your mind! Your mind is illuminated, or as the bible puts it - “renewed.”

**Ephesians 4:23** says, **“Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.”** To “renew” in the Greek means “to make young or recent” and not “to make different.” But the *renewal* here is not that of the mind itself, in this natural powers of memory, judgement and perception, but the *spirit of the mind*, which under the controlling power of the indwelling Holy Spirit directs and energises its inclination toward God. If your natural mental abilities were

*being renewed*, you would acquire mental powers far beyond your normal capabilities. However, God wants to influence the *spirit of your mind* - that controlling force behind all your decisions. The Holy Spirit seeks to direct your mind to enjoy constant fellowship with God the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. He wants to make your mind *spiritual!*

**Romans 8:5,6: “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.” [NKJ] For they that according to the flesh are, mind the things of the flesh; and they according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace.” [Greek]**

**“For those who live according to the flesh and are controlled by its unholy desires, set their minds on and pursue those things which gratify the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit and are controlled by the desires of the Spirit, set their minds on and seek those things which gratify the Holy Spirit. Now the mind of the flesh [which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit] is a death that comprises all the miseries arising from sin. But the mind of the Holy Spirit is life and peace in the soul.” [AMP]**

**“For those who follow the flesh have their interests in the flesh, and those who follow the Spirit have their interest in the Spirit. The interests of the flesh mean death, the interests of the Spirit mean life and peace.” [Moffatt]**

You, as a believer, can have two dispositions [two mindsets]; you can lean toward or indulge the things of your flesh and become a carnal Christian who is at enmity with God; or you can incline toward the things of the Spirit [being spiritually minded] and enjoy an abundant life and be at peace with yourself and others. A carnal mind cannot please God, only the Spirit effectively working in and through you can please God.

Remember this, you do not owe the flesh anything, for sin can never be rewarded, and therefore, you are not obliged to listen to it's promptings. **Verse 12** says, **“We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.”** Your indebtedness and obligation is to the Holy Spirit and His influences alone! It is God's Spirit who convicted you and showed you your need for a Saviour. It was the Spirit who imparted saving faith, who created a new nature inside of you, and who daily witnesses within that you are a child of the living God. What a great debt you owe the Spirit! Jesus Christ loved you so much He died for you; God's precious Spirit loves you so much He has chosen to live inside of you! Isn't that truly amazing?

Just imagine what He has had to endure during your time as a Christian? Daily He has had to tolerate you carnality and selfishness; daily He is grieved by your sinful ways; yet He cares for you and remains in you as a seal of your Heavenly Father's love. The Holy Spirit will always lead you into a glorious life of liberty and victory in Christ! But liberty to you, should never mean freedom to do as you please, for that is the worst kind of slavery - bondage to the flesh! Rather, liberty as a Christian is complete freedom in the Spirit so that you may please God and become the very person God has predestined you to be. Thank God, you have no obligation to the flesh - to feed it, pamper it or obey it. Instead, you can *put do death* the deeds of the flesh by being *spiritually minded*, and in so doing, allow the Spirit to direct you in all matters of life.