

## The Spirit and the Flesh

In our spiritual growth, we learn that there is a distinction between our flesh and the Spirit. Our response to these two aspects will determine everything about us as Christians. The Apostle Paul tells us, **Romans 8:5-6:** *“Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.”* Four times, Paul uses the word “mind” to contrast two different ways of thinking and employs an interesting Greek word when he states, *“They set their minds,”* referring to their focus in life. Paul is not merely saying that people are either fleshly or spiritual based on their thoughts. Instead, he suggests that people’s thoughts about fleshly or spiritual matters stem from their true nature. The Bible states that if we have the Holy Spirit at our center, we are full of life; made alive by God’s Spirit, and spiritual matters now make perfect sense. Before we became Christians, we were dead in sin. There are countless aspects of life over which we have no control. However, the most significant activity in life is entirely within our power: we can choose what we think about. **Romans 8:9:** *“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.”* The Spirit guides us, in contrast to unbelievers, who remain under the influence of Adam’s sinful nature; the Holy Spirit steers the lives of believers. The Spirit does not eliminate human initiative or render it impossible for believers to sin. However, as the most decisive influence in believers’ lives, the Spirit empowers us to resist the ongoing power of sin. **2**

**Corinthians 4:16:** *“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer person is decaying, yet our inner person is being renewed day by day.”* The Bible reminds us that even though we have been redeemed from the power of the flesh, we can still live fleshly lives if we don’t yield to the power of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is clear about this, and we must make a choice. We know that the Holy Spirit lives within us. Here’s how some Christians differ: Is the Holy Spirit merely a resident in their lives, or is the Holy Spirit the leader of their lives? Which one are you? Allow Him to take control and prevent a backslide into old patterns of sin and the flesh. Paul wants us to know that we’ve been saved from our sins through the Holy Spirit. Because of the Holy Spirit, we have everlasting life: abundant and filled with joy and peace. Moreover, because of the Holy Spirit who dwells in our bodies, one day we will be resurrected just as Christ was and spend eternity with the Lord. Thus, we can either be spiritually minded or fleshly minded. It’s not simply a decision; it’s an action. The Holy Spirit, who has come to live within us, provides us with peace, love, hope, guidance, and direction, ensuring that we will be with the Lord one day. Choose to let the Holy Spirit lead your life, rather than merely reside in it.