

Flesh and Spirit

by Andrew Murray

A Christian must learn to walk by the Spirit and cease from their own endeavours to be set free from the law of sin and death.

Topics: "Flesh vs. Spirit", "Living by the Spirit"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit in the life of a Christian, highlighting that many believers start in the Spirit but often revert to relying on their own strength to overcome sin. He explains that true freedom comes from walking in the Spirit, which empowers believers to live righteously rather than succumbing to the desires of the flesh. Murray encourages Christians to acknowledge their own weakness and to rely entirely on the Spirit's power to fulfill God's will, rather than striving in their own efforts. He reminds us that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus liberates us from the law of sin and death, urging believers to embrace this truth for a victorious Christian life.

Transcript

"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" I Corinthians 3:1.

"I am carnal, sold unto sin: to will is present with me, but to perform that which is good I find not. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" Romans 7:14,18; 8:2,9.

"Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" Galatians 3:3; 5:18,25.

It is of great importance for the young Christian to understand that within him there are two natures which strive against one another.¹ If we study the texts noted above, we will see that the Word of God teaches us the following truths on this point.

Sin comes from the flesh. The reason why the Christian still sins is that he yields to the flesh and does not walk by the Spirit. Every Christian has the Spirit and lives by the Spirit, but every Christian does not walk by the Spirit. If he walks by the Spirit, he will not fulfil the desires of the flesh.²

So long as there are strife and envy in the Christian, the Word of God calls him carnal. He would like to do good, but he cannot. He does what he should not, because he still strives in his own strength and not in

the power of the Spirit.³

The flesh remains under the law and seeks to obey the law. But through the flesh the law is powerless, and the endeavour to do good is vain. Its language is, "I am carnal, sold under sin: to will is present with me, but to perform that which is good is not."⁴

This is not the condition in which God would have his child remain. The Word says, "It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). The Christian must not only live by the Spirit, but also walk by the Spirit. He must be a spiritual man, and live entirely under the leading of the Spirit.⁵ If he walks in this way, he will no longer do what he should not. He will no longer be as in Romans 7--a newborn babe seeking to fulfil the law. But, as in Romans 8, the Spirit will set him free from the law which gives no power but brings death, and he will no longer walk in the oldness of the letter but, rather, in the newness of the Spirit.⁶

There are Christians who begin with the Spirit, but end with the flesh. They are converted, born again through the Spirit, but fall unconsciously into a life in which they endeavour to overcome sin and be holy through their own exertion--through doing their best. They ask God to help them in these endeavours and think that this is faith. They do not understand what it means to say, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). They do not know that they are to cease from their own endeavours so that they may do God's will, wholly and only through the Spirit.⁷

Child of God, please learn what it means to say to yourself just as you are, even after the new birth--"I am carnal, sold under sin." No longer strive to do your best under your own strength, merely asking God to help you in your endeavours. No, learn to say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Every day, let your goal be to have the Spirit work in you. Walk by the Spirit, and you will be redeemed from the life of complaining about your inability to do good into a life of faith, in which it is God who works in you both to will and to do (Philippians 2:13).

Lord God, teach me to acknowledge with all my heart that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells nothing good. Teach me also to cease from every thought, as if I could with my own endeavours serve or please You. Teach me to understand that the Spirit is the Comforter, who frees me from all anxiety and fear about my own powerlessness, in order that He may work the strength of Christ in me. Amen.

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