

Moral choices - Which way to go?



HOW DO I CHOOSE?



- Behaving
 - How to behave
- Belonging
 - where I belong
- Believing
 - What I believe in

Romans 7 : 14 – 8: 6

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

'Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.

And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace'

1 Corinthians 2 :10-16

'The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.'

Our view of the world

- We are all shaped by a combination of factors that influence our thinking and our way of looking at the world.
- Therefore our interpretation of the standards and morals we uphold, are based on a combination of these things.
 - Family
 - Country
 - Schooling
 - teachings
 - community
 - moral codes
 - church



How do these things affect us?

- Family
 - e.g. How tidy do we keep our houses.
 - How we bring up our children.
 - What codes/rules do we have in our homes.
- Community
 - shaped by similar ways of thinking
 - Belonging,
- Country and world views.
- All of these things have an impact on our attitudes to a number of moral and ethical areas:-
 - War, violence, litter, divorce, cleanliness, alcohol, abortion...



How we make choices



- If we can understand the process by which we come to an understanding of, say, our response to litter or cleanliness, then we may understand where we personally get thoughts about more complex issues like war or death.

Old self and new self:

- the Bible's theme

Adam

old self

unspiritual

law

Christ

new self

spiritual

freedom

The Law Man vs. the Christ Man

- Romans 7 The law man –
‘I am always doing what I do not want to do’
- Romans 8 The Christ man –
‘but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace’

Nature and Nurture vs. the New Creation

Nature: - what we are born with

- If you take God out of the equation, then life appears here on earth as a consequence of evolution. The moral code to which we all live by is then expediency, a way of making society work toward the survival of the species. Moral codes and laws develop as ways of making society work.

Nature and Nurture vs. the New Creation



Nurture: - the influence of the community in which we live

- Used a lot in the discussion of ethics.
- The history of the church and the way previous generations have lived leads us to our present understanding of how we are to behave.
- Paul had to face this issue but his history (nurture) was to Law of Moses.
- Our history is similar, Catholic tradition, Protestant tradition, and the weight of history.

Nature and Nurture vs. the New Creation



The Cross

- We should not use our past to influence our future, but allow the cross of Jesus to put that to death. Once dead we with spiritual minds, renewed and transformed will make our future.
- To put it another way. We need our lives to be shaped by what the Bible has to say, rather than allowing our experience of life to shape what we read in the Bible.

Nature and Nurture vs. the New Creation

- Reading the Bible through the eyes of nature and nurture will give us an interpretation of what we read to suit where we are. However, where we allow the nature and nurture to die, we find ourselves open to the truth revealed in the Word.
- Interpretation of the Bible is clearer when we view the Word fresh, with Spiritual eyes and discernment, not clouded by our previous ways of thinking, or even the thoughts of historic church.
- We should be able to weigh the arguments of human and church history in the light of Spiritual thinking.



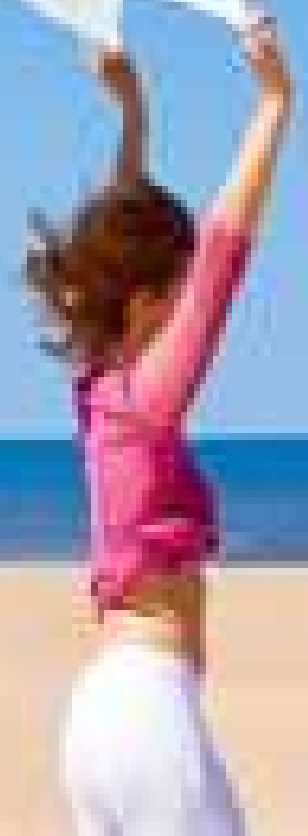
Spiritual people

- Therefore we are able, in theory, to make spiritual judgements.
- If we purely come up with a moral code or a system of laws, we merely repeat the historical problems associated with the Pharisees and previous generations and take a step back to the legalism.



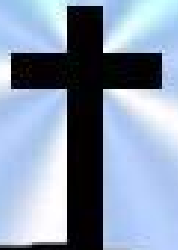
Live by the Spirit.

- No where in the NT can we find any reference to a list of moral codes or ethical teachings.
- There are plenty of references; however, to live in and by the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth.
 - (John 16:12-14 NIV) "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you."



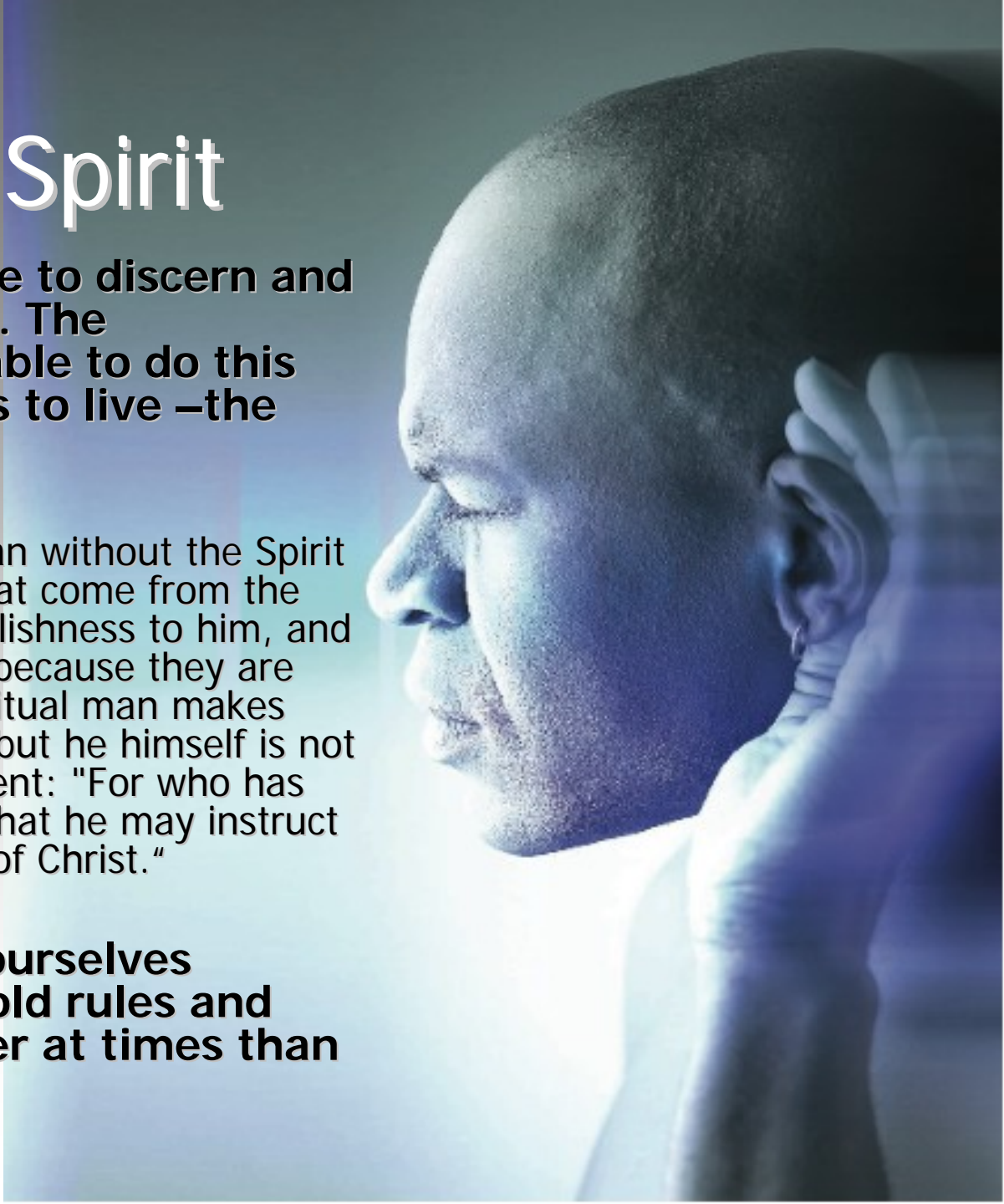
Live by the Spirit

- Jesus came to give us an example of the way that we should live, but nowhere gave us a list, or set of rules.
 - (Gal 5:16-18 NIV) "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law."



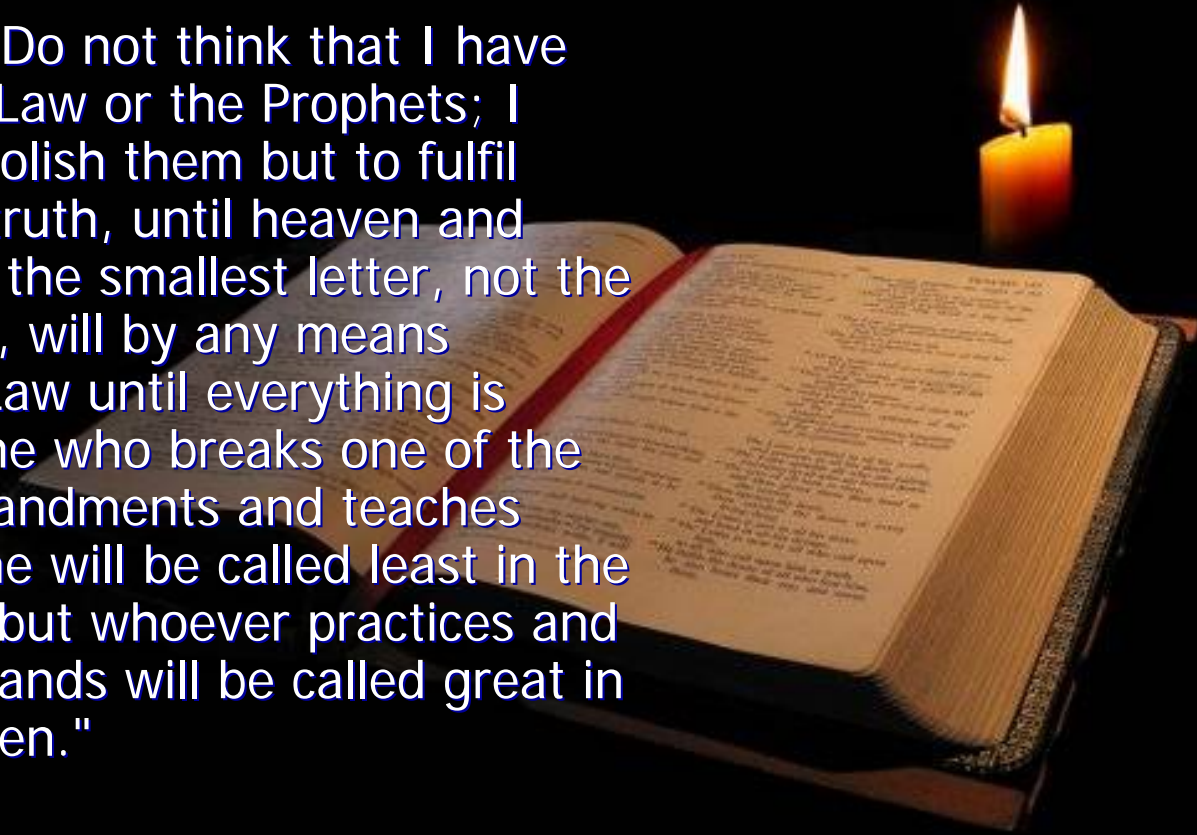
Live by the Spirit

- **The spiritual man is able to discern and is able to test all things. The unspiritual man is not able to do this and needs a list of ways to live –the Law.**
- (1 Cor 2:14-16 NIV) "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgements about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgement: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ."
- **Unfortunately we find ourselves slipping into the same old rules and Laws because it is easier at times than seeking God.**



The Law

- Jesus came not to abolish the law but to fulfil it.
 - (Mat 5:17-19 NIV) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."



Moral issues

- genetics
- abortion
- money
- euthanasia
- war
- healing
- money
- cloning
- infertility
- poverty
- cryogenics
- asylum
- drugs
- sex

HOW DO I CHOOSE?



- Behaving like Christ
- Belonging to Jesus
- Believing in Him