

## **“Being Spiritually Minded”**

**Elder Aaron V. Hood  
1/1/06  
For RevivingTruth.com**

### **Question . . .**

Am I spiritual? Wow . . . a very simple and straightforward question, but one that can be very sobering, humbling, or make us go through many thoughts or emotions when considering it personally and honestly. I believe anyone who is truly saved has, or should have, a desire to be spiritual (or more spiritual).

I am using the term “spiritual” as being that which is of or being led by God’s Holy Spirit, the third part of the Trinity. Basically, it’s like being “in tune” with God and His will and it becomes manifest or apparent in your life because you are following God in obedience. Certainly those who have been born again are spiritual to some degree or have the Holy Spirit within them, as Romans 8:14 tells us: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (All references will be KJV); however, the reality is that even though there is a part of us that has been made perfect in regeneration which is sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption, we still have flesh and sin that we wrangle with everyday.

Thus, outside of that perfect inward part, we cannot be sinless in this life and there is a constant internal warfare that we wage. The Apostle Paul himself spoke of this battle that he also fought in Romans Chapter 7 verses 14-25 (“For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do . . .”, etc.) This is NOT an excuse for sin (i.e. I’m just human) – we should strive to become as sinless as possible within this life.

If you are like me, then you probably look at other people in your life (primarily those who you consider Christians) and evaluate or have an opinion on if you consider them a spiritual person. The opposite would be a degree of being “worldly” or “carnal.” We all probably have people we know and greatly respect who we consider to be very spiritual or at least more spiritual than we are.

### **Purpose of the lesson**

The goal of this writing is more to examine the topic of the importance of our minds in the work of the kingdom after we have been saved. It is easy to get confused or bogged down over terminology in the Bible (i.e. mind, heart, soul, spirit, etc.), but by “minds”, I am generally speaking of our thoughts and desires in this case (not your brain or intelligence). I personally don’t believe that when you get saved, that God saves (or makes sinless) what I am defining as your mind. Even Jesus speaks of sins we can commit by our thoughts.

Two scriptures will be our main focus:

**Rom 8:6** For to be carnally minded *[is]* death; but to be spiritually minded *[is]* life and peace.

**Rom 12:2** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *[is]* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The first scripture refers to the difference between being carnally or spiritually minded. I will admit the context in which Paul is writing primarily points to a discussion on the difference between those that are lost in sin and those that have been regenerated (i.e. a lost person is carnally minded and cannot be spiritually minded, etc.); however, as I've already stated, we know the reality is that saved people still fight a battle of being carnal or spiritual and I think it's a verse that can apply to this situation as well.

### **Application to our lives . . .**

Carnally minded is simply defined as minding the things of the flesh or desiring and enjoying the things of the world, especially as opposed to minding the things of God or loving the pleasures of this life more than the Lord and His work. "Minded" here means inclination or purpose. Spiritually minded means that your mind is focused upon the things of God and led by the Holy Spirit. I don't know anyone who 100% thinks about God all the time, but I think the application is that our minds and hearts must be upon Him if we are to be spiritual. Do we care about God and the things He wants done or are we concerned with ourselves?

Paul in Rom 8:6 gives a very straightforward cause and effect. Applying this verse to the saved, we know that the Bible doesn't teach they are in eternal danger of spiritual death; however, if a Christian is carnally minded, it leads to a very weak and "dead" spiritual life here on earth (another great and somewhat related topic, but not in the scope of this article, is that of professed vs. true Christians and what their fruits say.) If we think and act exactly as we did prior to being "converted" then there is a fundamental problem. Carnal-minded Christians are ineffective in the service of the Lord.

One interesting truth that I've found is that the mind and body (or outward appearance) are not always in sync. For example, you can be doing all the right things outwardly – i.e. attending church regularly, saying your prayers, reading the Bible, etc. and NOT be spiritually minded. Your mind, thoughts, and desires can be completely on another path. It's your way of thinking.

To the contrary, Paul gives us a blessed recipe: if we are spiritually minded, then we are to expect "life and peace". It is implied *spiritual* prosperity (not material). It's the truest and purest sense of contentment one can find on earth. Peace, wonderful peace . . . something many don't have – especially many Christians whose minds and lives are so busied that they can't seem to find rest. You want to have abundant life and inward peace? Then be spiritually minded!

In Romans 8:7 Paul goes on to say that the carnal mind is enmity (or hostility) against God. It leads down a terrible and increasingly dark path. I don't believe we are in a place to truly and rightly discern the Lord's will if we are carnally minded.

### **Test time . . .**

One litmus test is that of Galatians 5:16-26, where Paul discusses fruits – those of the flesh and those of the Spirit.

Examine yourself. I believe it's imperative if we are to truly grow as Christians. Are your desires carnal or spiritual? Are we teaching by our thoughts, actions, and speech to those around us that we are spiritually or carnally minded? If your fellow church members or acquaintances were polled, would they describe you as someone who is spiritual or would they more likely say you are worldly?

I personally wrangle with the idea of “being in the world, but not of the world” (a phrase I've heard all my life – meaning saved people interact with the world, but it's not our identity) in the sense that are we noticeably different from society? For example, to a non-Christian, could they line up you and about 10 co-workers and mark those who are Christian?

My heart tells me (to my own sorrow) the sense of these scriptures is that our minds and lives should be completely different than that of the world in which we live. My perception is that most professed Christians I know ‘fit right in.’

Unfortunately, to be carnally minded is human nature and so to become spiritually minded takes active effort. It is not something that I believe is once attained always attained, but we have to work at it daily and it takes discipline to maintain or grow. Most importantly, it takes the aid of the Holy Ghost.

This leads us to our second text of Romans 12:2 – we need our minds transformed! First (and hopefully implied) one must be saved. You can't be spiritually minded if you aren't saved. Just as the scriptures readily advise us that we must die daily, crucify the flesh, mortify the flesh, lose our lives to gain them, etc. (which none of these scriptures means literally harming our body), we are to constantly work on transforming our minds.

Paul says to not be *conformed* (fashioned alike or conformed to the same pattern) to this world but be *transformed* (from the Greek word metamorphoō - literally or figuratively “metamorphose”) by the renewing (by making new, changing into new views and feelings) of our minds. Thus, our minds (like when we are saved, we are new creatures in Christ Jesus) can be changed from the default carnal mind to something completely different. God wants to reign your entire being (body, mind, soul, etc.), not just one piece or part. To have good actions, but a carnal mind implies hypocrisy.

### **G.I.G.O.**

Ever heard of this? I learned it in a Freshman computer class in college. It stands for “Garbage In, Garbage Out”. In computers it means that if you put in bad code or programming, then you are going to get flawed or bad results. Bad input = bad output. It’s something that applies to many things in life. Eat junk food; then don’t expect a model physique. Spiritually, I think it fits with the intent of this article.

In the battle for the mind, this thought came to me as we consider our environment and what inputs we have in our lives/minds. Just looking at our time, let’s take a simple example which is very generalized (obviously this is not true of everyone, but potentially of many): If the average “Christian” spends about 3 hours per week on good spiritual input (being at Sunday/School Church Sundays, maybe Wednesdays, personal prayer and maybe personal bible study) – that’s *less than 2%* of our total time (3 out of a total of 168 hours in a week)!

### **Bottom Line**

I am personally concerned with what I perceive to be a lack of and potential declining of spirituality among our people and churches. If you know me personally, you hopefully know that I would never intentionally discourage or preach a ‘gloom and doom’ sermon or present a message that has no hope. There is hope! I would not feel led to discuss this topic if I didn’t feel there was a remedy. Sometimes the truth is painful, but realizing it and taking action can produce much fruit. I believe something’s got to give. If we truly want to see revival, if we truly want to be the salt of the earth, if we truly want to be a peculiar people, then we are going to have to make some changes by the grace of God.

If you discern that you can be more spiritually minded and need to work on it, then may God help you do it and help others! I believe in the concept of positive peer pressure and there have been many times that I see others that are closer to God than I am or are more spiritual, and it has often sparked a desire in me to strive to do better. I pray God will help put a spark in you. The time of this writing is that of a new year – if you are into resolutions, then resolve to be more spiritual this year.

Are you going to be a carnally-minded Christian or a spiritually-minded one? The former lives for this world; the latter lives for the world to come.

**Mat 6:21** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.