

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

SET YOUR MIND ON WHAT THE SPIRIT DESIRES

Romans 8:5 “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.”

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught regarding the difference between those who live by the flesh as opposed to those who live by the Spirit, “By their fruit you will recognize them. . . every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. . .by their fruit you will recognize them.” (Matthew 7:16-20)

In today's devotional verse, St. Paul has much the same message. He says, whoever sets their mind on the things of the flesh, the flesh that is weak and sinful, will not produce good fruit. It will lead you into sin and cause you to be an enemy of God. Ultimately it will lead you to eternal death.

In his Large Catechism Luther encourages praying the Sixth Petition of the Lord's prayer, “and lead us not into temptation” because “although we have received forgiveness and a good conscience and are entirely acquitted, yet our life is of such a nature that we stand today, and tomorrow we fall. Therefore, even though we are godly now and stand before God with a good conscience, we must pray again, and again, that He would not allow us to fall again and yield to trials and temptations.”

Led and guided by the Holy Spirit you “will have their (your) minds set on what the Spirit desires.” The Spirit leads you to produce good fruit. God sends His Spirit into your heart through the Means of Grace (His Word and the Sacraments.) His Spirit works faith in your heart that connects you to Jesus through whom you do what is pleasing and good in God's sight. His Spirit gives you life and peace.

Prayer: Holy Spirit bring into my heart eternal peace through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. Amen.

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's sowing, May we ripen and increase,
Fruit to life eternal growing, Rich in love and joy and peace.

Laden branches freely bearing Gifts the Giver loves to bless;
Here is fruit that grows by sharing, Patience, kindness, gentleness.

Rooted deep in Christ our Master, Christ our pattern and our goal,
Teach us, as the years fly faster, Goodness, faith, and self-control.

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's tending, May we grow till harvests cease;
Till we taste, in life unending, Heaven's love and joy and peace.
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