

Walk not after the Flesh, but after the Breath

In Romans chapter 8, Paul used “flesh” and “breath” for the two contrary ways of living, “walk not after **the flesh**, but after **the Spirit [Breath]**” (8:1), “walk not after **the flesh**, but after **the Spirit [Breath]**” (8:4). These are simply expressions he defined earlier in his letter, “For he **is not a Jew**, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward **in the flesh**: But he *is a Jew*, which is one **inwardly [kryptos 2927]**; and circumcision *is that* of **the heart, in the spirit [breath]**, and not in the letter; **whose praise is not of men, but of God**” (2:28-29).

Paul began Romans with “For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**: for it is the power of God unto **salvation to every one that believeth [trusts]; to the Jew first**, and also **to the Greek**” (1:16). The gospel of Christ by which both Jews and Gentiles are saved is the message that Christ Himself preached: “that they may have **glory of men** ... thine alms may be **in secret [kryptos 2927]**: and thy Father which seeth **in secret [kryptos 2927]** himself shall reward thee openly” (Mat 6:2,4); “that they may be **seen of men** ... pray to thy Father which is **in secret [kryptos 2927]**; and thy Father which seeth **in secret [kryptos 2927]** shall reward thee openly” (6:5,6); “that they may **appear unto men** to fast ... appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is **in secret [kryptos 2927]**: and thy Father, which seeth **in secret [kryptos 2927]**, shall reward thee openly” (6:18). Salvation consists of walking with conscience toward God in all we do, and never with any motives of receiving praise from people, “whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.” This is what Paul meant by “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit [Breath].”

“For **the law of the Spirit [Breath] of life in Christ Jesus** hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom 8:2). This law of the Breath of life in Christ Jesus is the righteous requirements of the law He taught for the Breath of God to raise us to eternal life. The Breath of life comes by the law of Christ—the righteous standard of the law and the prophets as He defined it, “Think not that I am come to **destroy the law**, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, **but to fulfil**” (Mat 5:17), “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for **this is the law and the prophets**” (Mat 7:12). We must live by the righteous moral standard of the law that Jesus Christ taught in His sermon, “**except your righteousness** shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall **in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven**” (Mat 5:20).

Christ said that we must hear and do the moral righteousness of the law that He taught, “whosoever **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth them** ... every one that **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth them not**” (Mat 7:24,26). And Paul said the same: “For not the **hearers of the law** *are* just before God, but **the doers of the law** shall be justified” (Rom 2:13); “the things contained in the law” (2:14); “the work of the law” (2:15); “keep the righteousness of the law” (2:26); “fulfil the law (2:27); “the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us” (8:4); “he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (13:8); “love *is* the fulfilling of the law” (13:10).

“**For what the law could not do**, in that it was **weak through the flesh**, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (8:3). The law couldn’t atone for our sins because of the weaknesses of its priests and sacrifices, “the **weakness** and unprofitableness thereof ... were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue **by reason of death** ... offer up sacrifice, first for **his own sins** ... high priests which **have infirmity**” (Heb 7:18,23,27,28). But God’s own Son “condemned sin” by His sacrifice so that “**the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us**, who walk not after the flesh, but **after the Spirit [Breath]**” (8:4). We’re now dead to our sins so that we should live righteously after the breath, “Who his own self **bare our sins** in his own body on the tree, that **we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness**” (1Pe 2:24).

“For they that are after the flesh do **mind [phroneo 5426] the things of the flesh**; but they that are after the Spirit [Breath] **the things of the Spirit [Breath]**” (Rom 8:5). To “mind” the flesh is to “**mind [phroneo 5426] earthly things**” (Phl 3:19), the things of this world and the praise of men, “whose praise *is* not of men, but of God” (Rom 2:29). But to “mind” the breath, “**seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your **affection [phroneo 5426] on things above**, not on things **on the earth**” (Col 3:1-2). It’s to live with good conscience toward God: “I have lived in all good conscience before God” (Act 23:1); “to have always a conscience void of offence toward God” (Act 24:16); “their conscience also bearing witness” (Rom 2:15); “my conscience also bearing me witness” (Rom 9:1); “the testimony of our conscience” (2Co 1:12); “a good conscience” (1Ti 1:5,19); “a pure conscience” (1Ti 3:9); “for conscience toward God” (1Pe 2:19); “Having a good conscience” (1Pe 3:16); “a good conscience toward God” (1Pe 3:21). Walking after the breath is living morally righteous with good conscience toward God.