

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, November 12, 2017

**Your Part and God's Part in Spiritual Growth
Week 2 in the series "Engaged"
A Study of Romans 8:5-17**

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A new word in our culture is “adulting.” What does it mean? (Look it up if you need to.) What are the consequences for those who are slow to start adulting?

Christians are expected to develop in spiritual maturity. Define spiritual maturity.

Today is “Week 2” in our study through Romans 8. Today we’re focusing on Romans 8:5-17. There’s no need to ask someone to read it aloud yet. But have your Bible or Bible app open to those verses. You’ll read selected verses as assigned below.

Romans 8:5-17 describe your part and God’s part in spiritual growth.

Your Part in Spiritual Growth

Christians are expected to do two things in order to mature. Use your sermon notes to complete the following blanks.

First, f _____ godly desires.

Read Romans 8:5-6.

We tend to think of the intellect when we see the word “mind.” But Pastor Tom said that the word in these verses means more than just rational thought. So, what did Paul have in mind with the word “mind”?

What does it mean to **set** your mind on something?

In the 1800s, a famous sermon was published called “The Expulsive Power of a New Affection.” The pastor (Thomas Chamlers) taught “It is rare that any of our [bad habits or flaws] disappear by a mere process of reasoning or by the force of mental determination. The only way to dispossess the heart of an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one.” Is this an effective way to improve life? Why or why not?

What are some ways we can set our mind on glorifying God?

Second, s_____ sinful behaviors.

Read Romans 8:12-13.

Read Matthew 5:27-30. How do Jesus' words compare to Paul's command to "put to death the misdeeds of the body" in Romans 8:13?

Pastor Tom showed a clip of Bob Newhart playing a counselor. His advice to all the bad thinking and bad behavior of his clients was to "Stop it!" Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this simple approach to things you want to change.

So, your part in spiritual growth is to **feed** godly desires and **starve** sinful behaviors. One involves thinking, the other involves acting. Answer the following questions:

- ❖ If we try to develop the right way to think but don't deal with our actions, what happens?
- ❖ If we try to improve our actions but don't deal with our mindset, what happens?
- ❖ What is the best way to improve life: To think ourselves into a new way of acting, or to act ourselves into a new way of thinking?

God's Part in Spiritual Growth

Read Romans 8:1. Last week we looked at what it means to be "in Christ Jesus." What does it mean?

In this week's study of verses 5-17, we see that those who are in Christ Jesus have Christ Jesus in them! Read Romans 8:9-11 and identify the three phrases that show that God is **within** those who believe in him. (Hint: there's one phrase in each verse.)

Read Romans 8:14-17.

These verses tell us that the Holy Spirit's job is to remind us that in Christ we're the sons and daughters of God. Answer the following questions:

- ❖ How does this truth **convict** you to live holy?
- ❖ How does this truth **comfort** you when you fail to live holy?

Concluding Thoughts

C.S. Lewis wrote: "Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on: you knew those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of—throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace."

The truth is, too many Christians just want to be made into "a decent little cottage" instead of a "palace." Answer the following questions:

- ❖ Why do we tend to think this way?
- ❖ What are the consequences for our lives and our witness if we don't move beyond this way of thinking?
- ❖ What can you do **this week** to participate with God's plan to make you into a palace?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests