

**Devotional Thoughts :: Do We Relate To Each Other After the Flesh or After the Spirit? - Alan Martin****Do We Relate To Each Other After the Flesh or After the Spirit? - Alan Martin - posted by hulsey (), on: 2013/5/8 13:29**

In II Corinthians we read that some living in Corinth reasoned that Paul and his companions were "walking according to the flesh". The carnal mind may not be very discerning, but it is still very bold. It appears that the divisions Paul addressed in his first letter still lingered in the church. Paul said that "divisions" are the work of carnal minds (in most cases), whereas "unity" is always a fruit of the Spirit of Christ.

Which mind do we use to view our brothers? Do we see each other as the "same" family, united through a common grace - "a fellowship" of one Spirit? Or do we view one another through the carnal mind of "DI" (TWO) "VISION" (SIGHT)? The mind of the flesh produces conflicts and strife because it sees the differences more than the similarities. The mind of the Spirit seeks to harmonize our differences into a symphony of unity through peace. The carnal mind draws distinctions between brothers, but the Spirit knits hearts of brothers together. The mind of the Spirit sees through the love of Christ and hopes all things; this hope enables us to bear with and suffer long with the problems we encounter in relationships.

The Spirit's ministry is to perfect unity through the bond of love. The work of the flesh too often strives against the differences it perceives. Few of us would accuse Paul of walking in the flesh, but too often we assume that of each other. Let's learn to strive in the Spirit FOR each other and not in the flesh AGAINST one another.

In order to experience true and rich unity in the Spirit, we must resolve to NOT KNOW anyone according to the flesh. Paul indicated that this is a decision that alters our relationships dramatically. He put it this way - "FROM NOW ON we know no one any longer according to the flesh."

From the time we determine to NOT KNOW anyone according to the flesh, the works of the flesh will begin to ABATE and the fruit of the Spirit will begin to ABOUND. Divisions, strife, enmities and quarrels are all works of the flesh that cause wars among believers rather than unity. The lusts of the flesh pollute our perspective of our fellow believers and corrupt our ability to live in harmony and peace. When we knew Christ "after the flesh" we crucified Him because we did not see Him as He truly was.

When we begin to know our fellow believers according to the Spirit, the Spirit's mind of life and peace and the love He sheds abroad in our heart begin to govern all our relationships with wholesome edification. The Spirit's love bears the fruit of long suffering and forbearance that manifests itself in brothers dwelling together in unity. This unity results in a clear testimony before the world that we are disciples of our Lord and in the Heavenly Father bestowing His blessing upon us of "life evermore."

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit - especially in "knowing others!" The Spirit will make Christ's heart and mind towards others - our heart and mind toward them - just like His is towards us.

**Re: Do We Relate To Each Other After the Flesh or After the Spirit? - Alan Martin, on: 2013/5/8 16:29**

This is why it is important that the Lord draw us together and that we are united in the Spirit. Any fleshly attempts at unity outside of the truth is always bound to fail. When hearts are knitted together by the Lord, then a true and genuine and lasting fellowship emerges, one where one esteems the other higher than himself rather than seeing himself as superior. Now I have witnessed men trying to attempt these things in the flesh, it can work for a while and even seem to have some success, but all endeavors in the flesh, no matter how noble the intention, ultimately fails. That which is born of the flesh produces flesh.....bro Frank