

Flesh vs. Spirit

Romans 8:1-17

August Memory Verse: Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

NOTE: What a great truth to teach our children and preach to ourselves as well! Because of our sin, we have earned death. But God's gift to us through Christ is eternal life.

Opening Activity: Choose one or two that seem most appropriate for your children to start the lesson. Feel free to work them into the lesson If you kids start to get antsy and lose their attention span... like ours do!

- Practice saying this month's memory verse together, along with other verses you have memorized. Say it in funny voices, say it as loudly or as quietly as you can, say it while standing on one foot. If your kids are writers, have them write it down on a pretty or cool piece of paper to hang in their bedroom. Come up with motions that you can do while saying the verse, too.
- Pray together as a family for any needs you or others have. Remember to thank Him for His blessings and what He is doing in your lives, too.
- Grab two pieces of paper (different colors, if possible). On the top of one, write "Flesh" and on the other, write "Spirit." Talk about what those words mean in the context of today's lesson:
 - **Flesh:**
 - Does not refer to our *skin*
 - Refers to sin within our hearts, minds, and bodies.
 - Our sinful nature (define sin again, if necessary)
 - **Spirit:**
 - The Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Trinity

Set the papers aside for use later in the lesson.

Lesson: As you teach God's word this week, remember that He is using your faithfulness to accomplish His good purposes... whether it seems like it in the moment or not! Don't lose heart and don't give up. The seeds you are planting NOW will yield fruit.

- Provide a quick recap to your kids: ["We are still learning from the book of Romans about how to live in a way that pleases God. Romans was written by a missionary named Paul who loved Jesus and wanted others to love Him, too. We have learned that we are called to obey, to belong to Jesus, and to be holy. We've talked a lot about making righteous \(or good\) choices instead of sinful \(or bad\) choices. God rewards righteous choices and punishes sinful choices. Obeying in our hearts matters more than obeying with our hands. It is our faith in God that makes us righteous, not the things we do, just like Abraham's faith made him righteous. Because of what Jesus did on the cross, we can have victory over sin and be reconciled to God. Our faith in Jesus makes us righteous, not the things we do. Jesus gives us life so that we can serve Him."](#)
- Introduce the passage: ["Today, we are reading from Romans 8:1-17. This passage talks about our flesh \(our sin nature\) and the Holy Spirit. Let's listen to see what's different about those two!"](#)
- Read Romans 8:1-17, stopping to explain concepts or verses as you go. Ask questions to keep your kids engaged. Consider reading from *The Message* to make it more understandable to kids. Alternatively, read a few key verses and explain the rest of the passage.
 - *Key Concept: Life comes from the Spirit, not from our flesh.*
- To review this week's passage, use the two colored sheets from the opening activity (Flesh vs. Spirit) and identify the differences between the two. Verse references are in parentheses.

Flesh	Spirit
Personal desires (vs. 5)	Spirit desires (vs. 5)
Death (vs. 6)	Life and peace (vs. 6 & vs. 11)
Hostile to God (vs. 7)	Righteousness (vs. 10)
Not submissive (vs. 7)	Children of God (vs. 14 -16)
Can't please God (vs. 8)	Heirs (vs. 17)

As you fill in the table, talk about what each item means. For example, "Death" (vs. 6) refers to eternal separation from God, not just physical death.

- Connect the Gospel: "When God created people, He made us good without a sin nature. But the first people God made, Adam and Eve, chose to disobey God when they ate fruit God told them not to eat. They became slaves to sin when they followed their flesh desires. Now, everyone in the world is born with a sin nature. That means we are all slaves to sin, too. The punishment of sin is death and separation from God forever. But God sent His Son, Jesus, to earth so that we don't have to be punished forever for our sins. Jesus lived a sinless life. He was put to death on a cross, taking the punishment for our sin and guilt. He rose to life three days later, showing that He won over sin and death. If we ask Jesus to forgive our sins, He will. Then we can know Him, be part of His family, serve Him, and spend eternity with Him in heaven. Eternal life with Jesus is our best reward for following and obeying Him. If we have faith in Jesus, we are declared righteous. That makes us want to make good choices and follow Him. The Holy Spirit helps us do that and makes us more like Jesus."
- Close the lesson: "Instead of following our own sinful flesh desires, we can make choices to follow the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives. Let's ask Him to help us do that."
- Pray, then do some of the activities below, as appropriate for your family.

Activity Ideas: These are designed for use at the end of the lesson or throughout to break up the "sitting still" times. Be in tune with what your kids need in order to make this lesson the most effective for them.

- *Make it Personal.* Talk about different decisions you make everyday in your family (for example, praying, making your bed, playing, etc.). Include both righteous and sinful choices. Talk about which paper they would fit best on: Flesh or Spirit. Then, talk about which things bring life and joy. Which ones help us feel good? Which ones make us feel yucky in our hearts? God desires for us to live in the Spirit.
 - For example, if your child decides to pray every day, that would be on the *Spirit* paper. The decision to disobey would go on the *Flesh* paper.
- *Life in the Spirit is Egg-sellent!* Prior to the lesson, hard boil one egg. When you're ready, take out the hardboiled egg and a raw egg. Tell your kids, "When we live according the Spirit, God transforms us from the inside out. We may look the same on the outside, but in the inside, we are completely different!" Explain that one of the eggs is raw and the other is hardboiled. Ask, "Do the eggs look any different on the outside?" Have kids guess which is which. Invite one of them to break both eggs to see if they are right. Ask, "How are they different on the inside?" Like the raw egg, we are a mess without Jesus! But when He works in our hearts, He makes us something strong and good.
- *Color it in.* Print off the following coloring page to remind kids to live according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh. Post them where you'll see them throughout the week and talk about what they mean.

The mind governed by

**THE FLESH
IS DEATH**

but the mind governed by

**THE SPIRIT
IS LIFE &
★ PEACE. ♥**

{ -Romans 8:6 }