



**NO LIMITS**

WITH PASTOR DELMAN

WHO'S DRIVING YOUR  
C A R



S E R M O N G U I D E

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## Who's Driving Your Car?

*Romans 8:1-4*

### INTRODUCTION

There is a unique fascination with high-speed car chases. When a reckless driver leads police on a dangerous pursuit through busy traffic, we are often glued to the screen, wondering who is behind the wheel. A few years ago, a story about a chaotic chase in California ended with a surprising discovery. After the car weaved through traffic, ran lights, and finally came to a stop, officers approached the vehicle. Instead of a hardened criminal, they found a nine-year-old boy who simply said, "Sorry officer. I was just trying to get to school." While his goal was admirable, it shows that bad things can happen when the wrong person is driving the car.

This story makes us think about what can happen when the wrong part of us is behind the steering wheel of our lives. Sometimes, our reactions are driven by rage, bitterness, fear, or shame. These toxic emotions can lead us to say or do things that hurt others, create problems for ourselves, and damage our relationships. In Romans 8, the Apostle Paul gives us guidance on who or what ought to be in the driver's seat. He tells us that if we want to live a life of joy and peace, we must learn to walk according to the Spirit, not the flesh.

### KEY POINTS

#### **1. The Spirit, Not the Flesh, Must Be in Control**

To understand Paul's message, we must first define "flesh" and "Spirit." The "flesh" is not simply about bodily appetites like overeating or lust. Instead, it refers to the parts of our personality that have been wounded by negative life experiences. These parts carry pain, traumatic memories, and harmful beliefs that get triggered by new experiences. When we "walk in the flesh," we react to situations based on these old wounds. The "Spirit" in this verse does not refer to an external Holy Spirit we must "catch." It is the Divine Essence or God image within each person. To walk in the Spirit is to live from the core of who we are: beings made in God's image. The good news is that we can learn to let this Spirit, our truest self, drive our lives.

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### 2. Heal the Root, Not Just the Fruit

Many religious traditions focus on modifying behavior, creating a list of "do's" and "don'ts." This is like treating the fruit of a problem instead of its root. You can follow all the rules, pray all the right prayers, and attend every service, but if your heart is unchanged, you will still be driven by your wounds. Jesus often criticized religious leaders who appeared pious on the outside but were full of greed and hate on the inside. They changed their habits but not their hearts. God wants us to heal the root of our pain. Just because you suppress a behavior, like anger or gossip, does not mean you have addressed the underlying wound that causes it. Walking in the Spirit is about healing the parts of our personality that these behaviors are trying to soothe.

### 3. Discover the Underlying Need

Our behaviors, even destructive ones, are often misguided attempts to meet a real, underlying need. A person who is unfaithful in a relationship might be trying to meet a need to feel seen and understood. Someone who overworks might be trying to meet a need to avoid sadness or grief. Simply stopping the behavior, or behavior modification, is not enough because the need remains. To truly heal and let the Spirit lead, we must get curious about what our wounded parts are trying to achieve. This allows us to find healthier ways to meet our needs for connection, security, and love.

The Spirit-led life is a journey of healing. It requires moving beyond a focus on external behaviors and turning inward to care for the wounded parts of our souls. God's grace is not a reward for good behavior; it is the power that enables our healing. When we are in Christ, we are invited to stop walking according to our old, wounded flesh patterns. We can respond to difficult situations from a place of health and regulation, not traumatic activation.

This healing process is not just for our personal comfort. It is essential for our mission in the world. When we are driven by fear, shame, and resentment, we cannot effectively love our neighbors or fight for justice. But when we learn to live from our Divine Essence, we are filled with the compassion, joy, and peace that reflect God's character. Healing the root of our pain allows the Spirit to shine through us, empowering us to build a more just and loving world. You can begin this healing journey with a simple practice:

- **Notice:** Become aware of the moments when a wounded part gets activated.
- **Name:** Identify the painful experience in your past that produced the injury.
- **Need:** Discover the underlying need that your behavior is trying to meet.

This practice helps you separate from your reactive patterns and allows your God image, the Holy Spirit, to take the driver's seat.

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### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. In what areas of your life do you feel like the wrong "driver" is in control? How does understanding the difference between your "flesh patterns" and your "Divine Essence" change your perspective?
2. Think about a behavior you have tried to change through rules or willpower alone. What might be the unhealed "root" or wound that this behavior is trying to address?
3. How can you use the "Notice, Name, Need" practice this week to begin healing a wounded part of yourself so you can better live out God's call to love and justice?

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