

Uncharted Territory: Taking Life Where You've Never Been

Week Ten: *Do You Know the Difference? (Part 2)*

To successfully live in our new identity in Jesus, we must understand the difference between walking in our **flesh** (sinful nature) and walking/living by the **Holy Spirit**. When we learn to discern between the promptings and instincts of the **flesh** and **Spirit**, we can choose to submit ourselves to the **Spirit** and live in step with Him (see [Galatians 5:25](#)).

This week, make a commitment to *invest three blocks of time* to meditate on God's Word slowly and carefully, to reflect on the internal leadings in your heart, and to surrender to God for His help.

But first—Let's review: More than 120 times in the New Testament, God reveals the concept of our "**flesh**" that stands opposed to God. Most often translated "*the sinful nature*," this simplistic rendering is *mostly* true—our human nature has indeed been thoroughly corrupted by sin. However, this can mislead us to consider "**the flesh**" as only referring to that which is sinful in our lives. This is not what "**the flesh**" refers to in its entirety. In the biblical revelation, "**the flesh**" is the inseparable combination of our body and soul. Our soul is everything about us that makes us who we are, both good and bad—*our intellect, desires, will, emotions, impulses, instincts, fears, joys, hopes, dreams, personality, etc.*—in other places in scripture referred to as our "*hearts*."

"**The flesh**" might be better understood to be the entirety of our *human nature*. When we live according to the natural instincts, reactions, intuitions, and subconscious impulses of our human nature, we are living according to "**the flesh**," which stands opposed to God and is never able to produce the complete life of God in us (see [Romans 8:3-14](#)).

Day One: *What is the problem with my flesh?*

Read carefully and slowly [Jeremiah 17:5-9](#). Meditate upon this teaching—reviewing and reflecting for many minutes on its relevance.

Reflect: Do you notice how dependance upon the **flesh** leads to a curse? In the Hebrew of this text, the word for "*curse*" does not speak of actively wishing misfortune on someone as the English verb may cause us to

visualize. Rather, the Hebrew here is a passive verb referring to isolating ourselves and weakening internally. God is not throwing a punishment our way for depending on our **flesh**; rather God is warning that living by our **flesh** naturally isolates us from Him and weakens us internally. It is the natural result of **fleshly** living.

- *Where do I depend on my **flesh** in my daily experiences and circumstances? What might I define as my **flesh** in how I deal with day-to-day situations—my wisdom, my instincts, my subconscious reactions, my habits, my comforts, etc.?*
- *If the **flesh** is my entire human nature, where do I recognize my reactions and impulses as "natural" rather than "spiritual?"*
- *How does living day-by-day through the **flesh** draw me away from God? Do I see these natural impulses turning my heart away from the Lord?*

Pray: *God, search my heart and reveal to me where I am depending on my own strength, my own wisdom, my own instincts to guide me through the stresses and challenges in my life. Help me to see where I am not depending on you to be my wisdom, strength, and guidance. I lay down these natural impulses and ask you to empower me to trust you without reserve. I confess to you my dependance upon your power and strength. I thank you for the abundance and provision that comes from your **Holy Spirit**. In Jesus' name!*

(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 139:23-24](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Two: *How can my flesh be fixed?*

Read carefully and slowly [Ezekiel 36:25-28](#) and [Galatians 5:24](#) and [Romans 6:1-7](#). Meditate upon this teaching—reviewing and reflecting for many minutes on its relevance.

Reflect: Consider the words of Chinese pastor Nee T'o-sheng (1903-1972): "*The believer busily makes plans to handle sins—which are the fruits, while forgetting to deal with the **flesh** itself—which is the root... You say you still sin, but God says you have been crucified on the cross. You say your temper persists, but God's answer is that you have been crucified. You say your lusts remain very potent, but again God replies that your **flesh** has been crucified on the cross. For the moment, will you please not look at your experience, but just hearken to what God says to you...*

*Disregard your feelings and experience. God pronounces your **flesh** crucified; it therefore has been crucified. Simply respond to God's Word and you shall have experience.*"ⁱ

- *What is the promise of scripture regarding my **flesh**? Does it not say that it is crucified with Jesus? Does not God promise to provide me a new heart and to place a new **spirit** within me? Do I fully believe this enough to put my whole weight down upon it? Why or why not?*
- *While I still recognize sinful (**fleshly**) impulses that arise frequently in my life, how could the promise that my **flesh** has been crucified change the way I see myself and my struggles with sin?*

Pray: *God, reveal to me the power that exists in your finished work of crucifying my **flesh**. Help me to put my full faith down upon your work, not mine. I confess to you faith that you have done what needs to be done to set me free from my sin. I confess my faith in being crucified with you, and then raised to new life in union with your resurrection. Make this truth come alive in my heart. Expand my faith. Manifest the results of this faith into a practical reality of genuine victory in my life. In Jesus' name!*

(ALSO: Consider praying **Ephesians 1:17-23** as your own prayer to God!)

Day Three: How do I realize true freedom from my flesh?

Read carefully and slowly **Romans 8:1-14**. Meditate upon this teaching—reviewing and reflecting for many minutes on its relevance.

Reflect: God reveals in this text that though our **flesh** has been crucified and its power nullified on the cross, it remains a constant reality that needs to be submitted to God. We must choose to not live according to our **flesh**, but rather according to the **Holy Spirit**. Consider more words of Chinese pastor Nee T'o-sheng: *"Man can never arrive at the position of being beyond the possibility of sin since the **flesh** persists. If a believer does not follow the **Holy Spirit** but instead yields to the **flesh**, he certainly will be under the reins of the **flesh**. Despite these realities, however, we should not emasculate the salvation fulfilled by Christ... The Lord Jesus is able to bend us away from sin; but in addition we must be watchful... If*

ⁱ Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*. Christian Fellowship Publishers, New York, 1968. Pages 96-98. (Nee's work is available on Amazon.com)

*we follow the **Holy Spirit** and maintain an attitude of not letting sin reign over the body, then our feet are freed from stumbling and we experience sustained victory... How necessary to watch and pray and even fast that one may know how to walk according to the **Holy Spirit**."*ⁱⁱ

- *Do I have the consistent, daily habits in my life to be watchful in prayer to walk according to the **Spirit** and not according to my **flesh**? What would those habits look like if I were to fully engage them? Why do I not engage them more?*
- *Do I depend so strongly on the Lord—rather than my **flesh**—for strength, direction, wisdom, and impulse that I am constantly vigilant to find His **Spirit** and yield to Him? What stands in my way to living like this?*
- *What in this teaching do I not fully understand? What feels ambiguous to me? Who could I talk with to help me understand this better?*

Pray: *God, help me to stand in faith upon your power to deliver me from my **flesh**. As I have already confessed my faith in your finished work on the cross regarding my **flesh**, help me now to be vigilant on a daily basis to apply that work through prayer. Help me to stop trying to conquer sin through my own efforts. Rather, help me depend upon your work and your power completely. I confess and repent of my negligence to daily seek your face for this power. I confess and repent of not being watchful in prayer; hopeful in trust, and attentive to your **Spirit**. I thank you for delivering me and for giving me your **Holy Spirit**! In Jesus' name!*

(ALSO: Consider praying **Psalms 84** as your own prayer to God!)

Notes: What is God saying to me this week?

ⁱⁱ *ibid.* Pages 104-106.