

The Reborn Identity: The Flesh

This is the Flesh:

Romans 7:15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.

- The constant struggle with sin – even though we have been set free from sin.

Romans 7:17-18 But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find.

- Paul separates who he is (spirit) from what he does (flesh).
- **Romans 7:20** Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.
- **Flesh = Indwelling sin**

Romans 7:21-25 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²² For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

- Paul wants to be delivered from this indwelling sin, but can't see how
- Jesus is the answer.

Romans 8:1-2 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

- We truly are set free from sin.

What is flesh?

Distorted belief systems developed from believing lies about God and about self.

- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...
 - **Stronghold:** a fortification of the soul where incorrect beliefs and thoughts of who God is and who you are in Christ reside.
 - God is mean. I am worthless. God probably hates me. He never hears my prayers.
 - **Arguments (speculations or imaginations):** reasoning and distorted habitual thought patterns. They reinforce strongholds.
 - If God loved me He would have healed me by now.
 - KB – If you don't allow God to parent you then you can't call Him Father.
 - **Every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God:** the culmination of those habitual thought patterns, which result in distorted belief systems that demand your allegiance above God. Pride.
 - Anything we believe that is not true about God is something exalting that belief over who God really is.
- Denying the existence of your spirit, flesh demands use of its own resources to meet your spirit's needs of love, acceptance, worth and security.
 - Briefly explain LAWS – Bank Story? We have all our needs met by God, but flesh denies it.
- Denying the lordship of Christ, it acts independently of God—taking an “I can do it myself” approach to life.
- Works to keep your soul as its slave—even to the detriment of your soul.

Flesh Patterns

- Actions and behaviors (coping mechanisms) learned to cope with life—and ultimately, to protect flesh.

- Designed to keep your soul in bondage to the flesh.
 - Ex – Lying, defensiveness, pride, avoidance...

What Scripture Says About Flesh

1. Profits nothing.
 - a. **John 6:63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.
2. It cannot accomplish anything spiritual.
 - a. **Galatians 3:3** Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?
3. It always reaps corruption.
 - a. **Galatians 6:8** For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.
4. It wars against the Spirit.
 - a. **Galatians 5:16-18** ¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Biblical Origin of Flesh

Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life—each one represents a way of living:

- One tree with one type of fruit, not two types of fruit
- Flesh, or self-effort (works-based thinking)
- Starts with doing
- Striving to “do” leads to the bondage of always having to do: “I must do to become....”

Tree of Life represents:

- Spirit life, or Christ's sufficiency as our life
- Starts with being, not doing
- Spirit life is resting in our dependency upon God

There is a battle going on inside of us

Romans 7:15-16 ¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. ¹⁶ If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good.

- According to Scripture, a believer desires to live a life pleasing to God.
- "Indwelling sin" is the flesh. Paul separates himself from his flesh.
- He concludes that it used to be Paul doing these things, but it is not Paul now.
 - **Romans 7:17** But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.
- He is responsible for his actions, but Paul believed what God said about him:
 - **Galatians 2:20** I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
- When you live according to the flesh, you are not living according to who you are.
- Your soul and your flesh are not the same.
 - You are not a slave to your flesh.
 - You now a choice! You are not victim to your flesh patterns—they are not master over you.

How Flesh Develops

All flesh and flesh patterns develop the same way:

- Through external input received from family, others and circumstances.
- The messages you receive effect how you function as you get older.
- Emotions are used to protect yourself from getting hurt.

- Unresolved emotions develop into distorted belief systems.

Belief system: a philosophy of how life works—what motivates and directs your choices and behaviors.

- Made up of both truth and lies.
- Development begins in childhood, but continues through life.
Childhood is strongest as we form belief systems early. But traumas also can create belief systems, like divorce.
- Determines how you view God, yourself and the world around you.
- In order to live with distorted belief systems, you must develop flesh patterns, or coping mechanisms.

Flesh patterns are strategies of dealing with life and flesh's attempt to get your needs met apart from Christ.

- Every manifestation of the flesh has a root.
- The Holy Spirit shows us the root, and heals us from its effects.

Two Types of Flesh

1. Positive Flesh

- a. Can look well-adjusted, religious, others-centered, passive
- b. Some emotions or thoughts from positive flesh:
 - i. Strong
 - ii. Self-confident
 - iii. Competent
 - iv. Significant
 - v. Superior (Prideful)
 - vi. In Control
- c. Positive flesh reaps:
 - i. Pride or arrogance
 - ii. Self-righteousness
 - iii. Control issues
 - iv. Judgmental attitude
 - v. Self is at the center
- d. Ultimately results in conflict and frustration
- e. Paul—example of positive flesh:

- i. **Philippians 3:4-8** though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

2. Negative Flesh

- a. Can look poorly-adjusted, self-deprecating, self-centered, aggressive
- b. Some emotions or thoughts from negative flesh:
 - i. Anxious
 - ii. Worthless
 - iii. Incompetent
 - iv. Insignificant
 - v. Unacceptable
 - vi. Hopeless and Helpless
 - vii. Unloved
 - viii. Used
- c. Negative flesh reaps:
 - i. Self-pity
 - ii. Self-righteousness
 - iii. Control issues
 - iv. Judgmental attitude
 - v. Self is at the center
- d. Ultimately results in conflict and frustration
- e. Moses—example of negative flesh:
 - i. **Exodus 3:11** But Moses said to God, “Who *am* I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

- ii. **Exodus 4:1** Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.' "
 - iii. **Exodus 4:10** Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I *am* slow of speech and slow of tongue."
3. The type of flesh you manifest makes no difference in the ultimate result, because they both always result in conflict and frustration.
4. Positive flesh or negative flesh—makes no difference in the type of victory.

Flesh is controlling – Always wants to control the situation, others, even God. (Kanye asking God to overcome porn, he did, then asked for Kim back, God did not grant that, Kanye rejects God).

Flesh is self-protective – Defensive, making excuses, deflecting, blaming

Flesh has a victim mentality – Feelings of no power to change, feelings of entitlement, poverty mentality, needs proof of love...

Flesh is masquerading – You cannot fix flesh with flesh. You have a problem with being overly critical. So you work hard to fix it. You succeed. Now you get prideful. You start judging others who are overly critical as being immature. You believe you can change independent of God. New flesh patterns have risen to hide old flesh patterns.

Flesh is built on performance – PBA all the way! Puts performance above being with God. Trusts in itself and human reasoning.

Flesh is a rejector – Creates feelings of rejection.

- We have all been rejected. Either overtly or covertly.
- There are only 2 types of people. Those who have been rejected and those who have been rejected more.

Flesh is a Tool

Satan uses it

- Satan is not omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent.

- Only one thing he's allowed to do without express permission from God—lie.

God uses it

- **Romans 8:28** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.
- God uses it to build your faith and teach you to trust Him.