

Dying to Your Flesh – Session 3



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This is my final article on dying to your flesh. I shall recap what we have learned and I remind you that you must deal with your flesh nature inherited from the fall of Adam. Failure to do so means Satan will rule you by your flesh and your spiritual life will not go well. Misery and frustration will follow you and you will be most miserable because the way of flesh is death and following your Spirit is life and peace!!!

The Spirit of God which we receive when we accept Christ as Lord and Savior desires to obey God. Your flesh and spirit are at war with one another. In Galatians 5:16-25, the Bible lists the fruit of the flesh and the Spirit. After we confess our sin, God has a “process” for us to deal with our flesh. The Bible says, “flesh must die” by taking up our cross daily and Satan is always saying “flesh come alive.”

Now I want to quicken your memory from Sessions 1 and 2 Until you are willing to hear what God has to say about His law, you will never know true freedom nor will you have understanding about the powers of darkness. Jesus said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.” (Matthew 5:17)

Since Jesus came to fulfill the law, we need to know first what the law is really saying. Jesus answered this in Matthew

22:37-40, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

What the law is really saying is that if you do these two things, love God supremely and love your neighbor as yourself, you have fulfilled the law and are no longer a law breaker. But this is impossible without Jesus Christ because of our bondage to our selfish, self-centered flesh nature which must die. Since Jesus did not abolish the law, then what does the law do today? The law stands today to bring judgment upon all sin. The law brings the wrath of God (Romans 4:15). The law brings a curse (Galatians 3:13). The law as a ministry of death (2 Corinthians 3:7), and the law is a ministry of condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:9). All these things come upon law breakers. Are we in the New Testament?

Who are the law breakers? They are those who do not walk in love and cannot walk in love. Their minds are set upon this world system and the things their heart love. "For the mind set on the flesh is death but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the (carnal) (fleshly) mind is hostile towards God: for it does not subject itself to the law of God (which commands us to walk in love) for it is not even able to do so for those who are IN THE FLESH cannot please God." (Romans 8:6-8) So, if anyone loves their flesh nature, they refuse to love God with all their heart and love others as themselves. They choose to walk in the image of Satan.

I am not in any way saying that righteousness and holiness come by obeying the law. Paul makes that clear in Galatians 2:21, "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly." However, this does not release us from the law that tells us that we must love others as we love ourselves. Jesus came to fulfill

this law by perfecting the God-kind of love in us.

To put this in real plain English so it can be understood if someone loves his neighbor as himself, he will not kill his neighbor, commit adultery against his neighbor's wife, steal from his neighbor, not bear false witness against his neighbor. Understand those who still love their flesh nature, which is the nature of Satan, refuse to obey God's law and the law stands in judgment today against all rebellion. Paul said, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." (Romans 2:13)

I surely hope you understand that God is commanding us to walk in love. The wages of sin are death. If we die to our flesh nature, then we can walk in this kind of love that God commands but not if we are in bondage to our selfish desires of the flesh nature. When we die to our fleshly ways, then we manifest the nature of God when we love God and our neighbor as ourself.

In Session 2, we put anger on the cross. Today, I will use unforgiveness. Let's say someone hurts your feelings. You immediately come into agreement with God that unforgiveness is wrong and carries with it severe consequences from God. Unforgiveness must die. It is simply choosing your spirit man over your flesh. In Ephesians 4:27, it says we are not to give the devil an opportunity. Ephesians 6:11 says, "Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."

There are schemes of Satan and his forces of darkness that are destroying people and Christians every day tearing down their minds, and their wills. That is why God put all this in the Bible that we can take authority; yes, every Christian has been given authority in Jesus Name, over these schemes and works of Satan.

Let me give you one scheme of Satan and that is un-

forgiveness. 2 Corinthians 2:10-11, Paul forgave "In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes." The forces of darkness are around us all the time looking to gain ground in us. Before we got saved, our flesh was un-forgiving. But when we repented, we broke our old covenant with Satan, and we now have a new Master, and we now walk in forgiveness. This new covenant is written on our heart that we will obey God.

When you come into a situation where you are hurt by a friend or anyone, immediately and every time, the forces of darkness are there to talk to your mind to build a case against that person. Once in covenant with your friend, Satan wants you to stay hurt and angry with your friend and in un-forgiveness. These evil forces are talking to you building a case against your friend, "Your friend, shouldn't have said that about you. All that you have done for him and he said that about you." As a Christian, you are to obey 2 Cor. 10:3-5, and take those thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ and out of your spiritual will, forgive your friend. However, if you do not immediately forgive, your flesh will be angry at your friend, and you will scheme how you can get back at him.

Do you know why God says in Romans 12:19, "Vengeance is Mine saith the Lord; I will repay?" All God wants us to do is love. If we take vengeance, we have to take the weapons of the flesh – hate, anger, revenge, un-forgiveness, resentment, bitterness, and violence. Plus, when we take vengeance, our flesh is offended which is supposed to be dead. "Great peace have they which love thy Word and nothing shall offend them." (Psalms 119:165) HATH GOD REALLY SAID?!!!

What did Jesus say in Mathew, "Take up your cross and deny yourself?" The way we deny ourselves is to deny our flesh. Christians!! – we have a will and we can give it to whomever we wish. You will know them by what? "Their fruit." Forgiveness is an act of our Spirit and will; un-forgiveness is an act of our flesh. Why does God want us to forgive

others? There is nothing that anyone can do to us that is greater than what we did to Jesus Christ. Our sins put Him on the cross, and yet He has forgiven us.

Remember in Matthew 18:21-35 when Peter asked Jesus how many times do I forgive someone, seven times? Jesus said, "Seventy times seven." Which means you never stop forgiving? Then Jesus told the parable of a man who was forgiven but would not forgive someone else? What did Jesus say to that man? "You wicked slave. I forgave you so you should have forgiven also? His lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart." Is this plain? If we do not forgive from our heart, our heavenly Father will not forgive us and will turn us over to the torturers.

That is what you get when you don't forgive – torment from Satan and his demons. There is more on eternal consequences. In Matthew 6:14, "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Heavenly Father will not forgive your transgressions." Are we talking about Christians here? Does this help your fear of God to obey Him and resist these forces of darkness? Do you see the importance of taking thoughts captive, the importance of dying to your flesh and crucifying the flesh?

Here is a big benefit we get when we die to our flesh. I Peter 4:1-2 says, "Therefore since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourself with the same purpose because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin." So, when Jesus was tempted to sin, I Peter 4:1, says His flesh suffered for He did not sin. It is good for your flesh to suffer because that means you did not sin and your spirit man is prevailing and you are again walking in the Spirit. You choose God's way over your flesh which causes your flesh to suffer. It is a lot more to Christianity than going to a church building on Sunday!!!

It is about "changing your life" to walk in the Spirit and no longer in the flesh. It's about a war but we will always triumph in Jesus' Name if we are faithful in His process. To ignore your flesh and its fruit will guarantee you a life in the flesh which is spiritual death, frustration and defeat. Instead of being under the rule of God, when you remain in the flesh, you will continuously be under the rule and temptation of Satan. Change comes hard and slow but God knows your heart and will give you grace in His "process." Unlike your flesh, God wants you to succeed.

Taking thoughts captive is part of Spiritual Warfare. Paul talks in Ephesians 6:10-18 about flaming darts. These are thoughts put in our mind by Satan or his demons. Even when minding your own business and these thoughts (some can be vile), suggestions, or ideas come to you? We must discern if these are from God or Satan. That is why Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:5, "and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

If these thoughts line up with the Word of God, then they are of God and you can obey. But if they don't, you are to take them captive and resist them. "To resist means to openly oppose." "I resist you Satan in the Name of Jesus and I do not receive these thoughts." God dealt with this in Isaiah 65:2, "I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people who walk in the way which is not good, following their own thoughts." Remember David the King of Israel and instead of in the spring when Kings went to war, King David stayed at home. He went out on his porch and saw this beautiful woman. "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." King David should have taken those thoughts, imaginations, and lust captive to the obedience of his God. The King had a flesh problem!!!

Renewing your mind is talked about by Paul. Romans 12:2b, "And

do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” How do you renew your mind and what is the purpose of it? The neglect of the developmental process for inner life – soul care – has stunted the spiritual growth and potential of many Christians in America and around the world. Soul care has to do with the special things that we do to cooperate with the life God gave to us in the new birth. We must want and we must learn to develop and actualize the Holy Spirit’s empowering so as to grow as quickly and fully as possible into the likeness of Christ. Each Christian is responsible for their “soul care” but it sure would help if the pastors would provide the flock of God some leadership.

When we get saved, born of water and spirit, God washes us by His water and by His Spirit and we are made alive to God. It is an instantaneous event. God frees us from sin, we are delivered and the blood of Jesus washes away our past. He gives us a new nature and life and for the first time we are alive unto God. We feel things we didn’t feel before, hearing things we never heard, and sense things we never sensed before and this desire comes to us instantaneously, “I want to do the right thing – I want to live for God.” That happens in a moment – you are perfected and it cannot be increased or improved upon.

However, we are created a living soul. In our soul is our mind. The Bible says don’t be conformed to this world anymore but now that you have been saved in your Spirit, be transformed by the renewing of your soul (mind). The Word is the water. You sat down in a quiet place every day and as you read the Word, it washes out the soul (mind) with the water of the Word to get rid of all the junk and rebellion that is there. So, my Spirit has an instantaneous experience in salvation but my soul (mind) is being washed is a journey.

This is your daily time with God in the Word of God and this transformation of your life did not come when you prayed for salvation – transformation comes when you change your

thinking. Our thinking changes as our soul (mind) is washed with the water of the Word of God. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." Not as a man thinketh in his spirit but as he thinketh in his heart. (The heart here is not the one that pumps blood –your heart is your soul.)

We are body, soul, and spirit. Our real wealth does not lie in our body. It is the house we live in. The real self is our soul. This is what Jesus is talking about when He ask the question, "For what will a man profit if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mathew 16:26) Losing your soul here is not a soul headed for hell. The Greek Word used here is "zemios" which means damaged or not fully developed. Christians can gain the whole world but be the loser and not profitable if you failed to fully develop your soul. An individual's capacity to choose is his or her most God-like characteristic.

When God designed us, he gave us the ability and the right to make decisions. He will not force us to do anything. UNTIL I CHOOSE TO DO WHAT GOD HAS ORDERED FOR MY SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING, I WILL NOT BE A HEALTHY, GROWING SOUL. Sermons, desires, and understanding of God's truths do not change us. It is my choice to act on those sermons, desires, and understanding of God's truths that makes the difference in changing us. If my soul is not healthy, I lose the ability to make that choice. Until we spend time before God in His Word and let it wash out the junk and rebellion from our soul, in order to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, little can be done to change us. We must make the decision to spend the time being transformed by the Word. By making the decision and choosing to do the will of God by renewing your mind, you release God to do what He alone can do in your life.

WAKE UP BODY OF CHRIST – God bless, I remain your servant and watchman, Glynn Adams (Thanks to the late Milt Green and his teaching on dying to the flesh, taking thoughts captive, and

renewing your mind, and the late Peter Lord and his book,
“Soul Care.”

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