

Managing your Flesh
Part II
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Galatians 5:16 *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

Sometimes we come to Church hoping to get some encouragement and to be uplifted; actually we all hope to be uplifted when we come to God's house.

I like "feel good" preaching as much as the next man, however, for the good feeling to be real and from the Lord, sometimes we have to spend some time to lay out the truth and the real facts first. That was last week.

I shared with you last week a mountain of bad news about our great enemy, our very own flesh. We did not, in any detail, get to the actual solutions of how we can successfully manage our flesh.

We learned that:

There are some behaviors, desires and tendencies of the flesh that must be eliminated completely.

There are other behaviors, desires and tendencies of the flesh that cannot be

completely eliminated but must be managed.

There are still other behaviors, desires and tendencies of the flesh that for some must be eliminated and for others may be managed.

Today we are going to talk about how that some of this fleshly behavior modification can actually be accomplished.

Last week was a “what needs done” message: this week is a “how to do it” message.

As the message wound down, I shared with you three things that we as Christians can actually do that will help us defeat this great enemy. Today we are going to look at the details of how this really works.

Three times in Matthew and Luke, Jesus told us to **love our enemies**; I find it ironic that the one enemy we all seem to love is our flesh.

The Bible gives us the real solution to managing our flesh; that solution is that we learn to walk in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16 *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

This is no lightweight undertaking; today we learn how to get started.

First we must address what it means to be:

I. In the Spirit.

A. This simply means that if you are “in the Spirit” you are saved, born again, redeemed, forgiven, justified and many other terms which refer to what God did when you placed your trust in Jesus to save you from your sins.

1. When you trusted Jesus to save you, God placed you “in the Spirit” and He placed the Spirit in you!

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

2. Certainly no one can walk in the Spirit who is not “in the Spirit.”

3. **Galatians 5:16-18**

16 *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

4. How many here today either prayed a prayer and asked Jesus to save you or got baptized, or joined a church, or were a part of some organized religion before you truly understood the gospel and actually placed your trust in Jesus to save you?

5. Nearly everyone here. Without the Spirit of God dwelling in you, what was there to lead you? That's right, just your flesh.

6. Most people still are where you were; there is nothing more frustrating or doomed to failure than someone who is not really saved trying to live for God; it cannot be done!

B. Therefore the first step in managing your flesh will always be to make sure that you really are saved.

1. We can help you with that.

2. Saved people know they are saved and we can tell you how we know that we are saved!

3. **1John 5:13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; **that ye may know that ye have eternal life,...**

4. Our salvation is provable and furthermore we are commanded to prove it!

5. **2Corinthians 13:5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

6. Contrary to most religious practice, knowing and proving you are saved is not something that can properly be done in five minutes at the front of the Church; if you will allow us, we will spend the time to teach you and you can know it for sure!

Once you are truly “in the Spirit” now God says:

II. Walk in the Spirit.

A. I will try to explain this in a way that is simple and easy to understand:

1. When preparing to deliver God’s message, I try always to use just the right word that accurately conveys the proper thought. This week as I was writing the introduction to this message, I asked Lisa, “What is the actual definition of irony?” She said, “It’s the opposite of wrinkly.” (That was cute but it wasn’t much help.)

2. Walk is the opposite of “stand still.”

3. It is the transition from standing still to running.

4. It is moving!
5. It is doing!
6. It is active, not passive.
7. It is forward motion, it is positive movement.
8. Walking in the Spirit is walking, moving, going and doing in and under the leadership of the Spirit of God.
9. And just so you don't get that leadership mixed up with all the deceitful feelings of the heart; we have the Bible of which the Holy Spirit is the author to check with and make sure that leadership really is from the Holy Spirit!

B. Walking in the Spirit works just like another similar but even more often mis-taught and misunderstood term:

1. There is an entire movement out there based on the idea that "praying in the Spirit" is praying in tongues or in a language that the one praying does not him or herself understand.
2. Back when the gift of tongues had not yet ceased but was being grossly misused in the Church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul said this:

1Corinthians 14:12-15

12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts*, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I [were to] pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? [Answer; unfruitful] I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

[How come nobody wants to sing in tongues?]

2. Praying in the Spirit is exactly what this same author says it is in Ephesians:

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in [according to the leadership of] the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

3. Based on what we do know about our own flesh and the Devil, when you pray, you surely had better know exactly what you are saying!

There is a third factor to walking in the Spirit that we must address, that is how to:

III. Avoid fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

A. As we walk; even walking in or according to the Spirit, there are many destructive forces to avoid that are not easily avoided.

1. For example: Everyone has some besetting sin(s); those which trouble you more than any other.

2. You can be praying, “Lord, take this evil from my life; please Lord, save me from this horrible besetting sin”; and mean it with all your heart. Then even before you finish praying you will have made plans for the next time or place or involvement in it; maybe even sin in your thoughts while praying!

3. Every saved person here knows exactly what I am talking about; the more you pray about it the more you do it.

4. You are praying ‘take it away’ while you are actually at the same time driving to the party or the liquor store or to the drug dealer or lighting up or going to some vile website!

5. Why is this? It is because as **Proverb 23:7** states: *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:*

6. **Ephesians 2:3** says we go about “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind”. Your flesh follows your mind. Whatever your mind is on; even if you are praying against it or thinking about how much you hate it; that is where your flesh by nature is wont to go.

7. Your only solution is to get your mind on something else; something good that will replace the evil.
8. We would be far better off to never pray about or even think about the things we shouldn't be doing.
9. What is the best way to deal with your sin? **Forget about it; God has!** Just get busy enough doing right things and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh!
10. I understand that chemical dependencies; sins that have evolved into an actual physical disease need to have that side addressed as well; but replacement is the only lasting solution.

B. Forgetting your sin is not so easy, that's why you need a plan; you need to outsmart your flesh!

1. **Proverb 16:3** tells us: **Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.**
2. We need to get busy and stay busy doing good things and get in the practice of thinking about and focusing on those good things we are doing.

3. Serving the Lord should always be at the top of our “to do” list but this requires much more than just the spiritual or religious things.

4. Working your job, mowing your grass, changing your oil, art, painting, music, fixing stuff; why do you think that the Bible tells us to work with our hands?

a. **Ephesians 4:28** Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

b. **1Thessalonians 4:11** And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

5. Clean recreation like hunting, fishing; even team sports like softball are great as long they are in balance and do not place you in the position of being influenced and led down the very road you are trying to avoid.

6. You must learn to outsmart your flesh!

In Conclusion: Managing your flesh is a proactive endeavor. Walking in the Spirit is a proactive endeavor.

Many Christians; some of you, don't even try to manage your flesh. You have become complacent living a defeated life just

hoping for Jesus to come and dreading it at the same time; when all this time you could have been living a victorious life.

If you are “in the Spirit”, don’t just sit there, get up and walk!

As a matter of fact, if your sin issues are that bad, you might even need to run!

Hebrews 12:1-2

- 1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
- 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.