

**Managing your Flesh**  
**Part III**  
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**Romans 13:8-14**

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfill* the lusts *thereof*.

Of the many things that all saved people have in common one of them is that we desire from deep within to please and honor our Lord. This

is something that doesn't require being taught: this motivation comes already integrated into our new nature when we are born again. Salvation is something that God does, not something we do.

**2Corinthians 5:17** Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Almost everyone has at one time or another heard the preaching of one or more of the mega-church TV preachers; the comment I hear the most about them is that they are very good motivational speakers.

In a way, I admire the work of these mega-church feel-good pastors; to motivate and move that many lost people week after week is indeed an amazing accomplishment.

All I have to do is preach the Word: Jesus has already done the motivating when He saved you; He even did the motivating for you to be saved; all we had to do was teach you how.

Ideally, life as a Christian is simple; we trust Jesus to save us and we become born again... we get baptized and become part of our Church... we then come week after week and hear from the Word of God what the Lord is telling us... and then we go out and apply what we've learned and live for God as we study the Word and pray daily; pretty simple, right?

Simple; except for one thing; Jesus said in **Matthew 26:41** ... the spirit indeed *is willing*, but the flesh *is weak*.

Weak and troublesome as it is, we all still love our flesh.

**Ephesians 5:29** For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it...

The truth is that God originally designed our flesh to be nourished and cherished and loved and even now, there are many wonderful pleasures and good things that we can do for our flesh that are not wrong at all.

Your flesh is much like a child. We love our children and do good things for our children; here at Lighthouse, we definitely love our kids.

However, if you give a child everything he wants, what will happen?

**Proverb 29:15** The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.

It is the same with our flesh.

Of all the behaviors, desires and tendencies of the flesh that truly do need to be eliminated from our lives or that must be managed, there are usually two or three that really give us trouble above all the rest.

You have probably prayed, “Lord, please take this out of my life.” To this, God’s answer is as you heard it last week;

**Galatians 5:16** “Learn to walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh”;

You say, “But Lord, I know You have the power to do this; if You wanted to, You could just heal me of this curse and I would never have to deal with it again.”

And God answers, “Yes, but if I did, you still would not be walking in My Spirit. You would just be minus one besetting sin that you would soon replace with a different one down the list. This way you will not only overcome your lust, you will become profitable for my Kingdom.”

It is not often that the Lord sends us three messages in a row about the same issue.

I believe the Lord is hammering this subject because failure to manage our flesh has incredible cost attached to it.

Failure to manage your flesh costs you time; not only does it shorten your life, time that could be spent productively or with your kids and family or for the Kingdom is often wasted.

Failure to manage your flesh costs you money: A DWI costs the average offender an estimated \$17,000 for just the first offence.

A pack a day smoker could easily drive a brand new car for just the cost of the cigarettes and the value of the lost productivity it causes at work; not to mention the hundreds of thousands in medical expenses you or we taxpayers will spend if you don't happen to die in some accident.

Failure to manage your flesh costs you respect. It even forces you into social groups that have the same management failures you do; which further exacerbate the problem!

Failure to manage your flesh costs you your quality of life. Go ask Brother Guy, the redheaded fellow carrying the oxygen tank, if failure to manage your flesh can cost you your quality of life!

Probably worse than any of this is that failure to manage your flesh costs you rewards in heaven. The Apostle Paul writes:

### **1Corinthians 9:24-27**

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Today, we offer some practical help inspired by our text verse in **Romans 13:14** *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.*

Here are some simple things you can do that will make it much easier to walk in the Spirit and thus not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

## I. Learn to listen to your spirit.

*A. Unlike your flesh; if you are truly born again, your spirit will not lie to you.*

1. When you were saved, your spirit was made new!

### **Ephesians 4:22-24**

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the **new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**

2. Not only is your spirit righteous and holy, your spirit is now indwelt by the Holy Spirit!

**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.

3. Your spirit will always agree with the Word.

*B. Quit arguing with God about what is and is not OK for your flesh to do.*

1. It is one thing to go ahead and do things that we know are wrong; nobody here is exempt from that and we are not excusing sin as somehow OK just because we are all sinners.

2. It is another to lie to yourself and to others about things that you know in your spirit are wrong.

3. Let me illustrate this: A while back we had a discussion in Doctrinal Boot Camp about tattoos.

a. The Old Testament definitely forbids tattoos:

**Leviticus 19:28** Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I *am* the LORD.

b. The question was, "Since we are not under the law, is it OK to get tattoos that

maybe have a scripture or are in some way about Jesus?”

c. We know that tattoos originated in paganism.

d. We know that our bodies belong to God, not us.

**1Corinthians 6:20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

e. Except for the ways we have altered our appearance by mismanaging our flesh, we look the way God made us to look and it is reasonable that only the owner would have the right to change it.

f. One day He will change it:

**Revelation 3:12** Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*

4. On the board I drew three boxes:

a. In the first box I wrote, “Things that are obviously wrong.”



b. In the second box I wrote, “Things that are questionable.”

c. In the third box I wrote, “Things that are definitely good and OK.”

5. I asked my fellow discussion participants, “In which box should we be living?” The answer was obvious; box three.

6. I then asked my fellow discussion participants, “In which box would we find Christian tattoos?” This answer was also obvious; box two.

7. **Romans 14:21-23** 21 *It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor **any thing** whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*

22 *Hast thou faith? have **it** to thyself before God. Happy **is** he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*

23 *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because **he eateth** not of faith: **for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.***

8. Every Christian has some sin in his life that he is not ready or maybe mature enough to replace yet; at least be honest about it with the Lord; you can't fool Him anyway.

The key is this last phrase: **for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.**

## **II. Learn to plan your walk.**

### *A. Identify your weaknesses.*

1. Without going to the extreme of obsessing over them, identify your areas of fleshly weakness.
2. Are they primarily sexual like pornography or worse?
3. Are they primarily substance such as alcohol, drugs or food?
4. Are they sins of the tongue like gossiping and lying?
5. Are they materialistic, like greed and covetousness?
6. We all know where our weaknesses lie, even if we don't want to admit it.

### *B. Next, learn to identify potential occasions to fail:*

1. If your weakness is substantive you probably need to avoid events where drinking and drug use are prevalent; maybe you need to avoid the all you can eat buffet.
2. For sexual issues God has some good answers:

**1Corinthians 7:2** Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

3. One little word of wisdom to our married couples: how stupid do you have to be to send your husband or your wife off to work in an office or other work environment full of short skirts and hunky guys with their physical needs unmet?

4. I know the same answer does not work for everybody, but God has scriptural answers and good choices to deal with every fleshly weakness; all of which lie in being busy for God, being active in replacing sin with righteous activity and purposely avoiding temptations.

5. Plan your life in ways that place you around the good choices, not the wrong ones.

6. Example: for some, the computer needs to be out in the open, not in the bedroom behind closed doors.

*C. Get some help.*

1. **James 5:16** suggests that we **Confess (y)our faults one to another, and pray one for another...**Some of these might be:

2. An accountability partner.

3. Other Christians who are fighting the same battles you are who will encourage you to stay in the fight.
4. Notice it says 'confess your faults'; it doesn't say 'confess your sins'.
5. To confess your weakness or weakest areas to a trusted Christian friend who will encourage you is great; confessing your actual sins and failures themselves is for Jesus alone.
6. Let me suggest that one of the best sources to find this type of friend can be your own spouse.
7. Do not do this lightly; trust has to be earned. If another brother or sister trusts you enough to confide these things to you as a friend; DO NOT betray that trust.

### **III. Learn the right way to pray about this.**

*A. There are some really non-productive ways to pray about this.*

1. For example: Don't waste your breath continually asking God to take something away when He is clearly telling you to learn to walk in the Spirit instead.
2. Don't be so foolish as to pretend to God that something is not sin when you know it is.

### **3. 1John 1:8-10**

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

4. You might tell me that you really think what you are doing is OK, but I really don't recommend trying that on God.

5. Get honest with God about your sin; he already knows anyway and He is still going to love you; as a matter of fact (at least so far so good) we will still love you too.

*B. Practice prayer that will produce results.*

1. Use the principles laid out in the model prayer, especially the last part:

### **Matthew 6:9-13**

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

2. The power is in the Word; learn to pray power into your life by praying God's promises. "Lord, You said that through You I can do all things; You said that You would lead me into all righteousness; You said You would not allow me to be tempted above that I am able, but would make a way of escape; You said that as I seek first Your Kingdom and Your Righteousness that all I need would be added unto me. So Lord, that is what I am doing; lead me to opportunities to witness today; show me the blessings You have planned for me today and keep me so busy for You that temptation to sin won't even find a place to get in."

3. Learn to pray roadblocks into your life. What God did for a lost king, He will surely do for you! Look at this gem I found in scripture some years ago:

4. When King Abimelech took Sarah, Abraham's wife because he was told by Abraham that she was Abraham's sister, God did this:

**Genesis 20:6** And God said unto him [Abimelech] in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her."

5. God actually withheld this lost king from sinning against Him!

6. “Lord, I am going to be facing temptation today, I need you to help me; step in, Lord, and withhold me from sinning against you today.”

**In Conclusion: Managing our flesh is a matter of discipline; something that we by nature dislike.**

**Would you say of yourself that you are generally disciplined?**

**Or would you say of yourself that you are generally undisciplined?**

**Bringing our flesh into subjection to our new born again spirit is probably the biggest undertaking in our lives.**

**God has given us the motive; He has given us the means; it is up to us to provide the management.**

**Let me repeat one phrase from the first message:**

**Aren't you glad that drugs and alcohol and bad financial decisions and every other bad choice you have ever made cannot defeat the blood that Jesus shed for you!**