

Flesh Versus Spirit

I. Ignorance of the Flesh

If you were to ask Christians who their enemy is, most would respond, “Satan.” However, one of the greatest enemies overlooked in our lives is the flesh. Many see the enemy as being outside of themselves when their own flesh is the enemy! Many in the Church today are ignorant of the power of the flesh in their daily lives.

II. Two Extreme Teachings About the Flesh

In ancient Rome, there were two extreme teachings about the flesh. The first was that man could never gain victory over his flesh. The second was that there was no flesh nature with which to contend.

Over the years, this thinking hasn’t changed too much. Today we have one group saying, “Well, it’s unfortunate but you are just stuck with your flesh and you can’t help but sin—there’s nothing you can do to stop it.”

The other group is saying, “Well, just come down to the altar and we’ll lay hands on you and you will be completely sanctified. You won’t have to worry about sinning anymore.”

It is true that we have been given victory over the flesh, but we cannot overcome the flesh without an understanding of God’s Word concerning the flesh.

III. Defining Our Enemy

It is important that we define exactly who our enemy is. We can compare studying our enemy to a football team studying its opponent many weeks before they face them on the field. The team will watch and study films about the opposing team in an effort to learn how to overcome their opponent.

During a time of war, the military forces will define the enemy, describe the tactics of the enemy, explain the weapons and methods of combat used by the opposition, in an effort to impart knowledge that will save the lives of those fighting against enemy forces.

Knowledge is always the key to victory in the Christian life. You cannot have victory without knowledge. Knowledge is the key to everything.

In Hosea 4:6 God says, “*My People are destroyed for lack of knowledge...*”

If the devil never darkened your door, you could still be destroyed for lack of knowledge because the flesh could overtake you.

The three enemies that we face in this life are the *world*, the *devil*, and the *flesh*. However, both the world and the devil endeavor to work through your flesh. The devil cannot force you to sin. He has to work through the avenue of the flesh. When you learn to conquer your flesh, the devil cannot exercise power over your life.

We are taught to give the devil no place in our lives. James 4:7 says, “*Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*”

IV. Temporal and Positional Truths

When we are born again, we move in two realms with the Lord. One is temporal and the other is positional. In Jesus Christ, we are righteous. In Jesus Christ, we are holy. In Jesus Christ, we are justified. Colossians says that we are complete in Him. These are all positional truths. In our spirit, we are righteous. In our spirit, we are holy. In our spirit, we are justified and complete.

Even if you have sinned today, you are still righteous. You may ask, “Well, what about 1 John 1:9 that says the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all *unrighteousness*? Aren’t I unrighteous when I sin?”

In reality, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses the righteous one from the unrighteous act he has committed. If you commit an unrighteous act, that does not mean *you* are unrighteous. It means there is unrighteousness in you that needs to be removed.

Here is the difference between temporal truth and positional truth. You will *always* be a child of God after you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. When you commit a sin, you lose fellowship with God. This is temporal. You are still a child of God, but you have lost fellowship with Him.

If a small child does something wrong, it doesn’t mean that that child is now out of the family. It also doesn’t mean that that child must be born into the family again. He is still the child of his parents but communication has temporarily been severed.

The same is true of your relationship with your heavenly Father. When you sin, it does not mean that you are no longer a child of God and it does not mean you are banished outside the family of God. It means that you are out of fellowship with God and have temporarily lost communication until you apply 1 John 1:9 to your life.

1 John 1:9:

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

This does not mean we condone sin.

Romans 6:1-2:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

1 John 2:1:

My little children, these things I write unto you that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

However, there are many people who have been living in condemnation for years because they have been taught that if they do anything wrong, God is out to get them.

As we grow in our knowledge of the Word of God, we should sin less and less. We can compare our walk with God with a child that is learning to walk. When a child is taking his first steps without support, he tends to fall down many times. But the more he practices walking, the less he falls. He gets to the point where he is walking very well, but may trip and fall every once in awhile.

The devil will try to put obstacles in our path in an effort to cause us to trip. But as we continue to walk with the Lord, using 1 John 1:9 when necessary, we should be entangled less and less by the tactics of the enemy.

V. The Carnal Christian

1 Corinthians 3:1:

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

Most denominations today cannot put the words “carnal” and “Christian” together in the same sentence. But carnal Christians exist in the body of Christ and the Bible is full of examples about carnal believers.

Many Christians today, even those in the ministry, cannot comprehend how someone can be born again and yet commit sin. But the carnal Christian is one who simply either has not had their mind renewed with the Word of God or they have allowed the world to influence and dominate their thinking rather than God’s Word.

Romans 12:1-2:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

God wants you to present your body as a living sacrifice to Him. His desire is for you to grow to a point where your body is not dictating to you from the outside rather, that your spirit is dictating to you from the inside and your body is just following along.

Paul says again to the Corinthians, “*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal...*”

The word “*carnal*” means “meaty, fleshly.” In other words, when a Christian is carnal, his flesh is controlling him.

1 Corinthians 3:2-3:

I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

Carnal Christians cannot take meat. When a Christian becomes carnal, he begins to regress. In the Christian life, we are never stationary. We are either advancing or regressing in our walk with the Lord. When we are in fellowship with the Lord and taking in His Word, we are moving forward.

But when we are out of fellowship, the devil may deceive us into thinking we are progressing, but we are in fact, regressing.

Verse 3 says again, “...are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” The Amplified verse says, “...and walk as mere (unchanged) men?”

There is no difference between a carnal Christian and a sinner from outward appearances. In fact, many times it is easier to deal with a sinner than a carnal Christian. Paul makes clear that you can be carnal and still be a Christian by calling the carnal Corinthians “brethren.”

The word “walk” in verse 3 is a description of temporal truth. Paul was in essence saying, “In the natural, your walk is just like that of a sinner.”

When we walk in carnality, there is no way to distinguish us from the sinners walking in the world. Sin prevents us from operating spiritually. Your ability to hear the Holy Spirit is blocked when you are walking in carnality.

Psalm 66:18:

If I regard iniquity (sin) in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Notice, this person *knows* that they have sin in their heart.

VI. Two Areas of the Flesh

When you are carnal, you are under the control of the flesh. The two areas from which your flesh can produce are the areas of strength and of weakness. Out of the area of strength, you produce good works or human good. But out of the area of weakness, you produce sin. The flesh is never neutral. When in control, it either produces sin or it produces human good. All sinners are controlled by their flesh.

Ephesians 2:1-3:

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience:

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

As a sinner, you were under the control of the passions of your flesh and mind. Your mind actually teamed up with the flesh and because there was no new nature on the inside, you had nothing else to listen to except the dictates of the flesh.

VII. The Moral Sinner Versus the Carnal Christian

A. The Moral Sinner

There are many moral sinners in the world. You may even live next door to them. They are “good” people. They are faithful to their spouses. They are wonderful parents who are involved in the lives of their children. They would never think of stealing. Even if the sinner were committing adultery, stealing and being an unfaithful spouse and parent, this would not send them to hell. What sends any person to hell is the rejection of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This is the only decision that separates the believer from the unbeliever. Again, the sinner is under the control of his flesh and is either living in outright sin or is a very moral person. It is a sad fact that hell will be filled with moral people.

B. The Carnal Christian

When a Christian commits a sin, he becomes carnal. While he is in carnality, he is no longer under the control of the Holy Spirit. His soul is not in agreement with his inward man. For the moment, his soul is in cooperation with the flesh. And his condition puts him into the same position as a sinner. Even though the difference between he and a sinner is that he is born again, he is the same in that he is being controlled by his flesh. In the same way as a sinner, the Christian who is controlled by his flesh will go one of two directions. He will either continue in sin or he will suddenly become very moral or religious.

There are many carnal Christians today who do not know how to get back into fellowship because no one has ever explained to them that confessing 1 John 1:9 will restore them to fellowship. Many Christians are trapped in a seemingly never-ending cycle. First, they commit a sin. Next, they will begin performing many good works—human good. They will attend church, give large offerings; they may even have an increase in their prayer life. But after awhile, they cannot keep up the façade and will commit sin again. They will get under condemnation and to soothe their guilt they will get back into church. Maybe they will join the choir, work in the nursery, want to teach a Sunday school class all in an attempt to cover up the bad things they have done.

They begin thinking just like a sinner. “If I can just do enough good works, God will be pleased with me and will forget about all of the bad things I have done.”

But as a Christian, you are accumulating wood, hay, and stubble in your life (1 Corinthians 3:12). The carnal believer may give a large offering but his works are producing wood, hay, and stubble. Whereas the Christian who is in fellowship with the Lord is controlled by the Spirit. When he gives an offering that may even be less than what the carnal Christian gave, his works are producing gold, silver, and precious stones. I would much rather have a nickel’s worth of gold, silver, and precious stones than a thousand dollars worth of wood, hay, and stubble!

The most miserable people on the face of the earth are not sinners; they are Christians who are out of fellowship with God.

VIII. The Key to Freedom

The key to freedom from carnality is knowledge. We need to make the carnal Christian aware that if they will just confess their sins to the Lord, He will forgive their sins, cleanse them from all unrighteousness and they will once again be controlled by the Holy Spirit rather than their flesh. Once they are back in fellowship, all of their Spirit led giving and serving in the church will bring eternal rewards to their lives.

Often, a carnal believer will come into my office and say, “I just don’t understand. I am just miserable! I come to church. I sing in the choir. I give in the offering. I go through all of the motions and it just doesn’t work. Why do I see others around me doing the same things but they seem to be so happy!” But Christianity is not “doing.” Christianity is “being”—being in fellowship with God and being led by the Holy Spirit.

Many Christians have a constant conflict on the inside. “Why is it I want to do right but can’t seem to do it? Nothing makes me happy. I get up in the morning miserable and I go to bed miserable. I feel miserable all day long! What is wrong with me?”

God has said that it is for a lack of knowledge of God’s Word that His people are destroyed. A lack of knowledge will keep us bound up in our lives.

Galatians 5:16:

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

When you confess your sins, you are in fellowship with God and controlled by the Holy Spirit. But if you do not confess your sins and remain in carnality, verse 17 explains the result.

IX. The Spirit and the Flesh are Antagonistic

Galatians 5:17:

For the flesh lusts 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.

The word “*contrary*” means “*antagonistic*.” The Spirit and the flesh are antagonistic toward each other. Many read this verse and say, “Well, I guess there is just no victory in the Christian life. It is just a constant warfare, the Spirit against the flesh.” But this thinking is inaccurate. This verse is true only when a believer is not walking by the Spirit and is being controlled by the flesh because of carnality. The more a believer increases in the knowledge of God’s Word and walks according to the Spirit, the less control the flesh will have over their life.

Two basic categories of people often have extreme problems with their flesh. The first are baby Christians who are just beginning the process of having their minds renewed with the Word of God. Their knowledge of God’s Word is so limited that the flesh is still dominating their lives. The other group is carnal Christians who have been walking in carnality for so long that they have difficulty distinguishing between the Spirit and the flesh. They have difficulty recognizing one from the other. They start believing that God has forsaken them, which is not true.

When a believer remains in fellowship with the Lord and continues to pursue God’s Word, they will become proficient at recognizing the voice of the flesh and will learn to say “no” to the flesh.

X. Prepare for the Test

There are basically three different types of students you can observe during college exams. The first is the student who doesn’t prepare in any way for the exam. They are the students who are chewing on their erasers, staring at the ceiling, and wracking their brains about what the instructor taught in class. When the test is over, they talk about how hard the test was and try to put the blame everywhere but on themselves.

The second type of student is the one who tries to cram last minute for the exam. They are confused about how to answer many of the questions and it is hit and miss in making the correct choices on the exam.

Finally, there is the student who has methodically prepared for the exam. They have consistently studied the course materials, day after day, week after week and when it comes time for the exam, they are prepared for the test and pass with flying colors!

Satan has tests prepared for ever believer. When you stay current with the Word of God, you will come through each test victorious! But there will be others beside you who will be crying, “Oh, the trials of life! I think God has forsaken me!” The sad thing is that it was their own fault. They didn’t study. They were not properly prepared for the test before it came along.

It is important to realize that if you will walk in the Spirit, God will lead you long before the test arrives and you will be prepared when it hits you.

XI. The Longer the Carnality, the Greater the Warfare

When the spirit is antagonistic toward the Spirit and the Spirit toward the flesh and when there is a warfare going on in the inside of you, you are walking in carnality. The longer you remain in a state of carnality, the greater will be the warfare you are facing. The reason a carnal Christian is more miserable than a sinner is because the sinner doesn’t have the warfare going on in the inside. There is no recreated spirit on the inside of the sinner to fight against the flesh. But when a person is born again, their recreated spirit is saying, “Hey! Don’t do that! It is not your nature to participate in that activity!” Your recreated spirit will war against your flesh.

Often, if you run into a carnal Christian and ask how they are doing and mention that you haven’t seen them in church in awhile, they will respond defensively and usually make excuses as to why they haven’t been in church.

XII. Imitators

When a believer is in fellowship with the Lord, they are imitating Jesus. But when a believer is out of fellowship with the Lord, they are imitating the unbeliever.

Ephesians 5:1:

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

The word “*followers*” is the Greek word “*mimetes*” and actually means “to mimic or to imitate.” We are not Jesus walking in the earth, but we are to be imitators of Him. By walking in fellowship with the Lord and

walking in line with His Word, we become imitators of Christ. But when we are out of fellowship, we are led by our flesh, and the flesh can do nothing but imitate the world.

This verse could read, *“Be ye therefore mimics, or imitators, of God, as dear children.”*

The Greek word for *“children”* in this verse is *“teknon.”* It refers to a child between the ages of approximately two to seven years. Children younger than this age are called *“paidion”* in the Greek. Older children are referred to as *“huios”* in the Greek language.

It is interesting that the word *“teknon”* is used in this verse because young children typically enjoy playing *“Follow the Leader”* and *“Simon Says.”* They enjoy imitating the things others say or do.

XIII. Awake From Your Sleep

Ephesians 5:8:

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

Ephesians 5:11:

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Ephesians 5:14:

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Verse 14 is a quote from Isaiah 60, verse 1 and is probably one of the most fascinating comparisons of the carnal Christian to the sinner found in the Word of God.

This verse is actually saying that a carnal Christian is asleep among dead people. Think about it. If you were in a room filled with dead people, you would have a very difficult time finding the one who is asleep. You would have to get right up to that person to see if he were breathing.

It is the same with a carnal Christian. They look just like the world but instead of being dead, they are asleep. When a Christian is carnal, he is asleep among dead people.

Verse 14 doesn't say, "Resurrect, you that are sleeping." It says, "Awake!"

The first half of Romans, chapter 7 Paul is writing of a time when he was dead and under the law, but beginning in verse 15 he writes about when he was carnal.

XIV. The Thing I Want to Do, I Cannot Do

Romans 7:15:

*For that which I **do** I allow not: for what I would, that **do** I not; but what I hate, that **do** I.*

Unfortunately, this is one of the poorest translations found in the King James Version, but we must look at the Greek to determine what Paul is actually saying in these verses.

The word "*would*" means "I don't want to."

From verse 15 through verse 21, we have three different Greek words all translated as "*do*." The meaning of each word is slightly different.

The first word is "katergozomai" and means "something inside working out." The second word is "prasso" and means "to practice as a way of life." The last word is "poieo" and means "to do or commit."

Again, beginning in verse 15 through the end of Romans 7, Paul is carnal and does not understand himself. In this chapter, Paul begins to define the enemy. His trouble is in trying to gain victory over the flesh—the sin nature.

Paul begins, "*For that which I **do**...*" The word for "do" in this case is "katergozomai" and means "something inside working out."

Paul continues, "*...for what I would, that **do** I not.*" The word for "do" in this instance is "prasso" and means "to practice as a way of life."

Paul concludes, "*...but what I hate, that **do** I.*" In this case, "do" is the Greek word "poieo" and means "to do or commit."

This verse would more accurately be translated, "*For that which is working out of me I don't understand: for what I want to do, that I cannot even practice. I want to practice the spiritual way of life. But what I hate, that is what I commit.*"

Romans 7:16:

*If then I **do** (definition 3: do or commit) that which I would not, I consent (show) unto the law that it is good (correct).*

Paul is saying, “When I am doing what I do not want to do, I am proving that the law is correct. I know the law is for sinners, but I am under the same control as an unbeliever. I am actually proving that the law exposes the sin nature by doing the thing I do not want to do.

Romans 7:17:

*Now then it is no more I that **do** it, but sin (the flesh) that dwells in me.*

The word for “do” in this instance is definition number one, “something working inside out.”

This verse literally reads, “Now then, it is no more I who works it out, but the sin that dwells in me.” Paul is saying that the sin nature is working out all of these evil deeds.

When you are out of fellowship with God, the sin nature is controlling you. You are no longer under its dominion if you are born again, but for the moment, you are under its control. It is controlling you and bringing things out of you that you didn’t want exposed.

Romans 7:18:

*For I know that in me (in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to **perform** that which is good I find not.*

The word “perform” is the first Greek definition for “do,” meaning “something inside working out.”

Paul is saying, “I know that in my flesh dwells no good thing for the desire to do good is present with me, but how to work that which is good out, I don’t know how.”

Paul is producing sin that he does not want to produce. He has the desire to produce good, but he doesn’t have the way to pull that good out of himself and actually do it!

He’s basically saying, “I am trapped! I keep going around and around and around the same problem. I keep doing what I don’t want to do and I really want to do what’s right, but just can’t seem to do it!”

Romans 7:19:

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Paul is literally saying, “For the good I desire to do, I don’t do.” The Greek word for “do” in the phrase “*I do not*,” is “poieo.” Again, this means “to do or commit.”

The Greek word for “do” in the phrase “...that I do,” is “*prasso*” and again, means “to practice as a way of life.”

Paul is saying, “I am doing what I do not want to do as a way of life. I am continually doing it even though I do not want to.”

Maybe you are married to a carnal spouse. They want to do the right thing but are constantly upset about something. They are touchy and irritable and yet they are trying to do right and want to do right, but just can’t seem to do it.

XV. Knowing Proceeds Doing

What is the real problem? The real problem is a lack of knowledge.

Romans 6:13:

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Paul says that we are to yield ourselves to God. This is written in the imperative mood and is a command. But *how* do we yield?

Verse 3 says, “*Know ye not...*” Verse 6 says, “*Knowing this...*” Verse 9 says, “*Knowing...*” Verse 11 says, “*Likewise reckon...*”

You cannot yield until you know, know, know and learn to reckon yourself alive unto the Lord Jesus Christ. It is impossible to yield without first acquiring knowledge. Yieldedness is a result of acting on knowledge. When you have acted upon what you know, you are then in a position to yield yourself to God.

In chapter 7 of Romans, Paul was in a position where he did not know how to yield.

XVI. The Key

Romans 7:20:

Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.

When we are out of fellowship with the Lord, we are under the control of the sin nature. We are not dictating to it; it is dictating to us. When we are in fellowship with the Lord, we dictate to the flesh and the flesh becomes our slave. The slave cannot tell the master what he must do. But when we are not walking in fellowship, authority and submission are reversed, our flesh takes the dominion and we become slaves to it.

Romans 7:21:

*I find then a law, that when I would **do** good, evil is present with me.*

The word “do” is again, the Greek word “poieo” and means “to do or commit.” Paul says, “When I try to commit good, evil is with me.”

Evil is always present, but we have a choice as to whether or not we exercise the authority we have been given through Jesus Christ over evil *or* we allow evil to exercise authority over our lives.

Whether we like it or not, the devil will be here until Jesus returns. We can pray all day for God to remove Satan’s influence over our lives but He will not do it because He has already given us authority over him in the name of Jesus. The same is true of the flesh. It would be nice to cast the flesh out, but we will contend with the flesh until we either die or are raptured. Until then, God has given us authority over the flesh.

The Holy Spirit does not live in your flesh; He lives in your recreated spirit. When we learn to listen and yield to the spirit man on the inside, we will begin to walk in victory over the flesh.

XVI. The Outward and Inward Man

Romans 7:22:

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

The inward man consists of the spirit and the soul. The inward man is housed in your physical body. When we die, it is the inward man that goes to be with the Lord. We are both a two-fold and a three-fold creation. We

are two-fold in that we consist of an inward and outward man. But we are three-fold in that we are spirit, soul, and body.

In verse 22, Paul is saying that when the spirit man and the soul are in agreement, he is delighting in the law.

Romans 7:23:

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.

When we come to the realization that we are comprised of both the inward and the outward man, we should also begin to realize that our inward man has been given dominion over our outward man.

The outward man—the flesh is striving for your mind. It cannot strive for the spirit man because our human spirit is controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Some believe that a Christian can be demon possessed. But a Christian cannot be demon possessed because their human spirit was born of the Spirit of God at the new birth. Light and darkness cannot dwell together or dominate in a person's life at the same time. A Christian, however, can be mentally or physically oppressed by the devil. But Satan will strive for the mind of both the believer and the unbeliever. He desires to blind the mind of the unbeliever so that they will not accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. And he desires to blind the mind of the believer so they will never become spiritually mature in their walk with the Lord.

There are so many scriptures dealing with the inward man being in dominion over the outward man.

Philippians 4:8:

*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think** on these things.*

2 Corinthians 10:5:

*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity **every thought** to the obedience of Christ;*

Isaiah 26:3:

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Psalm 103:1:

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

You must take control over what your mind is thinking on. There are times when you have to tell your soul to bless the Lord. Your spirit is always willing to bless the Lord but it is your soul—your mind, will, and emotions that challenges you.

Renewing of your mind with the Word of God is vital to your spiritual growth.

Romans 12:1-2:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by **the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

XVII. Growing in God's Will

Real spiritual growth occurs as the mind is renewed to the Word of God. As our minds are renewed, they begin to come more and more in line with the recreated human spirit.

The goal of the flesh is reflected in Romans 7:23, which again says, “*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.*”

Romans 7:24:

O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Paul is not actually wretched; he just believes that he is. He is out of fellowship. He is experiencing warfare between his flesh and his spirit. He is torn between the two. They are antagonistic to one another. Paul is carnal and is not walking by the Spirit. He is walking by the flesh.

The only way to be delivered from our body of death is through Jesus Christ. The way you are set free is through the living Word! The Word will make you free! The more of the Word you know and apply, the more free you will become. Knowledge brings freedom.

The way that we are delivered from being the wretched man or woman that we are is the same way we were delivered from death. We were delivered from both through Jesus Christ!

Galatians 3:1 begins, “*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth...*”

Verse 3 continues, “*Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*”

If you are out of fellowship with God and looking to the flesh to make you spiritual—*oh foolish man or woman...who has bewitched you?* You began in the Spirit, so stay in the Spirit. You began in faith, so stay in faith. You began in the Word, so stay in the Word. You began with Jesus, so stay with Jesus.

Romans 7:24:

*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.*

The mind is the key point. The mind in agreement with the Spirit causes us to serve the Lord. But when the mind is in agreement with the flesh, it causes us to serve the law of sin. The mind is the hinging point. It either swings the direction of the flesh or it swings in the direction of the Spirit. If it swings toward the flesh, you are carnal and the spirit must follow along. But if it swings toward Spirit of God and His Word, the flesh has no alternative than to just go along. When the inward man lines up with the Word of God, the body must cooperate and that is God’s desire. He wants our bodies to be living sacrifices unto Him, holy and acceptable to Him—our reasonable service!