

## The Flesh 2

These are words that will set us free — that will clearly show us what we need to do to be able to experience life and peace.

What are we talking about when we say the flesh? There are different ways of interpreting the word when it speaks about the flesh. We need to understand that when we talk about the flesh we are not talking about improving the flesh or making it better, but we are talking about cutting it off. We must deal with the flesh and not talk about how we can improve it. Many people go through the torture of trying to “do better,” or trying not to do that particular thing again, but this is only trying to improve the flesh and not cutting it off. A person will continuously face death or condemnation if all he does is continuously try to improve the flesh. *It must be cut off.*

However, we must understand how the term is used in the Bible. It's not that every time we see the word “flesh” in the Bible we have to take it in the negative sense. In 1 Pet 3:18 the word *flesh* refers to his physical body and it does not refer to what we have to deal with. 1 Jn 4:2 refers to our Master having come in human nature, in a human body. Col 2:1 — *face* in some translations is flesh which means they hadn't seen him personally. Rom 9:3 refers to kinsmen. So all these are definitely not what we are talking about. Eph 2:3 and Rom 8:5 clearly show us what must be put to death. Eph 2:3 says that all of us formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh. We formerly did whatever our flesh wanted to do. We were indulging in the desires of both the mind and the flesh. Rom 8:5-7 clearly places before us life or death. The mind set on the spirit is life and peace. The mind set on the flesh is death. A man who is in the body of Messiah and is not abiding in Messiah and sets his mind on the flesh will die. He will experience the wrath of God — *death*. This is certain, sure and absolute. There is no way to get out of it. The mind set on the flesh is death. The mind set on the spirit is life and peace. Rom 7:18 there is no way to improve the flesh. If we insist on trying to, then we will die. If a man sets his mind on earthly desires, then he will die (Rom 8:13).

Col 3:1-6 — We must obey this perfectly (Acts 3:23). We must be dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and greed. Many times we sit at the table and are greedy. We just sit down and all we do is have our face in our plate or we are only concerned about how much food we eat. We must not set our mind on earthly matters, things of the earth. Earthly matters are matters that really don't matter. It is absolutely certain and sure that if a man sets his mind on the flesh — earthly desires — then he will die and experience the wrath of God (verse 6).

How many times will we have to hear it? The mind set on the flesh is death — separation — cut off. The mind set on the spirit is life and peace. If a person is so stupid and dull that he doesn't do anything about himself after reading this word then that person deserves to perish. He deserves to die richly because he doesn't obey the spirit.

What is the flesh's primary job? What does it always do? Gal 5:16-21 — The flesh is enmity against God. It is opposed to God, it is an enemy of God, hostile to Him. We must see this. If we are in the body and we set our mind on the flesh, it is enmity against God. We are an enemy. Is Rom 8:13 written to the Edah or to unbelievers? How do you put to death the deeds of the body? *By the spirit*. What is the flesh's primary job? To war against the spirit and the Spirit wars against the flesh. The flesh lusts against the Spirit. Lust means it sets its desire, its strong desire against the Spirit (Gal 5:17). So you know what happens if you set your mind on the flesh? You die. It is death. You are a dead man. The flesh is out to kill us. It is either us or it. The cry of war for us is to kill or be killed. If we do not kill the flesh it will kill us. The flesh has a death desire and the end of the road for us if we carry out the desires of the flesh is death. We are face-to-face in mortal combat with our most deadly enemy: the flesh. When men of the world find themselves face-to-face in combat, there is no room for discussion or debates. It's kill or be killed. One takes quick, desperate action with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength in order to come out alive. So it must be with us, because the flesh is out to kill us in every way possible, especially in that particular way that appeals to us the most. This is mortal combat. If the flesh wins, we will die. What we are saying is that it is a matter of life and death. When we are not walking in the spirit then we are

carrying out the desire of the flesh. Galatians 5:16. The desires of the flesh is death, our death. That is why the flesh deserves to die daily.

What will you not inherit if you practice these things of the flesh? (Gal 5:21). Although it belongs rightly to us, we will not inherit the Kingdom if we walk according to the flesh and do the deeds of the flesh. Look what happened to Esau. He had the birthright but because he set his mind on the flesh and its desires he lost the Kingdom. Even when he sought it with tears he could not regain it. Can you imagine loving the kingdom and then having to be there in death — recalling all the times you didn't cut off the flesh and regretting every minute of why you didn't do it. Why you did not choose to not obey the desires of the flesh. A person who does not deny his flesh will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

What happens when you think about something wrong and something good? And you debate about whether you should do the wrong or the good. You are already in the flesh! You will always choose the wrong. The wrong will always win the debate. Just the fact that you were having the debate in your mind shows that you did not set your mind on the spirit. The battle was already lost before it ever started. Your mind was set on the flesh. We need to see that the flesh is the whole personality of man, and that the whole personality of man is oriented in the wrong direction. We have to get oriented in our spirits and we have to set our mind on the spirit. If we don't and we set our mind on the flesh then it won't be long before we are producing the fruit of Gal 5:19-21. A brother with his mind on the flesh can maybe go on for a time but soon he will start producing the manifestations of the flesh. He will start causing dissensions and factions.

1 Jn 3:4-6 is very clear and we had better take it to heart. No one who abides in Him sins. Christians take this completely wrong. They say that you can abide and sin. But what does it mean to abide? It means to be in close communion with our Master and to live in the spirit. What if you try to resist the flesh? You can't, except by communion with the Spirit. If all we do is resist the flesh but we are not in communion with the Spirit then we are under the law (Gal 5:18) and the law brings wrath and condemnation. If you live this way then you are unwittingly trying to improve your own flesh. We'll be trying to improve our performance from now until death without any communication of life coming to us. Our performance was never the problem, but because our minds are set on earthly things, we insist that this is the root of the problem we are having. The actual problem is simply that we did not set our minds on the spirit, and we have been carrying out the deeds of the flesh. Totally under the law. We have the example of the whole Old Testament which proves to us that you cannot improve the flesh. You must cut it off. If we are led by the spirit we are not under the law. Many people know this only as a doctrine and they are still under the law. You cannot just try to resist the flesh. You must walk by the Spirit, setting your mind on the spirit. All else is an effort to improve the flesh.

The secret is to be *led* by the spirit. It means to be guided. This is the secret to not be under the law, for the law only tries to improve the flesh. If the spirit is *leading* us (going before us) then we will not be under the law. We need to let Him take the lead and show us the way. That is His ministry. He has come to help us, comfort us. If we do this then he will exercise his rightful dominion over our spirit and we will not be under the law. We get squashed flat under the law. We will find ourselves in the flesh trying to perfect the flesh, wondering why our flesh will not get any better. We find ourselves wondering why the further we go, the further behind we get. We don't see any progress. The reason is we are not walking in the spirit. Pr 3:5-6 tells us that He will lead us and guide us if we do not rely on our own understanding. Romans 8:14 says that those led by the spirit are the Sons of God. Does He lead us automatically? NO. We must set our mind on the spirit. When we are not being led by the spirit we are experiencing death, if we are true sons. We feel separated, cut off. We sense the agony of it. Our Father made it that way. Death is a form of discipline, of correction, it is corrective. The 1000 years of discipline will be corrective even though how terrible it will be because our Father wants to assure that all flesh will be cut off. That is why the 8th day is representative of the day when all flesh is cut off. Once we have tasted death we will want to set our mind on the spirit. That is how it should be now for a son.

The Spirit leads us to behave in a certain way (Gal 5:22-23). The way He leads us is *predictable*. If we are led by the spirit we are *not* under the law. What does this mean? We don't do things because we *have* to.

The law enslaves us, condemns us. If we are led by the Spirit we do things because we have communion, because we *want* to. He communicated His love to us (1 Jn 4:10-11). He tells us to do things because He loves us. If a brother comes to you and tells you to do something and you react by saying, "He just wants to make me work," etc., "You're under the law."

At baptism our flesh was crucified, but we have to crucify it daily from then on. The Helper has come, but sometimes we don't sense his presence because we don't set our minds on the spirit. He won't do it for us, we have to take the responsibility and the initiative. Heb 12:1 — We have besetting sins. There is always one major sin in us that we have to judge. We might have many encumbrances, but there is one main sin in us that has to be judged before we can enter the race in order to not be disqualified. We always have to deny the flesh, even when we walk in the spirit. Walking in the spirit doesn't mean that somehow we rise above having to deny the flesh. We must take action daily. When we set our mind on the spirit, then we can resist the flesh in the proper way. If we don't set our mind on the spirit then the flesh will overwhelm us. It's too strong for us.

The good news today teaches us what it takes to obey our Master and be a true son. We must die daily like Lk 9:23 says. What does a person do on a cross? We must die daily and crucify the flesh (Gal 5:24). The flesh was the cause of the original sin and the reason why our Master had to die. It is out for our own destruction. It is the curse of Adam. No matter how many sacrifices they offered, they still died.

So it boils down to this: do we love Him or not? Are we going to present our bodies as a living sacrifice daily? Our Master said you are my friends if you do what I say. Taking up our cross daily takes action. We must crucify the flesh early. We must walk in the light, John 8:12; Galatians 5:18. We must walk in the spirit. The flesh is out to get us. If we don't put our mind on the spirit, then the battle will be lost.

The whole key is setting your mind on the spirit. We must do it early.

Setting your mind on the spirit is the solution to all problems. We do not have to sit and council for hours and hours. We do not have to talk our heads off till two in the morning with our wives. All that counseling does is improve the flesh. Most people come out with all sorts of problems. They don't know what is the matter with them. The answer is simple — they don't have their mind on the spirit. The Helper has come, but we don't notice the Helper. We don't sense him anywhere because we are not seeking him nor getting to know him.

In Dt 30:19 our Father set before the people life and death, the blessing or the curse. It is the same way today.

We have a choice of life and peace or death. It's easy — the mind set on the spirit is life and peace; the mind set on the flesh is death. Which do we choose? Our Father made a perpetual covenant with Levi. A covenant of life and peace. This must be continued. There must still be priests whose lips preserve knowledge (Mal 2:4-7). There must be a functioning full priesthood of twelve tribes who set their minds on the spirit.

The good news is that if we hang on to our life we will die, but if we give up our lives we will experience life and peace. We must crucify the flesh daily. It deserves to die daily. We must cut it off every day. It is our arch-enemy — number 1. Its desire is to lead us to death. By the spirit we can put to death our enemy and its desires. By putting our mind on the spirit, this is life and peace.