

The Flesh And Its Activities

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 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.” Galatians 5:16,17

Intro:

This outline is not designed to be an exhaustive study on the flesh, but to be fairly comprehensive in pointing out things so that we will be able to recognize the various manifestations of the flesh nature's activity for the purpose of being able to regain the spiritual life activity of peace found in the filling of the Holy Spirit and the new nature.

It is designed to assist those who have gone through the one hundred plus classes on dealing with the emotions to be able to more readily identify what flesh characteristic they are having a problem with as they seek to live their lives in the filling of the Holy Spirit for the flesh's activity is hostile to what the Spirit is trying to accomplish in us.

Mention is made of the physical aspect of our flesh natures, only for the purpose of touching on some of these things, and obviously if one is having a problem with their body, then they need to consult their doctor on such a thing. But also for the purpose that, even though the physical side of the flesh is not spiritual, we can have problems in the spiritual realm due to the problem of fear, anger, guilt, anxiety, etc., over a physical problem. Some of the body's activities can be classified as human sin, others as human good, but all are still of the flesh.

Body

A. Physical

1. Infirmities – a reference to the body's physical weaknesses.
2. Injury – the body is subject to physical injuries.
3. Illness – the body is subject to physical illnesses.
4. Diseases – the body is subject to physical diseases.
5. Aging – the body is subject to the aging process.
6. Mortality – the body is subject to physical death.

B. Verbal

1. Complaining – expressing one's dissatisfaction.
2. Maligning – to speak harmful untruths about someone else.
3. Quarreling – an angry dispute with others.
4. Bragging – an expression of superiority that you are above others by stating what you have, what you have done, or what you have accomplished.

Soul

A. Mental Attitude – Pride

1. First level – sees oneself as being above others.
2. Second level – sees oneself higher than that.
3. Third level – sees oneself above everyone, including God.
4. Conceited – occurs for many reasons, but often comes about as the result of being in a position that you lack the capacity or qualifications for, but because you're there you think you're something now.
5. Puffed up – occurs also for many reasons, looks, money, education, position, etc., where one has an inflated ego, an inflated opinion of himself.
6. Lime lighter – one who always has to be the center of attention, they always have to be in the limelight.
7. Rebellion – the mental attitude of pride that refuses to submit to authority.

B. The Emotions Of The Flesh

1. Fear – the feeling of fear covers everything from worry, to anxiety, dread, apprehension, fright, etc.. It is a feeling that one's security is or could be threatened. Fear can be felt at a conscious level, or repressed into the subconscious.
2. Anger – is a complex of feelings covering everything from the reaction to things, which is bitterness, to being fuming mad, to outright rage. Anger can be felt also at a conscious level, or repressed into the subconscious. It can be expressed verbally or physically.
3. Envy – envy is the felt sense of displeasure over the profit or advantage of others. It can result in the person wanting to have what others have, or worse yet, wanting to deprive the other person of what they have for yourself.
4. Guilt – is the conviction of the conscience over wrongdoing, whether actual or imagined. There is real guilt, where you are guilty; and there is sensed guilt, where you feel guilty. And guilt leads to the feeling of shame.
5. Grief – is the pain the soul feels over loss. When two come together there is a connection in the soul. When one is lost there is a disconnection and that pain is grief. Abnormal grief gets into areas such as denial, repression, non expression of the grief and prolonged expression of grief.
6. Human Love – is not in itself sinful, but it is a dynamic of the flesh and not the Spirit. *Agape* love and *phileo* love are spiritual dynamics produced only in the new natures of believers in Christ by the filling of the Holy Spirit.
7. Human Happiness- is not to be confused with spiritual joy, although most Christians make this mistake. Human happiness is dependent upon one getting their way, having fun, experiencing something pleasant, etc.. While spiritual joy is produced in the new nature and is not dependent upon pleasant external factors.

C. The Thinking Of The Flesh

1. Logizomai – thinking based upon objective facts.
2. Nomizo – thinking based upon assuming something to be true.
3. Dokeo – thinking based upon one's emotions.

D. The Memory Function Of The Flesh

1. It leaves things out.
2. It adds things.
3. It misconstrues things.
4. It forgets altogether
5. There is no perfect memory function.

E. Imagination

1. Is the ability to create a picture in the mind apart from the physical senses.
2. Some mental pictures are sinful, some aren't.

F. The Defense Mechanisms Of The Flesh

1. **Repression** – is the unconscious pushing down of painful or embarrassing feelings into the subconscious where one doesn't have to see them or deal with them.
2. **Suppression** – is the conscious pushing down into the subconscious mind the painful or embarrassing feelings.
3. **Denial** – denying that one feels a certain way, or denying one's actions.
4. **Dissociation** – is where certain anxiety-provoking thoughts, emotions, or physical sensations are separated from the rest of the psyche.
5. **Projection** – is the tendency to ascribe to another person feelings, thoughts, or attitudes present in oneself.
6. **Transference** – is the shift of emotions, especially those experienced in childhood, from one person or object to another, especially the transfer of feelings about a parent to an analyst.
7. **TMS** – *tension myositis syndrome* is a diversionary tactic that the brain uses to distract the conscious mind from being aware of painful, or embarrassing feelings, by using physical pain. It can use an existing problem; it can amplify an existing problem; and it can create a new problem. Of course, all physical problems need to be checked out by one's own doctor. (*See, Healing Back Pain, by Dr. John Sarno*).

Note: Again this is not designed to be an in depth study on any of these concepts, rather sort of a check off list to enable us to see what is going on in our day to day walk with the Lord so we can be able to identify what activity of the flesh is going on and recover the filling of the Holy Spirit.

G. The Lust Of The Flesh

Definition Of Lust

1. The first thing we need to see is that the King James word, *lust*, is an Old English word and is the exact same idea for the present day word – **desire**!
2. The next thing we need to see is that in the original Greek it's in the singular, which summarizes the flesh as constantly lusting; the flesh lusts or desires!
3. The flesh lusts and it lusts in various categories.
4. The mistake that many make, especially Christians, is that they think this concept of lust applies to only a few things, such as, fornication, drugs, etc., while it applies to just about everything that people are doing!
5. A lust is a strong feeling or craving for anything, conscious or unconscious, that one thinks will bring enjoyment, satisfaction, or completion.
6. People's lust patterns differ. Some people desire certain things in life, while others desire different things.
7. People's lusts often change over the years; wanting different things at different times in their lives as they get older.
8. The object of the lust, the thing desired, may not necessarily be sinful in itself.
9. Lust is the condition of fallen humanity, and because it is resident in the body believers in Christ will have a problem with it also.
10. Lusts are countered by the filling of the Holy Spirit.
11. Lusts are hostile to the activity and purpose of the Spirit.
12. We cannot complete our souls by gratifying our lusts.

The Stages Of Lust

1. **Lust** - begins with the person having a desire for something that they think will bring them satisfaction, completion, enjoyment, or something else.
2. **Drive**- is the next thing proceeding out of lust where the individual is motivated to act and do what is necessary to acquire what one is desiring.
3. **Compulsion** – usually follows if the desire is strong and is an almost irresistible impulse to act toward the goal of gratifying the lust.
4. **Obsession** – follows in many and is the domination of one's thoughts and feelings toward fulfilling the lust or desire.
5. **Gratification** – is only a temporary fulfilling of the lust, but never leaves the person satisfied. They have to do it again and again.
6. **Analogy** – I liken lust and its gratification to poison oak. If one has ever had poison oak or ivy, then you know how bad it itches; crying out to be scratched. And when you do scratch it it feels so good, but it's only temporary because it itches all over again. So is lust and the gratification of the lust.
7. **Denied** – if one's fleshly lusts are delayed or denied, then the flesh kicks in with frustration or anger. Anger, resentment, depression, self pity and all sorts of reactor factors will follow when one doesn't get what they want.

The Categories Of Lust

1. **Power** – the desire to control other people. People with the lust for power are found in every walk in life: politics, schools, government, religion, business, etc..
2. **Approbation** – the desire to have approval from other people. Lacking spiritual self esteem they seek to have acceptance or validation from others.
3. **Social** – the desire to socially interact with others. Needy people love to chit chat, to always be around friends, relatives, get together, etc., to fill a void in their souls.
4. **Sex** – abnormal sex drive, fornication, (sex in religious rituals), pornography, adultery, (sex with another while married), illicit sex, (sex outside of marriage), pedophilia, same sex, voyeurism, etc., are all involved in this. When someone is motivated by the lust for sex, then that makes the other person involved a sex object that is being used only for the purpose of gratifying that person's lust. In fact, whenever anyone acts on the basis of any lust, and uses people in the process, then those people are nothing more to them than an object used to gratify that person's lust!
5. **Chemical** – covers the desire, dependence and addiction to alcohol, drugs, legal or illegal; one can even desire certain additives put in food.
6. **Money** – the lust, desire, to have money, gold, silver, also referred to as greed. Even when one has money, they always want more.
7. **Covetousness** - is the lust for material things. And being never satisfied, the lust is there for still more things. Remember, lusts are never satisfied, only gratified!
8. **Ambition** – the inordinate desire to succeed, to be the best, to be on the top. The problem today is that most of America now considers these things as admirable traits and not the lusts that they are.
9. **Crusader** – the desire to start a cause, to get others involved in your cause, or to follow a cause. Crusaders lusts have increased significantly in the past twenty years or so. It seems like everyone has a cause that they want you to get involved in.
10. **Revenge** – the desire to get even with someone over a wrong suffered. It proceeds out of pride and the anger complex. But vengeance belongs to the Lord, not us.
11. **Criminal** – the desire to break the law, to hurt other people, or damage their property. The reason why some turn to criminal enterprises to make money, instead of legitimate ones, is because of criminal lust.
12. **Pleasure** – hedonism is the desire and drive to do things, or possess things, that bring pleasure to the senses.
13. **Security** – security lust stems out of a sense of insecurity where the individual wants to feel secure. This desire for security will drive them to arrange their entire lives: job, housing, friends, etc., in such a manner that they will be secure.
14. **Gluttony** – the desire to eat, or the desire for food, or excessive eating and drinking. Food is the means by which our bodies receive the nutrition that they need. This desire goes beyond that and is often used to fulfill an emotional need.
15. **Stimulation** – is the desire to be constantly excited, invigorated, roused to action, either mentally or physically. TV, movies, music, interesting conversation, even soft drinks and coffee all the way to drugs help accomplish this.

16. **To Be Loved** – is the desire to receive the love that often one missed out on in their childhood. Many people go from relationship to relationship looking for love. When one is in the Spirit they will be loving with *agape*.

17. **To Love** – one will say, what's wrong with that? But it's an instinctual dynamic of the flesh. A man wants a wife to love, and vice versa; women want to have children to love, or to love them, but it's all a part of the flesh inherited from Adam. While the spiritual life dynamic of *agape* love is far superior to that.

18. **To Be Happy** – This seems to be the mantra of just about everybody in America today. They say, I just want to be happy. What's wrong with that? The thing about happiness is that it's a product of the flesh, it's short lived and it's dependent upon usually pleasant external circumstances. Human happiness, that any unbeliever can have, is not the same thing as spiritual joy. The fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in the new nature is spiritual joy and is not dependent upon anything external, but only upon the filling of the Holy Spirit as the believer walks in faith with the Lord.

19. **Fun** – the desire to have something that provides mirth or amusement, which is also so prevalent today, is a temporary fleeting thrill of stimulating excitement similar to human happiness. It's more than a desire with many, it's an obsession. All too many people want to do is go out into different pursuits, usually costing money, just so they can have fun.

20. **Family** – the desire to have a family, or the desire to see one's divorced parents back together again, is once again under this category. Remember that a lust is nothing more than a desire.

21. **Success** – the attainment of wealth, position, honors, or the like. Many people have the lust to succeed in a certain field, or to have money, and often will not stop at anything so they can have the success they so desire.

22. **Retirement** – is where one is financially able to stop working, or to cease from working. It's the desire to live a life of ease and not have to work any more. But men are not allowed to retire, even if they're financially able, because of the curse laid upon all men by God when Adam sinned against God. They are to be actively and constructively, hopefully profitably, working until they die. This too has become a major problem in America today as the result of the modern industrial revolution.

23. **Wanderlust** – is the innate desire of the flesh to rove or travel about, to mover here and there at random. Whether it is just a wish to travel, or actually traveling, it's all wanderlust. The only difference is the lust and its gratification.

The purpose of this outline is not for us to become absorbed in one's personal flesh activities, but simply to point out the various areas that the flesh operates in so we can recognize them in ourselves. The activity of the flesh is hostile to the activity of the Spirit in our lives and by recognizing what areas of activity that do belong to the flesh, we can recover the filling of the Holy Spirit through acknowledging these things to God.

Pastor Mike