

Spirit vs. Flesh

Lesson 18 – Teacher's Guide

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1. Once we're born again, the rest of the Christian life is learning to walk in the spirit, which is letting what God has done through the new birth dominate us more than our physical, emotional realm.

One of the hardest things we'll ever do is learn how to turn from our natural self-rule and let who we are in Christ dominate instead. It's difficult because we must perceive our spirits by faith in God's Word because we can't see or feel them. All we have to do is start basing our thoughts, actions, and identity on who we are in Christ.

2. As long as our flesh is contrary to our spirits, we'll have conflict (Gal. 5:16-18). "Contrary" means they're "opposed, enemies, adversaries." This conflict between our spirits and flesh is our true spiritual warfare.
3. We cannot please God in our flesh (Rom. 8:8). Living after the flesh brings all forms of death (Rom. 8:12-13 and 6:23). Our flesh is Satan's inroad to bring death into our lives. As born-again believers, our flesh is made up of our soulish and physical realms.

1. A. Once we're born again, what is the rest of the Christian life? (Learning to walk in the spirit)
B. Why is this so difficult? (We must perceive our spirits by faith in God's Word because we can't see or feel them)
2. A. Read Galatians 5:16-18. As long as our flesh is contrary to our spirits, what will we have? (Conflict)
B. What is our true spiritual warfare? (This conflict between our spirits and flesh)
3. A. According to Romans 8:8, can we please God in our flesh? (No)
B. What does Romans 8:12-13 and 6:23 reveal that living after the flesh brings? (Death)

4. As Paul taught how God now deals with people based on His grace, not their performance, this raised the question in Romans 6:1. The answer, of course, is “God forbid! How can we, who are dead to sin, live any longer in it?” (Rom. 6:2). Our spirits are the part of us that are dead to sin. Our bodies and souls can still do sinful things, but the born-again part of us cannot.
5. When we were born again, we were baptized into His death (Rom. 6:3). Being baptized into His death is automatic, but walking in newness of life isn’t (Rom. 6:4). Manifesting newness of life is something that should happen—but it depends on how we renew our minds (Rom. 6:5-6).
6. Our spirits died to sin, cannot sin, and have no desire for sin, but this doesn’t automatically mean that our souls and bodies will reflect that change. Our walking in resurrection life depends upon us knowing that our old man is crucified with him (Rom. 6:6). “Old man” refers to the spirit we had prior to salvation. Our old man no longer exists, because it’s been crucified, has died, and was buried with Christ. Our new man is now who we are in the spirit. What we’re dealing with is the spirit vs. the flesh.

4. A. According to Romans 6:1-2, can we just keep on sinning since we are saved by grace? (No)
B. Why not? (How can we who are dead to sin live any longer in it?)
5. A. According to Romans 6:3-6, what happened when we were born again? (We were baptized into Christ’s death)
B. What does manifesting this newness of life depend on? (How well we renew our minds)
6. A. What does the term “old man” refer to in Romans 6:6? (The spirit we had prior to salvation)
B. Does our “old man” still exist? (No, it’s been crucified, has died, and was buried with Christ)

Spirit vs. Flesh

Lesson 18

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Once you're born again, the rest of the Christian life is learning to walk in the spirit. It's letting what God has done through the new birth dominate you more than your physical, emotional realm. That's really how simple the Christian life is!

It may be simple, but it's not easy! One of the hardest things you'll ever do is learn how to turn from your natural self-rule and let who you are in Christ dominate instead. Why is it so difficult? You must perceive your spirit by faith in God's Word, because you can't see or feel it. Jesus' words are spirit and life (John 6:63). When you look into God's Word, you're looking into a spiritual mirror (James 1:23-25). The only way to really know what is true about who you are in the spirit is by believing God's Word. You must shift from walking by sight (sense knowledge) to walking by faith (revelation knowledge) (2 Cor. 5:7). All you have to do is start basing your thoughts, actions, and identity on who you are in Christ.

As long as your flesh is contrary to your spirit, you'll have conflict.

“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. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal. 5:16-18).

“Contrary” means they're “opposed, enemies, adversaries.” This conflict between spirit and flesh is your true spiritual warfare!

Each and every day of your life, the battle lies in whether you'll be dominated by your flesh or your spirit. Your flesh gravitates toward what it can see, taste, hear, smell, and feel. Therefore, it leans toward the influence of Satan and his kingdom, which operates in the physical realm. The devil is flesh-oriented, working through carnal, natural things. He tempts you to not believe God by things you can see and feel. On the other hand, the Lord operates in the spirit realm, primarily through His Word. Due to the nature of this intense, continual, inner conflict, you can't just do what you want to do. Either your spirit will dominate you or your flesh will instead!

You cannot please God in your flesh.

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:8).

It's not just hard—it's impossible. This means you must identify the flesh and deal with it!

Not “Sinful Nature”

Living after the flesh brings all forms of death.

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:12-13).

This not only means ultimate physical death (when your spirit and soul separate from your body) but includes everything that leads up to it.

“For the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).

Biblically speaking, any result of sin is a form of death. Depression, discouragement, anger, bitterness, fear, worry, sickness, poverty, loneliness, etc. are all death. If you live after the flesh, you’ll—be sick, impoverished, depressed, angry, etc.—die. Your flesh is Satan’s inroad to bring death into your life.

As a born-again believer, your flesh is made up of your soulish and physical realms. However, before you were saved, it also included your fallen human spirit.

My study of the *New International Version* of the Bible has shown me that it almost always substitutes the phrase “sinful nature” for what the *King James Version* translates “flesh.” This interpretation may work to a certain degree, but I’ve found it misleading in many places. For instance, in Romans, the flesh basically refers to either someone who isn’t born again or a born-again believer who isn’t living under the control of the Holy Spirit. The phrase “sinful nature” does not accurately convey this truth.

Newness of Life

As Paul taught how God now deals with people based on His grace, not their performance, this raised the question in Romans 6:1.

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

The answer, of course, is:

**“God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”
(Rom. 6:2).**

Your spirit is the part of you that’s dead to sin. Your body and soul can still do sinful things, but the born-again part of you cannot.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:3).

This is talking about being baptized into the body of Christ with the Holy Spirit being the baptizer—not water baptism (1 Cor. 12:13). There are different baptizers and different elements you’re baptized into. After professing faith in Christ, you should follow the Lord and be physically dunked underwater as a symbol of what took place at salvation. Also, Jesus will baptize you in the

Holy Spirit. But Romans 6:3 is referring to how, when you're born again, you are placed in Christ and He in you. You receive the Spirit of Christ and He receives you. When this baptism took place, you were baptized into His death.

Notice how being baptized into His death is automatic, but walking in newness of life isn't:

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4, emphasis mine).

Manifesting newness of life is something that should happen—but it depends on how you renew your mind.

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this” (Rom. 6:5-6).

Your spirit died to sin, cannot sin, and has no desire for sin, but this doesn't automatically mean that your soul and body will reflect that change. Your walking in resurrection life depends upon you:

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth, we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6).

“Old man” refers to the spirit you had prior to salvation. It's your spirit realm that was dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). Your old man no longer exists, because it's been crucified, has died, and was buried with Christ. The way some people teach the Scriptures would lead you to believe you have up to four spirits all living somewhere inside you at once (old spirit, new spirit, Spirit of Christ, and Holy Spirit). That's worse than being schizophrenic—it's multiple personalities! God's Word doesn't teach that!

Most Christians today believe they have an old nature and a new nature. That's wrong, because your old man died, and your new man is now who you are in the spirit. What you're really dealing with is the spirit vs. the flesh. However, I'm not going to verify this any further here, because my focus is showing you how to overcome the flesh. That's where we'll pick up on our next Lesson.

Spirit vs. Flesh

Lesson 18 – Outline

1. Once you're born again, the rest of the Christian life is learning to walk in the spirit, which is letting what God has done through the new birth dominate you more than your physical, emotional realm.
2. One of the hardest things you'll ever do is learn how to turn from your natural self-rule and let who you are in Christ dominate instead.
 - A. It's difficult because you must perceive your spirit by faith in God's Word because you can't see or feel it.
 - B. All you have to do is start basing your thoughts, actions, and identity on who you are in Christ.
3. As long as your flesh is contrary to your spirit, you'll have conflict.

“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. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal. 5:16-18).

- A. “Contrary” means they're “opposed, enemies, adversaries.”
 - B. This conflict between your spirit and flesh is your true spiritual warfare.
4. You cannot please God in your flesh.

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:8).

- A. Living after the flesh brings all forms of death.

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:12-13).

“For the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).

- B. Your flesh is Satan's inroad to bring death into your life.
 - C. As a born-again believer, your flesh is made up of your soulish and physical realms.
5. As Paul taught how God now deals with people based on His grace, not their performance, this raised the question in Romans 6:1:

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

A. The answer, of course, is:

“God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”
(Rom. 6:2).

B. Your spirit is the part of you that’s dead to sin.

C. Your body and soul can still do sinful things, but the born-again part of you cannot.

6. When you were born again, you were baptized into His death.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:3).

A. Being baptized into His death is automatic, but walking in newness of life isn’t.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4, emphasis mine).

B. Manifesting newness of life is something that should happen—but it depends on how you renew your mind.

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this” (Rom. 6:5-6).

7. Your spirit died to sin, cannot sin, and has no desire for sin, but this doesn’t automatically mean that your soul and body will reflect that change.

A. Your walking in resurrection life depends upon you:

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth, we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6).

B. “Old man” refers to the spirit you had prior to salvation.

C. Your old man no longer exists because it’s been crucified, has died, and was buried with Christ.

D. Your new man is now who you are in the spirit.

E. What you’re dealing with is the spirit vs. the flesh.

Spirit vs. Flesh

Lesson 18 – Discipleship Questions

1. According to John 6:63, what are Jesus' words?
2. What does James 1:23-25 reveal God's Word to be?
3. Second Corinthians 5:7 says that we walk by _____, not by _____.
4. According to Galatians 5:16-18, if we walk in the Spirit, we will not:
 - A. Fulfill the lust of the Spirit.
 - B. Fulfill the law of the flesh.
 - C. Fulfill the lust of the flesh.
 - D. Fulfill the law of the Spirit.
5. What effect does it have upon us when our flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit lusts against our flesh—one contrary to the other?
6. How do we avoid being under the Law?
7. According to Romans 8:8, who cannot please God?
8. Read Romans 8:12-13. What are the results of living after the flesh?
9. How, then, do we live?
10. According to Romans 6:23, what are the results of sin?
11. Read Romans 6:1-2. What question is normally raised once we begin to understand that God now deals with us based on His grace, and not our performance?
12. How does Paul answer that question?
 - A. For heaven's sake!
 - B. God bless you!
 - C. God forbid!
 - D. Lord willing!

13. Which part of our beings is dead to sin?
 - A. Spirit.
 - B. Soul.
 - C. Body.
 - D. None of the above.

14. According to Romans 6:3 and 1 Corinthians 12:13, what happened the instant we were born again?

15. What else does Romans 6:3 say occurred at this point in time?

16. Read Romans 6:4. Since Jesus died and was raised up by the glory of the Father, we also died and should what?

17. According to Romans 6:5-6, what must we know in order to be able to manifest this resurrection life?

18. What does Ephesians 2:1 reveal about our old man?

Spirit vs. Flesh

Lesson 18 – Answer Key

1. Spirit and life.
2. A spiritual mirror.
3. Faith, sight.
4. C. Fulfill the lust of the flesh.
5. We cannot do the things that we would.
6. Be led of the Spirit.
7. They that are in the flesh.
8. Death.
9. Through the Spirit, we mortify the deeds of the body.
10. Death.
11. Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound?
12. C. God forbid!
13. A. Spirit.
14. We were baptized into Jesus Christ.
15. We were baptized into His death.
16. Walk in newness of life.
17. That our old man is crucified with Christ.
18. He was dead in trespasses and sins.

Spirit vs. Flesh

Lesson 18 – Scriptures

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:23-25).

“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).

“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. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Gal. 5:16-18).

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:8).

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:12-13).

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

“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? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:1-3).

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13).

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. 6:4-6).

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1).