

The Flesh 11

Please refer to chapter 16 in the *Extraordinary* book, along with session 11 of the teaching series.

THE FLESH

In virtually every occurrence, the word *flesh* used in the New Testament is taken from the Greek word *sarx*... and generally refers to the **body** (as opposed to the soul or spirit); it's the symbol of what is *external*.¹

1. Out of all the things God created, man holds a position like no other. Genesis 1:27 declares that we were created *in the image of God*, and just as He is three in one, we are three in one—*body, soul and spirit*.

- a. Take a moment to stop and think about the fact that you've been created in the very like-

ness of God. Do you really believe this? How do your thoughts, words and actions prove that?

- b. Briefly describe the *function* of the spirit, soul and body and their relationship to each other.

- c. When it comes to our spirit, soul and body, what is the major difference between an *unsaved* person and a saved person? (See page 197 in the book.)

Check out Ephesians 2:1-6.

2. In light of all we've learned, it's important to understand how the **heart** fits into the overall picture. Read Hebrews 4:12 and explain the location and makeup of your heart. What is the only thing that can help you properly understand your heart's motives?

Voice of the Ages

"Christ's purpose for the world was that man, like Himself, should become the dwelling place of God.

It was purposed that mankind should be as holy and desirable a dwelling place of God as was Jesus Himself.²

...God lives in a man's *spirit*, the spirit of man reaching out into the boundless, touching the almightiness of God, discerning His nature, appropriating His power, securing His almightiness. God lives in a man's *flesh*, giving off a vibration of God-life, God-power, God indwelling in his blood, God indwelling in his hands, God indwelling his bones and marrow—a habitation of God."³

—John G. Lake

Heaven's APPEAL

Jesus answered, If a person [really] loves Me, he will keep My word [obey My teaching]; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home (abode, *special dwelling place*) with him.

—John 14:23 AMP

3. God desires you to experience *complete* salvation—spirit, soul and body. When Jesus died and rose again, He secured this privilege for every man and woman who puts their faith in Him. Briefly explain *how* and *when* each part of your being is saved. (See page 199 in the book.)

MY SPIRIT BEING SAVED: JUSTIFICATION

Check out John 3:3-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

MY SOUL BEING SAVED: SANCTIFICATION

Check out James 1:21; Philippians 2:12-13; John 17:17.

MY BODY BEING SAVED: GLORIFICATION

Check out 1 Corinthians 15:35-44; 2 Corinthians 5:1-3; Philippians 3:20-21.

“It’s obvious our present body is not redeemed but still corruptible. However, we’re no longer slaves to appetites, lusts, pride, selfishness, and other traits of fallen flesh, unless we *choose* to be. We can now draw upon the strength of our new nature and live by it rather than by the flesh. The determining factor is our *soul*, for it’s the **decision maker**.”

JOHN BEVERE

adapted from chapter 16

4. One day you will have a glorified body just like Jesus! For a preview, read these passages that talk about Jesus *after* He was raised from the dead. Look for both His *natural* and *supernatural* physical traits and senses and jot them down.

JESUS' BODY	IN YOUR GLORIFIED BODY, YOU WILL HAVE AND BE ABLE TO...
Matthew 28:9-10; Luke 24:36-40	
Luke 24:41-43 John 21:10-13	
John 20:16-17	
John 21:1-14	
John 20:19-20,26-27 Luke 24:30-31	

You can **check out** the full story of Jesus' interaction with His followers after His resurrection in Luke 24:13-53 and John 20:11-31; 21 and Acts 1:1-9.

5. Sadly, many Christians mistakenly credit their flesh with the dominating upper hand in their life, and because they *believe* their fleshly desires are hard to resist, they largely live under its control. It all comes back to *faith*—what you believe is what you get.

- a. From where does your *flesh* get its input and direction, and how does it gather it? What about your *spirit*—from where does it receive its influence?

- b. What is meant by your soul being the *decision maker*? How does it determine the progress of your sanctification?

Heaven's

APPEAL

So get rid of all uncleanness and the rampant outgrowth of wickedness, and in a humble (gentle, modest) spirit receive and welcome the Word which *implanted* and *rooted* [in your *hearts*] contains the power to save your **souls**. But be doers of the Word [obey the message], and not merely listeners to it, betraying yourselves [into deception by reasoning contrary to the Truth].

—James 1:21-22 AMP

- c. Is there any area of your life lacking self-control because you've put the blame on your flesh, thus living under its dominance? If so, what is that area and how is God calling you to action?

“Our **soul** is the only part of our being in which we determine the *rate* of salvation. We cooperate by *hearing*, *believing* and *obeying*, which in turn speeds up the process or, conversely, slows it down. The transformation of our soul is crucial to extraordinary living on earth, along with finishing well as believers.”

JOHN BEVERE

adapted from chapter 16

6. *Oneness* with the Father was a recurring theme in Jesus' teaching. He said, "I and My Father are *one*," "...the Father is in Me, and I in Him," "...the Father who dwells in Me does the works," and "...the Son can do nothing of Himself..." (John 10:30,38; 14:10; 5:19).
- a. Read 1 Corinthians 6:17-20 and Job 32:8 and write what these passages concerning the significance of your spirit mean to you:

Heaven's

APPEAL

Therefore, [there is] now no condemnation (no adjudging guilty of wrong) for those who are *in Christ Jesus*, who live [and] walk not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit. For the **law of the Spirit of life** [which is] in Christ Jesus [the law of our new being] has freed me from the *law of sin and of death*.

—Romans 8:1-2 AMP

7. Through repentance of sin and faith in Christ's completed work, you are *born again*. You are placed *in Christ* and are a new creation altogether. This means you are set free from the law of sin and death and are now under a new law—the *law of the Spirit of life*.

- a. Using the practical example of the law of gravity and Daniel Bernoulli's law of lift, explain how the law of the Spirit of life sets you free from the law of sin and death.

Voice of the Ages

"All the dealings of God with the soul of the believer are in order to bring him into *oneness* with Himself, that the prayer of our Lord may be fulfilled... Oneness with Christ must, in the very nature of things, consist in a Christ-like life and character. It is not what we feel, but what we are that settles the question. No matter how exalted or intense our emotions on the subject may be, if there is not a likeness of character with Christ, a unity of aim and purpose, a similarity of thought and of action, there can be no real oneness."

—Hannah Whitall Smith⁴

- b. Does the law of the Spirit of life do away with the law of sin and death? Can you as a believer be placed back under the control of the law of sin and death? If so, how?

- c. Have you been living more under the law of the Spirit of life, or the law of sin and death? How do your thoughts, words and actions prove that?

8. *Meditate on the message* of these passages regarding what it means to live according to the flesh and the Spirit:

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, (set their minds on) the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally (fleshly) minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

—Romans 8:5-6 NKJV

[words in parentheses added for clarity]

And set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth. For [as far as this world is concerned] you have died, and your [new, real] life is hidden with Christ in God.

—Colossians 3:2-3 AMP

- a. What is the Holy Spirit showing you about living according to the flesh?

- b. What is He revealing to you about living according to the Spirit?

- c. According to Romans 8:5-8, why are so many in the church living the same as those in the world? Do you find yourself in this position? If so, what must you do?

Heaven's

APPEAL

Those who look to him are
radiant; their faces are never
covered with shame.

—Psalm 34:5 NIV

9. The sobering truth is that the mind of the flesh is death and if we live according to the flesh we will die (see Romans 8:6,13). Therefore, in order to stay as far away from death as possible, it is imperative that we learn to live by the Spirit.

- a. Explain the two-fold remedy to keep you from gravitating toward following the flesh.

Check out Galatians 5:16.

- b. Read Romans 8:10-13. What is the Holy Spirit revealing to you in these verses about His power working in your *physical body*?

Voice of the Ages

“Our flesh is purged by the divine power being transmitted from our spirit through our soul into our body.

When we contemplate the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and think of the *radiant glory* that came through His *flesh*, not just the illumination of His Spirit, but the holy glory emanating through His flesh until He became white and glistening, until His face shone as the light, we begin to understand the transfiguring power of heaven.

It is that radiant purity of God that my soul covets. It is that *radiant power*, evidenced in the pureness of my spirit, my mind, and my very *flesh* that I long for.”

—John G. Lake⁵

Heaven's

APPEAL

God's Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go! This resurrection life you received from God is *not* a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?"
—Romans 8:14-15 The Message

“Life in Christ is *adventurous, exciting and expectant*. In a word—**extraordinary!** We are now free from the law of sin and death that once enslaved us. We no longer have to follow fallen flesh's desires. Our *spirit* along with our *body* has been affected by our new life in Christ. What an amazing salvation!”

JOHN BEVERE
adapted from chapter 16

10. God's Word declares that Jesus has set us free to live a life of freedom, but in order to *stay* free, we must take a stand spiritually and not be enslaved again by our sinful flesh or legalism (see Galatians 5:1). Clearly, we're not to use our freedom as a license to live carelessly.

- a. According to Galatians 5:13-14, for what are you to use your freedom?

- b. Have you ever fallen back into ungodly behavior you were once free from? What was it that re-ensnared you, and how did you get free?

Heaven's

APPEAL

Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And *use your whole body* as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God.
—Romans 6:13 NLT

FASCINATING FACT: THE FABULOUS FIVE

Our *five senses* give us some astonishing capabilities. We can see a candle's flame 30 miles away on a dark, clear night, and smell a single drop of perfume diffused in a three-room apartment. We can taste .04 ounces of table salt in 530 quarts of water. Our sense of touch can detect a pressure that depresses the skin .00004 inches on the face or fingertips. And we can tell where a sound is coming from even

when it arrives at one ear just .0003 seconds before its arrival at the other ear.⁶ Take these amazing abilities, surrender them to the Spirit that raised Christ from the dead living in you, and watch what He does!

11. In order to maintain true freedom in Christ and receive His grace, we must daily present our body to Him as a *living sacrifice* and cooperate with His Holy Spirit to *totally renew our mind*. In your own words, explain what these life-giving habits mean:

TO GIVE MY BODY TO GOD AS A LIVING SACRIFICE MEANS...

ALLOWING GOD TO TOTALLY RENEW MY MIND MEANS...

“I’ve learned through experience that when I read the Bible with a clear mind and heart, it opens up the channel of my spirit’s influence to my soul. It’s as if the passageway from my spirit to my soul is cleared so I can hear the instruction of the Holy Spirit. I’ve discovered that I see clearer, think better, and my body seems to have more life and empowerment. If I *don’t* hear the Word of God, then it seems as if the influence of the world creeps in and I find myself conforming more to the customs and ways of this world.”

JOHN BEVERE

adapted from chapter 16

12. The importance of feeding on God’s Word regularly cannot be stressed enough. Indeed, the truth of Scripture is the *power of God to bring salvation* to every area of your life (see Romans 1:16). *Get quiet before the Lord*. Ask Him to show you a creative plan for getting the Word into your mind and heart while you’re at home, in your car, at work and everywhere you go.
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Voice of the Ages

“The Spirit-filled walk demands...that we live in the Word of God as a fish lives in the sea. By this I do *not* mean that we study the Bible merely, nor that we take a ‘course’ in Bible doctrine. I mean that we should ‘meditate day and night’ in the sacred Word, that we should love it and feast upon it and digest it every hour of the day and night. When the business of life compels our attention, we may yet, by a kind of blessed mental reflex, keep the Word of Truth ever before our minds.”

—A.W. Tozer⁷

UNVEIL YOUR HERO

...found her life's calling at the
age of 12

—Mother Theresa

the bottom line

Jesus Christ has completely paid for our freedom. Through faith in Him, we have grace to live extraordinarily. But in order to remain in His grace and not give in to the desires of our flesh, we must live in the Spirit—giving our bodies to the Lord as a living sacrifice and allowing Him to live through us and totally transform our thinking.

Journal Your Journey

...everything—and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you.

—Ephesians 4:22-24 The Message

EYE-OPENERS

Proverbs 29:18 says that when we attend to what God reveals, we are most *blessed* (The Message). What new understanding is God revealing about the connection between your spirit, soul and body?

REVOLUTIONARY YOU

Is the Lord asking you to make any adjustments? Write out any new goals He's asking you to set in order to more consistently walk in the Spirit and not gratify the cravings of your flesh.

Prayer of Dedication

Father, please forgive me for living my life according to the flesh. I repent and humbly ask for Your grace to change. Help me focus on and live according to Your Spirit. Give me the strength and desire to honor You at all times in my body, the temple of Your Holy Spirit. I surrender my life to You as a living sacrifice, desiring to die daily to my fleshly desires (see 1 Corinthians 15:31). Help me cooperate with You and see my mind renewed by Your Word...in Jesus' name, Amen!

The Power of BEING PROACTIVE

Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God.

—Hebrews 12:2 The Message

I think you'll agree that any believer who has a true heart after God wants to please Him. Those devoted to the Father deeply desire to crucify their flesh and live daily in the Spirit. The question is: *how do we do it?* The answer is: by being *proactive*. In other words, **FOCUS** on the positive image of what we want to be, instead of the negative image of what we're trying to avoid.

As a believer, there's no greater image to set your gaze upon than Jesus. Although you can't see Him physically, you can look intently at Him in the pages of Scripture, studying how He lived.

A.W. Tozer, treasured author of more than 40 books and seasoned pastor of more than 30 years, had some keen insights concerning where our eyes need to be...

FOCUS

To concentrate attention or energy; a center of interest or activity.

To focus creates a condition in which something can be clearly apprehended or perceived; the state of maximum distinctness or clarity of an image.⁸ Interestingly, the original Latin root word for "focus" is a *hearth of fire*. When we focus on Jesus, an unquenchable *fire* of passion for Him is set ablaze!

...We are instructed to run life's race 'looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith' (Hebrews 12:2). From all this we learn that *faith* is not a once-done act, but **a continuous gaze of the heart** at the Triune God.

Believing, then, is directing the heart's attention to Jesus. It is lifting the mind to 'Behold the Lamb of God' (John 1:29), and never ceasing that beholding for the rest of our lives. ...Distractions may hinder, but once the heart is committed to Him, after each brief excursion away from Him, the attention will return again and rest upon Him like a wandering bird coming back to its window.

...The man who has struggled to purify himself and has had nothing but repeated failures will experience *real relief* when he stops tinkering with his soul and looks away to the perfect One. While he looks at Christ, the very things he has so long been trying to do will be getting done within him. It will be God working in him to will and to do.

Faith is not in itself a meritorious act; the merit is in the One toward Whom it is directed. Faith is a redirecting of our sight, a getting out of the focus of our own vision and getting God into focus.⁹

The proactive approach of fixing our eyes on Jesus means we are positive, upbeat and living life in a forward, purposeful direction. The opposite approach is to be *reactive* or *passive*. That is, instead of moving forward by faith, we sit still in neutral trying to hold our own, or even worse, we live life in reverse focused on all our failures and the negative things going on around us.

What is the Holy Spirit showing you through A.W. Tozer's excerpt?

How would you describe the way you live the majority of the time—*proactive* or *reactive*? Why?

If we live our Christian life in a reactive mode, we become *defensive* and tend to have a legalistic or religious outlook. What does a person with this view tend to focus on? According to 1 Corinthians 15:56, what does trying to follow a list of rules and regulations end up causing?

Name some practical ways you can **set your mind** on the things of the Spirit.

WHERE YOUR ATTENTION GOES, THE POWER FLOWS!

Indeed, what you focus on grows stronger. That being said, take the next week to meditate on these principles from God's Word. Read them *out loud* once in the morning before you start your day and once at night before you go to bed. Don't rush through them; take your time and focus on what you are saying. At the end of the week, journal any changes you notice in your attitude, thoughts, speech and actions.

MEDITATE on these PERSONALIZED PRINCIPLES

I am the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ my Savior and Lord.

—2 Corinthians 5:21

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God.

—Galatians 2:20-21 NIV

I think of and see myself as dead to sin—my relation to it completely broken. But I am alive to God, living in unbroken fellowship with Him. Sin no longer dominates and controls me since I am not under the law but under grace.

—Romans 6:11,14 AMP

I walk and live habitually in the Holy Spirit; I am responsive to and controlled by the Spirit. I do not gratify the cravings and desires of my flesh.

—Galatians 5:16 AMP

I am in Jesus Christ and I am not condemned because I follow the direction of the Holy Spirit, not the commands of my flesh. I am free from the law of sin and death and under the law of the Spirit of life.

—Romans 8:1-2 AMP

I walk by faith in God and His Word; I don't walk by what I see or hear in the natural.

—2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV

I do all things without grumbling, faultfinding and complaining against God and questioning and doubting myself and others.

—Philippians 2:14 AMP

I have the love of God and walk in the love of God. I am patient and kind, not envious, proud, rude, or self-centered. I am not easily angered and I do not keep a record of the wrong things others do. I hate evil and rejoice in the truth, always protecting, always trusting, always hoping, always persevering. God's love in me never fails

—1 Corinthians 13:4-8 NIV

I have strength to do all things and am ready for anything through Jesus Christ who infuses me with inner strength.

—Philippians 4:13 AMP

[note: these personalized verses are not the exact quote from scripture]

Date Started: _____

Speaking the proactive principles of God's Word over my life produced...

Date Completed: _____

Are there other scriptures you would like to see "fleshed out" in your life? Write them in a personalized format and begin confessing them out loud over your life every day. Watch what happens!

FOR FURTHER STUDY

GOD'S SPIRIT LIVES IN YOU!

Romans 8:9
1 Corinthians 3:16
2 Corinthians 6:16
Ephesians 2:22; 3:17-19

GOD'S POWER TRANSFORMS YOU

Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13
1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
Titus 3:5
Hebrews 13:20-21


SUBDUE YOUR FLESH

Romans 13:13-14
1 Corinthians 9:27

Galatians 5:24-25
1 Peter 2:11; 4:1-2

NOTES

1. James L. Strong, LL.D., S.T.D., *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990), adapted. 2. John G. Lake, *Spiritual Hunger, The God-Men and Other Sermons* (Dallas, TX: Christ for the Nations, Inc., 1979) p. 95. 3. *Ibid.*, p. 103. 4. Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 1998) pp. 187-189. 5. See note 2, p. 47. 6. Illustrations on the *Flesh* (http://bible.org/illus.php?topic_id=177, retrieved 6/24/09). 7. A.W. Tozer, *A Treasury of A.W. Tozer* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, Inc., 1980) p. 80. 8. Definition of *Focus* (<http://www.answers.com/topic/focal-point>, retrieved 6/26/09). 9. A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1993) pp. 84-85.



My task is to bring out in
the open and make plain what
God, who created all this in the
first place, has been doing in
secret and behind the scenes
all along. Through Christians
like yourselves gathered in
churches, this **extraordinary**
plan of God is becoming
known and talked about
even among the angels!

—Ephesians 3:9-10 The Message

extraordinary