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Putting Your Flesh In Its Place

Dear Friend,

There are certain messages we need to hear on a regular basis. One in particular is about putting our flesh in its place. *“Oh, I’ve heard that message before.”* That may be true, but I’m sure if you are like the rest of us you will agree that it never hurts to be refreshed on the importance of keeping our flesh in check.

We are no longer to be ruled over and controlled by the appetites of our flesh. Now that we are born again, children of God, we are supposed to be living out of our reborn human spirit instead of giving in to the whims of our soul and body. Having said that, don’t get the idea that the message in this letter is focused on sin, because it’s not. The message in this letter is about freedom, freedom over your flesh and what it takes to walk in that freedom and to no longer be ruled over by an unrenewed mind and a body that still wants to do bad things.

Some of you might be saying; *“I don’t believe this applies to me.”* If that’s what you’re thinking, then my next question to you is this. *“When’s the last time you put any kind of pressure on your flesh?”* You see just trying to live a clean life and do a few good deeds isn’t putting any pressure on your flesh.

Putting pressure on your flesh and forcing it to submit to your reborn human spirit can come in many different ways. Establishing a regular prayer life, particularly praying in tongues is one way to put pressure on your flesh. You are doing what Jude instructed us to do. (Jude 1:20)

“But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.”

In so doing you are applying pressure to the part of you that did not get born again. Likewise, meditating on God’s Word and fasting will also apply pressure against your flesh. *“To what end?”* As long as your flesh remains littered with

character flaws and behavior that doesn't resemble Christ you will remain under the influence of the enemy and susceptible to his manipulation.

Warning! Get ready; once you start attacking your flesh with the word of God you may discover issues lurking inside of you that you thought were long gone. I have found myself at one time or another being drawn by the Holy Ghost into a deeper communion with Him when all of a sudden I have a war with my own flesh. Things I thought were gone years ago seem to find their way to the surface and now I either stop praying or I keep putting pressure against it until finally that ugly, nasty, sick, repulsive, character flaw is destroyed once and for all.

Once you put your heel on the throat of that issue and destroy it once and for all, you're free. Until then, just tighten up that cinch because you are in for the ride of your life.

Some of you are asking yourselves; "*Why do I even care about putting myself through such torment?*" That's a very good question. It's much easier to just pretend everything is great and you have no issues rather than poking around on your flesh and making it mad.

Just keep putting on a nice outfit and listening to an inspiring message once a week and look like everything is great. All the while you are anxious about everything, in fear about losing your job, or being diagnosed with some incurable disease, your kids running off, and the list goes on. Looking like everything is great in your life when it's really a facade does you no good at all. I'd rather not pretend everything is perfect in my life, be real about the fact that I have issues, and go about dealing with them. Pretending so that everyone thinks I'm fine is really no different than being locked in a jail cell and the enemy has the key.

"How can you say that Mark? Jesus freed us." He most certainly did free us. So, if we are so free, why is it that we aren't seeing more of God's presence manifesting through us? Could it be that God knows us better than we know ourselves? He knows what is still lurking in our flesh that has yet to be put down, wrong thought patterns, selfishness, self-seeking, pride, arrogance, fearfulness, and on and on it goes. It is these issues still remaining in us that limit God from using us to the degree He really wants to use us.

Maybe you would like some examples of how dangerous it is to pretend you're okay when you are really not. Just ask some of the televangelists from the 1980's. You could see them on TV ministering to multitudes of people and all the while they were having illicit relations with women and even paying prostitutes. How in the world could this happen? Easy, they had talents and charisma and

could move audiences, but they had not addressed their own personal shortcomings. They could put on nice clothes and look the part of a preacher, but that did nothing to address the problems in their flesh.

In many of these cases, the devil saw the hypocrisy that was on display in their lives and it opened the door for him to attack. He came in and devastated their lives and families and all because they left themselves vulnerable by not dealing with what was lurking in their flesh.

One big concern I have today is how some preach a grace message that seems to alleviate any personal responsibility for addressing the weaknesses in our flesh. Thank God for His grace. But, if I ignore all that Paul said about dealing with my own flesh and instead say, “God’s grace will take care of all of my shortcomings”, then I am just burying my head in the sand and refusing to accept responsibility for dealing with my flesh. Here are a few verses that will help to show that we do in fact have a responsibility to deal with our flesh and put it in its place. (Colossians 3:5)

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Keep in mind, Paul was writing to the church at Colossi, Christians, telling them to put these things to death. You’re probably thinking to yourself; “Thank God I don’t have any of those problems. But wait a minute Paul doesn’t stop there. (Colossians 3:8-10)

“But now you also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth, (9) Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds; (10) And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.”

Notice that Paul’s instruction was for the person to “put off” or to cast off these things from them. First he told the people to “mortify” or put to death these works of the flesh and then he said to also cast off what seems to be a much more common list of fleshly sins, which most of us deal with from time to time. Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus almost the exact same thing in the fourth chapter, verses 22-27, where he told them to put off the old man and to put on the new man. Notice what he followed that up with in verse 27.

“Neither give place to the devil.”

I believe that without thinking about it we have given place to the devil in our lives by not putting the flesh in its place.

Never did Paul ever say; *“Oh, don’t be concerned about trying to get free of these sins of the flesh. Grace will take care of all that. Just relax and thank God for His grace and don’t be concerned about dealing with any of those issues.”* No, on the contrary, Paul told us to get this junk out of our lives. As for using grace as an excuse for not having to deal with our own flesh, this is what Paul had to say about it. (Romans 6:1-2)

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” (2) God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein.”

Please don’t think I’m saying that God can’t use you until you are perfect. If that were the case, God would have no one He could use because we are all imperfect people. Nor am I suggesting you adopt a “works” mentality and wrongly believe your efforts to put down the flesh are in some twisted way earning points with God so that eventually He will be satisfied and use you.

No, this is more about you dealing with your own flesh so that the enemy has less and less that he can use against you to destroy you.

Here is a word to the wise. The moment you decided, “Hey, I think I’m going to spend some time each day with Jesus.” Be prepared, the war is about to begin. How do I know this? I have experienced this far too times than I care to say. It might not happen immediately because the devil is crafty. But, take it to the bank, there will be resistance in some form or another because the devil must stop your forward progress anyway he can.

So, when the resistance comes, don’t back up, don’t give in. The devil is a bully and he will do everything he can to intimidate you into believing that you are no match for him. Well, thank God for James 4:7,

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

In closing, there are two thoughts I want to leave you with. First, when you refuse to give into the pressure the enemy is exerting against you and instead you turn to God with everything that’s in you, you are at that moment making the greatest strides you can possibly make putting your flesh in its place. The other

thought is this, you may have just done something you believe to be one of the worst things you have ever done since becoming a Christian. Praying in tongues is the last thing you want to do. You feel horrible. You're sure God is mad at you. But consider this, it is better for you, with all your shortcomings to pray than to not pray and remain the same.

~ Jesus Loves You!

Mark Jenkins