

Module : The Spiritual Man**Session 5** : Overcoming Carnality

Continued directly from Session 4

The sub-context in which the present study in this specific series of teachings is placed, is that of effective 'HEARING' of the WORD OF GOD that would produce faith resulting in obedience. We have taught that the spirit of man is the mechanism within which spiritual words from God are to be received, encoded, understood and then resolved to obey. The resolve to obey in the spirit must then filter through to the soul, which must follow through obediently within the body. Carnality poses a serious hindrance to this process. The carnal man who SETS his mind on the flesh cannot submit to God's Word or principles (Rom. 8:7). Carnality has detrimental effect upon the state of the soul.

Rehearse in your heart what carnality generally refers to: an examination of 1 Corinthians 3 and a host of Scriptures cited in our previous session will reveal that Carnality refers to:

- Unchecked sin and unbridled **fleshly lust**
- The state where **spiritual infancy is a preferred condition** with **no desire to proceed toward maturity.**
- Conditions of **strife, jealousy and division** - which manifest as **relational tension** and breakdown.
- **Sectarianism and schismatic tribalism**, based on loyalty to different spiritual fathers/grace carriers to the degree where it becomes divisive.

In addition to the list above, the following passage sketches out, in a broad sense, what the carnal man, who essentially 'loves the world and its lusts', is focused on:

1 John 2:15-17

- 15 Do **not love the world** nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
- 16 For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh** and the **lust of the eyes** and the **boastful pride of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world.
- 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever

Carnality is fueled by a desire for ...

- Protection (security; self-preservation)
- Provision and
- Pleasure (selfish and individualistic self-indulgence)

The carnal man will do whatever it takes to have these needs met. These priorities or obsessions of the carnal man are devoid of any reliance or dependence upon God. The self-absorption within the carnal man militates against his effective hearing, reception and obedience to God's Word.

Carnal men deliberately SET their minds on things of the flesh .	[Rom. 8:5a]
The mind set on the flesh ... a) leads to DEATH	[Rom. 8:6a]
b) is HOSTILE toward God	[Rom. 8: 7a]
c) DOES not subject itself to God's Word [Rom. 8:7b]	
d) is not ABLE to be subject to the Word	[Rom. 8:7c]
e) Cannot please God	[Rom. 8: 8]

As you continue reading, bear the following in mind:

- Your spirit should lead your soul;
- Your soul should blindly follow the leading of your spirit;
- BUT carnality of any kind erodes the strength of the soul.
- Carnality disempowers the soul to submit to God's Word that's comes through the agency of the Spirit of God within your spirit.
- Carnality empowers the mind of the flesh to yield to sin as its master.

CARNALITY CAUSES THE LEANNESS OF THE SOUL

In our previous session, we demonstrated how carnality wars against the soul, bringing torment upon it, to the degree where it is disempowered to follow or yield to the dictates of the spirit and still further, resigns itself yielding to the self-indulgent nature of fleshly, sinful appetites. Carnality seeks to master the soul into submission. The Holy Spirit, via your spirit, also seeks to master the soul into obedience. This is warfare. If the soul bows to the dictates of the fallen nature of the flesh, it erects a serious barrier to receiving any spiritual resource and benefit attendant with the hearing of the WORD OF GOD. We continue this discussion now, exploring the issue of the 'leanness of the soul'.

The 'mixed multitude', also called 'the rabble', was responsible for carnal influences upon Israel. At their exodus from Egyptian bondage, the 'rabble' went with them. These were non-Israelites, a heterogeneous bunch of people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and were not embrative of God's will or ways at any level – yet they journeyed with Israel out from Egypt toward the Promised Land.

Exodus 12:37-38

- 37 Now the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children.
- 38 A **mixed multitude also went up with them**, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock.

Mixed = ereb = a mixture, a mixed company, interwoven.

The primary meaning is a grouping of people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It was used of any heterogeneous band associated with the nation of Israel as it departed Egypt (Ex. 12:38); the tribes not aligned with any specific culture (Jer. 25:24); and the mingled people resulting from the Babylonian captivity (Jer. 50:37). By extension, the word was also used of interwoven material of varying fibres (Lev. 13:48).

Num 11:4 The **rabble** who were among them had **greedy desires**; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us **meat to eat**?"

Read the whole of Numbers 11.

Numbers 11:31-35

- 31 Now there went forth a wind from the Lord and it brought quail from the sea, and let them fall beside the camp, about a days journey on this side and a days journey on the other side, all around the camp and about two cubits deep on the surface of the ground.
- 32 The people spent all day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers) and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp.
- 33 While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very severe plague.
- 34 So the name of that place was called **Kibroth-hattaavah**, because there they buried the people who had been greedy.
- 35 From Kibroth- hattaavah the people set out for Hazeroth, and they remained at Hazeroth

Incited by the 'rabble' or 'mixed multitude' (Num. 11:4) element among them, Israel loathed the manna that God provided, calling it 'THIS manna'. There developed ingratitude and discontentment in reference to divine provision. Disappointment crept into their hearts and they began to long after Egypt and its food. They requested or desired meat. The people murmured both against God and Moses. Moses cried to the Lord, who instructed him to choose 70 men to provide supportive leadership with him over the nation. Afterward God provided meat in the form of an abundance of quail. Whilst in the process of eating the meat, the Lord sent a plague killing many people. The place where the dead were buried was called '**Kibroth Hattaavah**, which means '**graves of lust**' (Num. 11:34).

Whilst in the natural, Israel's request was for mere meat to be added to their diet, this was incited by the 'rabble' who had 'greedy/lustful desires' (Num. 11:4). There was also the comparison of their present diet with that of Egypt. Food has symbolic meaning indicating ideology, values and principles appraised by a specific nation or culture. Hence, Daniel refused to eat of the King's delicacies in Babylon. Israel's greed after meat was symbolically indicative of a desire to imbibe into their lifestyle, the varied and 'mixed' culture and ideology of nations. There seemed to be indications of gluttony evidenced as the quail fell. Gluttony at times highlights unbridled carnality and fleshly obsession.

Psalm 106:14, 15 describes the effect on the SOUL of Israel:

PSALM 106:7-16 (KJV)

- 7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked *him* at the sea, *even* at the Red sea.
- 8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.
- 9 He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.
- 10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated *them*, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
- 11 And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.
- 12 Then **believed they his words**; they sang his praise.
- 13 They soon **forgot his works**; they **waited not for his counsel**:

14 But **lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.**

15 And he gave them their request; **but sent leanness into their soul.**

16 They **envied Moses** also in the camp, *and* Aaron the saint of the LORD.

Leanness = rason = Thinness, skimpiness, scant

This word comes from a word, 'razah, meaning 'to emaciate', 'famish'.

The radical idea is that of abrading or "scraping;" and hence, it means to become lean, to waste away.

Leanness refers to weakness, frailty, and lack of strength.

Lusted = 'avaḥ = to wish for; to covet, (greatly) desire, be desirous, long for, to incline

Psalm 106:15

NASB So He gave them their request, But he sent **a wasting disease** among them.

MSG He gave them exactly what they asked for-- but along with it they **got an empty heart.**

BBE And he gave them their request, but sent a **wasting disease** into their souls.

CEV So you gave them what they wanted, but later you destroyed them with a **horrible disease.**

GW He gave them what they asked for. He also gave them a **degenerative disease.**

AMP And He gave them their request, but sent **leanness into their souls** and [*thinned their numbers by*] **disease and death.** **[See also Psalm 78:29-31.]**

The word 'leanness' implies two things:

Firstly, a **wasting away like that of the effect of a wasting disease that is degenerative.** It means that the effect of their exceeding lustfulness and craving for meat (which was symptomatic of unbridled carnality) on their souls was similar to the effect on the body when it wastes away by disease or lack of food. In the gratification of carnal desire, is a spiritual consequence that very few are aware of – the leanness of the soul.

Secondly, the word '**leanness**' **suggests that the soul becomes thin, scant, skimpy, weak, etc.** It becomes powerless to follow the dictates of the spirit within man and so obey the Lord. It also easily succumbs to the temptations in the flesh. Therefore, being 'emaciated', it has a reduced capacity to receive spiritual things from the Lord and also has a reduced ability to engage effectively in the world. From 'largeness', the soul has degenerated to 'smallness'. When the muscles in a physical body 'waste away', they lose their density and mass. **Muscle atrophy** is defined as a decrease in the mass of the muscle; it can be a partial or complete wasting away of muscle. When a muscle atrophies, this leads to muscle weakness, since the ability to exert force is related to mass. Similarly, when the soul becomes lean, its effective divinely- determined original functionality is compromised and may be lost.

1 Cor. 10:1-12;

1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea;

2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 and all ate the same spiritual food;

4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock, which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

- 5 Nevertheless, with **most of them God was not well-pleased**; for they were **laid low in the wilderness**.
- 6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not **crave evil things as they also craved**.
- 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY."
- 8 Nor let us **act immorally, as some of them** did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.
- 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents.
- 10 **Nor grumble**, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.
- 11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.
- 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

Jud 1:5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, **after saving a** people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently **destroyed those** who did not believe.

CARNAL COMPANY INCITES FLESHLY BEHAVIOUR

The 'rabble' influence attaches itself to you at the point of your breakthrough with the intent of eroding your capacity to maintain your breakthrough. If you accommodate 'the mixed multitude', the inception of your breakthrough will actually signal the commencement of your breakdown. Lot tags along with Abraham as he leaves Ur of the Chaldeans, but Abraham soon realised that LOT – with the many negative things he represents, could not be accommodated within his closest sphere of relationships, and was detrimental to his ultimate destiny in God. We must be careful of our associations and the kinds of people we carry along with us in our journey. Especially, we must **guard against intimate alliances with people that subtly lead us astray to sin lustfully, doubt God's providential ability as an orphan mindset would and incite us to grumble and murmur against authentic Divine leadership**. The 'rabble' enticed Israel to do all this.

Consider: **2 Tim 2:22** Now **flee from youthful lusts** and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, **WITH THOSE** who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Timothy is called upon to flee lusts and pursue righteousness with a specific calibre or quality of people, viz. 'WITH THOSE who call upon the Lord from a pure heart. Our associations and intimate alliances must have the same pursuit and objective as we do – i.e. the pursuit of righteousness. Amos 3:3 indicates that two people cannot walk together unless they agree. In the original Hebrew, this is literally read as follows: "**two cannot walk together unless they are focused upon the same destination**".

2 Cor. 6:14-18

- 14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?
- 15 Or **what harmony** has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

- 16 Or **what agreement** has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be MY people.
- 17 Therefore, **come out from their midst** and **be separate**, says the Lord. And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you.
- 18 And **I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me**, Says the Lord Almighty

Note here that after cautioning about unhealthy mixture in relationships in 2 Cor. 6 above, in the very Next chapter Paul speaks of defilement of flesh and spirit. The two are linked.

2 Cor.7:1 Therefore, having **these promises**, beloved, let us **cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit**, perfecting holiness in the fear of God

Rev 18:4,5 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities

The issue of accurate relationships is a broad topic and will be more thoroughly explored in a later module.

OVERCOMING CARNALITY

OVERCOMING CARNALITY: BY GRACE

GRACE IMPARTED TO YOUR SPIRIT CAUSES YOU TO LIVE SUCCESSFULLY IN IT AND SO DENY UNGODLINESS

Recall Paul's apostolic valedictions of "Grace be with your spirit" (e.g. Gal.6:18; Philemon 1:25; 2 Tim. 4:22). Grace in one's spirit is received through the Word of God (Acts, etc.). The light and revelation in one's spirit empowers one to lead your soul and flesh into submission to the Word of God.

2 Cor. 1:12 For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in **holiness and godly sincerity**, not in **fleshly wisdom**, **but in the grace of God**, we have **conducted ourselves in the world**, and especially toward you

Paul's claim to having his conduct in the grace of God is synonymously explained as also having it in HOLINESS and GODLY SINCERITY. **The claim to function in grace is a claim to function in purity and holiness.** Purity and holiness is the context that not just maintains the grace of God received, but also positions the recipient of this grace as a candidate for the receipt of more grace (Psalm 84:11).

Paul's ministerial behaviour was uncontaminated by the flesh because he limited his function to that which only the grace of God afforded and empowered him to do. His behaviour was circumscribed by the grace of God. To venture to operate outside of grace is to function in the flesh and so be subject to being dominated by fleshly dictates. In this sense, grace protects you. Hence we need to be filled with grace consistently and function in accordance with all that it affords us in Christ. This grace is the very substantive nature of God imparted to us through His word. It configures our identity as sons of God and empowers our effective execution of His will. The reception of grace also empowers us to overcome sin and carnality. This is a vast subject and will be dealt with under the theme of grace.

Titus 2:11,12

- 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,
 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

Instructs = paideuo = “to train children,” suggesting the broad idea of education.

Here it refers to “instructing” - of a training gracious and firm.

The word ‘instructing’ is also translated ‘**disciplining**’. The grace of God empowers the recipient with grace, thus enabling one to chastise oneself, instruct oneself or to correct oneself. Note that the emphasis is on ‘teaching us’ – i.e. we are able to bring ourselves into alignment. Grace is not grace if it does not teach you to deny ungodliness.

The verb ‘**instructs**’ also has the meaning “**to chastise with blows, to scourge,**”

Note also that this grace ‘**brings salvation**’. The fullness of God’s saving power is expressed when grace instructs you to deny ungodliness. Denying ungodliness has reference to refusing worldly desires on the one hand and living sensibly on the other.

Sensibly = sophronos = With sound mind, rationally, with a sober mind, soberly, moderately.

2 Tim. 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (KJV)

2 Tim. 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline (NASB)

Sound mind = sophronisomos = discipline, self control, sober mind

‘Sound Mind’ denotes a man of prudence and discretion. This is a reference to a well-balanced mind, under the right influences.

Note that God has given us a ‘**spirit**’ of a **sound mind** (KJV). We are exhorted by Paul to be “**renewed in the spirit of your minds**” (**Eph. 4:23**), a command which is couched between exhortations to live righteously in holiness (Eph. 4:25), without being corrupted by ‘lusts of deceit’ (Eph. 4:22).

The grace of God within our spirits empowers the mind of the soul to **be disciplined** and **well-balanced** or **sober** in its thinking as it engages life in the world. **'Sound mind' also implies self control**, i.e. the mind of our souls has the ability to be self-controlled in that it can assert itself in not yielding to the will of the flesh and rather willingly choose to submit to the leading of the spirit, which is imbued with grace from God's Word.

Grace teaches us to live sensibly, with soberness, seriousness, soundness of mind and moderation. The opposite of this is to live riotously, prodigally and disorderly. Grace brings a dignity to your life. You start to live a disciplined kingly lifestyle.

OVERCOMING CARNALITY: WALKING IN THE SPIRIT = OBEDIENCE

The Scriptures contain many keys to overcoming our carnality. One of the primary ways is to co-operate with the Holy Spirit by 'walking in the Spirit', and by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the flesh. This is an extensive subject – and brief reference is made to it here.

Romans 8:12-13

So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if **by the Spirit** you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Galatians 5:16-26

- 16 But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will **not carry out the desire of the flesh**.
- 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.
- 18 But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the Law.
- 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,
- 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,
- 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God**.
- 22 **But the fruit of the Spirit is love**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
- 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have **crucified the flesh with its passions and desires**.
- 25 If we **live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit**.
- 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another

You mortify the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit of God within you. Practically this happens when your spirit is empowered by words from God, which are spirit and life. All you must do is give this Word strong prevalence in yourself, such that the soul and body are brought into alignment with the Word. This is 'walking in the Spirit'. Grace imparted to one's spirit empowers you to walk obediently in that which the Word commands or expects of you. The decision to OBEY is a determination to align the soul and body to the spirit. Recall that the soul is purified through obedience (1 Pet. 1:22). One has got to richly feed one's spirit with principles from the Word until it becomes developed in uncontestable strength so that no protest from the soul or flesh will prevail against it. A fleshly mind that fuels and

accommodates carnality will give strength to the fleshly nature which in turns brings torment, vexation and leanness to the soul – eroding its capacity to submit to the spirit.

‘BY THE SPIRIT’: Note again: **Rom 8:12b** : “if **by the Spirit** you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

The works of the flesh (KJV) – or ‘deeds of the body’ are mortified (put to death) by the power of the Spirit in you. This requires co-operation between you and the Holy Spirit. The more you obey, the more you become empowered by the Spirit.

Acts 5:32 And we are witnesses of these things; and so is **the Holy Spirit**, whom God has given to those **who obey Him**.

1 Peter 1:1,2 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those ... who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by **the sanctifying work of the Spirit**, **to obey** Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Ezekiel 2:1,2 Then **He said** to me, Son of man, **stand on your feet** that **I may speak with you!** As He spoke to me the **Spirit entered me** and **set me on my feet**; and I heard Him speaking to me

Note here, that **AS** God spoke, instructing Ezekiel to ‘stand’, in the process of the speaking of the Lord the Spirit entered him and virtually empowered or capacitated him to stand. Note that Ezekiel is to be positioned in a standing position in order to receive the Word of God. Standing denotes readiness and vigilance. As the instruction to stand is released, the Spirit entered Ezekiel and actually positioned him on his feet – thus fulfilling the commandment of the Lord. Every command of God is fulfilled through the enablement of the Holy Spirit activated within us, as we position ourselves within a posture of obedience. This is a partnership between our willingness to obey and the Spirit energising for the same.

The realm you feed or sow in will be the realm that predominates within you – either Spirit or flesh.

Gal. 6:8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life

Walking in the Spirit is nothing more than living out obediently what you have heard. Every time you obey you empower your spirit into dominance over the soul and flesh more and more.

Become a bond-slave of obedience to God by the Spirit.

Rom 6:16-18

16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as **slaves for obedience**, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, **either of sin resulting in death**, or of **obedience resulting in righteousness?**

- 17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,
 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness

OVERCOMING CARNALITY – PURSUE LOVE

The objective of obedience in bringing purity to the soul, is so that we could express LOVE, the highest and most accurate of divine nature (1 Pet. 1:22).

1 Pet.1:22 Since you have **in obedience to the truth** purified your souls **FOR** a **sincere LOVE** of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.

1 Tim 1:5 But the **goal of our instruction is LOVE** from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

2 Tim 2:22a So **flee youthful passions** and pursue righteousness, faith, **LOVE** ...

One of the things that Timothy is encouraged to pursue after he flees youthful lusts, is LOVE. Carnality hinders the maturation of true Divine love. Also, the strong development in love acts to prevent the subtle slipping into various kinds of carnality or lust. The opposite of every one of the practical expressions of love recorded in 1 Corinthians 13 is a carnal expression. (See to the Scripture further on).

Amazingly, love is one of the **first things mentioned as FRUIT of the Spirit**. Love is a first-fruit of the Spirit. As a 'first-fruit', it is indicative of the quality of the harvest to follow. If love is perfected, the other eight fruit of the Spirit will naturally result.

With perpetual and consistent obedience, one cements in place certain aspects of the Divine nature, from which others are attained almost effortlessly, as one builds on another, with the highest expression of it being LOVE (see 2 Pet. 1:7 below).

2 Peter 1:2-8

- 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;
 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own **glory and excellence**.
 4 For **by these** He has granted to us **His precious and magnificent promises**, so that **BY THEM** you may become **partakers of the divine nature**, having **ESCAPE the corruption that is in the world by lust**.
 5 Now **for this very reason also**, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,
 6 and in your knowledge, self- control, and in your self- control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,
 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, **LOVE**.

- 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ

Note here that we ESCAPE the corruption of lust in the world through partaking of the divine nature through the Word of God (precious and magnificent promises). Neglect the Word and your obedience thereof, and you are disempowered in your quest to be uncontaminated by the world and the things in the world (lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life). Again I stress, from this platform of perpetual obedience, the ultimate end goal is to develop the ultimate indication of Divine nature – and the greatest of all enduring spiritual virtues, viz. LOVE – see verse 7 above. Love for God and love for your fellow man is a good position from which one may successfully maintain a life free from carnality.

Here a brief reminder of the practical outworking of love from 1 Cor. 13:4-8a:

“Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

Anyone who does all of the above, is progressively bringing mastery and complete renewal to his soul and flesh.

OVERCOMING CARNALITY: GIVE NO PLACE FOR THE DEVIL

If you are prone to fall in a particular area, do not place yourself in a position where you will have to deal with the temptation of that sin. Do not position yourself toward Sodom as Lot did. Abstain from all appearance of evil. Do not give the devil legal grounds to attack you. What legal hold does the enemy have on you? Does he have something ‘in you’ or ‘on you’ that is preventing your breakthrough that the Word of God has designed for you?

John 14:30: “I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;

AMP I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me. [*He has nothing in common with Me; there is nothing in Me that belongs to him, and he has no power over Me.*]

MSG I'll not be talking with you much more like this because the chief of this godless world is about to attack. But don't worry - **he has nothing on me, no claim on me.**

NIV I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. **He has no hold on me,**

'has' = echo = to have (hold) in the hand, in the sense of wearing,

to have (hold) possession of the mind.

to be closely joined to a person or a thing

to have – own – have possession of a thing

Thus Jesus is asserting the fact that the enemy has nothing in common with Himself; that the enemy does not possess any aspect or domain of His life; and that He is not in any align to or joined to him.

***Barnes' Commentary:** There is in me no principle or feeling that accords with his, and nothing, therefore, by which he can prevail. Temptation has only power because there are some principles in us which accord with the designs of the tempter, and which may be excited by presenting corresponding objects until our virtue be overcome. Where there is no such propensity, temptation has no power. As the principles of Jesus were wholly on the side of virtue, the meaning here may be that, though he had the natural appetites of man, his virtue was so supreme that Satan "had nothing in him" which could constitute any danger that he would be led into sin, and that there was no fear of the result of the conflict before him.*

Paul encourages us not to give **'PLACE'** to the devil.

Ephesians 4:26-28

- 26 Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,
 27 and **do not give the devil an opportunity**. (NKJV : Nor give **place to the devil**)
 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather **he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good**, so that he will have **something to share** with one who has need.

Place = topos = a post, a locality, occasion for acting, license, room, opportunity, a condition

Eph 4:27 **AMP** Leave no [such] **room or foothold** for the devil [give no opportunity to him].
 CEV and don't give the devil **a chance**.
 NKJV nor give **place** to the devil.

The term 'foothold' in general refers to a secure position from which further progress can be made. Note the context of the verse – it speaks of warnings against carnality and expressions of the flesh.

Eph. 4:17-32

- 17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you **walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk**, in the futility of their mind,
 18 being darkened in their understanding, **excluded from the life of God** because of the ignorance that is in them, because of **the hardness of their heart**;
 19 and they, **having become callous**, have given themselves **over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity** with greediness. {Hardness/Rebellion leads to Unbridled Sensuality}
 20 **But you did not learn Christ in this way**,
 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,

- 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,
- 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, *{In the ATTITUDE of your mind}*
- 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.
- 25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.
- 26 BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger,
- 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity.
- 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.
- 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.
- 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.
- 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Thus we must not provide the devil a foothold – a platform from which he may advance his work in us.

Rom 12:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts

OVERCOMING CARNALITY: ABSTAIN FROM ALL APEARANCE OF EVIL

1 Thess. 5:21-24 (KJV)

- 21 **Prove all things**; hold fast that which is good.
- 22 **Abstain from all appearance of evil.**
- 23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 24 Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

1 Thess. 5:21-24 (NASB)

- 21 But **examine everything carefully**; hold fast to that which is good;
- 22 **abstain from every form of evil.**
- 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

Abstain = apechomai = to hold one's self off, refrain, abstain.

Form/appearance = eidos = The external or outward appearance, form figure, shape;
The act of seeing, the thing seen; "that which strikes the eye, that which is exposed to view.

This word has two nuances, viz. **(1) the act of seeing** and **(2) the thing seen**. Again we should watch what we permit our eyes to view. Recall how that the soul of righteous Lot was tormented by what he SAW and heard of Sodom's lawless deeds. Do not expose your eye to evil – in any FORM or APPEARANCE. ABSTAIN from it.

1 Thess. 4:3-5 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you **abstain from sexual immorality**; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God

1 Pet 2:11,12a Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to **abstain from fleshly lusts** which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles ...

2 Tim 2:19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to **abstain from wickedness**."

2 Tim 2:22 Now **flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness**, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Flee = pheugo = to flee away, seek safety by flight; metaphorically to flee (to shun or avoid by flight) something abhorrent, especially vices; to be saved by flight, to escape safely out of danger

Hence in fleeing youthful lust we are fleeing from spiritual danger. 'Youthful lust' is not only to be understood exclusively as a reference to sexual lust – but is also refers to **self-assertion and self-indulgence, selfish ambition, headstrong obstinacy, etc.**

The example of Job

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and **turning away from evil**.

Job 28:28 "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; And to **depart from evil** is understanding."

Job 1:8 The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and **turning away from evil**

OVERCOMING CARNALITY: CLEANSE YOURSELVES AS VESSELS OF HONOUR and PURSUE HOLINESS

2 Tim 2:19-22

- 19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to **abstain from wickedness.**"
- 20 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.
- 21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.
- 22 Now **flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness**, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

House = oikia = a house, an inhabited edifice, a dwelling, the inmates of a house, the family.

In the house there are two strains of people, viz. vessels of honour and vessels of dishonour (wheat and tares; Cain and Abel; Isaac and Ishmael; Jacob and Esau, etc.).

Two categories of vessels are depicted :

- (1) Vessels of Dishonour – Wood and Earthenware
 - (2) Vessels of Honour – Gold and Silver
- Vessels of Honour are further described as :
- a) Sanctified
 - b) Useful to the Master
 - c) Prepared for Every Good Work

Honour = time = reverence, respect, esteem, a *value*, that is, *money* paid, *valuables*; by analogy *esteem* (especially of the highest degree), or the *dignity* itself: - honour, precious, price; a valuing by which the price is fixed; honour which belongs or is shown to one; deference, reverence

Dishonour = atimia = dishonour, ignominy (causing public disgrace or shame), disgrace, indignity, reproach, shame, vile

Sanctified = hagiazo = to render or acknowledge, or to be venerable or hallow; to separate from profane things and dedicate to God; consecrate things to God; dedicate people to God; purified, consecrated

Useful = euchrestos = easily used; profitable, meet for use, serviceable

2 Ti 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for **he is useful** to me for service.

MKJV Only Luke is with me. Take Mark *and* bring *him* with you, for **he is profitable** to me for *the* ministry.

PREPARED = hetoimazo = To make ready, prepare; to make the necessary preparations, get everything ready.

Metaphorically, drawn from the oriental custom of sending on before kings on their journeys persons to level the roads and make them passable; to prepare the minds of men to give the Messiah a fit reception and secure his blessings.

MASTER = despotes = a master, Lord – one who has undisputed ownership and control

The demand to be vessels of honour fit for use is sandwiched between two commands to be pure, viz. “Abstain from wickedness” (v.19) and “**Flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness**, faith, love *and* peace, **with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart**” (v.22). Timothy is to flee from some things and to pursue others. There cannot be an effective pursuit of that which is commendable/beneficial unless there is clear ‘fleeing’ of that which detrimental. We are to flee from the one in order to escape it and to pursue toward the other in order to attain it. Deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Christ. Ruthlessly reject the one and relentlessly pursue the other.

2 Tim 2:22 (AMP) **Shun** youthful lusts and flee from them, and **aim at** and pursue righteousness (all that is virtuous and good, right living, conformity to the will of God in thought, word, and deed); [*and aim at and pursue*] faith, love, [*and*] peace (harmony and concord with others) in fellowship with all [*Christians*], who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.

Note the amplified rendering of this verse: “SHUN ... and AIM AT ...”

Joseph’s Example:

Gen 39:11-12

- 11 Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside.
- 12 She caught him by **his garment**, saying, "Lie with me!" And **he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside.**

Potiphar’s wife grabbed Joseph by his garment and suggested sexual sin. ‘Garment’ alludes to **identity, authority, empowerment for function, mantle of grace and anointing**, etc. These are all compromised when we give into fleshly sins. Vessels of honour are focused on the execution of the Master’s will and realise that carnality threatens this, and so they regard with disdain and hatred sin and sinful acts related to the fleshly nature.

1 Pet. 4:1-2 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the **same purpose (mind)**, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, **2** so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh **no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.**

OVERCOMING CARNALITY: HATE INIQUITY AND LOVE RIGHTEOUSNESS

Jesus was anointed above His companions because of His hatred for iniquity and love for righteousness.

Heb. 1:8-9

- 8 But of the Son *He says*, "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE **RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER** IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.
- 9 "YOU HAVE **LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS**; THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS."

Jesus HATED iniquity or lawlessness (i.e. operating 'without law' or Godly principles); but He LOVED righteousness (practical expressions of holiness). For this He was ANOINTED above His brothers or companions – i.e. anointed much more than they. Kings and priests were consecrated to their office by pouring oil on their heads; see Lev 8:12; Num. 3:3; 1Sa 10:1; 2Sa 2:7; Psalm 2:2; Isa 61:1; Act 4:27; Act 10:38. The expression "to anoint," therefore, means to consecrate to office, or to set apart to some public work. This is evidently the meaning in Psalm 45, from which this scripture is quoted, where the whole language refers to the appointment of the person to the kingly office. Being set apart for special use or service is the preserve of those who clearly hate lawlessness and love righteousness. And it is not just being set apart for this service or work, but with it God gives 'an oil of gladness' - a joy and delight that comes from doing the work of God.

Psalm 40:7-8

- 7 Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me.
- 8 **I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart.**"

Psalm 40:8 (CEV) 'I enjoy pleasing you. Your Law is in my heart.' "

1 Tim. 4:12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith and **purity**, show yourself an example of those who believe.

OVERCOMING CARNALITY : LAY ASIDE WEIGHTS AND SIN THAT EASILY TRIP YOU

Heb. 12:1

KJV Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin** which doth so **easily beset us**, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

NASB Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also **lay aside every encumbrance and the sin** which so **easily entangles** us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

AMP THEREFORE THEN, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [*who have borne testimony to the Truth*], let us **strip off and throw aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and that sin** which so **readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us**, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us,

CEV Such a large crowd of witnesses is all around us! So we **must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially the sin** that **just won't let go**. And we must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us.

ISV Therefore, having so vast a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, and **throwing off everything that hinders us and especially the sin** that so easily **entangles** us, let us keep running with endurance the race set before us,

Lay Aside = **Apotithemi** = to put off, cast off.

ENCUMBRANCE / WEIGHT = **OGKOS** = whatever is prominent, protuberance, bulk, mass, hence a burden,
Impediment, a *mass* (as *bending* or *bulging* by its load), that is, *burden (hindrance)*

EASILY ENTANGLES = **euperistatos** = easily surrounding or encompassing, easily besetting

Note here the effect of weights and sins are the same. 'Weights' might not be sin but the effect is the same

as sin. Both weights and sin must be consciously LAID ASIDE. Many times we insist upon entertaining a particular attitude, behavior, practice or activity which might not be outrightly sinful, yet might not be expedient or beneficial to our spiritual growth. If something is not aiding your growth in God, it is probably subtly impeding it.

Consider :

1 Cor. 6:12 All things **are lawful** for me, but **not all things are profitable**.
All things are lawful for me, but I will not be **mastered by anything**.

MSG Just because something is **technically legal** doesn't mean that it's **spiritually appropriate**.
If I went around doing whatever I thought I could get by with, I'd be a slave to my whims.

1 Cor.10:23 All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but **not all things edify** .

OVERCOMING CARNALITY: PUT ON CHRIST & MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH

Rom. 13:12-14

- 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the **deeds of darkness** and put on the armor of light.
- 13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.
- 14 But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts

Provision = pronia = forethought. i.e. provident care or supply.

The Greek word, pronia, is derived from 'pronea', which means 'to know ahead'. Hence 'making provision for the flesh' alludes to giving conscious forethought to the deliberate planning in one's mind for the engagement in some kind of carnal act or expression. If you make provision for the flesh – you surely have no hope to fight against it. Give it no fore-thought – do not plan for it, but rather soak and saturate your mind on things of the Spirit (we deal with how to do this in our study on Meditation). Do not sow to the flesh and reap corruption and spiritual death; rather sow to the Spirit, and reap peace and eternal life (the God-quality or kind of life).

Eph. 4:22-25

- 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,
- 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,
- 24 and put on the new self, which in **the likeness of God** has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.
- 25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another

Accessing 'Zoe' Life

Note: Dr Sagie Govender, who does the work of an Apostle, has an excellent series of teachings entitled 'ZOE LIFE'. Part of this deals with other keys to overcoming the flesh. I highly recommend the reader access these teachings. See www.apostolicleader.co.za. From Romans chapter 8, he discusses nine ways in which you can lay hold of ZOE life – the abundant life that overcomes sin and carnality, and access the fullness of one's spiritual inheritance in God. Here below, I simply list these keys.

9 Ways in Which You Can LAY HOLD of Eternal Life.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Walk according to the Spirit | 6. Crying Abba Father |
| 2. Spiritual mindedness | 7. Groaning |
| 3. Dwell or Abide in Him | 8. Loving God |
| 4. Mortify the Deeds of the Body | 9. Conquering Through Him. |
| 5. Being LED by the Spirit | |

QUESTIONS AND ISSUES FOR PERSONAL REVIEW AND GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Rehearse the broad meaning of carnality, isolating some of its varied expressions.
2. The effect of fleshly pursuits upon Israel's soul was one of 'leanness'. What does this mean?
3. Who were the 'RABBLE' in the midst of Israel and what was their effect upon the nation? What lessons are to be gleaned by us from examining the carnal influence of the 'rabble' on Israel?
4. Explain how grace empowers us to overcome carnality.
5. What does 'walking in the Spirit' practically mean?
6. How does the pursuit of and maturation in love for God and man help to prevent slipping into carnality?
7. Summarise in a succinct way the following keys to overcoming carnality: Abstain from all appearance of evil; hate iniquity; lay aside weights and sin; make no provision for the flesh.
8. Rehearse in your mind what effect carnality has on the soul's ability to follow the leading of one's spirit.

N.B.: I strongly recommend that the reader listen to audio recordings of the five sessions of **Thamo Naidoo's** teaching on the 'Spiritual Man' delivered at his 20th Apostolic School of Ministry – Nov. 2011. This teaching provides accurate perspective to the Divine design for the position and function of man's spirit and soul in his body. Go to www.thamonaiddoo.com; 'Downloads'; 'ASOMs'; '7-12 November 2011'; then each day there is one session on the subject. **Also** consult **Dr SY Govender's** teaching on 'ZOE LIFE' from www.apostolicleader.co.za. In our present study at hand, we simply discuss some of the issues relevant to this topic in as far as it has reference to HEARING God's Word correctly, with a view to obeying it fully from the vantage point of an enlightened spirit.

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