

Forward Series

Moving your Flesh Forward

Philippians 3:13-15 ESV Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and **straining forward** to what lies ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **15** Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

What is the Flesh?

In the Bible flesh is defined in three ways:

- 1) The physical bodies of humans or animals. When God removed a rib from Adam with which he created Eve, he closed up the place with flesh (Gen. 2:21).
- 2) Sometimes the word “flesh” refers to the whole person and/or the totality of human kind.
- 3) In the NT “flesh” refers to our carnal nature which is contrary and in conflict with the Spirit of God.

Galatians 5:16,17 NIV So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

The flesh is that part you which refuses to submit to the control of the Holy Spirit.

The flesh is that part of you that resist the FORWARD move of the Spirit in your life.

The flesh and the passions of the flesh are not only contrary and resisting God’s work in your life, they are waging war against your new man.

1 Peter 2:11 ESV Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

The works of the flesh.

Galatians 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, **21** envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these...”

The Manifestations of the Flesh

- Sexual and Chemical Addictions
- Self-Worship (idolatry) which leads to Isolation
- Sorcery - Control and Manipulation
- Strife, Anger, and Division that comes from competition

What drives the flesh? Emptiness!

This is why we are encouraged over and over to be filled with the Spirit. Because the flesh seeks to fill the emptiness with destructive sinful pleasures which brings us into slavery.

Ephesians 5:18,19 NIV And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit **19** speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord...

There is a connection with sincere heart-felt worship and being filled with the Spirit! 1 Corinthians 14 Paul talk about singing with his understanding and singing with his spirit.

The War Within

1) What is the purpose of this war? What is at stake?

- a) Death - Romans 8:6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Romans 8:13,14 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

- b) Slavery - Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

2) But War is not a bad thing.

Note: often time God's people get discourage because they get tired of fighting the flesh.

- a) War is not a bad thing because if there is no war then you are not alive unto him.

The sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life is ---- The War Within!

- b) What is bad is the acceptance of the flesh.

When you lose your sensitivity to the Spirit you find serenity in the flesh.

The Forward Walk of the Spirit

The Promise: Galatians 5:16; 18 NIV So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law

1) To move forward we must focus on the Spirit's work not our own.

- a) I heard a preacher say once, "The Spirit is not a leader like the pace car in the "Daytona 500." He is a leader like a locomotive on a train. We do not follow in *our* strength. We are led by *his* power.

So "walk by the Spirit" means stay hooked up to the divine source of power and go wherever he leads.

- b) Our job is to stay hooked up to the Spirit.... Coupled to the Holy Spirit.

2) To move forward we must bear the fruit of the Spirit instead of the flesh.

Galatians 5:22,23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

- a) Again, the emphasis is not on your fruit but the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit is the one who produces fruit.

- b) Perhaps Paul got this image from Jesus. You recall John 15:4, 5: “Abide in me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.”
 - i) So “walk by the Spirit” means “abide in the vine.” Keep yourself securely united to the living Christ.
 - ii) Don’t cut yourself off from the flow of the Spirit.

The work of the *Spirit* is emphasized, yet the command is for *us* to do something. *Our* wills are deeply involved. We must want to be coupled to the locomotive. We must want to abide in the vine. And there are some things we can do to keep ourselves attached to the flow of God’s power.

Two Actions to Take:

- 1) Disconnect from locomotive of your past. “... *but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and **straining forward** to what lies ahead...*”
 - a) There are no doubt things in your life that are empowered by the enemy. And as long as you stay couple with those things, you will be pulled in the wrong direction.
 - b) Examples:
 - i) Painful Memory.
 - ii) Bad Relationship.
 - iii) Dangerous addiction.
- 2) Re-connect your spirit to your calling.

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- a) Once you have disconnected your flesh from power your past struggles you must re-connect the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

KNOW GOD; FIND FREEDOM; DISCOVER PURPOSE; MAKE AN IMPACT

- b) Set some Goals that lead you toward your calling
 - c) Strain for it --- press forward in it.
 - i) Stop being wimpy about your spiritual condition. Its gonna take effort!
 - ii) He’s is your helper! ---- use him!
- Help Me Holy Ghost!