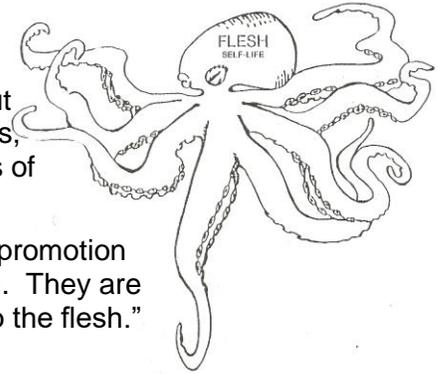




Nature of the Flesh Handout



1. Definition of Flesh

- Definition of flesh: Flesh is the condition where you are living out of your resources to cope and deal with life, solve your problems, protect yourself from pain (rejection), and meet your core needs of love, acceptance, value, identity, security, and adequacy.
- All forms of self-sufficiency, self-reliance, self-protection or self-promotion are attempts to meet your core needs and avoid pain (rejection). They are Biblically called “walking after the flesh” or “walking according to the flesh.”
- Read and discuss Galatians 5:16-21.
- Note: Flesh is not removed at salvation; it is a way of living independently of God.

2. Examples of the “deeds of the flesh”:

- Anger, temper tantrums, negative body language (sighing, dirty looks), silent treatment, manipulation, sarcasm, guilt trips, passivity, threats, escapism (reading, activities, adultery), internalizing, criticizing, nit picking, avoiding, indecisive, trying harder, pleaser, etc.
- These are all just forms of control that eventually fail.
- Our temptation is to say these behaviors are the problem and then attempt to stop them.
- The “deeds” of the flesh are not the problem!
- The self-life is the problem!
- Flesh cannot be crucified or killed. (Living independently of God can only be denied).

3. Characteristics of Flesh (Self-Sufficiency and Self-Effort)

#1 Flesh is a controller

1. to keep God or others from getting too close. (Fear vulnerability and intimacy.)
2. to keep others from running your life.
3. to keep circumstances from overwhelming or controlling you.
4. to keep emotions suppressed.
5. to protect failures, flaws, and flesh from being revealed.
6. to protect from (more) rejection.

#2 Flesh is opposed to yielding control to the Spirit and always resists God (Gal 5:19, Rom 8:6-8).

#3 Flesh holds you captive and victimizes you.

- You are controlled by the past, emotions, substances, people, addictions, etc.

#4 Flesh is deceptive. (It “looks” good. Positive flesh is encouraged and even applauded.)

- Work-a-holism, perfectionism, being a pleaser, etc.

#5 Flesh builds its identity on performance, not on the indwelling life of Christ.

#6 Flesh is proud, always right, self-important, never the problem, is confident in your abilities.

#7 Flesh is a rejecter and isolator. (We withdraw from people or cause them to withdraw from us.)

#8 Flesh will eventually self-destruct.

Flesh results in CONFLICT and FRUSTRATION and ANGER!

4. What Jesus said of the flesh.

- Matt 18:4 Whoever humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
- Luke 14:11 Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled; he who humbles himself will be exalted.
- John 6:63 Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

5. The Prodigal Sons (Read Luke 15:11-32)

The Younger Son's Flesh	The Older Son's Flesh	The Father's Love
Withdrew physically	Withdrew emotionally	Present, available, involved
Self-Indulgent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spending, carousing, gambling, passive, careless 	Self-Denial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Obedient, pleaser, critical, nit-picking, scorecard, spiteful 	Unconditional love for both sons
Wasteful	Diligent	Unconditional acceptance
Demanding, argumentative	Defensive, self-sufficient	Unconditionally blessed both sons
Resisted Authority	Resented Authority	Understanding
Self-abasing	Proud	Patient
Self-Centered	Self-centered	Sovereign
Flesh resulted in frustration!	Flesh resulted in anger!	Flesh resulted in God sending Christ as our Savior and life!

7. Which son does your flesh most resemble?

8. Notice that the flesh produces everything but the fruit of the Spirit!

- Read and discuss Galatians 5:16-21 (negative flesh).
- Read and discuss Galatians 5:22-25 (fruit of the Spirit).
- Read and discuss Philippians 3:4-11 (positive flesh).

"Flesh is all that I am as I operate apart from Christ." Lee LeFebre