

# Real Change 7

Dealing with the “Flesh”

Part 1

# exercise

**A journey of change:  
Changing character, not behavior**

**I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

**Galatians 2:20**

# We died, were buried and resurrected

## Romans 6

We were united (fused) with Jesus in His crucifixion, burial and resurrection

Our old self and our sins remain in the grave

Our new man was raised into newness of life

All of our sins are gone

“I will remember their sins and lawless deeds no more.” Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Hebrews 10: 17, 18

My old self was crucified, buried and  
my new self rose with Christ  
Romans 6: 3 - 8 *(ESV)*

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, we too might walk in newness of life

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For the one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

We don't have two selves in us  
“sin nature” is not in our vocabulary

Our old man (who we were in Adam) is  
dead

Our new man is in Christ

Christ lives in me (Gal 2: 20)

Jesus brings His holiness, love, faith into  
me

God now sees me as righteous and holy

My sin is no longer separates me from God

So you must also reckon yourselves dead to sin  
and alive to God in Christ Jesus Rom 6: 11

Think over the past week.. Is this how you  
felt?

Why do I still sin?

Why do I so often feel that God is “over  
there” on the other side of a mountain of  
my sin

Where is the “victory” in Christ here, now, in  
this life (is it only in the future, in heaven)?



Paul says “take it to the bank” that you are dead to sin and alive to God!

Unless I understand my old man is dead, I am a new creation (2 Cor 5: 17), Jesus brings His holiness into me, I will never have victory over sin, I will feel defeated and cover up

I make promises, I try, I fail, I feel defeated, and I can never let anyone know who I am

I can change some behaviors temporarily, but I can't change my character

“Christ lives in me” yet why do I still sin?

We don't understand “the flesh” and “sin”

So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. Romans 7: 17

“The flesh” is not my old self (man) who died

# What is “the flesh”?

The word “flesh” is the Greek word “*sarx*”

The NIV translates “*sarx*” as “sin nature”

The phrase “sin nature” can lead to faulty thinking, i.e., *it is in my nature to sin*

We generally give a negative meaning to *sarx*, but like many words has different meanings

*Sarx* (flesh) can mean a physical body, and is applied to Jesus (came in the flesh)

We aren't talking of a physical body

Some definitions of *sarx*

The sensuous nature of man, his animal nature

The animal nature with cravings which incite to sin

In some places it is translated “carnal”

Given rise to the phrase “Carnal Christian”

There is only one category of Christian

Two poor concepts: *sin nature and carnal C.*

We generally think of evil actions when we think of “the flesh”

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

Galatians 5: 19, 20

Avoid these things, and we avoid the flesh, right?

# What if the flesh is more?

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble

1 Corinthians 1: 26

Wise, mighty, noble

Are these character traits we equate with evil?

Is our concept of the flesh limiting?

How do we avoid something if what don't really know what it is?

# Paul describes his flesh: Philippians 3

We ... who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

# The flesh is more than we think

Paul listed everything that made him successful in his culture; we judge his culture as wrong

We miss how his description applies to us

It is easy to think of the flesh as doing things that God would not want us to do

But the flesh is being successful?

Wise? Noble? Powerful?

What is putting confidence in the flesh?



# We can walk by the flesh or the Spirit

Who walk not according to the flesh but according to 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 set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God

# Walking is daily living

walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

Galatians 5: 16 - 17

# Two ways of living

We can live our lives either by the flesh or by the Spirit

If we think the flesh is “the animal nature with cravings which incite to sin” we will spend most of our lives walking in the flesh but not realize that we are

We interpret life either through the flesh or through the Spirit

# Flesh: definition

The ways and patterns by which you have attempted to get all your needs supplied instead of seeking Christ first and trusting him to meet your needs.

Gillham: *Lifetime Guarantee*

Personal techniques for meeting your own perceived needs apart from Christ... relying on your own ability instead of God's

McVey: *Grace Walk*

# The flesh is how I live my life

Until we accept what our flesh is, and see how it operates, our character will not change, we will miss out on what God offers now

We will not know true freedom in Christ

How does our flesh develop?

Our flesh is so comfortable, so natural

Overcoming the flesh is by walking in the Spirit