

**Agape House of Worship
Midweek Service & Bible Study**

Theme: Believer's Conduct Part 2: Addressing Carnality

Text: 1 Cor.3:1-3, Rom.8:5-8, Gal.5:16-26

Date: Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Facilitator: Pastor Jide Lawore

Summary From Part 1: Last week we looked intently into the meaning of the word conduct (Which is the manner in which a person behaves, especially on a particular occasion or in a particular context; we learnt that it is good to conduct ourselves in ways that is pleasing to God; since God has a plan for us and that plan includes the way we live our lives as His followers. Knowledge of godly conduct helps us to live a godly life; and godly life is a life that is submitted to God's will. A Godly life is a life that no longer seeks satisfaction through sinful lifestyles; we discussed how we need to conduct ourselves with outsiders or unbelievers; our relationship with believers; our relationship in the world; relationship with spiritual leaders; church family and our communion with God. We also addressed our walk expectations; which is to walk worthy of the Lord to fully please Him in all things; bearing fruits in every occasion. Colossians 1:10.

It is important to note that genuine Faith will result in good works according to James 2:14

Three Categories of Men as Described By Paul

1 Corinthians 2:14-15 *"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one."*

- 1) **The Natural Man:** An unsaved man without the Holy Spirit and unable to understand or discern spiritual things. Governed purely by 5 senses: Taste, Touch, Smell, Sight and Hearing.
- 2) **The Spiritual Man:** A saved man, with the Holy Spirit and governed by the Spirit.
- 3) **The Carnal Man:** A saved man with the Holy Spirit but governed by the flesh.

Question: How do you distinguish between a natural man and a spiritual man?

Characteristics of A Carnal Christian:

Carnal: The word "carnal" is translated from the Greek word sarkikos, which literally means "fleshly."

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 *"Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ. ² I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, ³ for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are **jealous of one another and quarrel with each other**. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world? 1 Cor. 3:1-3 NLT*

Romans 7:14-20 *"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! NKJV*

1. A carnal believer is saved but still acts like the people of the world in a lot of ways.
2. A carnal believer is not ready for the solid food of the Word of God. They do not want the discipline brought in by the word of God. **2 Timothy 4:3** - *For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.*
3. Carnal believers are self-centered. They are focused on self-preservation, pleasure.
4. A carnal believer is mostly controlled by their sinful nature.
5. A carnal believer enjoys strife and divisions
6. Some carnal believers desire to do the things of God but lacks the power and the discipline to follow through.
7. A carnal believer is always at war on the inside of them. They are frustrated and "wretched".

The Battle Between the Flesh and the Regenerated Human Spirit

Before we became believers, we were entirely governed by our flesh (sinful nature). When we become believers, our spirit (inner man or being) was made alive in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:1-5). This presents a problem for a new believer, which sometimes lasts longer than it should. While our regenerated spirit wants to please God, our flesh wants to do the opposite. (Please itself or the world). A believer's primary goal is to empower the regenerated spirit by feeding and nurturing it while starving the flesh by denying it of its desires. When a believer succeeds, he becomes spiritual; when they do not, he remains carnal. Here are a few scripture passages that address this issue:

Romans 7:18-22 "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.....22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Romans 8:5-8 "Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. 7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

Galatians 5:16-17 "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Please note that in real life this is not as clear cut as it seems. A believer does not suddenly switch from being carnal to being spiritual in one day, it is more of a process than an instantaneous act. Becoming increasingly spiritual and decreasingly carnal is a process known as sanctification. Until we are delivered from our sinful flesh, there will be outbreaks of carnality. For a genuine believer in Christ, though, these outbreaks of carnality will be the exception, not the rule.

Question: How long should it take a believer to move from being carnal to being spiritual?

Danger of Remaining Carnal

1. Carnality prevents a believer from the supernatural life that God intended. 1 Corinthians 3:1, Galatians 4:1
2. The frustration (guilt, prayerlessness etc.) of a carnal believer can cause him/her to go back to the world.
3. A carnal believer is not a good witness to the world. **Romans 2:24** "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.
4. Too many carnal believers will destroy the church and prevent the church of fulfilling its potential. **Hebrews 5:12** *You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. NLT*

How to Overcome Carnality

1. Recognize that carnality is a problem and refuse to be content with it.
2. Feed your spirit man and starve the flesh of its desires. What we feed grows. Every time you deny yourself of the cravings of the flesh you disempower your flesh.
3. You feed the inner man by regularly reading, studying, and meditating on the word of God. 1 Peter 2:2
4. Practicing a life of faith. Walking by faith is denying the flesh and empowering the spirit. Hebrews 11:6
5. Practice the Fruit of the spirit. Galatians 5: 22 "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control". 1 Timothy 4:7 ".....exercise yourself toward godliness"
6. Set your affections on the things above. Colossians 3:1-3.
7. Submit to the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit. James 4:7

Conclusion: The key thing to understand is that while a Christian can be, for a time, carnal, a true Christian will not remain carnal for a lifetime. Since eternal security is a fact of Scripture, even the carnal Christian is still saved. Salvation cannot be lost, because salvation is a gift of God that He will not take away (see John 10:28; Romans 8:37-39; 1 John 5:13). 1 Corinthians 3:15.