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# STRUGGLES AND MANIFESTATION OF THE WAR BETWEEN THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

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## OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Defining the Flesh and the Spirit
3. Biblical Foundation
4. The Nature of the Conflict
5. Manifestations of the Flesh
6. Manifestations of the Spirit
7. Strategies for Overcoming the Flesh

*"Good morning, everyone. Today, we will explore a topic that is deeply relevant to our Christian walk: 'Struggles and Manifestation of the War Between the Flesh and the Spirit.' This subject addresses the internal conflict that every believer faces between our sinful nature (the flesh) and the guidance of the Holy Spirit."*

Understanding this battle is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it helps us recognize the root cause of many of our struggles and temptations. The Apostle Paul vividly describes this inner conflict in **Romans 7:19-20**, where he acknowledges his desire to do good but finds himself doing the opposite. This resonates with our own experiences of

wanting to live righteously but often falling short.

Secondly, by comprehending this battle, we can better identify the manifestations of the flesh in our lives—those thoughts, actions, and attitudes that pull us away from God. Awareness of these manifestations enables us to confront and address them more effectively.

## Our Objectives today:

"The objective of today's lesson is to equip each of us with the knowledge and strategies to overcome the flesh and live by the Spirit. By the end of this lesson, we should feel more confident in recognizing the manifestations of the flesh, understanding the role of the Holy Spirit, and applying biblical principles to live a Spirit-led life.

We will cover the following key areas:

1. Defining the Flesh and the Spirit: What do these terms mean, and how do they impact our daily lives?
2. The Nature of the Conflict: Understanding why this struggle exists.

3. Manifestations of the Flesh and the Spirit: Identifying the evidence of each in our lives.

4. Strategies for Overcoming the Flesh: Practical steps to live by the Spirit.

5. Encouragement and Assurance: Finding hope and strength in God's promises.

## DEFINING THE FLESH

### WHAT IS THE FLESH?

In the New Testament, "the flesh" often refers to our human nature apart from God's influence, which is prone to sin and rebellion against God's will. It represents our fallen, sinful nature that seeks to satisfy selfish desires.

**Romans 8:5-8 (NIV):** *"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. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God."*

### Impact on Our Daily Lives:

The flesh influences our actions, thoughts, and attitudes, often leading us away from God's will. It manifests in various forms such as lust, greed, anger, and pride. Recognizing the influence of the flesh is the first step toward overcoming it.

## DEFINING THE SPIRIT

### WHAT IS THE SPIRIT?

The "Spirit" refers to the Holy Spirit, who indwells believers and guides them towards righteousness. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live according to God's will, producing godly characteristics in our lives **Galatians 5:22-23**.

**Romans 8:9 (NIV):** *"You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ."*

### Impact on Daily Lives:

Living by the Spirit means allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and influence our decisions, attitudes, and behaviors. It results in the production of the fruit of the Spirit, which are godly attributes that reflect Christ's character. This leads to a life of peace, joy, and alignment with God's purposes.

## CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT:

**Galatians 5:17 (NIV):** *"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."*

Understanding this conflict helps us recognize why we experience internal struggles and equips us to make conscious choices to follow the Spirit rather than succumbing to the flesh.

## THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

The conflict between the flesh and the Spirit originates from humanity's fall into sin. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, sin entered the world, and humanity inherited a sinful nature. This sinful nature, or the flesh, is in constant opposition to the desires of the Holy Spirit.

Scriptural Reference:

**Genesis 3:1-7 (NIV):** *Describes the fall of humanity and the introduction of sin into the world.*

**Romans 5:12 (NIV):** *"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned."*

### **The Internal Battle**

The conflict between the flesh and the Spirit is an internal battle within every believer. While the Holy Spirit guides believers towards righteousness, the flesh pulls them towards sin. This ongoing struggle is a part of the Christian experience.

**Romans 7:22-23 (NIV):** *"For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me."*

**Galatians 5:17 (NIV):** *"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 CONSEQUENCES OF LIVING ACCORDING TO THE FLESH

Living according to the flesh leads to spiritual death and separation from God. It manifests in various sinful behaviors and attitudes that are detrimental to spiritual growth and our relationship with God.

**Romans 8:6-8 (NIV):** *"The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God."*

The flesh manifests in various sinful behaviors and attitudes, such as immorality, idolatry, jealousy, and anger. These acts hinder spiritual growth and damage relationships with God and others. **Galatians 5:19-21**

### **The Benefits of Living According to the Spirit**

Living according to the Spirit results in life and peace. It enables believers to produce the fruit of the Spirit, which reflects the character of Christ and leads to spiritual maturity and a closer relationship with God.

The Spirit produces *godly* characteristics, known as the fruit of the Spirit, which include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These qualities reflect the character of Christ and lead to spiritual maturity. **Galatians 5:22-23**

**Romans 8:5 (NIV):** *"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."*

### **MANIFESTATIONS OF THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT**

The flesh manifests in various sinful behaviors and attitudes. These acts are contrary to God's will and hinder spiritual growth. Recognizing these manifestations helps believers understand the areas in their lives that need transformation.

**Galatians 5:19-21 (NIV):** *"The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."*

**Colossians 3:5-9 (NIV):** *"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices."*

**Sexual Immorality and Impurity:** Engaging in or entertaining thoughts and actions that are sexually immoral or impure. **Idolatry and Witchcraft:** Placing anything above God in our lives or engaging in practices contrary to God's commands.

**Relational Sins:** Hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy.

**Substance Abuse:** Drunkenness and indulgence in substances that lead to loss of control and moral decay.

### **Manifestations of the Spirit**

The Spirit manifests in godly behaviors and attitudes known as the fruit of the Spirit. These characteristics reflect Christ's nature and are evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in a believer's life.

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

**Ephesians 5:9 (NIV):** *"For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth."*

### **Key Points:**

**Love:** Selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional love for God and others.

**Joy:** Deep, abiding happiness in the Lord, independent of circumstances.

**Peace:** Inner tranquility and harmony with God and others.

**Forbearance:** Patience, especially during difficult situations and with challenging people.

Kindness: Acting with compassion and generosity towards others.

Goodness: Moral integrity and benevolence.

Faithfulness: Loyalty and trustworthiness in relationships with God and others.

Gentleness: Humility and consideration in dealing with others.

Self-Control: Discipline over one's desires and actions.

## **PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING THE FLESH**

### ***Understanding the Power of the Holy Spirit***

The first step in overcoming the flesh is recognizing that believers have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, providing the power and guidance needed to live a godly life. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to resist sinful desires and cultivate the fruit of the Spirit. **Romans 8:11 (NIV):** "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you." **Acts 1:8**

### ***Renewing the Mind***

Transforming one's life begins with the renewal of the mind. Believers are called to reject worldly patterns and instead focus on godly thoughts and attitudes. This renewal helps in aligning one's desires with God's will.

**Romans 12:2 (NIV):** "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and

*approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."* **Philippians 4:8**

### ***Prayer and Fasting***

Prayer and fasting are powerful spiritual disciplines that help believers draw closer to God and gain strength to resist the flesh. They provide an opportunity to seek God's guidance, confess sins, and receive His grace.

**Matthew 26:41 (NIV):** "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." **Isaiah 58:6**

### ***Accountability and Fellowship***

Having accountability partners and engaging in fellowship with other believers provides support and encouragement. Accountability helps in staying committed to spiritual goals, while fellowship fosters growth through mutual edification.

**James 5:16 (NIV):** "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." **Hebrews 10:24-25**

### ***Studying and Applying God's Word***

Regularly studying the Bible and applying its teachings equips believers with the truth needed to combat the lies of the flesh. God's Word serves as a guide and a source of strength in the battle against sin.

**Psalms 119:11 (NIV):** "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

### ***Walking in the Spirit***

Walking in the Spirit involves daily submission to the Holy Spirit's guidance. This means making conscious decisions to follow God's will and allowing the Spirit to influence thoughts, words, and actions.

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

**Romans 8:14 (NIV):** "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God."

### **Practicing Spiritual Disciplines**

Engaging in regular spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible study, worship, and fellowship strengthens the believer's relationship with God and helps maintain a Spirit-led life.

### **Scriptural References:**

### **Conclusion**

There's No One today who will say Boldly I have Completely Conquered the Flesh. Living a victorious life in the Spirit involves daily reliance on the Holy Spirit, renewing the mind with God's truth, engaging in prayer and fasting, seeking accountability and fellowship, studying and applying God's Word, and embracing one's identity in Christ. These practical strategies enable believers to resist the flesh and cultivate the fruit of the Spirit, reflecting Christ's character in their lives.

In this journey, it's essential to remember that the victory has already been won through Jesus Christ. As believers, we are not alone in this battle; we have the Holy Spirit within us, empowering us to live according to God's will.

Let us be encouraged by the promise of **Philippians 1:6**, which assures us that "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." As we continue to walk in the Spirit, we can trust that God is faithful to complete the work He has started in us. May we strive daily to live by the Spirit, glorifying God in all that we do.

**1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NIV):** "Pray continually."

**Psalms 1:2 (NIV):** "But whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night."

**Hebrews 10:25 (NIV):** "Not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

### **FINAL THOUGHTS AND ENCOURAGEMENT**

Encouragement: The battle between the flesh and the Spirit is a common struggle for all believers. Encourage them to rely on the Holy Spirit, apply the biblical principles discussed, and support one another in their spiritual journey.