

## The Spiritual War in Your Home, Part 5 | the double-agent enemy

### I. When it refers to our spiritual enemy, the word “Flesh” describes our sin nature.

- Romans 5:12
- Because Adam was the representative of all mankind, and because we were all in Adam when he sinned, we all are stained by sin. We can't escape it. Our sin makes us enemies of God who are absolutely incapable of pleasing Him. And our sin will send us to hell.
- This is the whole reason Jesus came. He lived a perfect life, died, and rose again because there was no way we could ever be free from our sin outside of His redemptive work, but this is a discussion for another episode.

### II. The Flesh isn't trying to kill us so much as it makes us dead to begin with.

- Colossians 2:13; Romans 8:6
- The Bible frequently uses the language of death to describe not only the future of unbelievers, but also their present state.

### III. Nothing good comes from the Flesh.

- Romans 8:7-9; Romans 7:18; Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 64:6
- Jeremiah uses different terminology when he tells us that our heart is desperately wicked and deceitful, and Isaiah informs us that our absolute best attempts at righteousness are nothing more than filthy — bodily fluid soaked — rags.
- Self-esteem is the polar opposite of humility. Self-esteem is a modern term for pride.
- Psalm 138:6; Proverbs 3:34; Matthew 23:12; 1 Peter 5:5, and James 4:6 all communicate the idea that *“God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”*
  - Merriam-Webster defines self-esteem as being *“a feeling of satisfaction that someone has in himself or herself and his or her own abilities.”* Notice the self-focus.
  - The word translated “exalt” in Matthew 23:12 refers to lifting something up. It talks of me attempting to lift myself up by my own merits — to raise my own happiness in and of myself.
  - But Jesus says that people who try to exalt themselves will be humbled. The only way to truly be exalted, to be esteemed, is to humbly esteem God — allowing Him to be the one to exalt us. God will always exalt us higher than we could ever esteem ourselves.
  - My joy and peace doesn't flow from me. It can't. It doesn't matter how much I esteem myself, I will never experience the edifying and encouraging elation of salvation until I esteem God first and foremost above all else.
  - This is why in Luke 14:26-27 Jesus says, *“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate . . . his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”*
- Absolutely nothing good comes from my Flesh. I am only able to do good and please God when I submit to His will and am empowered by His grace.

#### IV. The Flesh is our most deadly enemy.

- No one in hell will be able to blame Satan for being there. No one will be able to blame the World for being there. No one will legitimately be able to blame the mean kids at school or their parents or their pastors. Everyone in hell will be there because they submitted to their own sinful delusion instead of God. They — like Satan — tried to exalt themselves above the throne of the one, true God.
- We've talked about how Satan can possess people and influence world culture and use all of that to tempt us to sin. But James reminds us why we sin. James 1:14-15 teaches, *"each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."*
- It's *my* sin that will kill me.
- And even if I'm born again and in no danger of an eternity in hell — relational carnage, painful consequences, and personal instability will only ever come as a result of the sin that was conceived in and by my personal lusts.
- We'll talk more about the temptation of Christ in a later episode, but basically these two words refer to temptation that comes from the outside of me and temptation that comes from the inside of me. Satan and the World can tempt me all day long, but if I don't want any part of what they're selling, I'm not going to give in because I'm not tempted from the inside of me.
- For example, someone can tempt me all day long to take drugs, and I never will because there is absolutely no appeal. Nothing in me wants to take drugs. But there are plenty of wicked things that do appeal to me. The things that I want — in my sinful flesh — are the things to which it's really hard to say no.
- Now, Satan is smart enough that he doesn't waste his time tempting me with drugs. He uses that on people who struggle with that. But he knows me too well. So he takes his cues from my own sin struggles. He uses his propaganda machine which surrounds me all day long and tempts me from the outside with the same things that tempt me from the inside.
- And when Satan works in this world to surround me with all right right temptations, and my sinful Flesh latches on to and lusts after the sinful things I think will make me happy, that's when sin is conceived and death results.
- Self, the Flesh, my own sin nature is the one who deals the death blow.

#### V. Important Considerations Concerning the Flesh

- Your family members are not the enemy.
- Yours and your family's sinful Flesh is the enemy.
- No, I'm not falling into a Gnostic heresy that all that is physical is sinful while all that is spiritual is good.
- No, I'm not suggesting that your children's sinful Flesh is somehow unique and distinct from who they are.
- The issue we face with this spiritual enemy is akin to how we treat cancer. Sin is not a disease we catch and which makes us a victim and therefore inculpable, but it needs to be spiritually healed in the same way we physically deal with cancer.