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FLIMSY FLESH

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FLIMSY FLESH

Flimsy Flesh

Foundation Scripture: **John 3:6** – *What is born of [from] the flesh is flesh . . .*

I. Depending On The Flesh Always Leaves Us Disappointed.

A. The flesh can muster enough energy to get started, but it cannot maintain that energy long enough to finish.

1. **Luke 14:26-30** – Don't start without checking to see if you have what it takes to finish.

B. What it takes to finish is God!

1. **Hebrews 12:2-4** – Jesus is the Author and the Finisher.
2. He is not obligated to finish anything He did not start.
3. Jesus would not have been able to ENDURE the Cross, had it not been God's will for Him to go there.
4. The shame, hostility, opposition, weariness, exhaustion, and struggle would have been too much. **These things are too much for the flesh, but never too much for GOD.**

C. **John 17:4-5** – Jesus said, “Glorify Me, Father; for I have finished the work You gave Me to do.”

1. Many people want to go to the next level of glory, but they have not finished the work assigned to the last level yet.

- D. **Acts 20:24** – Paul said he wanted to **FINISH HIS COURSE WITH JOY.**
1. He was not moved by any of his opposition.
- E. **Even if what we are doing was initiated by God and had His Anointing all over it in the beginning, we must depend on Him all the way through to be able to finish.**
1. Some get started right; and then when they see everything is going well because GOD is blessing them, they begin to think it is them. They get independent, and **that independent spirit causes them to fail.**
 2. **Daniel 4:2-3, 30-31** – We see a major attitude change that took place somewhere between **Verses 3 and 30.**

What happened? The king got full of himself!
 3. **I Samuel 15:1-23** – Saul started out right, but got full of himself!

II. God Fills Empty Vessels With Himself.

- A. **II Kings 4:1-6** – As long as we are empty of self, God will fill us with His oil (His Spirit) and enable us to be a blessing to others.
- B. **Luke 11:1-10** – The man who knows he does not have what it takes without God will be persistent in prayer and end up with his needs met.
- C. Persistence in prayer proves we are dependent on God.
1. When we start getting too busy to pray, it is because we are not desperate enough.
 2. Desperate people always find time to seek God!
 3. **Prayerlessness is a sign of an independent, self-sufficient spirit.**

D. **Ephesians 3:19** – Paul prayed that the people would be bodies wholly filled with God Himself.

E. **Philippians 4:13** – We are self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency.

1. Not in ourselves and not in our own strength
2. Not in our friends
3. Not in our bank account
4. Not in our experience – Sometimes we may think that we can pull something off because we have done it or something similar in the past.

I have preached thousands of times, but I need God every time I open my mouth.

5. Not in our natural talents
6. Not in our education

F. **Philippians 3:3** – Put no confidence in the flesh.

1. Why? **Because the flesh is flimsy!!**
2. **Isaiah 40:6** – All flesh is as frail as grass.
3. **James 4:13-16** – We are but a wisp of vapor, here today and gone tomorrow.

III. Depending On The Flesh Leaves Us Dry, Miserable, And Frustrated.

A. **Jeremiah 17:5-9** – No good comes from leaning on the arm of the flesh.

1. The heart is deceitful above all else.
 - a. Sometimes we must seriously examine our motives to discover if a thing is God’s will or our own will.

- b. When we want something in a strong way, it is quite easy to deceive ourselves.
- B. **II Chronicles 32:7-8** – When God is with us, nothing can defeat us.
 - 1. An enemy can come against you with the arm of the flesh, but God’s arm will always prevail.
- C. **Psalms 44:1-8** – The arm of God saved them, not their own arm.
- D. **II Chronicles 20:15** – . . . *the battle is not yours, but God’s.*
- E. **I Peter 5:5b** – God Himself opposes, frustrates, and defeats us until we humble ourselves and lean on Him.

IV. Satan Tries To Frustrate Us During Building Times.

- A. **Ezra 4:1-5** – When we won’t join with the enemy, he tries to frustrate our purpose and us.
- B. **Nehemiah 2:17-18** – Nehemiah determines to build up the wall of Jerusalem.
 - 1. **Nehemiah 2:19-20** – Immediately, the enemy rose up with scorn against them.
 - 2. **Nehemiah 4:1-4, 7-9** – Nehemiah battled the enemy with prayer.
 - 3. **Nehemiah 4:14-15** – Nehemiah was certain that if God had begun it, He would finish it.
- C. **When Satan tries to frustrate you, continue to lean on God; and God will frustrate him.**
- D. When we feel frustrated, it is one of two things:
 - 1. We are out of God’s will and trying to make something happen in the arm of the flesh – “**works of the flesh.**”

2. We are in God's will concerning the project, but we have pushed Him out of the driver's seat.

V. Remember The Flesh Is Flimsy – Depending On It Always Brings Failure.

- A. **Galatians 3:10** – Those who depend on the Law always end up disappointed.
 1. Those who depend on their ability to keep the Law
- B. The Law is perfect, but it is impossible for man to keep it.
 1. We cannot attain holiness by the Law.
- C. We are justified by **faith** alone.
 1. Faith is the leaning of the entire personality on God in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness.
 2. Faith is an absolute thing – a pure thing. Faith is not some of God and some of me. It is **ALL of GOD** and **none of me**.
- D. **John 15:5** – Apart from Me, you can do nothing.

Ten Characteristics Of The Flesh

I. The Flesh Is Weak.

A. **Matthew 26:41b** – *The spirit indeed is willing, but **the flesh is weak.***

1. The flesh – The body and soul combined or any part of it
2. The soul – Mind, will, and emotions of man

B. **John 3:6** – *What is born of [from] the flesh is flesh . . .*

1. If the flesh is weak, then what is begun in the flesh is weak.
2. It has cracks or weaknesses in it that will show up during pressure or storms.

We had a cracked, leaky basement once; and it was a very big mess.

C. **Hebrews 4:12** – Only the Word of God divides soul and spirit.

1. We don't even know the difference until we are filled with the knowledge of God's Word. We walk in the flesh all the time and don't know there is another way to live.

D. The flesh may get up enough strength to begin a thing, but it never has what it takes to finish it.

1. This is why we have so many unfinished projects, ministries, marriages, dreams, visions, etc.
2. For example: If you get married in the flesh, you are in danger of not finishing. Divorce is often an easy way out for the flesh.

3. The flesh gives up easily when things get tough.

II. The Flesh Is Not Good.

- A. **Romans 7:18** – Nothing good dwells in the flesh.
- B. It can WILL what is what, but has NO POWER to perform it.
- C. When we see a good act performed through us, we must realize it is not us, but God working through us.
 1. **John 10:32** – Jesus said His Father had enabled Him to do many good works.
 2. We should do good works and operate in the fruit of goodness. **But we must remember that we are not good – HE is good!**
- D. **Matthew 19:16-17** – A man called Jesus “Good Master” and was rebuked. Jesus told him that none was good except God.
 1. He was, of course, speaking as the Son of Man.
 2. Jesus was drawing attention away from Himself to the Father.
 3. **Matthew 5:16** – The good works we do should glorify the Father in heaven, not us!
 4. **The flesh craves credit, and loves boasting and attention.**

It wants to look good, think it is good, and have others think it is good.
- E. **Ephesians 2:10** – We do the **good works that God has predestined** before the beginning of time.

III. Flesh Cannot Be Anointed – It Has To Die.

A. Romans 8:8-9, 13

1. Put the flesh to death through the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. The flesh will not kill itself – it must be turned over to the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Surrender to the working of God in your life. When the Holy Spirit is finished, you will be changed. The proud become humble, the harsh become meek, the timid and fearful are bold, etc. But the road to victory has a cross on it – a place where we must “die with Him.”
 - b. **Romans 6:5** – *For if we have become one with Him by sharing a death like His, we shall also be [one with Him in sharing] His resurrection [by a new life lived for God].*
 - c. We cannot live the new life that is awaiting us until we die to the fleshly life. **IN GOD’S NEW PLAN, LIFE ALWAYS COMES OUT OF DEATH.**

B. **Exodus 30:31-32** – It was forbidden to use the anointing oil on the flesh.

C. **Galatians 2:20** – Paul said, “It is no longer I who live.”

D. The crucifixion of the flesh is one of the most misunderstood doctrines in the church.

1. People usually teach it in one of two areas of extremes.
 - a. We should never have to suffer.
 - b. We will suffer all the time.

IV. The Flesh Brings Destruction.

- A. **Romans 8:6** – The mind of the flesh is death – death that comprises all the miseries that arise from sin. But the mind of the Spirit is life.
- B. **Galatians 6:8** – He who sows to the flesh will reap decay, ruin, and destruction.
- C. Saul's kingdom was destroyed because he started in the spirit, and then moved into the flesh.
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was destroyed for the same reason.
- D. The flesh will always make its bid to be in on every situation.
- E. It may be quiet in an area for a long, long time and then SUDDENLY have a resurrection.
 - 1. **Galatians 5:1** – Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and do not be ensnared again in a yoke of bondage which you have once put off.
 - 2. You can get out of debt, and then get back into debt.
 - 3. You can overcome a quick temper, and then start letting yourself become angry again.
 - 4. You can become disciplined and lose thirty pounds and gain it all back.
 - 5. You can work hard and see tremendous improvements in your marriage and then start letting things slide again.

**ANY TIME WE ALLOW THE FLESH TO RULE,
DESTRUCTION WILL SOON FOLLOW.**

V. The Flesh Always Has Its Own Plan.

- A. **Ephesians 2:10** – God planned beforehand (predestined) good works for us that we might walk in them (walk in His plan).
- B. **Psalms 139:16** – *Your eyes saw my unformed substance, and in Your book all the days [of my life] were written before ever they took shape, when as yet there was none of them.*
- C. **Proverbs 16:1** – The plans of the mind belong to man, but wisdom comes from God.
1. What seems like the most well laid plan is not always a wise plan.
- D. **Proverbs 16:9** – *A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps . . .*
1. When we are planning one thing, and God is pulling us in another direction through circumstances we cannot control, we should trust that HIS plan will ultimately be better than ours.
 2. **Proverbs 19:21** – *Many plans are in a man's mind, but it is the Lord's purpose for him that will stand.*

Sometimes we have to watch many of our plans fail and fall until we finally realize that God's plan is the one that stands.
- E. **Jeremiah 29:11** – *For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you . . .*
- F. Sometimes our plans have a mixture of God and us in them. This can be very deceptive.
1. **I Samuel 15:1-23** – Saul usually had a little of his own plan mixed into God's original plan, and it cost him the kingdom.

2. Deception caused Saul to keep insisting that he had obeyed God when he had not.
- G. **Acts 13:22** – David was a man after God’s own heart, who carried out His program fully.

VI. The Flesh Is Stubborn And Rebellious.

- A. **I Samuel 15:22-23** – Stubbornness and rebellion are major problems.
- B. The flesh does not give up easily – it **INSISTS** on having its own way.
- C. The flesh does not want to be told what to do. It wants its own way, even though that way will lead to destruction.
- D. The flesh resists correction. It pouts about it.

VII. The Flesh Is Full Of Pride.

- A. Pride is the force behind rebellion.
- B. The proud flesh wants credit and is often found boasting.
 1. **Proverbs 27:1-2** – Don’t boast; let another man praise you and not your own mouth.
 2. **John 5:41** – Jesus said, “I receive not glory from men – I crave no human honor, I look for no mortal fame.”
- C. **Pride is possibly the most destructive force that we deal with in life.**
- D. Pride is a “Luciferian spirit.” It is the same spirit that Lucifer had when he rebelled against God and led one-third of the angels into rebellion.
 1. Pride not only rebels against leadership but it also often leads others into strife and rebellion.

2. Contention only comes by pride!
- E. The fleshly man is filled with “I,” “me,” and “mine.”

VIII. The Flesh Is Independent.

- A. The flesh wants to be self-sufficient.
- B. The flesh won't pray about many situations because it thinks it does not need God.
1. **Luke: Chapter 22** – Peter is a good example of this kind of independent pride.
- C. The fleshly man is not a team player. He wants to think he has all the gifts in himself.
1. He is not good at delegating. He may give others work to do, but he will not release authority to them.

When we release responsibility, we must also release authority.
 2. The fleshly man has a hard time doing this because he is sure nobody can do the job as well as he can.

IX. The Flesh Is Impatient And Hasty.

- A. **Proverbs 20:21** – *An inheritance hastily gotten [by greedy, unjust means] at the beginning, in the end it will not be blessed.*
1. God's way is slow and solid, not fast and fragile.
 2. When an impatient man builds something, it always falls apart later.
- B. **Proverbs 21:5** – *The thoughts of the [steadily] diligent tend only to plenteousness, but everyone who is impatient and hasty hastens only to want.*

- C. The flesh does not want to wait:
1. In traffic.
 2. In grocery store lines.
 3. For people to get ready to go or for people that are slow.
 4. For harvest.
 5. For God's deliverance – it usually takes matters into its own hands.
 6. For winter to be over.
 7. To save money and pay cash for things it desires.
 8. Etc.

X. The Flesh Is Selfish.

- A. Selfishness is probably the most blaring trait of the flesh.
1. The one that is most readily and frequently seen
- B. **Galatians 5:19-21** – Selfishness is listed as a practice of the flesh.
1. It is listed with some sins that we consider to be “major” sins.
 2. Sins don't come in major and minor, but we often think they do.
- C. The statement is made that “those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”
1. **John 3:3, 5** – The new birth allows us to **SEE** the kingdom of God; but unless a man is “born of water and of the Spirit,” he **cannot enter** the kingdom.

2. Just because an inheritance is laid up for us does not automatically mean that we will inherit it.
- D. Salvation is more than a trip to the altar and repeating a “sinner’s prayer.”
- E. **I John 3:9** – *No one born (begotten) of God [deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] practices sin, for God’s nature abides in him . . .*
1. **We should always be progressively moving away from sin toward holiness.**
- F. **II Timothy 3:1-2** – People in the last days will be utterly self-centered.
1. We must resist the magnetic pull from Satan toward selfishness and self-centeredness.
- G. Think of ways in which we frequently see selfishness manifested.
1. Love prefers others – selfishness fights to always be first in line, first to do most or all of the talking, first to get noticed or praised, etc. – it wants to be first.

Selfish people don’t know how to be number one at being number two. They cannot serve others; they must be served.
 2. Selfish people always want to be in charge of the remote control and make all the choices about what is to be watched on television.
 3. Selfish people seek to be blessed rather than to be a blessing to others.
 4. Selfish people are either not givers or only give what the Law demands.
 5. Selfish people must have their own way, or they respond with anger.

6. Selfish people expect everyone to consider their needs, but rarely return to others what they expect for themselves.

They do not consider what others may need – their own needs are predominant in their thinking.

7. Selfish people are often disrespectful.
8. Selfish people will always put the best cut of meat on their own plate.
9. Selfish people want what they have and also what you have. They want everything for themselves.
10. They think about themselves, talk about themselves, and seek to be the center of everything that goes on.

