

Unless a Kernel of Wheat Part 1

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The Lord showed me that there is so much self in the world which is the cause of many problems in the world.

Look at the current state of the world

The cultures we see

What is the root of this?

1. The Root of SELF

1 Samuel 15:23 NLT

Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft,

and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols.

So because you have rejected the command of the LORD, he has rejected you as king.”

Isaiah 14:12-14 NKJV

The Fall of Lucifer

“How you are fallen from heaven,

O Lucifer, son of the morning!

How you are cut down to the ground,

You who weakened the nations!

For you have said in your heart:

I will ascend into heaven,

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;

I will also sit on the mount of the congregation

On the farthest sides of the north;

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,

I will be like the Most High.’

So we see rebellion has its root in Satan.

Man (all humans descended from Adam and Eve)

While created by God (Jer 1:1 Before I formed you in the womb I knew you)

Are born in a fallen state - with the roots of Satan

Established firmly in the flesh

We see from the language it is:

- I will
- I want
- I must
- I cant
- I need

Galatians 5:17 NLT

The **sinful nature wants to do evil**, which is just the **opposite of what the Spirit wants**. And the **Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires**. These **two forces are constantly fighting each other**, so you are not free to carry out your good

intentions.

Galatians 5:16-17 NIV

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the **desires of the flesh**. 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.

To follow flesh is to rebel against God
Rebellion as we see is from Satan
Rebellion is opposition to God / the Spirit

Flesh and Mind are linked

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.

The manifestation of the flesh nature is in the mind.
This is where the battleground is!

Every action we carry out on this earth in our bodies begins in the mind. A decision motivated and controlled by a desire.
The desire can be described as flesh.
Some desires are not in opposition or contradiction to God's word and His will and His Way. That is the way of the Spirit.

But flesh is not satisfied with moderation or obedience!
God calls for this. He has his Way that all of us while living in our bodies on this earth, though we may have become a new creation in Christ (which must take place for us to become a current citizen of heaven)
That is - Accepting the Death of Jesus in place of our own
Believing in God and receiving the Holy Spirit that comes when we become a child of God.

So when this takes place the flesh is not born again!
The Spirit is - You become a New Creation

2 Corinthians 1:22 NLT

and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us.

But the flesh is from this realm - the fallen world and is not satisfied with what God wants for us.

It always desires Excess
Always is in opposition to God
Always in Rebellion
Which as we saw is witchcraft and evil in every way!

Now when we have the sinful nature manifesting
It often show up in how things work between people !!!

James 4:1-10 NLT

What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because **you don't ask God** for it. And even when you ask, **you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.**

You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that **God is passionate that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful to him.** And he gives grace generously.

As the Scriptures say,

“God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble.”

So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **Come close to God, and God will come close to you.** Wash your hands, you sinners; **purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.** Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. **Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.**

Notice here

The actions of people and the cause

There are things that have root which drive the actions

The passage mentions the motives are for the pleasure of the flesh.

This can include food, sexual, status, power, wealth, possessions, addictions and many more.

And wanting these can cause us to act in a hostile way to others too
(and can often be the root of the actions of many against us !!!)

We are the ones who need to take the steps to change this

Humbling ourselves before God

Understanding the devil's strategy that we are not a helpless victim to this

Assessing our motives

Knowing - We DO HAVE THE SPIRIT HE PLACED IN US - IF INDEED WE HAVE RESPONDED TO JESUS TRUTHFULLY (not pretending so that others will think you have)

2. The Victory God Provided

But we have hope!!

Romans 8:9-11 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. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 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.

So where is the problem we face?

What are the ways to overcome as Paul talks about

Romans 12:21 NIV

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 John 5:4-5 NLT

For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

1 John 5:4-5 NIV

for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

3. The Ongoing Challenge

We believe we are not selfish and we think we have died to self but the Lord has been showing me how much He needs us to not just die to self but be dead.

The flesh and the Spirit are complete opposites. Our most fundamental choice as believers is choosing each day, each moment, which to obey.

There are many words that highlight the nature we just looked at
The nature which we all need to address and overcome
The nature that is opposed to the Spirit of God

Some words describing these:

Note how all of these could be good if there were balanced and not in excess

But the nature of the flesh is to do as much of the "thing", "state", "position", "acquisition", "dispossession" as we can!

- a. Selfish
- b. Self-pity
- c. Self actualisation
- d. Self worth
- e. Pride
- f. Passion
- g. Arrogance
- h. Lust
- i. Hatred
- j. Gluttony
- k. Racism
- l. Anarchy
- m. Love of money
- n. Jealousy
- o. Gossip
- p. Fits of rage
- q. Unbridled anger
- r. Stealing
- s. Deceiving
- t. Manipulation
- u. Secret ambition
- v. Laziness
- w. Workaholic
- x. Status
- y. Power
- z. MANY MANY MORE!!!

The flesh and its arguments are often very crafty and shrewd and the enemy uses these arguments to justify ungodly attitudes, desires, passions, lusts, hungers

We are very quick to "defend" a position or a motive, which when analysed is actually opposition to God.

Some "Rules" we have made, which stem from the flesh nature and its desires

- a. I cant...
- b. I will only...
- c. I dont...
- d. I have to...
- e. I'm not like...

These can often be the motivation and defence we put up to keep the flesh passion in an area from dying because we just like it too much

We have not realised - Though we think we have control over this - it actually has gained control of us!!!

Scrip unless a kernel of wheat dies ..

John 12:24-26 NIV

Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

John 12:24-26 ESV

Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies**, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

There are many aspects to this passage Jesus is speaking about

You and I are the grains of wheat Jesus was talking about

Interesting that we came to be those grains because another grain died and was fruitful!

It is not just the kernel that matters - Its where it dies !

In the Ground - Jesus is the Ground here

"Die" in any other place - Like in all these manifestations of self and flesh - and its not relevant!

Die in Jesus only - is what matters

4. But How then?

But what is the death then?

Is this aspect of dying to self.

Matthew 16:24-26 NLT

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will

lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?

Matthew 16:24-25 NIV

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

Matthew 16:24-26 AMP

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to follow Me [as My disciple], **he must deny himself [set aside selfish interests]**, and take up his **cross [expressing a willingness to endure whatever may come]** and follow Me [believing in Me, conforming to My example in living and, if need be, suffering or perhaps dying because of faith in Me]. For whoever wishes **to save his life [in this world] will [eventually] lose it [through death]**, but whoever **loses his life [in this world] for My sake (the soil Jesus spoke of)** will find it [that is, life with Me for all eternity]. For what will it profit a man if he **gains the whole world [wealth, fame, success]**, but forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

When people are dying it's a gradual decay until the point of death.

Our physical bodies in their aging process are on a slow trajectory to the physical death of the body.

Even trees and plants are not alive and thriving one moment and then dead the next moment- they die slowly.

But the point at which a living creature dies is the point at which they do nothing more for themselves. Dead is dead. Lifeless.

Why all this talk of death?

Well - as we have seen - the Lord calls us to die to self!

The quickest way is to speed up the process in the spiritual realm!!!

We can try and keep the flesh alive and let it war with the Spirit (of God)

The battle will rage on as we try to cling to both realms.

As a believer we have received the Holy Spirit - Promised by God when we accept Jesus, believe in Him

For the man on Jesus' right on the cross this was an instant exchange.

Romans 12:2-3 NLT

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.

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.

Romans 12:2 MSG

Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking.

Instead, **fix your attention on God**. You'll be **changed from the inside out**. Readily **recognize what he wants from you**, and **quickly respond to it**. Unlike **the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity**, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

So there is much for us to learn here to understand from God and go from glory to glory

Over the next 2 weeks we will look at specific areas where God's word can be applied so that we can see how this aspect of us as a seed

Falls into the earth

Dies

And produces fruit

How does this work

- In relationship
- In work life
- In our own lives physically
- In our spiritual lives