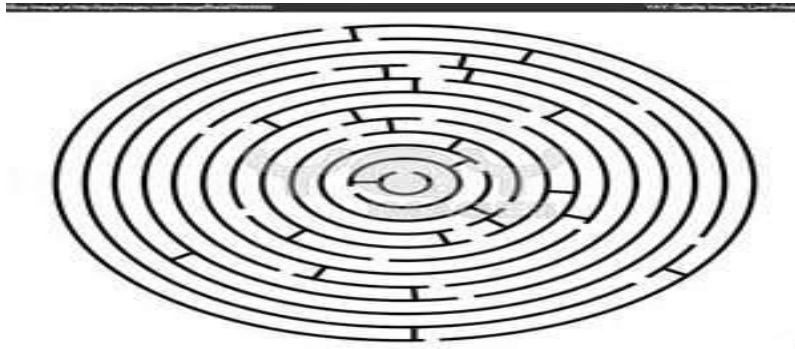


The Flesh vs. The Spirit



A maze is entered into from one opening path and has an exit that is not on a straight path. One often tries many paths and runs into many **dead ends** before finding the path to the exit. One may even take a seemingly new direction but end up retracing a path that comes back to a familiar **dead end**. **Unfortunately our lives are like a circular maze.** Sometimes it is at a point when we have come to **fatigue and exhaustion** with hitting **dead ends** that we find, **'THE WAY'**, to the exit path. We give up trying to **BULL** our way through; we recognize the incorrect path quickly because we have traveled this road before; we know that we need help and guidance to solve the maze. I have spent much of my life on this circular maze. Sometimes the **dead ends** appeared quickly, and some of the **dead ends** took years before realization that the seemingly well-traveled **path was not correct**.



**Weekend
Getaway**



In the summer of 2012 while on a long weekend getaway, the path for my life became very clear to me. Once the light came on, I spent days

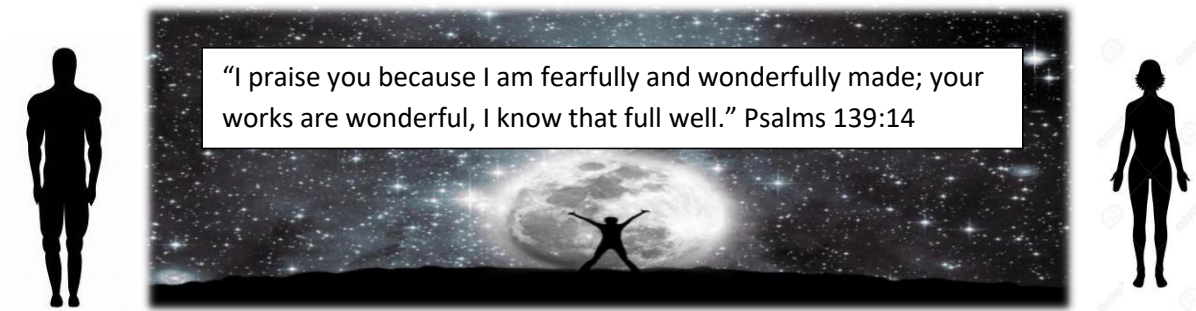
exploring, challenging, and mapping the path so that I could repeatedly find my way out and also share with others. Now that I have tasted the other side, **I can never be comfortable with where I use to be**. What I learned through the guidance of the **Holy Spirit** has its roots back in the first three chapters of Genesis and has perplexed Mankind and myself for ages. It is the battle of **The Flesh vs. The Spirit**. The remainder of this lesson will enlighten your understanding to this key concept and hopefully shed light on your life path in the maze as it did mine.

CONTENTS.



We shall first discuss the natural flesh purpose & weakness; then define what the Bible calls **The Flesh**. We shall detail the **Fruit/Works** of **The Flesh** and **The Spirit**. Finally we shall discuss the **Constant Epic Battle** between **The Flesh and The Spirit** that rages in every person.

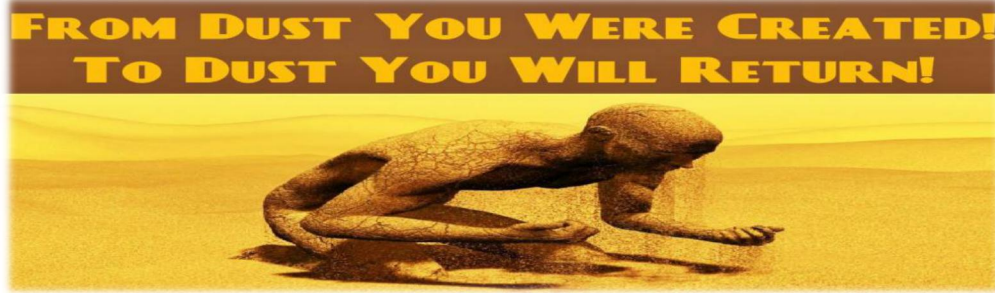
- The flesh of our natural body in its original state was Good.



"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." Psalms 139:14

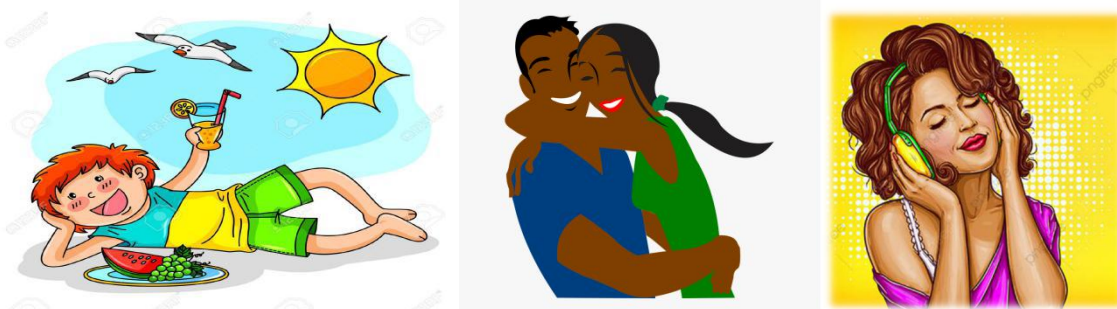
This natural flesh **should not be confused with** the Fruit/Works of **The Flesh**. Our natural flesh houses our natural body parts. As King David said, **we are fearfully and wonderfully made...** especially for existence on this Earth.

- All natural flesh is from the Earth and returns to the Earth



All of the living Earth creatures are made of the same elements. And when we die **we return to the elements** that we are made out of. Just visit a cemetery and look at the decayed bodies. I know it sounds morbid. But the truth is that **the body, no matter how cute/handsome, how strong, how tall, how sexy, how healthy it is while living,** will **return to the earth elements** once it dies. Yet we are often under the *illusion* that there are some *magical mixtures of human flesh* out there. And we are enamored by the endless search for the *best flesh*. King Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 1:8 *that the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.* We all converge to the same point in the flesh...**Dust.** **What makes us different and gives us value is on the inside; it is our spiritual heart.**

- Flesh allows us to enjoy the natural creation that God made for us



With flesh we can feel the warm sun on our skin; taste sweet nectar from our favorite fruit; embrace a long hug from a loved one; listen to lovely music, and any more of the things that our fleshly senses allow.

- There are some things that are required because we are flesh



Because we are made of flesh, there are some things that are **required to maintain the natural flesh**. For example, we must eat and drink to keep the flesh alive. We must maintain good hygiene for ourselves and those around us. We must sleep. The flesh requires some daily attention, but it is **not a 24 hour drain on our time**.

- The natural flesh is weak and limited but not inherently sinful



Although the flesh is limited, temporal, and weak, it is **not inherently sinful**. Adam and Eve were created as fleshly human beings. In their **pre-sin state** mankind **did not exhibit the fruit of *The Flesh***. The fruit of ***The Flesh*** was **not a part of our nature (creation amnesia)**. **Our desire was to please God**. But because of the weakness of the natural flesh and the **catalyst of *Satan the tempter***, our original representatives succumbed to the temptations of Satan. The weakness of the flesh is seen in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus found the disciples sleeping. He enjoined them to watch and pray lest they enter into temptation **for *the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*** (Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38). Here, the flesh was not sinful, but rather limited and weak due to fatigue, and easy to succumb to sleep or temptation.

The Flesh



What then is meant by the biblical term *The Flesh*? “Perhaps most plainly it refers to that part of us that is **alienated from God**. It is the **rebellious, unruly, and obstinate** part of our **inner self that is operative all the time**. It is that part of us that does not want to be told what to do. It is **stubborn, refuses correction, and does not want to have a thing to do with God**. It bristles at limits and rules. It recoils at anything that might cause **me** to be diminished or something less than the center of the universe. *The flesh* **hates to be under authority** or to have to yield to anything **other than its own wishes and desires**. *The Flesh* often **desires** something simply because it is **forbidden**.” *Charles Pope*



THE FRUIT/WORKS OF *THE FLESH*

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

1) Adultery	20) Perjury	38) Disobeying our parents
2) Fornication	21) Lies	39) Ingratitude
3) Filth	22) Bad thoughts	40) Ungodliness
4) Lust	23) Greed	41) Disaffection
5) Idolatry	24) Evil	42) Implacability
6) Sorcery	25) Slander	43) Calumny
7) Enmity	26) Pride	44) Intemperance
8) Disputes	27) Foolishness	45) Cruelty
9) Jealousy	28) Scam	46) Detesting good
10) Rage	29) Lustfulness	47) Betrayal
11) Arguments	30) Drunkenness	48) Impetuosity
12) Dissension	31) Orgies	49) Vanity
13) Heresy	32) Dissipation	50) Loving evil pleasures
14) Envy	33) Cowardice	
15) Murder	34) Disbelief	
16) Getting drunk	35) Abominations	
17) Orgies	36) Selfishness	
18) Vainglory	37) Blasphemy	
19) Robbery		

Galatians 5:19-24; Jeremiah 7:9;
Hosea 4:2; Mark 7:21-22;
1 Timothy 3:2-4; 1 Peter 4:3;
Revelation 21:8

- The Fruit/Works of *The Flesh* Produce Death

Those who follow the impulses of *the flesh* are governed by *the flesh* and are characterized as those who live *after the flesh*. Romans 8:5

In its weakness and limitation, the natural flesh tends to yield to the temptation of what seems good naturally. Those who yield to sinful passions and produce works contrary to God and His law are enslaved to the *desires of The Flesh*...they have the *mindset of The Flesh* and that *mindset produces Fleshly fruit/works* above. The *Fleshly mindset* simply leads to a **deadly path** where **Mankind's will supersedes God's will. The end result of disobedience to God's will leaves you stranded**

endlessly in the maze of life and rejecting Jesus atonement sacrifice... which leads to Death.

- Most metrics that we evaluate ourselves and others by are derived from *The Flesh*



Human behavior can be directly attributed to what *metrics* we value in our heart. For example, if some people value *tan skin* their behavior is to lay out in the sun (or tanning booth) so that they can achieve *that look* based on the metric of skin tone. And if a little tan is perceived good, then a deep tan must be better. Some people will try to achieve this metric even at the risk of skin cancer. This *drive for more and greater mentality* without regard for consequences is an example of how the *fleshly* desires *enslave people* to do those things that are naturally and *spiritually* **contrary to God's intent** for mankind.

- We are most comfortable with the ways of *the flesh* because they are familiar to us



Unfortunately, most of the metrics that society values are developed using this *fleshly* mentality. It appears so much in our everyday life

(homes, schools, churches, work, media...) that it **seems to be the norm** and is **coached by those with earthly authority** (parents, teachers, pastors, bosses...). There are terms like *global growth, the good life, all you can eat, go big or go home, the American Dream*that sound good on the surface. But the execution of these phrases is leading Mankind further **away from our original intent** as designed by the Creator. All we need to do is look at the example of Easter Island.



Easter Island is an island in the South Pacific Ocean belonging to Chile some 2237 miles west of the mainland. It is the **remotest inhabited island in the world**. Easter Island is one of **clearest and simplest examples of a society that destroyed itself**. The people carved the stone megaliths weighing up to nearly **80 tons** and tore them down. The clans competed and **built bigger and bigger statues**. They used all of the trees on the island to erect the statues. Without trees the land eroded; no birds; no boats to go catch tuna; no crops. Because they were so remote, they **had nowhere to go or no one to turn to for help**. They devastated the environment, fought civil wars, tore down other tribes statues, and **resorted to cannibalism**. If you wanted to insult another tribesman, you might say *the flesh of your mother sticks in my teeth*. **Easter Island is a classic example of what happens when the fleshly mindset runs its course.**

- Achieving *Fleshly* metrics have **NO PROFIT** with God and our pursuit leaves us unfulfilled

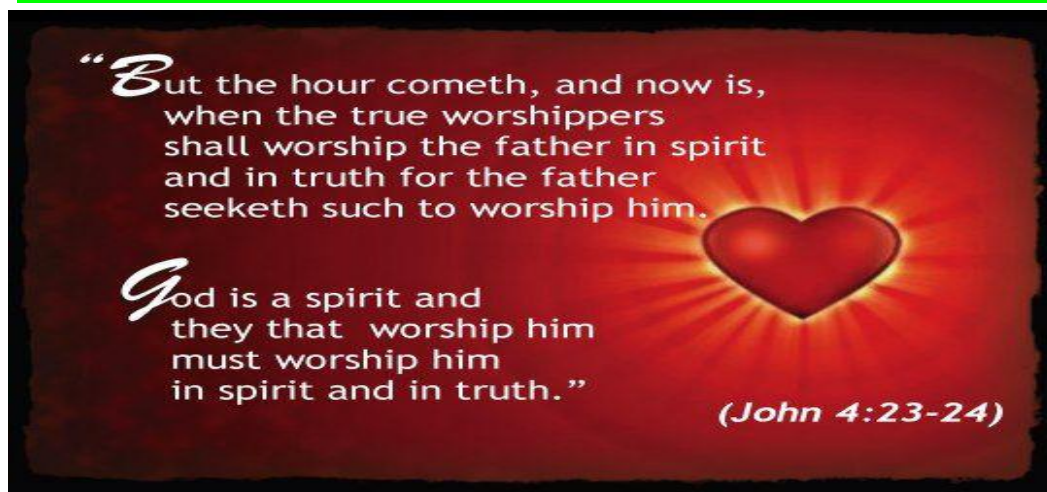


**SORRY
NO
CREDIT**



It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63

In the days/weeks of personal challenging these concepts of *The Flesh* vs. *The Spirit*, I pondered on all my life's achievements. I wondered how God viewed them. I thought about being Valedictorian; being a decorated *All Everything* athlete; earning an athletic scholarship; completing University degrees with honor; my job with a Fortune 500 company; my nice homes; my ability to teach the gospel; my disciplined work-out routine... **The more I thought, the sadder I got.** I realized that these accomplished achievements, when done with a *fleshly* mentality, **meant absolutely nothing to God.** I was steered into my achievements by well-meaning people in society...*but it was the blind leading the blind.* **Because God is a Spirit, we can only please Him in The Spirit.**



The Spirit



The *human spirit* is that part of our inner self which is **open to God**, which *desires him* and is *drawn to him*. It is that part of us which is **attracted by goodness, beauty, and truth**, which yearns for completion in God and to see His face. Without *the spirit* we would be totally turned in on ourselves and consumed by *The Flesh*. Thankfully our *human spirit*, when connected to and empowered by the **Holy Spirit** draws us to desire what is best, what is upright, good, and helpful.

FRUIT/WORKS OF THE SPIRIT



The **Holy Spirit** is a direct line from the **Creator of the Universe's** mind, heart, and will to your mind, heart, and will. It perfectly syncs **God** and

your *human spirit* together. **The Holy Spirit of God** is equipped like a Swiss army knife to enable you to perform your non-evil will and God's will. When your *human spirit* is led by the **Holy Spirit** the *spiritual fruit* listed above and more **will be manifested in our lives just as it was in the life of Jesus.**

Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Matthew 7:20

Spiritual fruit/works are not a mystery (*Matthew 25:31-46*)

FEED THE HUNGRY 	 INSTRUCT THE IGNORANT
GIVE DRINK TO THE THIRSTY 	 COUNSEL THE DOUBTFUL
SHELTER THE HOMELESS 	 ADMONISH SINNERS
CLOTHE THE NAKED 	 FORGIVE OFFENSES
VISIT THE SICK 	 COMFORT THE AFFLICTED
VISIT THE IMPRISONED 	 BEAR WRONGS PATIENTLY

When you see someone hungry and your *human spirit* is led by the **Holy Spirit** (not for personal publicity) to feed them, this is a *Spiritual Work*. When you visit and pray for the sick; when you help the homeless; when you provide for the elderly and orphans; when you reach out to those in prison; when you provide *spiritual* guidance to someone who is struggling with life issues; when you protect and manage animals and the environment; you have done *Spiritual Works*.

And **God is pleased** because we are **showing love** to his greatest creation. These are things that you can do in **The Spirit** that enhance those things that are in the natural. You get **Creator Credit** for doing these works. **Cha Ching!!!!**

And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.
— John 8:29 (KJV)

- **The Flesh** and **The Spirit** are ALWAYS in CONFLICT with each other. This conflict keeps us from being productive as God intended

Galatians 5:17
For the **desires of the flesh** are against the **desires of the Spirit**, and the **desires of the Spirit** are against the flesh, for these are **opposed** to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do...



There is a feud inside every person that continues for a lifetime. It is the feud between **The Flesh** and **The Spirit**. Ever since the sinful fall of Mankind, this internal feud has raged inside of us. If you often wonder why you do things that you really didn't mean to do or why you don't do the things that want to do, this feud is the reason. **This feud** is why you see the examples of people that God used in the bible **demonstrate both positive and negative actions:**

- **Noah building the ark on one hand and being sloppy drunk on the other hand**

- Rebecca marrying the patriarch Isaac on one hand and plotting for her younger son to steal the birthright from her older son
- Moses killing the Egyptian and running from God then leading God's people from bondage
- David, a man after God's own heart, slaying Goliath, and winning battles then committing adultery with Bathsheeba and murdering her husband
- Sampson slaying a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass then telling Delilah his secret of his strength and having his eyes blinded
- Peter walking as a favorite disciple of Jesus and preaching so that 3000 souls were saved then afraid to eat food with the Gentiles
- Paul expounding the better way of the Gospel of Christ then boasting of his own merits when challenged by the Jews

This internal feud between *The Flesh* and *The Spirit* has raged within mankind for ages. **And because it is internal most people can't understand it but struggle with its effects every day.**

- We must feed and exercise *our spirit* to grow *spiritually*



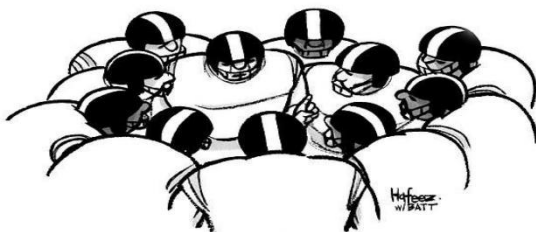
A Native American elder once described his own inner struggles in this manner: *"Inside of me there are two dogs. One of the dogs is mean*

and evil. The other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time." When asked which dog wins, he reflected for a moment and replied, "The one I feed the most."

Just like we feed and exercise our natural body to stay healthy, we must do the same with our *spirit*. We must:

- Filter *fleshly* influences that we are Constantly exposed to
- Stay connected constantly to the **Holy Spirit of God John 15:5**
- Discard the metrics of *the flesh*. This is a battle. **Philippians 3:7-14**

The never ending ways of *the flesh* are seemingly everywhere you turn. They are in our *songs, books, commercials, magazines, newspapers, Internet, billboards, clothes, tattoos...*It is a moment by moment battle in the lives of everyone. **You cannot win this battle on your own.** The only way to combat these *fleshly* ways are with the ways of the *spirit*. **There is no middle ground. One of these 2 states always has the upper hand.** You can tell which state has the upper hand by **what fruit appears from your actions.** **Simply being in a religious circle does not produce *spiritual fruit*.** Actually being in a religious circle can **deceive people** into thinking that they are producing *spiritual fruit* and can become a *fleshly* endeavor of its own.



On the football field before each play, most teams huddle together to discuss what play they are going to *perform*. They then *go and perform* that play to the best of their ability. **The fans do not pay to watch them in the huddle.** We as believers in the All Mighty All Powerful

Everywhere God must get in the game and out of the huddle. **The game is outside the huddle, not inside it.** We have to start by **submitting ourselves to God** and **filtering our intake** so that we are **receiving Spiritual guidance** from the **Holy One** himself. Then we must **act as the Spirit leads us.**

- God is at the beginning and end of all things.



What I found on this journey is that **God was there** as I entered the circular maze. Because I was not listening with *spiritual* ears or seeing with *spiritual* eyes, I didn't realize that **He was there** as I bumped into every dead end. Some dead ends I rammed into so hard that I thought I might die. **He was there** as I exited the maze. God is always there. **He is at the beginning and ending of everything.** If you want to take any action or achieve a goal ask yourself the question *then what*. At the end of several *then whats* you will meet God. **What shall we say that we did with His time and talents that He gave to us?** Shall we say that we enjoyed the time with endless selfish pursuits or shall we say that we produced *spiritual* fruit? Shall He say, ***well done good and faithful***

servant...You have done my will. That closing conversation depends greatly on our understanding of the ageless battle that exists inside of us between *the flesh* and *the spirit*.

LET GO
&
LET GOD

I hope and pray that this lesson helps you as much as it is helping me. It is transforming my life into what the Creator intended it to be. Pray that I will continue to “Let Go” and “Let God” perform this marvelous miracle in my life. And I will pray that you “Let Go” also. He is waiting to hold you. **God Bless You Always.**