

Spirit-Led Transformation: Are You Feeding Your Flesh More Than Your Spirit?

Do you sin? Most of the sins we commit are sins of the flesh. Sin may begin as a thought triggered by an emotion, but the sin itself many times is played out in our physical bodies.

For true transformation to take place, we must allow the Holy Spirit to lead us instead of our minds, wills, emotions or bodies. However, when we have a war raging between flesh and spirit, the winner is the one we feed the most.

Sins of the Flesh

The term “flesh” in the Bible can mean the fleshy part of an animal or human. However, in the war that goes on, flesh can mean anything we use to try to satisfy some need, want or desire related to our physical bodies. The issue arises when the things that placate us physically take precedence above God in our lives.

There are many passages where we can read about what things God categorizes as sins of the flesh. The ones that stand out to me from different translations of Galatians 5:19-21 are uncontrolled addictions, uncontrolled feasting and the all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants. Thank God I have submitted my sugar addiction to Him, as well as uncontrolled feasting and the all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants.

Though there are definitely other sins I've committed, these run together in my mind to define how I did not honor God with my body as 1 Corinthians 6:20 tells me I should have. These can become lifestyle sins, which happen when we focus on our own selfish interests instead of what God wants for us.

Give Up

In Luke 9:23 (AMP) Jesus tells the disciples: "If anyone wishes to follow Me [as My disciple], he must deny himself [set aside selfish interests], and take up his cross daily [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]."

In Luke 9:24 (TPT) the next verse says, "For if you choose self-sacrifice, giving up your lives for my glory, you will discover true life. But if you choose to keep your lives for yourselves, you will lose what you try to keep."

This hits home for me because giving up foods made with processed sugar and flour felt like the biggest sacrifices I have ever made. I finally did it because I knew it was what God had been telling me to do for years. At 430 pounds, I wanted to lose weight, so I wouldn't stand out like a huge sore thumb in every group I was in.

Without God's Spirit leading me on this journey, though, I would still be going around and around that mountain looking for the exit.

Flesh Cannot Fix Flesh

Flesh cannot fix flesh. There was no truer statement ever said than that quote from Bill Johnson. We cannot make ourselves perfect because we are imperfect. We have sinned, as Romans 3:23 tells us. This means we have missed the mark. We have failed. We are human. We have flesh. We have a sin nature, and no sin can enter heaven.

This is a big issue because when we act on our carnal nature, on the physical desires we have, we are sinning. Yes, it does mean when we are overeating, binging or just eating to make ourselves feel better, we are sinning.

“Your FLESH doesn’t care about your eternity because it’s not going with you,” the unattributed Facebook quote says. Our flesh lives in the here and now. The physical body has no concept of eternity. Our physical bodies will decay and will not go with us to wherever we spend eternity.

Confession Is Good for the Body

God forgives sin. However, even as a Christian, I still had to confess my overeating as a sin, then repent, or turn around and go the other way, trusting God to lead me. Surrendering everything to Him was the only way to get there. It was what God had told me over and over and over again.

What kept me stuck, though, is I told God I couldn’t do it. That was because I didn’t know how. The surrender process for me was to start trusting God to teach me how to give up sugar for the rest of my life. I needed a lifestyle change. I needed total transformation—body, soul and spirit.

The flesh wants what the flesh wants because all it wants is the physical fulfillment of that next bite we are about to take. This is why we have such a hard time resisting eating what we know we shouldn’t. Our flesh is in charge until we challenge it.

Let the Spirit Lead

If we let our bodies guide us, we will be in a big mess for sure. The Holy Spirit should be the one to guide our spirits, but many times, everything in us has been hijacked by our emotions, which have also hijacked our taste buds. We feel like we need to eat to curtail any emotional outburst such as anger, sadness, fear, shame, unworthiness, regret, disappointment, rejection or any emotion we don’t want to feel.

Following God for my change process was not an easy thing to do by myself. I needed Jesus with skin on to teach me how to

do it. When I'm ready to do things God's way, He always brings people into my life to help me. God brought me a mentor and a group. I followed my mentor's gentle—though many times challenging—guidance with the support of a group of those with the same goals.

I was ready to do that because I had finally surrendered to what God wanted for my life. Recognizing and identifying my sin was a big part of that. Confessing it and repenting was next. Then, understanding that I am weak and need God's strength to make it through even one minute without giving into temptation was the only way I could lose 250 pounds and keep it off.

Yield to the Spirit's Power

Flesh cannot fix flesh. However, following what God tells us to do can fix our flesh. It goes deeper than just following some physical steps He's told us to do, like stopping the consumption of sugar. It really hits at the core of living out our faith.

Romans 3:28 says, "God's wonderful declaration that we are righteous in His eyes can only come when we put our faith in Christ, and not in keeping the law." We are saved by grace through faith in Christ.

We walk out that faith by submitting to the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16 says, "As you yield to the dynamic life and power of the Holy Spirit, you will abandon the cravings of your self-life."

The self-life, the sins of the flesh, our humanity and our cravings can only be silenced when we surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit. Flesh cannot fix flesh. A diet cannot fix our body, but being Spirit-led can bring us to total transformation—body, soul and spirit.

Are you feeding your flesh more than your Spirit? Remember the

winner in this tug of war is the one you feed the most.

For more on this subject, check out podcast Episode 84, *Flesh vs. Spirit* on *Sweet Grace for Your Journey with Teresa Shields Parker*. Find the podcast everywhere including Charisma Podcast Network.

To get the video, transcript of this lesson, action steps and challenge, go to Overcomers Academy for the Spirit-Led Transformation course. All lessons on this topic will be added weekly to the course. Go here to .

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