

The Flesh and the Spirit

Galatians 5:13-26



Apostle Paul (~ 5 – 67 A.D.)
By Andrei Rublev (1410)

The Flesh and the Spirit Introduction



The Flesh and the Spirit Introduction

- In 1963, Martin Luther King delivered his *I Have a Dream* speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.
- The location was important.
- Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.



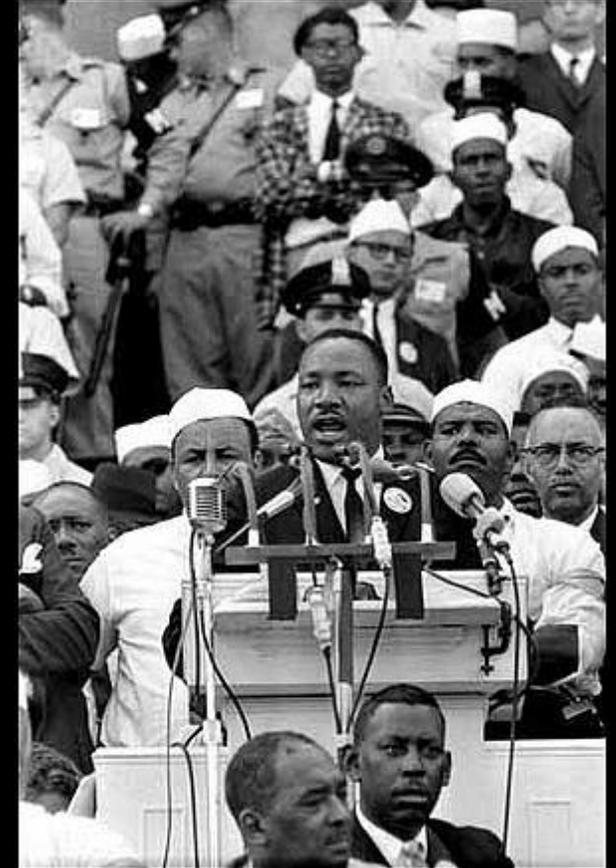
The Flesh and the Spirit Introduction

- King's point was that, after 100 years, the potential of that proclamation had not been fully realized.
- The average Christian is in a similar position today.



The Flesh and the Spirit Introduction

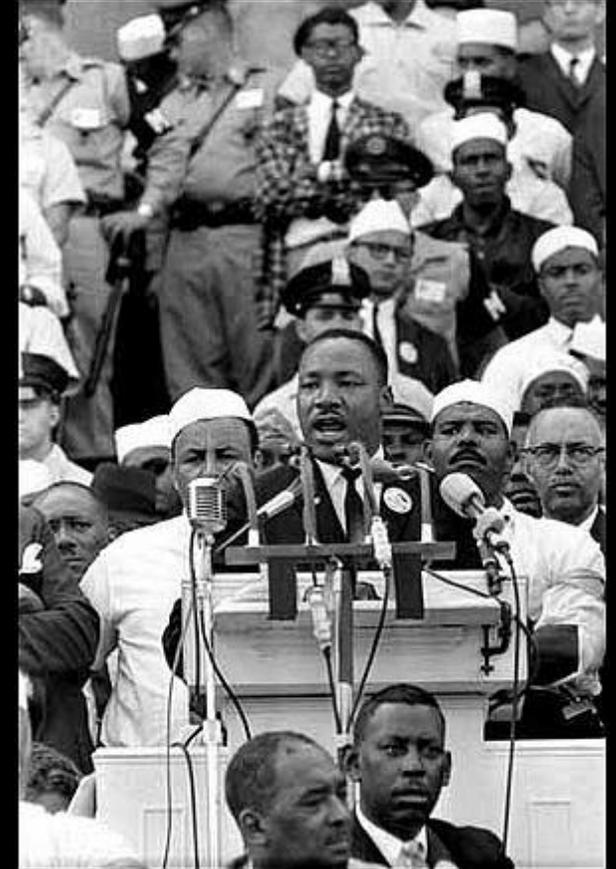
- Christians are set free from the law.
We have no need to strive to gain merit with God.
- We are also set free from sin.
We are no longer bound by its power.



The Flesh and the Spirit Introduction

- Christ's death secured our freedom.
- God's Word proclaims it to be so.
- **Galatians 5:1** (ESV)

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.



The Flesh and the Spirit Introduction

- But have the promises of Christ's death and God's word been fulfilled in our lives?
- In this section of **Galatians**, Paul explains how we make that freedom ours.



The Flesh and the Spirit Introduction

We are set free from the law and from our flesh by yielding to God's Holy Spirit.

The Flesh and the Spirit Introduction

1. Christian Freedom 5:13-15
2. Walk by the Spirit 5:16-18
3. Works of the Flesh 5:19-21
4. Fruit of the Spirit 5:22-26

1. Christian Freedom 5:13-15



1. Christian Freedom 5:13-15



There are two sides to Christian freedom. We have been set free from slavery to the law, but we are called to serve the Spirit and one another. Christian freedom is not a call to irresponsibility or self-indulgence but to a new set of responsibilities.

*– Samuel Ngewa,
Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology*

1. Christian Freedom 5:13-15

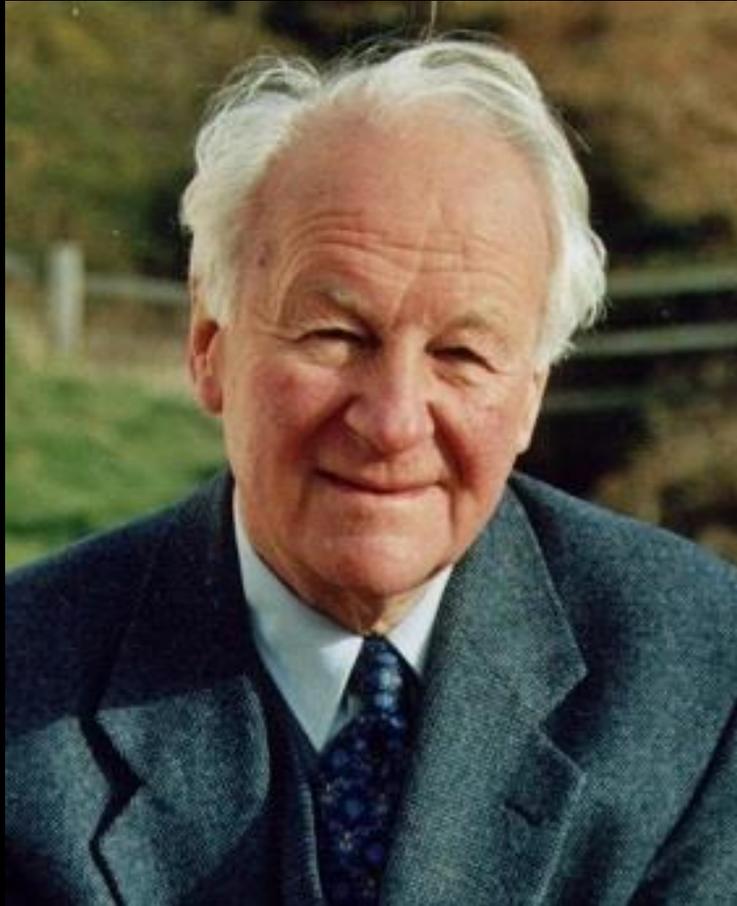
- The Christian life does not enslave us.
- But neither is it a life without moral standards.
- The Spirit-controlled life is really the only way to resist the various forms of bondage that the world offers.

1. Christian Freedom 5:13-15

- **Matthew 22:35-40** (ESV)

- ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

1. Christian Freedom 5:13-15



Christian freedom is freedom from sin, not freedom to sin. It is an unrestricted liberty of approach to God as His children, not an unrestricted liberty to wallow in our own selfishness.

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),
Long-time pastor of All Souls, London*

1. Christian Freedom 5:13-15

- John 8:34 (ESV)

Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.”

2. Walk by the Spirit 5:16-18



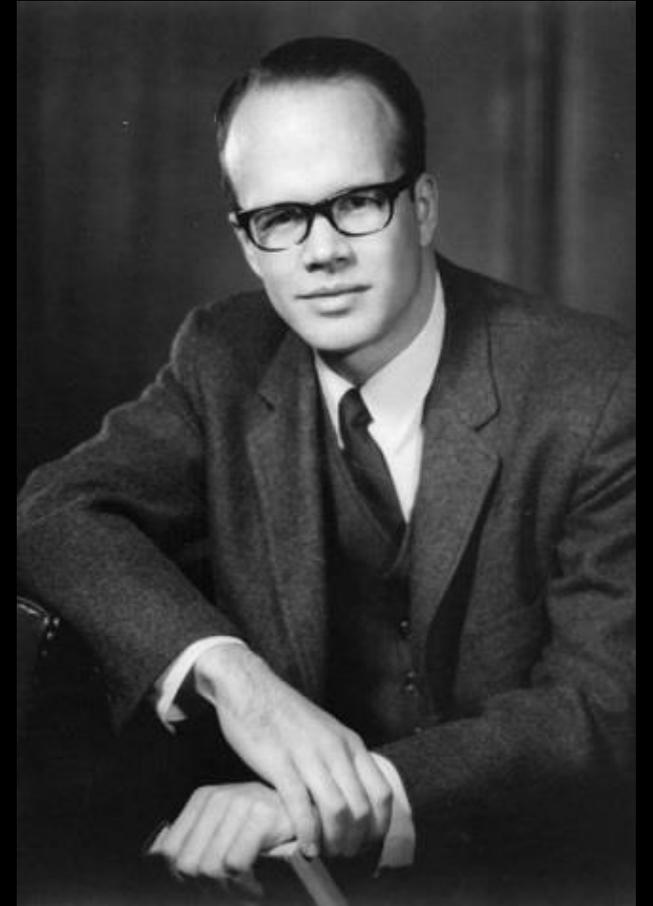
2. Walk by the Spirit 5:16-18

- The only way to master the flesh is to yield to the Spirit.
- To *walk by the Spirit* involves two actions:
 1. We make decisions with the Holy Spirit's guidance – mainly by getting to know God's Spirit-inspired Word.
 2. We then act with the power that the Spirit supplies.

2. Walk by the Spirit 5:16-18

The Spirit is not natural to a human being in one's fallen state. But this does not mean that by the gift of the Spirit a redeemed person escapes the need to struggle against sin. The Spirit simply makes victory possible – and that only to the degree that the believer “lives by the Spirit” or “walks” in him.

*– James Montgomery Boice (1938 – 2000),
pastor, Tenth Presbyterian Church,
Philadelphia*



2. Walk by the Spirit 5:16-18

We are set free from the law and from our flesh by yielding to God's Holy Spirit.

3. Works of the Flesh 5:19-21



3. Works of the Flesh 5:19-21

- These are our natural inclinations – things in our (BC)DNA.
- They may not appear all the time, but when they do, we know that their source is in the flesh.
- They come naturally to the person that we were before we were born again.

3. Works of the Flesh 5:19-21

- 5:20 sorcery (*pharmakeia*) refers to the occult, sorcery, witchcraft, illicit pharmaceuticals, trance, magical incantation with drugs (*Complete Word Study Dictionary*)
- Idolatry and sorcery are offenses against God – and are just as bad (maybe worse) than sins against other people.

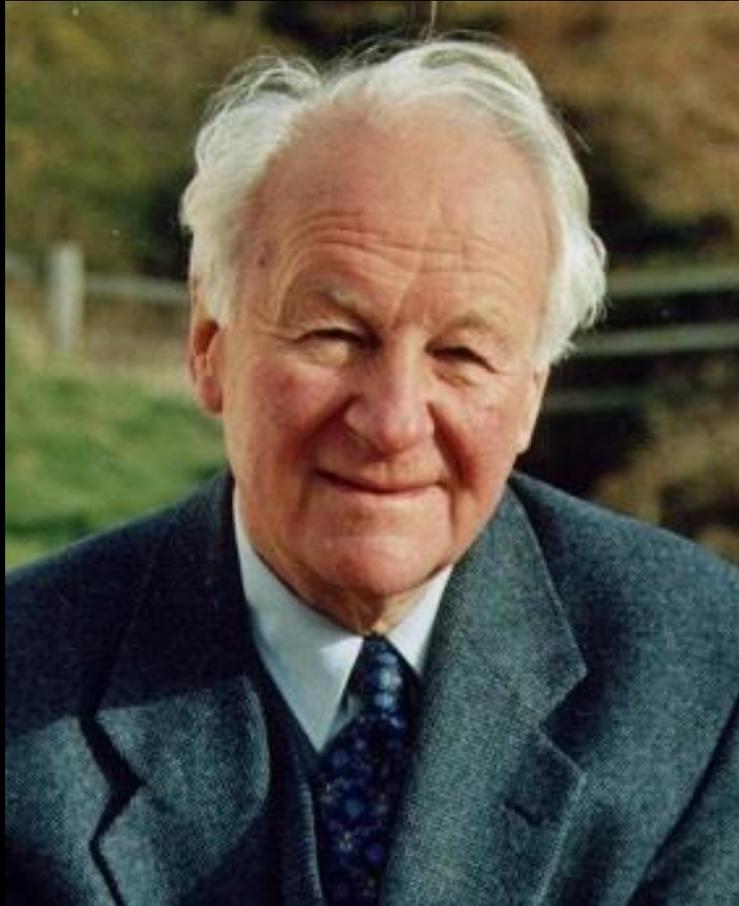
3. Works of the Flesh 5:19-21

- 5:20-21 Hatred, etc., sins against other people
- When we reject God's desires for us, we can easily turn on one another.
- Adam and Eve at first only disobeyed God.
- In the next generation, Cain hated Abel and killed him.

3. Works of the Flesh 5:19-21

- 5:21 and things like these
- This is not a complete list, but it is a good starting point.
- Look for problems in sex, false religion, relations with others and drinking.

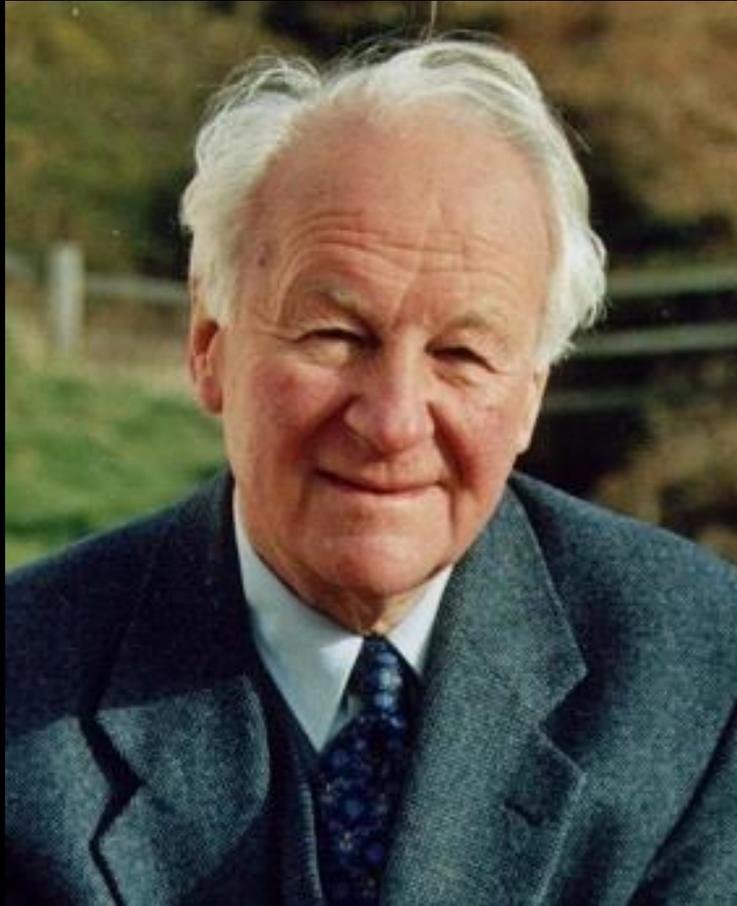
3. Works of the Flesh 5:19-21



To this list of the works of the flesh in the realms of sex, religion, society and drink, Paul now adds a solemn warning: I warn you ... that those who do such things ...

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),
Long-time pastor of All Souls, London*

3. Works of the Flesh 5:19-21



(... habitual practice rather than an isolated lapse) shall not inherit the kingdom of God ... For such works give evidence that they are not in Christ.

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),
Long-time pastor of All Souls, London*

3. Works of the Flesh 5:19-21

- **Research Experiment:** See if you can find evidence that some of these behaviors have genetic components. For example, this is on WebMD.com
- *Dec. 2, 2010 -- Genes associated with sensation-seeking behaviors, such as drinking alcohol or gambling, may also be associated with sexual promiscuity and infidelity, according to a new study.*

3. Works of the Flesh 5:19-21

- All of these flow out of fallen human nature and its desires – which is why their habitual practice is so serious to Paul.
- Without the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, sinful humans can instinctively gravitate toward these works.

4. Fruit of the Spirit

5:22-26



4. Fruit of the Spirit

5:22-26



Those who truly live by the Spirit ... will demonstrate that the Spirit is within them and is bearing fruit in their actions and attitudes. These virtues go far beyond what any mere law could possibly prescribe.

*– Samuel Ngewa,
Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology*

4. Fruit of the Spirit 5:22-26

- Paul lists a bunch – or cluster – of nine virtues.
- They point to God, to others and then to ourselves.

4. Fruit of the Spirit

5:22-26

- Love, joy, peace.
- These may be general Christian virtues, but above all, they point us to God.
- Our first love is love for God.
- Our primary joy is joy in the Lord.
- Our deepest peace is peace with God.

4. Fruit of the Spirit

5:22-26

- **Patience, kindness, goodness.**
- These social qualities point us toward others.
- The word **patience** describes how we treat others – for example, not lashing out, even when there is just cause.
- **Kindness** is always appreciated by all.
- **Goodness** relates to our all words and our deeds.

4. Fruit of the Spirit 5:22-26

- Faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.
- Faithfulness. Think of the Marine Corp motto *Semper fidelis* – *always faithful* – reliability in any situation.
- Gentleness points to the humble meekness of Christ.
- Self-control gives us victory over all forms of sin.

4. Fruit of the Spirit 5:22-26

- And all of these are “the fruit of the Spirit.”
 - Love, joy and peace point us toward God.
 - Patience, kindness and goodness point us toward others.
 - Faithfulness, gentleness and self-control reflect back on ourselves and our inner life.

4. Fruit of the Spirit 5:22-26

- And all of these are “the fruit of the Spirit.”
 - They are the natural harvest of God’s Spirit at work in us.
 - They render the law unnecessary.

4. Fruit of the Spirit 5:22-26

- And all of these are “the fruit of the Spirit.”
 - Law is intended to restrain, to deter, to set boundaries.
 - No restraint, deterrent or boundaries are needed here.

4. Fruit of the Spirit

5:22-26



Isn't duty only a second-best to keep one going until one learns to like the thing, and then it is a duty no more. When love fulfils the Law, sin (as such) flies out of the window. Isn't that part of what St. Paul meant by being free from the Law?

– C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963), in a letter to Mary Van Deusen, 16 December 1955

4. Fruit of the Spirit

5:22-26

We are set free from the law and from our flesh by yielding to God's Holy Spirit.

The Flesh and the Spirit **Conclusions**



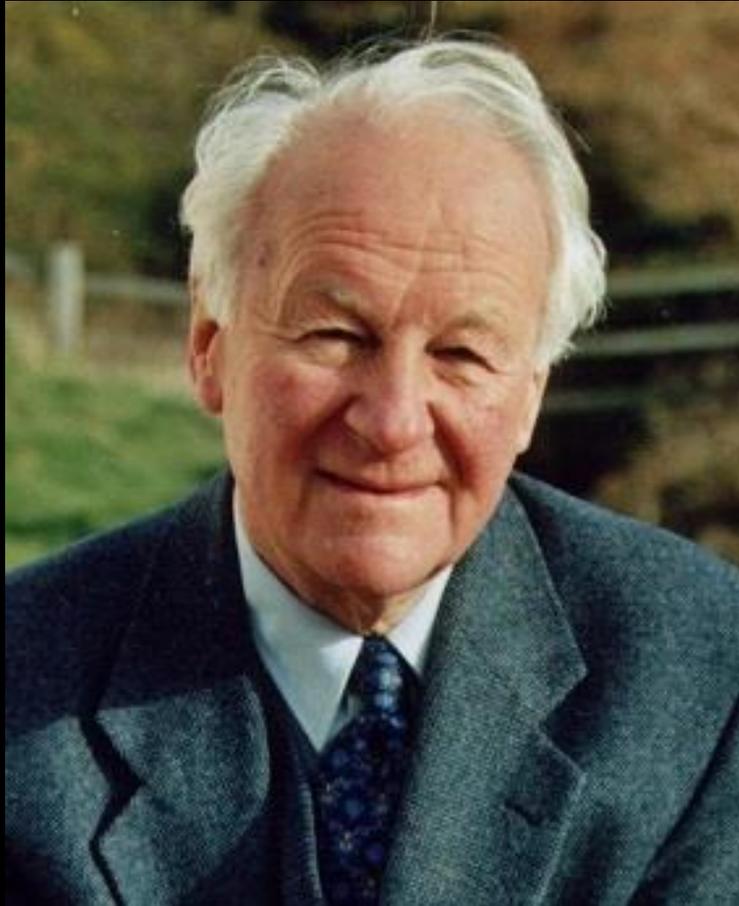
The Flesh and the Spirit Conclusions

- Christians are set free from the law.
We have no need to strive to gain merit with God.
- We are also set free from sin.
We are no longer bound by its power.
- Let's make sure that the promises of Christ's death and God's Word are fulfilled in our lives.

The Flesh and the Spirit **Conclusions**

- As God's creatures we are most free when we do what he made us to do.
- To walk in complete freedom is to **walk by the Spirit**.
- We must now reject our flesh while submitting to him.

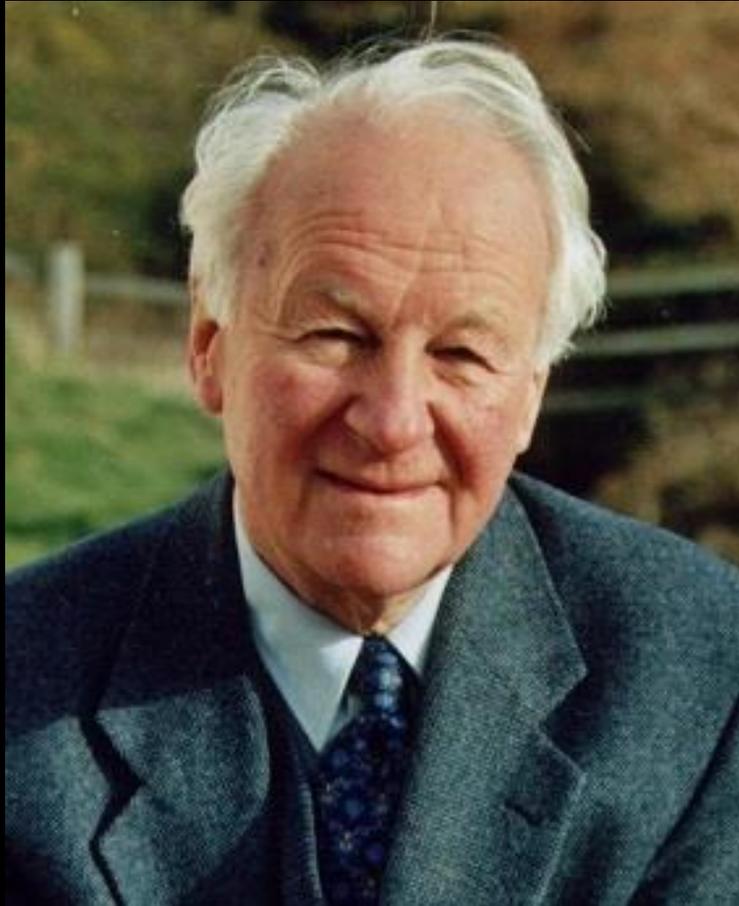
The Flesh and the Spirit **Conclusions**



When we came to Jesus Christ, we repented. We 'crucified' everything we knew to be wrong. We took our old self-centred nature, with all its sinful passions and desires, and nailed it to the cross ...

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),
Long-time pastor of All Souls, London*

The Flesh and the Spirit **Conclusions**



And this repentance of ours was decisive, as decisive as a crucifixion. So, Paul says, if we crucified the flesh, we must leave it there to die. We must renew every day this attitude towards sin of ruthless and uncompromising rejection.

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),
Long-time pastor of All Souls, London*

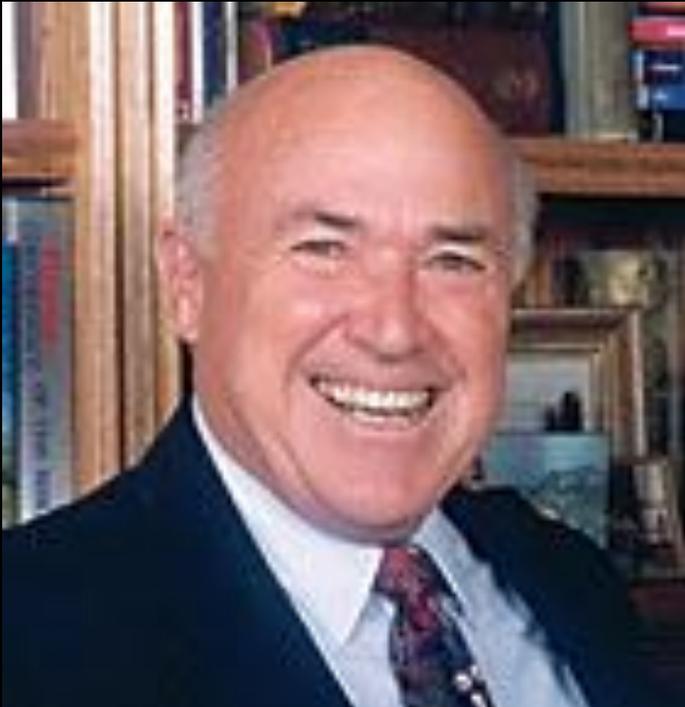
The Flesh and the Spirit **Conclusions**

- The fruit of the Spirit has its source in God the Holy Spirit.
- Like most fruit, however, it's best when it's carefully cultivated.

The Flesh and the Spirit **Conclusions**

- This is where many people fail in the Christian life.
- They know that the Spirit produces the fruit, but they do not cultivate or nurture a Spirit-filled life.
- **The result:** Our lives appear fruitless, but only because we are not voluntarily cooperating with God.

The Flesh and the Spirit **Conclusions**



When we find our minds absorbed in the things of the flesh, it's important to take control and say, "I don't want to think on those things." Start to sing a worship chorus or just turn you mind toward the Lord. Get into the Scriptures. We want to live in the Spirit. We want to walk in the Spirit. If we do, we will not fulfill the lusts of our flesh.

*– Chuck Smith (1927 – 2013),
in The Word for Today Bible*

The Flesh and the Spirit **Conclusions**

- Crucifixion of the flesh is a slow and painful process.
- Cultivation of the Spirit's fruit is a lifelong process as well.
- But the end result will be all of the qualities listed here.

The Flesh and the Spirit **Conclusions**

- **Love, joy and peace**, which point us toward God.
- **Patience, kindness and goodness**, which point us toward others.
- **Faithfulness, gentleness and self-control**, which reflect back on ourselves and our inner life.

The Flesh and the Spirit **Conclusions**

- Consider the first verse of this chapter your personal **Emancipation Proclamation**.
- **Galatians 5:1** (ESV)

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

The Flesh and the Spirit Conclusions

We are set free from the law and from our flesh by yielding to God's Holy Spirit.