

Four Characteristics of the Carnal Life.

by F.B. Meyer

F.B. Meyer explores the characteristics of the carnal life, emphasizing the need for spiritual maturity and discernment in the Christian faith.

Scripture: Matthew 5:14-16, John 15:5, Romans 8:7, 1 Corinthians 1:12-13, 1 Corinthians 3:2, Galatians 5:17, Ephesians 4:14, Philippians 2:13, Hebrews 5:14, 1 Peter 2:2

Topics: "Discernment", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

F.B. Meyer discusses the four characteristics of the carnal life, emphasizing that a carnal Christian remains in a state of spiritual infancy, relying on others for spiritual nourishment instead of growing in their own understanding of God and the Bible. He warns against sectarianism, where believers identify more with their denominational labels than with the universal Church of Christ. Meyer also highlights the inability of carnal Christians to discern good from evil, likening their spiritual immaturity to a lack of sensitivity to moral issues. He calls for self-examination to determine whether one is living a Christ-centered life or a flesh-centered existence, ultimately urging believers to depend on God rather than themselves.

Transcript

Now the carnal life is a babe life. What is sweeter than a babe? So beautiful, so wee, one can take the child so close to oneself. But what is tender and beautiful in a babe for a few months is terrible at the end of twelve months, or ten years. And what is lovely in a young convert is terrible in a man of ten or twenty years of Christian life. I have met men who use the same expressions twenty years after conversion that they did when they were cradled on Calvary; and if you are still living in the elementary stage of experience and feeling and prayer, and do not grow, do not know God better, do not know the Bible better, do not know yourself better, do not know Christ better, you are a little babe, you are carnal.

And then the carnal man lives on milk. Paul said: "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." Milk is food which has passed through the digestion of another. The babe cannot take meat, so the mother takes meat, and breaks it down, and the child takes milk. So many Christians can not read the Bible, cannot get any good out of the Bible, it must be broken down by their minister, and they are fed with a spoon!

Ministers are nurses. They have to spend their time wheeling the converts about, comforting them, putting them to sleep, waking them up and feeding them; and if they are not fed with a spoon three or four times a week, there is no knowing what will happen. And if you are in that state that you must take spiritual truth

through the digestion of another, you are a babe. A carnal Christian is also sectarian. "I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas." Oh, how much we make of the fold, and how little of the flock!

How much we think of the hurdles, and how little of the sheep! One man says: "I am a Baptist"; and another: "I am a Presbyterian"; a third says: "I am a Roman Catholic"; and a fourth: "I am evangelical." Half the time we are worrying about the sect to which we belong. Directly a man begins in that course, and forgets the Church with a large C,--the Church of Christ,--he is a carnal Christian and a babe. I would lead you one step further because I desire to make my system perfectly clear.

Turn to Heb_5:14, where we read: "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Here we have a fourth characteristic of the carnal Christian: such an one is unable to exercise his senses to discern good and evil. When I returned to England from one of my Atlantic voyages, my nose was very sensitive; the pure ozone of the Atlantic had made me very keen to discern impurity. I went to stay with some friends in the country, and all that time I was haunted by a noisome effluvia.

I said: "What is the matter?" "Oh," they said, "there is nothing wrong." I said: "I am sure there is," and presently, after investigating, about a mile off we discovered a sew-age-farm which infected the air. My friends who had had no training on the Atlantic were unable to detect it. So there are men who take up a novel full of impure thought and read it and not feel hurt, though the hurt has been certainly received; men and women who listen to uncharitable talk, and not detect its undertone; men and women who go in and out in the world and mix in its pleasure and sin, and still call themselves Christians, because they cannot discern good and evil.

Those four tests,--are they true of you? I am here as a surgeon, and must help you to anatomize yourself to know where you are. Are you growing? Are you living on the strong meat of the Bible? Are you a sectary? Have you the power to discriminate between good and evil? By these four tests you may know whether the Christ-life or the flesh life is predominant in you. Let us go deeper. When God created man, He gave all intelligent beings a self, hood, a power of self, determination.

He gave it to angels. Demons have it, because they were angels. Men have it,--self-hood. The Creator meant the self-hood to be dependent on Himself, so that a Christian might turn to the Creator and say: "Live Thou in Thy will through me." When Jesus Christ, the perfect man, came amongst men, during all His earthly life He said nothing and willed nothing from Himself; He lived a truly dependent life. The vegetable creation, --the flowers, the trees,--they depend on God absolutely, and that makes them so beautiful.

Consider the lilies and the cedars, how they grow! And the angels who have kept their first estate live on God. God wills, thinks, acts, energizes through them. Satan was once an archangel dependent on God, but something passed over him and he caught the fever of independence, and began to make himself his own pivot; and so he began to be in hell; because hell is the assertion of self to the exclusion of God, and heaven 'is the assertion of God to the exclusion of self. The devil fell, and all his crew that leaned on him, instead of on God, fell also.

Then when man was made, Satan traversed the abyss, and whispered to man: "Be God, be independent, take your own way, do your own will." Man in his fall withdrew his nature from dependence upon God, and made himself a center of his own life and activity. And this world is cursed to-day because men and women are living for self, and the flesh life. The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is darkness and

despair. Christianity is a science, a deep science, which tries to do away with the evil or the fall into selfishness by substituting for self the Son of God, which is Christ.

Is it not wonderful that Hindooism and Christianity are each of them intended to deal with the same root of evil? But the Hindoo tries to exterminate the self life by absorption in eternity until :Nirvana sets in, whilst the Christian who also sees that the self, life is accursed eliminates it by the philosophy and the action which I am now going to describe.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/fb-meyer/four-characteristics-of-the-carnal-life/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net