

# Subduing Your Greatest Enemy

by John Ray Nolt

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*The law of sin and death is a reality that affects all humans, but Christ's death and resurrection provide the solution to sin.*

**Duration:** 1:19:40

**Scripture:** Romans 6:3, Romans 7:18-24, Romans 8:1-3

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Life In Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the audience's personal experiences and challenges in living according to the law of sin and death or the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He emphasizes that those who are in Christ Jesus are not condemned and encourages the listeners to walk in the Spirit rather than in the flesh. The speaker then discusses the role of the Old Testament law and how it was weak through the flesh. He highlights the significance of God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh. The sermon concludes with a call to look to Jesus for freedom and deliverance from the law of sin and death, and to walk in the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

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## Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the freewill offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Well, we greet you in the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the risen Lord and Savior.

Hallelujah. I must say I am humbled to be asked to give a message here this morning, knowing that there would be many people here and knowing that in a crowd this size, there's probably many needs and perhaps many of you are looking to God and longing for some answers for some of those needs. And it is a humbling thing to consider abiding in the presence of God, to find and to hear the heart of God and then to be able to come here and by the grace of God to be able to minister what God has given.

That's a humbling thought to me and so we look to God this morning in faith. I must say I feel like I face an impossible task here this morning because my heart, I have a twofold burden. Now, the first burden of my heart seems to have been conveyed quite a bit already and I'm catching that other brethren have the same burden and that is that as young people, as youth, you have sat here in the Bible school all week long and you've seen God work and you've experienced God working in your life and the burden on our hearts is that you could come back here a year from now and testify of a faithful walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the burden and cry of our hearts and I have to echo the blessing of yesterday when a brother got up here and testified of how God had worked in his life last year and then how that worked out and through the year as he up to this point and what a blessing that was. May you set that vision before your heart. I have another burden on my heart this morning and that is that behind you young people are sitting many mothers and fathers and I can't even see who they are from here.

I can't distinguish their faces. They've not been here all week, many of them. They've been on the job.

They've been at home caring for the family. But my burden this morning is that if you're sitting in the very last row in this room that God would not pass you by today, that you would also be the recipient of the grace of God on your heart and life this morning. For I believe that is the heart and burden of God.

That you could also enter into the spirit and reality of the living God working in our lives, moving us on, changing us from glory to glory. That's my prayer for you. You know, many, many prayers have been prayed all week long and again I know for this morning's service.

But why don't we all together stand to our feet. I don't know how many people are here but let's all quiet our hearts in the presence of God and let's quietly in our heart and in our spirit intercede that God would come and visit us this morning. Let's all pray together.

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. You may be seated.

You know, as I listened to some of your testimonies yesterday, I appreciated so much hearing those testimonies and those breakthroughs and how God dealt with you as youth. And there was something I thought about. Often, you know, we make reference to the victory.

That I've gotten the victory. And I understand what we say. I understand what we mean when we say that.

But I'd like to remind us that until there has been a test, you really haven't gotten the victory. And maybe that's some of my burden for you today. There will be tests.

You will be tested. You can count on it. And that's okay.

That's okay. If you face those tests head on, it will strengthen you in the Lord mightily. The danger is that someone in the middle, in the heat of the test, in the heat of the battle, begins to waver, begins to turn aside, begins to lose their way.

So, the tests will come. The title of the message this morning is Subduing Your Greatest Enemy. Subduing Your Greatest Enemy.

Now, I'd like to clarify that statement of the title just a bit. Because I'm going to talk about a given subject this morning and I'm going to refer to that subject as your greatest enemy. And I want to recognize that someone else could give the same title and preach a message on another subject and it probably would be as true.

So, when I use that statement, I'm not necessarily saying that it's all conclusive. But I do want us to see this great enemy and many times is one of the greatest ones that we face. And the need to subdue that enemy.

We'd like to turn to the book of Romans this morning. We'll begin in Romans 8. Two precious verses here. Quite a few precious verses.

But we'll look at Romans 8, verses 1 and 2 where the Scripture says, There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Now, I'd like to, for the first part of this message, I'd like to focus a bit on that statement in verse 2 at the end of the verse, the law of sin and death.

Let's look now at Romans 7, verses 18 to 24. As we try to get a glimpse into this law of sin and death, Paul here, as he writes to the Romans in verse 18, he says, For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, in me, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. Paul says, He says, For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.

For the good that I would, the good that I know that I should do, the good that I have a knowledge that I should do, I do not do. But the evil that I don't want to do, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Notice that statement, sin that dwelleth in me. He says in verse 21, I find then a law that when I would do good, when I would desire to do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Pretty despairing situation, isn't it? Verse 24, he says, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Or we might say, from this body of death. Who is going to deliver me from this body of death? And again, as we notice there, some of these statements are very comparable to what we read there in Romans 8 verse 2 where he speaks about this law of sin and death that seems to exist. In Romans 7 verse 24, he says, as he makes that statement there, the body of this death or this body of death, we notice that there is, it's like, well, let's look at Romans 5 verse 12.

The Scripture says in Romans 5 verse 12, Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men. And there we get even a deeper glimpse into this whole subject of this matter of this death passing upon all men. And I'd like to, today I'd like to make a comparison.

I'd like to draw a line up here. And we would like to, as we consider this law of sin and death, and we'd like to label this line actually the law of sin and death. Maybe I'll just put the initials here.

We'll put some words here. Law of sin and death. Now, I would like to make a comparison here with this law of sin and death that the Bible is speaking of.

This body of death that Paul speaks of here in Romans 7.24 and this death that passed upon all men in Romans 5.12. This death that it is speaking of, I'd like to compare that to the law of gravity. We all know what the law of gravity is. The entire earth's surface is controlled by the law of gravity.

If I take this book and if I let it go, it would immediately fall to the floor. And that's because there is a law called the law of gravity that is in effect. And it keeps all the objects around us clinging to the floor.

It's the law of gravity. Well, there is a law that is controlling or is the entire human race is in the grips of a law. And it's called the law of sin and death.

It doesn't matter what creed, what land, what race, what tongue. It matters none. Every human being that has ever been born in the earth with the exception of the Lord Jesus Christ are held in the grips of that law of sin and death.

They're held there. That's what controls them. And that's why we see the continual decay of mankind.

You know, God has done, and we have the history of the Scriptures where God has done various things to try to work with mankind and to bail them out of their situation, if you want to say it that way. And yet we see men destroying themselves. We see nations destroying themselves.

We see communities and families destroying themselves. We see young people destroying their lives. Why? It's because there's a law of sin and death that is ruling their lives.

And they can't do a thing about it. Well, the Bible has a lot to say. As Paul said there in Romans 7.18, he says, In my flesh dwelleth no good thing.

And I'd like us to realize that while this physical flesh is not necessarily the cause of this law, it seems to be the agent through which it works. This law seems to work through our flesh. I guess it's a little bit like there's nothing evil in this finger, and yet this flesh is the agent through which this law operates.

Maybe we'll put it that way. And when we see in the Scriptures, and especially here in Romans 8, we see Paul as he speaks and as he dialogues on these truths, he uses terms like walking in the Spirit. Verse 1 there, they who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

And he uses that term quite a bit there in Romans 8 where he makes the comparison between walking in the flesh and walking in the Spirit. And I simply want us to make that connection. I want us to make that connection this morning.

That this law of sin and death is simply our flesh. That's where it operates. That's where its seat, where its throne is.

In our flesh. In us. In me and you.

And so I want us to make that connection this morning that as we read through the Scriptures and we read about this whole thing of to be they that are after the flesh, mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit, he's talking about this law of sin and death. This flesh, this self, this body of death that he spoke of in verse 24 of chapter 7. Now, I'd like to put a little attention to the subject

of how the law in the Old Covenant affected this. And by the way, I don't know if you've discovered it yet, but it is your flesh and it is my flesh that is our greatest enemy.

And it's in that flesh through which that law operates that is our greatest enemy. And that's, you know, remember the clarification I gave in the beginning. Maybe somebody says, well, the devil's our greatest enemy.

Well, that is also true, I believe. But as I speak this morning, I'm speaking to us concerning our flesh and I'm going to make that statement of it being our greatest enemy without apology and without clarification from here out. And so, I'd like to, as we have taken a look at this enemy, we see this enemy, we see this law that is in effect, I'd like to just spend a few minutes talking about what happened when God tried to or when He worked with Israel as a people and He gave them the old covenant, the old law, as we sometimes say it, and how that affected this enemy of ours, this flesh of ours, this law of sin and death.

Okay, so here we have this law of sin and death and we know what is all contained there. We know what is all contained in our flesh. As Paul says here in Romans 7, he talks about the things that we should do, we don't do, and the things that we shouldn't do, we do.

The flesh lusts to sin. You know, the flesh strives after sin. The flesh wants to do its own thing.

And so here we have the God of heaven, the holy God of heaven. And the question is raised here, as God brings the law on the scene, the question was raised in Romans 7, verse 7, is the law sin? We might ask, if the law didn't take care of the problem, is it then sin? Well, we want to try to answer that question. And also, just going down to verse 12, he says, wherefore, in Romans 7, verse 12, wherefore, the law is holy, and the commandment holy.

And that's what I'd like us to see this morning. The law was an expression of God. It was an expression of His holiness.

And what happened when God brought that law on the scene, exactly what happened is this, it was like putting a magnifying glass to man's sin problem, to this whole matter of the law of sin and death. And now, the problem is magnified. You see, we have this holy law.

It tells us about God. It tells us what God wants for His people. It tells us how we should live.

But, it does absolutely nothing to deal with this law that is in effect. It does nothing to deal with the law of sin and death that men and women are bound by. It only puts a magnifying glass to it and explodes it to be something... You know, all of a sudden, mankind sees that He's wicked, He's evil, He's... Wow! Such an ugly creature I am.

Here's the law of God. It's holy. He wants me to live in purity.

He wants me to love my enemies, you know, and to be kind to people around me. And I'm a sinner. I've got this anger in my heart.

Well, that's what it was supposed to do. That's what it was supposed to do. And Paul describes that here in Romans 7. He says in verse 12... No, let's back up.

Let's read some of this context now in Romans 7. Maybe we ought to begin all the way over in verse 5. He says, therefore, when we were in the flesh... And now I'd like you to notice that statement right there.

When we were in the flesh. This Scripture is not speaking about a half-hearted Christianity.

This is speaking about people who are in the flesh. And a person who is in the flesh is living in the grips of the law of sin and death. He says here, for when we were in the flesh, the motions, or we could say the passions of sins, which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, we should serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Was the Old Testament law sin? No. He says, God forbid.

He says, I had not known sin but by the law. I had not known lust except the law said I shouldn't covet. He says, but sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of desire, concupiscence, all manner of cravings.

For without the law, sin was dead. It had no power. He says, for I was alive without the law once.

And I'm not exactly sure what he means there. I gave thought to the possibility that he meant before he was old enough to understand. But then he grew up and became of fuller age and began to understand the heart of God and began to understand the law and conviction settled down on his heart.

And he died. But anyhow, he says, when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life... You see, there's nothing wrong with the commandment.

It was a holy commandment. It was a glimpse into the holiness of God. It was ordained to life.

He said, I found it to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it slew me. Wherefore, the law is holy, the commandment is holy, it's just and it's good.

Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. No, not at all. But sin.

The problem is sin. The problem is not the commandment. The problem is sin.

But sin that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good. That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. Hallelujah.

For we know that the law is spiritual. You ever think about it that way? The law is spiritual. But I am carnal, sold under sin.

And there we have it. Sold under sin. Exactly what we were talking about here.

Sold under sin. Held in its grips. No getting free.

A slave to sin is what he's saying. A slave to sin. He goes on, for that which I do, I allow not.

See what he's saying? He has the law, the Old Testament law. He knows what he should do. In his mind he doesn't allow it.

But his body does it anyway. He doesn't have no power over that law of sin and death. He doesn't have no power over that sin.

Says, for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

And again, he's just bringing us right back down to this whole, this law of sin and death. And he goes on in verse 18 again, he says, for I know, and I'd like to reemphasize this, for I know that in me, that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. And then he goes on and gives this dialogue all over again about what I don't want to do, I do.

And what I should do, I don't do. And again, it brings us right down to the same bottom line. This chapter is speaking about the flesh.

And a person who is living in the flesh. But trying, and in certain cases, trying to please God at the same time. You know, when you identify yourself as a Romans 7 Christian, I don't think there is such a thing.

Frankly, I don't think there is such a thing. If you're living in the experience of Romans 7, I don't think you're a Christian. And we'll try to clarify some of that as we go.

Now, so we see how the old covenant, the law of the old covenant, affected this law of sin and death. It only magnified it. Only brought the problem out in the light.

But it gave no solution. So now, we would like to look at how does Christ deal with the problem? How does Christ deal with this law of sin and death? Let's read a verse in Romans 8, verse 3 now. We read verse 1 and 2 already.

Let's look at verse 3 for a moment. For what the law could not do, that's the Old Testament law. And we have to clarify a little bit He speaks about quite a few laws here, and we have to clarify them a bit.

In verse 3 here, He speaks of the Old Testament law. What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. And that's the phrase we'd like to focus on there for a moment.

God sending His Son, His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. Turn over to Romans 6. And we'd like to see how that all, a bit more deeper into that truth. In Romans 6 here, He gives us a bit of a revelation of Jesus Christ and how that by His death.

Let's begin in verse 3. Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? And now I'd like to take your focus away from the actual water baptism for this moment here. I know we use this scripture a good bit when we talk about water baptism. But you know what water baptism is? It's being immersed.

And what I'd like you to notice here is not necessarily when you were baptized with water, but when you were immersed into Christ. When you saw Him. And you entered into Him by faith.

He says, Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? We die with Him by faith. We enter into that death with Him. Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Verse 6, Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin, notice that

phrase, the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin any longer. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. And the sum of those words is this. The Lord Jesus Christ, by His death and resurrection, brought into existence a new law.

It's described in Romans chapter 8, in verse 2, as the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. By His death, dying, identifying with us in our sinful state, taking on that body of flesh, going to the grave, and then resurrecting again. And in Romans 7, the first several verses, He actually uses the example of a wife being bound by the law to her husband as long as that husband lives.

And how that we as the human race were bound to the law of sin and death until the Lord Jesus Christ died. And then we were freed from that law. And now He wants us to get married to another, which is Jesus Christ Himself.

We're now free to get married again because the old law died. We're dead to that old law. We're free to be married to Christ.

And so the Lord Jesus, in that work of redemption on Calvary's cross, He brought a new law into existence. I'd like to compare that law to the law of aerodynamics. You know what that is? Marker's getting a bit dull.

I hope you can see this in the back. We'll try to make it big enough that you can. I'd like to compare that law to the law of aerodynamics.

Now, what is the law of aerodynamics? Well, we all know again, we have the law of gravity. And the law of gravity has kept men on the ground for thousands of years. Their main means of transportation was walking and donkeys and horses and boats and something that was on the ground, on the earth's surface, whether it was water or ground or whatever.

Because the law of gravity kept everything there. Well, how is it that nowadays you look up in the air and you see these big objects flying through the air? What happened? Doesn't the law of gravity work anymore? Seems to work right here. You know what? Men developed a new law.

It's called the law of aerodynamics. And by that law, they are able to take a big object, like an airplane, and they've developed various other ways as well. And they're able to take a big object and they actually defy the law of gravity that is in place and they take them up in the air and they fly for thousands of miles that way.

You know, that is exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ did in light of this law of sin and death that held men in bondage, that men were bound by. He developed, He bought, He paid for, He came up with a new law and it's called the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Now, that law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus did not eradicate the law of sin and death.

Did it? It didn't. We know that the law of sin and death is still in existence in the lives of many people. And if we're totally honest, as Christians, we see more of it in our own lives than we'd like to at times, right? But we see that that law is still in existence.

However, there is a greater law. Just as men have developed a law that overpowers, overcomes the law of gravity, the Lord Jesus Christ has given a law that overpowers and overcomes the law of sin and death. Hallelujah! Amen! We are free from the law of sin and death! Hallelujah! Imagine that! For thousands of years, men and women were bound by that thing.

And many today are bound by that thing yet. But there's a greater law. It's called the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

And to whosoever will can come and enter into the reality of that law by faith in Jesus Christ, by faith in His death and resurrection. Whosoever will can come and enter into that law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Well, what about this down here then? And we'd like to spend some time now talking about that, having established this framework of thinking in our hearts.

You know, as a Christian, you know, just like an airplane, you know what happens when an airplane cuts its throttle. Does he keep climbing? Does he even hold a steady pace? Can he hold his altitude? No, he can't. If he cuts the throttle, what's going to happen? He's headed down.

That's right. He's headed down. What happens in your life after you have entered into this law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus and you are enjoying a glorious climb in Christ and you just kind of... well, you get satisfied with where you're at.

Or maybe some little old sin begins to plague you again and you kind of carelessly go through life and sin starts coming back into your life. What happens? You stay up here. You come down, right? You come down.

That's right. Well, we'd like to ponder that a bit. You know, I counseled with a young man here this week who was converted about three months ago, I think you said.

I may not have all the details quite accurately, but he was converted and out of a life of sin. And let's put a circle here to kind of indicate the point of conversion. And he had walked with God some through those few months and had enjoyed some of that freedom in Christ.

But in the last number of weeks, he had just done a nosedive. And that's where the burden of my heart lies here some for you youth. The potential exists.

You know, many of you, I think you've gone, right? You've been going up. You've been gaining altitude. Amen? The danger is in the weeks ahead, as you face the turbulence, one of the brothers spoke about turbulence in his message this past week.

As your aircraft is up there and you're sailing along and you face the turbulence and the old thing starts rocking this way and that way, and you can hardly keep the water in the cup, remember? The danger is that your old plane will start coming down. And we don't want to see that happen. So I'd like to talk to you a little bit on the practical side.

Like we said here, this law of gravity, the law of aerodynamics, did not eradicate the law of gravity. The law of sin and death did not eradicate... excuse me, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus did not eradicate the law of sin and death. It overpowered it.

It gave us a higher law to live by. However, we must take heed because this law of sin and death, or our flesh, where that law operates, our flesh continues to make bids for our soul, right? You know, there's still some of this pull towards sin. And our flesh still needs to be dealt with.

And so that brings us into this verse here again in Romans 8 where he says that there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. And he gives those two comparisons. Who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.

And it gives us this picture of a walk, a life lived in the spirit rather than a life lived in the flesh. And the danger point is back here as you are walking with God, you're living for the Lord Jesus Christ, the heaven is open over your life, you are gaining altitude, and then God brings some circumstances into your life to test you. Remember we said the test will come? To test you.

And we must needs be tested. We must be proven. Is my faith real? Do I really love Jesus with all my heart? And we can't prove that until we've been in the test.

And so the test must needs come. And the danger is that as we respond to those tests, you're probably going to fail sometimes. Your flesh will probably get the upper hand at times.

Now that's not the worst thing. It is bad, but it's not the worst thing. The worst thing is if you don't deal with it.

That's the worst thing. And so now, let's just use an example. Your parents try to give you a little guidance in your life.

And you cringe under it. You might not even get angry at it. You might not even express any verbal words of disrespect or unwillingness to submit.

It might just be all in your heart. It might just be festering there, sitting there. Well, now you're beginning to entertain.

You're beginning to draw from this old law of sin and death again. You're making a connection with that old law again. With that old flesh.

Well, life goes on and maybe you're walking through a grocery store or something and you come upon some magazines that aren't the most healthiest and you haven't been feeling real good toward your parents because they didn't let you do what you wanted to do. And so you don't have a whole lot of spiritual strength and so you stop and you glance at those magazines and now you've just got another connection to the flesh. You've just plugged into that law of sin and death the second time.

And mind you, the cords are getting thicker. The cords are getting thicker. Well, maybe you have a radio in your room and by now your spiritual desires are starting to fade out a bit and it's bedtime and you ought to pray and you ought to read your Bible a little before you go to sleep.

But, well, it was just a couple of hours ago you were in the grocery store and you saw that stuff you shouldn't have looked at. So now you can't really focus on prayer and you can't really focus on the Bible and so you turn on the radio. You get that secular music and that plugs, fits right into what you're doing.

Fits right into where your heart is. And so now you're plugging into the flesh even more and bringing yourself into the bondage of this old law again. This law of sin and death.

You're bringing yourself right back in to the bondage of that old law of sin. And so you go on through life and this happens and that happens. The next thing happens and finally it's time to go back to Bible school.

God forbid! God forbid! You know, the Bible says in James 1, verse 14, you know, this whole matter of temptation, I think it's one that we have to reckon with and realize that we'd like to blame the devil. We'd like to blame our friends. We'd like to blame the circumstances.

We'd like to blame everything else. But the Bible says in James 1, verse 14, every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust. Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust.

And enticed. You know, it is our flesh that draws us away. And if we'll be frank, if we'll be totally honest, our flesh loves sin.

Right? It does. Our flesh loves sin. Our flesh would take us into the depths of iniquity if there wasn't some other law written on our hearts.

It would. Mine would. I tell you, my flesh is... There's no good thing in my flesh.

And if we can see that, if we can reckon with the fact that when a temptation comes our way and maybe we fail in some of these things. Some of it, there's several... I think there's several situations and types of situations you'll find yourself in. Some of them, you'll find yourself in situations where temptations will come your way and even though in your mind you don't want to, but your flesh wants to.

And so it becomes a struggle of the spirit or the flesh. And the spirit of God prompts your heart, but the flesh is also calling. And it's a matter of which one is going to win.

But I think one of the things and the quickest way out of failure is if we can come to grips with the fact that I sin. I love that sin that I just committed. My flesh wanted to do it.

And we deal with that flesh. We bring it into subjection. You know, flesh is a little bit like anything else.

It needs to be fed in order to live. And this is the foolishness of it. When a person, he wants to live for Christ.

He wants to walk with God. He wants to live in this law above. But at the same time, he wants to enjoy the pleasures of sin.

And so, you know, maybe his music. He has this filthy music. This fleshly music.

This music that entertains the flesh. Feeds the flesh. Maybe he has reading materials that feed the flesh.

You know, and we go through life wanting to live for Christ, but at the same time, wanting to enjoy the sin and the pleasures of sin. And so, here we sit, trying to gain altitude, trying to gain strength, but at the same time, feeding the flesh. And that old flesh keeps right on pulling us down, keeps right on pulling us down, keeps right on pulling us down, and at the same time, we are trying to go up, trying to go up, trying to go up.

Frustrating experience, isn't it? And it's because we are not dealing with our flesh. We don't have to live down here. And we don't have to live halfway in between.

If we are living there, it's because we are wanting to live there. Maybe in our mind we are not wanting to, but there is something in us that is wanting to. And we have not dealt with that thing, that something, that flesh.

Paul says, well, let me make one more reference, one more illustration to this whole thing of flesh. You know, pride is such a big one in the flesh. Such a big one.

And so subtle. And we may not realize it. We may not realize at times that the way we handle ourselves, there is a little tinge of pride in there.

We stand in front of the mirror and make sure everything is nicely in place and we don't recognize at times that tinge of pride that is sticking in our hearts. Maybe it's pride in our, like I said, in our appearance, in our clothes. Maybe it's pride in our possessions.

Maybe it's pride in our gadgets, like one brother preached this week. You know what I thought of when I thought about that? All those gadgets and sometimes people get involved in. You know, there is no end to gadgets these days.

Cell phones and organizers and palm, whatever they call them, little palm things. I mean, oodles of them. And my mind went back to something I heard about cell phones years ago.

When cell phones were first coming available and they were, of course, you didn't carry them on your belt. You had a big pack and you have it in your vehicle. And somebody told me that, I can't say that I've necessarily seen it myself, but somebody told me that in the Midwest, the farmers, if they had a cell phone, you'd see them driving down the road sitting like this, so that everybody that drove by could see they had a cell phone.

You know, sitting there like this on the street, slouched way over with the phone in their hand so everybody could see they have a cell phone. Sounds like pride, doesn't it? Well, how about us? You know, those little tinges of pride that stick their head up. I've got this thing hanging here.

I go out in the hallway and make a phone call here. Go call somebody. Hope everybody sees what I'm doing.

Got a cell phone. My car. Pull in here.

It's flesh. Flesh. You're feeding the flesh.

You're bringing yourself into the bondage of the law of sin and death. Oh, it's so subtle. I don't stand here as one who's never failed.

I stand here as one who's had to repent over my own pride at times. In 1 Corinthians 9, verse 27, Paul says, I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. It seems like Paul recognized the danger of this flesh.

And he says, I keep it under. And the picture that is given there in the Greek context is one of some vehemence. It's basically the idea of giving that flesh a blow that lands it on the floor.

That puts it on the floor. It's a little bit like, you know, here am I and here's this old self, this old flesh, and I see it sticking up its head. I see it trying to get power in my life and I lay that thing a blow with all the

vehemence that the impact puts it on the floor with a black and blue eye.

That's the way we need to deal with our flesh. Knock it out. Ever had anybody knock you out? Knock it out.

Hit it so hard that it loses its senses. You know what? If you don't, God might have to send somebody else who will. You know what happens then? Don't hurt me.

Why do you say that? You know, God might send somebody else to put a blow to that flesh. And then we go running away in self-pity. Hmm? Go running away in self-pity when the God of heaven divinely sends a servant to put a blow to yourself, to your flesh.

Oh, how many people do that and miss the opportunity for spiritual growth in their lives? As they go away in self-pity, oh, he had no business doing that to me. What did he think he is? Had no business saying that. Would you say that to Jesus? Would you say that of Jesus? Are you going to say that of a servant of Jesus who is Spirit-inspired? That doesn't mean... I want to clarify that.

That doesn't mean people don't make mistakes. It doesn't mean people don't at times do things they shouldn't do. They do.

But be careful when somebody tries to deal with you. If you want to get some mileage out of it, if you want to grow in the grace of God, you welcome that. You welcome that.

Even if they didn't do it all right. Well, I hope this picture is riveted on your heart. I hope it is.

And I hope that you can go as young people, you can go home and you can see and identify that flesh when it comes around. And you can lay the axe to the root of the tree by faith in Jesus Christ. And you can deal with it.

And you can continue to gain altitude in Christ. Continue to walk with God. Well, I'd like to just shift my focus for a few minutes here.

You know, many of you are sitting here now speaking to those who've not been here all week. You've not had the opportunity to live under the blessing of the preaching of the Word all week long. I don't know where you find yourself this morning.

I don't know what you were thinking as we went through this diagram. I don't know what your experience has been. I just know that you weren't here all week long.

You were somewhere else. Life's responsibilities called you. But what's your experience? Where are you living? Which law is controlling you? Which law is reality in your life? The law of sin and death? Or the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? Which one is it? The Bible says that there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

What was your week like? What was your last month like? What's your last year been like? Are you living in the reality of the Spirit? Or are you muddling around down here with the flesh? Defeat. Defeat in your life as a husband and a father. Did you walk in the Spirit this week or this past month in your home as you related to your family? Were you walking in the Spirit or is the flesh having the upper hand in your life as you related to your wife? Have you been walking in the Spirit? Have the fruits of the Spirit been coming out? Or have the works of the flesh been manifesting themselves? At your workplace, have you been walking in the Spirit? With your employee? Employees? Employer? Wherever you find yourself.

Have you been walking in the Spirit? Have you been living up here? Or have you been living down here under the law of sin and death? Ill feelings in your heart. Yeah, maybe you didn't get angry and curse at them, but in your heart you were upset. What was your experience? What was your experience as a wife and mother? Did you walk in the Spirit in your home this week, this month as you related to your husband? Did you walk in the Spirit as you related to your children? Was the Spirit, the sweet fruit of the Spirit coming forth from your life and heart as you related to your family? What did your children see? Were your words that you spoke, were they graced with the grace of the presence of God? Or were they defiled with flesh? Your attitudes.

Did you walk in the Spirit? Are you living in the reality of the Spirit? The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. You know, there's quite a few of us pastors and elders here today. You know, we can ask ourselves that question.

Are we walking in the Spirit with our flock? As we relate to our flock? Are we walking in the Spirit as we see their needs? Are we responding to those needs under the Spirit's control? Are we responding by the grace of the Spirit of Christ as we minister to the weak ones or maybe even the carnal ones? Are we ministering in the grace of the Spirit? The Spirit of Christ. As we relate to those who do not seem to appreciate our oversight, are we able? Are we under the control, under the infinite of the Spirit of Christ? To be able to relate to those situations with grace. To be able to relate to them with humility.

To be able to keep our hearts clean, free from bitterness, free from anger. As we minister to sisters in our fellowships, are we pure in heart? Blessed are the pure in heart. Are we pure in heart? Do we relate to them in all purity as Paul exhorted Timothy? Valid questions to ask ourselves as elders and pastors.

Are we walking in the Spirit? You know, as brothers and sisters in the church, where do you find yourself as brothers and sisters in the church? Are you walking in the Spirit as you relate to your overseers, as you relate to your elders? Are you walking in the Spirit as you observe their mistakes? And they make some. When they do something different than you thought it should have been done. How do you relate to them? Do you walk in the Spirit? Is your heart free of bitterness because of how something was handled? Bitterness is flesh.

Bitterness is flesh. Maybe they didn't do it right. But if you have bitterness, you're not doing it right either.

The Spirit inspired several writers to pen these words that we are to esteem them very highly who are called to oversight. We are to give them double honor. The Spirit of God inspired those words.

As the Spirit of God, as it has filled your life, has it given you that kind of attitude toward those whom God has watching over your life? And as you relate to one another in the brotherhood, do you esteem your brothers and sisters? Do you walk in the Spirit as you relate to one another in the body of Christ, in the church? Do you walk in the Spirit? Do you esteem your brothers and sisters? Do you appreciate them in your heart and love them? Are you walking in the Spirit? Well, if you're not. If you're not. If you're in bondage to this law of sin and death, even if it's just one area of your life, just one area.

I'd like to recommend the Lord Jesus Christ to you. The Lord Jesus Christ brought this new law into effect because He wanted it to be... Number one, He saw we needed it. And number two, He wanted us to enter into the reality of it.

He wanted us to enter into the reality of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He wanted to deliver us from this law of sin and death that we're bound by. And by faith in Jesus Christ, we can.

We can enter into that law of the Spirit of life. We can enter into the reality of a Spirit-filled life. And we can walk in the reality of a Spirit-filled life.

And if we... Just the way I told the youth, you know, if they find themselves in defeat, if they find themselves somewhere down here, we need to repent. We need to get right with God. We need to clear the heaven.

We need to look to Jesus. And I... You know, this morning I so appreciated the emphasis on not looking at us, but looking at Him. And the other night a message was preached like that.

Looking to Him. And that's the answer, brothers and sisters, that's the answer. Look to Jesus.

Are you sick of your sin? Are you sick of the way you're responding to your children? Are you sick of that root of bitterness that's in your heart? And you've tried to deal with it. And you've tried to think good thoughts toward the person. But this root of bitterness keeps springing up within.

Are you sick of it? Look to Jesus. I remember some years ago when I was still a fairly young Christian down at charity one Sunday morning there was an altar call given. And I went to counsel.

I don't know how old I was in the Lord. I was young. I was zealous.

I wanted to be involved in stretching myself in all the things of God. Bless God. We ought to be doing that.

And I got put into a room with a brother who was older than I. You know, that was a little bit intimidating to start with. But anyhow, as we were in that room and this brother was... Oh my, I rarely have seen such conviction as I saw in that brother that day as God was dealing with his heart over an issue in his life. And the issue was his business.

It was an idol to him. And God was asking him to sell his business and get out of it. And I found myself in that counseling room with that brother and oh how he wrenched under the hand of God as God was pressing upon his heart dealing with that idol that was in his life.

And he loved it. And he knew exactly what God wanted him to do. But it had his heart.

It had his heart. And I can hardly describe the physical wrenching that went on as he tried to deal with his sin and let go of this idol. And we can all imagine.

I mean, this is no little thing. It was a big thing. It was a very big thing.

I mean, it was like letting go of life as I was standing by that brother and trying to help him through. And I didn't know how to help him. I mean, it was an inner struggle.

And finally, I said, I'm going to find somebody else to help us. I went looking for some of the older brothers, the mature brothers. I couldn't find any of the ones I wanted to find.

They were probably somewhere else counseling him. So, I went back down again. He was still there.

He was still wrenching in his body and in his spirit. And he pleaded with me. Don't let me go! Don't give up on me! He was pleading with me not to give up trying to help him.

And I was young. I mean, I felt so helpless that day. I felt so helpless.

I had rarely seen anything like that. And finally, he was kneeling on the floor and I got down beside him. I started talking to him.

I said, brother! Brother, look to Jesus! Look to Jesus! I started describing Jesus hanging on the cross. I said, the soldier comes up and he throws a spear in his side and blood is flowing out. I said, look to Jesus! Get under that blood! Crawl! Get up there! See yourself under the blood! It's for you, brother! It's for you! And all of a sudden, heaven started to open.

Hallelujah! I mean, heaven opened over that man's life. And he was able to just let go of it. He got up off his feet.

Of course, he was physically exhausted, but in spirit he was rejoicing. Look to Jesus! Hallelujah! He's the answer for your need. It doesn't matter what it is.

Look to Jesus. Let's bow our heads. Oh, God.

Oh, God. We look to Jesus this morning as we sit here in our hearts. I know in our hearts there are many different things going on in our hearts.

In a group this size, there are many different things. Oh, God, would You give us grace this morning to look to Jesus, to find freedom and deliverance out of our flesh, that law of sin and death that dwells there, to enter into the spirit of life in Christ Jesus new and fresh again this morning, and to walk therein moment by moment through life? God, give us that. Give us that reality.

Help us to apprehend that which we've been apprehended for. Oh, God, meet every need in this room today, God. Oh, Spirit of the living God, settle down on this place and meet every need as only You can.

Grant deliverance to that heart that is sick of sin. Bring conviction to that heart that is still enjoying its sin. Oh, God, give us what we need, for we ask it in Jesus Christ's name.

Amen.

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