

THE BODY: INSTRUMENT OF THE SPIRIT (3)

Introduction: Read Matthew 5:27-30. Civil law does not regulate what one thinks, but does govern how we behave. Christianity begins with control of one's heart (mind, spirit) & the actions follow the dictates of one's own heart.

1. There is indeed a continuous battle raging within each one of us between our body (flesh) and the spirit that is within us (2 Cor. 4:16-18).
 - a. Consequently Paul admonishes that we should "look" (*skopeō* – "look at the mark"; *i.e.*, keep our minds upon, endeavor to obtain) upon that which is eternal (spiritual) and not on that which is temporal (flesh).
 - b. Romans 6:12-14 teaches that our spirit within us has the responsibility to control the impulses of the flesh: **"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts."**
2. The fact is that our body cannot sin without our spirit's consent.

C. GRATIFICATION OF THE FLESH IS FORMED IN THE HEART.

1. In Matthew 5:27-30 Jesus moves from the regulations of the Mosaic Law to His Own higher Law. One must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (see 5:20): (a) murder begins in the heart in the form of anger (5:21-26) & (b) adultery begins in the heart in form of lust (5:27-30).
 - a. Yet, the principle had already been well expressed in the Old Testament: ***For as he thinks in his heart, so is he*** (Prov. 23:7).
 - b. The primary element of man's character is his controlling disposition.
 - c. This is why we must control our thinking (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Phil. 4:8, 9).
2. Thus the spirit of a man manifests itself through the body of a man.
 - a. So our bodies can be for righteousness or unrighteousness (Rom. 6:19).
 - b. *E.g.* our tongues can either praise God or curse man (Jas. 3:9, 13-18).
 - c. Our bodies are either for our glory or shame (Rom. 8:13; 2 Cor. 5:10).
3. The body, then, isn't the responsible agent of sin, the spirit is (1 Cor. 6:18).
 - a. Note that Paul says, **"Every sin that a man does is without the body."**
 - b. **"Without the body"** means exterior to, beyond the body. It is not the body that sins but something else is responsible for the body's actions.
 - c. Thus, while every sin that one commits comes from the spirit and not the body, there are sins (*e.g.* fornication) that are against the body.
 - d. Consequently, while all sin defiles the spirit, some also the body.
 - e. The truth is, a regenerated man can sin against his spirit and his body.
4. We all have two choices in life: either (1) be governed by the desires of the flesh or (2) by our human spirit which is trained by God's Spirit.
5. Walking in the Spirit guards against lusts of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16). Daniel Earl Boatman [*Guidance from Galatians*, p. 217] suggests this rendering: "I command then, walk according to the dictates of your spiritual part, and so you will not gratify the lusts of your animal nature; particularly, ye will not gratify the sinful passions of envy, malice, anger, revenge."

Matthew 5:27-30 [SCRIPTURE READING] 27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."

Romans 6:12-14 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Philippians 4:8, 9 8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Romans 6:19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

James 3:9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

Romans 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.

Galatians 5:16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.