

You Must Be Born Again

What Jesus Meant

A Publication of

REFORMATION PLATFORM MINISTRY

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KJV- King James Version
NKJV- New King James Version
AMP- Amplified Bible
AMPC- Amplified Bible Classic Edition
NLT- New Living Translation
AUV- An Understandable Version
GNB- Good News Bible
MSG- The Message
TLB- The Living Bible
CEV- Contemporary English Version
ERV- Easy to Read Version
NIRV- New International Readers Version
BBE- Bible in Basic English
BWE- Bible in Worldwide English
NIV- New International Version
NCV- New Century Version
ICB- International Children Bible
TVB- The Voice Bible
NASB- New American Standard Bible
NAB- New American Bible
NJB- New Jerusalem Bible

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LESSON ONE

“VERILY, VERILY...”

Introduction

In the church of the Lord Jesus Christ today, there is a complete misunderstanding to what it means to be “Born Again”, thus several so called born again people go about living like Sinners. Countless cases of Pastors and other ‘Christian’ leaders misbehaving with church members abound. It is therefore necessary that we trust the Holy Spirit of God to open our eyes of understanding into this foundational truth and revelation that grants us access into God’s kingdom. At the end, each of us should be able to answer this question. “Am I really Born Again?”

Main Text: John 3:1-7.

Let us look at John 3:1-7 in several Bible translations. What does it mean to be born again?

“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, Verily I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. ” [KJV]

“After dark one evening, a Jewish religious leader named Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to speak with Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are proof enough that God is with you.”

Jesus replied, I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the kingdom of God. What do you mean? Exclaimed Nicodemus. How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again? Jesus replied, the truth is, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of the water and the spirit. So don't be surprised at my statement that you must be born again. ” [NLT]

“NOW THERE was a certain man among the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler (a leader, an authority) among the Jews, Who came to Jesus at night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know *and* are certain that You have come from God [as] a Teacher; for no one can do these signs (these wonderworks, these miracles—and produce the proofs) that You do unless God is with him.

Jesus answered, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that unless a person is born again (anew from above) he cannot ever see (know, be acquainted with and experience the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to him, how can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter his mother’s womb again and be born again? Jesus answered I assure you, most solemnly, unless a man is born of water and (even) the spirit, he cannot (ever) enter kingdom of God. What is born of (from) the flesh is flesh (of physical is physical) and what is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not (do not be surprised, astonished) at my telling you, you must all be born anew (from above)” [AMP]

“There was a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was one of the Pharisees. He was an important Jewish leader. One night Nicodemus came to Jesus. Nicodemus said, “Teacher, we know that you are a teacher sent from God. No person can do these miracles that you do without God’s help.”

Jesus answered, I tell you the truth. A person must be born again. If a person is not born again, then that person cannot be in God’s kingdom. Nicodemus said, But if a person is already old, how can he be born again? A person cannot enter his mother’s body again! So a person cannot be born again the second time! But Jesus answered, I tell you the truth, if a person is not born from water and the Spirit, then he cannot enter God’s kingdom. A person’s body is born from his human parents. But a person’s spiritual life is born from the spirit. Don’t be surprised that I told you, you must be born again.” [ERV]

1. “VERILY, VERILY.... I ASSURE YOU..... I TELL YOU THE TRUTH....”

Nicodemus came to Jesus. The bible says he was an important Jewish leader (John 3:1 ERV), he came, singing praises and bearing record that Jesus is Lord. In the same way several people do in church today. But why did Jesus tell him **“Verily, Verily...I assure you...I tell you the truth...”**?

Jesus responded to Nicodemus this way because:

a) **God does not want people who will come to him, showing much love with their mouths but whose hearts are not right with Him.** 1Cor.15:1-4, Mark 7:6-7, Lk.6:46, Mal. 1:6, Isaiah 29:13 [AMP], Matt. 7:21, Prov. 26:23 [NLT, AMP], Titus 1:16 [AMP], Psalm 78:36, Ezek.33:31.

One of the reasons we have a problem knowing who is truly born again or what being born again really means in church today is because there are hundreds of thousands of people who come to church with a pretext to “worship” God while all they really come to do is to flatter Jesus.

They desire to partake in the benefits and blessings of being godly but they are not in any way ready to live godly lives in their thoughts, speech and actions. **“So they came to you as people do, they sit before you as My people and hear your words but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain”** Ezek. 33: 31 (NKJV). Thus, there are several people in church today who are still hopelessly lost in sin and are on their way to eternal damnation; except they accept the truth the Master confronted Nicodemus with here. God is not in any way interested in any soul that desires being religious but shrinks away from being genuinely spiritual.

What about you, are you born again? Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

b) God is more interested in telling a perishing soul what he needs than allowing him to offer meaningless “sacrifices of praise” to God. The sacrifices or prayer of a sinner is an abomination to God. Proverbs 15:8 [AMP], Prov.21:27, Isa.1:10-18 [MSG, TLB], Amos 5:21–26 [MSG, TLB], Ezek.18:20.

Our congregations are full of dancers, givers, performers and entertainers and we are still very comfortable with ourselves even though several of us are on the highway to hell. Some people are not born again, but they just come to constantly *enjoy* our praise and worship.

The Lord said he does not and He cannot accept the praises of a wicked person (****A wicked person is anyone who still remains in his sins because he refuses to accept the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ for his sins by confessing Jesus as Lord and believing God raised Him from the dead. Please see- Jn.3:18, Mk.16:16, Rom.4:25, Rom.10:9-10***). While there could be several people who are not living right in the church, it is of a necessity that we, upon whom the end of the world hath come, should look intently at our own personal lives to find out and be sure as we continue this study by asking again, “Am I saved? Am I really born again?”

If we are not sure, we may still be lost too.

[NOTE: in the subsequent lessons, we will be looking intently not just at what it means to be born again but also how we become born again and also how we can be sure we are saved.]

c) There is nothing as serious and urgent as the need for every human being who is unsaved to be saved. Meeting this need is the only thing that saves men from eternal damnation. Jn.3:3 [TLB], 2Pet.3:9, Rev 20:11-15, Ezek.18:23, 30-32.

i) Why is the need to be Born Again the most urgent and crucial need for a sinner? Rev.20:11-15, Lk.16:19-31, Heb.9:27, Matt.25:46, Rev.14:11.

It is because his present and eternal destiny is dependent on that singular decision. A refusal to make a firm commitment now may mean that fellow is playing with a life lived outside of God's purpose [] and an eternity in the lake of fire []. Every living human will face either of these two inevitabilities:

(i) We face the rapture [Jn.14:1-3, 1Thes.4:15-18] or

(ii) If the rapture does not occur in our time, it is certain we will all die [Heb.9:27].

(ii) Without being born again, you can never understand nor access your divine purpose and it is only God's purpose that gives your life a meaning. 2Tim.1:9, Eph.1:11 [AMP, TLB], Eph.2:10 [AMP, GNB], Ps.139:16, Jer.1:4-5.

Without living for a purpose, your life will be in shambles. No human being "decides" his purpose. Every one of us discovers it at a particular point in time. God's word says God has called us according to His own purpose. We were predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

What are you living for?

d) It is only the truth that can show each man what he really looks like without any uncertainty. The sinner, having a true picture of himself is the only thing that can bring about a change in his life. Jn. 8:32, 34, Rom.6:16, Eph.4:17-19, 1Jn.3:6-8.

The LORD confronted Nicodemus with nothing but the truth. He found out that though he was a highly celebrated religious leader, he was still a slave of sin as every other person in His synagogue was. Thank God Nicodemus got saved, for scriptures noted he became a disciple of the Lord. (Jn.19:39)

What about you? The Master said anyone who sins is a slave of sin. Sin is a master over the life of anyone who associates with it. God's word says everyone who sins is a child of the devil (1Jn.3:6-8). What will you do with the knowledge of this truth today? It changed Nicodemus, but what will it do to you? He came to praise Jesus, but met what mattered most to his life.

What matters most for your life and my life is that we are converted and completely changed. It is that we have turned from sin and we are turned to God. There is nothing we do that will be acceptable before the Master if our souls are not yet regenerated.

Are you saved?

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the Lord wants more than dancing or praise singing or even giving from us. Anyone who has not come to Christ (or is unsure of his or her salvation) must of necessity bow the knee to the lordship of Christ before God can be interested in anything else the person is willing to do or say. The most urgent need of every human being is to be saved.

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

1. Why did the Lord Jesus interrupt Nicodemus? As you went through all these Bible passages, has the Lord interrupted you too?
2. List and explain the reasons why the Lord Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again.
3. Why is the eternal destiny of every human being dependent on whether or not he or she is born again?
4. What is your personal reaction to what the Lord told Nicodemus?

LESSON TWO

“...EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN...”

Introduction

Having begun a study into how Jesus confronted the man, Nicodemus, it is expedient that we proceed into the details of what our Lord said to Nicodemus—the same words which he is saying to us who come to him today. The master used the Word “...Except...” to start his discourse with Nicodemus. As we study what this compelling condition really means, The Lord will grant us understanding (Amen)

Main Text: John 3:3

1. What is the meaning of the Word “Except” in the context of this study?

a) Unavoidable condition.

Jn.14:6, Matt.7:13-14, Deut.30:15-20, Matt.7:21, Deut.28:1-2.

Condition is a thing that must exist or be in place if something else is to ever exist or be in place. It is impossible, for instance, for any human being born of a woman to access or come to God except He meets the principal condition of coming through Jesus Christ. The Way, The Truth and The Life. If a man wants to come to God and he despises THE ONLY WAY or ROUTE (which is Jesus) then it becomes completely impossible for him to ever arrive at his proposed destination – which is, experiencing God.

“Jesus answered him, “I am the way [to God], and the truth [to believe], and the life [to live]. No one can go to the Father, except through [believing in] me.”

Jn.14:6 [AUV]. [see also Ex.33:13, Ps.25:4, Ps.103:7].

If a man wants to meet God and he refuses to believe in Jesus who is The Truth of God, then he will fall into error and miss God altogether! In the same way, he cannot dare coming to God as a “dead” (or separated) man spiritually while refusing God’s provision of the “Life” in Jesus. Such presumption is costly.

In the same way, being saved or becoming born again is an unavoidable condition. No matter where we run to or how far we run away to avoid it, it will still be there as an unchangeable and immovable condition. Long years of church attendance, being very active in the choir or in the sanctuary keepers team or in giving or in the prayer band cannot be exchanged for a personal salvation experience. **“That which is born of the flesh is flesh”** regardless of the exposure, training or discipline applied in spiritual

matters. A sinner cannot be *trained* to become a saint. **“Marvel not that I say, ye must be born again”** (John 3:7).

b) Absolute Necessity.

1 Pet.2:9, 1 Cor.2:14, 2Cor.4:4, Job 14:4, Rom.8:6-9, Col.2:11-13, Phil.3:3.

From these scriptures above, it is clear that the new birth is neither a REFORMATION nor UPGRADING of the old nature but the reception of a completely new nature (2 Cor.5:17, Gal. 2:20).

No matter how morally refined, talented or (even) religious the natural or unregenerate man may be, he is still blind to spiritual truths and he has no capacity to understand them neither is he also able to save himself. If any man refuses to conform his life to this absolute necessity, he cannot possibly relate with God because **“The natural, non-spiritual man does not accept or welcome or admit into his heart the gifts and teachings and revelations of the spirit of God for they are folly (meaningless nonsense) to him; and he is incapable of knowing them (of progressively recognizing and understanding and becoming better acquitted with them) because they are spiritually discerned and appreciated”** 1 Cor.2: 14 (AMP).

It is completely necessary therefore, if a person intends to walk with God that he comes to God, based on God’s terms and not his own.

2. Who specifically is the Bible referring to as “...a man...” in the main text of this study?

God’s word is referring to the whole humanity because it was the whole human race that was separated from God in sin (Gen.6:5–6, Rom.3:23). The bible says that God **“...created them male and female and blessed them and named them (both) Adam (Man) at the time they were created.”** Gen.5:2. Thus, you see that every human being needs this salvation experience. It doesn’t matter what tribe or race a person is from. What religion they all practice notwithstanding. Religion CANNOT save any man! Only Christianity can! This is why we must fear for every soul presently outside of Jesus...They are heading for an eternity of suffering without a minute degree of alleviation. This is why we must preach the gospel through the example of our own godly lives and through preaching salvation to those who still live in sin one-on-one. But before you go out, please settle down first and re-evaluate your own life. Be certain you are saved. Don’t just assume you are, be certain!

CONCLUSION

By God's grace we have been able to see that we have before us an unavoidable condition. To avoid it is to avoid a blissful eternity and everything it connotes. It is to jeopardize our eternal future and count it a light thing. The Absolute necessity of a new life is also a thing we need not overemphasize. Until we have been reborn, we are not God's own yet.

Finally, we can be certain we are saved if we have truly confessed Jesus as our Lord and renounced all forms of sin. No one who comes to Jesus with a genuine heart of repentance will be turned back. Will you come today?

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

1. What were the various ways you tried pleasing God by before you finally gave your life to Christ? Discuss with us.
2. How has the “...**Except...**” in this study struck you?
3. Having found out that salvation is an unavoidable condition and an absolute necessity for every man, how have you resolved to respond to it? Explain.
4. Since religion CANNOT save any man, how do you hope to help as many lost people as possible who are religious but unsaved? Share with us.

LESSON THREE

“...BE BORN AGAIN...”

Introduction

In this study, we shall be unraveling what being Born Again actually means since we have spent time explaining its importance and absolute necessity. We need to diligently take heed here so that we will not just have a religious understanding or conception of this fundamental truth that is our entry point into God’s kingdom; instead we will be thoroughly baptized and permeated through our entire being with the total change that everyone who comes to the Cross of Jesus Christ experiences.

Main Text: John 3:3, 7.

1. What does it really mean to be “Born Again”?

a) It means everyone needs to be born from above or from a higher place. Jn.3:3 [AMP, CEV], Jn.3:31, Jn.8:32, 1 Cor.15:47-49 [Amp]

Every human being needs a rebirth that is superior and higher than our natural birth if we will ever be able to return to God and be acceptable to Him. Several people in church today act like people of this world. They intermix the nature of flesh with life in the spirit thus all they have and continually experience in a distorted nature that is foreign and alien to the life of Jesus, God’s pattern son who we are all mandated to exclusively follow.

b). It means everyone needs to be born “from the first”.

Gen.1:26- 27 [ERV, GNB, AMP], Gen 5:1.

This implies that every man needs to return to the original creation. As long as you live in sin, you are living outside God’s image and likeness. Sin is not the first or original creation. Life in sin is not the real thing. It was only a distortion of the original! It was not the first.

God made Adam in his own image, but when Adam fell, he gave birth to a son in his own separated, godless, carnal and sinful image (Gen. 5:3). Through salvation, God has now made it possible for every man to return to the type of life we lost when Adam sinned. We can now enjoy the same type of relationship Adam had but lost to sin. We can now relate intimately with God if we are only willing to be reborn as mankind was before the fall!

c.) It means we must be Born “anew or all over again”

John 3:3, 7; 1Cor.5:17, Gal. 2:20, Rom.6:5-6, Eph.4:22-24.

We must be Born Anew. We must be born all over again. However, we cannot say we are “new” when there are still particles or traces of our old life in us. We cannot claim to be born again when attitudes and character traits of our old man (or old life) are still evident in us.

A brand new car is not the same thing as a freshly repainted second hand car. Our old self (the actual occupant of our bodies before we met Jesus) cannot be improved upon... it must be done away with! Many people in church today are not Born Again because they are merely trying to “improve” their old self life. They have now started training it to learn Christian mannerism and codes of conduct.

You cannot train the flesh to become acceptable and pleasing to God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh regardless of its trainings, discipline, and exposure; a sinner cannot by learning become a saint.

And Mr. Flesh will be cooperative in learning all these once it will be left intact to quietly go about its own personally fixed plan, ambitions, dreams and goals whether or not Jesus is now inside the body. No...we must be Born All over again, putting on a new life as we put off self —our old nature. There is no other way.

2. How is it now possible to be “Born from above, born from the first and Born Anew?”

a). By putting off our old nature.

Eph.4:22, Gal 5:24, 2Kgs. 17:40 [NIV, KJV], Rom.8:12 [AMP, NLT, TLB, NIV], Col. 3:9.

By “putting off” our old nature, what we mean is that our old nature **MUST BE PUT TO DEATH**. It must be delivered up to be crucified with Jesus on the Cross (Rom.6:6-7, NLT, Amp; Isa. 53:5-6).

Jesus had no reason to die (because He never sinned and He did nothing wrong). The only reason He died was because He needed to save us from our iniquity. You will notice in Isa.53:5-6 that the word ‘*iniquities*’ was first mentioned, then *iniquity* was mentioned in verse 6. These do not mean the same thing. Iniquities in verse 5 talks about individual acts of sin but Iniquity in verse 6 talks about a personality. Mr. Iniquity that was in every one of us (Rom.7:17,20). He is the producer of sin [he is also known by several, almost uncountable names e.g. sin, self, flesh, old nature, sinful self, old man, carnal nature, old self, sinful nature etc.] It is this fellow we are to “put off” by allowing Jesus to take him to the cross so that He can put him to death there. If we were saved only from our sins,

we would have been forgiven but we will lack the power to actually stop sinning because Mr. Sin or Iniquity in each of us will still be alive and well and still capable of producing sins or iniquities.

b) By putting on our new nature.

Eph.4:23-24, Rom.13:14, Rom.6:4, 2Cor.5:17, Gal.6:15, Col.3:10, Gal.2:20, Col.3:4.

We will be able to experience the kingdom when we follow the second condition of putting on the new nature or life after self has been crucified in us.

When we “gave our lives to Jesus” the proper thing that should have happened to us is that our bodies should have dropped down dead since the “life” inside that body has been given to Christ.

However, The Lord Jesus filled our bodies with Himself so that (while in us) He can now carry out His own purpose, desires and plans. (Col.3:4, GNB, NLT, and Gal.2:20)

A dead man can't dream again.

This is why you can't be truly Born Again and still be living for your self. When we say “No” to the flesh, we must immediately yield our lives to Christ by saying “yes” to every leading of God. By so doing, we will not just be “**empty, swept and garnished**” with no occupant in our lives (please see Matt.12:43-45), indeed we will let Jesus live fully in us and carry out His plan to use our lives as a platform for carrying out His own purpose—and the Lord has only one purpose in this present world, it is the reconciliation of men back to God (please see 2Cor.5:18-21).

C) By daily living exclusively for Jesus.

2 Cor.5:15 [GNB], 1Pet.4:1-2 [AMP], Acts 9:1-6, Rom.8:12 [AMP, ERV].

The Lord died so that we who are alive should no longer live to please our SELF lives, instead we are to live and please Him alone. When we have the same mindset as the Lord's, His motive, objective and focus becomes ours also. We will only live for what He wants.

Many of us think being Born Again is a carry over of the old life into this new life or a continuity of our old lives; but it is not like that. You can't be working in a factory and die then you go to the same place tomorrow. This means whatever you are doing before you met Jesus will have to be surrendered to Jesus. You must first of all pause; then as you grow in your personal knowledge of the Lord, He Himself will point to you what you should do and where He wants to use you.

This means the first thing you must now be willing to do, so that you can be serving Jesus daily is to ask Him like Brother Paul did: **“Lord, What wilt thou have me do?”** if he now tells you to remain in the same office (or employment) for His own sake, then there is no problem. You will now be working, but not for Self again, not because of a salary but because the Master needs you there to point men to Him...And if the Lord tells you He wants to use you elsewhere (a place different from where you are presently), then yield to His direction and leadership. Do not struggle with Him—He struggle with no man. And don't forget, it is only SELF that has the ability to struggle.

3. How can a person become Born Again?

Rom.10:9-10.

a. We are not saved only by confessing sins committed.

Maybe you have seen several people coming out for altar call and as they stood in front, the preacher asked them to confess their sins, then the Lord will accept them, then they will become born again.

A person may confess all his sins and he will be forgiven if he has faith in the ability of the Lord Jesus to forgive him of his sins, however, he is still not free from sin. This means once there is another opportunity to sin, a sinner has no choice, he will still sin—regardless of the fact that he was forgiven all his sins yesterday. The principal reason why Christ came is to SAVE US from sin—not just to forgive us of our sins but to free us from sin so that we don't have to live our lives under the dominion of sin any longer (please see Matt.1:21, Acts 4:12, 5:31; Jn.1:29, Acts 13:38-39 AMP, Col.1:20-23, Tit.2:14 AMP.)

i. Sin is a Slave-Master.

Jn.4:34, Rom.7:14-20 AMP, AUV, GNB; Eph.2:1-2 AMP, NLT, NCV; Jer.13:23 MSG, Rom.6:16, 20.

The term 'sin' does not primarily refer to acts or deeds that are sinful—instead, it refers to the principle or the *person* within a man that is responsible for making a man sin. Sin is like a tree that produces fruits of sins. By the '*person within a man*' we are not referring to the spirit man which is the core essence of man himself (do not forget that man is basically a spirit, he has a soul and he lives in a body-See 1Thes.5:23); rather we are talking of the spirit being who rules such a man.

Let us affirm first of all that every human being is controlled by a spirit being. It is either the Holy Spirit [Rom.8:14, Gal.5:16 AMP] or an evil spirit [Eph.2:2 AMP, Rom.6:12-13, Matt.12:43-45]. It is this evil spirit that we refer to as Mr. Sin—and he is completely

different from Mr. Self (also known as the Flesh. We will be explaining in detail on this in the next Lesson.)

ii. Fallen man is a slave of sin

Jn.8:34, Rom.7:14-20, Eph.2:1-3, Prov.5:22, Rom.6:6, 20, 2Pet.2:19 CEV

When Adam sinned, the Spirit of God departed from him—as such, he and all his descendants came under the evil influence of Satan and his cohorts. Since then every human being, born of a woman had been born under the slavery of sin (see Ps.51:5, Matt.12:43-45, Eph.2:2). Civilization, education, religion, intelligence and every ideal attainable by man cannot free a man from the slavery of his soul to the principle of sin. A man must come to Jesus if he will ever be freed from the dominion of sin and death.

iii. The only way to be freed from sin is by death to the Old Man.

Rom.6:2-7, Col.3:3, Gal.2:20, Gal.5:24, Gal.6:14, 1Pet.4:1-2 AMP.

If you have come to Jesus, confessing His Lordship over your life and believing He died for your sins and was raised to prove that you are no longer guilty, then you are dead to your old self.

You are dead.

I did not say you will die. I said as far as this world is concerned, you are dead. This happened when you came to Jesus. The old 'you' cannot be accepted by God. It must die so that a new life can begin. God cannot accept it because it already has a master— sin and if Jesus will now be your new Master, you must be freed from your old Master.

You cannot be *Born Again* except you have *died before*.

“But I will not be proud of anything but of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of it, the things of the world have become dead to me, and I have become dead to the world.” Gal.6:14 [BWE also see NLT, CEV, BBE, ERV].

Are you dead to this world and its pursuits, cares, lusts and deceits? The part of you that could relate with the world system without trouble is the flesh, the slave of sin. You died when you came to Christ, enabling you to be free from a lifetime of servitude to sin.

“Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the Cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer at sin's every beck and call!”

Rom.6:6-7 [MSG]

b. How we become Born Again

i. By Confessing the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Rom.10:9, Acts 2:36, Lk.6:5, Jn.13:14, Jn.20:13, Jn.10:36, Eph.1:20-23, 1Pet.3:22, Rev.17:14, Rom.14:9.

“Say the welcoming word to God—“Jesus is my Master”—embracing, body and soul, God's work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead. That's it. You're not "doing" anything; you're simply calling out to God, trusting him to do it for you. That's salvation. With your whole being you embrace God setting things right, and then you say it, right out loud: "God has set everything right between him and me!" Rom.10:9-10 [MSG]

We become born again when we confess that Jesus is the Master of our lives and believe that he died, paying for our sins because we could not by ourselves pay for them. Do not forget that our allegiance was formerly to sin, who ruled us with an iron grip and made us do even those very things that we hate [see Rom.7:14-20]; now however, Jesus becomes the new Master and as we follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit, we begin to live our lives, serving Jesus. Salvation begins with our confession of the lordship of Jesus over our lives.

ii. By Believing that God raised Him from the dead. Rom.4:25 [AMP], 1Cor.15:17 [AMP], Rom.6:9, 8:11, 34; Rom.14:9, 1Cor.15:1-4, 2Cor.13:4, 1Pet.1:3.

Why should belief of the resurrection of the Lord in our hearts be a necessity? The Bible says:

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is mere delusion [futile, fruitless], and you are still in your sins [under the control and penalty of sin]” 1Cor.15:7 [AMP].

He was delivered up to death because of our transgression but He was resurrection to affirm and bear witness to the fact that we have been set right with God. If the Lord did not rise from the dead, then sin will remain our ultimate Master but thank God Jesus rose from the dead! And thank God we need to believe He rose before we can be saved! For how can He save us from the clutches of sin and the devil if He had died and passed away? He is not just alive today, He is alive forever more!

CONCLUSION

Having learnt what it means to be born again in the light of several scriptures, we can all see that the self-life is an impossible route to heaven.

Furthermore, we can see that the weakness of our lives and poverty of our souls is caused by this enemy within us that always opens the doors of our lives to its allies outside us. Being Born Again requires the death of our Old life so that a new life, the life of Jesus can now occupy and take control of us.

Are you ready for this?

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

1. What do you understand by being “Born Again” before this Bible study? Share with us.
2. How many people can you point to as example of being genuinely Born Again as described in this study? More importantly, are you among them?
3. Having studied the condition that must be met before God can consider anyone as “Born Again” where do you see that you are failing in your own personal life? Share with us.
4. How much changes have you experienced since our study on what it means to be Born Again? Illustrate with practical examples.

LESSON FOUR

UNDERSTANDING THE FLESH (Part One)

Introduction

Since we now have an understanding of what it means to be Born Again and how to be saved, we need to probe deeper into the meaning of the word flesh, self, old man etc. (all of which means the same thing).

In this study, God willing, we shall begin to carefully examine in depth what the FLESH life actually mean in order to gain deep insight into understanding ourselves and where we were coming from and in order to genuinely serve the Master according to His own pattern. I pray, the Lord will grant you understanding as we study (amen).

Main Text: Rom. 7:14-25.

1. What is the Flesh?

Ps.51:5, Jn.3:6; Rom.8:6-8, Rom.7:14-25, Col.3:9, Eph.4:22, Rom.6:12 [AMP].

It is the spirit, life and nature of sin and evil inherent in every man born of a woman. Self is the art of thinking, talking and acting like an ordinary human being.

The flesh is the person or *who* you were before you met Jesus.

It is a fully developed way of life that is complete in itself. However, in order to understand this principle in man that dictates, whispers, rules, fights and complain inwardly, it is better we look at how other translations of scripture views Mr. Flesh:

In several translation other than the Authorized King James Version, it is called EVIL NATURE, OLD SINFUL LIFE, HUMAN NATURE, SELF, MR. SIN, CARNAL NATURE, OLD MAN, SINFUL MIND, LOWER NATURE and so on.

2. What is the Origin of the flesh?

Gen.5:1-3, John 3:6, Ps.51:5, Job 14:4, Rom.3:23, Rom.5:12, Ps.14:2-3.

In the beginning, man was made in the image of God. But when Adam sinned and was separated from God, the whole mankind inside his loins was also separated (because Adam sinned before giving birth to any child).

Thus, He gave birth to children “...in his own likeness and after his image...” and not in the image of God from whom he is now separated. God’s likeness was perfect,

Adam's image imperfect and completely depraved with the law of sin and death working in it and bringing it to ruin.

Flesh' therefore is a direct product of sin and the fall of man. It is what Adam degenerated into immediately he fell into sin and lost the image and nature of God. Over the ages, the flesh has improved itself in learning how to live independent of God and it is ever doing all it can to remain severed from God. The Flesh survives through independence from God. As far as it is concerned, God does not exist. This is why the flesh must die and be removed from man if he will ever be regenerated.

3. Works, nature or lifestyle of the flesh.

Gal.5:19-21, 1 Cor.6:9-10, Rom.1:18-32, Rom.7:15-20.

By “works” of the flesh, we mean the activities, nature, practices or employment of the flesh. *Works* talks about what the flesh will naturally do. They are its natural actions and reactions to any and every issue of life. When you see stools, chairs, or wooden tables, you know that those things are *works* of a carpenter; but when you see artworks, painting or sketches, you know that the person responsible for such *works* is not a carpenter, mechanic or dentist but an artist. In the same way, the Bible says **“What human nature does is quite plain...”** thus, when you see the *works* of Mr. Flesh or Self or Human nature, you will easily recognize them. Some of them are listed and briefly explained below:

a) Adultery

Gal.5:19 (ERV, KJV, AMP), Matt.19:9, Prov.6:25-35 [GNB, ERV, NLT], Mk.6:17-19, Mk.7:21, Mk.10:11-12, Rom.2:22 [AMP], 2 Pet.2:14 [KJV, GNB, NLT].

Adultery is when a married man or woman is unfaithful to his or her spouse by being involved in an extra marital affair. It is somewhat surprising that this is the first ‘*work*’ or practice of the flesh mentioned. Man became so depraved that the simple life of monogamy (one man, one wife) is now unpopular to him. Even in so called ‘*advanced*’ countries, serial monogamy (where a man or woman consistently exchange bed partners) is what is primarily in vogue.

What about you? Are little, teenage girls catching your attention now more than the wife of your youth? She has been devoted and loyal to you all these years, why is it now that you think she is too *plump*? Maybe you are a man of God, but Sir, are you unchaste in thought or in action? The constant argument you have with your wife, is it simply to cover your *secret moves* with young women who you are now more familiar with than the

books of the Bible? NOTE: anything that takes your eyes (and heart) off your marriage partner is the flesh.

b). Fornication

Gal.5:19, Mk.7:21, Rom.1:29, 1Cor.6:9, 2Cor.12:21 [KJV, NLT], Eph.5:3, 1Thes.4:3 (KJV, Amp)

Fornication is being sexually immoral and engaging in sexual acts before marriage. Fornication does not start with sex, it ends with it. It begins with doing anything a third party must not see the two of you do. Kissing, necking, fondling and petting are the things that comes first and leads directly to sin (NOTE; these acts are not wrong in themselves if they are done by two people—A man and a woman, who are legitimately married)

In this age where sexual vice is a normal thing on television, on the internet, in novels and magazines, the fallen man accepts the abnormality of fornication as a normal way of life. In the world system, if you have a *'girlfriend or boyfriend'* and you have not had sex in the first three months, your friends will say something is wrong with you. Virginity is perceived as naivety and lack of sophistication. However, we must fully understand that whatever any man sows before God that is what he will reap.

Sister, you have been in the choir for some time now, but are you secretly sinning with the choir master? There are sisters, today who are in relationships with unbelievers. They have watched so many wrong things on T.V. that they literally surrender themselves to men as instruments of unrighteousness. Brother, what are you doing fondling sisters up and down? How can you say you are redeemed and Self is still using your life to perpetrate its evil and despicable acts? As a Christian you must steer clear from fornication.

Sister, you are an undergraduate during the week but a fornicator at the numerous night clubs on weekends—all because of money...do you honestly think God is not seeing you? Your conscience has warned you over and over again and now it keeps quiet because it knows you are bent on heading to hell even though you are well known in church...

c) Uncleaness.

Matt.23:27, Rom.1:21-32 [AMP, NLT], Rom.6:19, 2Cor.12:21, Eph.4:19 [ERV, NLT, GNB], Col. 3:5, 1Thes.2:3, 2Pet.2:1

Uncleaness is moral filthiness. It is any unnatural pollution, whether acted out by oneself (e.g. masturbation) or with another person (e.g. sodomy). It is whatever that is

opposite to purity. It includes homosexuality, group sex, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality and every other form of sexual perversion.

Any sexual act that does not primarily include a man and woman (who are legitimately married) is perversion and God had declared that sexual perversion is an abomination and absolute confusion (Lev. 18:22, 20:13, Deut.23:17). Today in the world system, young women are paid huge sums of money to sleep with animals while such abominable acts are being recorded as pornography (Lev. 18:23). In all these abominable works of the flesh, a Christian does not have to physically partake in them to be defiled. Mere viewing, looking at or reading (for pleasure) such evil acts on TV, in video, on the internet, in books, novels or magazine will bring on your head the same penalty God is reserving for those who are practicing these abominations. Remember, don't join the multitude to do evil. (Ex.23:2) Be warned.

d) Lasciviousness

Mark 7:21-22, 2Cor.12:21, Eph.4:19 [KJV, GNB, ERV, NLT], 1Pet.4:3 [NKJV, AMP], Jude 4 [KJV, NKJV, AMP, NLT, GNB]. This is the promoting or partaking in that which tends to produce lewd emotions. It is anything that encourages sexual urges and lust.

It also means readiness of all sinful pleasure and people who partake in such evil are such who acknowledge no restraints and do whatever their impulse and unimaginable depravity dictates or suggests. This is the main reason why many worldly pleasures or entertainment must be avoided by Christians.

Presently in the world system, a film is not '*complete*' except the lead actor or actress fornicates in them. That is only when it becomes popular and acceptable. Even if there is clearly no sexual sin, there must be women who must expose their breasts or thighs in order to satisfy the depraved cravings of their audience.

As Christians, we are not asking you not to watch T.V., but be on your guard to refuse to watch anything that will lead you to lasciviousness. Watching people kissing or romancing on T.V. has nothing to benefit your spirit man. Reject such practice now before it pushes you out of God's plan for your life.

e). Idolatry

1Cor.10:14, Gal.5:20, Eph.5:5, Ezek.14:1-5 [AMP], 1Jn.5:21 [NLT, AMP]

Idolatry is simply the worship of images instead of the only living God. Both in Bible time and even in our own days, men make all manner of objects and set them up as gods.

However, though this evil act is condemned by God, there is a potent modern version of it, practiced even today.

Modern idolatry claims false supremacy and importance in the heart of the depraved man. The flesh, by nature, is an idolater, thus setting up '*images*' (Posh cars, extravagant houses, fat bank accounts, a glamorous wife, etc.) is a lifestyle for him. Day in, day out, self runs about trying to make ends meet so that he can satisfy himself physically possessing these images already in his heart.

Brother, you are Born Again, but when did looking for what to eat begin to replace your Bible Study life? How could you permit your heart to run after Business contacts at the expense of your relationship with the Most High God?

Why insist that a Brother must have certain '*qualities*' and physical possessions before you can marry him, dear sister?

Are you becoming an idolater?

f). Witchcraft

Gal.5:20, Rev.9:21, Deut.18:9-15, 1 Sam.28:3-20[NKJV], Ex.22:18, Rev.21:8, Rev.22:15.

This is the practice or art of relating with evil spirits. Since man fell from his exalted position of power, he lost every form of spiritual power. However, the depraved man knows fully well that it takes him some sort of '*supernatural*' power (positive or negative) to succeed almost in everything; thus, self, now began to relate with demons and fallen angels, seeking their assistance or help in several issues.

Witchcraft is also the manipulation of a person (or people) via intimidation, charisma or systematic criticism. There are Brothers in church today whose "slaying in the spirit" is stage-managed and unreal. What they call anointing has NOTHING TO DO with genuine anointing. Since they lack the inner life which compels supernatural power, they can now visit fetish priest and witch doctors all in a bid to get "power" in order to run a church.

There is no reason for instance for you to agree to have any part of your body incised because someone told you that such incision is for protection, or blessing or whatever.

g). Hatred.

Gal.5:20, Rom.8:7-8, Jam.4:4, Lev.19:17, Prov.10:12, 1Jn.2:9. 1Jn. 4:20.

This means enmity, irreconcilable hostility. It is bitter dislike, abhorrence (or having nothing to do with a person), malice and ill-will against anyone. It is the tendency to hold grudges against or be angry with anyone.

The flesh does not just hate those who hate him, instead, he hates those who he doesn't like or those who are doing better than him in one area of human endeavour or the other. The flesh hates God simply because the nature of God reveals the sinfulness of Mr. Flesh and you know, the flesh does not like to be embarrassed, if you embarrass him, he cannot forgive you (even after he retaliates!)

Can you see that there are people in church today who bitterly dislike one brother or the other? There are sisters in the choir who are holding a grudge against the choir master or Assistant pastor because these people corrected or disciplined them. Self does not enjoy discipline. He rebels against it. Are you harboring ill-will against any one? Are you keeping malice with anyone even though you say you are Born Again?

h). Variance

Gal.5:20, Lk.10:29, Rom.1:29, Prov.26:21, Prov. 29:22, Prov.17:4, Prov.20:3 (NKJV), Prov.13:10, Ps.140:1-2 [NKJV, NLT], 2Tim.2:14, James 3:14

This is bitter disagreements, discord, quarreling, debating and disputing. The flesh is so proud that he cannot bow or submit to the opinion of another person even if that opinion is far better than his own. He will want to justify himself and prove he is right (even when he is wrong!).

Nothing is worse than two so-called Christians who begin to argue. Each will seek to put his foot down and want only his own words to reign as supreme (forgetting they are not God!)

In several deacons, elders, choir or even ministers meetings, there are more than a few brethren, full of self who will always start disagreements, debating and disputes. They are even not suppose to be in leadership in the first place (as they personally need to grow first). Even at home, you see husbands and wives arguing over trivial issues. None is humble enough to keep quiet for the other person. Humility is not stupidity. Keeping quiet to let the other person take the *'upper hand'* is not weakness. In the world system, it is weakness but in this kingdom, it is strength. See the example of our Master (Matt.27:12-14).

i). Emulations

Gal.5:20, Acts 13:45, Rom. 13:13, 1Cor.3:3 [GNB, NLT, ERV, AMP], Jas.3:14-15, Acts 5:16-18 [KJV, GNB]. This means *striving to excel at the expense of another person because one is jealous and envious of that other person. It is seeking to surpass and outdo others. It is an uncurbed rivalry spirit, either in religion, business, society and any other field of endeavor-Dake Study Notes.*

Even though nothing good can come out of self, he enjoys the publicity of looking important. The flesh does not mind remaining a mediocre if any other person is not achieving anything. But once someone begins to do exploits, self will stand up, full of envy and ready to compete. He will sacrificially do everything he can just do outdo others.

If you are Born Again and you are still trying to compete with someone, it is because you don't have a vision for your life yet. True visionaries compete only with time. They know they have a limited amount of time to achieve what God will have them achieve (John 4:34, John 9:4). What about you, do you compete by comparing yourself with others?

CONCLUSION

We can see that the flesh is exceedingly sinful, after going through the first part of this particular study. We can see by carefully examining each *'work'* of the flesh that of a truth, no good thing can ever be in the flesh (Rom.7:18)

This is a key reason why the old nature must be put off by each of us. Where are you today? Are you still trapped in emulations, variance, hatred, witchcraft or adultery? What you should deal with is not this individual manifestations (first of all), instead, root out the producer of all these evils. Hand him over to Jesus and your freedom from Mr. Self will be permanent!

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

1. What do you now understand by the flesh? Explain, giving practical examples.
2. How has the Origin of the flesh struck you? Share with us what the knowledge of this origin will do to you.
3. Explain in detail what we mean by "works" of the flesh.
4. From this study, which particular work or works of the flesh have you noticed in your own life? Share with us and let us pray together.

LESSON FIVE

UNDERSTANDING 'SELF' (Part Two)

Introduction

We can have no result to a problem we do not understand. The flesh as a principal problem in our pursuit of godliness cannot be fully dealt with except we understand, if possible every practice of the Self life. In this present study (which is a continuation of the last one) we shall be unraveling more of the acts, practices, doings, nature and behavioural pattern of the flesh. May the Lord grant you understanding.

Main Text: Rom.7:14-25.

(a). Wrath.

Luke 4:28, Acts 19:28, 2Cor.12:20, Eph.4:31, Gal.5:20, Col.3:8, Rev.12:12. This means indignation, rage, fierceness, hot anger, fury or turbulent passions.

It is domestic or civil turmoil, rage; determined or lasting anger-Dake Study Notes.

The flesh is terribly wicked. When he is angry, he does not care what happens. His anger is not in any way constructive but absolutely destructive. There are Brethren today, who when they get angry, even God can't stop them. They can behave saintly in every other way as long as you don't mistakenly step on their 'toes'. Let me ask you, what gets you angry? Jesus was angry that God's house was being turned into a den of thieves but Judas was angry a young woman poured expensive perfume on Jesus's feet. As far as he was concerned, it was better if the perfume was sold so that he can make some 'extra cash' (Jn.12:1-6). What about you? Do you constantly have a determined and lasting anger? While angry, are you like Jesus?

(b). Strife

Gal.5:20, 2Cor.12:20, Phil.2:3, [NLT, ERV, GNB, Amp, KJV], Phil.1:15-16, 2Tim.2:14, Rom.2:8, Prov.20:3, 2Tim.2:24, Jam.3:14.

This means striving or competing, it is the contest for superiority or advantage. It is selfish ambition, utter selfishness and a constant aim and effort to get the best for yourself. It is laboring for hire or other selfish purposes—such that in order to gain your end, you promote party spirit or factions. It is also a serious endeavour to equal or pay back the wrong done to one.

When you see a person (whether in the church or in the bus) asserting his *own* rights and claiming he has been wronged and he must be compensated, it is self. It could even be that you someone *'insulted'* you before others and you begin to resist such insult (whether in your heart or outwardly), it is Self. Your own may be that you just like yourself. At every point in time, you always try to get the best for yourself, it shows you are still a prisoner of Mr. Self.

When you see people rushing a commercial bus for instance, it is because they are all in the flesh. Each of them will be striving to get the best seat and space for himself. You see, even in church, this is not alien to us. When people strive with each other in the choir on who will lead in praise or worship, it is the same Mr. Flesh. When ministers quietly lobby and fight (even thought they are still smiling to each other and shaking hands) on who to *'preach today'* or lead in prayer points, it is still this Mr. Flesh.

The Bible declared that some people are preaching Christ out of contention, which tells us that they are preaching Christ in the Flesh! In your own personal life, where and how do you argue with your husband or quarrel with your wife in making sure that only your own opinion is respected?

Are you still in the flesh?

(c). Seditious

Gal.5:20. Rom. 16:17, [KJV, NLT], 1Cor.1:10-13, 1Cor.3:3-4.

Principally, this means Division. It is breaking into parties or factions. *It is stirring up strife in God's house, in the government, at home or in any other place- Dake Study Notes.* NLT translations renders it as **"...divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group..."**

By and large, this is what most denominationalism and fragmentations of the church of Jesus is built upon. Each of us is willing to have an exclusive group in order to protect some personal *interests*. Even within a local church, you will be surprised how fragmented we have become! There are now several *Cliques and Mafias* in God's house. Constantly, rumors are flying here and there. Brother, let me ask you, are you caught up in sedition? Sister, I Know you are influential in church, but are you causing division? Evaluate your life and be sincere to yourself. No one under the influence and control of the flesh will have neither a place nor an inheritance in the eternal Kingdom of God. Whether in the church or out there in the world, **"...that which is born of the flesh is flesh..."** Be not deceived.

(d). Heresies.

1Cor.1:7-13 [GNB, NLT, NKJV], 1Tim.4:1, 1Jn.2:19, Gal.5:20, 2Pet.2:1 [GNB, ERV, AMP], 2Pet.3:17, Tit.3:10-11 [AMP]. These are sects or parties into which divisions crystallize. The word Heresy means doctrines (or teachings) and has no evil meaning in itself. However, when used as a “work” of the flesh, it implies a doctrinal view or belief at variance with (or opposed to) the recognized and accepted tenets of the Christian faith.

It is the rejection of sound doctrines and acceptance of fallacy and error. When people begin to have itching ears, only willing to hear what soothes them and not what they need to hear, they are heretics (2Tim. 4:3 KJV, GNB, NLT, AMP, ERV).

When you begin to run after a so-called man of God who will tell you only the things that please you, things you like and things that foster or encourage your present beliefs (several of which you have not checked again if Jesus preached on them or if His apostles practiced them), are you not a heretic now? Why do you insist on running to men who will tell you *“it doesn’t matter what you wear!”* as a sister? Didn’t the Bible command women to dress modestly?

Brother, you say you are born again so how will you pierce your ears as a man and be wearing earrings up and down and you expect us to keep quiet? All the so-called worldly *stars* live like that and we will not allow such nonsense in the church of God. Don’t you know that if we leave you alone with your earrings and plaited, dreadlocks or permed hair (when you are not a woman), you will corrupt the other brothers and embolden them in error?

Israel was still mourning on the rejection of God on the matter of their fornication and idolatry with Moabite women when Zimri the son of Salu, of the tribe of Simeon, a great leader among them, brought Cozbi, the daughter of Zur, an influential chief of Midian into the camp (in the sight of Moses and all Israel) to fornicate with her.

Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, understood that sin uncurbed will become sin uncontrolled and it will defile the whole assembly. He cut the two of them off from the congregation of Israel and the wrath of God was appeased (please see Num.25:1-18).

How will you dress, talk and behave like people of the world and think we won’t react to it?

Some people who are crowd-hungry in their churches may even tell you **“you are blessed, we know the Lord is happy with you”**, when you know that sin is still quietly your master. Don’t let them push you to hell! Align yourself with true and wholesome doctrine.

Cease from Heresy!

(e). Envy.

Gal.5:21, Gen.37:11, Matt.27:18, Mk.15:10, Rom.1:29, Gal.5:26, 1Cor.13:4, Jas.3:14, Phil.1:15, Prov.14:30, Prov.23:17, 1Tim.6:3-4, Tit.3:3.

This is the pain felt and malignity conceived at the sight of excellence or happiness. It is ill-will and jealousy expressed (either inwardly or outwardly) at the good fortune or blessing of another person. This is the most base and least curable of all the degrading and disgraceful passions of the self life.

Joseph's brothers hated him more because of his dreams...It was not that they hated the person of Joseph, no...they were only uncomfortable with *his dreams*. They became insecure and began feeling inferior because their younger brother had a dream. What do you see in people that makes you begin feeling uncomfortable, insecure and inferior? There are sisters in church today who had no problem with the number of clothes they have until they see another sister in church who has more new and expensive cloths than they do, then there's suddenly a problem. They will now begin to feel sorry for themselves.

There are brothers who were formally content with their cars until a younger brother in church gave them a lift in his new car. Then, every seed sowing, every prayer point will now be toward this new desire and if God did not grant them their '*heart desire*' on time, it may be enough reason for them to turn back from Jesus and start following witch-doctors and several con-men on pulpit whose claim is that God has sent them to give people only material possessions (please see 1Cor.3:11, 1Cor.15:19). What about you? People who feel threatened, uncomfortable, inferior and insecure at the blessings of others only feel so because they do not know that God has an equally beautiful destiny for them if they will please him and walk with him and this destiny is not gotten by struggling to be this and that or struggling around only to make ends meet. It is achieved by sitting daily at the feet of Jesus. [Jn.12:26].

(f). Murder

Gal.5:21, Matt. 15:19, 1Jn.3:12, Rev.9:21. This signifies the destruction of human life and as he who hates his brother in his heart is ready to take away his life, so he is called a murderer.

It is deliberately spoiling or marring the happiness of another person. It is the climax of wrongly cherished antagonism. Are you still in church and there is still someone somewhere you can't imagine seeing face to face?

Are there people you just wish something evil will suddenly happen to? Are you even praying that the judgment of God should fall upon a government official who you think is blocking your access to a contract that you have not even asked God whether or not He wants you to bid for...? Brother, are you asking the *arrow of God* to hit their target in

this man's life or home so that he will not disturb you? Have you even prayed once for his salvation? Are you a murderer at heart? There are "Christians" today who at home, they are clearly known to spoil the happiness of the entire household...are you so emotionally unstable such that any day you wake up *on the wrong side of the bed* or someone offends you, does everyone in your family pay for it simply because you are the head of the house? I am asking you...Are you a *murderer*?

(g). Drunkenness

Gal.5:21, Lk.21:34, Prov.20:1 [GNB], Prov.23:29-30, Isa.5:11, 1Cor.6:9-10, Eph.5:18, Rom.13:13. This means living intoxicated and being a slave to drink. It is taking more wine or any kind of inebriating liquor than is necessary for health; whatever is unfit for public, domestic or even spiritual cares; this can even be used (metaphorically) of the cares of the world – when they intoxicate the mind.

If you are still a drunkard (For instance), what then is the difference between you and those who spend time in drinking joints? How can you preach the gospel to people when you are still drinking just like them?

Strong drink has broken many homes. Wives and children feel terribly hurt seeing an irresponsible father or husband stagger into the house in the dead of the night, stone drunk and disturbing the neighbours. Sometimes I feel like asking those who drink, what do you derive from it? Why become a fool by coming under the influence of a strong drink? Slowly, your health is ebbing away and yet you are still a slave to drink? How do you hope to become useful in God's hands like this?

It is also possible to be drunk by the cares of this world where all that moves you around are bills or needs or competition with your contemporaries or you are the type that is afraid of what people say about you...you can also be drunk with sorrow such that you are blinded to whatever God is saying until you carry a child in your womb and safely deliver. Those who are drunk are unreceptive to what is happening around them. Are you drunk with the cares of this world or you are vigilant enough to know that we are in the end time?

(h) Revelling

Gal.5:21, 1Pet.4:3, Rom.13:13. Another name for this is Orgy. It is wild and wasteful parties, consisting of feasting and drunkenness with impurity and obscenity of the grossest kinds. When you visit the site where worldly people had a party a night before, you are sure to see condoms, female underwears and so on littering the whole place.

The songs sang by the world system are songs of rebellion against God's order of morality and chastity. Their parties, awards and shows are nothing but provocations and

abominations before God. Do you still enjoy partying? While you may say your own is not ‘reveling’, do you waste a whole night in a pretense to be celebrating? Are you still “liberal” as far as worldly songs are concerned? The flesh believes it is independent and it will do all it can—only to make sure that he is not under anybody’s restraint. The Bible continued the works of the flesh by adding an “et cetra” in Gal.5:21. This means since self is a life (or an existence) on its own, there are still several other attributes and behavioural patterns which he has that gets God angry. One way to pin down other works of the flesh (that have not been analyzed here nor in the other letters of Brother Paul, the apostle) is to find out whether or not such attributes or behaviour are conformable with the life of Jesus. Issues like pride, unforgiveness and so on are also under this group.

2. What is the destiny of the Flesh?

(a) He will not and cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Gal.5:19-21, 1Cor.15:50, 1Cor.6:9-10, Eph.5:5, Rev.22:15, Rom.8:7-8.

Since the self life is the exact opposite of the life God will have us live, it is important we inform you that anyone who is in the flesh will not and cannot possess God’s kingdom. They will be refused access and thrown back—right from the gate.

Where and how do you hope to end? It will be terrible to be thrown into hell right from the church...it will be too sad to be refused access into eternal bliss and rest and yet you have been a faithful church-attendeo all your life.

I want you to join me and let’s pray.

Let us plead with God to open our eyes of understanding so that we can see what is wrong in our individual lives and correct it now while there is still time and mercy...Let us pray, Lord **“...point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the paths of everlasting life”** Psalm 139:24 [NLT]

(b) He will have a portion in hell and in the lake of fire.

Matt.25:41; Matt.13:41-42, Rev.19:20, Rev.20:10-15.

Hell fire is the present place of torment but the Lake of Fire is the eternal place of torment. While there are millions of people (who lived in the flesh) presently in hell, there is none yet in the lake of fire.

“And I saw the dead, great and small alike, standing before the throne. Books were opened, and then another book was opened, the book of living. The dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books....

Whoever did not have their names written in the book of the living was thrown into the lake of fire.” Rev.20:12, 15 [GNB]

I am certain that you know it is absolutely impossible for anyone who lives in the flesh to have his name written in God’s Book of life. Just as Jesus Confronted Nicodemus with what he needed to hear (and not what he wanted to hear), in the same way, I am asking you today... based on what we have studied so far on the flesh, how will you rate yourself? Since God will judge everyman according to the works of that man’s hand, what will your own judgment be?

Do evaluate your life.... And pray.

CONCLUSION

Having examined in Graphic details the poverty of the self life, we can all vividly see why this sort of life is an impossible route to heaven. Life in the flesh is opposed to everything God stands for this is why the Bible says **“Those who obey their human nature cannot please God”** Rom.8:8[GNB]. Who are you obeying? Self or the Spirit of God? Only you can honestly answer that.

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

1. As we continue on more works of the flesh, what other practice of the flesh do you notice in your own life? Let us be practical, truthful and straight forward.
2. Which of the works of the flesh listed in this chapter struck you most? List and explain.
3. Since the works of the flesh continued with et cetera, which other works of the flesh have you noticed that is not mentioned among the ones we listed here?
4. Based on this thorough knowledge of Self, what decision have you made personally? Share with us.

LESSON SIX

PUTTING OFF THE FLESH

Introduction

Having graphically seen the corruption of life in the flesh (especially how it relates to each of us personally), we understand that the number one question in every heart is “how can I be free from this self life?”

Since anything that is corrupt and thoroughly rotten cannot be improved upon, ultimately the best thing to do is to discard it. In this study therefore, this is what we will be looking at—why we should and how we can put off the flesh. May the Holy Spirit grant us understanding.

Main Text: Eph.4:22 [GNB]

1. Why must we put off the flesh?

a) He is God’s enemy.

Rom.8:7-8, Jam.4:4, 1Jn.2:15

The Self life is not aimless. There is what is designed to target, castigate, mock, frustrate and oppose. It is the way, life and nature of God. When God say “North”, Mr. Flesh says “South” and when God Say “East”, Mr. Flesh says “West”.

The world system— which is the societal lifestyle built and customized for the flesh (as a communal group) in ever opposed to the principles, views and beliefs of God and everything that godliness connotes.

There is no how you think you can serve God acceptably therefore if there is anything fleshy in your life. Self CANNOT obey God and even if he can obey, God cannot accept his service because it is evil. To be acceptable to God therefore the flesh must be put off.

(b) He desires everything God forbids.

Rom. 1:18, 32 [KJV, NLT, GNB], Eph.2:1-3 [NIV, AMP, NLT, GNB, TLB], Eph.4:19 [KJV, NIV, GNB, TLB, NLT, AMP]. Everything God clearly forbids is what Self revels in. He enjoys everything God sees and declares as evil. Even the desires of the self life are called *‘lusts of the flesh’*. By lust we mean *‘an unholy desire for what is forbidden’*.

Fornication and other sexual perversions like homosexuality, bestiality, lesbianism, bisexualism, adultery and so on have been clearly marked out by God as abominations,

yet more and more, day by day, it is still these evils things that fallen men is magnifying and raising high. They even have *pornography stars* now. Every work of the flesh listed in Galatians 5 is thoroughly hated by God, this is why you will be doing yourself a favour by not being a part of all these. Because of the nature of Self's desire, it must be put off, executed and destroyed if you ever hope to please God.

c) He is the opposite of God's nature.

1Cor.2:14, Eph.2:1-3 [NLT, AMP], Jer.6:16-17 [AMP, MSG]. Why there will always be an irreconcilable hostility between God and the self life is because both lives are opposite. Self, the flesh or human nature is actually a distorted version of God original creation.

The carnal man cannot accept any principle or view that comes from The Spirit of God. (i.e. such virtues that enables a man to live a blameless life before God) because these truths sounds foolish, empty, meaningless and nonsense to the carnal man. Every truth from God's Word is a direct opposite of their own so called lofty views and principles. Self has to die because it is unrepentantly opposed to God's nature.

d) He can never change for the better.

Rom.7:18 [NLT, AMP, GNB, ERV], Gen.6:5, Gen.6:12, Jn.3:6, Job 14:4, Job 15:14, Job 25:4, Ps.51:5, Rom.8:5-8, 1Cor.15:47-48. Just as a leopard cannot change its spots, so also self CANNOT change his life, even if he tries he still cannot change because by nature he is a child of disobedience.

The Bible says that the self life is rotten through and through. Thus it cannot be upgraded or improved upon (Rom.7:18, NLT). You cannot upgrade what is spoilt...Self if spoilt beyond all forms of recognition. It is completely corrupt so if you must please God, self must go.

e) He is completely selfish

Matt.6:31-33, Matt.6:25, Gen.6:5, Luke12:22-30, 1Pet.5:7.

Ever since the fall of man, the depraved self has left the genuine reason why God created man on the earth (which is to be a delegate of God, living solely for God's purposes) and he has carried the body away (so to speak) in order to run after his own selfish agenda, plans and programs.

What man lives for now is what to eat, what to drink and what to wear. The world system believes that the most essential needs of every human is food, clothing and

shelter thus, every man runs around for these so called *'basic needs'*. However, the most essential need of any man is the salvation of the soul of that man. And when he conscientiously begins to live for God's purpose, God will definitely provide these other physical, seemingly important needs.

You are not created to look for food. You must understand this and understand it well (Matt.6:25-26). The reason you were born into this world is to fulfill a purpose in God's mind but self cannot trust God let alone lay down his life for God's purpose. If you must please God, selfish self must die.

f) He is under God's curse.

Gen.3:16-19, Gen.4:11, Gen.5:29, Deut.11:26-28, Deut.28:15-68. Since self (or the flesh) is thoroughly disobedient and he cannot please God (Rom. 8:7-8); since he provoked God and he is still provoking Him, God placed a curse upon him. A curse is any verdict placed on anyone that reduces such a one to a lower state than where he formerly was. The only reason why a curse can come on anyone is because of sin. And since every thought and action of the Self life is sinful and evil before God (Gen.6:5), he has been perpetually placed under a curse.

If you must please God therefore, you must put off self. God cannot permit a cursed soul to relate closely with him – and everyone who is in the flesh is under God's curse.

g) He is a child of the devil.

Jn.8:44, Acts 13:10 [AMP], 1Jn.3:8,10.

Jesus said the carnal man is a child of the devil. Now, since God's arch-enemy is the devil, how can the child of this same enemy claim to serve God and be useful to him? If you are in the flesh in any way, you are still a child of the devil. You are his legal property and God will have nothing to do with you except you put off that wrong, evil nature. Whether you are choir master, Sunday school teacher or even pastor, you must put off that child of the devil!

h) He is under Satan's control.

Eph.2:2 [AMP, GNB, NLT], John8:44, Acts 13:10, 1Jn.5:19. Satan is the spirit of work in every man who lives in the flesh. Probably you are happy that you *'cannot'* embezzle money, but you still beat your wife. It is possible you have stopped fighting and abusing people but you are still quietly competing with others. Satan has an unhindered access into the life of ANYONE who lives in the flesh. He can use them to do anything he likes.

The Lord clearly said that anyone who practices sinning is a slave of sin... ***the truth is that anyone who remains in the flesh remains in his slavery to sin*** (please see Jn.8:34, 1Jn.3:8-10, Rom.6:16, 19). Are you still a slave even though you are wearing new clothes? Has sin chained and retained you in servitude even though you are well known in church?

i) He belongs to the world system.

1Jn.2:15-16, Jam.4:4, Eph.2:2, Rom.12:2. Self is an active member of the world system. The world system is the lifestyle opposed to the lifestyle and nature of God. It is the combination of several '*fleshes*' and the communal life of the flesh. Anyone who is following the way of the world is a sworn enemy of God and righteousness. The world system is ruled by the devil and he is worshiped as the god of this world. Do you still have an attachment to the world system? Are you content with the way of Jesus alone? Self must be put off if you want God to take you serious.

2.) How do we put off the flesh?

a) By death through crucifixion.

Rom.6:6 [GNB, ERV, NLT, AMP], Rom.7:1-6, Isa.53:5-6 [NKJV, KJV], Jn.3:14-15, Num.21:4-9, Num21:4-9.

Self our old life, our sinful carnal nature was crucified with Jesus on His cross. Please know that Jesus had no reason to die (because he was completely holy, sinless and perfect); in contrast, we were to be condemned to death because we were vile sinners and rebels before God.

However, The wisdom God used to put self to death in us is by attaching our SELF lives (i.e. our old lives before we met Jesus) to Christ, then Jesus took this evil life (my own life was there as well as yours). Our old nature was nailed with Him so that we can be truly dead (Rom. 6:1-5) as He died on the cross.

Our iniquity (not iniquities—i.e. acts of sin, rather our INIQUITY i.e. the sinful nature and principle producing acts of sin in us) was laid on Him. When Jesus died on the cross, we all died too (Gal.2:20, Col.3:3, Rom.6:6). If all Jesus died for was to forgive us our sins, we will still never be free from the power exerted by our old life and nature because it will still be an active producer of sin. But instead of just forgiving our sins, this is what Jesus did:

“And we know that our old being has been put to death with Christ on the cross, in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed, so that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” Rom.6:6 [GNB]

“We know that our OLD LIFE died with Christ on the cross. This happened so that our sinful selves would have no power over us. And then we would not be slaves to sin” [ERV]

If truly you are tired of the manifestations of your Self life, you will have to hand it over to Jesus (by faith) so that the master can take him over to his cross and execute him there.

We will like you to know that there is no other way to put self to death other than this way. It is only when we fulfill this condition that we can move on to the next...

b) By being baptized into Christ.

Rom.6:1-5, Col.2:12, 1Cor.15:35-38, 42-49 [AMP, GNB].

Being baptized into Christ here is not referring to water baptism. Rather, we are saying the medium which we are immersed, planted and buried is the person of Christ. We need this baptism so that the life of Jesus can infuse and permeate into every corner and space in our hearts and lives. This baptism is an integral part of our salvation experience.

In case you do not know: there is a baptism INTO Christ. We must be buried just the same way we bury a white cloth in a black dye. We all know that the purpose for such immersion is that a complete change should happen to the white cloth as the dye penetrates, fills and changes every part of the white cloth into the colour and nature of its medium. It is the same with our own lives too.

To genuinely put off self, you must be baptized into Jesus. We must begin to permit the life of Jesus to flow unhindered into every part of our lives. A new life does not come out except the old one dies. This happens to seeds that produce new trees—it is the same with us. Self cannot truly remain nor survive in a life that Jesus has unhindered access. But when you claim to be BURIED into Christ and your hands or legs or head or body is still sticking out, then you are not dead yet—and it is only a dead man that can be buried, not a man who is sleeping or a man who has fainted. Are you dead to your SELF life?

CONCLUSION

We have seen why and how to put off the evil, carnal human nature in us called the flesh or self. It is now very plain that nobody can remain in the flesh and hope to ever please God, just as we see the unavoidable condition of putting off the flesh before we can be in a growing, intimate relationship with the Master. By crucifying our old lives with Christ and being baptized into Him, we can live in a freshly new way and life every day.

Are you ready?

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

1. State and explain to us, four reasons why we must put off our old nature.
2. Can you explain what you understand by being baptized into Christ? In what way(s) is this type of baptism different from water and Holy Ghost baptism
3. Have you been crucified with Christ? Using practical examples, share your experience with us.

LESSON SEVEN

HOW TO KEEP THE FLESH DEAD ALWAYS

Introduction

It is very possible for the self life to die in each of us and remain dead every time and every day if we really understand what provision the Lord has made for us in mercy.

In this chapter, therefore, we will be accessing the wisdom of God packaged for our deliverance from Self—our “old man”. May the Lord grant us understanding.

Main text: Romans 6:6

1. By denying Self daily

One of the ways to keep the flesh dead always is by denying refusing and saying “no” to our flesh every day. This is possible by:

a) Maintaining a daily revelation. Rom. 6:6, Rom.6:7, 11-12, Gal.5:24, Josh.1:8, Ps.1:2, Rom.12:2, Eph.4:23 [NLT, AMP], Gal.2:20, 2Cor.5:17.

You must understand that you are dead. Self has died in each of us. Now, it is not enough to know that our self life is dead, we must also apply this revelation to every issue and circumstance everyday. People, lusts, sicknesses and diseases, situations and temptations are the friends of our “old self” that will constantly come back into our lives to find out whether or not their old friend—Mr. Self is still living in us. Another enemy of our spiritual life—The World system will do all it can to convince us that self is still alive in us but we must stand by the truth of God’s word daily—we are dead, and a dead man is not capable of acting or reacting again. Please remember: None of us, no matter how spiritual we are can survive the assault of self, sin, the world and Satan EXCEPT we maintain this daily revelation of the death of the flesh.

How can we maintain a daily revelation?

1. By daily thinking Bible-based thoughts. Josh.1:8, Ps1:2, Phil.4:8
2. By daily renewing our minds. Rom.12:2, 2Cor.10:3-5
3. By daily guarding and watching our minds. Phil.4:8, Prov.4:23.

b) Dying Daily. 1Cor.15:31, 1Cor.9:27 [AMP], Jn.3:14, Gal.5:24, Heb.12:2 [Amp, NLT]. The natural result of maintaining a daily revelation is that we die everyday. While many

(of us expect God to take away the flesh from us so that it will no longer “bite us” (Like the analogy in Numbers 21:4-9), God’s wisdom however is to render self impotent by providing an alternative lifestyle (the life of Jesus), placed on a cross, where we can all see it and crucify self with it there.

Instead of God ‘removing’ the flesh from us, God has shattered his power and put him to death. Any lure into sin now are just friends of the old man asking constantly whether their dead friend is alive in us or not and we owe them the truth—Self is dead so why seek ye the dead among the living? Anytime temptation looks so intense, we are to look up at the cross. From there we can see our dead self still hanging on the cross and we can vividly see the life of Jesus as our example.

2. By daily carrying our cross.

Another way of keeping Mr. Self always in each of us is by taking up our cross every day. In this segment, we will be quoting directly from Brother Gbile Akanni’s book:

“Understanding the concept and conditions for Discipleship”

a) What is the cross?

i) It is God’s instrument for terminating the natural life (i.e. the self-life, life in the flesh) Isa.53:5-6, Rom.6:6, Gal.2:20, Gal.6:14. It is by the cross that the “Iniquity of us all” (the self life), the embodiment of sin (the flesh) was rendered powerless over me. By the cross, “I” became dead. I became a dead man to the world. Whenever the world sees me, they see a dead man, a man as good as dead, as the power of the cross becomes manifest in me as I live the crucified life. It is only the cross that has such power on the flesh. The rat race of living to please, sustain and defend yourself ends at the cross.

ii) It is the authentic symbol and public identification mark of the death of the old man—the flesh. Rom.6:1-2, Gal.6:14-17. Anywhere you see the cross even physically on a grave, a coffin, in newspapers; it is a symbol of death. When you see a crucified life, it signifies the death of the natural life.

iii) Life in the spirit begins at the cross. It is only a dead man that can resurrect. Gal.2:20, 1Cor.6:19-20, Rom.6:5-7. The point at which the natural life terminates is also where the spiritual life begins. The point of death is also the point of resurrection.

Someone who is not dead cannot be said to resurrect. Resurrection life begins at the cross. Crucifixion is painful but the resulting resurrection life is joyful. The cross (as you surrender to it) is what God uses to release and translate you from the natural life to the supernatural. It is the doorway into a life of spiritual and physical prosperity. Allowing your self to be death with by the cross gets God on your side.

(iv) The cross is also God's instrument of rendering the devil impotent. It nullifies the ground on which the devil can attack us. Jn.3:13-16, Num.21:5-9, Col.2:13-15 [GNB, Phillips]. Give examples of ways in which Satan attacks us and how our victory comes through the cross.

(v) The cross insulates us from the world system. So we can be able to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit with all liberty. Gal.6:14,17, Rom.6:14,18, 1John2:15-16. As we become liberated from the grip of the natural life, we become free and available to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. When the cross is allowed to work in any life, he is not only dead to the world but the world and everything that is in it also becomes crucified, dead, rendered useless to him, he loses taste for the world and all that is in it.

b) Daily Application of the cross (Lk.9:23). Why must we take up our cross daily?

i) We are not of the world (though we are in the world.)

Applying the cross daily in our lives distinguishes us from the people of the world. Jn.15:18-21, Gal.6:17.

ii) We are still in the world and we encounter the world daily. Even though our lives have changed inside, the world has not. Jn.17:14-17, 1John2:15-16, Rom.12:2. Therefore we need the power of the cross in order to overcome the world daily. Without applying the cross, the world will influence, squeeze us into its mould and standards and overcome us. It is only as we apply the cross to our lives that we experience daily victory over the world system.

iii) Daily application of the cross reminds us of the death of the flesh everyday. In order to be free everyday to serve God. Rom.6:6-7, 14, 19; 2Corth.5:15, 17.

C) How to apply and experience the cross daily.

i) The power of the cross is made manifest only in someone who has seen the rottenness of himself and has become tired of himself. Rom.7:8-15, 1Cor.15:31.

ii) Reckon yourself dead. Rom.6:7, 11, 14, 2Cor.5:14, Col.3:3

(a) We were in Him when he was crucified; therefore His death became your death and my death. It is credited to my account and yours. Count yourself dead.

You are dead. That is the truth. Not that you will die. Your flesh, your human nature has been done away with and rendered impotent. Self shall no longer be your master. Its grip over you is broken. You can freely walk out of the sepulcher now, living the resurrected life!

iii) Declare it daily in your dealings with the world.

Gal.6:14:17, Heb.13:13, Rom.6:7. Don't keep quiet about it. Be bold and walk in the consciousness of the power that the cross exerts on your life. Anytime temptation comes your way, God is only giving you an opportunity to prove that you are dead.

Just as a dead man in the hospital is certified dead before he is said to be dead in the world, when you have died by the instrumentality of the cross, you will have to be proven and certified as dead by the world before you are said to be dead. Therefore, when temptations and provocations come your way, God does not expect you to fall, but to prove the death of the old man. What kind of temptations and provocations are likely to come your way after now? Discuss how you intend to overcome them.

iv) Prove the life of Christ within. Gal. 2:20, 1Cor.16:19-20, Col.3:4, Phil.1:20-21 [GNB]. Proving that you are dead is not enough. You must practically manifest the life of Christ, the "New creation life" within.

(v) Set your mind on things above. Rom.8:5, Col.3:1-2, 1John2:15-16, Rom.12:2, Phil.3:7-8 [GNB, TLB, Phillips]. Since your desire now is to do what the Holy Spirit tells you to, set your mind on things above, things that the spirit wants. Devalue the things of the flesh and of the world as Paul did. Put the highest value on spiritual things and set (tune) your mind on desiring such things.

vi) Live only for Jesus henceforth! 2Cor.5:15, Rom.6:13-14, Rom.14:7-9, Rom.7:5-6, Col.3:16. There is no vacuum in creation. If you do not immediately start living for Jesus, the flesh and its lusts will creep back into your life. The right thing to do is to replace the works of the flesh with the fruits of the spirit. As the flesh is evacuated, fill your mind with God's word.

vii) He (Christ) must be magnified in us at any cost. Phil.1:20-21 [GNB], By willing to allow Jesus to be magnified in you whether by life or by death.

3. BY following Jesus daily.

It is not enough to just deny self and carry our cross daily, but as Brother Gbile said, we must now be willing to follow Jesus everyday, everywhere and in everything. What does this mean?

a) We are to take and apply His lifestyle daily

1Pet.2:21 [NKJV, GNB, NLT, ERV] 1Jn.2:6 [AMP, NLT, NIV, NKJV, TLB, ERV], Eph.5:1 [Amp, NLT, NIV], Jn.12:26 [AMP]. By daily looking at the example of Jesus in the Bible, we will be able to practically know what step to take per time as we set out to live this resurrection life.

We are to discover and apply His personal lifestyle every day. His attitude towards food, work, sleep, prayer, fasting, rest etc. must be our attitude. How He acted and reacted at every point to every circumstance must be what we must conscientiously find out and emulate.

b) We are to cleave steadfastly to Him.

Jn.12:26 [AMP], Lk.22:54 [KJV], Jn.14:6, Matt.22:36-38. We are to cleave inseparably to the Lord Jesus. We must not allow anything in-between ourselves and Him-whether it is people, activities, our loved ones and so on. We must not let anything make us follow Jesus “afar off” and in all issues we must learn to stand **“where he is”!**

c) We are to do nothing without him.

Jn.15:1-6, Ps.127:1, Mk.16:20, 1Cor.3:9. We must now learn to do everything under his leadership. He has said there is nothing we can do without Him...so how do you ever hope to achieve anything of significance without the active involvement of our master? He is now the life within us!

d) We are to daily study and apply the Word.

Jn.1:1-5, Josh.1:8, Deut.17:18-20, Ps.1:1-2

Studying the personal life of our Lord is not the only thing to do. The Bible is the word of God and Jesus is the word. Studying and applying the Word of God therefore is following the same man—

Jesus.

Whether it is in Leviticus or Nahum, Ecclesiastes or 2Timothy, Micah or Obadiah, The Word of God (Jesus) is the central theme in all. The Bible says in Him was life and that life is the light of men. Therefore until we daily study and apply His life from the pages of the Holy Scriptures, (whether in the Old or New Testaments) we cannot locate the “LIGHT” that will put us in dominion over this dark, evil world.

CONCLUSION

By daily denying our SELF, carrying our cross and following Jesus, we can be certain that the flesh in each of us can be subdued. It is not enough to know all these theoretically.

Are you going to be practicing them from now onwards?

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

1. How do we keep the flesh dead every day? Explain with practical examples.
2. In your own experience, what are the things that are hindering you from maintaining a daily revelation? Share with us and let us pray together.
3. Have you truly experienced the death of your “Old man” (The flesh)? Share with us, giving practical examples.
4. How do you plan to carry your cross and follow Jesus from henceforth?

LESSON EIGHT

PUTTING ON OUR NEW NATURE (Part One)

Introduction

Like we said earlier, it is not enough to just put off our self life and think we are free. All that will give way to is a vacuum. Rather, as we are putting off our flesh we must also learn to put and keep on our new nature. How this is possible is what we will be trusting God to reveal to us in this particular study. May God grant you understanding (Amen.)

Main Text: Rom.13:14

1. What is our “New Nature”?

It is the nature, image and lifestyle of our master Jesus. Rom. 8:29, 2Cor.5:17, Eph.4:24 [NLT, GNB, AMP], 1Jn.5:11-13. The holy, true and godly nature that mankind lost in the first Adam is what is restored to us in Jesus—the second Adam. Having Jesus’ nature, image and lifestyle is what qualifies you as a Christian.

Have you put on Christ?

2. Why must we put on this new nature?

There are several reasons. Amongst these are:

a) It is the only lifestyle acceptable to God. Rom.8:29, Mat.17:5, Eph.4:15, Isa.42:1, Matt.3:17, Matt.12:18 [GNB, NLT, AMP], Jn.14:6 [AUV]. The life of Jesus is the pattern and standard that God is expecting anybody who is coming to Him to conform to. A refusal to pattern our lives to this lifestyle is to remain unacceptable to God. The life of Jesus is the standard God will approve and accept. Are you striving to let Jesus live in you?

b) It is the nature of God’s kingdom. 1Cor.15:45-49, Eph.4:15, Rom.8:29, 2Cor.5:17. Anybody who does not have the nature of Jesus cannot enter the kingdom. The Bible says that nothing unclean will enter the New Jerusalem (Rev.21:27) and by now, you know that self is thoroughly unclean.

The ticket that grants us access into the kingdom of God is that we internally possess the nature of this man—Jesus and we outwardly express His life that is within us. Do you have this nature yet?

c) It is the opposite of life in the flesh. Rom. 8:5-6, 9, 12-13 [AMP, NIRV, AUV], Matt.5:14-16, Jn.1:4-5. We cannot be the LIGHT of the world except we put on the nature of the man whose life is the LIGHT of men. Just as “Self” is a nature that provokes God, the Christian nature is all that gives God pleasure! Without putting on this nature, you will still remain full fledged in the flesh.

d) Its desires are set principally on God. Col.3:1-3, Ps.1:2, Jn.5:30, Jn.6:38, Heb.10:5-7, Matt.7:21. We must put on this new nature because it is the only nature that selflessly desires to please God at all cost. Just like our Master, when we put on the nature of Jesus, we will do everything possible to make sure that God’s will is carried out in us, through us and by us.

Selfishness, self program, self agenda and everything belonging to self will die in any man who put on the nature of Jesus. You will stop insisting on your own rights and you will be willing to please God always even if you have to suffer for God’s will to be done. (By suffering, we don’t mean sickness or disease, but ill-treatment that comes from persecution or slander.)

3. How do we put on and keep on this new nature?

It is not enough to experience the Christian life occasionally or once in a while. God does not just expect us to put on the nature of his son...we must learn to KEEP ON this nature. How is this possible?

a) By complete faith in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus. 2Cor.5:16 [NLT, GNB, AMP], Isa.53:6, Gal.2:20 [AMP, NLT, GNB, ERV], Col.3:3, Rom.6:6. You are dead. Understand this truth. God has laid (not God will lay) your INIQUITY (yourself, old evil nature, carnal nature, lower self etc) on Jesus. It is no longer you who live. The former YOU is DEAD. God has bought your body for His own use. You no longer belong to yourself.

Faith comes by understanding. The more time you spend digging deep into the Holy Scriptures to learn all about what this redemption through Jesus Christ connotes, the more the reality of it dawns on you. Although men still see you and think the old you is still alive, but you must understand that you are dead and it is only Jesus who now lives His own life in you!

b) By maintaining a daily revelation. Rom.12:2, Col.3:3-4, Rom.6:1-14, Col.2:20, Gal.2:20, Eph.4:22-24 [NLT, ERV, GNB, AMP]. Everyday of your life from henceforth must now be lived as a new person. But this will be impossible if you do not maintain a daily revelation. This revelation is maintained by daily having a spiritual and mental

attitude that you are saved (i.e. completely and absolutely free and delivered from Satan, sin, the flesh and the World system) and that your old self is dead. This is easily achievable by studying the Bible for your own life (not for preaching or quoting or cramming!)

c) By practically emulating Jesus in all things, at all times. Jn.12:26 [Amp], Mat.17:5, Eph.4:15, 1Pet.2:21-23, 1Jn.2:6 [AMP, GNB, ERV, NLT].

Since God had publicly endorsed this Jesus as the pattern and standard he will accept from anyone who must draw near Him and we are willing to put and keep on His nature, we must learn to practically emulate His example in everything we do. By simply following His life in all things, we can be certain that we will not be led astray. Are you following Jesus? Do you ask yourself **“What will Jesus do”** before you take decisions?

d) By practical obedience to every verse of scripture. Eph.2:2, Eph.5:6, Rom.2:13, Jam.1:21-25, 2Cor.3:18. The only thing that differentiates us from *‘sons of disobedience’* is the fact that we are obeying God’s word in all things.

There will be no difference between our nature and that of the unbelievers if we refuse to make the Bible our first consideration and final authority. And since Jesus is The Word of God, a lack of conformity to the Word is a lack of conformity to His life.

e) By being ruled everyday by the Holy Spirit. Rom.8:14, Gal.5:18, Gal.5:25, Rom.8:4-5, 9. If the Holy Spirit does not have uncontested authority and control over your life, know that you are not putting on this new nature. The Holy Spirit is called The Spirit of Christ (Rom.8:9), so a refusal to let him rule us is a refusal to let Jesus rule us. Check your own life and look inwardly. Do you constantly argue with the Spirit? What is your relationship with God’s Spirit like? Is He helping you to become more and more like Jesus or are you frustrating His help?

CONCLUSION

Our Master Jesus has complete divine approval over His life. If you ever hope to please God, it is a must that you cling tightly to Jesus’ pattern of life and style of service. You must take the steps He took, have the focus He had and His manner of life must be yours also. Since there is no other way but his man – “The Way”, what will you do?

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

1. What is Our New Nature? Explain.
2. As an individual, how can you be certain you are putting on this nature?
3. What are the reasons why putting on this nature is a must and
4. As an individual, what challenges are you still having that are hindering the effective *Putting On* of this nature? Share with us.

LESSON NINE

PUTTING ON OUR NEW NATURE (Part Two)

Introduction

Christianity is not a religion. It is God's way of life and this is why there are benefits for accepting this way of life by putting on Jesus' nature and living like Him just as there are consequences in refusing to live like Jesus and take up his nature. These are what we will be looking at in this lesson. May the Lord grant you understanding. (Amen)

Main Text: Rom. 13:14.

1. What are the benefits of putting on the nature of Jesus?

(a) **We become “Born Again”.** 2Cor.5:17, 1Cor.15:47-48, 1Jn.5:11-13, 1Jn.2:25. There are two human races on earth—The Adamic race and the Christian race. It is only by becoming one with the stock of the man from heaven (Jesus) that we can begin to partake in what the Christian life offers. The Christian life is the very life and nature of God. It is the opposite of the Adamic life (which is carnal and fleshy). Let me ask you, are you experiencing this resurrection life, even today?

(b) **We live like gods on earth.** Rom.5:17, Ps.82:6, Jn.10:34-36, Jn.1:12, 1Cor.15:48, Jn.3:16. When we put of the nature of this man Jesus, we live in complete victory in this present world. Nobody lives like Jesus and does not reign over circumstances and situations that he formerly thought impossible.

In the midst of suffering, trials and persecution, we will have the inner fortitude that comes from trusting in Christ and men will marvel at us. We become people the devil has no more legal rights over by the virtue of our reliance on our Master, Jesus. Everyone who is a genuine child on God will resemble God His Father. A lizard cannot give birth to a cockroach. God can only “give birth” to gods. [see 2Cor.5:1-4].

(c) **We are prepared for God's purpose.** 2Tim.1:9, Eph.2:10 [AMP, NLT], Rom.8:28-30. The only way we can be called by God to fulfill His purpose is by conformity to the life of this man, Jesus. As we can see, purpose is only given to us “...in Christ” and except we have put on the nature of this man who is God's pattern and standard for the fulfillment of purpose, there is no how we can be useful to God. When we conscientiously put on the image of Jesus therefore, we become qualified to be used of God for his own purpose on earth.

(d) Our names are recorded in the book of life. Rev.21:27, Jn.10:14, Rev.20:15, Dan.12:1, Lk.10:20, 2Tim.2:19.

Except you have sincerely put on the nature of Jesus, (which means you are genuinely Born Again), there is no how your name can be in the Book of Life. What guarantees your name in the book is not whether you perform miracles or demons are subjected to you. Your name can only be written if you are one stock and nature with Jesus. Are you like Jesus Christ?

(e) Our eternity is guaranteed. Jn.3:14-18, Rev.22:14, Rev.21:7. Like we said earlier, the sole ticket into the kingdom of God is that we have the nature of Jesus deep in us and we are living that life daily. Every thing sinful and full of self will not enter the kingdom.

Those of us who will enter eternal bliss will of necessity put on the image of Jesus. Once we have put on His image therefore, we can be certain that we will face eternity and Divine judgment without fear because as He is, so will we be in this world and when we see Him, we shall be like Him. (1Jn.4:17, 1Jn.3:2).

2) What are the consequences of not putting on this new nature?

a) We will be rejecting God's great offer. Matt.11:28-29, Jn.1:12, Jn.3:16, Rom.5:6, 8 [AMP, NLT, GNB, ERV], 1Jn.4:9. God's great offer is the complete deliverance of each of our souls from Satan, sin, self and the world system by our acceptance of the redemptive and substitutionary work of Jesus. If we refuse to wear his new nature therefore, we will be refusing the opportunity to become new beings and we will still have to be carrying our own loads of sin, affliction and every consequence arising from sin. Without putting on this man's nature, you cannot be truly free.

(b) We will be the same as the ungodly in this world. Eph.2:2, 12, Rom.8:9, [NKJV, ERV, AMP, NLT], Rom.8:14, Jn.1:12, 1Jn.5:11-13. Without putting on the image of Jesus, we will be like the rest of the world—separated and alienated from every benefit derivable from being connected to God. Anyone who the Spirit of Jesus (i.e. the Holy Spirit) is not controlling and directing, is not a Christian at all, if our Christianity is merely religious and we are not becoming more and more like Jesus in our daily lives, then we are the same with the ungodly people of this world.

(C) We will still be living in the flesh. Rom.8:5-10, 1Pet.2:21, 1Jn.2:6, Eph.4:12-15, 1Cor.15:47-48.

In the spirit realm, there is no intermediary. It is either you are putting on SELF or you are putting on Jesus. Now, to refuse to put on the image of this man Jesus means we still want to remain our old self. Are you not tired yet of your self? Why not embrace Jesus today as you surrender the flesh to Jesus for Him to deal with it? You will emerge a new person if you do!

(d) Our names will not be in the book of life. Rev.20:15, Rev.21:27, 2Tim.2:19. Like we said earlier, there is no how your name will be in the Lamb's book of life except you put on this nature. What will you do?

(e) We will face a doomed eternity. Rev.20:15, Rev.21:27, Rev.22:15. Everyone who does not put on the image of Jesus cannot have His nature in them and it is only people with the NATURE (or lifestyle) of Jesus who ever have their names written in His Book of life. I will like you to consider this and appraise your own personal life? Pause a bit and ask yourself "Am I like Jesus?"

CONCLUSION

Without having a practical understanding about the benefits and consequences of putting on or not putting on the nature of Jesus, we would be tempted to live carelessly. However, when we have this sound understanding, we will live circumspectly. Have you seen the benefits of serving God with your life now? Or are you still contented living your own life?

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

1. List and explain to us at least two benefits of putting on the image of Jesus?
2. Why is it impossible to walk and succeed in God's purpose without putting on the nature of Jesus?
3. Considering your personal experience in trying to put on the image of the Lord Jesus, please share with us what your challenges have been.
4. Where do you want to spend your eternity? If it is in heaven, then it is very important that you check your life again and again and be certain you do not just say you are in faith, but that you daily put on the nature of Jesus. Have you put on the nature of Jesus?

LESSON TEN

LIVING PRACTICALLY FOR JESUS

Introduction

If we have put off the old nature and we have put on the new nature, then we will begin to understand what it means to be Born Again. However, there is still one more thing we need to consider. We must now begin to live principally and practically for Jesus and Him alone. How we can go about this is what we will be studying in this lesson.

Main Text: 2Cor.5:15

1. You will be divinely interrupted.

If truly you are redeemed, your life will have to go through a divine interruption. Are you ready to be interrupted?

a) What is Divine Interruption? 2Cor.5:15, 1Pet.4:1-2 [ERV, GNB, AMP, KJV], Rom.14:7-8 [NLT, AMP]. Divine interruption is the abrupt end our former lives come to immediately we genuinely encounter the Lord and give our lives to him. Look at a man like Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-6), He encountered the Lord and that became the end of his former life—but also the beginning of a new life to be lived for God!

b) Examples of Divine interruptions.

It will interest you to know that nobody ever amount to anything in God's hands without being interrupted. Here are some examples:

i. Noah. Gen.6:13-22. God resolved to destroy humanity but He also wanted to keep some alive so that they can reproduce and multiply and carry out God's program...then God chose Noah. We were not told what this man's business was before this time. It was only after the flood that he became a farmer. His name is in the Bible today because he permitted God to interrupt him. If it were you, what will you do?

ii. Abraham. Gen.12:1-5. God wanted to redeem fallen mankind to Himself. To do this, He needed a man through whom he will begin to accomplish His purpose (i.e. by sending the Messiah through Abraham's lineage.) This man had to leave his country, his relatives, his business and everything just to pursue a divine call—God did not even tell him where he was taking him! (Gen.12:1, Heb.11:8)

iii. Isaac. Gen.26:1-6, 12-16. In continuing His covenant and purpose with Abraham, God called Isaac his son. He even gave him business strategies all because Isaac was to live solely for God and God's will.

iv. Moses. Ex.3:1-end, 4:1-18. God wanted to deliver the nation of Israel from 400 years of bondage in the land of Egypt. Then he called Moses, an eighty years old shepherd who was keeping his father-in-law's sheep. God used this same man to author the first five books of the Bible. Can you imagine this? You cannot answer divine call like a part-time thing. It will consume the whole of your life. Do you still want to be Born Again?

v. Gideon. Judg.6:11-16. Gideon, a mere farmer, was called by God to become a general. He was to lead the armies of Israel (actually, just some 300 men) into battle against the *'numberless'* Midianites [Judg.7:12]. This man had to leave his father's farm in order to fully obey God's call.

vi. The Apostles of Christ. Matt.4:18-22, Matt.9:9. All the Apostles of Jesus were very busy men. Yet when the Lord encountered them, they had to make a sacrifice—they left their old lives so that they can pursue God's call. They were painfully interrupted but they were also eternally rewarded. Will you let him interrupt your goals and plans today?

(c) Why are we going to be interrupted?

i. We are saved for a purpose. 2Tim.1:9, Eph.2:10, Jer.1:5, Ps.139:16-18. You are not saved to just go to church twice a week or to just be a member of the choir in a local church all your life. God has a specific purpose in mind for each of us. This purposes are very important in the plan of God for moving His church forward and many a time, our personal lives are complete opposite of God's plan —thus a divine interruption has to happen if God's purpose will not be frustrated.

ii. We are God's chosen instruments. 1Cor.1:26-29 [GNB, NLT, AMP, ERV, KJV], Jer.1:4-10. No created thing can question the sovereignty of God as to why He called anyone who He calls. Once you are Born Again, you are not just called, you are also God's own personal instrument through which he will draw mankind closer to Himself and in doing this, your plan for your life (When self still ruled you) must necessarily be frustrated and packed aside so that God's own personal and purpose can be enthroned and pursued by you.

iii. It is God's method of calling every man. Gen.6:13-22, Gen. 12:1-6, Ex.3:1, 4:1-8, Judg.6:11-16, Matt.4:18-22, Matt.9:9 etc. Every descendant of Adam has self in him. He lives only for self and runs around to make only self comfortable. However, if God will use you —and use you effectively too, you will have to be interrupted by God. The plans of self that you were dutifully working on will come to an abrupt end. Divine call is a change of masters, life, rulers and perspective. Are you ready for divine interruption?

2. What does it mean to practically live for Jesus?

i. We will stop living for self. 2Cor.5:15, 2Cor.5:17, 1Pet.4:1-2. If truly you are Born Again, the reason why you are alive will not be anything other than the reason why Jesus came into this world—

to reconcile men back to God. To still be running up and down looking for what to drink, wear or eat shows that you lack understanding. Jesus said real life consist of more than food or clothes. So, to keep running about for mere additions (Matt.6:32-33) shows that you are not yet living for Jesus—which means you are not yet dead to your old life.

ii. Our lives will be at His disposal, ready for His use. Acts 9:1-6, Lk.5:1-3, Rev.3:20, 2Tim.1:9`. Just like Peter's boat, people whose lives are emptied of self are the type of accommodation Jesus is looking for. He will knock and we can open to Him. He will come in and table His plans as our Lord and show us what errand He will have us run for him. Is your own life at the master's disposal, even today?

iii. We will be living in unconditional obedience to Him. John 10:4, John 5:30, John 6:38, John 8:29, John 13:31-32. When we begin to obey Jesus at our own expense, when we obey him even when it is difficult and not convenient, that is when we begin to practically live for the Master. Is your obedience complete or partial? Whose will do you seek... His or yours?

iv. We must set aside our goals, dreams and ambitions as we embrace His own purpose and plans for our lives. Acts 9:4-6, Heb.10:5-7, Matt.28:18-20, Acts 1:8. The acid test of determining who you live for is this: What thoughts are constantly on your mind? What do you dream on most? Is it the expansion of God's kingdom on earth, through your own active participation or your own personal plans and ambitions? Where your treasure is, that is where your heart will be. Who or what is your treasure? Is it Jesus or something else?

CONCLUSION

Living for Jesus is not a theoretical issue. It is absolutely practical. You can know who you are personally living for if you will be sincere enough with yourself. But please know, without living for this man Jesus, there is no how heaven will recognize you as belonging to God. Remember **“Not every one that calls me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father in heaven”** Matt.7:21 [NKJV]

What will you do?

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

1. What is Divine interruption?
2. In your own personal experience, have you been interrupted by God?
3. Can you give some other examples of Bible characters that God interrupted? What did you learn from their lives?
4. Are you practically living for Jesus? Be sincere and share your answer with us.

OTHER REFERENCE MATERIALS

1. **Becoming Like Jesus** - Gbile Akanni
2. **The Crucified Life**- E.A. Adeboye
3. **New Birth—What Jesus meant**- Abraham Oshoko

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