

Bible Study

The Danger of Carnality

Theme: Living in the Spirit, not in the Flesh

Key Verse: *Romans 8:6 – "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."*

Introduction

Carnality refers to living according to the sinful nature rather than being led by the Spirit of God. A carnal Christian may believe in Jesus but still be dominated by worldly desires, selfish ambitions, and sinful habits.

Paul addresses this issue in several places in Scripture, urging believers to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. In this study, we will explore the **definition, characteristics, consequences, and cure for carnality** according to the Word of God.

1. What Is Carnality?

Definition: Carnality comes from the Greek word *sarkikos*, meaning "fleshly" or "dominated by sinful nature." It refers to a mindset that prioritizes worldly desires over spiritual growth.

Biblical References:

- **Romans 8:5-8** – *"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."*
- **1 Corinthians 3:1-3** – Paul calls the Corinthian believers "carnal" because of their immaturity and divisions.
- **Galatians 5:17** – The flesh fights against the Spirit, making it impossible to live for God while following carnal desires.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some ways we can identify a carnal mindset in our own lives?
- Why do you think Paul considers carnality a serious problem in the Christian life?

2. Characteristics of a Carnal Christian

Paul gives several signs of carnality in the Bible:

A. Immaturity in Faith

- **1 Corinthians 3:1-2** – Paul calls the Corinthians “babes in Christ” because they were not spiritually mature.
- They were still controlled by their old sinful nature rather than growing in godliness.

B. Strife, Jealousy, and Division

- **1 Corinthians 3:3** – Carnality causes believers to be envious, argumentative, and divisive.
- A carnal Christian focuses on personal gain rather than unity in Christ.

C. Love for Worldly Things

- **1 John 2:15-16** – The carnal mind loves “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.”
- A carnal Christian prioritizes pleasure, status, and material wealth over spiritual things.

D. Lack of Spiritual Discernment

- **Romans 8:7** – *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”*
- A carnal person resists God’s authority and does not seek His wisdom.

Discussion Questions:

- Have you noticed these characteristics in your own spiritual life?
- What are some practical ways to grow out of spiritual immaturity?

3. The Consequences of Carnality

A. Spiritual Death

- **Romans 8:6** – *"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."*
- Living in carnality weakens our relationship with God and leads to destruction.

B. Inability to Please God

- **Romans 8:8** – *"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."*
- A person controlled by the flesh will struggle to live in obedience to God.

C. Weakness in Faith and Prayer

- **James 4:3-4** – Carnality causes selfishness in prayer, leading to unanswered prayers.
- **Luke 8:14** – Jesus warns that the cares of this world choke out the Word of God, making a believer spiritually unfruitful.

Discussion Questions:

- How do we see the effects of carnality in the church today?
- What are some dangers of continuing in carnality without repentance?

4. The Cure for Carnality

A. Walk in the Spirit

- **Galatians 5:16** – *"This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."*
- Living by the Spirit means surrendering our desires to God and seeking His will daily.

B. Renew the Mind with God's Word

- **Romans 12:2** – *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."*
- Reading, studying, and meditating on God's Word transforms our thoughts and actions.

C. Crucify the Flesh Daily

- **Galatians 5:24** – *"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."*
- This means denying sinful desires and living in obedience to Christ.

D. Set Your Affections on Heavenly Things

- **Colossians 3:2** – *"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*
- A spiritually minded believer prioritizes God's kingdom over earthly pleasures.

E. Stay in Fellowship with Other Believers

- **Hebrews 10:25** – *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another."*
- A strong Christian community helps us stay accountable and grow spiritually.

Discussion Questions:

- What practical steps can we take to walk in the Spirit daily?
 - How can we encourage one another to resist carnality and pursue holiness?
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Conclusion

- **Carnality is a dangerous mindset that leads to spiritual weakness and separation from God.**
- **God calls us to grow in spiritual maturity by walking in the Spirit, renewing our minds, and crucifying the flesh.**
- **The Christian life is a daily battle, but through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can overcome carnality and live victoriously in Christ.**

Call to Action:

- Identify areas in your life where you are struggling with carnality.
 - Commit to a deeper relationship with God through prayer, Bible study, and obedience.
 - Surround yourself with spiritually minded believers who will help you grow.
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Memory Verse:

Galatians 5:16 – *"This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."*

Closing Prayer

"Lord, we acknowledge that at times we have allowed our flesh to control us instead of Your Spirit. We ask for Your help in overcoming carnality. Teach us to walk in Your Spirit, renew our minds with Your Word, and set our affections on things above. Strengthen us to live in holiness and obedience to You. In Jesus' name, Amen."