

Sinful Flesh

Dustin Butler

Romans 8:3

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the **likeness** of **sinful flesh**, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Likeness:

g3667. ὁμοίωμα **homoiōma**; from 3666; a form; abstractly, resemblance: — made like to, likeness, shape, similitude.

AV (6) - likeness 3, made like to 1, **similitude** 1, shape 1;

Philippians 2:7

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the **likeness** of men:

Matthew 26:41

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

He knows by experience what are the **weaknesses of humanity**, what are their wants, and where lies the strength of their temptations. The **weakness of our human nature** will not bar our access to the heavenly Father; for Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, “yet without sin.” {ST October 7, 1897, par. 10} (Heb. 4:15)

Think of Christ’s humiliation. He took upon himself **fallen, suffering human nature, degraded and defiled by sin.** {YI December 20, 1900, par. 7}

The divine nature, combined with the human, made Him capable of yielding to Satan’s temptations. Here the test to Christ was far greater than that of Adam and Eve, for Christ took **our nature, fallen but not corrupted, and would not be corrupted unless He received the words of Satan in the place of the words of God.** {Ms57-1890.11}

1 John 3:5

And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and **in him is no sin.**

Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; **some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power.** But Christ declared of Himself: “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.” John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. **He had kept His Father’s commandments,** and there was **no sin in Him** that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble. {GC 623.1}

James 1:14-15

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own **lust**, and enticed. Then **when lust hath conceived**, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

“The prince of this world cometh,” said Jesus, “and hath nothing in Me.” John 14:30. **There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan’s sophistry**. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ’s humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, **that we may attain to perfection of character**. {DA 123.3}

A plain, simple but liberal diet of fruits, vegetables and grains is the best for those who are preparing for the work of God. The **lower nature**, with all its inclinations, must be subdued and crucified, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. It is absolutely necessary for Christians to **keep the body under, bringing it into subjection**, and uprooting every **affection and impulse** which is contrary to the will of God. The food which we eat will help or hinder us in doing this. {Ms47-1896.26}

The **lower passions** have their seat in the **body** and work through it. The words **“flesh” or “fleshly” or “carnal lusts” [1 Peter 2:11] embrace the lower, corrupt nature; the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God**. We are commanded to crucify the flesh, with the **affections and lusts**. How shall we do it? Shall we inflict pain on the body? No; **but put to death the temptation to sin. The corrupt thought is to be expelled. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ**. All **animal propensities** are to be subjected to the **higher powers of the soul**. The love of God must reign supreme; Christ must occupy an undivided throne. Our **bodies** are to be regarded as His purchased possession. The **members of the body** are to become the instruments of righteousness. {Ms1-1888.10}

I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” That he might not run uncertainly or at random in the Christian race, Paul subjected himself to severe training. The words, **“I keep under my body,”** literally mean to beat back by severe discipline the **desires, impulses, and passions**. {AA 314.1}

The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. The will must consent, faith must let go its hold upon Christ, before Satan can exercise his power upon us. **But every sinful desire we cherish affords him a foothold. Every point in which we fail of meeting the divine standard is an open door by which he can enter to tempt and destroy us**. And every failure or defeat on our part gives occasion for him to reproach Christ. {DA 125.2} When Satan quoted the promise, “He shall give His angels charge over Thee,” he omitted the words, **“to keep Thee in all Thy ways;”** that is, **in all the ways of God’s choosing. Jesus refused to go outside the path of obedience**. {DA 125.3}

Even **one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire cherished**, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. {PH117 28.2}

How little we appreciate this fact. **Actions make habits, and habits, character**, and if we do not guard our habits, we shall not be qualified to unite with heavenly agencies in the work of salvation, nor be

prepared to enter the heavenly mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare; for no one will be there except those who have surrendered their will and way to God's will and way. He whose character is proved, who has stood the test of trial, who is a partaker of the divine nature, will be among those whom Christ pronounces blessed. {RH December 8, 1891, par. 10}

Pure religion has to do with the will. The will is the governing power in the nature of man. If the will is set right, all the rest of the man will come under its sway. **The will is not the taste or the inclination, but it is the choice, the deciding power;** the kingly power which works in the children of men **unto obedience to God or to disobedience.** {Lt49-1887.12}

Every human being possessed of reason has power to choose the right. In every experience of life God's word to us is, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Joshua 24:15. **Everyone may place his will on the side of the will of God, may choose to obey Him, and by thus linking himself with divine agencies, he may stand where nothing can force him to do evil.** {CG 209.3}

The tempted one needs to understand the **true force of the will.** This is **the governing power in the nature of man—the power of decision, of choice.** Everything depends on the right action of the will. Desires for goodness and purity are right, so far as they go; but if we stop here, they avail nothing. Many will go down to ruin while hoping and desiring to overcome their evil propensities. **They do not yield the will to God. They do not choose to serve Him.** {MH 176.1}

In the work of redemption there is **no compulsion. No external force is employed.** Under the **influence of the Spirit of God,** man is **left free to choose whom he will serve.** In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. **The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.** {DA 466.4}

The **heavenly intelligences will work with the human agent** who seeks with determined faith that perfection of character which will reach out to perfection in action. To everyone engaged in this work **Christ says, I am at your right hand to help you.** {COL 332.4}

As the **will** of man co-operates with the **will of God,** **it becomes omnipotent.** Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. **All His biddings are enablings.** {COL 333.1}

Let every one who desires to be a partaker of the divine nature, appreciate the fact that he must escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. **There must be a constant, earnest struggling of the soul against the evil imaginings of the mind.** There must be a steadfast resistance of temptation to **sin in thought or act.** The soul must be kept from every **stain,** through faith in Him who is able to keep you from falling. We should meditate upon the Scriptures, thinking soberly and candidly upon the things that pertain to our eternal salvation. {RH June 12, 1888, par. 4}

But Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. **It does not come to us by accident.** A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God gives the talents, the powers of the

mind; **we form the character**. It is formed by **hard, stern battles with self**. Conflict after conflict must be waged against **hereditary tendencies**. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected. {COL 331.1}

2 Corinthians 10:5

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;**

Hebrews 4:15

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.