

Looking At The Carnal To See The Spiritual

I. Introduction:

A. The word “carnal” generally brings a negative thought to mind (**Romans 8:5-8** and **I Corinthians 3:1-3**).

1. The word translated “carnal” is about the flesh (Strong’s # 4561) and we know what happens when man is fleshly minded (**Ephesians 2:1-3** and **Colossians 1:16-23**).

2. Having said that, not all carnal/fleshly things are wrong (**Ephesians 4:28**, **I Timothy 4:1-8**, **Hebrews 13:4**, etc.).

3. Those lawful carnal things can be used to teach spiritual things (i.e. **Matthew 20:1-16** and **Ephesians 5:22-33**).

4. When we examine carnal things in this lesson we are not saying it is right to be sinfully, fleshly minded (i.e. **Galatians 5:16-21**).

5. Yet, how we handle things that are carnal is revealing (**I Timothy 5:8**).

B. This lesson is one in which our aim will be to better equip each of us when it comes to self-examination that we all are supposed to do. To know our own selves (**II Corinthians 13:5**).

1. While your flesh and soul are not one in the same (**II Corinthians 4:16** and **James 2:26**); you cannot separate your mind from your works (**Colossians 1:21** and **James 1:8**).

2. What you do comes from within and ties to your thinking (**Proverbs 16:3** and **Mark 7:21-23**).

3. The act of sin starts with one’s own lusts (**James 1:13-16**).

4. How well do you know yourself?

II. Body: He That Is Faithful In The Least (**Luke 16:1-13**)

A. Furthering the illustration of “he that is faithful in the least [little]” ... (**Luke 19:11-27**).

1. If someone cannot manage something smaller, why would you trust them with greater responsibility (**I Timothy 3:1-7**)? **Specifically, the principle in I Timothy 3:4-5*

2. Our focal point though is in **Luke 16:10**. You are not going to be somehow more capable in spiritual things when you cannot manage carnal things. Example of the principle: **I John 4:20**

B. If we notice we lack in some areas we can know to guard and/or focus on those things spiritually (**Psalms 119:59-60** and **Revelation 3:2-3**).

1. You have to be honest with yourself when seeing where you may be lacking (**James 1:26**).

2. Don’t justify yourself if you find your’e lacking (**Psalms 36:1-4**, **Proverbs 16:2**, **Proverbs 20:6**, **Proverbs 30:12**, and **Galatians 6:3-4**).

C. Consider some applications of all of this...

1. Christians are supposed to have temperance [self-control] (**Galatians 5:22-23** and **II Peter 1:3-11**). If you cannot control something carnal [i.e. how much food is on your plate], even if not necessarily sinful, what should that tell you about you?
2. Even before we became Christians, we needed to count the cost (**Luke 14:25-33**)? If you cannot count the cost [i.e. how badly going into debt for something will actually cost you in the long run], even in things not necessarily sinful, what should that tell you about you?
3. We are not supposed to be busybodies (**I Thessalonians 4:11**, **II Thessalonians 3:11**, **I Timothy 5:13**, and **I Peter 4:15**). If you just have to be “in the loop” (so to speak) [i.e. have to know what someone posted on social media], what should that tell you about you?
4. We are not supposed to be slothful [lazy] (**Romans 12:11** and **Hebrews 6:12**). If you are never motivated to do things in the flesh that are necessary [i.e. **Proverbs 24:30-34**], what should that tell you about you?
5. We are not supposed to do anything through strife or vainglory (**Philippians 2:3**). What if you are a person that likes to argue and prove that you know more than others (**Galatians 5:26**)?
6. We are supposed to be a people that understand NOT to do things for appearances (**Proverbs 31:30**, **Matthew 6:1-7**, and **Matthew 23:25-28**). If you are caught up (balance here - modesty, pleasing spouse, etc.) in how you look, your house looks, etc.; what should that tell you about you.
7. We are not supposed to desire the preeminence (**III John 1:9-11**; cf. **Philippians 2:9-11**). If you have to be the first, the most important, the center of attention; what should that tell you about you?
8. We are not supposed to be haughty; proud people (**Proverbs 16:5**, **Proverbs 18:12**, **Isaiah 65:5**, and **James 4:6**). When you think you're above everyone else, what should that tell you about you?
9. We should have happiness in our lives (**Psalms 144:15**, **Proverbs 16:20**, and **James 5:11**). If you're never happy, what should that tell you?
10. We should be strong in the Lord (**Ephesians 6:10**). If you seem to never be able to summon strength, what should that tell you about you?
11. We are supposed to be content and not covetous (**Luke 3:14** and **I Timothy 6:6-10**). If you are never satisfied regarding lawful material things [i.e. always looking for that higher paying job so you can get this or that], what should that tell you about you?
12. Christians need to be strong and willing to step up [man-up] in adversity (**I Corinthians 16:13**). What does it tell you about you if you shrink in times of adversity (**Proverbs 24:10**)?
13. The list could go on and on. Things like preparation (**Matthew 25:1-13**), endurance (**Mark 13:13**), etc., etc.

III. Conclusion: If we cannot get the earthly [in principle]... **John 3:1-12**