

LIFETIME GUARANTEE

BILL GILLHAM



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To my beloved wife, Anabel

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I gratefully acknowledge the Holy Spirit, who worked through the Word and members of the body to teach me the truths contained in this book.

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Lifetime Guarantee



Preface

Bill and I were business and ministry partners for more than 30 years. We were also family for more than 55 years: he as the father, me as the son. When I came into the world, Dad held me. When he exited this world on June 23, 2011, I held him.

So, what's left? Of course, there are memories galore, things I will treasure throughout the duration of my days. But what about you? What is there for you from Bill's life?

In large part, you hold it in your hands: *Lifetime Guarantee*.

Dad was a brilliant man, versed in any number of subjects. When I was in graduate school, I was required to take a course on the subject of testing, including intelligence testing. Part of the class requirement was to administer what seemed like a million tests, so I tested anyone with a heartbeat, including Dad. He missed one question on the entire Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale.

But in spite of Dad's breadth and depth intellectually, in his heart he was called to one thing: communicating to followers of Christ what it means to live in Christ—victoriously!—in the Spirit, not after the flesh.

As a doctor of education, a university professor by profession, a brilliant man, and a man specifically commissioned by God, Dad brought all to bear in creating the collection of words and diagrams you are holding.

In the early days, when Dad and I were in private practice together, several times a week we would sit over lunch and review the definition of “flesh” in Scripture. It was uncanny how elusive the definition proved to be—lunch after lunch. After a while it became clear: The definition of the flesh is elusive because it is an essential component to practical victory in Christ. The last thing in the world God’s adversary wants believers to grasp is just that: an understanding of what they have been delivered from and no longer have to yield to as new people. In Christ, there is a divine alternative to life as usual, and the alternative is remarkable!

Through the furnace of counseling and the public forum of teaching, Dad honed his ability to communicate with simplicity and personal transparency the lifetime guarantee recorded for our consideration in Romans 5–8. After accepting Christ’s invitation of life while watching Billy Graham on TV in 1958 and then attempting to live, understand, and convey the Christian life in the intervening years, in 1987 Dad sat down and penned *Lifetime Guarantee*. It is his life’s work.

Perhaps I am biased about Dad and this book. It’s a fair criticism, and one I have carefully considered but reject. I’m certain my opinion of Dad is skewed, like any son’s, but *Lifetime Guarantee* is not a book written by my dad, per se. It is a book written by my partner. The theology in this book is profound. In fact, my name appears in the flyleaf as well, and I have had to defend the book on occasion. If anything, I was the hardest critic of both Dad and *Lifetime Guarantee*.

The book is rock solid! But as Dad would tell you, don’t take my word for it. Read the book. Then read *The Book*. Judge Dad’s pen against the divine pen. If *Lifetime Guarantee* is found lacking, find something else to read. But if you find it to be complimentary to the divine work, as many before you have, then I encourage you to embrace the pages that follow with heart, soul, and resolute volition as transformational, life-altering, and representative of Dad’s heart for you, his reader.

If you would like to read more about Dad, he has other books and resources readily available. If you would like to read more of the relationship Dad and I shared, you might start at www.PrestonGillham.com/Bill.

Dad signed any number of copies of *Lifetime Guarantee*. Many of those books, handed to him with trembling hands, were heavily marked, dated, tear-stained, dog-eared, notated, and held together with tape from repeated reference. May you find Dad's work equally compelling, and may the message of *Lifetime Guarantee* and my father's words speak life deep into the recesses of your soul.

Preston Gillham
Fort Worth, TX
November 2011

It's important that you read this...

Your Lifetime Guarantee

This book is written to the Christian who is struggling in his attempt to live the life of victory in Jesus. It is not a mere glimmer of light at the end of a dark tunnel. Rather, I trust you will discover, as I have, that these truths open wide the door to “the life [that] is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3).

People usually buy a book on marriage if they've got a problem in their marriage, or they order a book on self-esteem if they have a low one. But the problem they're actually experiencing is the basic question of how to make the Christian life work. We all have the same problem when you get right down to it.

As I've interacted with thousands of people over my years as a Christian counselor, the hurting person would typically tell me about what counselors refer to as “the presenting problem.” I got to where I would sit there with a sort of “hidden agenda,” knowing what the *real* problem was but, of course, listening intently and empathetically anyway. I began to see that what they were seeing as their problem was in reality but a symptom of the problem. They were looking for a way to eliminate the symptom, which in their view would solve the problem.

That simply won't work. We all agree that a person with a physical illness who concentrates on eliminating symptoms will have a similar experience to that of the person trying to hold a couple of dozen table tennis balls under water. Think of how absurd it would be to treat your

child's fever, which is a symptom of the presence of infection, by packing him in ice! That would lower his temperature, all right, but it would lower the kid, too, by six feet! The fever is not the problem; it is merely a symptom of the underlying trouble.

Doctors are trained to treat problems, not symptoms. The symptoms indicate to them the nature of the problem. Once this has been determined, they attack the problem, the *source* of the symptom. Once you correct the problem, many of the symptoms will improve or even disappear.

I've forgotten who said it, but I once heard a preacher say something like this: "Your problem is that you don't know what your problem is. You think your problem is your problem, but that's not the problem at all. Your problem is not your problem, and that's your main problem."

What *is* the problem? Are you ready for this? Here it is. The problem is that you have yet to discover that the Christian life is not difficult to live—it's *impossible* to live! There it is in a nutshell. God never intended that you be able to live the Christian life at all. The harder you try to live your life for God, the more frustrated you'll become. But hold the phone! That is precisely the position of weakness and desperation from which the Holy Spirit wants to teach you the reason Jesus came *into* you. Have you ever questioned why He didn't come under you, over you, behind you, alongside you, or in front of you? Jesus is the only one who ever *has* lived the Christian life, and He's the only one who *can* live it today—through you! That's why God can offer a lifetime guarantee of abundant living—and why most believers have yet to experience it.

It's no easier for an ordinary person to live the Christian life today than it ever was. That's the reason you're equipped differently from the average, run-of-the-mill individual. Christ now *indwells you*, Christian, to enable you to cooperate with Him to express *His* life through you moment by moment, not just when you encounter the situations you can't handle by yourself. That's the mistake I made. I tried to handle all the "small stuff" by myself and not trouble Him with it. The straw kept piling up on my back day by day until it inundated me. It took me so

long to wake up and smell the coffee! But I think I'm not much different from most people. We're all slow to learn.

What are your symptoms? Troubles in your marriage? You just can't hack it anymore? You're just worn out from trying? You've given and given until you feel as if you just can't give anything else? You're considering bailing out?

Maybe you just can't handle the problems on the job. You're trying to keep all the balls in the air, but you don't have enough hands or time, and they're falling all around your head and shoulders. Your boss doesn't seem to be sympathetic, either. Further, you can't quit because you couldn't get a better job. And once you found out that *Maranatha* means "Come quickly, Lord," you've been closing your prayers with it ever since.

Perhaps you go off to the convention and you wind up in the massage parlor or renting a porno movie in your hotel room—or something worse. You've promised God you'll never do it again, but you have. You've rededicated until your rededicator's worn out, and nothing helps. And you're a teacher or a deacon—or a pastor.

Maybe your attitude about yourself is, "If I could just become a different person. Someone I could learn to like and respect. But [sigh] what's the use? It's all so hopeless! I've tried the self-improvement books and tapes. They just don't work for me. I'm just different. I'd be better off dead. Everyone would be better off if I were gone. I can't stand myself!" And maybe you've even toyed with the notion of ending it all.

Dear one, it is no accident that you've picked up this book. This is your time! Our precious Lord wants to offer some beautiful, healing words to you from these pages. All that garbage listed above is one deep pile of (you guessed it) *symptoms*. Your problem is twofold: *Number 1*, you are trying to live the Christian life instead of understanding how to collaborate with Christ to live the Christian life *for* you and *through* you. *Number 2*, you are not comprehending how to appropriate your true identity as the new creation you already are *in* Christ. You are still attempting to face each day using your old ID pass.

I hear you say, "But I don't understand that." I didn't, either, when I was in my fix. But, I'm free from my fix now. He took me through

it, and I'm here to tell you it was a big one. God spells relief *J-e-s-u-s*. Wouldn't you know that appropriating some facet of Christ is somehow the root of the solution for every problem that any person can experience? The key to experiencing victory in Christ lies in learning how to literally "walk in newness of life" as described in the Word.

God has graciously shown me how to appropriate the life that is hidden with Christ and to explain it in very simple, biblical terms. I guess my strong suit is simple communication through practical life experiences, the nuts and bolts kind, to teach you how to see Christ glorify Himself through *you*.

Let me draw you a verbal road map to acquaint you with this book. It is designed to teach you *how* to appropriate consistent, rather than just sporadic, victory in Christ.

In Chapter 1, we'll look at how you have programmed your brain with earthly techniques for satisfying your needs for love and self-esteem—the greatest needs in life—rather than seeking these through Christ. These *techniques* are called "flesh" by God (see Philippians 3:3-6).

In Chapter 2, we'll see that the measure of success or failure you attain in satisfying your needs through earthly techniques determines your unique version of the flesh. Those who are successful cling to these; those who are not feel hopelessly unlovely. *Both* are flesh. In Chapter 3, I describe my own struggle for love and self-esteem to help you identify your flesh.

In Chapters 4 and 5, we'll deal with the fact that you were born a self-centered rebel, dead to God, but alive to Satan and the world. Your major goal was to get all your needs supplied *your* way. God had no plan to make something beautiful of *your* self-centered life, but to crucify it in Christ and spawn a *new* creature in Him who is now totally acceptable *to* Him.

In Chapter 6, we'll examine how Satan tries to deceive you. His goal is to trick you into using your flesh to get your God-given needs satisfied. He accomplishes this goal through your thought life, masquerading as the now defunct "old man."

In Chapter 7, we'll emphasize the reality of who you are as a

Christian. When you were born, your parents didn't say, "Oh, I hope he matures into a human being." *Birth* determined your identity. You *are* human. Likewise, when God caused you to be born brand-new in Christ, He didn't say, "Oh, I hope he turns out to be a new creature in Christ." Your *second* birth determines your *present* spiritual identity.

In Chapter 8, we'll consider the role of feelings. Feelings are wonderful when they line up with *God's* reality. The problem is that they also react to earthly circumstances. This is when you are most highly motivated to "walk after the flesh" rather than to walk in the finished work of Christ *for* you *in* the circumstance.

In Chapter 9, we'll see how Christ living through you is supposed to be the typical Christian experience. Many believers are deceived into thinking that trusting Christ as your life is an idealistic fantasy for them, something attained only by the spiritual elite. Quite the contrary is true. Such a life isn't only attainable; it is God's provision for *every* Christian.

In Chapter 10, we'll examine Bible verses that seem to refute this teaching. The Bible can be interpreted as teaching that salvation, security, and sanctification must be earned. But it can also be interpreted that these are *bestowed* upon the believer solely by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ. The correct interpretation is critical to your victory over the flesh. This chapter reveals what I believe is the key to "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

In Chapter 11, we'll discuss the need for "brokenness." Most of us have only a hazy understanding of what we're to be broken *from*. We must be broken from trusting in our fleshly ways. Often they have been so productive that God must allow suffering to come into our lives that our flesh can't handle.

Finally, in Chapter 12, we'll see that God's ultimate goal is to conform you to Christ's image, and we'll review how He does that. Snuffing Satan out will be easy for God when the time comes. But right now, God is using him by allowing him to attack your flesh. God's goal is that you be motivated to abandon your fleshly ways and turn to Him, learning to enjoy His lifetime guarantee.

I'm not a trained theologian, although that would be nice. I'm just


pretty much a plain vanilla guy who mows the lawn, marvels at how airplanes fly, feels he's gathering precious treasure when his pecan tree bears in the fall, watches football games, adores his wife and kids, and loves Jesus with all his heart.

God has freed me from a life of hostility and criticism toward my wife and sons; from lusting after anything in a skirt; from demanding that my sons be macho; from being torn by passions within, doubting my self-worth and at times my salvation, and yet simultaneously working like crazy trying to live a life of victory in Christ. After twelve years of struggling, I finally crashed and burned.

That was the best thing the Lord could have ever let happen to me. It was through my painful failure after giving the Christian life my best shot that God began to teach me the liberating truths recorded in this book. I know of no other book quite like it. If I did, I wouldn't have undertaken this project. I do not intend to toot my own whistle or claim to have the market cornered on truth. God has dealt with that. "I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished *through me*" (Romans 15:18, emphasis added). This book and the freedom I now enjoy through the truths it contains, I respectfully dedicate to my hero, Jesus.

I am also indebted to my son and partner in the ministry, Pres, for his technical expertise and wisdom in writing this book. He has also developed study questions following each chapter. If you want the contents of this book to become more than simply information, I urge you to work through these study helps as an aid to personal appropriation.

I love you.
Bill Gillham



CHAPTER 1

Why You Struggle

The following suicide note came to me in January 1986:

I can't stand living anymore. For an eternity, it seems, I have done little but exist. I am of no use to anyone, especially God. There is so much in my head that I know He wants me to do for myself, but I just seem incapable of willing myself to do anything—especially about my mental state. Suicide seems to be the only solution left.

I'm sure people will not understand. They will think that it was senseless to waste such a young life. That is exactly how I feel: It *is* senseless. But, since I *am* wasting my life anyway, I might as well do something! I will do the only thing I believe I can do—stop existing.

There is no way to explain this to people. No one can understand the torment a person goes through day after day unless they themselves have been mentally ill. No matter how much people say they love me and no matter how much they encourage me to pull myself out of this, it still doesn't help. I simply don't know how to help myself. I've tried other people's suggestions—including committing myself to a psych ward—and nothing helps. Over and over again the message is the same: "You have to help yourself." But no one can tell me *how* to help myself.

Do you see why suicide is my only alternative? What would you do? Where would you go if you didn't know how to help yourself? What would you do to stop feeling so helpless, to stop feeling like such a failure for not being the Christian you know Christ wants you to be? What would you do?

What would you do if year after miserable year you only seemed to take up space—space no one seemed to care about or notice anyway. I could commit suicide and literally not be discovered for weeks, maybe even months!

Christ said that I am to be the salt of the earth. I can hardly stand to do the bare minimum each day to exist, let alone care for anyone else. There was a time in my life when this was so different. A time when I exhausted myself with labor for others. But as time went by, I began to see that Christ wasn't enough in my life. I needed and wanted something more. I tried to keep working toward the goal of helping others, but I just got more and more drained until now I am mentally ill.

Christ said that I was to be the light of the world. My light has been reduced to a flicker. In fact, it is worse than flickering; it is now smoking from having just been blown out.

What a waste. Is there any hope? Christians would say, "Yes." They would point to a relationship with Christ, and I would agree if I could only see it again. If I could only feel it again.

What would you say to this young woman? Would you say she needs professional help? Some years ago that's what I would have said—before I began to comprehend the truths set forth in this book.

Exactly one year later, I met this dear lady at a seminar my wife Anabel and I were leading in Washington, D.C. The woman is now a happy, productive, relaxed Christian who praises Christ daily. In the postscript of a more recent letter from her, she said, "Just today I brought a woman into my home the doctors feel should enter the psych ward.

Who would have thought a year ago when I was planning my death that God would be using me to help someone who is so desperate?" And she signed off with a smiley face.

The Flesh

The truths contained in this book are precious, fine gold. I can say that without feeling I'm bragging because they aren't mine. I have merely been entrusted with them to pass them on to others. For you to understand them, we must proceed step by step, the first of which is to give you an extensive understanding of what the Bible means when it speaks of "flesh" or "walking after the flesh" (e.g., Romans 8:4). The suicidal woman's lack of understanding of this concept almost destroyed her.

In these first two chapters, then, I'll show how you have programmed your brain with earthly techniques for satisfying your needs for love and self-esteem—again, the greatest needs in life—*or* for believing yourself to be unworthy of either and thus living your life to keep love away because it makes you uncomfortable. Both of these techniques are do-it-yourself projects that God calls "flesh." I'll document this later from Philippians 3:3-9.

The term "flesh" has many meanings in the Bible, but our primary definition here is this: *Flesh refers to the old ways or patterns by which you have attempted to get all your needs supplied instead of seeking Christ first and trusting Him to meet your needs.* These patterns develop as you are growing up in your parents' home. And when the Holy Spirit begins the work of tearing them down, most Christians panic at the idea of losing them.

We can lump all Christians into three broad flesh categories: Yukky Flesh, Plain Vanilla Flesh, and USDA Choice Flesh. The person with the Yukky Flesh has been reared in an environment where, no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't get his love supply out of it by his do-it-yourself tactics. The suicidal woman at the beginning of this chapter has Yukky Flesh. She was nearly deceived into suicide to escape her feelings of low self-esteem. The Plain Vanilla, or average, Flesh person has been moderately successful, neither a roaring success nor a total failure

at getting his need for self-esteem met. The USDA Choice Flesh person is everyone's candidate for Mr. Christian. His high self-esteem is a result of his skill at milking love out of the world.

We're going to look at how all three flesh types get programmed into Christians. For economy's sake, however, I'll only describe in greater detail the structuring of Yukky Flesh. You can then apply how that happens to the development of the other two.

How Does God Spell "Relief"? (Step 1)

The Word teaches that God *is* love and that He loves us (see 1 John 4:9,10). God created humanity with a burning need for love. That's why you're sitting there needing love. If you didn't need love, you wouldn't need God. In fact, that's why you were created with needs, period. God is the supreme authority figure who has the market cornered on being able to supply all our needs. Thus, He created a bunch of people who have a ton of needs. This way, some of us would recognize our need and turn to Him through Jesus to get our needs supplied *His* way. God spells relief *J-e-s-u-s*. Fleshly people spell it *s-e-l-f* ("I'll do it my way").

The Problem: Lord of the Ring (Step 2)

When you showed up on planet earth in a little earthsuit two feet long, you drew a circle around yourself and declared, "I am Lord of this Ring!" Oh, you were willing to let God run the universe, but your attitude was, "I am god of all the turf inside this circle. I will control *this* area." Playing Lord of the Ring is what original sin is all about. Adam saw to it that you'd be a "born" loser, and you immediately began to demonstrate it. You knew nothing about God and His provision for supplying all your needs, so you took over His role. Since most of your other needs were being met pretty well, you looked to mom, dad, siblings, relatives, and later to peers to satisfy your need for love. That cut God out of His own picture.

How Little Children Learn About Themselves (Step 3)

A preschool child is the most self-centered creature God ever made; he thinks only of himself and his needs. This being true, *he learns only*

of himself as he interacts with others. When the dad of a nine-month-old baby points to his own nose and then to that of his teeny offspring and says, “Nose,” the little one doesn’t reason, *How interesting! Dad and I both have noses!* Oh, no. He thinks, *I’ve got a nose and it looks like that.* Totally self-centered thinking.

Who Am I?

Let’s consider what a little child learns who is born to a couple who had to get married due to his unexpected arrival. Let’s name him Charlie. His mom and dad were only sixteen when they were forced into marriage by both sets of parents. Charlie’s imminent arrival caused the newlyweds to drop out of high school in their junior year, which “ruined their lives.”

The little daddy had his heart set on being a college athlete and someday a football coach, but Charlie shattered that dream. It’s now three years later, and dad works at the local Dairy Queen for seventy-five dollars a week. The onset of football season is always agony for him as he meditates on lost opportunities and a hopeless future. He broods a lot over the “life sentence” he’s serving with no hope of time off for good behavior. Color him hostile.

The little mom had always wanted to be a sorority girl at her mom’s alma mater. Mom and her mother before her were both members. In fact, they both still wear their pins at homecoming. This was a “big thing” for her in her childhood, but now, at nineteen, she works at the local Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant.

Her friends come home from the university on weekends in their fancy new clothes, but she still has to wear her old high school wardrobe, which is now outdated. She listens to their exciting stories of campus life, and she sees their manicured nails, expensive hairdos, polished toenails, and so on—all the result of their being able to invest hours per week on their earthsuits. She is bitter and resentful. She, too, sees herself serving a life sentence for having made one fatal mistake. And to make matters worse, it was *his* idea.

The romantic side of marriage for her has long since dissipated. Sex is more of an obligation than a romantic oasis—“Just one more

thing I have to do for that louse who ruined my life!” It’s sort of like cooking another batch of chicken, only after closing hours! Color her despairing.

There are basically two sorts of folks on the earth: “ulcer-givers” and “ulcer-getters.” These two are ulcer-givers; they give them to other folks, mainly to each other. They keep a hot war going on constantly in their little three-room house. Right at the height of the battle (words, not fists), dad will unleash a verbal artillery salvo on Charlie: “It’s all *your* fault, you little bleepity bleep! If *you* hadn’t come along, I wouldn’t be married to this old bat! I wish you’d never been born!” And he storms out of the house in a rage, to the accompanying tune of his wife’s screaming that she hopes he’ll get lost and never be found.

The Results

Now, moment by moment, day by day, who is Charlie learning about? Is he learning, *Now, wait a minute, dad! I didn’t ask to be born into this chicken outfit?* No, he’s learning about himself, remember? He’s processing the situation like this: *It’s all my fault that mom and dad are so miserable and unhappy! If I were gone, it’d be better for everybody! I am the problem! I really do need love, but I don’t blame mom and dad for not loving me. If I were in their shoes, I wouldn’t love me either! Sorry, no-good bum! Anybody that would cause the very ones he loves the most to be miserable ought to be shot! I hate myself!* Obviously, he doesn’t verbalize it as I have done, but it’s all coming through to him at the gut level.

Charlie’s family environment represents the whole world to him because it’s the only world he knows. Therefore, he generalizes his attitude to this: *The whole world would be better off if I had never been born.*

The Plot Thickens (Step 4)

You have a mind and you have emotions, a “thinker” and a “feeler.” Your feeler responds to your thinker; whatever you set your thinker on, your feeler will react to it. For example, suppose there’s a rattlesnake on the floor coiled to strike you on the leg, and you see it poised. First, you will detect this stimulus with your mind, which responds, *I believe I’m in great danger!* Let’s quantify this on a 1 to 10 scale, where 10

is the greatest. *I believe I'm in great danger, and that's a 10!* Now, feeler responds to mind's belief like this: *I feel terrified, and that's a 10!*

Then suppose that on closer examination you detect that the snake is made of rubber. Mind says, *Why, there's no danger here; I believe I'm safe.* And mind immediately goes back down to level 1. But what about feeler? Does it go immediately back to 1? No way! Oh, it'll eventually go down all right, but it'll take thirty minutes to do so. It'll go down like a BB sinking in oil.

Now let's say that your mind's gone down to 1, and in ten minutes your feeler is down to about a 7. Then you open a drawer that's got a spider in it, and the spider scoots up your sleeve! Your mind goes from 1 to 10 instantly, and feeler covers the three points back to the top in one leap.

Generalizing from this illustration, let me pose a question. What if you are reared in a home where your dad is a rattlesnake and your mom is a spider? Or maybe it's your brother or an aunt or a surrogate, like grandma. They keep your mind *and* your feeler at level 10 most of the time. When they back off for a few minutes, your mind will go down to 1 and think, *Whew, relief at last!* But feeler only gets down to about a 7 when one of them does it to you again. Wham! Bam! Ten and 10! Due to this process, do you see that by the time you are five years old, it's been so long since your feeler's been below a 7 that it sort of bottoms out on 7? *Seven becomes the door, or threshold, below which your feeler does not go.* This is what happens to a child like Charlie.

Psychologists teach that by the time a child reaches age five, 85 percent of his personality is established and is irreversible. Unfortunately, those psychologists never heard of 2 Corinthians 5:17, which says that any person *in* Christ is a *new* creation, that old things *have* passed away, and that *all* things *are* new. What psychologists are observing is that kids' feelers get programmed, and this controls the person throughout his entire life. But praise God, we walk by *faith*, not by *feel*. There is a way out.

Does Your Elevator Go Clear Down to the Lobby?

Now suppose Charlie grows up and gets saved by accepting Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. God may do many glorious works to

erase some of his hang-ups, but He doesn't erase them all, and I find that in the vast majority of cases the adult who has had childhood experiences such as I have described has his feeler stuck on about a 7 or even a 9.5. It's been so long since the points below 7 on his emotional Richter scale have been exercised that they've atrophied away like arm muscles in a cast. After many years, they aren't even operative any longer. They're like a 1935 Buick that's been sitting in a little old lady's garage since World War II. It has all the standard equipment, but it sure won't run! Its parts are stuck. It needs to be freed up. And the Holy Spirit is the oil who can deal with the problem I'm describing.

The Beat Goes On (Step 5)

God has designed the human brain with memory banks. They're just like the First National Bank, only instead of being a depository for money, they are depositories for memories. Your memory banks have memory traces burned across them. These are habit patterns of how you *act*, how you *feel*, and how you *think*. The more you repeat these patterns, the more deeply entrenched they become. This is the usual method for their development, although a memory trace may become deeply imprinted in just one (often traumatic) episode.

Some of these memory traces are fine, such as your particular language pattern. These patterns were etched into your memory banks through your experiences, and your speech is now "controlled" by this. And the Lord doesn't get concerned about whether you sound as if you were reared in California or New York.

Memory traces are like highways, and the more you drive on them, the wider they become. Traffic flow is the key to development and maintenance. The more you spend your time in the pattern, the stronger it becomes. I suppose you're sitting there with several thousand memory traces ranging from eight-laners to cow trails. Some of them are okay, but some of them are sheer garbage in God's ecology. Let's color these green for garbage. These green highways were generated by the "old man" as he sought to get his needs supplied on planet earth using *his* resources and cutting God out of the picture. He (the old man) was his own god. He declared himself Lord of the Ring.

...And On (Step 6)

With that understanding, we can see that little Charlie, having been reared with rejection, *learned* that he was yukky. He was trained like a bird dog to accept as “truth” that he really *is* yukky. And now his feeler is stuck on a threshold of 8, having not been below an 8 in years. Digits 1 through 7 are nonexistent. They have atrophied away. As he becomes more and more aware of “who he is” (yukky), his feeler will become more and more programmed. This has become a monstrous, green highway for him. He feels yukky most of the time.

The “New Math”

As Charlie matures, he becomes more astute in his observations of the world, better able to objectively assess truth. The only trouble is that since his feeler is stuck on 8 and always has been so far as he’s able to recall, he now has renumbered his emotional Richter scale. Since 8 is as low as he’s ever experienced, he now calls 8 a 1.

Do you see, then, that Charlie can go from his 1 up to 10 five times faster than someone who’s playing with a full deck? He’s got only two points on his Richter scale. But he doesn’t *know* that. He just knows that he reacts internally (or externally) five times as rapidly as other kids do, and then he “objectively” concludes that he’s weird. I use quotation marks around the word *objectively* because Charlie will assure you that he *knows* he’s weird. He believes he has arrived at this conclusion objectively when, in fact, he has arrived at it by virtue of how he feels. This is *his* normal experience. He typically hates himself and wishes he were someone different, someone he could love.

The Noose Tightens (Step 7)

If you identify with this category I’ve been discussing, I’m not making light of you. I know it may be painful to have me dredging up all this trauma from your past, but trust me that the Lord has shown me some solid answers.

Now let’s grow Charlie up to adulthood. His feeler has been stuck for so long that its programming is as deep as the Grand Canyon. He has built his life around rejection. He rejects himself and others, being

unable to trust them. He believes that if he gets too close to them, they will hurt him or discover how yukky he really is and turn away from him. Thus, he has learned that it's safer to just keep everyone away. If anyone earnestly tries to show love to him, even his wife or kids, he will be skeptical of it. Since he hates himself, anyone who tries to love him must be either pretty dumb or else a phony.

What does Charlie do then? He runs tests on the love others offer to see if it will break down. When it does (and it usually will due to techniques he has learned to employ), something inside him seems to "fall into place." *I knew it! I knew it!* he thinks. *I knew she didn't love me! I just had this feeling. She fooled me for fourteen years, but her true colors finally showed!* Or if the lover's love does not break down, Charlie may actually drive the lover away, being unable to tolerate the love. He wants it, but he can't handle it. He's like a dog chasing a car and finally catching it: "What do I do with this?" He has never experienced a love environment before and he can't handle it.

At the other extreme, if Charlie ever tastes love, he may latch onto it like white on rice. I've seen more than one Yukky Flesh mother who smothers her kids, often producing lots of them "because I love kids." She then strives to keep them dependent on her so she can extract her love supply out of them, while simultaneously alienating them with her counterproductive methods. Thus she winds up rejected again and "proves" that she really is yukky.

If you try to be kind to such a person at Sunday school, she shows up on your front porch after lunch "just to visit with such a nice person." She leaves at 10:30 p.m., but not before learning how many days you have free this week so she can come over and "enjoy good Christian fellowship." Now she's sucking her love supply out of you. It will begin to drive you up the wall. Then Satan will work the false guilt number on *you* as you begin to resent her taking up so much of your time.

I've also seen some folks with the rejection patterning who are all peaches and cream one day and who will give you the cold shoulder for no reason the next. They are the vacillators; they jump from one of these polarities to the other without predictability. Once you see what's

happening to these dear people, it will become easier for you to discern the cause of these symptoms.

The Finishing Touch (Step 8)

Let's return to Charlie's childhood and use the rattlesnake illustration again to add the finishing touch to his emotions. If little Charlie *believes* in his mind that he is worthless to his parents, how will he *feel*? Worthless. When he matures, his feeler will be stuck, feeling worthless at, say, level 9. If he believes he's inadequate, how will his emotions get programmed? He will feel inadequate (say, at level 7). If he believes he's ugly, he will feel ugly. If he believes he's a loser, he will feel he's a loser. If he believes he's responsible for all the misery in his house (which is his *world*), how will he feel? He'll feel guilty.

Is Charlie guilty? No! He's not guilty of anything. His parents are doing him a great disservice. They are being used by Satan to strap unmerited guilt on their son. That's *false* guilt.

Emotions Lie

Here's a crucial point, so underline it: False guilt *feels* exactly like valid guilt (a conviction from the Holy Spirit). You can't tell the difference by how they *feel*. Your feeler will return the same verdict for both. Guilty! The jury is fixed as far as the feeler is concerned.

Because this is true, you have to look to the Word of God for discernment to determine whether any guilt is valid or false. The Word is the path to truth, not your emotions. Emotions are fine things, but emotions will lie to you at times; the Word of God never will. You've got to know whether you are guilty or not from the Bible. False guilt comes from the Evil One, working through the flesh (old patterns in the brain). Valid guilt comes from the Holy Spirit working through your spirit (see Figure 1.1).

You can confess false guilt through the night until sunrise and it'll never get better. In fact, it'll get worse! You will greet the dawn after your night of confession *feeling* guiltier because you still feel guilty.

You must never confess false guilt to God as if it were valid. You must agree with God's Word that you are not guilty and deny that the

guilt is valid. You don't deny that you *feel* guilty, but you deny that you *are* guilty. You confess, "Praise God! I am not guilty! Even though it is true that I have committed sins against the Lord, I have repented and confessed these to You, Sir, and I am forgiven! Praise God I am forgiven! I am not guilty! You said so, Lord! Hallelujah!" (Stage whisper: "Lord, I sure do *feel* guilty, though.")

(Stage whisper in reply: "Yes, your feeler's stuck, but you keep hanging in there on what *I* said about whether you're guilty or not. I'll begin to unstick it for you as you 'set your mind on things above.' I'll give you more points to play with on your Richter scale. You're going to grow to where you can tolerate this false guilt number and slough it off with truth.")

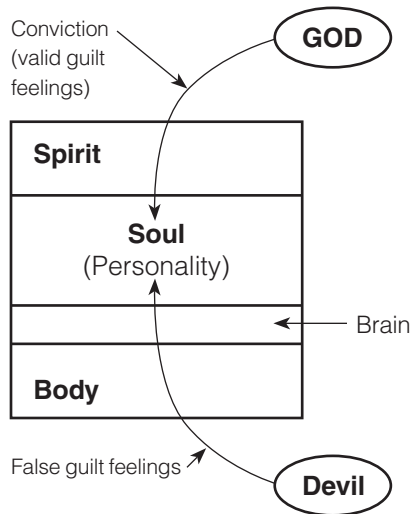


Figure 1.1

Yukky Flesh (Step 9)

Obviously, adult Charlie has a problem. He set out as an infant to get all his needs supplied by himself, doing it his way. But the deck was stacked against him as far as getting love was concerned. There was no way he was going to make it. So, while on this self trip, he gets rejected,

is trained to believe he's a loser, and thus learns to reject himself. His feeler gets programmed for non-love, and he develops skills in how to live with rejection.

This becomes his "turf." It's where he functions best. He'll gravitate to rejection or generate it, because it's on this turf that he's best able to function. However, since God created him to *need* love, he's miserable! He can't tolerate love or believe it's real if he does get it. His Lord-of-the-Ring approach isn't working for him. He's a very unhappy person.

Plain Vanilla Flesh

Consider now the average person (who may be reading this book). We'll call him Joe. He got a pretty fair share of love as a child. Oh, sure, he may have been rejected off and on by certain people during the course of his life, but all in all, he has experienced a pretty good measure of acceptance. Unbeknownst to him, however, the love he has received has not been received without his having paid for it.

People don't usually love you with no strings attached; you must earn their love. A child must perform up to certain standards in order to be "loved." Since he desperately needed love on a moment-by-moment basis, he was willing to pay whatever performance price was demanded in order to receive it. All things considered, he was pretty fair at playing Lord of the Ring. These techniques are very precious to him. He relies heavily on them to generate and maintain love from others and for self.

USDA Choice Flesh

Consider next a home where the dad is a moderately successful businessman, works fairly hard, has built his business by increasing its size, is rather perfectionistic in several areas, and has, on many occasions, philosophized on the merits of such a lifestyle to his son Sam. Dad's system of reward (praise) and punishment has been predicated upon these standards that characterize his life.

Now dad would probably insist that his acceptance of his young son is *not* based on whether Sam can emulate his dad's performance. But the youngster gets a different message. You see, he is living in a hostile world, peopled by peers who demand that he dance to their tune

if they are to “pay him off” with acceptance for services rendered. He begins to take for granted the notion that acceptance is available on this planet, but that it comes with a price tag on it. That price tag is performance. And he’s able to pay for it. He has enough talent, intelligence, looks, and whatever else is needed to earn love from people.

What has *he* learned? How has *he* been trained on this planet? Why, he’s a winner! He plays Lord of the Ring very well. Oh, sure, he’s lost a few in his day, but nothing that has been so devastating that he couldn’t cope and ultimately land on his feet. And through it all, he has learned to accept (love) himself. He takes for granted that he can beat Joe. And he can’t identify with Charlie at all. He may even feel compassion for Charlie and wonder why he can’t get his act together.

Do you see that *all* these men have cut Christ out of their lives as *the* source? They’re as lost as a ball in high weeds! It’s just that one’s god-playing trip is unproductive, whereas the others’ god-playing is “working.”

Walking After the Flesh

Now, let’s have them each accept Jesus Christ as Savior. After salvation, they will each begin to demonstrate different versions of the same problem—walking after the flesh. I’ll explain briefly now how this works and discuss it more at length in later chapters.

Charlie hears all about how much God loves him, but he can’t seem to “feel” the way he “feels” other Christians “feel.” It would appear on the surface that Joe and Sam are relatively free from this problem, but not so. They *feel* good. They feel loved, and since the techniques they’ve used all their lives to generate acceptance from others as well as self are still productive, they continue to employ them. Only this time they apply them to the church environment. They simply tack a few appropriate Scriptures onto their existing good feelings about themselves and “feel” they’re now walking in the Spirit.

“My strength is made perfect in weakness,” the Lord told the apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV). I love Ken Taylor’s paraphrase in the Living Bible: “My power shows up best in weak people.” Since Charlie is weak and knows without a doubt that he’s weak, he’s a super candidate

for God's strength to "show up best in." But how about Joe and Sam? They thank God daily that they're strong! They mean well, but they're flying on flesh power and heading for a flameout.

Here's the point to remember: *Now that these three men are saved, the Evil One will try to control each of them by working through their old patterning.* He'll try to use Charlie's flesh to *block* him from appropriating love and self-esteem through Christ's finished work for him. This was happening to the young woman who wrote the suicide note that began this chapter. The Evil One was seeking to destroy her through her Yucky Flesh. On the other hand, he'll try to deceive both the Plain Vanilla Flesh person and Mr. Wonderful into settling for a cheap imitation of the valid article, trusting in the same old fleshly techniques they have always used to generate acceptance from others and from self. They seek to satisfy their God-given need for love with the conditional (merited) love of people instead of the unconditional love of their Creator. In addition, they have built their own self-esteem on this same foundation. Now reread this paragraph, please. It's that important.

Conclusion

Perhaps you have been able to identify with one of these types of flesh. If yours is the rejection pattern, you must see that by striving to adjust to the world's demands so you can gain others' acceptance and accept yourself, you are still caught in the flesh trap. If, on the other hand, you identify more with the people who managed to "make it" through techniques found in the "self-help" section of your local library, you are no different from the man who identifies with Charlie. You just *feel* better. Your flesh is paying off with the world's (and, alas, the church's) acceptance, where his is not. Both positions are sin positions, failing to trust God to supply all your needs in Christ Jesus.

There is no such thing as Spirit-filled flesh, although you see a lot of teachers who are trying to market and package this product. How are you attempting to get your love needs met? *How does your method for getting acceptance differ from that of the lost man or woman?* You programmed these patterns into yourself during your childhood as you sought to get all your needs supplied, primarily your need for love.

This constitutes your unique version of the flesh. Do you still depend on it? The precious Holy Spirit wants to reveal to you what Christ has made available to you to liberate you from “walking after the flesh” to get your acceptance needs met in Him. Ask the Lord to reveal this truth to you from His Word as you study this book. We are totally accepted in Christ! It’s not necessarily a feeling; it’s a *fact*. It is to be primarily *believed*, not felt.

Questions for Further Study

1. God created you with a need for love. Why is this?
2. The ability to think abstractly begins to develop during the elementary school years. This means that children are basically concrete thinkers, primarily thinking only of themselves. Of what significance is this when trying to determine how your flesh was structured?
3. What kinds of things have you based your self-acceptance on, and through what means have you tried to get acceptance from others?
4. In what specific ways have you tried to play god and get your needs met your way?

Answers on page 235.