Take-Home · Session 2

Flesh and Spirit at War

What We Found

"Flesh" in Paul is not the body: several works of the flesh (envy, enmity, party spirit) are not merely bodily appetites. Flesh is the whole self bent away from God; the body is good and destined for resurrection.

Galatians 5:16 states victory as a consequence: walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the flesh. Grace leads, we cooperate.

Romans 7's anguish resolves in Romans 8's power: by the Spirit we put to death the deeds of the body and live. The struggle is normal and may be long; surrender is not the Christian's settled state, for grace gives real power for growth, repentance, and perseverance.

Ezekiel 36:27 promised the Spirit would cause us to walk; Paul's command assumes the promise has been kept.

Voices of the Church

> **St. Augustine** · *Confessions 8, summary*
> Two wills fought in one man, old habit against new love, until grace carried him across. The war is real and winnable, and it is not soul against body.

> **St. John Chrysostom** · *Commentary on Galatians, at 5:17, summary*
> If flesh meant body, blame for sin would fall on the God who made it. Flesh names the earthbound choice of the will.

> **St. Catherine of Siena** · *The Dialogue, A Treatise of Prayer (CCEL pp. 100-101), summary*
> In the cell of self-knowledge the soul learns both its poverty and God's goodness, escaping despair on one side and presumption on the other.

Live It This Week

This week's one thing. Name your most predictable daily skirmish and pray for the Spirit's help before it, not after.

• Optional: Read Romans 7:14 through 8:17 in one sitting.

Important. When you fall, return to the Lord immediately instead of hiding first.

Memory Verse

Galatians 5:16 · But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Before Next Session

Read Galatians 5:19-21 slowly, and Genesis 4:1-7.

Scripture this session: Galatians 5:16-18; Romans 8:5-14; Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 7:19; 8:12-13; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Psalm 1 · Catechism: 405, 1264, 2515-2516