

# Characteristics of Self

When you were born you were given a self nature which is at enmity with and independent from God (*Genesis 4:6-7*). As you grow physically your self nature learns to drink harm from the world around you then it actively seeks to destroy your spirit and build strongholds to protect itself (*John 3:6, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5*). These strongholds not only harm you but they also do great damage to those around you as well (*Genesis 4:8*). You see, your self nature is, at its very core, idolatry or worship of self and the exact opposite of Christ's nature of truth, love and humility (*Daniel 3, Romans 8:7-8*).

The self nature is non-relating and the essence of singleness in the spiritual realm because it opposes spirit at all times (*Jeremiah 2:2 then 3:8*). When you come to Jesus the self nature in you constantly wars with and opposes your spirit's relationship with God (*Romans 7:23, Galatians 4:29, James 4:1, 1 Peter 2:11*). To grow into relationship with Jesus you must learn to deal with and then eventually bring to death the self nature in you so that your spirit can flourish (*Romans 7:24-25, Colossians 3:5*). If you do this God will bring you into a deeper intimate relationship with Himself which is like a married state in the spiritual realm (*Romans 6:23; 7:4*).

It is very important to note that, unlike demons, the self nature can never be cast out of a person but can only be brought to death by cooperating with the Holy Spirit (*Romans 8:6*). The process of bringing the self nature to death is a daily journey the Holy Spirit leads us on and this requires constant obedience (*Matthew 10:38; 16:24, Luke 9:23; 14:27, Galatians 5:24*). The intent of this document is to help you recognize the evidence of the self nature in you and then help undermine and destroy the idolatry of self that you were born with (*Psalms 51:5, Romans 5:12*). The three main pillars that the self nature rests on are deception, immaturity and pride and therefore the main focus here. By recognizing these pillars of self your spirit can begin to repent of the self nature and grow in God.

**Note:** In the following document the words SELF, CARNAL, CARNALLY MINDED, FLESH and UNSPIRITUAL will be used interchangeably. All these words have the same base meaning in the Bible.

## 1. Deception

- a. **Self testifies of itself** – Flesh will declare of itself actions, words, thoughts and motives that cannot be independently verified or are supported by sycophants that flesh will inevitably surround itself with. There is no true independent verification of the claims flesh makes for itself. Typically these claims are based on exaggerations, little truth or outright falsehood (whether realized or not) because the plumb line for self is self and therefore arbitrary and open to great deception (*Proverbs 21:2; 27:2, Luke 16:15; 18:10-12, John 5:43, 2 Corinthians 3:1; 5:12; 10:12, 18*).
- b. **Self declares good things about itself (or bad if the need suits it)** - Almost without exception flesh casts itself in a positive or good light but can also cast itself in a bad light if there is self deprecating and low self esteem type pride in that person. Either way the focus will still remain on self so the aim of self promotion is achieved. Again with self

testimony, because there is no objective standard, the unspiritual person will declare things that others around it think is the standard for good behavior. If there are people around that are unspiritual the standard of behavior will get increasingly wicked to the point where good will be called evil and evil will be called good (*Exodus 23:1-9, Proverbs 17:15; 24:24 Isaiah 5:20, 23, Malachi 3:14-15*).

- c. **Self will believe lies about itself** – Over time as flesh testifies of itself and declares good things about itself it will begin to move in self-deception and believe its own lies. Once this has begun lies will be added to lies and a stronghold will develop where the carnal person will have to perpetuate more lies in order to support the stronghold of self deception. Active promotion of these lies to others is a good indication of the strength of unspirituality in anyone (*Isaiah 42:20, Romans 8:7, 2 Corinthians 4:2, 4*).
- d. **Self does not believe anyone else's testimony but its own** –The stronghold of fleshy lies, once complete, will cause self to disbelieve in any testimony except what supports itself. At this point the deception is so great that the carnal person will eventually seek to actively destroy anyone who carries any testimony except that which supports their own deception. If manipulation and witchcraft do not bring the offending person into agreement with the fleshy lies then the offending person's destruction will be the only thing that will mollify the carnal person's rage (*John 7:18-20, Acts 9:22-23 3 John 1:9-10*).
- e. **Self uses witchcraft and manipulation** – In order for the carnal person to maintain the illusion that they are in control or have control in the world around them, they will increasingly turn to witchcraft and manipulation to control others into doing their will. Typically these actions start with ham fisted words and expressions of emotion that will 'guilt' the other person into giving in but over time these skills will be honed to a fine art rivaling Michelangelo in depth. Frequently the carnally minded person will make a detailed analysis of their victim, making note of any and all points at which it can yank to get their own way. The unspiritual person will shamelessly use any and all information and possessions at their disposal to get others to submit to their will. If the victim becomes hardened to the carnal person's attempts at control then the carnal person will turn first to threats of violence and intimidation and then to actual violence to get their way. In all of these things the unspiritual person has to make things happen for self (*1 Kings 21:1-13; Nehemiah 6, Colossians 2:8*).
- f. **Self is fearful and fear based** – Carnal people have no objective plumb line for truth but use arbitrary lies to support themselves. These lies open the flesh up to great deception and fear. Because self is its own god it must preserve itself but the arbitrariness of life will expose that folly and soon unspiritual people will dwell and live in fear because they have no guarantee that they can preserve themselves. That fear will infect everything the carnal person is involved in and will prevent them from participating in many experiences. Eventually the unspiritual person will promote and be an evangelist for

fear thereby trapping and controlling other people. Fear is a very useful tool in the carnal person's arsenal of manipulation and witchcraft (*1 Kings 19:1-3, 2 Kings 19, Ezra 4:4-6*).

## 2. Immaturity

- a. **Gifts are self centered** – Giving and gifts from flesh always draw the receiver's attention back to the giver in such a way as to promote itself. Oftentimes the gifts are chosen by what the carnal person would like rather than an interest in what the other person likes or needs. When the gift is under appreciated, not appreciated or not received and self's response is usually petulance, peevishness, pouting or some other immature response then that indicates that flesh is present (*Genesis 4:4-8; 1Kings 9:10-13*).
- b. **Age inappropriate acts** – The unspiritual person is typically very wounded at their core and the age at which most wounding and trauma occurred will limit the actions they will engage in. The consistent nature of the immature behavior will betray the lack of personal growth in maturity. Flesh will be amazingly consistent in its immature behavior over time and it will be easy to predict this behavior with great accuracy when one is in contact with the unspiritual person (*1 Samuel 18:6-9; 25:3, 10-17, 36-37*).
- c. **Clueless to times and seasons** – Because the carnal person is stunted in their maturity and is promoting and interested only in their own selfishness it will be clueless to the times and seasons of growth in others around them. As such flesh will not recognize milestones of maturity in others because in itself it has failed to pass these milestones and is stuck. Often the carnal person will dismiss these important milestones as being irrelevant or unnecessary thereby betraying their own immaturity. In extreme cases the carnal person will actively attempt to prevent individuals from reaching these milestones and will promote their own immaturity on others (*1 Kings 13, Ecclesiastes 8:6-7, Malachi 3:13-15*).
- d. **Focus on externals** – Flesh cannot stand close scrutiny of itself because at its very core there is wounding and lack of security. Therefore the unspiritual person will often engage in words and actions that reflect a preoccupation with external rather than internal issues. Most of the issues will be of intellectual nature as the heart is often too messy for the unspiritual person to deal with. Flesh will take an intellectual tidbit and hold to that in such a way as to force others to submit to its belief or risk ridicule and other intimidating acts (*Matthew 23:5-7, 23-28, Acts 11:2-3, Galatians 6:13, Colossians 2:20-23, 1 Timothy 4:2-3*).
- e. **Nattering** – Since the carnal person is immature at their core and has no internal basis the conversations they will have will revolve around external issues (i.e. weather, politics) and will be primarily of intellectual nature avoiding messy issues of the heart. Many times the conversation will have no point or conclusion and anything that would

lead to maturity will be avoided at all costs, aggressively if need be. This senseless chatter can often expose deep hidden truths about the insecurity and immaturity of the carnal person but if confronted they will vehemently deny it (*1 Timothy 5:13; 6:20, 2 Timothy 2:16, Titus 1:10*).

### 3. Pride

- a. **Evidence of pride** – The unspiritual person will often give evidence of their prideful nature through secondary acts and words. What this means is that pride can be quite evident through direct boastful acts and words but also can be seen through attitudes that come out through seemingly innocent words and actions. The basis or motive for such acts and words is often prideful and if examined closely will reveal the pride that is coming out. Many times the right light has to be cast on the words and actions or the right situation has to be in place for this to be seen. One of the primary indicators that one has been in contact with pride, even though it has not been obvious, will be the awful feelings that will well up within you after such contact (*Psalms 10:4; 59:12; 123:4, Proverbs 8:13; 16:18, Jeremiah 48:29-30, 49:16, Ezekiel 28:1-6, Hosea 7:10, Obadiah 1:3, Zephaniah 2:10*).
- b. **Self needs a platform** – The carnal person often does not have the strength to dominate others simply through brute force or personal charisma and so needs a title, role or authority from which to dominate. Any form of role, title or authority will do but in order to tell legitimate use versus selfish use is to take the title, role or authority away. The carnal person can never lose that title, role or authority because they derive too much of their personal value from it. The carnally minded need to be needed and if they do not get that ‘fix’ they can, and will, resort to increasingly aggressive means to get it. Once the platform has been achieved the carnal person will maintain an almost maniacal control of it and use it to dominate and subjugate all around it (*1 Kings 12:4-11, Proverbs 29:2, 16, Matthew 20:25, Mark 10:42, Luke 22:25, 3 John 1:9-10*).
- c. **Self can't let go** – As in the previous item with flesh needing a platform and not letting go the flesh will never let go of anything that brings it comfort or value. Flesh has a hoarding mentality that must accumulate and an uncontrollable, immature need to show off all of its possessions. Flesh relishes in ownership and holds that ownership over anything it can control whether it is animate or inanimate. For animate, living beings the carnally minded will quickly objectify any person or creature so they can do with them what they want without any nasty guilt feelings (*Exodus 5:6-19, 1 Samuel 15, Isaiah 39:1-2, Jonah 3:10-4:11*).
- d. **Self cares little about anything but self** – The carnal person quickly turns any conversation or action back onto themselves to feed their own internal pride. Any

attempt to divert attention away from self will meet with stiff resistance up to the point of using force to keep the focus on themselves (*Genesis 4:23-24; 31:38-43, 1 Samuel 15:28-30*).

As you can see the self nature is a nasty piece of work and is, at its core, at enmity with God and relationship with Him. The self nature wants all the focus, attention and even worship from those around it and can be rightly called idolatry. If you desire to grow deeper into relationship with Jesus it is important to dethrone self and then bring it to death. Below are some simple, but important, steps that can be taken in cooperation with the Holy Spirit to help bring the self nature in you to death and your spirit closer to God.

1. First things first. If you recognized any of the above aspects of the carnal nature in yourself then you would be wise to repent of them. Repentance means to turn completely away from something and run in the opposite direction. If you confess to God and others the aspects of the flesh you see in yourself and then repent before God that will help bring the self nature to death (*1 Kings 8:46-50, 2 Chronicles 6:36-39, Ezekiel 14:6; 18:30, Luke 13:3-5; 15:4-10, Acts 2:37-38; 3:19-20; 8:22, 2 Timothy 2:25, James 5:16, 1 John 1:9*). True repentance will be evident by its fruit. If you don't see fruit in keeping with repentance it is not repentance but just remorse which does you no good (*Matthew 3:8, Luke 3:8, Acts 26:20, 2 Corinthians 7:9-10*).
2. The second attitude you need is humility and teachability which will undermine the pride flesh holds so dear. Adopting a humble, teachable attitude will go a long way to dethrone the carnal nature and bring maturity to the soul. After this you would do well to focus on the BE not the DO of life. The unspiritual person relishes in outward acts but if you cultivate an internal relationship with God you will eventually find rest from the 'doing' (*Proverbs 22:4, Isaiah 57:15, Micah 6:8, Matthew 18:2-5, James 4:6-10*).
3. Thirdly, silence and quietness before God will force the lies of the carnal nature to be exposed and hopefully repented of. Spending time in silence and quietness before God in prayer will allow you to hear God's perspective on your life and deny the carnal nature a voice. As you do this God will lead you down the path to His Son who is always selfless, humble and mature (*Psalms 139, Isaiah 30:15; 32:17, Philippians 2:5-9*).
4. Fourthly, you would do well to let go of those things around you which the carnal nature in you gravitates to. In other words if something is really hard to let go of then there is all the more reason to let go of it as it is an idol in your life. Do a mental exercise and consider letting go of possessions, pets, people and places. If anything comes back with an emotional response it may be a stronghold of the carnal nature or an idol that will eventually need to come down if you want to grow in God. Let the Holy Spirit guide you in how to get rid of these idols. Some idols are not as readily apparent as others so trust God to reveal and extricate those idols from your soul as you walk with Him (*Matthew 19:16-29, Mark 10:29-30, Luke 14:26-27, 33*).

5. Fifthly, actively pursue spiritual growth and maturity with the Holy Spirit and watch for the spiritual milestones that will be your progress check for growth (*Matthew 5:48, Ephesians 4:13, Hebrews 6:1, 1 John 2:12-14; 4:11-17*).

All references taken from The Amplified Bible®