

Doctrine of Carnality

1. The doctrine of carnality is found explained primarily in the *New Testament* epistles.
2. The apostle Paul first uses the term “*carnal*” to declare that by nature he is “*fleshly*” and “*given over to sin.*”
 - *Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*
3. The natural state of carnality is a state of wickedness because the heart of every person is initially hostile to the will of God
 - *Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*
4. To Paul being a carnal man was something to be ashamed of which is why he used the term when rebuking the wayward saints in the Church of Corinth.
 - *1 Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.*
5. Paul associated carnality with childish immaturity and worse.
 - *1 Corinthians 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*
6. The carnal Christian is a professing believer who is petty, selfish, angry, strong willed and acts no differently than a non-Christian. The carnal Christian is one who enjoys dividing the body of Christ.
 - *1 Corinthians 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?*
7. Satan is so subtle that he has convinced many Christians to believe it really does not matter how life is lived because the security of the believer is assured.
8. The current carnal Christian doctrine thus becomes a primary example of how *Scriptures* can be twisted so that men are destroyed.
9. The Apostle Peter warned of individuals who would study Paul’s letters, not understand them and so misinterpret what the apostle meant.
 - *2 Peter 3:16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

10. The modern carnal Christian doctrine as it is now called is a partial fulfillment of Peter's warning.
11. The only way to sort out true teaching from false teaching is to return to the *Scriptures* in context.
12. Here then is what the *Bible* conveys about carnality in summary form.
- First, it is possible for a Christian to act in a fleshly or carnal manner as the saints in Corinth did during the days of the apostles and as David did during the days of his fleeing from King Saul.
 - Second, carnality is not to be called good or acceptable behavior for it gives a false sense of eternal security to those who are living in open sin and who are hostile to the church.
 - Third, carnality is not presented in the Bible as a way to excuse reckless abandonment to sexual sins nor as a way to give people a false sense of eternal security because they once made a profession of faith and were baptized.
 - While many in Christendom believe the concept of someone being a carnal Christian condones an acceptable lifestyle the term was never meant to speak of social acceptance. The term was meant to convey guilt and shame leading to repentance.
13. A *carnal* Christian is nothing to be proud of. The reason why Paul used the term *carnal* in a negative moral sense was to communicate the shame associated with the word.
14. A person who has had a past interest in spiritual matters but now has no present love for the Lord (defined in terms of obedience John 14:15), a person who has no present interest in the daily and weekly life of the local church, and no present appetite for leaning Bible doctrine *may* be like the saints in Corinth or David and be full of carnality. But that is not the end of the matter.
15. What is also certain is that a person cannot persist in a state of carnality and expect to go to heaven. The security of the believer is not a doctrine that gives license to sin.
16. When a person in emotional revolt of the soul turns from the Lord, turns from the church, discards the *Bible* and recognizes no authority structure that is not carnality. that is damnation.
- *Matthew 13:18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;*

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.