

Chapter 3: Jesus Purifies Human Desires for Us

Exercise #1: Reflect on Matthew 3:13 - 4:11

^{3:13} Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ But John tried to prevent him, saying, ‘I have need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ ¹⁵ But Jesus answering said to him, ‘Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he permitted him. ¹⁶ After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on him, ¹⁷ and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.’ ^{4:1} Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he then became hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’ ⁴ But he answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’’ ⁵ Then the devil took him into the holy city and had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you’; and ‘on their hand they will bear you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’’ ⁷ Jesus said to him, ‘On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the LORD your God to the test.’’ ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹ and he said to him, ‘All these things I will give you, if you fall down and worship me.’ ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and serve Him only.’’ ¹¹ Then the devil left him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to him.

Historical and Cultural Background

- The biblical story contains a diagnosis of human nature: God created us good, but we corrupted ourselves. Hence, God’s desire to bring humanity back to a garden land with Him has, until this point, been thwarted by a problem internal to humanity. Symbols of washing in water (flood, Red Sea, baptism) had not been enough. Jesus was resolving this problem.

Adam and Eve	Noah & Family	Israel
<p>^{Gen.1:2} the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters... ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (God then placed humanity in a garden land.)</p>	<p>^{Gen.7:24} The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days. ^{8:1} But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided. (Noah then planted a garden.)</p>	<p>^{Ex.14:29} But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians... (Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years, because the first generation of Israelites gave in to temptations, before God brought the second generation into the garden land.)</p>
<p>^{Gen.6:5} Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.</p>	<p>^{Gen.8:21} The LORD...said to Himself, ‘...the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth...’</p>	<p>^{De.30:6} The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants... ^{Ps.51:10} Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ^{Jer.31:33} ‘I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it...’ ^{Ezk.36:26} I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you... ^{Mt.15:19} For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.</p>

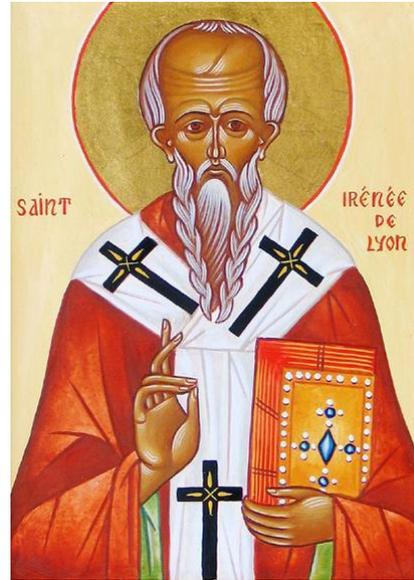
Exercise #2: Read and Reflect

Some of us may not have heard that Jesus came to save us from our fallen desires. Below are three quotations: Observe how these Christian leaders celebrated Jesus, and taught about him.

Discussion Questions

- Does anything surprise you about these three quotations?
- Compare these quotations to John 1:14, Hebrews 5:7 - 9, Romans 8:3, and 2 Peter 1:4. Why are Jesus' identity and human experience important for healing all of who we are?

Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons (130 - 202 AD), was mentored by Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who was mentored by the apostle John. The Gnostics claimed that Jesus' body was a kind of illusion. In response, Irenaeus wrote the first systematic theological treatise, *Against Heresies*, to explain why Jesus took on true humanity and a real human body. Irenaeus is also very important because he shows the awareness of the apostles' writings in the early church: He was the first to explicitly quote from all four Gospels, and every New Testament book except 3 John and Philemon.



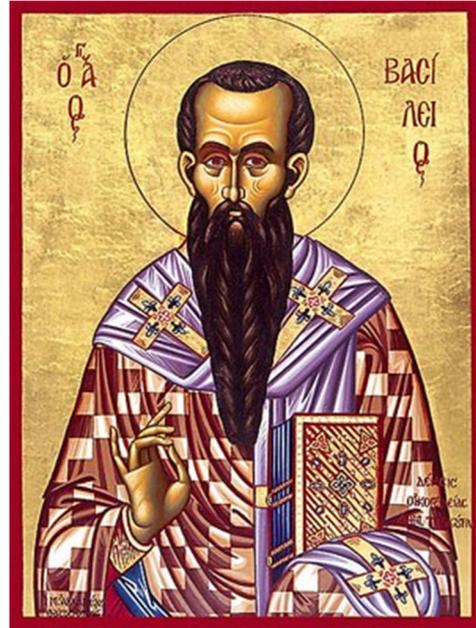
‘He caused man (human nature) to cleave to and to become, one with God.
 For... man... had sin in himself...
 For it behooved Him who was to destroy sin,
 and redeem man under the power of death,
 that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was,
 that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death,
 so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death...
 God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man,
 that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power,
 and vivify man; and therefore His works are true.’¹

‘So the Word was made flesh, that, *through that very flesh which sin had ruled and dominated*,
 it should lose its force and be no longer in us.
 And therefore our Lord took that same original formation as (His) entry into flesh,
 so that He might... conquer by Adam that which by Adam had stricken us down.’²

¹ Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies* 3.18.7

² Irenaeus of Lyons, *Demonstration* 31 emphasis mine

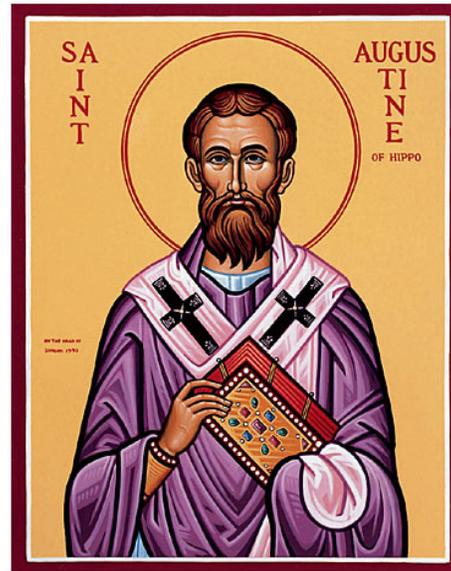
Basil, bishop of Caesarea (330 – 379 AD), was named one of the three ‘doctors of the church’ in the Greek East, honored as such in the Latin West. He was an influential theologian who supported the Nicene Creed, and opposed various heresies. He was also known for his care for the poor, his efforts to reform thieves and prostitutes, and concern for Christian intentional communities. While bishop, in addition to preaching every morning and evening, he built a Christian complex which included a poorhouse, hospice, and hospital. His greatest works include: *On the Holy Spirit*, *On Social Justice*, and *On the Human Condition*.



‘Our Lord assumed the natural affections to establish His real incarnation,
and not by way of semblance of incantation,
and that all the affections derived from evil that besmirch the purity of our life,
He rejected as unworthy of His unsullied Godhead.
It is on this account that He is said to have been made in the likeness of flesh of sin;
not, as these men hold, in likeness of flesh, but of flesh of sin.
It follows that He took our flesh with its natural afflictions, but did no sin.
Just as the death which is in the flesh, transmitted to us through Adam,
was swallowed up by the Godhead,
so was the sin taken away by the righteousness which is in Christ Jesus,
so that in the resurrection we receive back the flesh neither liable to death nor subject to sin.’³

³ Basil of Caesarea (330 – 379 AD, Cappadocia in Turkey), *Epistle* 261.3

Augustine, bishop of Hippo (354 - 430 AD), was named one of the four ‘doctors of the church’ in the Latin West. After deep personal struggle involving both the mind and sexual pleasure, Augustine gave his life to Jesus as a mature adult. He never mastered Greek, and made a few mistakes as a result,⁴ but worked tirelessly to preach and teach in Latin. He was a brilliant philosopher and speaker, defending the faith against many heresies. He served in Roman North Africa, in Hippo Regius. More than 350 preserved sermons and much of his writing remains. His greatest works include: *Confessions*, *City of God*, and *On the Trinity*.



‘For if the Son of God by nature
became the Son of man out of compassion for the sons of men...
how much more credible it is that the sons of man by nature
become the sons of God by grace,
and dwell in God in whom alone and from whom alone
the blessed can be made sharers of His immortality;
and that we might be convinced of this,
the Son of God was made a sharer of our mortality?’⁵

‘Christ’s deformity is what gives form to you.
If he had been unwilling to be deformed,
you would never have got back the form you lost.
So he hung on the cross, deformed;
but his deformity was our beauty.’⁶

‘Christ is the former and reformer of humans,
the creator and recreator, the maker and remaker.’⁷

‘The Teacher of humility became a sharer in our infirmity
to enable us to share in his divinity;
he came down to us both to teach us the way and to become the way,
and he graciously willed to make his own humility above all a lesson to us.’⁸

⁴ David Bentley Hart, ‘Traditio Deformis,’ *First Things*, May 2015; <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2015/05/traditio-deformis> ; see also Augnet: <http://augnet.org/default.asp?ipageid=158>

⁵ Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity* book 13, chapter 9, paragraph 12

⁶ Augustine of Hippo, *Sermon 27.6*, commenting on Isaiah 53

⁷ Augustine of Hippo, *Tractate on John’s Gospel 38.8*

⁸ Augustine of Hippo, *Psalms 58* (sermon 1).7

Leader's Notes

Exercise #1: Matthew 3:13 - 4:11

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think Jesus *wanted* throughout this experience? Gather ideas, impressions.
2. Why did Jesus *want* to be baptized? What does it communicate?
 - a. He's becoming God's true human being. Everyone else before him failed.
 - b. First, the surprising thing is that John the Baptist is baptizing Jews. Why? He was supposed to be baptizing Gentiles only! To say that Jews needed to be baptized, too, was radical. The second surprising thing is that Jesus gets baptized. Why did Jesus get baptized? What did it mean to 'fulfill all righteousness' (3:15)? Did he have sin to confess and repent of?
 - c. Jesus did not have sinful actions or thoughts of his own, but Jesus took on the same human nature we have, which was a corrupted human nature. Jesus needed to confess the sinfulness of that human nature.
 - d. Jesus wanted to publicly 'out' human nature. He wanted to show that it was corrupted. By doing this, he wanted to 'out' you and me, too! We have the same problem. No hiding it anymore. But he wanted to cleanse his human nature and transform it all the way through his life, death, and resurrection, so he could share his new human nature to be shared with us for our sakes.
 - e. Jesus is symbolizing his own death and resurrection. He is looking ahead to that, and being prepared for it. He is going to offer us salvation from ourselves by giving us himself!
 - f. What else could the Father have said to Jesus? I mean, if you're seeing your kids off to school, you give them a pep talk or some advice. This was the start of Jesus' ministry, and he would immediately go through a really big challenge. Why does the Father say this?? This will be answered later.
3. Why does the Spirit lead Jesus into *the wilderness*?
 - a. What happened in the wilderness before? Israel had been there, too, for 40 years, after being 'baptized' in the Red Sea. So the wilderness was part of Israel's foundational story. Notice that Jesus quotes *exclusively* from Deuteronomy [8:3; 6:16; 6:13], so we know he's thinking about that part of Israel's story. (Moses gave Deuteronomy to Israel while they were all wandering in the wilderness.)
 - b. What is the U.S. foundational story? What if Jesus sailed from England to Plymouth, MA on a ship called the Mayflower and started to deal kindly with the Native Americans (who are still there today)? If he intended to redo the U.S. but undo its sin, that's what he would do.
 - c. MAJOR POINT: So Jesus is redoing Israel's foundational story but undoing its sin. Jesus is the 'new Israel' who was going to succeed where Israel failed.
 - i. Illus: When Jesus came into my life, he began to re-tell my story and re-live my story to undo patterns of sin in my life. The most powerful instance of this was during the summer after my junior year of college. That was the time my parents finally decided to get their divorce. My dad's drinking had escalated to an alarming place. Now my way of dealing with my family, ever since 10th grade, was to leave. After I got my driver's license and my car keys, I was out of there. I'd go over to a park or to a friend's place to distract myself. I didn't even have a thought for my younger sister, who was four years younger than me, who I left at home to deal with the mess I didn't want to deal with. But that summer, I felt Jesus say to me, 'I want you to stay.' I said to him, 'I don't have the strength to do that. If what you said is true, Jesus, then you need to be here in me, living your life out through me.' And he did. My parents couldn't afford a lawyer, so they had me arbitrate who gets what. I remember going into that time saying, 'I can't do this!' But during that time, Jesus filled me with a sense of his love for me. And he gave me his love for my parents. I was able to listen sensitively to both of them. In fact, every other time before that, my response to them was, 'You have to stay together - for my sake' or 'You have to get a divorce - for my sake.' But I had never considered it for their sakes. Jesus helped me separate myself from my parents' marriage so they could make a decision that was best for them. Jesus gave me his love for my parents. He gave me his strength to stay at home. He gave me insights so I could counsel my sister with what she was feeling. At the end of that summer, I was talking to my friend Malcolm, whose family had gone through a similar thing earlier. I told him

what I was experiencing and how I was meeting Jesus throughout it all, and he said these words to me that I'll never forget: 'Mako, how can you be so other-centered at a time like this?' I treasure those words as a reminder to me of the difference Jesus makes.

- d. *Leader: Pick a story below that will resonate most with your audience. Or come up with another one.*
- i. Illus: Somehow, we know that in all good stories, the happy ending doesn't just come out of nowhere. It replays the mess ups people had done before. Like with Anakin and Luke Skywalker. How many of you are Star Wars fans? Do you notice that Luke repeats motifs from his father Anakin's life. In Anakin's duel with Count Dooku, Anakin loses his green lightsaber, but he also has Obi-Wan Kenobi's blue lightsaber. During the fight, a power cord is cut, which turns the lights off. So Anakin and Dooku fight in a blue and red lightsaber duel, with blue and red lights reflected in their faces. In that duel, young Anakin loses his right hand. Of course, Anakin later chooses the dark side and becomes Darth Vader. Luke Skywalker replays his father Anakin's story, but redeems it. He has a blue lightsaber, and with it fights Darth Vader, who now has a red lightsaber. So Luke and Darth Vader fight in a blue and red lightsaber duel, with blue and red lights reflected on their faces. They are in a dark room, and replay the same moves that Anakin and Dooku did. In that duel, young Luke Skywalker loses his right hand. So the stories parallel each other. But Luke later does not choose the dark side. He stays on the good side of the force and redeems his father, yes, but also his father's story. The victory echoed the defeats of the past, but reversed them.
 - ii. Illus: In *The Lord of the Rings*, there are a number of retellings of its own story. Bilbo gives Frodo the Ring on his birthday (they share a birthday). He does this freely, so Frodo does not become haunted by some memory of desiring the Ring. This is a reversal of Smeagol/Gollum killing Deagol to get the Ring from him, on the pretense that Deagol should have given him the Ring, since it was his birthday. Then, Aragorn retells his ancestor Isildur's story. He is the heir of Isildur, and has the same weakness common to all men, but refuses to take the Ring when Frodo offers it to him. Then, Gandalf retells Saruman's story. He stays faithful to his task as one of the Istari. And when he returns, he wears the white robes of the leader of the Council, because Saruman had betrayed that role. Gandalf says, 'I am Saruman. Saruman as he should have been.' All of these reversals happen because the defeats of the past must be overcome. The victories reverse the defeats.
 - iii. Illus: The Red Sox have a lot of history like that. The Red Sox won the World Series in 1916 and 1918, and then traded Babe Ruth to the NY Yankees in 1920. They didn't win another championship for 86 years. It was called 'the curse of the Bambino', i.e. Babe Ruth, and it seemed true. How many of you know that sad story? Whenever the Red Sox went to either the American League championship or the World Series, they lost through some weird fluke, each time. In 1975, the Sox lost to the Cincinnati Reds in game 7, in the 9th inning, after being ahead 3-0. In 1986, the Sox lost the American League playoff to the Mets. In game 6, Bill Buckner just had to catch the ball and throw it to home, but he let the ball go through his legs, and the Mets scored the winning run. They lost that game, then lost the next game and lost the World Series. In 2003, in the American League championship, the Sox were beating the Yankees in the 8th inning of game 7. They were up 5-2. But the Yankees won in the 9th 6 - 5. It did seem like the Red Sox were just cursed. No matter how well they did, something tragic always happened. But in 2004, as we all know, the Red Sox won the World Series. But they didn't just win, they won in such a way that they replayed many of the past events but redeemed them. They beat the Yankees, their arch-rivals, for the American League Championship after the Yankees had already won 3 games. And the amazing thing is that NO ONE has ever come back to win 4 straight games after losing the first 3. Curt Schilling pitched on a bleeding ankle because he had torn sutures because he had torn tendons. And in the World Series, the Red Sox beat the St. Louis Cardinals in 4 straight games. To add a surreal touch to the World Series victory, there was a total lunar eclipse that colored the moon a deep red color. The moon was red when the Red Sox won the World Series at last. The victory echoed the defeats of the past, but reversed them.

- iv. Happy endings don't come out of nowhere – they repair the failures of the past. Adam's race brought evil into the world. Adam's race will help to heal it. Why does it work that way? – Because God is committed to working inside the story. Not from outside it, because He would then overrule humanity's place in the story. He is so committed to us, in love and justice, that this is the way He brings it about. **PRACTICAL APPLICATION:** How do you think Jesus would re-live your life story with you, and heal you and transform you?
4. What do you think Jesus *wanted* during this time of temptation?
 - a. Just to be somewhere else! Fishing? Lounging around? Back in heaven???
 - b. Food!
 - c. Power? Or an easy road to power? He seems to be thinking about rescuing the nations from the power of Satan. So he might have been tempted to take an easy road to get there.
5. How does the devil appeal to Jesus?
 - a. (if people ask) Is there really a devil? A personal incarnation of evil? Well, although it's hard for skeptical people in the West to believe that, the rest of the world believes in a spiritual realm and definitely evil spiritual beings. Adam and Eve, as the original rulers of creation, allowed the serpent (the devil) to be influential in the world through their own sin. If people want to talk more about this, save it for later.
 - b. The 1st and 2nd times, the devil tries to get Jesus to question his identity, to try to prove it again. The last thing Jesus heard was 'You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' That is the 'word of God' that Jesus last heard. He trusts in that statement.
 - c. Satan wants Jesus to be proof-seeking. He wants to set the terms for what it means to be the Son of God. He wants Jesus to get God to prove it. If he can introduce insecurity into Jesus' heart, then Jesus will start to not take God's word about his identity as a given.
 - i. It's like if we believe that God will only bless us if we succeed at school (as a premed, or whatever). Sometimes you emerge through it only by releasing your idea of 'specific calling' from your identity in Christ. God is still good, still loves you, and could still use you in a plethora of other ways. It is dangerous to want evil things. It is equally dangerous to want good things for evil reasons. Testing God is from the devil.
 - d. On the 3rd time, he just makes a naked power offer. Of course, if Jesus accepted that, he would have become a 'son of Satan.'
 - e. What is each temptation about?
 - i. Jesus knew he would not always have bread to give, but would always have a word to speak. We as his followers would also find ourselves in that position. And while we are not to ignore people's physical needs, at the same time our mission is most fundamentally to declare a message and give our lives for others, as Jesus did, and we are not to be embarrassed when we have words but no bread (e.g. Jn.6:22 – 51). Jesus was not embarrassed by this. He did not take this as a sign of God's absence.
 - ii. Second, Jesus refused to lead men and women out of an ego-boosting posture. Even efficiency was not the most important criterion for Jesus, because efficiency tends to enshrine power, celebrity, and wealth to accomplish an end supposedly superior to those means. But in the process, efficiency always becomes its own god, even when it promises to point to another. For example, someone might argue that we should first evangelize powerful, attractive, rich people because they will have more influence over other people than do disenfranchised, lowly, and poor people. Put so bluntly, the elitism and enshrining of power, celebrity, and wealth become obvious. Yet most of the time, we only think such things quietly to ourselves, afraid to face the absurdity of our own thinking. However, Jesus' effectiveness and that of his people does not ultimately depend on power, celebrity, and wealth.
 - iii. Third, Jesus knew that his mission was radically different from what Satan suggested. Jesus came to liberate humanity out of Satan's dominion and place them rightly under the Father's good reign. To allow humanity to continue in subjection to Satan or some other principle was contrary to God, even if it meant suffering. Jesus would indeed go to the cross to accomplish God's unswerving purpose. Jesus would not deviate from the course set out for him. We must not deviate either. Before we are students, or employees, or

citizens of a country, we are missionaries. Before we are anything else at all, we are missionaries sent by Jesus, continuing his mission to the nations.

6. How does Jesus resist the false desires?
 - a. He receives the Father affirmation of his identity as the Son.
 - b. Why does he want the affirmation of the Father above all else? Because that is who he is. He IS the Son of the Father.
 - c. **DISCUSS:** Where do you find your sense of identity? Accomplishments? Relationships? It's easy to look around for other affirmation, especially if we feel like the Father's voice is not very affirming. If we don't receive our identity from God by relying on Jesus do that for us, we will basically run around asking other people to tell us who we are. *This is what leads to us making the same mistakes over and over.*
 - d. **DISCUSS:** Who else do we allow to tell us who we are?
7. Possible Applications: Jesus in your story
 - a. How has Jesus been retelling your story *and reshaping your desires so they match his desire to honor his Father?*
 - b. From what you know of Jesus, how do you think he might want to retell your story? *What desires do you think he'd want to reshape?*
 - c. (for non-Christians) How else do you think the corruption in human nature and human desires can be dealt with, except through Jesus? Here's a comparison of ways that different belief systems have of dealing with human evil
 - i. Change external circumstances, make better laws, let each person work off the evil (through good deeds): (Rabbinic Judaism, Islam, Mormonism)
 - ii. See good and evil as one continuous whole; have no desire for change, but only another world; have no attachments to this life (Hinduism, Zen Buddhism)
 - iii. Transform human nature itself and then offer people a new, fresh, purified humanity. Only with Jesus do we see God someone actually transforming human nature itself. Let's see how God does this.

Exercise #2: Quotations

Discussion Questions

1. Does anything surprise you about these three quotations?
 - a. How insistent they are that Jesus took on a humanity that was corrupted, deformed, etc.
 - b. There's a healing purpose to Jesus. Not a payment for guilt in these passages.
 - c. Jesus shared in our diseased humanity, that we might share in his healed humanity.
2. Compare these quotations to John 1:14, Hebrews 5:7 - 9, Romans 8:3, and 2 Peter 1:4. Why are Jesus' identity and human experience important for healing all of who we are?
 - a. John 1:14: ¹⁴ "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."⁹
 - b. Hebrews 5:7 - 9: ⁷ "In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety."⁸

⁹ 'Flesh' (Greek *sarx*, Jn.1:14) was a very negative term to describe humanity in Greco-Roman and Jewish contexts. For example, Paul wrote, 'I know that no good dwells in me, that is in my **flesh**' (Romans 7:18). The Hellenistic Jewish commentator Philo Judaeus wrote: 'It is impossible for the Spirit of God to remain and to pass all its time, as the law-giver himself shows. "For," says Moses, "the Lord said, My Spirit shall not remain among men forever, because they are **flesh**.'" For, at times, it does remain; but it does not remain forever and ever among the greater part of us; for who is so destitute of reason or so lifeless as never, either voluntarily or involuntarily, to conceive a notion of the all good God. For, very often, even over the most polluted and accursed beings, there hovers a sudden appearance of the good, but they are unable to take firm hold of it and to keep it among them; for almost immediately, it quits its former place and departs, rejecting those inhabitants who come over to it, and who live in defiance of law and justice, to whom it never would have come if it had not been for the sake of convicting those who choose what is disgraceful instead of what is good.' (Philo, 'On the Giants,' *Commentary on Genesis*, V.19 - 21) Therefore, John chose the most negative way to say this. He could have said, 'The Word became a body (Greek *soma*)' or, 'The Word became a man (Greek *anthropos*)' but he does not use those other words. He chose the word that connotes the tainted nature of humanity.

Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. ⁹ And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation...'

- c. Romans 8:3: 'For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.'
 - d. 2 Peter 1:4: 'For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.'
3. Irenaeus:
- a. This is a very significant passage in Irenaeus. In it, he insists that Jesus came to resolve a problem within human nature itself, and offer back to us his renewed humanity. The Word of God had to partake of the same human nature ('man, with sin in himself') that we all share, to renew it and save it. He did not start a different type of human being, because that would have been of no help to us!
 - b. Similar to John 1:14 because of the negative coloration of the word 'flesh.'
4. Basil of Caesarea
- a. Jesus took the same 'natural affections... all the affections derived from evil that besmirch the purity of our life' which we have. But he rejected them as unworthy of him. He quotes Romans 8:3, 'in the likeness of flesh of sin' and Basil is pointed about it being not just 'of flesh,' but 'of flesh of sin.' So he was able to take the sin away from our flesh, and give flesh (humanity) that is healed of death and sinfulness. Wow!
 - b. So he wants to change our natural affections, the ones 'derived from evil'? Yes!!
 - c. This also makes us think of John 1:14 and Hebrews 5:7 - 9 together, and the struggle to become perfect. Jesus perfected his humanity in his resurrection, finally.
5. Augustine
- a. He is very poetic, getting across the same idea.
 - b. He stresses 'sharing.' He shared in our humanity, that we might share in his divinity. He shared in our deformity, that we might share in his beauty.
 - c. It is closest to 2 Peter 1:4, which stresses being a partaker.
6. How does this answer what we studied in Romans 7:7 - 25? (Chapter 1 of this curriculum?)
- a. Paul wanted someone to save him from the 'flesh' or 'sin that indwells' him. He wanted deliverance from that.
 - b. Jesus saves us, from what? From evil desires. In these passages, Jesus comes to heal our desires, reshape them according to his own desires!! True human desires are defined by Jesus alone. Not by us. Not by academics studying human nature, the human brain, or human genes, and so on.
 - c. God is a healer. A surgeon. He is very much against the disease in human nature. And we are responsible to turn ourselves over to Him.
 - d. Our healing is modeled after Jesus' life. He provides us with his power and love. But we must also follow in his footsteps. This will be challenging!