

## **"Make No Provision for the Flesh"**

Frank Himmell

How do we win the fight against fleshly lusts? Several answers come to mind. Pray. Fill your heart with God's word. Fill your time with spiritually beneficial activities. Associate with people who will influence you for good. In Romans 13:14 Paul identifies another key: "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

To make provision for something is to think ahead, to make plans, to provide opportunities. Paul's word literally means forethought. Its other occurrence is in Acts 24:2, where the lawyer Tertullus praised Felix, the governor, because through his "providence" beneficial reforms were occurring throughout the land.

Obviously, making no provision for the flesh requires that we not plan ways of fulfilling illegitimate carnal lusts. But it goes beyond that. It requires that we think ahead and, when possible, avoid even the opportunity for such conduct. Here is the principle in action.

Teens, when you are planning a date, make no provision for fleshly lusts. Do not go to movies that glorify sensuality and fornication, and thereby arouse desire. Stay away from dances for the same reason. Be selective about parties; skip those where alcohol is featured. Avoid dark, lonely sites that provide the occasion for unchaste behavior.

Parents, when arranging your homes, make no provision for fleshly lusts. It may make me unpopular in some circles to say so, but when you allow your kids to have televisions, phones, and internet-connected computers in their bedrooms, you are providing a world of possibilities for wrong conduct.

Families, when you are purchasing in-home entertainment, make no provision for fleshly lusts. If you don't subscribe to cable or satellite channels which air nudity and "adult" content, there will be no opportunity for any family member to watch it. If you refuse to listen to profanity, you will be much less likely to speak it.

Shoppers, when you are choosing your clothes, make no provision for fleshly lusts. Plenty of modest choices exist for those concerned about such things. Err on the side of caution. Don't underestimate the appeal of exposed or accentuated flesh.

Brethren, when you place membership at a congregation, make no provision for fleshly lusts. Realize up front that you won't always get your way, that others may be more talented than you, that we are all working together for the same cause. Remind yourself of that often and give thanks for your brethren.

If you want to know what this last point is doing here, read Paul's illustrations of fleshly conduct in Romans 13:13. Let's not deceive ourselves into thinking that strife, jealousy, and bickering are any less carnal or any less sinful than drunkenness or fornication. No matter the sin, make no provision for fleshly lusts.