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A Re-Envisioned Theology of Repentance and Entire Sanctification:
How a Natural Reading of Σάρξ (*Sarx*) Unlocks an Unexpected Friend of Holiness

A Project Report

Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

By

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Abstract

The Wesleyan/Holiness movement—and, for the purposes of this study, particularly the Church of the Nazarene—was birthed as a result of a powerfully defining spiritual experience that has been termed “Entire Sanctification.” The language is rooted in the theology of John Wesley¹²³ and has developed from there to be understood as a point in time where the entire being is surrendered, the individual is filled with the Holy Spirit, and consequently enters into a state of full devotion to God.⁴ As the doctrine has been developed over the years, this author has observed that it has taken on a perfectionism that is beyond the scope of the actual doctrine. It has been perceived as bringing people to a state of “Christian perfection” (a phrase John Wesley uses⁵ but seems to have been augmented and distorted) that manifests itself in one of two ways: 1) a spiritual paranoia that collapses into condemnation when there is anything in the believer’s life that is not right, whether that be sin proper or a flaw in character or judgment, or 2) a spiritual arrogance that ignores anything that is not right in the believer’s life, whether that be sin proper or a flaw in character or judgment, on the basis that the sanctified believer has been cleansed of sin and the sin nature.⁶

¹ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, First Printing, Unabridged Edition (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1966), 41–47.

² Wesley spends this seventeenth section of his tract answering questions related to sanctification. Wesley asserts that, since the Apostle Paul uses the term to refer to justification, his use of the term should always “[add] the word *wholly, entirely, or the like*” (p. 43).

³ J. Kenneth Grider, *Entire Sanctification: The Distinctive Doctrine of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1980), 12.

⁴ Grider, 11.

⁵ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 9.

⁶ Grider, *Entire Sanctification*, 119–24.

This author asserts that one of the sources of this reticence is the way Romans 7—8 are interpreted. Specifically, the Greek term Paul uses to describe the life that is contrary to the ways of the Spirit (σάρξ - *sarx*) is at times translated "sinful nature" (NLT) or some similar expression is footnoted (as does the NIV after Romans 8:3—"In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.") A more natural gloss of the term is simply "flesh"⁷ or "people; human being."⁸ If one reads Paul as addressing life according to the literal "flesh"—"the locus where we find ourselves"⁹—over against life according to the Spirit, then space is made for victorious Christian living wherein weaknesses, flaws, and even sins can be joyfully admitted and repented of while maintaining spiritual integrity.

As a part of the study, Nazarene pastors across the contiguous United States were surveyed concerning their view of the term as well as their personal and corporate practice of repentance. Drawing inferences from this data, along with an exegetical analysis of Romans 7—8, a proposal for interpretation and practical implementation is offered.

The author's conviction and hope are that this re-envisioned theology of repentance and entire sanctification can contribute to developing healthy, maturing, humble disciples of Jesus in Wesleyan/Holiness contexts.

⁷ Henry George Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1 (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁸ J. P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989).

⁹ Fredrick J. Long, "Email from Dr. Long Concerning Paul's Use of Σάρξ," March 19, 2022.

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extra work to help fund it. She managed other items in the home so that I could study and write. She prioritized my writing more than I did! She believed in me. She believed in this project and what God might say through it. And most importantly, she believed (and believes) in the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to transform lowly sinners like us into the holy people of God. She has listened, learned, challenged, lived out, and persevered for the sake of the Gospel and, by association, this project. Where would I be without my wife, Verna? I have a pretty good idea where I might be...but I resist the urge to say it.

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Epigraph



Unexpected

By Karah Lain

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT DESIGN

Project Orientation

Problem Statement

The Wesleyan/Holiness movement—and, for the purposes of this study, particularly the Church of the Nazarene—was birthed as a result of a powerfully defining spiritual experience that has been termed “*entire sanctification*.” The language is rooted in the theology of John Wesley¹⁰ and has developed from there to be understood as a point in time where the entire being is surrendered, the individual is filled with the Holy Spirit, and consequently enters into a state of full devotion to God.¹¹ As the doctrine has been developed over the years, it can be observed that it has taken on a perfectionism that is beyond the scope of the actual doctrine. It has been perceived as bringing people to a state of “Christian perfection” (a phrase John Wesley uses¹² but seems to have been augmented and distorted) that manifests itself in one of two ways: 1) a spiritual paranoia that collapses into condemnation when there is anything in the believer’s life

¹⁰ John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, First Printing, Unabridged Edition (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1966), 41–47; (Wesley spends this seventeenth section of his tract answering questions related to sanctification. Wesley asserts on p. 42 that, since the Apostle Paul uses the term to refer to justification, his use of the term should always “[add] the word wholly, entirely, or the like.”); J. Kenneth Grider, *Entire Sanctification: The Distinctive Doctrine of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1980), 12.

¹¹ Grider, *Entire Sanctification*, 11.

¹² Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 9.

that is not right, whether that be sin proper or a weakness in character or judgment, or 2) a spiritual arrogance that ignores anything that is not right in the believer's life, whether that be sin proper or a weakness in character or judgment, on the basis that the sanctified believer has been cleansed of all sin.¹³ As a result, repentance in the life of the sanctified believer is viewed as a questionable on-going practice.

A central argument of this dissertation is that one of the sources of this reticence is the way Romans 6—8 is interpreted. Specifically, the Greek term Paul uses to describe the life that is contrary to the ways of the Spirit (σάρξ, *sarx*) is at times translated "sinful nature" (NLT) or some similar expression is footnoted (as does the NIV after Romans 8:3—"In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.") A more natural gloss of the term is simply "flesh"¹⁴ or "people; human being."¹⁵ If one reads Paul as addressing living according to the *flesh*—understood simply as "the locus where we find ourselves"¹⁶ or the human condition—over against living according to the Spirit, then space is made for a victorious Christian life wherein weaknesses, flaws, and even sins can be joyfully admitted and repented of while maintaining spiritual integrity.

My conviction and hope are that this improved understanding can contribute to developing healthy, maturing, humble disciples of Jesus in the Church of the Nazarene in particular and the Wesleyan/Holiness movement in general.

¹³ Grider, *Entire Sanctification*, 119–24.

¹⁴ Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*.

¹⁵ Louw and Nida, *Louw-Nida*.

¹⁶ Long, "Email from Dr. Long Concerning Paul's Use of Σάρξ," March 19, 2022.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following key definitions are set forth:

Repentance. The *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene defines *repentance* in Article of Faith VIII: “Repentance, which is a sincere and thorough change of the mind in regard to sin, involving a sense of personal guilt and a voluntary turning away from sin, is demanded of all who have by act or purpose become sinners against God.”¹⁷ (See Appendix A for full text.) There are a few significant components to this definition. First of all, according to Nazarene doctrine, it is a change of mind in regard to sin. Secondly, it involves guilt. Thirdly, it is a voluntary action. Finally, it is an activity of sinners. This combination results in a theology of repentance that seemingly functions exclusively in relation to acts of known sin by sinners and is marked by guilt. Although this term, even outside of the Nazarene context, often carries with it a sense of sorrow and remorse, I am using the term in its much more basic sense of simply *changing one’s mind* based on the assertion that the terms translated “repentance” fundamentally mean “to turn away from something.”¹⁸

James D. G. Dunn states that “in the OT two words are regularly translated ‘repent’ or some near equivalent—*nāḥam* (‘be sorry, change one’s mind’) and *šûb* (in the sense, ‘turn back, return’)”, the former regularly used in relation to God “where it is often said that God ‘repents of evil’ proposed or initiated.”¹⁹ Joseph P. Healey, writing in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*

¹⁷ David P. Wilson et al., eds., *Church of the Nazarene Manual 2017-2021*, Kindle Edition (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2017).

¹⁸ A. Scott Moreau, *Effective Intercultural Communication: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2014), 258.

¹⁹ J. D. G. Dunn, “Repentance,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. R. W. Wood (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

affirms that “the basic Hebrew word which is used to express this change is *šwb*, the root of which means simply ‘to turn.’”²⁰

Turning to the New Testament, Dunn points out that “in the NT the words translated ‘repent’ are *metanoēō* and *metamelomai*. In Gk. they usually mean ‘to change one’s mind’, and so also ‘to regret, feel remorse’ (i.e. over the view previously held).”²¹ In the NT section of the “*Repentance*” article in the Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary, Luter affirms this idea when he states that the “core idea of these words is a ‘change of mind’, citing the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*.²² Similarly, N. T. Wright submits that when Jesus called people to repent, he was calling them “to turn back from the ways they were going.”²³ Again, although repentance can, and often does, have an element of remorse, the fundamental idea is a change of mind and direction.

The implication for this study is that repentance can become a tool for maturing in holiness. Healey again asserts that our journey of faith requires constant attention, inferring that repentance is the means of maintaining a relationship with God throughout that journey.²⁴ Foster

²⁰ Joseph P. Healey, “Repentance: Old Testament,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

²¹ Dunn, “Repentance.”

²² A. Boyd Luter, Jr, “Repentance: New Testament,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

²³ N. T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, *The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (London : Grand Rapids, MI: SPCK ; Zondervan Academic, 2019), 188.

²⁴ Healey, “Repentance: Old Testament.”

would agree: salvation requires a “means for transforming the human personality into Christlikeness.”²⁵ That means is repentance, a change of mind.

Entire Sanctification. *Entire sanctification* is understood in this paper as it is defined in the Nazarene Articles of Faith delineated in the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene. The full statement is found in Article X (“Christian Holiness and Entire Sanctification”) and is augmented as it interfaces with the other Articles of Faith, particularly Article V (“Sin, Original and Personal”). The full text of these articles can be found in Appendix A. However, presented below is a statement from Article X that summarizes the doctrine as understood by the Church of the Nazarene:

We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.²⁶

A focal point of this research explores the scope of the doctrine, specifically as it pertains to character growth and the suitability of repentance as a facilitator for that growth. Breaking down the statement from the Manual, there are several points that will need to be reconciled in order to allow for repentance to be an acceptable means of personal as well as spiritual development.

First of all, the statement above notes that entire sanctification is an “act of God.” The implication is that it is entirely an act of God and is not dependent on human effort. Repentance can be seen as human effort, thereby making the practice incongruous to the experience.

Secondly, entire sanctification is “subsequent to regeneration.” Since repentance is the means of

²⁵ Richard J. Foster, “Salvation Is For Life,” *Theology Today* 61, no. 3 (October 2004): 297, <http://dtl.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/salvation-is-life/docview/208060264/se-2>.

²⁶ Wilson et al., *Church of the Nazarene Manual 2017-2021*.

entering a regenerate state, this statement somewhat infers that repentance has served its purpose. This idea is further supported by the third point to be made, namely that “believers are made free from original sin, or depravity.” Original sin, according to long-standing Nazarene theologian H. Orton Wiley, remains “in the hearts of believers, a bent toward worldliness, or a bias toward sin,” and this “tendency to conform to the world was to be removed by further transformation.”²⁷ In other words, entire sanctification cleanses and/or removes that thing in humanity that leans toward sin, thus making sin—and thereby, repentance—an uncommon, even rare, event in the sanctified believer’s life. Furthermore (and finally), the believer has entered into a state of being marked by entire devotement, obedience, and love made perfect. Clearly, repentance in this state of grace is not in view.

The intent of this research is not to dismantle the doctrine of entire sanctification but rather to explore an acceptable theological option in which the understanding of repentance is broadened to include an intentional spiritual discipline through which spiritual and character dimensions of the sanctified believer are developed and matured, bringing the believer, and ultimately, the Church into “the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13 NIV).

Research Questions

The controlling research question is: *How can a healthy practice of repentance meaningfully intersect with the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification?*

To further amplify this question, the following sub-questions are proposed as helpful guides:

²⁷ H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology, Volume 2*, Kindle Edition (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1952), 7992.

1. What are the components of a healthy practice of repentance?
2. In what way does the interpretation of σάρξ (*sarx*; "flesh" or "sinful nature") impact the practice of repentance in a Nazarene context?
3. What is the current understanding of Paul and his use of σάρξ (*sarx*)—particularly in Romans 7 and 8—among Nazarene pastors in the United States, and what impact does that understanding have on the practice of repentance, both personally and corporately?

Research Design

The project involved researching the theology and practices of Nazarene pastors throughout the United States in relation to how repentance is understood and exercised in Nazarene congregations. The intent was to discern how acceptable a regular practice of repentance is to Nazarene pastors. Of particular interest is the impact the interpretation of σάρξ (*sarx*; “flesh” or “sinful nature”) had on the acceptability of the practice.

The research design implemented a qualitative survey using secure online technology. The twenty-question survey was divided into five sections: Demographics (four questions), Doctrinal/Theological Perspectives (two questions), Biblical Perspectives (four questions), Personal Practice (four questions), and Corporate Practice (six questions). Of the twenty questions, ten questions were quantitative with multiple-choice answers. Five of those questions had a possible “Other” response that was open-ended. The other ten questions were qualitative, inviting participants to freely share their thoughts. The demographic component of the survey identified the age range, total years in the Church of the Nazarene, tenure in pastoral ministry in the Church of the Nazarene, and a broad geographic affiliation based on the eight Missional Fields in the United States portion of the USA/Canada region in the Church of the Nazarene.

The survey targeted pastors—licensed and assigned—in Nazarene churches in the contiguous United States who are part of one of the 67 English-speaking districts. (There are a few districts in the USA region that are specifically labeled ethnically. These were not included.) An introductory letter was emailed to every District Superintendent in the USA requesting permission to forward the survey to all pastors on their district. Upon receiving a positive response, a pre-formatted invitation to the pastors to participate in the project, along with a link to the survey, was sent to the District Superintendents, who then forwarded the email to their pastors. (Email transcripts can be found in Appendix M.) In this way, the confidentiality of the participants was preserved. As a token of appreciation, the District Superintendents were given the opportunity to request an early look at the results and analysis of the research survey.

The USA region is divided up into eight Missional Fields: Northwest USA, Southwest USA, North Central USA, South Central USA, Central USA, East Central USA, Southeast USA, and Eastern USA. Each Field is comprised of between six and eleven districts. Not all districts participated in the research, but all Missional Fields were represented. (See Appendix L for a map of participating districts.) The breadth of the representation across the USA provided a denominational perspective of the way Nazarene pastors, at least in the United States, perceive the role of repentance as it intersects with entire sanctification.

An intriguing result of the survey was the way age groups, tenure as a Nazarene pastor, and length of time as a Nazarene impacted the responses. The survey was carefully designed to glean this information without compromising the confidentiality of the participants. Furthermore, additional risks to the participants were negligible and all responses remained anonymous. The full copy of the *Consent to Participate*, included in the Survey, can be found in Appendix N.

Delimitations

The research, although ultimately impacting all church attendees, was focused only on the clergy. Therefore, neither denominational leaders, nor local church lay leaders, nor regular church attenders were included in the survey. Furthermore, even though the findings will have implications for the broader Wesleyan/Holiness movement and the Church at large, only Nazarene pastors were invited to participate. Finally, while it is my contention that the practice of repentance is closely related to that of confession, the concept being addressed in this research focuses on a willingness to change one's mind and behavior (repentance). Therefore, the practice of confession was not addressed in the survey.

The nature of this research required a broad sampling of Nazarene pastors across the United States. Even though Canada is included in the USA/Canada Region within the denomination, the decision was made to focus on Nazarene churches in the contiguous United States. Although there are approximately 4,500 Nazarene churches in the contiguous United States, the response rate was influenced by the good will of the sixty-seven district superintendents and their willingness to forward the survey materials to their pastors. I am deeply indebted to all who did just that.

Proposed Chapter Structure

Chapter One consists of an orientation to the project, including problem and purpose statements, research questions, and delimitations. Terms and their definitions are an important component. Finally, Chapter One concludes with a section on the significance of the project for the Church of the Nazarene as well as the greater Church as a whole.

A literature review is the focus of Chapter Two, with attention given to four areas: 1. Components of healthy repentance in the life of a Christian believer. 2. Nazarene literature related to repentance, holiness, entire sanctification, and σάρξ (*sarx*); 3. A history of interpretation of σάρξ (*sarx*) in the Church at large; 4. Current exegetical analysis and interpretation of σάρξ (*sarx*), particularly as found in Romans 7—8.

Chapter Three consists of an exegetical analysis of Romans 7:14—8:13 original to the author. This chapter concludes with a recommended interpretation based on the exegetical analysis as it applies to this project.

Chapter Four outlines the project research design. The nature and structure of the research, the survey target audience, and the questions intended to be answered are all highlighted here. Furthermore, the methods of data collection and data analysis are discussed. Finally, limitations to the research are noted.

The focus of Chapter Five is the results and analysis of the data. Specific conclusions are drawn as well as any trends that emerge related to geography, age, or tenure in the Church of the Nazarene.

Chapter Six concentrates on conclusions drawn from the research. Furthermore, implications of the findings are discussed along with recommended implementations. Concluding this chapter are commendations for further study related to the research topic.

Beyond the bibliography and resources cited, the Back Matter includes some necessary appendices including, but not limited to, survey questions and results, an historical review of Nazarene literature, a brief history of interpretation of σάρξ, a detailed σάρξ word study, a detailed exegetical survey of Romans 7:14—8:13, as well as a sample repentance litany for use in worship services.

Anticipated Significance of the Study

Having participated in and experienced Nazarene church practices throughout a lifetime (including 35 years in pastoral ministry), I have observed an anemic discipleship that is lacking in authenticity and is often either ineffective and defeated or arrogant and dogmatic. In reflecting on the issue, it seems that a general reticence to repent is a leading cause of the anemia. Without any vehicle whereby one can safely grow and develop faith and practice, character development is stifled, and façades begin to mount. There is little room for error, growth, forgiveness, support, spiritual encouragement, and the like. Dallas Willard affirms: “Confession alone [synonymous with repentance for our purposes] makes deep fellowship possible, and the lack of it explains much of the superficial quality so commonly found in our church associations.”²⁸

This research is motivated by the belief that a leading cause for this reservation to repent is rooted in the way the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification intersects with passages of scripture such as Romans 7—8. In this passage, Paul is calling the church to abandon the ways of σάρξ (*sarx*, “flesh”) and, instead, live according to the Spirit. The problem lies in how one translates and interprets σάρξ (*sarx*). Since it is often both translated and interpreted to mean “sinful nature”, it is naturally repulsive to Nazarenes who are professing entire sanctification which, according to Nazarene doctrine, cleanses the heart of the sinful nature.²⁹ As a result, Nazarenes are not free to repent in order to mature in their relationship with Christ or with each other.

²⁸ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 188.

²⁹ Wilson et al., *Church of the Nazarene Manual 2017-2021*. ¶5.1; Article X, ¶10.

It is anticipated that a fresh understanding of Paul's admonitions will help ease some pressure for absolute perfection among Holiness people. Should the recommended proposals be adopted, the Church of the Nazarene (as well as other Christian groups) has the potential to move into a joyful and secure relationship with God that is heightened by a healthy practice of repentance (both individual and corporate) so that gracious, authentic, growing disciples of Jesus will be manifest in the church and in the world today. Truly, repentance can be unlocked and rediscovered as a powerful, albeit unexpected, friend of holiness.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review reveals that the topic being researched is adequately resourced but not specifically addressed. There are many resources working around the topic, but very few specifically deal with the practice of repentance in a Nazarene (or even Wesleyan/Holiness) context. Furthermore, very few resources support the particular claims concerning σάρξ being proposed in this project. Nonetheless, important and instructive information is gleaned from a review of the current literature surrounding σάρξ, spiritual formation, interpretation of Romans 7:14—8:13, and repentance as a regular Christian practice.

The three primary focal points for the purpose of this research are:

1. The Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification and the concomitant implications for the practice of repentance.
2. A history of interpretation surrounding Romans 7:14—8:13, specifically in relation to how σάρξ is understood.
3. The nature of healthy repentance as a spiritual discipline with a particular exploration of Nazarene/Wesleyan teaching.

Nazarene Doctrine of Entire Sanctification and Repentance

Introduction

Exploring repentance in a Nazarene context as a regular practice/spiritual discipline is quite challenging. A formal doctrine that includes repentance as a normal part of the life of the believer is essentially nonexistent. Instead, any doctrine of repentance in the life of the believer is intertwined with the doctrine of entire sanctification. Therefore, conclusions must be drawn from how the term is used in Nazarene literature, and most significantly, how the doctrine of entire sanctification is taught and understood.

The literature is sparse with the bulk of the materials focusing on the *need* for entire sanctification as opposed to how to *live* and *maintain* the experience. In Nazarene literature, the term “repentance” is generally reserved for justification or restoration from a backslidden condition. This is explicit in the Nazarene articles of faith³⁰ and is inferred throughout the bulk of Nazarene literature, which will be discussed in detail below.

To get at a better understanding of the development of the doctrine of entire sanctification in the Church of the Nazarene, and thereby the place of repentance in the life of holiness, the historical denominational periodicals from their inception to the present have been examined. Those periodicals are the *Herald of Holiness* (now *Holiness Today*) and *Preacher’s Magazine*. After scanning thousands of pages, the findings are presented below.

Although the focus here is on denominational literature, the Church of the Nazarene is in close sympathy with other Wesleyan/Holiness groups. Therefore, some of the resources cited

³⁰ Wilson et al.

will be from authors that are respected in Nazarene circles, even though they are not specifically Nazarene.

Nazarene/Wesleyan/Holiness Teaching on Entire Sanctification

The Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification is unashamedly rooted in and developed from the teaching of John Wesley. Amidst Wesley's discussion of the doctrine, one thing that stands out is the completeness of the experience. Although he uses a variety of terms to describe it, he insists that any discourse using the term "sanctification" be qualified with the adjective "entire" or the like.³¹ Interestingly, though his language emphasized the all-encompassing nature of entire sanctification, his methodology called for repentance as a regular practice.³²

As Wesley's teaching came over to the Americas and subsequently took root in the Church of the Nazarene in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a much more perfectionistic nuance was assumed within the doctrine of entire sanctification.³³ Although there is a consistent affirmation that the perfection wrought by entire sanctification "is not the perfection of Christ," it is also consistently affirmed that "God perfects His work in the heart by the removal of inbred sin."³⁴ Indeed, Carradine asserts that "the principle of decay is taken out"

³¹ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 43.

³² Craig Drurey, "Reclaiming Wesley's Class Meeting for Intentional Discipleship," in *Renovating Holiness* (Nampa, ID: SacraSage Press, 2015), 360.

³³ Mark R. Quanstrom, *A Century of Holiness Theology: The Doctrine of Entire Sanctification in the Church of the Nazarene (1905 to 2004)* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2004), 30–36.

³⁴ Beverly Carradine, *The Better Way*, Holiness Legacy Collection (Shawnee, KS: Holiness Legacy Ministries, n.d.), 7–8, www.HolinessLegacy.com.

and is replaced by “a constant, conscious stream of life...; a welling-up joy in the heart,... hallelujahs in the soul and on the lips; and Christ and heaven everywhere.”³⁵

This sentiment has carried forward even to more modern times. Dr. John A. Knight, former General Superintendent in the Church of the Nazarene and strong proponent of entire sanctification, asserts that “sin...has been cast out of the soul.” The language he uses to describe the effects of the experience reflects the sentiment that internal conflict is resolved and freedom from “organized resistance from within” is attained. At the same time, he affirms that “the instinctive life must still be disciplined” and that these “basic instincts...are clearly related to the sentiments of life” and “have been perverted by sin.” However, even though he maintains that the “one who is following close to Christ, progressing in Christlikeness, will acknowledge, confess, and identify his failure,” the overarching principle communicated in regard to entire sanctification is that “organized resistance has ceased. The whole self has been given to God to direct,” and the Holy Spirit has enacted the “removal from the body of the sins of the flesh” as a “supernatural act of God.”³⁶

Long-standing Nazarene evangelist, Nelson Purdue, echoes a similar sentiment and reflects many other Nazarene leaders of the past thirty to fifty years when he writes of the root of sin being dealt with, not just the fruit of sin, and that “base desire” is virtually non-existent.³⁷ Even though absolute perfection is not part of the doctrine (“we must spare no energy to be more and more conformed to His image”)³⁸ nonetheless, the primary focus is that Christ “reigns

³⁵ Carradine, 8.

³⁶ John A. Knight, *In His Likeness: God's Plan for a Holy People*, Holiness Legacy Collection (Shawnee, KS: Holiness Legacy Ministries, 2010), 71–73, www.HolinessLegacy.com.

³⁷ Nelson S. Purdue, *The School of Christ*, Holiness Legacy Collection (Shawnee, KS: Holiness Legacy Ministries, 2011), 33–34, www.HolinessLegacy.com.

³⁸ Purdue, 34.

without a rival”³⁹ clearly inferring a position in the sanctified believer that does not include the ongoing practice of repentance.

Prominent Nazarene theologians affirm similar stances. William Greathouse speaks of how “those who are Spirit-filled do God’s will spontaneously in love.”⁴⁰ The implication is that the cleansing work of the Spirit in entire sanctification is such that the intuitive response of the sanctified believer is love at all times. H. Ray Dunning in his theology *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* states that “...by entire sanctification we refer to that work of the Spirit in the believer that...delivers from all sin, and creates a relation to God that can be referred to as perfection.”⁴¹

Even so, Dunning maintains that entire sanctification “in no sense...suggest[s] a completion that precludes further growth.”⁴² He goes on to discuss the limitations of “ceremonial” interpretations of entire sanctification (in which the act is a moment in time as opposed to progressive in nature) on continued growth in the grace.⁴³ He reaffirms later in his theology that “...when sanctification is interpreted exclusively in terms of ceremonial concepts (purity, cleansing), it makes it extremely awkward to speak of real development.”⁴⁴ However, this is in conflict with what he has previously stated (above) about entire sanctification delivering from all sin. The “ceremonial” concept of entire sanctification is very common in Nazarene literature with a strong emphasis on the “crisis moment” of entire sanctification.

³⁹ Purdue, 34.

⁴⁰ William M. Greathouse, *Romans*, ed. William M. Greathouse and Willard H. Taylor, vol. 6, Beacon Bible Expositions (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1975), 116.

⁴¹ H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988), 455.

⁴² Dunning, 456.

⁴³ Dunning, 467.

⁴⁴ Dunning, 471–72.

The concepts presented here represent a wide range of Nazarene literature and authors and can be clearly seen in the following sections of this chapter reviewing the *Herald of Holiness* and *Preacher's Magazine*. (For a brief discussion of other Nazarene voices addressing repentance in the life of the believer, see Appendix B.) However, a new conversation is emerging among Nazarenes that takes into account the very present reality of human error, weakness, and poor judgment. A significant collection of essays written by a wide range of authors from a variety of cultures representing the global Church of the Nazarene is *Renovating Holiness*.⁴⁵

Many of these authors dig more deeply into John Wesley's theology. One such author is John Bechtold who notes that Wesley made a point of distinguishing between sin proper and "accidents or mistakes stemming from human weakness."⁴⁶ Being aware of the potential dichotomy between theology and praxis, he writes:

In making this distinction, Wesley made sin purely volitional, and therefore individual. When sin becomes only the intentional wrongdoing of the individual, it would certainly be possible to speak of the sanctified as sinless. Yet, to speak of sanctified individuals as living without sin leaves the possibility that they could, unintentionally or accidentally, cause immense damage to the created order around them.⁴⁷

Although the thrust of Bechtold's essay revolves around environmental concerns and ethical sourcing, he also sees the disparity this theological position causes in relationships.⁴⁸

Another contemporary essayist, Craig Drurey, focuses on accountable discipleship:

⁴⁵ This work is a comprehensive resource for those attempting to think through the implications of holiness across disciplines and cultures. It addresses specific topics within a wide range of disciplines by academically and theologically sound contributors. It represents more progressive thinking in the Church of the Nazarene and, because of the more radical theological positions of one of the editors, was almost eliminated from my bibliography. However, the materials cited here, though progressive, are orthodox and fully in line with Nazarene experience and the current Nazarene conversation about holiness.

⁴⁶ John M. Bechtold, "Sin in the Sanctified: Holy Living in the Broken Creation," in *Renovating Holiness* (Nampa, ID: SacraSage Press, 2015), 240.

⁴⁷ Bechtold, 240.

⁴⁸ Bechtold, 240–41.

The Church of the Nazarene's brand of Wesleyanism didn't carry over John Wesley's emphasis on accountable discipleship through class meetings. Instead, the Church of the Nazarene, from its very beginning, has been heavily influenced by a revivalistic/camp-meeting emphasis. This emphasis has focused on crisis experiences of salvation and entire sanctification.⁴⁹

Drurey decries the common focus of Nazarenes on the crisis experience of entire sanctification and notes that discipleship has often been viewed as “convincing people to make the minimum required two trips to the altar” for salvation and then entire sanctification.⁵⁰ In contrast, Drurey calls for a renaissance of Wesley's class meetings:

The process [i.e. the class meeting] consists of three doctrines Wesley thought to be essential—*holiness, repentance, and faith*. When we recognize holiness in God or in others, we are brought to awareness in ourselves where we are lacking.... This awareness helps us to admit to our lacking and creates a desire for growth to occur. This process is what repentance entails. With this awareness, confession, and desire, God enables faith in God's grace to bring about transformation. We then grow in holiness to be more like this perfect love we have experienced in God and others. Then the process begins again: holiness experienced, repentance, faith, and then holiness lived out.⁵¹

He is convinced that this process enables the people of God to address “blockages to God's grace” in themselves and in each other, promoting progress in holiness.⁵²

Finally, Jason Rowinski emphasizes the place of confession as an active spiritual discipline. He identifies what many modern Nazarenes are perceiving among those professing sanctification, namely that “many of the people you know who claim to be holy and sanctified actually lack severely the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which leads you into spiritual cognitive dissonance.”⁵³ Affirming the positive nature of confession (which I am understanding to be

⁴⁹ Drurey, “Reclaiming Wesley's Class Meeting for Intentional Discipleship,” 359.

⁵⁰ Drurey, 359.

⁵¹ Drurey, 360.

⁵² Drurey, 360.

⁵³ Jason T. Rowinski, “The Duty of Constant Confession: The Wesleyan Way of Holiness,” in *Renovating Holiness* (Nampa, ID: SacraSage Press, 2015), 377.

synonymous with repentance), he sees it as a tool and “a means of grace, faith, and holiness.”⁵⁴

Highlighting the impact such a practice can have on the individual as well as the culture at large,

Rowinski describes the power of Wesley’s model:

Appropriating the scriptural, sacramental discipline of confession, Wesley combined it with the Reformer’s understanding of the ‘priesthood of believers’ and placed it within the context of highly relational, confessional discipleship. His goal was the renewal of the *Imago Dei* in the head, habits, and heart of each Christian. His middle way of confessional community lead to spiritual revival and societal change.⁵⁵

We now turn to the voice of the denominational organ from the earliest days of its existence, the *Herald of Holiness*.

Herald of Holiness/Holiness Today

A significant source of communication within the Church of the Nazarene, virtually since its inception in 1908, has been the publication of the *Herald of Holiness*. The first issue was published April 17, 1912, and, at that time, was a weekly publication. It remained a weekly publication until 1971, when it transitioned to a biweekly (every other week) periodical. Publication frequency was again changed in 1990 to a monthly issuance. Beginning in 1999, the *Herald of Holiness* was renamed *Holiness Today* and is a currently a bimonthly (every other month) publication with both print and digital editions.

The magazine touches on a variety of topics. However, the primary concern—especially in earlier years—was the explication and promotion of the doctrine of entire sanctification.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Rowinski, 377.

⁵⁵ Rowinski, 378.

⁵⁶ B. F. Haynes, “Editorial: Word of Salutation,” *Herald of Holiness* 1, no. 1 (April 17, 1912): 1, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1807; H. S. Galloway, “What the Church of the Nazarene Believes,” ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 41, no. 1 (March 12, 1952): 10, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1755; Donald D. Owens, “Attempting Great Expectations,” ed. Wesley D. Tracy, *Herald of Holiness* 84, no. 5 (May 1, 1995): 4, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/41.

Therefore, the publication has consistently been a primary vehicle for the dissemination of theology and Nazarene doctrine. The periodical has reliably addressed contemporary concerns in light of doctrinal distinctives.⁵⁷ In more recent years, the focus of articles has shifted toward life management, social concerns, and inspiration with much less directly theological pieces.⁵⁸

In reviewing the *Herald of Holiness*, it quickly became evident that a thorough analysis of the content of each issue was not feasible for this project. Having secured copies from Nazarene archives spanning 1912-1999⁵⁹, the number of editions available for analysis was over 1,800 with the page count nearing 40,000 pages. For this reason, the material was reviewed by searching the digital copies for the term *repent*, which highlighted every occurrence, and any form of, the term (repentance, unrepentant, repenting, etc.). These “hits” were then evaluated to discover the way in which the “repent” terms were used.

In essentially all of the instances throughout the publications, repent is used for the act of confessing and repenting of sins prior to justification/salvation. A related term—reclaimed—is also used in relation to a “believer” who is in a backslidden condition.⁶⁰ In this regard, however, the insinuation expressed both implicitly and explicitly is that a person in a backslidden

⁵⁷ B. F. Haynes, ed., “Editorial: Material Millennialism,” *Herald of Holiness* 1, no. 5 (May 15, 1912): 1–2, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1811; B. F. Haynes, ed., “Editorial: Censorship Needed” 1, no. 17 (August 7, 1912): 3, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1823; Richard S. Taylor, “What’s ‘General’ About the GENERAL RULES, and What’s So ‘Special’ About the SPECIAL RULES?,” ed. W. E. McCumber, *Herald of Holiness* 69, no. 5 (March 3, 1980): 16–17, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/324; David C. Wright, “Holiness: Hope for the Homosexual,” ed. W. E. McCumber, *Herald of Holiness* 69, no. 23 (December 1, 1980): 14–15, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/369.

⁵⁸ “Herald of Holiness/Holiness Today,” Digital Commons @ Olivet: Distinctive Heritage, Scholarship, & Creativity, n.d., https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/.

⁵⁹ The specific years available to me were 1912-1919, 1935, 1950-99.

⁶⁰ Marcus J. Clements, “Times of Refreshing,” ed. W. E. McCumber, *Herald of Holiness* 71, no. 14 (July 15, 1982): 11, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/285.

condition is no longer a Christian and needs to repent again of sins in order to be restored to faith.⁶¹

There are a few exceptions where repent is used in the context of a believer to hint at repentance as an ongoing spiritual discipline and practice, such as admonishing that the ardor of revival be stirred by the church staying “on fire.”⁶² None are explicit. Furthermore, repentance is almost always a “crisis moment” experience.⁶³ In other words, even when repentance is used in a way implying a change in heart or mind about less-than-sin infractions, it is still in the context of coming to the altar, or getting on the knees, or some other posture and context of a definitive moment of repentance.⁶⁴

The only other context in which repentance is not used in terms of salvation and justification is the periodic calls for national repentance or corporate repentance for revival.⁶⁵ In

⁶¹ J. R. Hunter, “Hints to Personal Workers,” ed. B. F. Haynes, *Herald of Holiness* 3, no. 19 (August 19, 1914): 7, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1937; Arthur J. Stott, “Tragedy Has Its Blessings,” ed. W. E. McCumber, *Herald of Holiness* 66, no. 15 (August 1, 1977): 34, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1217; B. F. Haynes, ed., “General Church News: Malden, Mass.,” *Herald of Holiness* 4, no. 35 (December 8, 1915): 14, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/2057.

⁶² John A. Broadbelt, “Are the Days of Revival Over?,” ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 46, no. 21 (July 24, 1957): 8–10, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1326; E. E. Wordsworth, “Christians Are to Blame!,” ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 49, no. 3 (March 16, 1960): 7–8, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/834; Lawrence B. Hicks, “The Meaning of Sin,” ed. W. T. Purkiser, *Herald of Holiness* 54, no. 18 (June 23, 1965): 4–5, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/533; J. J. Steele, “Love Never Fails,” ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 41, no. 32 (October 15, 1952): 7, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1786.

⁶³ W. T. Purkiser, ed., “Editorials: V. the Church and Nominal Religion,” *Herald of Holiness* 51, no. 16 (June 13, 1962): 2, 12, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/583; Gypsy Smith, “The Open Parliament: Repentance,” ed. B. F. Haynes, *Herald of Holiness* 1, no. 14 (July 17, 1912): 7, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1820.

⁶⁴ Milton Harrington, “This Is Pentecost!,” ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 41, no. 43 (December 31, 1952): 7, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1797; C. T. Corbett, “Faith...the Final Step,” ed. W. T. Purkiser, *Herald of Holiness* 54, no. 12 (May 12, 1965): 5–6, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/527.

⁶⁵ Ed Bennett, “—Add Prayer and Fasting,” ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 48, no. 46 (January 13, 1960): 7, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/935; S. James Randle, “What Does America Need Most?,” ed. W. E. McCumber, *Herald of Holiness* 66, no. 13 (July 1, 1977): 10–11, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1215.

these instances the call is understood to be a specific time in which the collective body participates in a service or specific act of repentance.⁶⁶ It is never addressed as an on-going posture.

It is intriguing as the decades progress how concern seemed to shift to the viability of the doctrine of entire sanctification in light of human error and weakness. This is seen particularly in a recurring interest in the meaning of the Hebrews 6 and 10 passages that speak to there being no more forgiveness of sins.⁶⁷ It seems that the laity were concerned that human error could actually be sin and thereby condemning. A continued interest in the Hebrews 6 and 10 passages persisted for a couple of decades.⁶⁸

Beginning in the 1970s, two trends emerged in relation to repentance. The first trend seemed to be an attempt to bridge the gap between the “perfection” of entire sanctification and the flaws of real life with a spiritual posture known as *penitence*. The basic premise of penitence is set forth as an attitude and disposition of humility and admission of need before God.⁶⁹ It is a spiritual posture of humility before God, recognizing that we, as humans, are frail, weak,

⁶⁶ Randle, “HH 66.13”; W. T. Purkiser, ed., “Editorial Notes,” *Herald of Holiness* 49, no. 31 (September 28, 1960): 13, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/862.

⁶⁷ A. R. Higgs, “Eternal Life...May Be Lost,” ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 44, no. 46 (January 18, 1956): 8–9, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1146; Stephen S. White, ed., “The Question Box,” *Herald of Holiness* 41, no. 25 (August 27, 1952): 11, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1779; Stephen S. White, ed., “The Question Box,” *Herald of Holiness* 42, no. 14 (June 10, 1953): 15, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1716.

⁶⁸ W. T. Purkiser, ed., “The Answer Corner,” *Herald of Holiness* 56, no. 43 (December 13, 1967): 19, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1482; W. T. Purkiser, ed., “The Answer Corner,” *Herald of Holiness* 51, no. 5 (March 28, 1962): 18, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/572; W. T. Purkiser, ed., “The Answer Corner,” *Herald of Holiness* 49, no. 32 (October 5, 1960): 16, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/863.

⁶⁹ A. R. G. Deasley, “The Penitence of the Sanctified: The Place of Contrition in the Life of Holiness,” ed. W. E. McCumber, *Herald of Holiness* 65, no. 21 (November 1, 1976): 12–13, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1199.

vulnerable, and in constant need of God’s intervention.⁷⁰ However, there was a reticence to connect penitence with repentance, and great effort was made to clarify that penitence was only for weaknesses and failures and not for sin. If there was sin, repentance was required to restore relationship.⁷¹ Such prominent Nazarene figures as Alex Deasley, William “Bill” McCumber, and Gene Welch championed this concept.⁷²

Another important observation gleaned from the 1970s is that social ills began to be addressed in terms of repentance. In this way, divorce, homosexuality, AIDS, abortion, euthanasia, and other social issues were addressed almost exclusively in terms of a need to repent of sin with very little deliberation on other “non-sin” causes.⁷³ This trend was most prominent in the 1970s and 80s.

Finally, the term consecration is consistently used to describe the spiritual activity of the believer that is the prerequisite for entering into the experience of entire sanctification. Consecration has a flare of repentance in that it is a surrender of self to the will of God, just as repentance is the surrender of the self for the forgiveness of God. Although the language edges toward equating consecration and repentance synonymously, the writers stop short of endorsing repentance in the life of the believer outside of when there is a need to repent of known sin.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ W. E. McCumber, “The Editor’s Standpoint: Breakthrough,” *Herald of Holiness* 67, no. 4 (February 15, 1978): 16–17, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/374.

⁷¹ W. T. Purkiser, ed., “Editorially Speaking: A Question That Will Not Die,” *Herald of Holiness* 63, no. 13 (June 19, 1974): 18–20, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1240; Wesley D. Tracy, “Devotions for Lent,” ed. Wesley D. Tracy, *Herald of Holiness* 79, no. 3 (March 1, 1990): 22–25, 43, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/99.

⁷² Deasley, “HH 65.21”; McCumber, “HH 67.4”; Gene R. Welch, “Be Christian Today!,” ed. W. T. Purkiser, *Herald of Holiness* 61, no. 17 (August 16, 1972): 5, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1270.

⁷³ Ivan A. Beals, “The Sanctity of the Home,” ed. John A. Knight, *Herald of Holiness* 65, no. 5 (March 1, 1976): 9, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1183.

⁷⁴ Merrill Williams, “White Flag of Surrender,” ed. W. E. McCumber, *Herald of Holiness* 69, no. 6 (March 15, 1980): 10–11, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/325; V. H. Lewis, “When You Testify,” ed. W. E. McCumber, *Herald of Holiness* 70, no. 12 (June 15, 1981): 2, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/307; V.

A more detailed decadal walk through the *Herald of Holiness* can be found in Appendix C.

Shifting the discussion to how clergy have been instructed in the doctrines of entire sanctification and repentance, a review of the primary minister-focused denominational periodical follows.

The Preacher's Magazine

Established in 1926, *The Preacher's Magazine* “was originally a monthly magazine specializing in theological and sermon material adapted to the requirements of the men and women who give their lives to the preaching of the Wesleyan doctrine of holiness.”⁷⁵ It has been a standard issue for Nazarene pastors over the years and has also served other sister denominations. It is comprised of theological discussions, homiletical instruction, illustrative material, and sermon outlines. The objective in perusing these magazines is to determine how preachers have been instructed in relation to the spiritual practice of repentance.

As with the study of the *Herald of Holiness*, the volume of magazine editions made a thorough reading impractical for the purpose of this research. Therefore, once again the material was reviewed searching the digital copies for the term repent, which highlighted every occurrence, and any form of, the term (repentance, unrepentant, repenting, etc.). These “hits” were then evaluated to discover the way in which the “repent” terms were used. A discussion by decades follows.

H. Lewis and W. E. McCumber, “Mighty Deliverance,” *Herald of Holiness* 73, no. 21 (November 1, 1984): 2, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/244.

⁷⁵ “Preacher’s Magazine,” Digital Commons @ Olivet: Distinctive Heritage, Scholarship, & Creativity, n.d., https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/.

From the beginning in 1926 to the end of that decade, there is a strong commitment to “call” people to repentance.⁷⁶ The implication is that ministers are to issue a strong admonition for sinners to repent. The same is used for “calling” people to entire consecration. With the idea of “calling” people to a decision, a general sense of urgency as well as the importance of a definite moment is underscored.

The focus on repentance through the decade of the 1930s particularly emphasized salvation.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the minister was encouraged to boldly and clearly issue the call to repentance. The language used, such as “stern” and “a clarion call”, stressed the urgency and importance of leading sinners to repentance and salvation.⁷⁸ None of the instances addressing repentance, however, was in the context of an on-going spiritual practice for developing Christian maturity.

Continuing in the 1940s, the sternness toward repentance language is augmented with black-and-white, in-or-out language. Luke 13:3 (“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” - KJV) appears often as well as “repent or perish” verbiage.⁷⁹ One implication from this

⁷⁶ A. M. Hills, “Devotional: Letters on Preaching,” ed. J. B Chapman, *The Preacher’s Magazine* 1, no. 3 (March 1926): 6–7, https://whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/article/preachers_magazine_1926_01_03.pdf?language=en; J. B Chapman, ed., “The Message of the Fathers,” *The Preacher’s Magazine* 1, no. 7 (July 1926): 11, <https://whdl.org/en/browse/resources/6993#download-box>; W. D. Shelor, “The Call of God,” ed. J. B Chapman, *The Preacher’s Magazine* 2, no. 1 (January 1927): 15, <https://whdl.org/en/browse/resources/7004>.

⁷⁷ J. B Chapman, ed., “Morning Sermon,” *The Preacher’s Magazine* 9, no. 12 (December 1934): 10, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/108; Jarold J. Sutton, “Repentance,” ed. J. B Chapman, *The Preacher’s Magazine* 7, no. 11 (November 1932): 19, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/83; Olive M. Winchester, “Expositional: Hosea—The Preacher of Love and Repentance,” ed. J. B Chapman, *The Preacher’s Magazine* 7, no. 4 (April 1932): 12–14, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/76.

⁷⁸ J. Glenn Gould, “Homiletical: The Teaching Ministry of the Church,” ed. J. B Chapman, *The Preacher’s Magazine* 14, no. 10 (October 1939): 16–17, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/166; Olive M. Winchester, “Expository: Expository Messages from Hebrews,” ed. J. B Chapman, *The Preacher’s Magazine* 10, no. 5 (May 1935): 6–8, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.37315962>.

⁷⁹ J. B Chapman, ed., “The Austere Man,” *The Preacher’s Magazine* 15, no. 9 (September 1940): 22, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/177; J. B Chapman, ed., “Preparing for the Future,” *The Preacher’s Magazine* 18, no. 4 (August 1943): 33, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/208; C. W. Perry, “The Present

observation is that repentance was seen as a harsh reality. It was the dividing line between heaven and hell. Therefore, there was an urgency to call people to repentance, but there is little sense of compassion and mercy with the call.

In the decade of the 1950s, Hebrews 6:1 (“...let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.” - KJV) is often cited as evidence that repentance ought not be a part of the sanctified life.⁸⁰ W. N. King expresses this position quite strongly when he asserts that “one is to go on to perfection, and thus seal regeneration, so that one does not constantly have to relay the foundation of repentance.”⁸¹

It is observed that the following scriptures recur on a regular basis: “Unless ye repent ye shall all likewise perish” (Lk 13:3 & 5); Jesus “came not calling the righteous to repentance, but sinners” (Mt 9:13, Mk 2:17, Lk 5:32); “bring forth fruit meet for repentance” (Mt 3:8); and John baptized “with water for repentance” but Jesus would baptize “with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Mt 3:11, Lk 3:16). In addition, the stern “repent or perish” language persists, even to an article being titled, “Repent or Else.”⁸²

The decades of the 1960s and 1970s did not reveal any significant changes from previous years.

Need—A Holiness Emphasis,” ed. J. B Chapman, *The Preacher’s Magazine* 21, no. 6 (December 1946): 29–31, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/228.

⁸⁰ W. B. Walker, “Sermon of the Month: Arrested Development and Continuous Babyhood,” ed. Lauriston J. Du Bois, *The Preacher’s Magazine* 30, no. 7 (July 1955): 12–14, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/296; W. N. King, “The Preaching of Holiness,” ed. L. A. Reed, *The Preacher’s Magazine* 26, no. 2 (April 1951): 26, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/254.

⁸¹ King, “PM 26.2.”

⁸² Edwin Raymond Anderson, “The Underscoring of Urgency or Repent or Else,” ed. D. Shelby Corlett, *The Preacher’s Magazine* 28, no. 3 (June 1953): 45–46, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/272.

The 1980s, however, is a decade marked by an increase in theological articles. Many of these articles are addressing social issues as well as various theologies, such as liberation theology, black theology, and others.⁸³ With this, there seems to be a shift away from such a strong emphasis on the call to repentance as indicated by the lack of such language in the periodicals.

There is one article by Philip Metcalfe in the spring 1981 issue that focuses on confession. It is a Lenten piece and spends several pages addressing the validity of confession in the life of the believer.⁸⁴

In summary, *The Preacher's Magazine* addressed the issue of repentance from the vantage point of salvation. Outside of the Metcalfe article, it did not affirm repentance as a normative spiritual discipline, but rather sustained the apparently traditional position of the Church of the Nazarene discouraging repentance other than for known sin.

Conclusion

The doctrine of entire sanctification is the flagship doctrine of the Church of the Nazarene. It was, and still is, the rallying cry of Nazarenes and encompasses a powerful, transformative work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. At the same time, it has been taught through the years in such a way that has emphasized the cleansing moment of the experience and has severely minimized the place of growth after the experience. The practice

⁸³ Albert Truesdale, "Liberation Theology: What Is It?," ed. Neil B. Wiseman, *The Preacher's Magazine* 55, no. 4 (August 1980): 52–54, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/564; Albert Truesdale, "James Cone: Spokesman for Black Theology," ed. Wesley D. Tracy, *The Preacher's Magazine* 56, no. 4 (August 1981): 39–40, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/585; Jim Wilcox, "Why Not Influence Television Instead of Being Influenced by It?," ed. Neil B. Wiseman, *The Preacher's Magazine* 55, no. 3 (May 1980): 37–40, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/565.

⁸⁴ Philip N. Metcalfe, "Where Does Confession Fit In?," ed. Wesley D. Tracy, *The Preacher's Magazine* 56, no. 3 (May 1981): 32–34, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_pm/561.

and spiritual discipline of repentance has been diminished even further, often to the point of dismissing it entirely.

As the concept of repentance has been explored in light of the doctrine of entire sanctification, it quickly becomes evident that repentance is understood primarily in terms of the initiating rite for salvation or restoration from a backslidden condition. It is affirmed after conversion primarily as a means of dealing with known sin or, in some ways, as the prerequisite for entire sanctification (although that form is generally called “consecration”). It is almost never sustained as a valid, regular, intentional practice to spur the sanctified believer on to greater growth, spiritual maturity, or intimacy with God.

One possible reason for this reticence is the way σάρξ has been understood, particularly in Romans 7—8. It is to this point of interest we now turn.

History of Interpretation Regarding Romans 7—8 with a View Toward Σάρξ (*Sarx*)

Historical Voices

Very few passages of Scripture have carried as much hope while simultaneously garnering intense debate as has Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, chapters 6—8. From the assurance of salvation to the victorious life in the Spirit, Paul’s description of God’s work in the believer’s life through Jesus Christ is magnificent. It has guided countless individuals into a dynamic life of holy living. In fact, Ben Witherington III calls this the climax of Paul’s argument.⁸⁵

As central as these chapters are to Christian faith and a well-informed theology, there is significant debate about the exact meaning of Paul’s rhetoric, especially through chapter 7. Much

⁸⁵ Ben Witherington III and Darlene Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 208.

of this debate is centered on the Greek term σάρξ. The term has a standard gloss of “flesh” (NIV2011, NASB, ESV, NRSV, KJV, RSV), but is also translated “body” (CEB) and “sinful nature” (NIV1984, NLT). While the term may be translated “flesh” in most instances, the underlying inference in Romans 7—8, either in footnotes or in commentary, typically reflects the “sinful nature” interpretation.

The purpose of this section is to highlight the general nuances of interpretation and trace how this segment of scripture has been understood through church history.

Spanning the history of the Church from its inception to the present day, and covering a variety of theological streams of thought, the literature reveals some interesting patterns. The Early Church Fathers, such as Irenaeus, essentially viewed “the flesh” in rather plain terms, focusing on the flesh as essential to human existence while maintaining that a fascination with fulfilling the desires of that flesh (living “after the flesh”) is cause for concern.⁸⁶

This plain reading of the text—by which I mean understanding σάρξ to simply mean “flesh”, or human existence—is echoed later by such authors as Tertullian who writes in reference to Romans 8:8 (“Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.” NIV):

Now, when shall we be able to please God except whilst we are in this flesh? There is, I imagine, no other time wherein a man can work. If, however, whilst we are even naturally living in the flesh, we yet eschew the deeds of the flesh, then we shall not be in the flesh; since, although we are not absent from the substance of the flesh, we are notwithstanding strangers to the sin thereof. Now, since in the word flesh we are enjoined to put off, not the substance, but the works of the flesh, therefore in the use of the same word the kingdom of God is denied to the works of the flesh, not to the substance thereof. For not that is condemned in which evil is done, but only the evil which is done in it.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Philip Schaff, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*, CCEL, vol. 1, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 1323, <https://ia902205.us.archive.org/18/items/AnteNiceneFathersCompleteVolumesIToIX/Ante-nicene%20fathers%20-%20complete%20volumes%20I%20to%20IX.pdf>.

⁸⁷ Philip Schaff, ed., *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*, CCEL, vol. 3, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 985,

Although these Early Church Fathers offer a plain reading of the text, it should also be noted that the language clearly indicates that they are confronting various heresies that diminish the value of the body. It appears that those issues were of much greater importance for their attention and correction than a nuanced understanding of σάρξ.

The later Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers affirm a similar reading of the term. Augustine takes a very naturalistic approach to the term in his *Confessions* as he focuses on his personal experience trying to tame the lusts of his own fleshly existence.⁸⁸ Others, such as Chrysostom, offer a plain reading as well but on the basis that the soul is superior to the flesh.⁸⁹

The plain reading seems to remain intact until after the Reformation when it begins to take on a “sin principle” nuance. Furthermore, the flesh and Spirit in Romans 7—8 become mutually exclusive. For example, John Wesley asserts that any measure of flesh in the believer is a sign that a person “is not a member of Christ: not a Christian: not in a state of salvation.”⁹⁰ Moving forward, this mutually exclusive reading continues to dominate the interpretive landscape. From Wesleyan/Arminian Adam Clarke (“...to be in the *flesh*, or to be *carnally minded*, solely respects the unregenerate.”)⁹¹ to the Reformed Charles Hodge (“It [the flesh]

<https://ia902205.us.archive.org/18/items/AnteNiceneFathersCompleteVolumesIToIX/Ante-nicene%20fathers%20-%20complete%20volumes%20I%20to%20IX.pdf>.

⁸⁸ Philip Schaff, ed., *The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustine, with a Sketch of His Life and Work*, CCEL, vol. 1, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 269, <https://ccel.org/ccel/s/schaff/npnf101/cache/npnf101.pdf>.

⁸⁹ Philip Schaff, ed., *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans*, CCEL, vol. 11, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 282–85, <https://ccel.org/ccel/s/schaff/npnf111/cache/npnf111.pdf>.

⁹⁰ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, Fourth American Edition (New York: J. Soule and T. Mason, 1818), 393–94.

⁹¹ Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible with a Commentary and Critical Notes*, Logos Edition, vol. 6 (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2014), 86.

designates man, or humanity, or human nature as apostate from God.”)⁹², there is little diversion from this interpretation.

Modern interpretations carry a similar polarity. However, a unique interpretation comes from Neil T. Anderson and Steve DeNeff. Anderson maintains that the flesh is “that tendency within each person to operate independent of God and to center his interests on himself.”⁹³ His paradigm does not demonize nor acquit the flesh, but rather considers the amount of influence it has in the life of the believer.⁹⁴ Similarly, DeNeff understands the impact of personal history on our humanity and calls for addressing issues such as “low self-esteem, laziness, stubbornness,...[and] flippancy” as manifestations of the “flesh”, even in the sanctified.⁹⁵

For a more detailed discussion of how σάρξ has been understood through the centuries, see Appendix D, “A Short History of Interpretation of Romans 7:14—8:13 with a Focus on Σάρξ (*Sarx*).”

We now turn to modern voices specifically addressing σάρξ.

Modern Voices on Σάρξ (*Sarx*)

The literature dealing specifically with σάρξ is fairly varied and, at times, even self-contradictory. The following paragraphs address how modern scholars, both Nazarene/Wesleyan and otherwise, have understood the term within the past 50 years.

⁹² Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Logos Research Systems (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc, 1997), 144.

⁹³ Neil T. Anderson, *Victory Over the Darkness: Realizing the Power of Your Identity in Christ* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 79.

⁹⁴ Anderson, 87–106.a

⁹⁵ Steve DeNeff, *7 Saving Graces: Living Above the Deadly Sins* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2010), 22.

A significant writer in the late twentieth century, particularly specializing in the spiritual disciplines, is the well-known Dallas Willard. In his works, and specifically in *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Willard makes a strong and consistent argument for the validity of the physical body in spiritual formation. He insists that without a proper appreciation of the body as a meaningful part of Christian experience, there is no authentic growth, deliverance, or even salvation.⁹⁶ Even though the body is closely coupled with the flesh in Willard's thinking (although he does not specifically reference the Greek term), the flesh does bear a unique nuance:

It is now time to put in a good word for flesh, which has been badly misunderstood and falsely accused. "Flesh" in its biblical usage seldom means the mere physical substance that makes up the parts of the body.... But flesh is generally spoken of in the Bible as something quite *active*, a specific power or range of powers that is embedded in a body of a specific type, able or likely to do only certain kinds of things.⁹⁷

Willard goes on to assess various scriptures to discern a general sense of the term "flesh" and concludes that "they do not presuppose that flesh must be something inherently evil."⁹⁸ Instead, he notes the close connection between flesh and body in the original, pre-fall human being.⁹⁹ As a result, he asserts that what many have called "the flesh" ("fallen human nature") should more appropriately be called "the world" since so much good is promised for "the flesh"—the Spirit is poured out on flesh (Jl 2); the flesh longs for God (Ps 63); the flesh blesses God's holy name (Ps 145)—but not so for "the world".¹⁰⁰

Attempting to bring clarity and balance to the discussion, Willard identifies natural human impulses that have been hijacked by sin as a way of understanding "flesh".

⁹⁶ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 29; Willard, 124; Willard, 152.

⁹⁷ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 86–87.

⁹⁸ Willard, 87.

⁹⁹ Willard, 91.

¹⁰⁰ Willard, 91.

These old impulses...are not in themselves sinful. Sin has had them in its grip and has twisted them. To be dead to sin with Christ is not to be lacking in these natural desires, but to have a real alternative to sin and the world's sin system as the orientation and motivation for our natural impulses.¹⁰¹

Robert Jewett, a scholar on the outer edges of our “modern” framework, thoroughly discusses σάρξ in his authoritative work on anthropology in Paul’s writing. He notes that many modern scholars adopt the Augustinian view that σάρξ is “man in revolt from God.”¹⁰² However, Jewett also avers that σάρξ “is connected with human weakness, the weakness of will. Further, the sensual body lures man to depend upon it, upon its ‘I’.... [However] σάρξ does not equal σῶμα [“body”].”¹⁰³ In other words, “flesh” is that part of the human existence that interacts with the “body” for good or for evil.

Addressing the concept of “the flesh” as being in polarity with “the Spirit”, Craig S. Keener highlights the role of the two as they interact with the body. Specifically referencing Romans 8:1-11, Keener states that “Paul’s use of ‘flesh’ and ‘Spirit’ refers to two spheres of existence—in Adam or in Christ—not to two natures in a person.”¹⁰⁴

A solid Wesleyan voice who speaks to the topic is Steve DeNeff. In *7 Saving Graces*, DeNeff helps his readers understand the nature of the flesh, but he does not use the exact term. Instead, he speaks in common language about what the flesh looks like: “low self-esteem, laziness, stubbornness, foolishness, flippancy, and a restless or busy spirit that can damage us for the rest of our lives. These ‘toxins’ are active and progressive. They intrude into our lives and

¹⁰¹ Willard, 115.

¹⁰² Robert Jewett, *Paul’s Anthropological Terms: A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings*, 1971, 50, http://books.google.com/books?id=_1UcAAAAMAAJ.

¹⁰³ Jewett, 50.

¹⁰⁴ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

debilitate us.”¹⁰⁵ He calls these tendencies “triggers” and teaches that “sin can attach itself to one of these triggers and slip unnoticed into our lives.”¹⁰⁶

Turning to Nazarene voices, William Greathouse equates “flesh” with “self-reliance.”¹⁰⁷ Although affirming that “*flesh* in Scripture basically means ‘mere man,’”¹⁰⁸ Greathouse moves on to assert: “By the flesh Paul means the *entire human person under the power of sin*—his mind and spirit as well as his body.”¹⁰⁹ In doing so, that which is common about the term is acknowledged and then spiritualized to be a force against God.

In a later commentary by Greathouse and George Lyons, “flesh” is understood “to be human, to be a creature, a physical part of this material world. To attach the word ‘sinful’ to any translation of the term...is unwarranted. There is nothing evil about being human or material.”¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, Greathouse and Lyons go on to assert that σάρξ is an existential reality (as opposed to a substantival one) and “is my total human nature ‘before’ or ‘apart from’ Christ’s grace and the liberation power of the Spirit.”¹¹¹

In *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, H. Ray Dunning affirms that “properly interpreting Paul’s use of flesh (*sarx*) is crucial for understanding the nature of the sin that remains.”¹¹² He then spends the next few pages discussing what that might mean, particularly in light of John

¹⁰⁵ DeNeff, *7 Saving Graces*, 22.

¹⁰⁶ DeNeff, 25.

¹⁰⁷ Greathouse, *BBE Romans*, 6:119.

¹⁰⁸ Greathouse, 6:121.

¹⁰⁹ Greathouse, 6:123.

¹¹⁰ William M. Greathouse and George Lyons, *Romans 1-8: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*, New Beacon Bible Commentary (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2008), 216.

¹¹¹ Greathouse and Lyons, 218.

¹¹² Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, 481.

Wesley's teaching. He ultimately concludes that, when Paul uses the term in an ethical sense (as he is doing in Romans 7—8), “flesh does not refer to the body, or to the natural appetites” but rather “attitudes, dispositions, or behaviors that are essentially self-authoritative” or “self-sovereignty.”¹¹³

A third dominant theological voice in the Church of the Nazarene is W. T. Purkiser, who seems to equate “flesh” with “the persistence of original sin in an unsanctified heart.”¹¹⁴ In his *God, Man, & Salvation* biblical theology, Purkiser joins others in affirming that flesh is not in and of itself evil. Nonetheless, in contexts such as Romans 7—8 and Galatians 5, he believes that σάρξ is used metaphorically “as standing in for sin itself. Hence, . . . to be ‘in the flesh’ is to be under the domination of sin. . . . Flesh may be defined as human nature oriented toward sin.”¹¹⁵ In this same passage, Purkiser also describes σάρξ as being “neutral but may be infected by sin.”¹¹⁶ This language of “infection” is significant since it speaks of a morally neutral “flesh” being systemically influenced by sin.

One final Nazarene author to highlight here is a contemporary author whose work focuses on systematic theology as well as spiritual formation, Diane Leclerc. In a significant contribution to the literature of spiritual formation in a Nazarene context, Leclerc and Maddix briefly note in *Spiritual Formation: A Wesleyan Paradigm* that the flesh is to be understood as sinful desire.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Dunning, 483–84.

¹¹⁴ Purkiser, “HH 63.13,” 20.

¹¹⁵ W. T. Purkiser, Richard S. Taylor, and Willard H. Taylor, *God, Man, & Salvation: A Biblical Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1977), 289.

¹¹⁶ Purkiser, Taylor, and Taylor, 289.

¹¹⁷ Diane Leclerc and Mark A. Maddix, eds., *Spiritual Formation: A Wesleyan Paradigm* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2011), 51.

Conclusion

As we have reviewed various interpretations of σάρξ and traced those interpretations through the history of the church, it becomes evident that there are two developments. The early church up to the Reformation seemed to read σάρξ very naturally while still putting a spiritual sin principle on its meaning in some cases. It was not a very well-developed doctrine, primarily because the Church Fathers had other more pressing matters on hand, namely various heresies that were emerging as the Church was trying to hammer out what Jesus and the Gospel really meant.

From the Reformation until modern times, the prevailing interpretation is a polarizing, “in-or-out” kind of interpretation. This interpretation includes the assertion that the flesh is infused with a sin principle and, therefore, everything of the flesh is sin. There have been varying degrees of rigidity with this view, but it has always played itself out as either being redeemed and instantly living according to the Spirit or being unredeemed and living according to the flesh. There was little middle ground.

A fairly unique contribution to the discussion comes from Neil T. Anderson, who suggests that the flesh is simply the human condition that has forever been stained by sin in the world. DeNeff draws similar conclusions using different language. In either case, the desires and passions of stained flesh can, by God’s grace, be brought into submission to the ways of the Spirit. In the process, even “mortal bodies” can receive new life from the Spirit (Romans 8:11), not simply in the eschaton, but in the here and now. The result is freedom and the capacity to keep moving forward, continually refining personal focus on the ways and thoughts of the Spirit.

With this understanding in mind, our attention now focuses on literature related to spiritual formation and the place of repentance for spiritual growth.

Spiritual Formation and Repentance

Introduction

The concept of spiritual formation is in no way new or novel to the church. Instances can be found in the Old Testament (Dt 6; Ne 8 and 13; Proverbs) as well as through ecclesial history. Movements such as monasticism, for instance, were focused on spiritual development. Although there has always been an interest in spiritual development, spiritual formation as a modern academic discipline is a relatively new development with “the pioneering ministry of people like...Dallas Willard”¹¹⁸ who is a late twentieth-century writer. Richard Foster’s *Celebration of Discipline*¹¹⁹ followed suit and the movement was launched. The Church of the Nazarene embraced the paradigm and a few scholars rose up as leaders and pioneers in their own rites, some originating the program at Nazarene Theological Seminary and others working in conjunction with them to write such books as *The Upward Call* (Wesley Tracy, Dee Freeborn, Janine Tartaglia, and Morris Weigelt.)¹²⁰ This trend was noted in the *Herald of Holiness* with the emergence of articles by Dee Freeborn, Morris Weigelt, and Wesley Tracy.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ James Houston, Bruce Hindmarsh, and Steve L. Porter, “The Table: A Publication of The Biola University Center for Christian Thought,” *The History of Spiritual Formation — James Houston and Bruce Hindmarsh* (blog), November 25, 2013, <https://cct.biola.edu/the-history-of-spiritual-formation-james-houston-and-bruce-hindmarsh/>.

¹¹⁹ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 20th anniversary ed., 3rd ed., rev. ed (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998).

¹²⁰ Wesley Tracy et al., *The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994).

¹²¹ Dee Freeborn, “Try a Prayer Walk,” ed. Wesley D. Tracy, *Herald of Holiness* 85, no. 10 (October 1, 1996): 45, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/34; Morris Weigelt, “Sources of Grace,” ed. Wesley D. Tracy, *Herald of Holiness* 80, no. 9 (September 1, 1991): 30, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/93; Tracy, “HH 79.3.”

Since these early beginnings, there have arisen many spiritual formation resources from a wide variety of theological streams. Unfortunately, the emphasis in Nazarene/Wesleyan/Holiness circles has not kept pace, resulting in very little material contributing to the discussion. This section explores not only spiritual formation, but specifically the idea of repentance in that paradigm. General material will be presented followed by an investigation of Nazarene views on spiritual formation and repentance.

General Material on Spiritual Formation and Repentance

Since the nature of this research focuses primarily on repentance as a tool for spiritual development, I will explore the broader concepts of spiritual formation but briefly. In a broad sense, the goal of spiritual formation is reflected in this statement from Richard Foster:

The daring goal of the Christian life is an ever-deeper re-formation of our inner personality so that it reflects more and more the glory and goodness of God; an ever more radiant conformity to the life and faith and desires and habits of Jesus; an utter transformation of our creatureliness into whole and perfect daughters and sons of God.¹²²

With that in mind, there are several key authors who have had great influence in the arena of spiritual formation. As has just been quoted, Richard Foster is a strong voice in the field with several titles to his name.¹²³ Foster has also been influential in the Renovaré resources for spiritual development.¹²⁴

¹²² Foster, "Salvation Is For Life," 299.

¹²³ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*; Richard J. Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, 1st ed (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992); Richard J. Foster and Emilie Griffin, eds., *Spiritual Classics: Selected Readings on the Twelve Spiritual Disciplines* (San Francisco: HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers, 2007).

¹²⁴ "Renovaré," accessed March 7, 2024, <https://renovare.org>.

Dallas Willard has made significant and comprehensive contributions to the discipline.¹²⁵ In *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, Willard makes a case for confession (repentance) as one of the vital spiritual disciplines. Interestingly, he puts it in the context of community and asserts that the lack of this discipline in the community of believers (as opposed to a private, individualistic practice) is a significant cause for “the superficial quality so commonly found in our church associations.”¹²⁶

A passionate proponent of spiritual formation, especially in leaders, is Ruth Haley Barton.¹²⁷ She published a powerful blog post on the Transforming Center website entitled *Practicing Repentance*. In the post Barton avows that confession (repentance) is so essential that to “stop short...is to stop short of the deepest levels of transformation.”¹²⁸ She makes such a convincing case for the power of healthy confession in which our failures are acknowledged, owned, and repented of (with restitution as needed) that it is hard to dismiss the truth of it. She also recommends the regular practice of *examen*:

The Christian practice of the *examen* of conscience helps us to name our sins in God’s presence so that we can turn away from that which is destructive in our lives. It involves reviewing some portion of our lives—such as a day or a week, or maybe even the patterns of a life-time—asking God to bring to mind attitudes, actions and negative patterns that prevented us from fully entering into God’s will in our lives. We are willing to listen without defending and to see without rationalizing. We do not depend upon our

¹²⁵ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*; Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting On the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002); Dallas Willard and Jan Johnson, *Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice: Experiments in Spiritual Transformation* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006).

¹²⁶ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 188.

¹²⁷ Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009); “Transforming Center,” n.d., <https://transformingcenter.org>.

¹²⁸ Ruth Haley Barton, “Beyond Words,” *Practicing Repentance* (blog), accessed February 29, 2024, <https://transformingcenter.org/2009/03/practicing-repentance/>.

own morbid introspections or keen insights; rather we surrender ourselves to the Spirit of God who reveals truth to us as we are able to bear it.¹²⁹

While these and others have a strong commitment to spiritual growth and transformation by means of regularly exercised spiritual disciplines and practices, none of them come from Wesleyan church traditions. That being the case, it is easy for Nazarene readers to disregard their admonitions because of our doctrine of entire sanctification. Therefore, it is necessary to explore where the Church of the Nazarene stands on this matter of spiritual formation.

Nazarene Views of Spiritual Formation and Repentance

As was mentioned earlier, spiritual formation as an academic discipline in the Church of the Nazarene seems to have emerged with a few proponents and practitioners in the late 1990s. Although much Nazarene discipleship and spiritual formation seems to be centered around guiding people to entire sanctification, these “spiritual formation” authors began talking and writing about accountability among Christians.¹³⁰ For example, consider this quote from Weigelt and Freeborn: “We are free to live wisely within the Body of Christ. The accountability and reinforcement of the community protects us. The success of 12-step programs demonstrates the power of community. May the Church become such a force of deliverance and stability.”¹³¹ Statements such as these reveal a heart for sustained growth. However, it is simply a nod toward repentance of fleshly behavior as a tool for the stated accountability, but no explicit instruction.

¹²⁹ Barton.

¹³⁰ Tracy et al., *The Upward Call*, 149–51.

¹³¹ Morris A. Weigelt and E. Dee Freeborn, *Living the Lord’s Prayer: The Heart of Spiritual Formation* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001), 96.

Nazarene theologians affirm the need for growth in holiness. Dunning describes a significant component of growth comes from “occasion,” indicating that growth is not isolated from community but actually requires interaction (repentance?) with others.¹³² Purkiser writes that holiness grows in the heart and life of the sanctified (although this discussion is in the context of arguing that growth does not make one more holy, even as character is improved.)¹³³ Knight, in discussing acting poorly “on occasion” instructs that “for these failures we need the atonement of Christ and should seek forgiveness.”¹³⁴ Once again, the implication is that repentance is a tool for correcting “occasional” poor behavior, but not as a regular practice.

Finally, Diane Leclerc and Mark Maddix have co-authored a Nazarene “manual” of sorts on spiritual formation entitled, *Spiritual Formation: A Wesleyan Paradigm*. Like so many other Nazarene resources, Leclerc and Maddix emphasize that sanctification opens up new opportunities for growth but provides little practical tools for achieving that growth.¹³⁵

Of particular significance at this juncture is to note that these are essentially the only Nazarene spiritual formation resources. That is not to say that others do not address spiritual formation interests, as will be noted shortly. However, the Nazarene emphasis on spiritual formation as a discipline is quite sparse. When exploring Nazarene spiritual formation resources, I contacted the professor who teaches this topic at Nazarene Theological Seminary (NTS). I mentioned the early spiritual formation leaders in the Church of the Nazarene and asked if he knew of other more current resources. He replied: “I’m not aware of specifically Nazarene

¹³² Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, 475–76.

¹³³ Purkiser, Taylor, and Taylor, *God, Man & Salvation*, 470–71.

¹³⁴ John A. Knight, *All Loves Excelling: Proclaiming Our Wesleyan Message* (Kansas City, Mo: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1995), 118.

¹³⁵ Leclerc and Maddix, *Spiritual Formation*, 60–61.

writings beyond the ones you've already mentioned.”¹³⁶ It was the NTS librarian who pointed me to the Leclerc and Maddix work. The point is this: there is a void in Nazarene literature when it comes to spiritual formation.

As I mentioned earlier, there are others who have not yet been recognized as leaders in spiritual formation, even though their writings indicate a strong interest and adept skill in communication on these themes. I am honored that one such author is the second reader for this project, Dr. Doug Van Nest. In a series of blog posts walking through the Lord’s Prayer through the Lenten season in 2023, Dr. Van Nest offered a solid case for confession and repentance in the life of the believer. In it he warned that “our neglect [of ongoing confession and repentance] sacrifices something essential to our spiritual formation.”¹³⁷ The argument is then taken a step further in relation to the life of holiness:

Far from removing the need for confession, the heart that is fully surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus feels the need for confession and repentance more deeply than before. The heart that has been made perfect in love sees with ever-increasing clarity the ways we fail to actually live out that perfect love. It recognizes the ongoing need for the grace of God to transform our broken humanity into the image of Christ. The holy heart prays daily, as Jesus taught us to pray, “forgive us our debts.”¹³⁸

Even though the presence of spiritual formation resources from a Nazarene/Wesleyan perspective is limited, there is a growing conversation among clergy and scholars around practical strategies for growth in holiness, and confession and repentance are included.

¹³⁶ Douglas Hardy, “E-Mail Regarding Nazarene Spiritual Formation Resources,” February 23, 2024.

¹³⁷ Douglas Van Nest, “This, Then, Is How You Should Pray...Confession: The Lord’s Prayer Forms Us Into a People of Confession,” *Blessed Are Those* (blog), March 20, 2023, https://open.substack.com/pub/douglasvannest/p/this-then-is-how-you-should-pray-6ba?r=25shyv&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=email.

¹³⁸ Van Nest.

Conclusion

Spiritual formation has been a continual concern of the church of God and has developed into a formal academic discipline. Covering a wide range of focal points in order to maximize spiritual (and personal) growth, invariably there is a component directed at confession, which often carries a nuance of repentance. Non-Wesleyan contributors readily embrace confession and repentance as a viable and positive regular, ongoing practice. The Wesleyan writers I have encountered are more reticent to do so.

When searching for spiritual formation writers from a Wesleyan theological perspective, the resources are slim. While there are a few Nazarene contributors, most of them are from the late twentieth century with only one contemporary resource discovered from 2011. Because of the commitment to the doctrine of entire sanctification as it has been taught and understood in Nazarene history, there is a general reluctance to embrace confession, let alone the more personally indicting practice of repentance. While the conversation validating repentance without discarding entire sanctification and holiness is growing in the Church of the Nazarene, the landscape is generally bare.

Nonetheless, many are working to revive the confessional/repentant practices of John Wesley. Even though he held a high view of entire sanctification, he was also committed to the personal and communal practice of repentance as he strongly counsels:

Be always ready to own any fault you have been in. If you have at any time thought, spoke, or acted wrong, be not backward to acknowledge it. Never dream that this will hurt the cause of God; no, it will further it. Be therefore open and frank, when you are taxed with anything; do not seek either to evade or disguise it; but let it appear just as it is, and you will thereby not hinder, but adorn, the gospel.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 96–97.

Summary of Findings

The doctrine of entire sanctification has been and continues to be a driving force in the Church of the Nazarene. There is good reason for this! However, from the mid-twentieth century forward, there has also been a growing concern for the lack of holiness observed in sanctified believers. A concern has consistently been voiced related to the nature of sin and what can properly be called sin. Concomitant with this concern is the question of how to manage “shortcomings, mistakes, and frailties.”¹⁴⁰

There have been long-standing arguments addressing these concerns that primarily focus on the positive impact of entire sanctification with a focus on allowing the Spirit to guide in such a way so as to make repentance all but unnecessary. However, modern writers on the topic¹⁴¹ are stepping forward to confront the issue head-on. They are unwilling to dismiss what they are clearly observing in the body of Christ and are calling the church to a more mature holiness.

Even so, the Nazarene literature on spiritual formation and the practice of repentance is very slim. Nonetheless, there seems to be a growing conversation addressing these issues and particularly calling the church back to many of John Wesley’s practices, most commonly the class meetings.

A possible influence on the reticence in Nazarene circles to embrace repentance as a viable attendant to entire sanctification is the way σάρξ has been understood. In the years following the life of Jesus, the predominant understanding of the term is what I call a plain reading, meaning that the standard gloss for the term (“flesh”) was embraced. The theological

¹⁴⁰ Van Nest, “This, Then, Is How You Should Pray...Confession: The Lord’s Prayer Forms Us Into a People of Confession.”

¹⁴¹ Josh Broward and Thomas Jay Oord, *Renovating Holiness*, 2015.

and ecclesial milieu called for this understanding as Docetism, Gnosticism, and other heresies were being confronted that undermined the value of the body/“flesh”.

However, once those divergent views were dealt with, theologians were able to turn their attention to a more nuanced understanding of σάρξ. From the reformation forward, the general consensus has been that σάρξ is directly related to sin, the sinful nature, and an innate sinful condition brought about by the fall. It has not been until recent years that this view has been challenged with a proposition that affirms the neutrality of σάρξ while admitting to sin’s hijacking of natural human desires residing in the σάρξ.

This project now turns to an exegetical glance at Romans 7:14—8:13 before delving into a survey of Nazarene ministers across the contiguous United States regarding the practice of repentance both personally and within their local congregations.

CHAPTER THREE

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF ROMANS 7:1—8:13 AND ΣΑΡΞ (*SARX*) WORD STUDY

Introduction and Approach

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the propriety of a plain reading of the Greek term σάρξ, specifically in Romans 7:1—8:13. Though the natural gloss is “flesh”, the term is often translated as “sinful nature” or is footnoted in the translation indicating a similar sentiment. Understanding the term in this way creates a certain interpretive nuance that spiritualizes the term. In doing so, the practical reality of desires and behaviors inherent in the human condition becomes problematic.

If these natural human desires are equated with the “flesh”, then human weakness is easily demonized, and a sense of spiritual failure ensues. However, if they are disconnected from σάρξ, then they can be categorically dismissed as simply “human nature.” The result is that human error is perceived as either a spiritual problem resulting in a sense of defeat or as “human nature” and disregarded. In both instances, the aberrant behavior is not faithfully addressed. Consequently, personal and spiritual maturity is stunted because the reality of the human condition becomes practically untouchable.

A natural reading of σάρξ, however, opens the potential of dealing with human weakness without compromising spiritual reality. Indeed, spiritual experience becomes a foundation from which human weakness can be addressed naturally, without undue condemnation or disregard.

The intent of this chapter is to explore how σάρξ is used in the New Testament and specifically in Romans in order to clarify translation and interpretive possibilities. To this end, a general overview of the Epistle to the Romans will be presented with the goal of placing the Romans 7:1—8:13 segment in its proper context within the epistle as a whole. Furthermore, a more detailed survey of the segment will focus on how σάρξ is used specifically in relation to the argument of the segment, which holds the densest use of the term in all of Romans and even in the New Testament. Finally, a detailed word study of σάρξ and its use in the New Testament will be presented as a tool to inform how the term is to be understood. A proposal for how to best comprehend the term will be offered in response to this analysis.

It should be noted that this chapter is essentially my own work and analysis. I will reference an unpublished word study I received from Dr. James Davison, a Winebrenner professor with many years as the professor of Greek and also my project chair. After reviewing the piece and analyzing the data, I drew conclusions for this chapter. Otherwise, the work in this chapter is original to myself with some reference to other scholars who confirm my thoughts.

Survey of The Epistle to the Romans

General Overview

The following is a general overview of the Epistle to the Romans giving specific attention to how the Romans 7:1—8:13 segment fits in the context as a whole. The purpose is to gain a better understanding of the segment and ultimately the meaning of σάρξ. It should be noted that the scope of this project does not allow for, nor does it call for, a thorough analysis of Romans. Therefore, broad strokes will be used as the epistle is examined. Finally, a detailed outline as well as visual representations of the epistle and segment can be found in Appendices E, F, and G.

In its most basic sense, Romans is divided into three groupings: the introductory comments (Rom 1:1-1:17), the letter body (Rom 1:18—15:13), and the closing comments (Rom 15:14—16:27). In the introductory comments, Paul identifies himself as the author and the recipients as “all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people”¹⁴² (Rom 1:7). As the letter progresses, we understand that the “all in Rome” include Christians from both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds. The introductory comments also set the stage, foreshadowing what is to come concerning the nature of the gospel and the qualifications for participation in it. Paul explains that he has been eager to visit Rome so that they and he “may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith” (Rom 1:12). Before concluding his greeting, he asserts that his calling and obligation is to unashamedly share the gospel to both “Greeks and non-Greeks” (Rom 1:14), because it is “the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16). This statement, along with Romans 1:17—“For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”—becomes the thesis statement for the epistle.¹⁴³

The letter body then spells out just how this is to be understood in two large sections that can be further sub-divided. The first large section I have labeled “Gospel Truth” and spans Romans 1:18—11:36. This section spells out the theology of the gospel and clarifies various

¹⁴² *The Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

¹⁴³ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty*, Logos Bible Study Software Edition (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 437; Walvoord and Zuck, 441; Wilbur T. Dayton, “The Epistle of Paul to the Romans,” in *Romans - Philemon*, vol. 5, *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1966), 5; Witherington and Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 47.

theological concepts. The second large section can be labeled “Gospel Praxis” (Rom 12:1—15:13) and focuses on how the gospel is to be lived out in the real world.¹⁴⁴

The first section—“Gospel Truth”—can be further divided into two large sections, “True Law” (Rom 1:18—8:13) and “True Israel” (Rom 8:14—11:36). Although most commentators suggest a clean break at Romans 9, I have chosen to include the second half of Romans 8 with chapters 9—11 because of the connection between sonship and Israel’s identity with God.

“True Law” covers Romans 1:18—8:13 and focuses on a comprehensive understanding of the law: its origin, limitations, fulfillment/reframing, and ultimate freedom. Beginning with a view of judgment (Rom 1:18—3:19), the apostle spells out the condition of humanity (Rom 1:18-1:32), the similar condition of the people of God (Rom 2:1-2:11), followed by an affirmation that all people are now subject to God’s judgment, whether they have the law or not (Rom 2:12-2:16). He addresses the issue of circumcision, affirming that the circumcision God requires is one of the heart, thereby putting Jew and Gentile on equal footing when it comes to the gospel (Rom 2:17—3:18).

This sets up the argument that humanity, therefore, must be saved through faith (Rom 3:19—4:25). Using Abraham, the father of the faith, as an example of one who was declared righteous before circumcision or, by inference, the law had been instituted, Paul makes a case for salvation fundamentally being by faith and not by keeping the law. This becomes a driving theology as he moves through chapters 5 and 6, ultimately coming to the conclusion that “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23).

¹⁴⁴ This general breakdown of the body of the letter is consistently affirmed by most scholars, including: Witherington and Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 280; Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 170; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1996), 47.

Paul then builds on this conclusion to discuss how he can legitimately claim freedom from the law. Connecting the death of Jesus with the release from the requirements of the law when a person dies, he makes the claim that we are released from the law through our identification with the death of Jesus (Rom 7:1-7:13). Nonetheless, a challenge is continually present in that the σάρξ and its desires are persistently in conflict with the desires of the Spirit (Rom 7:14-7:25). The only source of relief is “through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 7:25) with a clear inference to freedom from the law through the death of Jesus.¹⁴⁵

This section is wrapped up with a beautiful picture of living in freedom and “no condemnation” (Rom 8:1) by means of living life “in accordance with the Spirit” (Rom 8:5). Interestingly, the summary statement at the end of this segment emphasizes NOT living according to the flesh rather than living according to the Spirit (Rom 8:13).¹⁴⁶ Instead, the assertion is that “if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live” (Rom 8:13). Living according to the Spirit can be construed in a very disconnected, spiritual sense whereas not living according to the flesh requires practical, real-life action. This will turn out to be a significant statement when the segment analysis is examined.

The second subsection features Paul’s discussion of the concept of sonship and election in Romans 8:14—11:36 in the light of Romans 1:18—8:13. Having made the case in the first major sub-section that people are justified by faith and not by the law, Paul now extends the concept to election. Election, then, is for those who are the true Israel as defined by their

¹⁴⁵ Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Paulus, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 1. Yale Univ. Press impr, vol. 33, The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2008), 476; Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, eds., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Rev. ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 124.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Aquinas, “Romans 8”, in Ian Christopher Levy, Philip D. Krey, and Thomas Ryan, eds., *The Letter to the Romans*, The Bible in Medieval Tradition (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Company, 2013), 187.

righteousness through faith. What the Israelites had depended on for their salvation is now understood in terms of true faithfulness to God rather than the law or heritage. In this way, the Gentiles are fully “grafted in” (Rom 11:13-11:27) and mercy is extended to all, whether Jew or Gentile (Rom 11:28-11:32). The end of it all is an explosive doxology exalting the wisdom and knowledge of God that is a glorious mystery beyond understanding (Rom 11:22-11:26).

The second large section follows: Gospel Praxis (Rom 12:1-15:13). After beginning with a powerful exhortation to offer ourselves to God as living sacrifices, not conforming to the world but being transformed by the renewing of the mind (Rom 12:1-2), Paul launches into a series of short ethical instructions (Rom 12:3-12:21). He then spends a little more time addressing the relationship with governing authorities (Rom 13:1-13:6) followed by an admonition to love and live well (Rom 13:7-13:14). He spends the final portion of this practical section on the need for mutual respect (Rom 14:1—15:13).

One significant observation here is that this praxis section focuses on behavior in the physical bodies of the believer. While scholars do not specifically note this observation, it is clear from the titles they give to this final section that practical, everyday living is in view.¹⁴⁷ This perspective influences how Romans 7:1—8:13 is to be understood in terms of the meaning of σάρξ, which will be addressed in more detail later.

Paul’s concluding comments are fairly extensive and span Romans 15:14—16:27. In them, he reviews his calling and mission (Rom 15:14-15:22), shares his traveling itinerary (Rom 15:23-15:29), requests prayer (Rom 15:30-15:33), shares commendations and greetings to specific Romans (Rom 16:1-16:16), warns about false teachers and division (Rom 16:17-16:20),

¹⁴⁷ *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2156; Fitzmyer and Paulus, *AYB Romans*, 33:96; Witherington and Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 280.

sends greetings from his co-laborers (Rom 16:21-16:24), and concludes with a benediction (Rom 16:25-16:27).

General Observations

There are several observations that could be noted. However, I limit the observations to those things that highlight the question at hand, namely, “How is *σάρξ* to be understood in Romans, and specifically in Romans 7:1—8:13?” With that in mind, I offer these two main observations.

First of all, while it is not explicitly stated, Paul clearly indicates that there is always a physical component involved in sin and righteousness. This can be observed throughout the epistle, making specific notation of references virtually impossible. However, the active nature of the human being in sin as well as in righteousness can be summarized by chapters as follows: sinful behavior in chapter 1; sinful and righteous behavior in chapter 2; offering members of the body to sin or righteousness in chapter 6; doing and not doing in chapter 7; living according to the flesh or the spirit in chapter 8; exhortations to godly behavior in chapters 12-15.

The significance of this in relation to *σάρξ* is that *σάρξ*, therefore, must carry a physical component to it. When *σάρξ* is translated “sinful nature”, a potential and common inference is that *σάρξ* is a spiritual thing and not a physical thing. However, since the thrust of the epistle is actual, physical, practical, real-life behavior, the “sinful nature” translation becomes suspect from my perspective. If *σάρξ* were to be read plainly as “flesh”, the real-life, physical, active theme that has been present throughout would be sustained.

The second general observation is the recurrence of *σάρξ* as well as *σῶμα* (*soma*, “body”). Looking first at *σάρξ*, there are some 27 recurrences of the term throughout the epistle. Furthermore, those recurrences are scattered throughout with a dense 16 recurrences in the

segment in question (Rom 7:1—8:13). This can be seen visually in Appendices F and G and is also noted in Dr. Davison’s “Reflections on Sarx in the New Testament” document, which can be found in Appendix H. A detailed analysis of the term is forthcoming, but it is significant to note here that in the Epistle to the Romans, the translation of σάρξ in the NIV 1984 always (with one exception) has a plain translation—meaning that it references humanity or the physical component of humanity in some way—except for the Romans 7:1—8:13 segment. This will be addressed further later in this chapter, but for now suffice it to say that this seems to be a clear interpretive translation of the term.

In addition to this, it is important to note the recurrence of σῶμα (*soma*, “body”) throughout the epistle, and particularly the five recurrences in the Romans 7:1—8:13 segment. With this term, there is little confusion about its meaning. Therefore, noting that it is often used in apposition to σάρξ, there is a suspicion that Paul is using the terms somewhat interchangeably. Although not entirely consistent, there are instances when it appears that he is addressing the same concept. F. F. Bruce seems to agree in his excellent excursus on the meaning of “flesh” in Paul’s writings found in his commentary on Romans.¹⁴⁸ Of particular note from my analysis is the summary statement found in Romans 8:12-13—“Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the **flesh**, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the **flesh**, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the **body**, you will live” (NIV 2011, emphasis added). In this verse, “the misdeeds of the body” lies in apposition to living “according to the flesh.” This understanding is further supported by the active, physical nature of sin and righteousness as has been previously stated.

¹⁴⁸ F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, v. 6 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 53.

The Place of Romans 7:1—8:13 in the Logic of the Epistle

Focusing on the segment as it lies within the epistle as a whole seems to indicate that it functions somewhat as a summative bridge between Romans 1:18—6:23 and Romans 8:1—11:36. In Romans 1:18—6:23, Paul reframes the meaning of the law and positions faith as the true catalyst for righteousness. Again, it is a faith that is marked by physical action, as was exemplified by Abraham. When Paul gets to chapter 7, there is a sense that he is recapping what has been previously stated. He returns to the regulations of the law at the beginning of chapter 7 and shows how humanity is now set free from the weight of the law's regulations; it no longer has dominion because of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Since he died—and we died with him (as is stated in chapter 6)—he has been released from the law, as have we, so that we “serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code” (Rom 7:6).

Paul then goes on to articulate a continued tension between the σάρξ and the law of the mind and Spirit. He concludes chapter 7 in agony over his condition in which he is battling with his flesh. Just as the flesh had been the major obstacle for the original law (as observed in chapters 1—4), so now the flesh is the major obstacle for life free from the law. Again, there is an echo from chapters 1—6 that is seen here, even as he concludes chapter 7 with a strong statement of assurance that Christ brings victory.

As he moves into chapter 8, there is a renewed sense of victory that reflects the sentiment of chapter 6. This time, however, it is not simply eternal life that is gained (Rom 6:23), but freedom in this life that is achieved by living according to the Spirit (Rom 8:8). Furthermore, Paul affirms that Christ did something in his death and resurrection that overcomes what the law was not able to accomplish because it was weakened by the σάρξ (Rom 8:3-4). It is a beautiful

picture of σάρξ losing its position of authority and being relegated to its proper place of submission to the ways of the Spirit!

This then sets the stage for Paul’s discussion of sonship and election. As we move into Romans 9:1—11:36, we are in a position to understand our Christian identity in terms of faith and Spirit and not in terms of heritage and adherence to law. In this way, Paul reframes what it means to be children of God and the elect. He affirms that it is not by the σάρξ, but rather the mercy and calling of God coupled with faith (Rom 9:6-33) that places us among the elect. In other words, Paul is continuing his argument that life in the Spirit keeps σάρξ in submission so that life in the Spirit can abound by faith.

Survey of the Segment Romans 7:1—8:13

Romans 7:1—8:13 can be divided into three sections: Romans 7:1-7:13 (“The Authority OF and Release FROM the Law”), Romans 7:14-7:25 (“Conflict of Mind and Flesh”), and Romans 8:1-8:13 (“Freedom by Living According to the Spirit”). (See Appendix G for a visual representation of the segment.) As previously mentioned, this segment echoes the first six chapters of the epistle to some degree. It begins with what is known about the law, then moves to how the law has been redefined by the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

Paul then introduces how the flesh is still in conflict with life in the Spirit, which is understood as faith in the first six chapters. Under the law, there was no provision for fleshly weaknesses. In Romans 7:1—8:13, Paul reframes the law and what it means to walk in righteousness by acknowledging the challenge presented by σάρξ.

The segment climaxes at Romans 7:24-25 with an agonizing plea for deliverance that is met with a powerful solution: “through Jesus Christ our Lord!” The idea is that the death of Jesus Christ has removed the weight and obligation to the law. In its place, a new kind of righteousness

has emerged by faith. Nonetheless, the σάρξ is still at work and in conflict with this new life of righteousness. However, the inner being acknowledges the good that ought to be done even while the σάρξ is striving against it. This is the conflict that is done away with through Christ Jesus.

Paul then pivots dramatically and declares that now—since the conflict between the σάρξ and the obligation felt by the law has been abolished—there is “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1). Furthermore, while the law was sabotaged by the σάρξ, Jesus defeated that σάρξ and destroyed its power over godly living (Rom 8:2). He then goes on to explain that living according to the Spirit is life but living according to the σάρξ is death. However, it is now possible to not live according to the σάρξ, but according to the Spirit.

The segment ends with a summary statement affirming life in the Spirit, not giving attention to the desires of the σάρξ (Rom 8:12-13). Interestingly, this final statement juxtaposes σάρξ and σῶμα (*soma*, “body”) in such a way that seems to link the two concepts suggesting that σάρξ has more to do with the human condition and the body that carries that condition than with a spiritual “sinful nature” that controls human behavior.

Σάρξ (*Sarx*) Word Study

Narrowing the study to the actual term of concern, engaging an analysis of the use of the term through the New Testament is in order to discern its meaning. Since the particular focus of this research is the segment made up of Romans 7:1—8:13, a more detailed look at Paul’s use of the term in the Epistle to the Romans will follow.

I am indebted to Dr. James Davison for his personal research on σάρξ and for making it available to me for this investigation. His “Reflections on Sarx in the New Testament” can be found in its entirety in Appendix H with some additions I contributed as a means of analysis. His

work uses the NIV 1984 text and includes a statistical overview of the term’s usage along with two cognate adjectives: σαρκικός (*sarkikos*, “human”) and σάρκινος (*sarkinos*, “fleshly”). Davison includes a chart listing all uses of these terms along with their NIV 1984 translations, as found in Appendix I. From this, I have analyzed and drawn conclusions as to the meaning of the terms, which follow.

Davison notes that σάρξ appears 147 times in the New Testament while σάρκινος (*sarkinos*) and σαρκικός (*sarkikos*) appear 4 and 7 times respectively.¹⁴⁹ Since the adjectival versions are rather straight forward and provide no substantial obstacle to interpretation, I will focus my attention on σάρξ. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the adjectival cognates would point toward a plain reading of σάρξ—“flesh”—as opposed to a spiritualized “sinful nature.”

The use of σάρξ is spread throughout the New Testament, appearing in almost every New Testament writing. That being said, Romans includes 26 instances which is more than twice the occurrences than any other book except for Galatians, which is slightly less than twice.¹⁵⁰ When you consider usage by New Testament authors, Paul by far dominates the field with nearly 62% of all occurrences coming from his pen.¹⁵¹ Although this is somewhat predictable in light of the volume of epistles he contributed to the New Testament, it is also important to note that all of his epistles use the term multiple times, with the Gospel of John the only other book with comparable usage.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ James Davison, “Reflections on Sarx in the New Testament” (unpublished, 2023).

¹⁵⁰ Davison.

¹⁵¹ Davison.

¹⁵² Davison.

The plain gloss for σάρξ is “flesh” or “body”¹⁵³ with Liddell, Scott, and Jones noting two additional glosses: “portions of meat” and “pieces of flesh or membrane.”¹⁵⁴ That being said, Davison lists the 33 different ways σάρξ is translated in the NIV 1984. (The complete list can be found in Appendix I.) The most significant translations are: “flesh” (34 times), “sinful nature” (25 times, 13 of which are in Romans), “body” (21 times), “human” (6 times), with the remaining 61 a spattering of various terms that are mostly related to the translations already listed.

When evaluating the data, a guiding principle is to assume an essentially plain reading unless the context is clearly figurative. Bauer and Traina affirm this principle in *Inductive Bible Study*. In discussing the hermeneutical principles involved in interpreting epistolary passages (which are understood to be discursive), they assert: “The assumption of discursive literary form is that the language will be literal rather than figurative.”¹⁵⁵ In other words, the interpreter should assume a literal understanding of terms unless a figurative, metaphorical usage is clearly in view. With that in mind, the number of clearly figurative uses of σάρξ in the New Testament is very slim. (See Appendix J.)

With the figurative uses numbering no more than 13, the remaining 134 occurrences reveal several literal uses of the term, the most common ones being “flesh” (34), “body” (21), or various terms referencing humanity, race, inheritance, or posterity (around 20 times). The bulk of the remaining uses are also very literal and reflect the reasonability of a plain reading of the term.

¹⁵³ Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*; Louw and Nida, *Louw-Nida*.

¹⁵⁴ Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*.

¹⁵⁵ David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 150.

Before considering the specific uses of the term in Romans, it is important to note that there are at least 25 instances of an interpretive translation of σάρξ as “sinful nature.” Some points to consider here are that nowhere is σάρξ clearly sinful or evil.¹⁵⁶ This is a conclusion that Davison comes to and that I affirm in light of the word usage, despite some scholars who assert that those instances where it is translated “sinful nature” (as in Romans and Galatians) do, indeed, point to σάρξ as an evil force in the human being.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, “sinful” or “evil” or other adjectives attached to “nature” are rarely in the Greek text; they are supplied by the translators. Reflecting back on the literature review from the previous chapter, σάρξ has had a long history of being interpreted as an evil thing,¹⁵⁸ although the earliest interpreters read σάρξ plainly (see Chapter Two—“Historical Voices” and Appendix D). However, upon careful examination there appears to be little evidence to support this long-standing interpretive tradition.

In the Romans 7:1—8:13 segment under investigation, virtually all the uses are either translated “sinful nature” or have a footnote indicating that “in contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit” (NIV 2011). However, I have some concerns with this interpretive translation.

First of all, σάρξ is used some 26 times in the epistle as a whole. Of those 26 instances, 9 are plain readings and reference physical, human existence in some form. The other 17, which are translated as “sinful nature” or the like, are found entirely in Romans 7:1—8:13 with the

¹⁵⁶ Davison, “Sarx”; Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*.

¹⁵⁷ Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 383; Clarke, *Adam Clarke*, 6:94.

¹⁵⁸ Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 393–94; Clarke, *Adam Clarke*, 6:86; Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 144.

exception of 1 occurrence in Romans 13:14. It is unclear why the meaning of the term would switch in the middle of the epistle without a clear and compelling reason, especially in light of the various ways that σάρξ is used outside of Romans 7:1—8:13, such as Jesus being in his “earthly life” a descendant of David (Rom 1:3), circumcision being outward and “physical” (Rom 2:28), or Paul giving an example for everyday life because of “human limitations” (Rom 6:19).

Furthermore, Paul uses σῶμα (*soma*, “body”) throughout the epistle in similar ways and often in juxtaposition to his use of σάρξ, the most notable one already mentioned above being

Translations of σάρξ (*sarx*) in the NIV

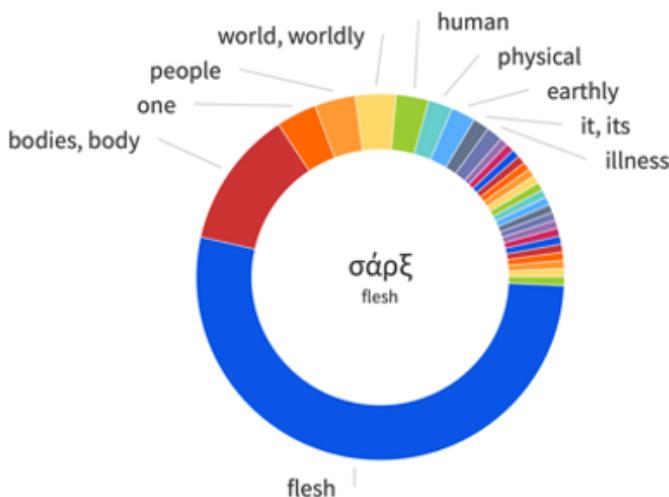


Figure 1: Translations of Σάρξ (Sarx) in the NIV

Romans 8:13 (“For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”) In this verse, σάρξ and σῶμα (*soma*, “body”) seem to be sitting in apposition to each other, mutually informing the meaning.

In working through the contexts in which σάρξ is used, it seems that the term experiences a

“spiritualization” or “moralization” when it comes to certain passages dealing with human behavior in light of God’s holy standards. Figure 1 graphically shows how σάρξ is translated in the NIV 2011.¹⁵⁹ It is predominantly translated as “flesh” in this translation, which is similar in

¹⁵⁹ “Logos Bible Software” (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2024 2000).

other translations. However, observe the “sense” of the term as found in the Logos Bible Software Senses Tool found in Figure 2. The sense of the term shifts to include the spiritualized “sinful humanity.” This sense, according to the Sense Tool, applies across translations and, when the specific references that make up this breakout are evaluated it becomes clear that it shifts away from the tangible humanity sense to the sinful humanity sense specifically in the passages where godly living is in view, such as here in Romans 7 and 8.¹⁶⁰

However, a demystifying of the term, allowing the term to stand on its own merits, can have a powerful impact on meaning and translation. Following Bauer and Traina’s principle of assuming literal word usage over against figurative usage in discursive literature,¹⁶¹ allowing for a plain reading of the term in the “spiritualized” occasions reveals that a meaningful

“Senses” of σάρξ (sarx) in the NIV

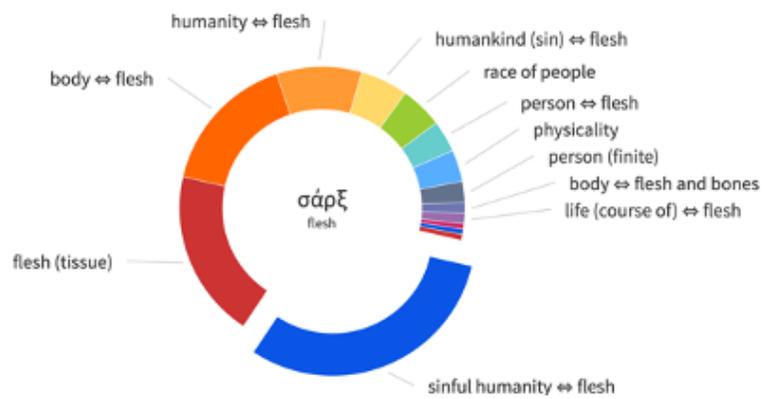


Figure 2: “Senses” of Σάρξ (Sarx) in the NIV

understanding can be achieved in virtually all instances. Furthermore, accepting a plain reading will actually empower the text to communicate a truth about the spiritual life that has eluded the American Holiness church for some time, namely the necessity for maturity in the “fleshly” realms of life which, in turn, powerfully impacts the spiritual life.

¹⁶⁰ *Bible Sense Lexicon*, Logos Bible Software 9.15 (Faithlife, LLC, 2022).

¹⁶¹ Bauer and Traina, *Inductive Bible Study*, 150.

Conclusion

In considering the meaning of σάρξ, it becomes clear that the vast majority of its uses are translated plainly using language that essentially communicates “flesh” or some kind of human existence or condition. However, there are perhaps a quarter of the instances in which a “spiritualized”, interpretive translation is used, namely “sinful nature” or the like. After careful review of these occurrences, it is evident that this interpretive translation is not necessary. In fact, in many instances it muddles the meaning and causes unnecessary confusion in the believer.

The term translated plainly makes sense in virtually every context in which it appears. Furthermore, it reads better in Romans and specifically in Romans 7:1—8:13. Reading this segment using “sinful nature” has motivated many a scholar to perform “exegetical acrobatics” to make chapter 7 make sense.¹⁶² However, a plain reading makes sense without extra gyrations to make it work.

The demystifying of the term allows it to speak to humanity at its most basic needs, which is ironically the σάρξ. Foundational to Christian doctrine is the belief that something is very wrong in the human condition.¹⁶³ As has been observed in Chapter Two, many scholars from the Reformation forward have credited the sinful nature, or original sin, for this “wrongness”. (See Appendix D.) In doing so, it has been inferred that the problem is fully spiritual in nature. As such, it can be disconnected from physical reality to some degree in that the only remedy is some form of spiritual cleansing. For Nazarenes, that is the role of the Holy

¹⁶² A displacement of the flow of logic in Romans 7 is asserted by various scholars, including Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 393; Witherington and Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 179; Greathouse, *BBE Romans*, 6:118; John A. T. Robinson, *Wrestling with Romans* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), 81–95.

¹⁶³ Wilson et al., *Church of the Nazarene Manual 2017-2021*; Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 117.

Spirit in entire sanctification. However, as I mentioned in Chapter One, confusion and spiritual angst arises when human error and weaknesses surface. They must be dismissed as immaterial to the nature of holiness and the work of entire sanctification or embraced as spiritual defeat.

On the other hand, if the “wrongness” is understood not only as a spiritual condition, but also as a physical condition of all of humanity due to the fall, then practical and meaningful steps can be taken to address human error and weaknesses without compromising the powerful and necessary experience of entire sanctification. A plain reading of σάρξ, especially in the Epistle to the Romans, opens up fresh, unexpected possibilities for discipleship and spiritual growth that have been often overlooked, allowing the follower of Jesus to revel in the work of God in their life while at the same time acknowledging and joyfully addressing error and weakness in the human condition. I am suggesting that a plain reading opens up the possibility for a healthy practice of repentance in which human error and weaknesses can be faithfully addressed without compromising the experience of entire sanctification.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN

This project researched the theology and practices of Nazarene pastors throughout the United States in relation to how repentance is understood and exercised both personally and in Nazarene congregations. The intent was to discern how acceptable a regular practice of repentance is to Nazarene pastors. Of particular interest is the impact the interpretation of σάρξ (“flesh” or “sinful nature”) had on their theology and praxis

Research Target

A survey targeted licensed and assigned pastors in Nazarene churches in the contiguous United States who are part of one of the sixty-seven English-speaking districts. A district is defined as English-speaking according to the dominant language in which the district does business. While many of the districts have ethnically based congregations, if the primary language used for business at the district level is English, they were included in the research. There are a few districts in the USA region that are specifically labeled ethnically, such as Southwest Native American and Texas Oklahoma Latin. These were not included due to both linguistic barriers and cultural variances.

The portion of the USA/Canada region that is the focus of this research is divided up into eight Missional Fields: Northwest USA, Southwest USA, North Central USA, South Central USA, Central USA, East Central USA, Southeast USA, and Eastern USA. Each Field is

comprised of between six and eleven districts. Not all districts participated in the research, but all Missional Fields are represented by at least two districts. The breadth of participation across the USA provided a representational sample of the way Nazarene pastors, at least in the United States, perceive the role of repentance as it intersects with entire sanctification. (See Appendix L for a map of the fields and districts as well as which districts participated.)

Research Methodology

The research design implemented a qualitative tool that included both open-ended and multiple-choice questions using secure online technology. The twenty-question survey was divided into five sections: Demographics (four questions), Doctrinal/Theological Perspectives (two questions), Biblical Perspectives (four questions), Personal Practice (four questions), and Corporate Practice (six questions). Of the twenty questions, ten questions were multiple-choice with five of those questions providing a possible “Other” response that was open-ended. The other ten questions were open-ended, inviting participants to freely share their thoughts. A printed copy of the online survey can be found in Appendix N.

The demographic questions were of necessity quantitative. The other questions that were quantitative in nature were designed in order to gain a fundamental, broad perspective of Nazarene pastoral opinion. Furthermore, these are questions in which an open-ended response could obscure the results for the purpose of this research. In other words, I was looking for some specific variables that, from my experience as a Nazarene and a Nazarene pastor, could be summarized according to the multiple-choice options presented. Open-ended responses here could have produced such a varied refinement of the essential data so as to make the data incomprehensible.

Nuances of understanding, however, is an important component of this research. Therefore, several of the multiple-choice questions have an “Other” option in which a free response is permitted. Even so, most significant nuances were probed through the free response questions. These questions sought to understand specific motivations, reasonings, and theological/pastoral praxis. The intent was to discern the “why” related to the opinion, as well as the “how” associated with the implementation—or lack of implementation—based on the individual perspective.

The demographic component of the survey identified the age range, total years in the Church of the Nazarene, tenure in pastoral ministry in the Church of the Nazarene, and a broad geographic affiliation based on the eight Missional Fields in the United States portion of the USA/Canada region in the Church of the Nazarene. These demographic components were chosen in an effort to trace trends in theological understanding and practice specific to those demographics.

The second section dealt with the doctrinal/theological perspectives of the participants. It is important for this research to understand how the survey respondents understand and navigate the theological issues surrounding repentance and entire sanctification. Furthermore, how the ministers understand the issues from the perspective of Nazarene teaching is central to this project. Therefore, questions addressing both general theological views as well as specific doctrinal understanding was critical for this study.

The next section narrowed the theological/doctrinal section to focus on biblical considerations. The purpose of shifting the emphasis to biblical evidence was to determine how Nazarene pastors support their stated theology with scripture. A high value of this research is the teaching of the Bible as it intersects doctrine. Therefore, understanding the way Nazarene pastors

across the US navigate this juncture in invaluable. Furthermore, since a focus of my research centers on the impact translations of the term *σάρξ* has on the practice of repentance, a biblical perspective from the survey participants was imperative.

The last two sections dealt with praxis. In other words, how theological, doctrinal, and biblical positions influenced the practice of repentance among the ministers as individuals as well as church leaders. The “Personal Practice” section sought to get a picture of how Nazarene pastors practice repentance in their personal lives, including how frequent and public they deem appropriate. Tying in the biblical component, the final question in this section addressed how Nazarene pastors were influenced by the term *σάρξ* in their personal practice of repentance.

The concluding section enlarged on the previous one by extending the discussion to the way the respondents’ churches practice repentance. The primary focus of this section was to get a snapshot of the extent to which repentance is practiced in Nazarene churches across the US as well as specific strategies that are being implemented for that purpose. A part of this project is to propose strategies and tools to assist congregations in their practice of repentance in a corporate setting. Therefore, understanding what is already being practiced, what is not being practiced, and any hindrances that may be present is important to this research.

Survey Distribution and Collection Strategy

An introductory letter was emailed to every District Superintendent (DS) in the USA requesting permission to forward the survey to all pastors on their district. Upon receiving a positive response, a pre-formatted invitation to the pastors to participate in the project along with a link to the survey was sent to the District Superintendents who then forwarded the email to their pastors. In this way, the confidentiality of the participants was preserved, and the integrity of the district ministerial database was maintained. (See Appendix M for the email transcripts.)

The initial email to the District Superintendents was sent on September 7, 2023, with a follow-up email to DS's who had not yet responded on September 18, 2023. A gap in the number of districts willing to participate in the research as well as the number from each Missional Field was still present by September 25, 2023. A goal of the research was to have at least two districts from each Missional Field participating in the research. This would provide a much better picture of the perspectives of Nazarene pastors across the United States. Furthermore, multiple districts from each Missional Field would assist in maintaining the confidentiality of participants.

After consulting with my research team—particularly Dr. Van Nest who had served many years as a DS—we decided that a personal phone call from me to those DS's who had not yet responded would be the best plan of action as opposed to a third email. Those phone calls began on September 25 and spilled into September 26, 2023. While there was not a specific script, the general approach was to confirm that the survey information had been received, to answer any questions, and to discover any issues that needed to be addressed by me in order for the district superintendent to be willing to forward the email invitation to the district pastors. This process secured the necessary additional participants.

The first emails to be forward to the district pastors was delivered on September 11, 2023. The survey was open until October 2, 2023, and garnered 169 responses. The original plan was to close the survey on September 25, 2023. However, several extenuating circumstances necessitated extending the close date. To begin with, I was unaware of a nationwide mandatory DS conference that was taking place when the initial email was sent out. Therefore, most DS's either did not see the email or were unable to respond. Many of those same DS's had additional conferences the weeks following. Finally, one district was not able to send the survey out until

the week of September 25, 2023. In the final analysis, it was decided that an extension of the survey close date would be necessary for maximum participation.

The results were collected beginning October 3, 2023. The multiple-choice data was charted and graphed in multiple ways in order to find the most helpful and meaningful information. Those tables and figures can be found in Appendix O. Furthermore, the coding process for the qualitative sections of the survey was conducted through the middle of November 2023. The relevant information was collated and translated into statistical data, which can also be seen in Appendix O.

Chapter Five will detail findings that emerged from the data, including general perceptions about repentance, sin, and entire sanctification, as well as backing scriptures (see Appendix P). Conclusions will be drawn from these findings with particular emphasis on the impact they have on the rest of this dissertation.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter focuses on the findings gleaned from the qualitative survey described in Chapter Four. The complete text of the survey is included in Appendix N. Each question will be considered below with analysis of specific findings related to that question. The findings will be discussed under five headings, each with their own set of questions: Demographics, Doctrinal/Theological Perspectives, Biblical Perspectives, Personal Practice, and Corporate Practice. A final section will draw the material together to suggest broad inferences related to repentance, entire sanctification, their connection with each other, and the way Nazarene pastors in general address the issues at hand.

A few items need to be noted at the beginning. First of all, it was intended that no IP data would be collected with the survey. However, it was discovered when the data was collected and exported for analysis that the IP addresses were present. Immediately deleted from the raw data in order to preserve participant confidentiality, the analysis was conducted devoid of this information. Secondly, 169 ministers accessed the online survey, but one chose not to consent to the research. Therefore, the total active respondents became 168. Finally, one respondent was an anomaly in that all responses were highly volatile and even vulgar. None of the free responses from this respondent were included in the coding process.

Demographics

The first four questions in the survey surround respondent demographics. Each of those questions will be addressed on its own merits. The tools used to generate and analyze the data are SurveyMonkey¹⁶⁴ and Dedoose.¹⁶⁵

Question 1: What is your age range?

One of the objectives of this research was to determine trends in doctrinal/theological understanding in conjunction with age groups. A second objective was to have a broad representation of ages thereby discovering denominational trends. Unfortunately, representation was heavily weighted to those over the age of 40 and especially between 50 and 69. A mere 12% of the 165 respondents who answered this question (four skipped) were under the age of 40. Furthermore, only five respondents represented the 20–29-year-old age bracket, with a meager 20 total representing those in the 20–39-year-old grouping.

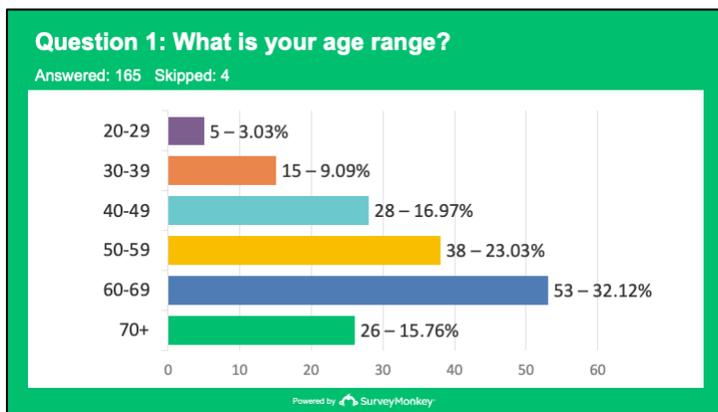


Figure 3: Age Range

In contrast, a solid 55% of the respondents identified as being 50-69 years old. When the age brackets on either side of that (40-49 and 70+) are added, nearly 88% of the respondents are represented. The immediate implication for this research is that the

¹⁶⁴ “SurveyMonkey” (San Mateo, CA: SurveyMonkey, Inc., n.d.), www.surveymonkey.com.

¹⁶⁵ “Dedoose: Web Application for Managing, Analyzing, and Presenting Qualitative and Mixed Method Research Data” (Los Angeles, CA: SocioCultural Research Consultants, LLC, 2023), www.dedoose.com.

findings are heavily weighted to an older generation. The gap in the perceptions and practices of the younger generations will need to be relegated to future research.

However, after further investigation with Nazarene Research at the Global Ministry Center in Lenexa, KS, it should be noted that this age discrepancy is indicative of Nazarene ministry trends across the United States. According to denominational research, only fifty

ministers (lead pastors) in the USA fit the 20-29 age bracket.¹⁶⁶ This is a startling statistic! However, with that in mind, this survey has potentially tapped into 10% of that age group. I say “potentially”

Ages of Nazarene Pastors in the USA (Nazarene Research Department)					
USA/Canada Pastors' Age Categories					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20 to 29	50	1.1	1.2	1.2
	30 to 39	389	8.8	9.1	10.3
	40 to 49	926	21.1	21.8	32.1
	50 to 59	1123	25.5	26.4	58.5
	60 to 69	1248	28.4	29.4	87.9
	70 to 79	439	10.0	10.3	98.2
	80+	77	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	4252	96.7	100.0	
Missing	NA	144	3.3		
Total		4396	100.0		

Table 1: Ages of Nazarene Pastors in the USA

because this survey was sent through the DS's to “their pastors”. For some of those DS's, that means it only went to lead pastors and for others, it went to their full clergy database including assistant pastors of any kind.

Question 2: How many years have you been a part of the Church of the Nazarene?

The information related to the number of years being a part of the Church of the Nazarene is enlightening. Nearly 75% of all respondents (with 4 skipping the question) have been Nazarene for more than thirty years. The significance of this is at least two-fold. First, there is only one age demographic that would not qualify for the “30+ years Nazarene” bracket,

¹⁶⁶ Rich Houseal, “Research Services, Church of the Nazarene Global Ministry Center. Data Compiled from Records Kept by the General Secretary’s Office, Church of the Nazarene.” 15-17 2023.

namely those 20–29 years of age.

Similarly, the 30-39 age range has but 33% of respondents selecting 30+ years as their response.

Second, it would imply that the vast majority of respondents are lifelong Nazarenes. This is supported by the data indicating that well over half of respondents in the 40-70+ brackets have been Nazarenes for 30+ years with the percentage increasing incrementally as the age increases. As the respondents reported being older, the possibility they became Nazarene later in life likewise increases. Even so, thirty years as a Nazarene indicates a buy-in to the doctrine and practices of the denomination.

With this in mind, it would suggest that the information gleaned from this representative sampling at least points to Nazarene sentiment on the topic of repentance and entire sanctification.

Question 3: How many years have you been in pastoral ministry in the Church of the Nazarene?

When you place the age bracket statistic alongside the question of years in ministry, there is an interesting data set. While the trajectory of the graph clearly aligns with that of the age demographic, it does not align with the “years Nazarene” graph. The implication of this is that

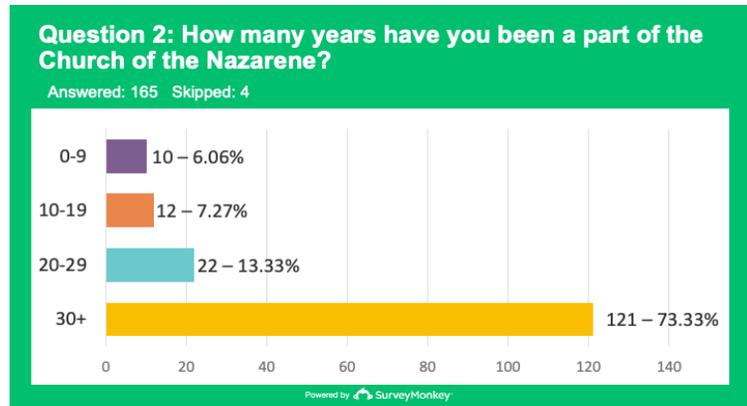


Figure 4: Years in the Church of the Nazarene

YEARS NAZARENE:	0-9	10-19	20-29	30+	Total
Age Range					
20-29	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	0	5
30-39	3 (20%)	4 (27%)	3 (20%)	5 (33%)	15
40-49	2 (7%)	3 (11%)	5 (18%)	18 (64%)	28
50-59	0	4 (11%)	4 (11%)	30 (79%)	38
60-69	2 (4%)	0	7 (13%)	44 (83%)	53
70+	1 (4%)	0	1 (4%)	24 (92%)	26

Table 2: Years Nazarene vs Age Range

there are Nazarene pastors who are older who have not been single-career ministers. In other words, there are those who fall into the 30+ years Nazarene who are less than 30 years in ministry.

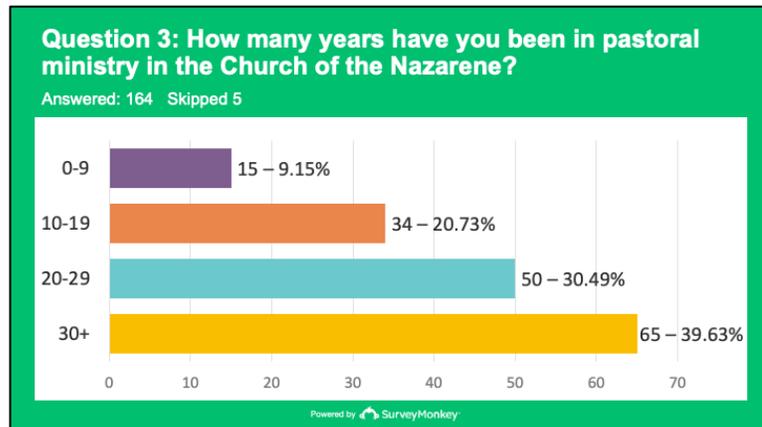


Figure 5: Years in Pastoral Ministry

When analyzing the data,

the majority of respondents in the 30-39 age group fall into the 10-19 years of ministry column.

If a minister begins ministry at the age of 20, a single-career minister would fall into the 10-19-

year bracket indicating that most is the

30-39 age group are career ministers.

Following the same formula for the 40-49

bracket, a single-career ministry would

indicate 20-29 years of ministry, and

those 50 and older would fall into the 30+

years of ministry. This formula proves

modestly true in the 40-49 age group with 48% of respondents having served 20-29 years.

However, that leaves another 48% indicating less than 20 years of ministry.

Applying this formula to the 50-59 age bracket reveals that only 29% have been in ministry for more than 30 years. However, this age group is on the edge with this formula, which is indicated by the 47% who have been in ministry 20-29 years. This places this demographic solidly in the single-career minister group.

YEARS IN MINISTRY:	0-9	10-19	20-29	30+	Total
Age Range					
20-29	4 (80%)	0	1 (20%)	0	5
30-39	4 (27%)	10 (67%)	1 (7%)	0	15
40-49	1 (4%)	12 (44%)	13 (48%)	1 (4%)	27
50-59	4 (11%)	5 (13%)	18 (47%)	11 (29%)	38
60-69	1 (2%)	5 (9%)	8 (15%)	39 (74%)	53
70+	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	9 (35%)	14 (54%)	26

Table 3: Years in Ministry vs Age Range

While the single-career conclusion can clearly be drawn from the 74% of those in the 60-69 age group, the 70+ age group is interesting in that only 54% indicate 30+ years of ministry. Although this could mean that they entered ministry at the age of 40, it most likely indicates a life-long ministry. However, 47% indicate years in ministry as less than 30 years, pointing to a second-career ministry.

Pulling this all together, the data would indicate that most of the ministers participating in the survey are life-long ministers or have given a significant number of years to the calling. With that in mind—and understanding the limitations of sampling—it is reasonable to conclude that the findings from this survey fairly represent the thoughts and practices of Nazarene ministers in the contiguous United States, at least for the 40+ age group.

Question 4: In which USA/Canada missional field do you serve?

The Church of the Nazarene is organized around six world regions with USA/Canada being one of them. Within this region, there are nine missional fields comprised of multiple districts that also support a regional college/university (as noted in parenthesis after the missional field title in the questionnaire.) This research targets the districts in the eight missional fields in the USA portion of the region. (See Appendix L for a map indicating participating districts.)

One of the goals of the survey was to get a broad representation of districts from the eight missional fields. Although some fields only had a couple of districts participating while others had up to five, the participation in the survey was relatively balanced.

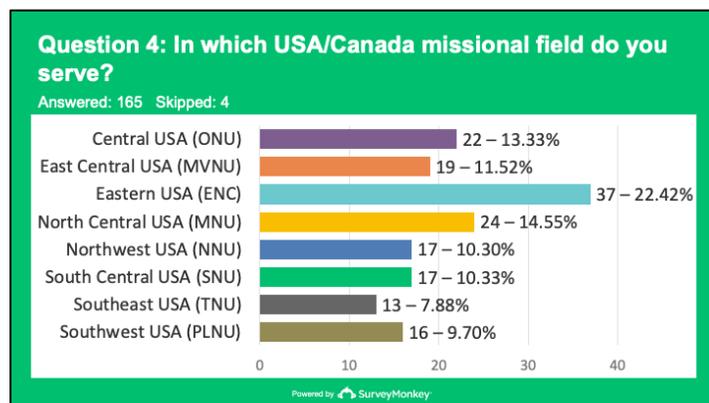


Figure 6: Missional Field Membership

Even though Eastern USA recorded twice as many respondents as most of the districts, it was still only 22% of the total. Another 14% came from North Central USA, and Central USA provided 13% of the responses. The remainder of the fields hovered around 10% of the results with Southeast USA having the lowest participation with only 8% of the total responses. Four respondents skipped this question.

It is not surprising that Eastern USA had the most participants since they had the most districts participating (five). However, it is interesting to note that the next top participating fields only had two districts participating. Furthermore, the fields that had three or more districts participating did not produce a greater number of contributors than those with only two districts participating.

The missional fields were relatively balanced when it came to the other demographics. In other words, the number of respondents from each age group, years in ministry, and years as a Nazarene were relatively equal across the missional fields. This would indicate that the findings are a general consensus and are not significantly influenced by geographical regions of the United States. The only exception to this balance is the 20-29 age group. Four of the five participants were from the Central USA missional field. This further isolates the credibility of the findings for this demographic.

Doctrinal/Theological Perspectives

Question 5: What place does repentance have in the life of the believer professing the experience of entire sanctification?

Question five presents some general options scaling from repentance having no place in the life of the sanctified believer to repentance being a regular part of that life. The

overwhelming majority (73%) affirmed that repentance is to be for known sin as well as human error. This is an interesting statistic considering the Nazarene understanding of sin:

Paragraph 5.3. We believe that actual or personal sin is a voluntary violation of a known law of God by a morally responsible person. It is therefore not to be confused with involuntary and inescapable shortcomings, infirmities, faults, mistakes, failures, or other deviations from a standard of perfect conduct that are the residual effects of the Fall.¹⁶⁷

As a lifelong Nazarene and single-career Nazarene minister myself, the response to this question is unexpected, especially in light of the Nazarene position on sin (as well as sanctification, which will be discussed later.) The question then arises: Is there more to this

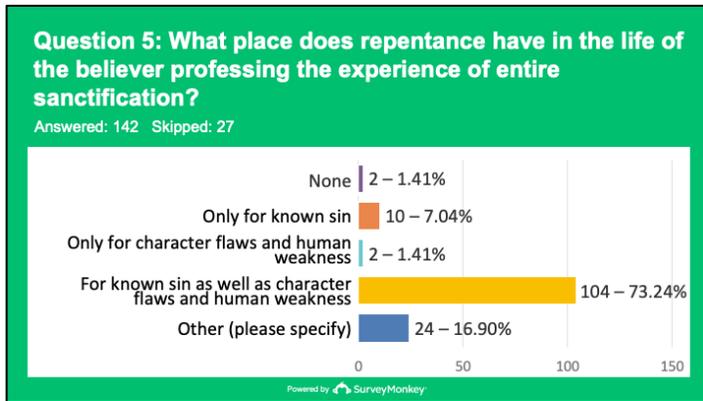


Figure 7: Place of Repentance in Sanctified Life

response then first meets the eye? The answer is that although there is a significant trend among Nazarene ministers to include repentance as a regular part of the Christian experience, there is also a significant number of respondents who were using different

understandings of the terminology. This will come out as we progress through the survey questions.

Focusing on Question 5, some insight can be drawn from the “other” responses. A couple of points of interest help inform the findings. Of the total 169 respondents, twenty-seven chose to skip this question. Representing 16% of the participants, this number seems significant. Furthermore, twenty-four felt the need to qualify the answer by choosing “other” and including an explanation. This represents nearly 17% of the responses. It is beyond the scope of this

¹⁶⁷ David P. Wilson et al., eds., *Church of the Nazarene Manual 2017-2021*, Kindle Edition (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2017), paragraph 5.3.

research to determine why the question was skipped. Nonetheless, 16% did not want to take the time, were disinterested in the topic, or were unwilling to enter into the conversation for whatever reason.

In analyzing the “other” responses, there were five main codes or themes that emerged: “repentance is for known sin”, “repentance is for when we fall short”, “repentance should be normal and comprehensive”, “repentance is not the entire sanctification experience”, and “repentance is for unknown sin”.¹⁶⁸

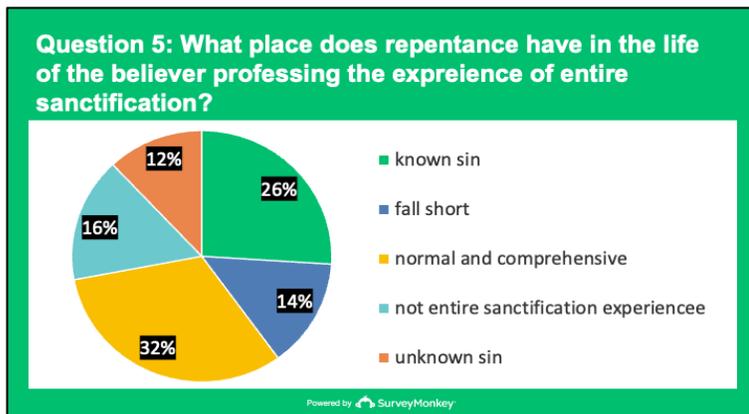


Figure 8: The Place of Repentance in the Sanctified—“Other” Responses

Although there were twenty-four respondents, some responses garnered multiple codes resulting in a total of 57 codes being applied to the responses. Of these responses, there are several things of which to take note.

The largest category was the “normal and comprehensive” one with 32% of the responses pointing to this in one way or another. Repentance flagged with this code can be as simple as saying, “I’m sorry” when someone is offended, or as abstract as repenting for ancestral sins. A consistent appeal to repentance as a means of staying in proper relationship with the Lord is throughout with some pointing toward a more positive position of growing in “the fullness of a relationship with God” (106). Many in this category cross-code with “unknown sin,” which

¹⁶⁸ All codes and themes were gleaned from the survey issued to Nazarene pastors across the United States. The complete survey can be found in Appendix N. When specific excerpts/quotes are cited, the ID number of the cited respondent will be included in parentheses immediately following the citation. The data in spreadsheet form can be found at <https://rb.gy/3mo4gp>.

explains the normal and comprehensive nature of the responses. This will be addressed in more detail when discussing the “unknown sin” code but suffice it to say that this is contrary to classic Nazarene doctrine.

The second-largest code was “known sin” with 26% of the respondents. This category expresses a more traditional Nazarene understanding in that repentance is only engaged in when known sin is committed. “Repentance has a place in the entirely sanctified when the[y] fall from Grace and they need to repent” (141) is a recurring sentiment, not only here but throughout this survey. The emphasis under this code was always on a known act of sin. Human weakness was only addressed when it would lead to sin: “Of course for known sin, and character flaw if sin is revealed somehow as a result” (99).

In the same vein, the next code group was “not entire sanctification experience.” In this code, respondents were much more explicit concerning the nature of sin, repentance, and entire sanctification. Some emphasized that repentance is only for getting saved. Beyond that, it is not the norm. “We repent of our sins committed/omitted to ask Jesus into our life. It is a salvation experience and not sanctification experience” (120). In fact, one respondent adamantly stated that “character flaws cannot be repented” and “failure to distinguish flaws and sin is a horrible mistake” (2). The consensus from this group reemerge as the survey continues.

The 14% that expressed the need for repentance when one “falls short” were pointing toward repentance being responsive/reactionary. When there is awareness, then repentance is required. Common phrases fall along the lines of “anything God asks me to repent of...” (56) and “any time the Holy Spirit brings something to a person’s attention...” (104). The implication is that it is God’s/the Holy Spirit’s responsibility to bring things to light that require repentance.

The final category at first blush seems innocent enough, but upon further investigation, it reveals an alarming trend in Nazarene theology. With 12% affirming the need to repent of “unknown sin”, these pastors are potentially indicating an espousal of Calvinistic/Reformed teaching. It is not the intent of this dissertation to weigh the merits of this theological position. However, the Church of the Nazarene is squarely Wesleyan in theological orientation, thus several statements—such as a need to repent of sins “that one may knowingly or unknowingly participate in” (130) or an affirmation that “sins to which the individual may not be aware could be covered” (106)—become theologically incompatible.

Question 6: What does the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification teach concerning repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer?

This was the first fully free-response question. This was an intriguing set of responses for a couple of reasons. First of all, most respondents did not actually answer the question. They answered around it, delved into sanctification theology, discussed repentance, etc., but few actually discussed what Nazarene sanctification doctrine says about repentance. Those who did answer the question directly exposed some disconcerting realities: 1. They did not know: “I don’t

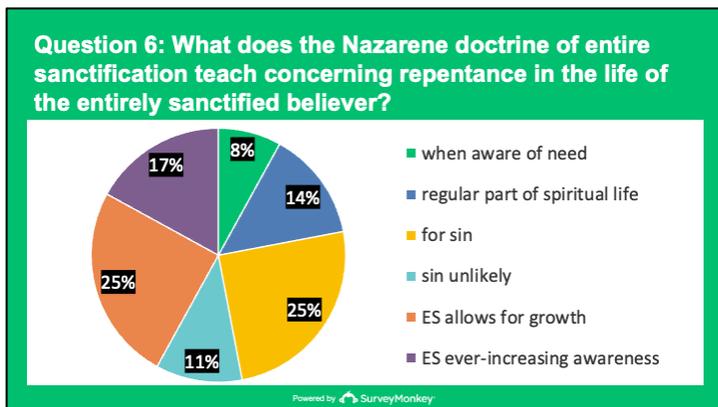


Figure 9: Nazarene Doctrine of Sanctification and Repentance

know” (132) “I’m not sure” (60), and “I’m not sure what the doctrine teaches concerning repentance” (117). 2. They (seven respondents) perceived that there is not an explicit connection. Responses like “not sure where to find a direct correlation” (165), or “As I

read the Manual, I don’t see anything mentioned specifically regarding repentance” (77), or “A

quick look at the article in the 2017-2021 Manual reveals that there is nothing specific about repentance in relation to entire sanctification” (64) all revealed a void, at least in the perceived doctrine. One person went so far as to say that “the Church of the Nazarene does not have a unified doctrine of entire sanctification” (53).

Unfortunately, there is some truth to these statements, and I appreciate the candid, honest reflection of these ministers. The significance of these statements is that it appears the issue has been left to Nazarene pastors to wrestle with and personally reconcile the seeming incongruity between theology and practice. The result, as will be seen as we continue through the findings of this research, is that Nazarene pastors have come to sundry conclusions regarding, among other things, the place of repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer.

The 2023 General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene had an opportunity to take a step in reconciling entire sanctification praxis. A resolution was proposed that was a complete re-write of Article of Faith X—Entire Sanctification. In that resolution, the concluding paragraph included the following: “While awaiting the redemption of the body, believers still confess shortcomings, trespasses and faults, but press on to ever more mature and holy character in the image of God.”¹⁶⁹ Unfortunately that resolution was defeated, leaving Nazarene pastor to continue wrestling with the issue with little guidance from the official doctrinal statement.

The lack of unity on this issue may be the cause for the fifty-one respondents who skipped this question. Furthermore, the lack of clarity may have caused some reticence on the part of many to address the question. This research does not address those causes. However, it must be noted that those fifty-one non-responders represent 30% of all participants.

¹⁶⁹ Board of General Superintendents, “JUD-801: Resolution to the 2023 General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene Re-Writing Article of Faith X,” 2023, <https://gadocs.nazarene.org/index.php/s/Resolutions-EN?dir=undefined&path=%2FJUD%20-%20Special%20Judicial&openfile=5854>.

Working through the responses, six themes emerged. Of the 297 codes assigned to the 118 responses, three themes focused on repentance: “for sin”, “when aware of need”, and “regular part of spiritual life”. One theme focused on sin: “unlikely”. Two others emphasized entire sanctification: “allows for growth”, and “ever-increasing awareness”.

The polarity of responses to question 6 reveals the complexity of the question to Nazarene pastors. For instance, the two largest categories are “for sin” dealing with the purpose of repentance and “ES [entire sanctification] allows for growth.” In other words, a quarter of the responses affirmed that repentance is primarily for sin while another quarter of the responses affirms that growth is a part of entire sanctification and, by inference, so is repentance. Similarly, 8% assert that repentance is called for when an issue comes to light, whereas 14% believe that repentance should be a regular, and by inference, proactive part of the spiritual life. At the same time, 17% perceive of an ever-increasing awareness that is part of the sanctified life while 11% find sin unlikely in the life of the sanctified believer.

The polarity is rather stark. Those whose response in some way indicated that sin is unlikely used strong language at times, asserting that “entire sanctification is the ability to live above sin” (126), or when “the desire to sin is no longer there” (111), or again “although it is possible in theory to sin, in practicality a sanctified person does not choose to sin” (104).

Admittedly, several of the responses in the “sin is unlikely” category were statements about what Nazarene doctrine has traditionally taught and not necessarily the position of the respondent. Nonetheless, these responses are in line with the “repentance is for sin” theme in which the clear leaning is that known sin is what gives cause for repentance. Anything that is not known sin is not to be repented of. However, “any lapse in devotion that leads to sin” (151) is cause for repentance.

The severity of the issue is noted. Although there are a variety of ways of expressing that sin is the only reason for repentance, it generally carries the idea that anything but known, willful sin is not sin per se and does not need the discipline of repentance...although, sin, once identified, is extremely serious. Three respondents quoted in whole or in part a portion of the Manual relating to entire sanctification. The response given was “‘We believe that all persons, though in the possession of the experience of regeneration and entire sanctification, may fall from grace and apostatize, and unless they repent of their sins, be hopelessly and eternally lost.’ 2017-2021 Church of the Nazarene Manual P. 29” (97, 141, 157).

Notice the weight of “fall from grace” and “hopelessly and eternally lost.” Of course, there is merit to this statement. However, it seems to be in part the reason Nazarenes are reticent to embrace repentance as a positive spiritual discipline. Nonetheless, 14% of respondents asserted that repentance should be a regular part of the spiritual life. Several of these, however, as mentioned before, were leaning very much toward a Calvinistic doctrine of sin as “missing the mark” (stated explicitly by respondent 44).

When the respondents said that entire sanctification “allows for growth,” there is a sense that this is a reaction to the perfectionistic view of sin being unlikely. In this theme, some common Nazarene phrases are used, such as “there is a difference between a pure heart and a mature character” (167) which is also found in the article of faith dealing with entire sanctification. Various other phrases are used to express the sentiment that entire sanctification is not an end, but a beginning of fresh growth...and growth requires repentance. Although for some, “confession” is a much more palatable practice than “repentance” (39).

Despite this mixed bag of ideas and the reactive nature of much of the respondents, 17% expressed a positive and proactive approach to repentance. For these, entire sanctification

provides for an “ever-increasing awareness” (38) of sin and missing the mark, as well as ways and means of growing in grace and intimacy with God. Furthermore, repentance is viewed by these as a “good and necessary work” and “an active, ongoing role in the sanctifying work of God” (61).

One final observation: The lack of clarity denominationally is found in the fact that respondents used a variety of analogies and imagery to describe entire sanctification and the place of repentance within the sanctified life.

Biblical Perspectives

The Biblical Perspectives section of the survey is designed to explore how Nazarene pastors understand the teaching of the Bible in relation to repentance and entire sanctification. It differs from the previous section in that the focus is not doctrinal or theological streams of thought. Instead, the questions center around what the Bible actually says as opposed to theological interpolations.

Question 7: True or False: The Bible teaches that repentance is a normal part of the Christian life.

Question 7 is a wide-sweeping question that, in retrospect, may not have achieved the insights desired. Nonetheless, the findings align themselves with the rest of the survey.

For this question, forty-five respondents skipped the question and

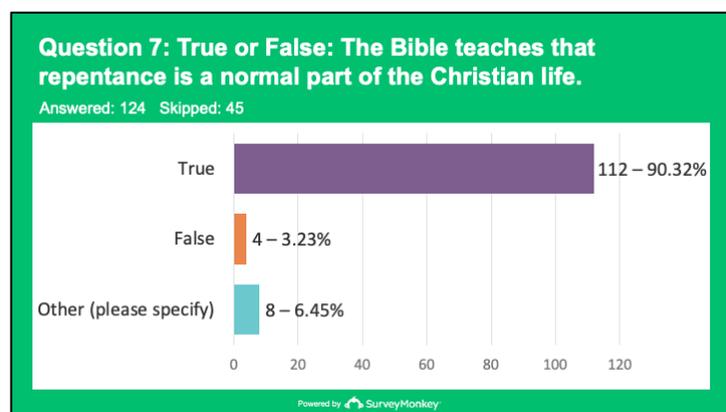


Figure 10: Does the Bible Teach that Repentance is Normal?

only 8 found the need to further explain their answers. However, the “other” responses, though few in number, give some insight into what respondents may mean when a solid 90% affirm that repentance is a normal part of the Christian life.

From the “other” responses, 43% affirm that “to live above sin is normal.” One respondent cited several Old Testament characters who lived “fully righteous” lives (2). The New Testament, it is claimed, teaches that “it is expected that the person CAN live above this and is expected to live above this” (2, emphasis in original). Another focuses on the idea that believers are to “leave sin and serve Jesus” (120) while two respondents maintained that “sin should not be the norm” (65) and that the “living examples of the Apostles was that confession of sin was RARELY needed” (2, emphasis in original).

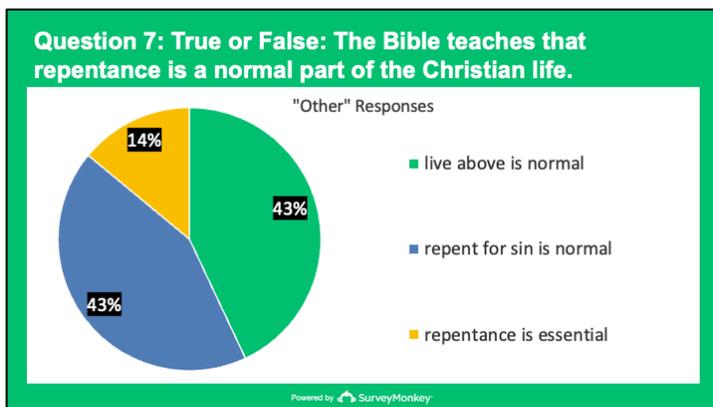


Figure 11: Is Repentance Normal? "Other" Responses

Notice that the emphasis in these responses is whether *sin* is normal, not whether *repentance* is normal. This points to the concept that repentance is only for sin and not for growing in character by repenting of human weaknesses that are hindering

personal and spiritual development. The emphasis on known sin being the sole motivation for repentance is further supported by another 43% of respondents who, in one way or another, state that to “repent for sin is normal.” Supporting this assertion are statements affirming that repentance is for salvation and for when convicted of sin. Furthermore, it is asserted that sin should not be the norm for the believer and therefore repentance “should not be the norm” (65).

Combining these first two codes reveals that 86% of respondents qualify “repentance is a normal part of the Christian life” by essentially saying that it is “normal” to repent of sin when one is aware of it or to be saved or sanctified. However, since sin is not normal—as in a regular part of life—for the sanctified believer, then neither is repentance. As you can see, the question crafted differently may have garnered more meaningful results.

The final theme emerging from the “other” responses is that “repentance is essential.” Since there were only two respondents in this category, conclusions are highly tentative. One response noted that “repentance is essential, basic part to the Christian life, without repentance there is no Christian life” (138). Although the statement is fairly strong, it is unclear what is actually being said. Is repentance a “basic part to the Christian life” because it develops the believer? Or is it because without repenting of sin and inviting Jesus into the heart “there is no Christian life”?

The second respondent is clearer and, unlike most, clearly addresses the question in the context of the definition of repentance stated in the introduction to the survey:

“With the broader definition of repent that you are using, anytime I say I am sorry to the Lord for...miss handling a situation, not responding to church business in as timely a manner as was expected, forgetting devotions that day etc. I am repenting. This type of repentance is definitely a normal part of Christian life” (65).

It is clearly inconclusive what respondents meant when they almost unanimously affirmed that repentance is a normal part of the Christian life. However, it should be noted that this is the first time a fear of Calvinism emerges in the responses. Only one person addressed this concern, but the respondents claim is significant: “While repentance is part of the Christian life, to say it's the normal part may be misleading. It's not that we sin in every thought, word and deed” (150). This concern appears later in the survey as well.

Question 8: What scriptures come to mind in support of your answer?

This question generated a wide range of scripture references! No less than 103 different scripture references were cited in support of repentance being normal, with multiple references for many of the scriptures. An additional eight were recommended in support of repentance not being normal. The complete list can be found in Appendix P.

The scope of this paper does not allow for a full analysis of each scripture. However, some general observations are in order.

First of all, the scriptures supporting the normalcy of repentance do so generally from the position of repentance for the purpose of forgiveness of sins. Very few explicitly state otherwise, nor is there a clear inference. This is seen particularly in the scriptures that have multiple recurrences: 1 John, 1 John 1:9 and surrounding scriptures, and 1 John 2 specifically address sin and are cited thirty-seven times. Acts 2 and 2:38 are mentioned seven times. Nonetheless, a few of the recurring scriptures have a clear possible inference to spiritual development being the motivation for repentance, such as James 5:16 (12 times); 2 Chronicles 7:14 (4 times); Matthew 6:12/Luke 11:4—The Lord's Prayer (10 times).

It is particularly intriguing that all of the references used to support repentance NOT being normal are also included in the list of references use to say that repentance IS normal. The significance of this finding is that the concept of the normalcy of repentance in the believer's life is not explicit in scripture. Furthermore, the duplication indicates that Nazarene pastors may also be approaching the scriptures from a pre-conceived theological bias rather than a biblical interpretation angle. Finally, it appears that pre-determined definitions of sin and repentance are in play as the respondents offer their responses.

Of particular interest to this research is that Romans 7—8 was only cited one time, and that was in a large segment citation of Romans 5—8. Clearly, the scriptures that this research focuses on as a proposal for how to reconcile the disparity of understanding surrounding repentance and entire sanctification are not in the forefront of thought for Nazarene pastors in the US.

Question 9: In Romans 7—8, Paul speaks about living according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. How do you understand the term “flesh”?

It is intriguing that the majority of responses to question 9 (75%) affirmed that “flesh” is to be understood as the sinful nature. This is particularly intriguing in light of the fact that 90% of respondents answered question 7 in the affirmative that repentance is a normal part of the believer’s life. According to Nazarene doctrine, the sinful nature is cleansed, purified, and even eradicated (according to common Nazarene parlance, especially prior to the year 2000.) With this position, affirming repentance as a normal part of the Christian life without some kind of

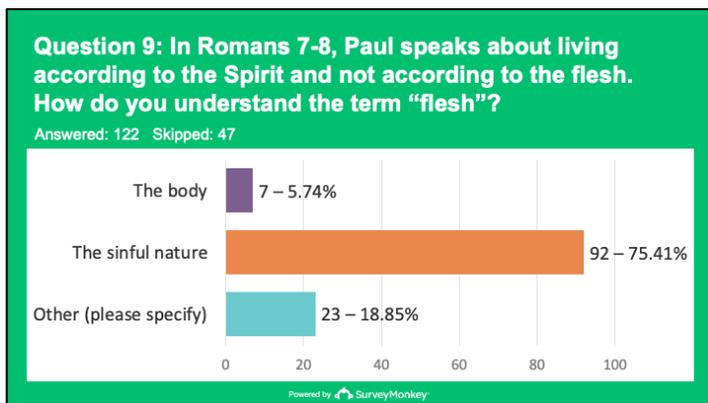


Figure 12: Understanding of “Flesh”

caveat explaining the logic is somewhat contradictory and “unorthodox”. It seems that these two questions expose some of the theological tension Nazarene pastors navigate.

Exploring question 9 further, forty-seven respondents skipped this question while twenty-three nuanced the possible answers with an “other” explanation. Among these twenty-three, two simply restated their choice was “sinful nature” while another three defined “flesh” in terms of

self-sovereignty, human effort and life contrary to Christ with a general allusion to the sinful nature as the overarching principle.

Beyond these, there are two predominant themes: Flesh being understood as “human existence” or

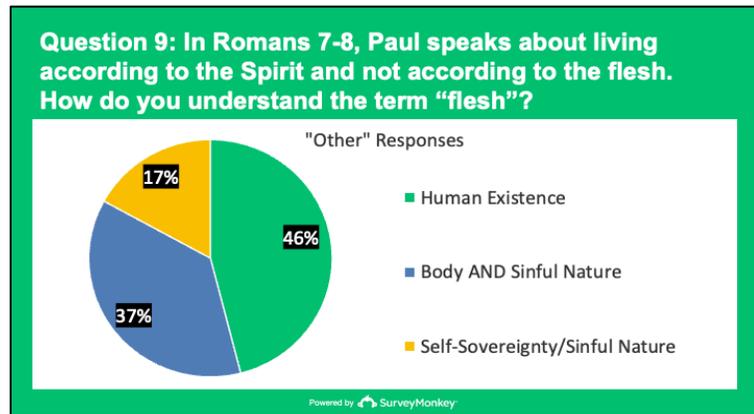


Figure 13: Understanding of “Flesh”—“Other” Responses

as “body AND sinful nature.” The theme of “human existence” (46% of codes) nuances the multiple-choice option—“the body”—nicely, giving some clarity to the concept. Phrases used include not only “human existence” (68) but “flawed humanity” (169), “human desires and temptations” (4), “sinful cravings of the body” (65), and “brokenness from the fall” (63). One intriguing angle is that the flesh includes “where a person may have a physically inclined weakness to sin” (106). All in all, these responses reflect a carefully considered perspective based not only in biblical theology, but also in personal experience.

At the same time, 37% of the codes reflect a hybrid approach affirming a dual meaning of both the sinful nature and the body. As such, six out of the ten respondents literally wrote “both” or something very close thereto (25, 54, 65, 115, 131, 156). Again, it appears that respondents are attempting to reconcile biblical insight with personal experience, except in this grouping the choice has been made to suggest double meaning to a single term in the same passage. This is a technical possibility, particularly if there is a play on words. For example, in Matthew 16:18, Jesus says, “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church....” The ESV Study Bible gives a clear explanation of the duplicity of meaning surrounding the play on words between “Peter” and “rock.”

This is one of the most controversial and debated passages in all of Scripture. Roman Catholics have appealed to this passage to defend the idea that Peter was the first pope. The key question concerns Peter’s relationship to “this rock.” In Greek, “Peter” is *Petros* (“stone”), which is related to *petra* (“rock”). The other NT name of Peter, Cephas (cf. John 1:42; 1 Cor. 1:12), is the Aramaic equivalent: *kepha*’ means “rock,” and translates in Greek as *Kēphas*. “This rock” has been variously interpreted as referring to (1) Peter himself; (2) Peter’s confession; or (3) Christ and his teachings. For several reasons, the first option is the strongest.¹⁷⁰

There are many examples of word play throughout the scriptures, often overlooked or not perceived because of the language/translation barriers. However, it seems that an attempt to expand on “classic” Nazarene doctrine in order to accommodate personal experience may be more the case in this instance.

Question 10: How does your understanding of “flesh” influence your view of repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer?

A flood of themes emerged from this question, even though a remarkable 67 respondents skipped this question. In other words, nearly 40% of survey participants did not address this question. Nonetheless, a large number of codes were generated from the responses. It should be noted, however, that the responses generally worked around the question, but few respondents clearly and explicitly addressed how their understanding of “flesh” impacting their view of

repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer. One in particular, however, did make an explicit connection: “None” (158).

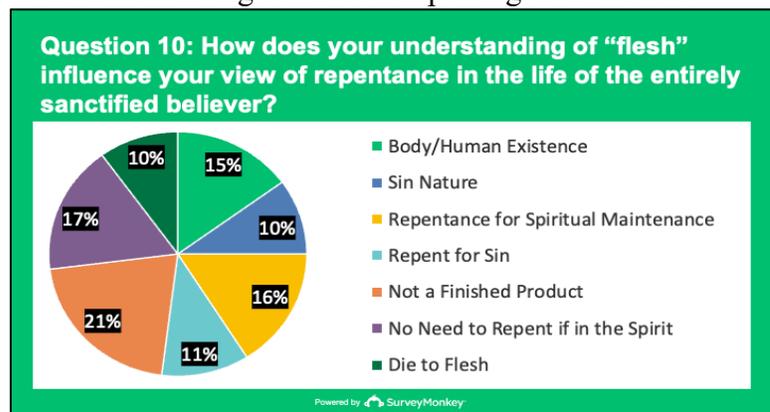


Figure 14: “Flesh” and Repentance

¹⁷⁰ *ESV Study Bible*, 1855.

The polarity revealed in the responses to question 10 is startling. The responses essentially fall into three bipolar pairs. The first pair fundamentally reiterates the previous question dealing with the nature of the flesh: “body/human existence” or “sin nature”. The second pair reiterates motivations for repentance: “spiritual maintenance” or “sin”. Finally, the third pair reiterates the possibility of sin/failure and the concomitant need for repentance: we are “not a finished product” and “no need to repent if in the Spirit”. The final theme—“die to flesh”—is fundamentally not useful because flesh is not defined, although it can be assumed from a classic Nazarene perspective to be the sinful/carnal nature.

While the responses generally restate what has already been stated, there are a few ideas which merit notice. For instance, most of the “body/human existence” responses in some way reflect the idea that “the fallen nature is still there” (144). There is a consistent affirmation that “there will always be an element of the flesh in this life” (110), and that we continue to “live in the flesh” even after sanctification (90). The sentiment that the flesh “is diminished” (117) or loses its influence is common, all the while highlighting “the influence of the world about us” (83).

Even though the “sin nature” camp tends to hold to a more traditional Nazarene position, some noted the importance of the human body. In fact, sanctification is seen as a “fight...[that is] FOR the body, not against the body” (91, emphasis in original). Another affirmed that understanding the flesh in terms of the sinful nature allows the believer to “embrace the goodness of the body” (62). Furthermore, several who affirm that “sinful nature” is the correct understanding of “the flesh” still express a sentiment of the ongoing need for repentance. Phrases such as, “it is something I continually drift towards” (163), or “we have to be mindful of the sinful nature and that we keep ourselves in check” (97), or “the process of being sanctified is the

process of the Spirit removing the sinful nature” (82) reveal an understanding and need to address the hindrances to spiritual maturity and Christlikeness. In fact, one person declares that “to ignore the ‘flesh’ (sinful nature) is to refuse to care for our spiritual health” (142).

The “repentance is for sin” theme likewise has several who are pursuing a deeper walk with Christ. However, they either frame all failure as sin or focus on “giving in” (22) or “stumbling” (137). Some also highlight inadvertent sin and believe that one should repent for sins we are unaware of. Still others emphasize that repentance is for salvation.

The polarity is “repentance for spiritual maintenance.” There is a strong emphasis in this group on a regular practice of repentance in order to develop or maintain a right relationship with God. Some focus on developing and maturing in their character and relationship with God, while others emphasize the maintaining of a relationship with God. The focus is slight, but significant. The first is looking to grow; the second is looking to not lose ground.

The “spiritual maintenance” group also has some unique and forward-looking perspectives. One person affirms that “repentance brings a good conscience and freedom” (63).

A highly distinctive perspective has an evolutionary twist to it:

Because I don't define sin as "obedience to the law" after Christ but in relational terms, I think Paul's use of "sarx" refers back to our human selfishness that we inherited through evolution. That desire for survival (selfishness) gets expressed in our physical, mental, spiritual, and social bodies. So just as our physical body is in constant regeneration and transformation, so our spirit must be too (112).

The largest populated code was the “not finished product” theme carrying 21% of responses. This theme emphasized that, regardless of what sanctification does in regard to the flesh and/or sin nature, we as humans “are not a finished product” (169). In one way or another, respondents affirm that there is still room for personal growth. With an emphasis on “weakness due to human existence” (92), the group affirms that entire sanctification includes not only a crisis moment, but also has a progressive nature that works to “bring wholeness” to humanity

(89). One respondent stated it well: “The flesh (physical body) is tainted by the sinful nature and isn't fully restored until glorification thus our actions though not always sinful (willfully disobedient) are yet not perfect and fall short of God's intent thus needing repentance” (109).

Moving to the opposite end of the spectrum are those who assert that “the power of the sinful nature does not have to control us if we live according to the Spirit” (92). This position falls back on a more traditional Nazarene understanding of the flesh and of entire sanctification, namely that “the natural tendency of men and women is to serve self. The natural tendency of the sanctified believer is to serve God” (66). In other words, “an entirely sanctified believer who is walking in step with the Spirit has NO need to repent - they are free from sin” (2, emphasis in the original).

This position is further supported by the “die to flesh” theme. Unfortunately, the vast majority do not clearly define what the flesh is. Instead, the language is rather generic, although consistent with the way entire sanctification has been discussed in Nazarene circles. “Die to the flesh” and “crucify the flesh” are biblical language. Nonetheless, it is not clear what that means in practical terms.

Personal Practice

This section focuses on the minister’s personal practice of repentance. The survey explores how often the minister finds it appropriate to practice repentance personally as well as what that practice looks like. How public the minister expresses repentance follows, along with how their understanding of “the flesh” shapes their practice.

Question 11: What should the frequency of repentance be in the believer professing the experience of entire sanctification?

Question 11 was skipped by 49 respondents (29%) along with another 34 (28%) who selected “other” as their choice of answer.

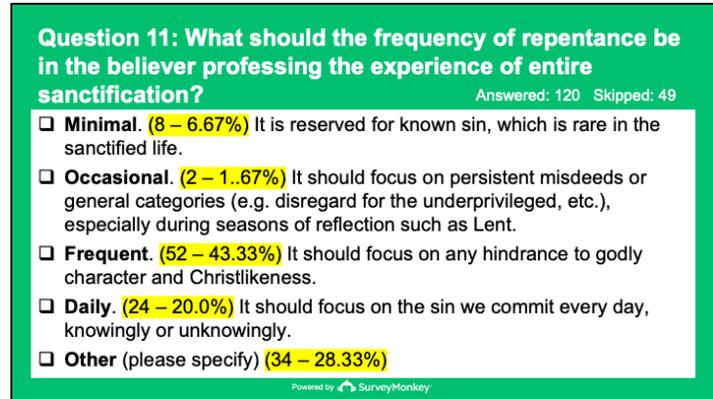


Figure 15: Frequency of Repentance in the Sanctified

When considering the multiple-choice responses, the data reveals that 43% consider “frequent” the appropriate frequency for personal repentance. Eight respondents felt it should be minimal while only two indicated “occasional” as their choice. It is a little surprising, given Nazarene doctrine, that fifty-two respondents would acknowledge “frequent” as the best option. However, it is even more surprising that twenty-four, or 20%, of respondents selected “daily.”

Once again, this is significant because it seems to indicate a trend among Nazarene pastors to disconnect from the traditional “perfectionism” doctrine of entire sanctification and embrace a practical reality that includes human error and weakness. However, “frequent” and “daily” also may be revealing a tendency toward a more Calvinistically nuanced theology. As has already been said, the purpose of this research is not to defend nor to denigrate any doctrine in particular. The purpose here is to note a possible shift in theological understanding from one theological stream toward another—or to borrow certain components, as the case may be.

Exploring the thirty-four “other” responses reveals a sense of a “repentant posture” (8). Regardless of the code used to decipher meaning from the comments, most comments remain committed to a posture of openness and awareness before the Lord. Although some indicated that it is “possible to never sin” (89), others felt that it was dependent on “spiritual maturity” (61) with still others noting that repentance should become “increasingly rare” (146). However, there were a few who also indicated that repentance “should not be limited to ‘sin’” (35). With those few thoughts presented, we now turn to the codes that generated the most significant responses in terms of numbers.

Three themes emerge from the responses: “daily” (7, or 14%), “regularly” (15, or 31%), and “when aware” (27, or 55%). As has been previously mentioned, the dominant nuance in both the “daily” and “regularly” groups is a “repentant posture.” A strong emphasis on “ongoing self-examination” (146) and a desire “to be like Jesus” (25) as a primary motivator for regular repentance arises out of the comments. Psalm 139:23-24 is cited as a helpful scripture to focus this practice (22), and repentance as a “discipline” is highlighted (25, 63). “Honest humility” is embraced as a core value for these respondents (3, 89). Corporate and systemic sin is also a concern among these ministers.

The “when aware” category reveals nothing that has not already been said. The emphasis

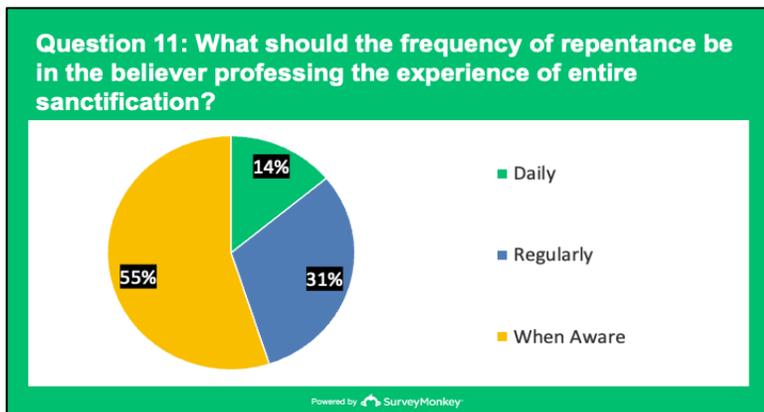


Figure 16: Frequency of Repentance—“Other” Responses

here is that repentance is required—and should only be considered—“when...led to by the Holy Spirit” (22, 64, 79, 126, 146). An admonition to not “make repentance a law” (112) but rather

to wait until “sin is present or made known” (151). These respondents are generally not opposed to repentance but insist that it should not be forced. Instead, repentance should be simply responsive to the promptings of the Spirit.

Question 12: How would you describe your personal practice of repentance?

Question 12 is marked with sixty-nine respondents skipping the question. Reasons can only be surmised. Nonetheless, the responses to personal practice are varied. They are also difficult to synthesize. Much of the responses reflect what has already been expressed. Some of the less frequent themes include “not yet perfect”, “die daily”, “reflect love”, and “ask God to reveal.” However, there are six general categories that arise from the responses and, although there is not much new here, the volume of responses deserves mention.

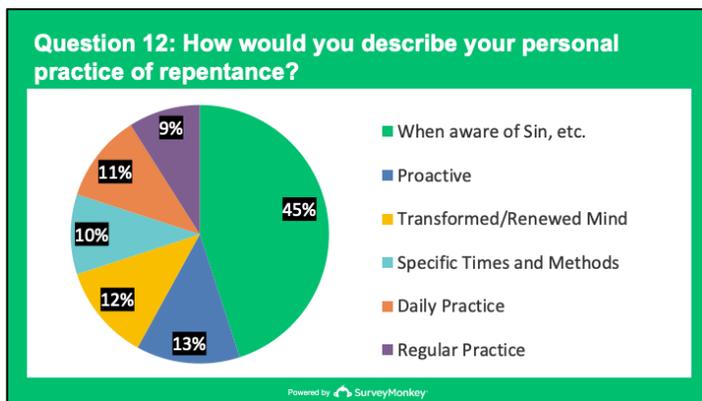


Figure 17: Personal Practice of Repentance

The largest grouping—“when aware of sin”—comprises 45% of the responses and focuses on a personal “assessment by the Holy Spirit.” For some, that is a passive activity; for others, an intentional practice of opening oneself to be assessed by the Spirit is in place. Some allow for “assessment by others” (5) as well as by the Holy Spirit, but being “sensitive to the Holy Spirit” is central to this theme (167).

The second largest group consists of 23 responses, or 13%, and believes in being “proactive” about repentance and spiritual and personal development. They not only desire a regular practice of seeking deeper purity of heart and character but emphasize a “constant conversation” (17) with the Spirit. From “being aware of my sin, temptations, pride, and

arrogance” (144) to maintaining a personal practice to “ask God to reveal areas that I must work in” (126), intentionality is a key concept. Some mention journaling as a tool for this purpose.

Along this same line is the next category: “transformed/renewed mind.” The goal is to “improve relationship with God” (24, 46, 80, 107) and to allow the Holy Spirit to “shape behavior” (41). With this in mind, pride is noted as a hindrance to this process. Among these pastors, growth, maturity, Christlikeness, and a closer relationship with God are all driving forces. Toward this end, “there is no growth or victory without repentance” (143).

Noting specific times and methods of repentance, a variety of practices surface. Among them are meditation, fasting, seasons of repentance (such as Lent), and before communion. Almost half affirmed a weekly time of repentance with their congregation and several valued the use of scripture and written prayers.

There is little to say about the final two groupings: “daily practice” and “regular practice”. While there are respondents in the earlier questions who expressed a lack of personal sin, the pastors in these last two categories find value in regular, even daily, times of self-reflection, seeking the Holy Spirit, and repentance.

Question 13: How public is your personal practice of repentance?

It is significant—and a bit surprising—that sixty-six respondents affirmed an open and transparent practice of repentance. It is equally significant that nearly as many (fifty-two) skipped this question. Even more interesting is

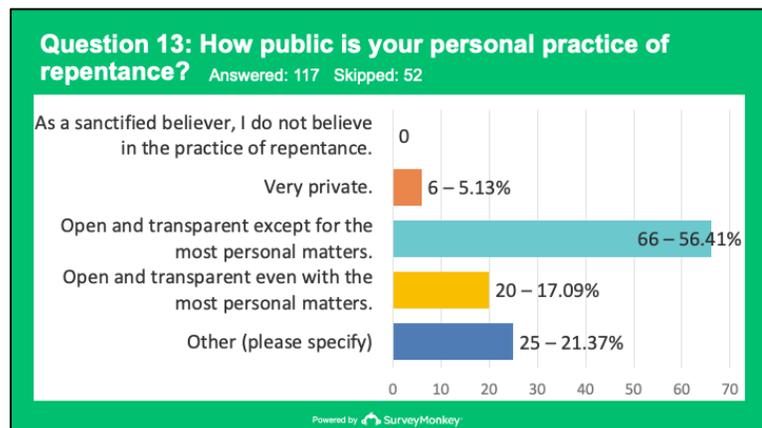


Figure 18: How Public is Repentance?

the number of respondents who claim to be highly transparent in their repentance (17% of respondents). This is simply not what I, as a Nazarene pastor, have experienced in more than 35 years of ministry...which may be why so many survey participants skipped the question.

Exploring the twenty-five “other” responses, three main themes presented themselves with one dominating—“contextual.” To clarify, respondents expressed how the openness of the repentance was dependent on the specific context. “Some repentance stories I tell from the pulpit, others I only share with my trusted friends” (112). “Some repentance can be taught and used as an example. Some matters need to be confessed privately to a band of intimately close friends” (156). “In certain situations I can be more open and transparent. Otherwise it is just a

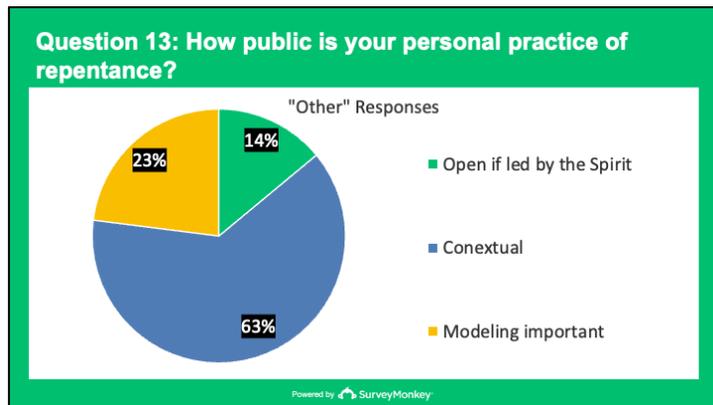


Figure 19: How Public is Repentance? “Other” Responses

general practice” (148). These and other examples stress the need for discernment and discretion.

In a similar vein, some expressed a willingness to be open and transparent at the beckoning of the

Holy Spirit. The sentiment is that transparency is not a regular practice but is a point of obedience to the Spirit. However, the last group recognized the importance of modeling repentance for their congregations. Although these responses spill over into the next section related to corporate practice, Nazarene pastors understand the power and necessity of modeling.

Question 14: How does your understanding of the term “flesh” (particularly from Romans 7—8) influence your personal practice of repentance?

A noteworthy seventy-seven respondents skipped this question. Nearly 46% of survey participants did not choose to take the time to share their thoughts. Beyond conjecture, it is a

mystery. Nonetheless, a large number of codes were generated from the ninety-two responses that were received.

By far the largest theme is that there are “daily implications” to the sanctified life. The focus here is that sanctification is an ongoing process as well as a crisis moment. That ongoing process requires our attention. Although many did not make explicit reference to the flesh in their responses, the essence of this excerpt is representative of the sentiment of most respondents in this bracket: “We will live with this flesh of ours while we are still on earth sucking wind. Paul wants to encourage us to get better at having control over our flesh every day” (53). Furthermore, seeking to keep in step with the Spirit is paramount: “As a new creation in Christ, set apart to live every day for Him.

Walking in the Spirit, being led by the Lord” (23).

Many in this category reaffirmed the need to “die daily” (32) to the flesh and to sin. In fact, a strong

contingency noted the “need to put repentance in the holy lifestyle” (25). This is a fresh development in Nazarene praxis. In my experience as a Nazarene and as a Nazarene pastor, the concept of sinless perfection has dominated the theological landscape. It now appears that there is a shift. Interestingly, the trend does not seem to be age-related but instead is mixed throughout the age brackets.

The theme “follow the Holy Spirit” has been expressed before with little new insights here. Nonetheless, a strong number of respondents reiterated this response. The response rate indicates the fundamental importance of this concept to Nazarene pastors.

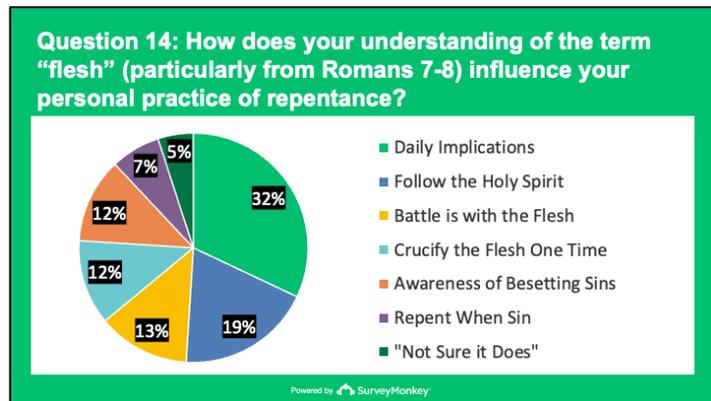


Figure 20: “Flesh” and Personal Repentance

The same can be said of the “repent when sin” and “battle is with the flesh” themes. There is fundamentally nothing new expressed in these responses. A general lack of clarity in regard to the flesh along with a common reticence to apply repentance to anything but known and willful sin continues to dominate. However, one trend is beginning to show itself and that is a distinction between repentance and confession. Many who are unwilling to embrace repentance as a spiritual discipline find “confession” to be much more palatable. Similarly, seeking forgiveness is perceived as more appropriate than repenting. All in all, these are important precepts for Nazarene praxis.

Interestingly, the totality of entire sanctification resurfaces at this point. The “crucify the flesh one time” theme appears fairly strongly in response to question 14. Several express that “the power of the sinful nature is removed” (142) and that “the sinful nature ‘remains’ but it does not ‘reign’” (58). Following the trajectory of traditional Nazarene doctrine, the idea that sin is minimal comes to the surface once again as Paul’s words to “crucify the flesh” are championed (60).

One final theme boils to the top: “awareness of besetting sins.” This is a fresh perspective that affirms the need to “admit I’m not perfect” (12) and become “keenly aware of...frailties, faults, shortcomings” (57). Once again, my experience tells me that Nazarenes are to focus on the strength they have in the Spirit and not on their weaknesses. Therefore, this is an interesting development among Nazarene pastors.

Corporate Practice

This final section focuses attention on how the spiritual discipline of repentance is practiced in the church. The intent is to discern how much or how little the discipline is

encouraged and practiced in corporate gatherings as well as to discover specific methods and strategies used in Nazarene churches across the United States.

Question 15: Do you publicly encourage your people to practice repentance?

It is to be noted that fifty-three respondents skipped this question and only eight felt the need to expand their thoughts through the “other” response. It should also be noted that the vast majority of respondents affirmed public encouragement to repent. Given the free response concepts already analyzed, the question arises as to exactly what the respondents intend when they affirm repentance. Although there is little evidence in this question, the general sense from

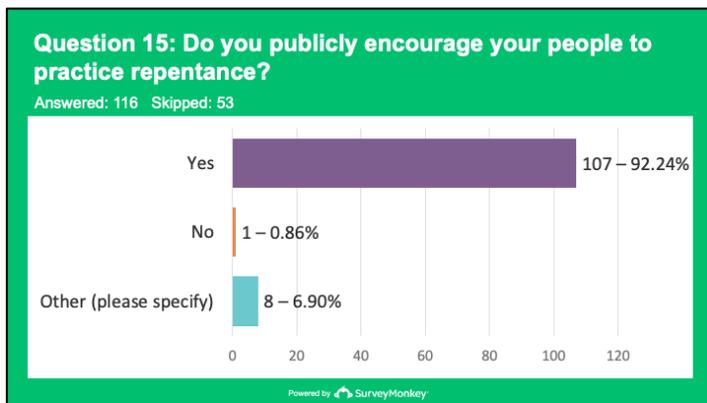


Figure 21: Is Public Repentance Encouraged?

the rest of the insights would indicate that at least half of the respondents are referring to encouraging people to repent of their sins for salvation or sanctification or restoration. We will see this more clearly as the next question is processed.

In the meantime, the small number of “other” responses makes finding trends in thought virtually impossible. However, there are a few statements that merit mentioning. In the “other” responses to this question, the need to “encourage accountability” (109) was noted. One noted that repentance is “not encouraged” (137) while another confessed that there was “not enough” repentance (83). Finally, one person resisted encouraging repentance so as to “avoid Calvinism” (44).

Question 16: How would you describe your church's practice of repentance?

Question 16 generated a vast spectrum of codes and themes. Even though sixty-six respondents skipped this question, those who did respond had much to say, although not as many specific strategies as was anticipated. Several of the themes represent essentially another iteration of previous concepts and will not be discussed in much detail. However, there are a few themes that merit further discussion.

Tied for the largest group, encouraging repentance “if and when needed” is one of those categories that has already been addressed in some detail. In the context of corporate repentance, the focus is on “for forgiveness” (11, 62, 161), or salvation. As such, “altar calls” are a primary strategy (16, 22, 42, etc.) with an emphasis on repentance being a “response to the Holy Spirit” (150).

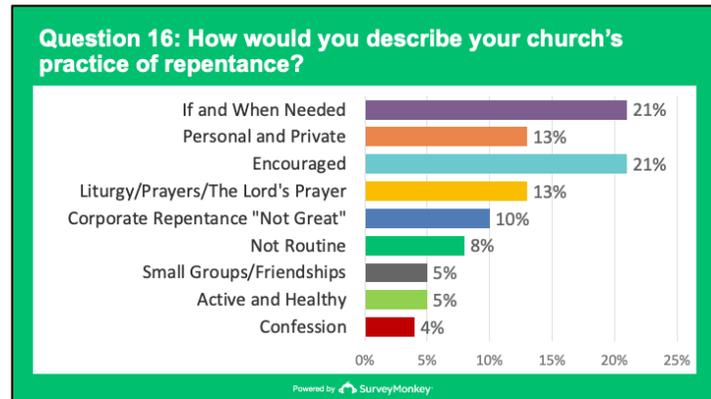


Figure 22: Church's Practice of Repentance

“Personal and Private” carried 13% of the responses. While repentance may be encouraged, it is context-sensitive and virtually always a private matter between the individual and God. Very little is expressed corporately, neither in terms of corporate/systemic sins nor public confession and repentance.

Another 43% of responses relayed that repentance was encouraged in some form or another. For some, corporate repentance is encouraged and practiced. Furthermore, repentance is “encouraged at regular times in the service” (37). For instance, “during pastoral prayer” (11), “open altars” (56), and “in response to a sermon” (22). The nature of the repentance varies in this context from a call to repent to be saved, to repenting for systemic sins, to dealing with an area

of growth addressed through the sermon. In this group, they “frequently teach” (131) about repentance in an effort to increase the practice.

Strategically, “liturgy/prayers/the Lord’s Prayer” is used to encourage repentance. Some reserve the practice primarily for specific seasons such as Ash Wednesday or Lent and Good Friday. The Lord’s Prayer is used as a catalyst for repentance as are “weekly prayers of confession and assurance” (87) and prayers that use “the lectionary texts for that month” (115). Communion is a consistent time for reflection and repentance as well as “public confession in Baptism” (107).

In contrast, 10% determined that the practice was “not great” (169), “tentative” (41), or approached “with apprehension” (169). Others report that repentance in the corporate setting is “minimal” (90, 168), “discouraging” (72), “very poor indeed” (60), “guarded” (125), or “misunderstood” (168).

On the more positive side, 8% confess that repentance is a “work in progress” (23) or is “new” (64). The main place for repentance in the corporate setting for this group centers around seasonal practices.

A small percentage makes a point out of practicing “confession” in place of repentance (121). As has been previously mentioned, “confession” is a much more palatable concept. However, confession finds its place alongside repentance as ministers “model confessing faults” (2) and “lead by example” (4) in this discipline.

While 5% describe their church’s practice of repentance as “active and healthy,” another 5% acknowledge the vitality of “small groups/counseling” for nurturing repentance. Trusted “friendships” (5) are also cited as meaningful settings for repentance.

Question 17: How does your understanding of the term “flesh” (particularly from Romans 7—8) influence the way you lead your church in the practice of repentance?

Nearly 50% of survey participants chose to skip this question. Of the eighty-seven who responded, the responses were essentially the same as for question 14 related to personal practice. For that reason, it would not be productive to discuss this question further.

Question 18: What place does repentance have in your regular Sunday worship service?

Continuing the trend, sixty-six survey participants skipped this question leaving 103 responses. The responses revealed that 13% perceived repentance to be a “big part” of the Sunday worship service while 22% admitted that it was “not regular.” Among those who say that repentance is a “big part” of the service, very few give any specific

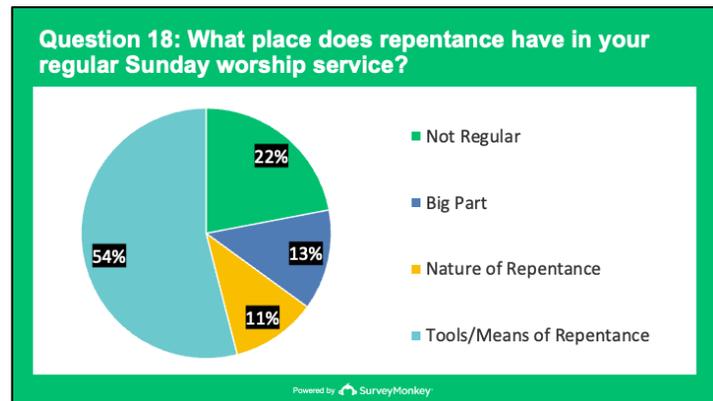


Figure 23: Repentance in Regular Sunday Worship

description of how that is practiced. For instance, one respondent simply stated, “Always a part of the service from beginning to end” (98). Another claims that “repentance is the focus of every service, for it is at the heart of the gospel” (94). Still another describes repentance as “a core value in our regular Sunday worship service” (143). Yet none of these give clarity as to what that specifically means.

Similarly, the “not regular” group does not give much reason for why they do not practice repentance. They do, however, note that repentance is “seasonal” (28), “as needed” (99), and “as

the Holy Spirit leads” (89, 156). In this way, the corporate practice reflects the theological perspective that repentance is responsive rather than proactive.

Eleven percent of the responses use this opportunity to discuss the nature of repentance. Of the nineteen excerpts flagged with content that comprise this category, there are ten different sub-codes represented. In other words, the responses here are profoundly varied and not cohesive. The strongest grouping centers around repentance being for reconciliation and forgiveness with an emphasis on salvation. The next sub-group asserts that repentance is private while the final sub-group with more than one response holds that repentance should be regular but private. Others expressed that repentance must connect with “worship and praise” (81) and understand the practice as a “worshipful” experience (61).

The final theme to be discussed is “tools/means of repentance.” Once again, most of these themes have already been highlighted previously with the main emphases being at an “altar call” (3, 110, 146), “open altar” (25, 54, 109), in response to a “challenge in the sermon” (5, 58, 64), or in the “pastoral prayer” (4, 11, 57). “Liturgy” (91, 115), “The Lord’s Prayer” (60, 152), and “communion” (11, 57, 85, 112) are also highlighted as tools used to encourage repentance during Sunday morning worship.

Question 19: What place does repentance have in other regular meetings (e.g., home groups, prayer meeting, Sunday School, etc.)?

Question 19 reflects the thoughts of ninety-one respondents with 78 skipping the question. Nonetheless, a large volume of information was coded. Unfortunately,

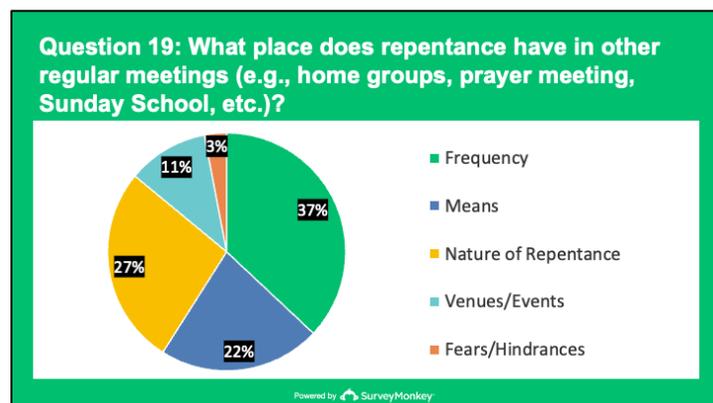


Figure 24: Repentance in Other Regular Meetings

most of the information is not new but simply new iterations of previously stated content. For instance, while 37% discuss the “frequency” of repentance in other meetings, the responses reflect what has already been offered. However, it is still significant that those themes—“occasionally,” “as needed,” “not as much as needed,” “rare”—are mutually applied to the smaller corporate settings of the local church as they were to the larger corporate context. In other words, the theology and practices are distributed evenly through the church and are not reserved for a single context.

In discussing the “means” of encouraging repentance in other regular meetings, some still turn to liturgy, but a stronger emphasis is placed on teaching about repentance and the need for repentance as well as “responding to truth/teaching” (17, 47). Other than that, the majority means of encouraging repentance is simply that it is, indeed, “encouraged.”

The “nature” of repentance is again the same as has already been expressed—“for salvation,” “private,” “response to the Holy Spirit,” “situational.” However, a greater emphasis is placed on “accountability” (41), “checking in with each other” (62), and repentance being “practical” in terms of “sharing our daily walk” (25).

Venues for repentance in other meetings list seasonal settings, such as Lent. Furthermore, prayer meetings and small groups are promoted as appropriate places to encourage repentance in a corporate setting.

The smallest category to discuss is perhaps the most meaningful for this question, and that is the “fears and hindrances” of practicing repentance in a corporate setting. While one affirms that meaningful repentance “needs a safe environment” (41) that can be more easily found in smaller groups (106), others question the small group setting as being fundamentally safe. Instead, it is claimed that it is “difficult to share in smaller settings” (85). Furthermore, a

“fear of routine/losing meaning” (22) hinders some while the “fear of gossip” (106) hinders others. These are important hindrances that need to be addressed in order to safely and meaningfully practice repentance in a corporate setting.

Question 20: What else would you like to say concerning the practice of repentance in the life of the sanctified believer?

Sixty respondents decided to share extra thoughts concerning repentance in the life of the sanctified believer. While most of the comments were once again reiterations of previous responses, there are a few that stand out as significant as the survey comes to a close.

Perhaps the most meaningful part about this question is that the pastors seemed to speak from their hearts concerning matters that are deeply important to them. Whether that be to reassert that repentance is NOT a normal part of the sanctified life or to affirm a valid place for it, or reemphasize confession as an appropriate substitute for repentance, the ministers seemed to speak with greater clarity and passion.

Of the statements made, the most unique and fresh assertions include that “repentance is a gift from God” (48) and that it brings “the joy of freedom” (14). In addition, the continued conviction that the sanctified life “is about being devoted to walking with the Spirit, to hearing his voice, to cooperating with the Spirit in leading a life of love” (60) could not be overlooked. However, the comments related to Nazarene doctrine in general as well as cautions concerning the free practice of repentance are perhaps the most significant portions of the responses.

The candid thoughts of those who see contradiction and confusion in the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification, especially as repentance relates to it, are strong. It seems appropriate to cite many of them here.

I do believe our language speaking of holiness and entire sanctification is lacking a clarity for the place of repentance in the everyday development of immaturity and maturity (25).

We take pride in our "right and orthodox" theology, and ignore our flawed orthopraxy (11).

The Church of the Nazarene should stop being hypocritical and admit that entirely sanctified people regularly commit actual sin and that they need to repent as much as everyone else (157).

I long for us in the Nazarene Church to embrace confession more and to abandon a false belief that once filled with the Holy Spirit we are perfect from that moment on (52).

If we are honest with ourselves we need to get beyond the instant "perfection" idea of sanctification. Moving to a deeper understanding and walk with God that will require more repentance (17).

I know this is a sensitive subject but an important study. I grew up thinking that the entirely sanctified never needed to repent since repentance involved sin (92).

In these excerpts, a love and passion for God and the church shows itself as these ministers work to be faithful to God and to the church they serve.

The cautions are also expressions of ministers who love God and the church and desire God's best for his people. Their gifting helps us to see that repentance can cause us to "focus on how bad I am" (65). In addition, the caution to "don't systematize it" (131) keeps repentance free and spontaneous. The danger of polarity is noted:

There are 2 dangers regarding repentance in the life of the sanctified. 1) There is no need for repentance which allows for an unsanctified pride in one's spiritual life in which we consider ourselves better than others due to our sanctified state rather than humbly following the Lord. 2) The vague practice of regularly repenting for unknown or unconvicted sins rather than known sins or faults brought to our attention by the Spirit can deaden the conscience to sin and failings by assuming we all sin so I don't need to make an effort to change my actions. In other words, we are all sinners so what's the big deal (109).

A final caution to highlight: "I think a larger part of repentance is directed by the Holy Spirit rather than a human understanding of the word 'flesh'" (22). Since this dissertation is

directly addressing this statement, further analysis will be left to the reader. Nonetheless, these words of caution are valuable assets in the conversation.

Conclusion

In drawing all of this data together, there are some general conclusions that present themselves as being significant.

First of all, it is evident that most of the respondents have had specific training in and have given thought to the doctrines of entire sanctification and sin. However, the connection repentance has to those doctrines is lacking. Furthermore, most do not perceive repentance as a positive spiritual discipline that is a catalyst for spiritual and character growth and maturity.

With that in mind, it is disturbing the lack of clarity and unity on the topic that is evidenced in this research. Although several ministers have done some solid theological reflection on this matter, it is evident that Nazarene ministers have been left to figure this out on their own, and the conclusions are quite mixed. Phrases such as “the sinful nature does not reign, but it still remains” after entire sanctification and “there is a marked difference between a pure heart and a mature character” have provided axioms to help reconcile the theological and practical realities surrounding sin, repentance, and entire sanctification. However, these and other teachings have led to some rather conflicting statements. As a result, disparate conclusions have been drawn.

Those conclusions are an attempt to reconcile theological positions and training with practical, real-world experience. The result, as indicated by the survey responses, is that a variety of theological perspectives are emerging among Nazarene pastors. Classic “old school” Nazarene Wesleyanism is held by many while others have leaned toward Keswickian Holiness, Calvinism, or some hybrid position. As I have repeatedly said, my intent is not to cast judgment on any one

of these theological perspectives, each of them having merits of their own. However, as Nazarene ministers, it would seem most ideal to have a unified agreed upon theology related to these matters.

Finally, repentance as a healthy, proactive, joyful means of spiritual development is lacking. It was encouraging that some respondents have come to this paradigm. Nonetheless, it is not the norm and is fairly unorthodox in relation to traditional Nazarene doctrine. Fortunately, there are theological paradigms that are both orthodox and proactive when it comes to repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer. Unfortunately, we do not have a clear theological statement to support those paradigms, nor do we have the tools to sustain them.

It is to that conversation this research is seeking to contribute and to which we now turn.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction and Orientation

The controlling question being addressed has been, “How can a healthy practice of repentance meaningfully intersect with the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification?” This question has arisen out of this author’s experience with, and observations of, the doctrine of entire sanctification and how that doctrine has intersected with real life. While the doctrine depicts a powerful work of the Spirit in the life of the believer, and also allows for human error and weakness, it has often been understood in Nazarene contexts in a perfectionistic kind of way. The result has been that “Many of the people...who claim to be holy and sanctified actually lack severely the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which leads you into spiritual cognitive dissonance.”¹⁷¹ This “cognitive dissonance” has been an issue for me and many Nazarene pastors, as evidenced by many of the responses in the survey.

The purpose of this study has been to address that “cognitive dissonance” by evaluating the Nazarene understanding of entire sanctification as well as the perception and place of repentance, particularly in the life of the entirely sanctified believer. It is my contention that one of the realities that has nurtured the general lack of repentance in the life of the sanctified believer is the way $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\zeta$ has been translated and understood, particularly from Romans 7:14—

¹⁷¹ Rowinski, “The Duty of Constant Confession: The Wesleyan Way of Holiness,” 377.

8:13. It is often translated and/or understood to mean “sinful nature,” which, according to the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification, has been cleansed in the experience. Furthermore, error and human weakness are often confused with sin. The result is a theology and a people who are resistant to repentance as an ongoing, transformative, disciple-making practice.¹⁷²

This research has revealed that Nazarenes appropriately hold a high view of entire sanctification. However, the survey of Nazarene pastors reveals that a theology of repentance outside of conversion, restoration, or in some way, sanctification, is underdeveloped and inadequate to address the very present reality of human weakness and error. For that reason, Nazarene pastors have been left to manage this discrepancy on their own, resulting in an array of theological positions on the matter.

One of the contributors to the discrepancy is that *σάρξ* has been understood in a much more “spiritual”, metaphysical manner, thus allowing it to theologically be assumed in the doctrine of entire sanctification. In other words, when *σάρξ* is understood as “sinful nature”, then entire sanctification cleanses, even eradicates it in the view of some. However, this does not answer the question of the human mishaps that manifest in the life of the entirely sanctified believer. The result is neglect, or arrogance, or defeat.

With all of this in mind, some proposals for implementation are in order.

¹⁷² Van Nest, “This, Then, Is How You Should Pray...Confession: The Lord’s Prayer Forms Us Into a People of Confession.”

Theological Implementation

Do Not Neglect Entire Sanctification

The first point of implementation is to not neglect the doctrine of entire sanctification. I in no way want to imply that the doctrine of entire sanctification is in error. It is a powerful truth and a powerful experience. I would not discard what I believe to be the moment of sanctification for me! It was March 14, 1982, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti when the Holy Spirit broke into my helpless, hopeless, defeated condition and wrought a powerful transforming work in my heart, mind, and soul. In an instant, I had victory over sin, a love for God and the Word of God, a desire to pray, an attentiveness to the voice and leadership of the Spirit, and internal freedom and peace. What a moment!

The purpose of this project is not to disparage the doctrine of entire sanctification nor holiness. In fact, holiness is as necessary now as ever! Churches need to present, explore, promote, and embrace holiness and entire sanctification fully.

A Reframing of Σάρξ (*Sarx*) By Means of a Plain Reading

At the same time, the people of God need to be honest about human weakness, errors in judgment, and the like. Nazarenes have been fearful to admit to errors in judgment because it has a nuance of “sin” to it. However, if the people of God can embrace a reframed understanding of σάρξ, they can begin to address these weaknesses and hindrances to their relationships and to their witness in meaningful ways.

That which is pertinent to this project is a reframing of how σάρξ is understood in the context of entire sanctification and holiness. As has already been discussed, σάρξ has often been understood to mean “sinful nature.” However, understanding the term in this way seems to take

Paul's use of words, spiritualize it into a kind of identity that embeds itself in the human soul, and then controls the human being from that vantage point toward sinfulness. With this view, some would suggest that the "sinful nature" is never fully dealt with; others (such as Nazarenes) tend to view the "sinful nature" as something that can be fully cleansed out of the soul. The first interpretation is not theologically pertinent to this discussion. However, there are a few consequences to the second "Nazarene" interpretation.

First of all, elevating σάρξ as the "sinful nature" to a controlling spot in the human soul assigns it more authority than it deserves. It is certainly a powerful influence in humanity, but it is controllable through the blood of Jesus and the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, elevating σάρξ to a spiritual entity disconnects it from practical holiness. In other words, it places it in a spiritual realm that can be easily dismissed or overly emphasized. It can be seen as an uncontrollable part of human existence, or it can be seen as a great spiritual enemy that can only be addressed through a crisis experience of some sort. In doing so, it places the human being in somewhat of a passive position in regard to both the influence by or the freedom from its influence and control. Humanity is truly helpless to address the concerns of σάρξ.

Thirdly, although the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification has been interpreted to deal with σάρξ in the absolute spiritual sense, as mentioned in the second point above, the experience of the people reveals that there are still troubling behaviors that seem to go unchecked. As a result, Nazarenes are dismissive of the troubling behaviors on the basis of being entirely sanctified, or they are dismissive of the experience of entire sanctification on the basis of the frailties they know to be a part of their lives.

However, what would happen if we reframed σάρξ in a very tangible, natural, and realistic manner? This is what I call a plain reading of the term. In a plain reading, σάρξ is read with its more generic gloss, “flesh”. In doing so, there are a few consequences that contribute to a solid, manageable, practical holiness without being dismissive of the work of the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification.

First of all, a plain reading suggests that σάρξ is a natural influence in the human experience, but not absolutely controlling. It is powerful! But not absolute. Can a human being overcome σάρξ on their own? Not really. But the human being is not a passive observer in the influence that σάρξ exerts in life either. A plain reading brings σάρξ down to earth and places it in a context that, by the power of the Spirit, is controllable.

Secondly, a plain reading de-spiritualizes the term and places it naturally in the human experience. As such, it is not evil in and of itself¹⁷³ but is a very natural part of human existence that has been distorted and infected¹⁷⁴ by sin in the world because of the Fall. In other words, the flesh is human existence with its natural passions and desires that, because of the disorientation brought about by sin in the world, has lost self-control in meeting those desires and passions. It is natural needs and desires that are out of sync with the ways of the Kingdom of God. The one who lives “according to the flesh” (Romans 7:14—8:13) hyper-fixates on the needs and desires of the flesh to the detriment of life in the Spirit, and even good, healthy natural life.

Thirdly, a plain reading of σάρξ does not diminish the work of the Holy Spirit in entire sanctification. Instead, it clarifies the locus of the work in the human heart and soul as a perfecting of relationship with God. This work not only perfects the covenant relationship, but in

¹⁷³ Schaff, *NPNF0111*, 11:772; Fitzmyer and Paulus, *AYB Romans*, 33:474; Purkiser, Taylor, and Taylor, *God, Man & Salvation*, 288.

¹⁷⁴ DeNeff, *7 Saving Graces*, 22.

the process so transforms the relational focus resulting in much inappropriate behavior instantly disappearing because it is so clearly an expression of discord with God. Once the human soul is in accord with God, many behaviors are completely eliminated.

Finally, a plain reading of σάρξ provides a theological framework for addressing those behaviors in the entirely sanctified believer that are detrimental to human existence and relationships.¹⁷⁵ When σάρξ is understood to be simply “flesh” and “flesh” is understood to be “the locus where we find ourselves,”¹⁷⁶ then we have a basis on which we can address the distortions of the “flesh.” In other words, a plain reading of σάρξ reduces it to a manifestation of human existence. “When alienated from God, our flesh becomes our focus to our own detriment, often then looking for satisfaction of its desires (carnality). So, *sarx* is not bad in and of itself except as a place lived apart from God.”¹⁷⁷

When you combine these ideas, it is theologically possible to hold a high view of entire sanctification in which a transformative holy love is established in the relationship with God while still maintaining that our human existence is influenced by our history, experiences, innate and natural desires, and sins—not necessarily even our sins, but sin in the world.¹⁷⁸ If this theology can be accepted, then a powerful door to practical holiness is unlocked!

¹⁷⁵ Bechtold, “Sin in the Sanctified: Holy Living in the Broken Creation,” 240–41.

¹⁷⁶ Long, “Email from Dr. Long Concerning Paul’s Use of Σάρξ,” March 19, 2022.

¹⁷⁷ Long.

¹⁷⁸ DeNeff, *7 Saving Graces*, 22–25.

A Re-Envisioned Theology of Repentance and Entire Sanctification

With this theological possibility in place, a re-envisioned theology of repentance and entire sanctification allows for a high view of entire sanctification while addressing the low view of σάρξ. It specifically accounts for σάρξ by means of repentance. From the research in this project, it is clear that most Nazarene ministers view repentance only as a means of addressing sin proper. There is no provision for other areas of fault, thus stimulating dysfunction. However, when repentance is re-envisioned to be a tool for confronting anything that is a hindrance to a vibrant walk with God and people, then it becomes a tool for dealing with σάρξ in the believer.

Furthermore, when repentance is “normalized” as a godly behavior instead of an expression of defeat, then it can be practiced joyfully! Some of the Nazarene pastors that participated in the survey expressed this kind of agreement with repentance and the Holy Spirit in the on-going life of holiness. In this view, “there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1), and that includes the behaviors that come from σάρξ. That is strange to hear because of the preconceived notion that σάρξ is “sinful nature.” However, placing σάρξ in a natural humanity framework allows it to be embraced as a natural desire or tendency that can either be under the control of the Spirit or out of balance, leading to hurt, disorientation, or even sin.

Since there is no condemnation, then it can be freely acknowledged as something that needs to be “shored up” in the life of the believer but does not diminish the relationship with God. Of course, allowed to continue, it does influence the relationship with God, because “the mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God” (Rom 8:7). However, freely acknowledging any area of weakness not only does not diminish the relationship with God, but actually enhances it!

Dr. Van Nest says it beautifully and powerfully:

Far from removing the need for confession, the heart that is fully surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus feels the need for confession and repentance more deeply than before. The heart that has been made perfect in love sees with ever-increasing clarity the ways we fail to actually live out that perfect love. It recognizes the ongoing need for the grace of God to transform our broken humanity into the image of Christ. The holy heart prays daily, as Jesus taught us to pray, “forgive us our debts.”¹⁷⁹

In this way, repentance opens the doorway for development in holiness. Freely and joyfully embracing the practice allows the entirely sanctified believer to settle into assurance, reject condemnation, and own shortcomings in order to put them at the foot of the cross. Shortcomings are not “owned” in order to keep owning them, but in order to take authority over them and, by the power of the Holy Spirit that is active and alive in the entirely sanctified believer, turn from them, changing one’s mind about how those shortcomings have been understood, and allowing the Holy Spirit to expose underlying dysfunction in *σάρξ* that is prompting them. It is not a scolding or a punishment, but discipline and guidance. It is not an experience of judgment, but of loving correction. It is not a break in the relationship with God, but rather a deepening of the relationship, making it more intimate, more caring, more in love with God and neighbor—In essence, more holy!

Repentance, then, becomes a friend of holiness.

Praxis

The question now becomes, “How can repentance be developed in the local church as an accepted practice? As a friend of holiness?” In response to that question, three proposals are offered.

¹⁷⁹ Van Nest, “This, Then, Is How You Should Pray...Confession: The Lord’s Prayer Forms Us Into a People of Confession.”

Personally Develop Repentance as a Friend

The most fundamental need is for repentance to be a personal friend. Speaking from my own experience, I could have affirmed the concepts presented in this paper but could never have fully embraced them because of a latent sense of failure and defeat at the thought of repenting. I, like so many others, deferred to confession or to very general concepts of repentance. Confession, as has been discussed in Chapter Five, is much more palatable to Nazarene sensibility and often focuses on positive confession, such as affirming the Apostle's Creed. In this way, it is much more tenable to admit to a general lack of devotion to the poor, or lack of spiritual fervor—but to admit to actually neglecting the poor or actually neglecting prayer or some other specific confession that called for specific repentance, well...that was very uncomfortable to me as it is for most sanctified Nazarenes.

As has already been mentioned, repentance is generally viewed as a point of failure and defeat. However, with a reframed, re-envisioned theology of repentance and entire sanctification, repentance can be viewed as a positive, fresh awareness of a place in life that can get closer to God and people. Instead of perceiving the repentance point as a loss of relationship, it can be embraced as a point of deepening relationship. Repentance can become a friend of holiness instead of a witness of failed holiness.

Until the Nazarene pastor becomes fully comfortable with this re-envisioned theology and personally experiences the liberating and maturing power of repentance, truly leading a congregation in a healthy, ongoing practice of repentance will not be possible.

Develop a Safe Atmosphere for Repentance

Once repentance is embraced as a friend of holiness, it now becomes essential for a safe atmosphere to be established and nurtured. I am proposing seven principles for developing a safe and nurturing environment where repentance is experienced as a friend and not a judge.

Teaching

It will take some time to carefully teach the people a new way of understanding repentance. Since it has been essentially a negative experience—one in which failure and shame are the norm—it will take consistent, persistent, gracious teaching along with the other recommendations listed below in order to see wide-ranging change.

Modeling

Teaching is of little effect if it is not modeled clearly. Modeling involves the practice of acknowledging a shortcoming, owning it by not only confessing the issue but also verbalizing the consequences of that shortcoming, intentionally and gratefully repenting of it (turning away, changing the mind, adjusting behavior), and then trusting the power of the indwelling Spirit to empower transformation. A future witness of freedom, or a “testimony”, is also an important component of modeling.

Extending Grace

As people are learning to embrace repentance as a help and tool for growth, it is essential to consistently extend grace. A key component of extending grace—or being graced-filled—is not being alarmed by people’s wrong behavior. Remembering that we, like all humans, are capable of terrible atrocities, and that God’s grace extends to us all, helps us to not be so startled at other people’s sins and shortcomings, nor at our own! The title of a helpful resource

addressing this very concept says it clearly: *Unshockable Love*.¹⁸⁰ By being grace-filled we develop and model “unshockable love” while displaying the beautiful grace and holiness of God.

Resist Minimizing Wrong

An important part of developing a viable praxis of liberating repentance is, perhaps ironically, resisting the urge to minimize wrongdoing. Minimizing shortcomings and sin does not communicate grace as much as it communicates that admitting and repenting is fearful and undesirable. Instead, embracing personal error owns the infraction and gives space for grace. Again, repentance is a friend of holiness, not a judge of unholiness.

Resist Elevating Wrong

At the same time, it is important to resist elevating wrong behavior, giving it too high a place of authority. It is to be clearly and freely admitted, but not coupled with shame. There is, of course, a sense of remorse and conviction that comes with admitting to wrong behavior. However, shame takes it to a higher level of condemnation that points to the individual as being wrong instead of the behavior. It is not a controlling, defining event; it is a moment of *σάρξ* weakness that is brought under the authority of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Emphasize Covenant Relationship

The foundational thing that makes a re-envisioned theology of repentance and entire sanctification possible is the covenant relationship between humanity and God. This covenant relationship has established forever the grounds for unconditional love, forgiveness, and maturity. As a Wesleyan, I believe that this covenant relationship can be neglected and “the

¹⁸⁰ John Burke, *Unshockable Love: How Jesus Changes the World Through Imperfect People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014).

grace itself frustrated and ultimately lost.”¹⁸¹ Nonetheless, the covenant relationship established between God and humanity at salvation and perfected at entire sanctification places humanity in an enduring, grace-filled (albeit just) relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. As such, we can be confident that God is striving to grow our relationship and not condemn it—much more so than we ever imagine or even desire ourselves.

Deal with Sin and Shortcomings in Like Manner

Finally, it is important to address matters of sin proper in like manner as shortcomings. In other words, sin and shortcomings both need the same repentance. They both need an acknowledgement of wrong, a change of mind, and behavior transformed and empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Once sin and shortcomings are dealt with differently, we return to the initial problem of shame, resistance, and avoidance. Ultimately it does not matter what inappropriate behavior is called—sin or shortcoming or “just the way I am”—it needs to be dealt with by the blood of Jesus and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Develop Meaningful Litanies of Repentance in a Wesleyan Framework

A final proposal is to develop practices of repentance that are rooted in a Wesleyan framework. Each congregation will experience this differently and have different levels of toleration for the practice. Therefore, I offer two guiding thoughts.

Understand Your Context

A litany of repentance will not be welcomed by every Nazarene congregation. In fact, there are many who are very resistant to formal, “liturgical” practices. However, there is a

¹⁸¹ David P. Wilson et al., eds., *Church of the Nazarene Manual 2017-2021*, Kindle Edition (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 2017), Article of Faith X.

growing trend in the Church of the Nazarene for congregations to adopt these practices and value pre-meditated, carefully crafted, intentionally focused prayers of all kinds. Nonetheless, the pastor needs to use contextual wisdom in implementing a healthy practice of repentance.

That being said, an informal litany can be expressed at various times and occasions throughout the life of the church. For instance, public prayer times can be a place where a re-envisioned theology of repentance can be expressed. The pastoral prayer can verbalize both personal and corporate issues that can then be repented of by the pastor. Furthermore, an “open altar” time where people are invited to come forward to pray can be a beautiful place to accommodate repentance. Inviting people to participate in prayer at the altar *outside* of seeking for salvation or sanctification provides a space for people to pray more broadly, offering praise, thanksgiving, petition, intercession, “casting cares on the Lord”,...or repenting for shortcomings.

Another very natural place for an informal litany of repentance to be expressed is at special occasions and special times. Communion is a very natural place for this kind of experience. Although a common way of asking people to make sure there is no sin in them before taking Communion in many ways takes us back to the initial problem with repentance, modifying those instructions in a more positive light can be very powerful. For instance, asking people to consider any thought, attitude, habit, or behavior pattern that is hindering their relationship with God and people offers a nuanced position that points people toward healthy, on-going, liberating repentance.

Often the Lord’s Prayer is prayed before the sacrament of Holy Communion. This is a very natural place to spend some time focusing on repentance as an on-going expression of biblical faith and Christian maturity. An informal litany will be meaningful and easily accessible,

but it is also an opportunity for a more structured approach to be received well by the congregation.

Furthermore, there are seasons that are more accommodating to the practice of repentance. Lent is probably the most obvious one, but seasons of fasting and prayer, revival meetings, or the National Day of Prayer are all occasions that lend themselves well to a “soft” litany of repentance. These are also occasions when a structured litany may be more well-received, the benefit being that a carefully prepared repentant focus can be achieved.

Finally, providing opportunities in a variety of settings to be open, appropriately transparent, authentic, real, and open-hearted is essential. Healthy repentance must become a natural, intuitive way of dealing with life in order for it to become a true friend of holiness.

Developing Meaningful Litanies of Repentance

In considering a very practical approach to implementing on-going repentance in the life of the corporate church, the following guidelines for developing litanies are offered.

Variety

In order for a repentance litany to be meaningful, it is important that there be variety. One of the hesitations of Nazarene congregations is the repetitive nature of liturgy. Whether that hesitation is justified or not is a different conversation. In the meantime, a variety of contexts, scriptures, points of confession and repentance, and ways of saying things are vitally important for the practice to be embraced and to maintain long-term engagement.

Affirm Holiness and the Call to Be Holy

A litany of repentance in a Nazarene/Wesleyan/Holiness context must affirm holiness and the call to be holy. Since the practice is being encouraged from a re-envisioned theological position, maintaining the Wesleyan theological distinctiveness of entire sanctification and

holiness is essential. Without this foundational commitment, nothing is being contributed to the Nazarene context. Instead, practices that are rooted in other theological traditions will be adopted and, consequently, the fundamental theological tenets of the Church of the Nazarene will be diminished or dismissed resulting in theological confusion or malaise. However, a litany of repentance that begins with holiness squarely places repentance in the context of holy living and affirms the re-envisioned theology being proposed here.

Recognize Human Frailty

If a litany of repentance in a Nazarene context is going to encourage repentance as a friend of holiness, it must acknowledge that repentance is for more than “a voluntary violation of a known law of God.”¹⁸² Instead, it involves human weakness, shortcomings, cultural patterns of thinking, and other wrong or inappropriate behaviors that are often not properly called sin. Therefore, these non-culpable behaviors must be recognized as hindrances to intimacy with God, fellowship with people, and to mature holiness.

Affirm the Covenant and Grace of God

At the same time, assurance of salvation and God’s grace is indispensable. Squarely rooted in covenant relationship with God, repentance must be framed as a help and process of maturing in holiness rather than a point of judgment, failure, and break of relationship. The covenant relationship and grace of God allows for positive growth to come from repentance rather than simply returning the believer to square one.

¹⁸² Wilson et al.

Be Scripture Based

A necessary piece in a dependable litany of repentance is scripture. A litany should be built from scripture, focusing on what comes forward from the selected passage. This devotion keeps the practice of repentance rooted in God's truth and avoids distracting sentiments. Furthermore, it helps accommodate the first guideline of variety. Virtually any passage of scripture can be used as a meaningful catalyst for repentance. Likewise, litanies of repentance can, in this way, be tailored to specific seasonal focal points or preaching emphases.

Confess and Repent

A litany of repentance needs to actually include repentance. It needs to confess the call of God, the need or shortcoming, and the solution. Then a specific point of repentance calling for a change of mind concerning the matter must be offered. These points of confession and repentance are of two classes:

1. **General Concepts.** This includes broad perspectives of the issue at hand. It calls the individual and the church at large to consider ways of thinking, cultural perceptions, church and social dynamics, and systemic concerns.
2. **Specific Actions.** This includes a call to change the mind in specific ways. The congregation as a whole is challenged to adopt a particular change of mind as a congregation. Furthermore, individuals are provided opportunity to discern specific points of repentance for themselves individually.

Resist the Need to Include All Elements in Every Litany

Finally, it may be impractical to include every recommendation in every litany. For the sake of time and engagement, including some elements at certain times and others on different occasions may be helpful. However, caution should be taken to ensure that the litanies maintain

balance in the big picture so that the re-envisioned theology of repentance can be fully functional, not losing balance nor important components.

For a model litany of repentance, see Appendix Q.

For Further Research

In working through this research, it quickly became evident that this project is only a very small part of a much larger conversation. The following are themes that emerged as connected to the topic of repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer but were outside of the scope of this paper.

1. History and development of the American Wesleyan/Holiness Movement and its impact on discipleship, the doctrine of perfection, confession, and repentance.
2. An expanded view of a biblical teaching on repentance.
3. What has the Church of the Nazarene said about holiness. Much of this undertaking has focused on what has not been said.
4. A comprehensive study of John Wesley's perspective on repentance and holiness.
Although Wesley seems to hold a high view of sanctification, his practice reveals a strong commitment to a confessional, repentant life.
5. The power of Wesley's class meetings, specifically accountability, open repentance, and the pursuit of holiness.
6. A further developing of what healthy repentance looks like.
7. Delineate between confession and repentance and its place in the Church of the Nazarene.
8. The concept of penitence and the validity of this posture for growth in holiness.
9. A general study on the impact translation has on interpretation and theological positions.
10. Shame and its impact on Christian discipleship.

11. Embodied faith. In other words, how faith is exercised, nurtured, and influenced through physical action.
12. Old Testament perspectives on repentance.
13. Connection between a plain reading of σάρξ (*sarx*, “flesh”) and a plain reading of ἐπιθυμία (*epithymia*, “desire”) which is often translated “evil desire.”
14. The impact of trauma on the “flesh” and how inner healing can bring freedom in the “flesh” and soul.
15. The nature of sin. Is it substantival or existential in nature, a combination of the two, or something entirely different? Can sin exist apart from human action? And is sin synonymous with evil?
16. The place of community in the body of Christ for the development of a repentant, confessional community that is maturing in holiness.
17. Spiritual formation more broadly and, at the same time, more specific to developing authentic Christian holiness.
18. The place of covenant in a strong theology of practical holiness.

Conclusion

The Church of the Nazarene has long been committed to the “optimism of grace.” I stand squarely in that optimism. It is an optimism in the security that comes from being in covenant relationship with God because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is an optimism that brings assurance of salvation and an assurance of entire sanctification. It is an optimism of the interaction between the grace of God and the work of entire sanctification through the indwelling Holy Spirit, positioning the believer in a secure relationship that is not fearful of judgment, condemnation, or loss. Instead, it is an optimism that embraces repentance as a friend of

holiness; an unlikely friend that unlocks new possibilities in the maturation of holiness in believers. It is my prayer that this undertaking will in some way contribute to the conversation of practical holiness, ultimately empowering the people of God to be holy indeed!

Appendix A

Articles of Faith V, VIII, and X

Taken from the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene, 2017-2021.

V. Sin, Original and Personal

5. We believe that sin came into the world through the disobedience of our first parents, and death by sin. We believe that sin is of two kinds: original sin or depravity, and actual or personal sin.

5.1. We believe that original sin, or depravity, is that corruption of the nature of all the offspring of Adam by reason of which everyone is very far gone from original righteousness or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation, is averse to God, is without spiritual life, and inclined to evil, and that continually. We further believe that original sin continues to exist with the new life of the regenerate, until the heart is fully cleansed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

5.2. We believe that original sin differs from actual sin in that it constitutes an inherited propensity to actual sin for which no one is accountable until its divinely provided remedy is neglected or rejected.

5.3. We believe that actual or personal sin is a voluntary violation of a known law of God by a morally responsible person. It is therefore not to be confused with involuntary and inescapable shortcomings, infirmities, faults, mistakes, failures, or other deviations from a standard of perfect conduct that are the residual effects of the Fall. However, such innocent effects do not include attitudes or responses contrary to the spirit of Christ, which may properly be called sins of the spirit. We believe that personal sin is primarily and essentially a violation of the law of love; and that in relation to Christ sin may be defined as unbelief.

(Original sin: Genesis 3; 6:5; Job 15:14; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Mark 7:21-23; Romans 1:18-25; 5:12-14; 7:1-8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Galatians 5:16-25; 1 John 1:7-8. **Personal sin:** Matthew 22:36-40 {with 1 John 3:4}; John 8:34-36; 16:8-9; Romans 3:23; 6:15-23; 8:18-24; 14:23; 1 John 1:9-2:4; 3:7-10)

VIII. Repentance

8. We believe the Spirit of God gives to all who will repent the gracious help of penitence of heart and hope of mercy, that they may believe unto pardon and spiritual life. Repentance, which is a sincere and thorough change of the mind in regard to sin, involving a sense of personal guilt and a voluntary turning away from sin, is demanded of all who have by act or purpose become sinners against God.

We believe that all persons may fall from grace and apostatize and, unless they repent of their sins, be hopelessly and eternally lost. We believe that regenerate persons need not return to sin but may live in unbroken fellowship with God through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit who bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God.

(2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalms 32:5-6; 51:1-17; Isaiah 55:6-7; Jeremiah 3:12-14; Ezekiel 18:30-32; 33:14-16; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 3:1-14; 13:1-5; 18:9-14; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 17:30-31; 26:16-18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9)

X. Christian Holiness and Entire Sanctification

10. We believe that sanctification is the work of God which transforms believers into the likeness of Christ. It is wrought by God's grace through the Holy Spirit in initial sanctification, or regeneration (simultaneous with justification), entire sanctification, and the continued perfecting work of the Holy Spirit culminating in glorification. In glorification we are fully conformed to the image of the Son.

We believe that entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotion to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect.

It is wrought by the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service. Entire sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by grace through faith, preceded by entire consecration; and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

This experience is also known by various terms representing its different phases, such as "Christian perfection," "perfect love," "heart unity," "the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit," "the fullness of the blessing," and "Christian holiness."

10.1. We believe that there is a marked distinction between a pure heart and a mature character. The former is obtained in an instant, the result of entire sanctification; the latter is the result of growth in grace.

We believe that the grace of entire sanctification includes the divine impulse to grow in grace as a Christlike disciple. However, this impulse must be consciously nurtured, and careful attention given to the requisites and processes of spiritual development and improvement in Christlikeness of character and personality. Without such purposeful endeavor, one's witness may be impaired and the grace itself frustrated and ultimately lost.

Participating in the means of grace, especially the fellowship, disciplines, and sacraments of the Church, believers grow in grace and in wholehearted love to God and neighbor.

(Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Malachi 3:2-3; Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17; John 7:37-39; 14:15-23; 17:6-20; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 15:8-9; Romans 6:11-13, 19; 8:1-4, 8-14; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Galatians 2:20; 5:16-25; Ephesians 3:14-21; 5:17-18, 25-27; Philippians 3:10-15; Colossians 3:1-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Hebrews 4:9-11; 10:10-17; 12:1-2; 13:12; 1 John 1:7, 9. "**Christian perfection**," "**perfect love**": Deuteronomy 30:6; Matthew 5:43-48; 22:37-40; Romans 12:9-21; 13:8-10; 1 Corinthians 13; Philippians 3:10-15; Hebrews 6:1; 1 John 4:17-18. "**Heart purity**": Matthew 5:8; Acts 15:8-9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:3. "**Baptism with the Holy Spirit**": Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Malachi 3:2-3; Matthew 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 15:8-9. "**Fullness of the blessing**": Romans 15:29. "**Christian holiness**": Matthew 5:1-7:29; John 15:1-11; Romans 12:1-15:3; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:17-5:20; Philippians 1:9-11; 3:12-15; Colossians 2:20-3:17; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:7-8; 5:23; 2 Timothy 2:19-22; Hebrews 10:19-25; 12:14; 13:20-21; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2 Peter 1:1-11; 3:18; Jude 20-21)

Appendix B

Limitations of Repentance as a Means of Grace in Nazarene Literature

Instead of repentance as a tool for spiritual growth, other expressions are used when speaking of areas needing improvement in the life of one who is entirely sanctified. McClurkan uses “lay aside;”¹⁸³ John A. Knight, “disciplined;”¹⁸⁴ Beverly Carradine essentially expresses the absence of need: “...the principle of decay is taken out;...there is a constant, conscious stream of life, strength, and health in the spirit.”¹⁸⁵

Discussions centered around life in the Spirit focus primarily on staying focused spiritually. A prominent mid-twentieth century Nazarene leader, J. O. McClurkan, devotes an entire piece to maintaining the life and experience of entire sanctification. In it, he offers a wide variety of counsel on—as the title of the work indicates—How to Keep Sanctified. Among the items mentioned, two that are particularly salient to this project are to “mind the checks” and “walk in the light.”¹⁸⁶

While these are clearly good pieces of advice, there is no indication of how to actually do them. For instance, when speaking of “minding the checks”, McClurkan essentially says to simply stop going the direction you are going.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, the counsel to walk in the light primarily means to keep attentive to things you should or should not do, and then follow in that

¹⁸³ J. O. McClurkan, *How to Keep Sanctified*, Holiness Legacy Collection (Shawnee, KS: Holiness Legacy Ministries, 2011), 17, www.HolinessLegacy.com.

¹⁸⁴ Knight, *In His Likeness: God's Plan for a Holy People*, 71–73.

¹⁸⁵ Carradine, *The Better Way*, 8.

¹⁸⁶ McClurkan, *How to Keep Sanctified*, 15–17.

¹⁸⁷ McClurkan, 15–16.

way.¹⁸⁸ However, there is no discussion about how to “mind the check”, how to choose to “walk in the light”, and more importantly for this research, what to do with those actions, attitudes, and dispositions that were the catalysts calling the believer to “mind the check” or “walk in the light” in the first place.

There is a consistent call to “spare no energy to be more and more conformed to His image,”¹⁸⁹ but there is no indication of how nor a vehicle given whereby that can be achieved.

¹⁸⁸ McClurkan, 17.

¹⁸⁹ Purdue, *The School of Christ*, 34.

Appendix C

A Review of the Herald of Holiness by Decade

Walking through the decades, the early 1912-1919 publications were focused a great deal on a defense of the holiness groups merging to becoming a denomination.¹⁹⁰ There was also a significant emphasis on social ills, such as drinking, gambling, card playing, and even such social evils as white slave trafficking and child labor.¹⁹¹ Nonetheless, repentance was a noteworthy theme. With a continual caveat that sin is not a part of the believer's life, repentance is essentially excluded from the believer's experience. Although there are instances where a call to repent is issued for "non-sin" issues, the issues are still treated as sin and a "crisis moment" of repentance is inferred. For instance, a call to repent of resisting God's work of missions is issued.¹⁹²

The most significant observation from the 1912-1919 volumes is that repentance is listed in a sequence of spiritual activity.¹⁹³ The sequence represents a progression of spiritual events, one leading to the next without repeating itself in the sequence. With some minor modifications,

¹⁹⁰ B. F. Haynes, ed., "Organized Holiness: A Symposium in Two Parts," *Herald of Holiness* 1, no. 1 (April 17, 1912): 5–6, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1807; B. F. Haynes, ed., "Organized Holiness: A Symposium in Two Parts, Part II," *Herald of Holiness* 1, no. 2 (April 24, 1912): 5–6, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1807; B. F. Haynes, ed., "Organized Holiness: Objections Answered," *Herald of Holiness* 1, no. 3 (May 1, 1912): 5–7, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1809.

¹⁹¹ B. F. Haynes, ed., "Editorial: Strongly and Truthfully Said," *Herald of Holiness* 1, no. 7 (May 29, 1912): 4, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1813; B. F. Haynes, ed., "Editorial: Proper Stress at the Wrong Time," *Herald of Holiness* 1, no. 7 (May 29, 1912): 4, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1813; A. S. London, "The Work and the Workers: A Campaign Against the White Slave Traffic and the Vice District," ed. B. F. Haynes, *Herald of Holiness* 3, no. 48 (March 10, 1915): 14, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1966.

¹⁹² L. A. Campbell, "The Open Parliament: Missionary Motives," ed. B. F. Haynes, *Herald of Holiness* 1, no. 7 (May 29, 1912): 6–7, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1813.

¹⁹³ B. F. Haynes, ed., "The Editor's Survey: Doctrinal Preaching," *Herald of Holiness* 1, no. 34 (December 4, 1912): 3, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1840.

the sequence is generally presented as conviction/recognition of sin, repentance, regeneration, consecration, sanctification. One leads to the next and ought not be returned to without the cause of spiritual failure.

The 1935 volume of the *Herald of Holiness* continues the sentiment that repentance is generally the precursor to regeneration and salvation. Beyond that, there is no real call for repentance. In fact, when a writer addresses how to deal with personal challenges and weaknesses, the antidote offered is to focus, center oneself in the experience of entire sanctification, resist aberrant behavior by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the like.¹⁹⁴ However, it is never advised that one should embrace the weakness, own it, and repent of it in order to continue in spiritual victory.

The issue of backsliding is a dominant theme in the decade of the 1950s.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, admonishing the church to deal with their own issues before expecting revival is evident.¹⁹⁶ This is perhaps the most closely related concept of repentance in the believer for ongoing spiritual development that is presented. There is also a recurring interest in the meaning of the Hebrews 6 and 10 passages that speak to there being no more forgiveness of sins.¹⁹⁷ It seems there is a

¹⁹⁴ C. W. Ruth, "Some Lessons for the Sanctified to Learn," ed. H. Orton Wiley, *Herald of Holiness* 24, no. 23 (August 24, 1935): 5–6, https://ht.whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/article/1935-0824%2520HOH_VOL24_NO23.pdf?language=en; J. A. Kring, "How to Maintain Spirituality and Deep Piety," ed. H. Orton Wiley, *Herald of Holiness* 24, no. 22 (August 17, 1935): 12–13, https://ht.whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/article/1935-0817%2520HOH_VOL24_NO22.pdf?language=en.

¹⁹⁵ Milton Thomas, "Good Morning, Friends," ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 42, no. 17 (July 1, 1953): 6, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1719; Stephen S. White, ed., "The Question Box," *Herald of Holiness* 44, no. 19 (July 13, 1955): 14, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1119; Kenneth Hahn, "Backsliding: Is It Necessary?," ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 46, no. 25 (August 21, 1957): 5, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1330.

¹⁹⁶ Broadbelt, "HH 46.21"; Dalton Roberts, "Church Gadabouts," ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 45, no. 25 (August 22, 1956): 5, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1073.

¹⁹⁷ Higgs, "HH 44.46"; White, "HH 41.25"; White, "HH 42.14."

growing concern with how to deal with sin in the life of the sanctified. Finally, the activist demeanor that so marked the earlier Herald of Holiness publications is lacking in the 1950s.

While there is a continued interest in the Hebrews 6 and 10 passages,¹⁹⁸ a distinctive mark of the 1960s publications is the concern for corporate and national revival.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, a strong emphasis related to revivals was repentance with restitution.²⁰⁰ With most discussion of repentance revolving around a “crisis” kind of moment, repentance “does not describe a lovely process.”²⁰¹ In fact, the act of repenting is never described in a positive, joyful manner. On the contrary, there is an attempt to distance the believer from the need for repentance. For example, Lawrence B. Hicks asserts: “To get the wrong definition of sin is a basic error that will send folk to hell. If they think of sin as being something different than it is, they will soon convince themselves that they have sinned or that they are sinning when they have made innocent mistakes.”²⁰² Even though later on in the article he states that “all the wrong which needs to be repented of and corrected is not sin,” there is nonetheless a clear implication that the believer should not fall into the trap of repenting for things that are not sin, such as “oversight and forgetfulness and shortcomings and missing the perfect mark of idealism...speedy actions and contrary moves .”²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ Purkiser, “HH 56.43”; Purkiser, “HH 51.5”; Purkiser, “HH 49.32.”

¹⁹⁹ Bennett, “HH 48.46”; Wordsworth, “HH 49.3”; Purkiser, “HH 49.31.”

²⁰⁰ Oscar Hudson, “Prepare to Meet God,” ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 49, no. 14 (June 1, 1960): 4, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/845; D. I. Vanderpool, “Prepare Ye The Way!,” ed. Stephen S. White, *Herald of Holiness* 49, no. 21 (July 20, 1960): 2, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/852; John M. Drescher, “Requirements for Revival,” ed. W. T. Purkiser, *Herald of Holiness* 56, no. 52 (February 14, 1968): 3–4, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1491.

²⁰¹ John A. Monroe, “Except Ye Repent,” ed. W. T. Purkiser, *Herald of Holiness* 49, no. 46 (January 11, 1961): 4, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/877.

²⁰² Hicks, “HH 54.18.”

²⁰³ Hicks.

The question, “Is there a place for repentance in the sanctified life?” comes forward for a direct response by theologian and magazine editor, W. T. Purkiser: “If by repentance you mean contrition for and turning from known sin, the answer is, ‘No.’ If you mean a feeling of regret and humiliation as a result of human failures and imperfections, the answer is, ‘Yes.’”²⁰⁴ Purkiser then goes on to speak of repenting to others for failures in behavior toward them, but not to God or self. Instead, he reaffirms that the sanctified believer is filled with love, and in love there is no sin. Again, repentance as an ongoing spiritual discipline is not presented as acceptable in the sanctified life.

Of particular interest to this writer is an article by the Mildred Bangs Wynkoop. In the article, Wynkoop offers a radical theological shift. She asserts: “Repentance is not really a negative action. Repentance is so dynamic and revolutionary and therapeutic that its very exercise recreates wholeness, integrity, rightness, nobility, true humanhood. In it we experience God’s forgiveness and a right relationship to Him, and the way is opened toward rightness with men.”²⁰⁵ In light of the other articles in this decade, Wynkoop’s theology of repentance is in stark relief with the trends of her time.

The 1970s take a turn in some significant ways. While there is a continued call for national repentance,²⁰⁶ a new term emerges to bridge the gap between the “perfection” of entire sanctification and the flaws of real life: penitence. Dr. Deasley, professor at Nazarene Theological Seminary, leads the charge with “The Penitence of the Sanctified: The Place of

²⁰⁴ W. T. Purkiser, ed., “The Answer Corner,” *Herald of Holiness* 49, no. 41 (December 7, 1960): 16, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/872.

²⁰⁵ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, “The Right to Be Wrong,” ed. W. T. Purkiser, *Herald of Holiness* 57, no. 39 (November 13, 1968): 8–9, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1433.

²⁰⁶ Randle, “HH 66.13.”

Contrition in the Life of Holiness.”²⁰⁷ In his article, the basic premise of penitence is set forth as an attitude and disposition of humility and admission of need before God. The concept is fleshed out in several more articles moving forward.²⁰⁸ Gene R. Welch champions the idea of penitence: “It involves a movement toward God, a carefulness of spirit and a compassion for others growing out of an awareness that we too are often wrong. Let us all remain in the state of penitence, thanking God that penitence is a prerequisite for spiritual growth.”²⁰⁹ Falling just shy of endorsing repentance in the life of the sanctified believer, penitence is an intriguing option.

At the same time, the theme of Christian perfection continues. A question posed in “The Answer Corner” reveals the way the laity had come to understand the filling of the Spirit and entire sanctification: “Please explain Luke 1:15. If John [the Baptist] was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, was he without sin?”²¹⁰ McCumber’s response is appropriate to the question, but the significance here is that “without sin” is how the laity perceived holiness. The conclusion is not without precedent. Even while articles about penitence are being submitted, there are an equal number of articles promoting a theology that discourages admission of wrong. The exact language often concedes a lack of perfection, then turns the tide with a statement that essentially nullifies the concept of repentance in the believer. For instance, W. T. Purkiser writes in response to the statement from the Westminster Confession that people sin “in word, thought, and deed” every day:

²⁰⁷ Deasley, “HH 65.21.”

²⁰⁸ McCumber, “HH 67.4”; Albert J. Lown, “Privilege and Prohibition,” ed. W. E. McCumber, *Herald of Holiness* 66, no. 3 (February 1, 1977): 11, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1205; W. E. McCumber, ed., “Editorially Speaking: The Motto That No One Uses,” *Herald of Holiness* 66, no. 5 (March 1, 1977): 16, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1207.

²⁰⁹ Welch, “HH 61.17.”

²¹⁰ W. E. McCumber, ed., “The Answer Corner,” *Herald of Holiness* 67, no. 10 (May 15, 1978): 31, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/380.

The whole issue boils down to the fact that Bible terms should be used biblically, not philosophically. Nowhere does the New Testament use the word sin to describe mistakes, errors of judgment, or inadvertent failures to achieve absolute perfection....

Make no mistake: our humanity is heir to a thousand infirmities; we are exposed to temptation, liable to mistakes and errors of judgment, falling short of absolute perfection in a multitude of ways. But nowhere does the Bible count this as sin. Only theologians do that.²¹¹

In a later edition of the *Herald of Holiness*, Purkiser continues the theme of spiritual perfection, this time almost inferring a passive posture of the believer by asserting that sanctification does a work in the believer rendering them impenetrable by the forces of darkness. His claim is that “early holiness people had a high view of the power of the Blood to cleanse from all inbred sin and deliver from satanic power in a crisis experience of sanctification. Thereafter, they testified, Satan and all of his imps could not cross the ‘blood line’ that protected the believer.”²¹²

One final note from the 1970s: Divorce is beginning to be addressed, but in terms of its violation of a law of God. Divorce is not addressed primarily as a brokenness in relationship, but rather as a sin against God. Responsibility for reconciliation and repenting of behavior that damaged the relationship is not the central focus. Instead, the weight of restoration was almost entirely placed in the act of repenting of sin. Consider Ivan A. Beals words: “The primary reason divorce occurs is because one or both hearts are hardened towards the will of God.”²¹³

Moving into the 1980s, themes are generally the same but for one notable exception: “hot button” social topics such as abortion, homosexuality, AIDS, divorce, euthanasia, and the like

²¹¹ Purkiser, “HH 63.13.”

²¹² W. T. Purkiser, ed., “Editorially Speaking: On Demon Possession,” *Herald of Holiness* 64, no. 8 (April 9, 1975): 19, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/1160.

²¹³ Beals, “HH 65.5.”

come to the fore.²¹⁴ Of particular interest is that repentance is advanced as the answer to these issues. In fact, even articles on caring and hope for homosexuals all focus on repentance.²¹⁵ Addressing these issues strictly from a spiritual perspective is so very foreign to the modern ear. Yet, as was previously noted, even such “minor” social concerns as divorce were perceived primarily as a sin requiring repentance with little attention given to other “human” causes.

Turning to the 1990s, the *Herald of Holiness* takes a distinct turn toward spiritual formation. Although still holding on to sinless perfection, there is more openness to repentance. Wesley Tracy writes about a “spirit of repentance, an attitude of confession of need.”²¹⁶ Morris Weigelt gives reference to the eucharist as a time for repentance.²¹⁷ Dee Freeborn asserts that “prayer walking opens us to repentance and confession. The change in environment triggers a new way of looking at our lives, of seeing things as they really are. We are energized and encouraged toward the change of mind and heart to which the Scriptures call us.”²¹⁸

Combining the two streams of thought, Wesley Tracy offers some suggestions on using *lectio divina* as a means of spiritual formation that affirms repentance while still distancing from the discipline.

Some Christians speak of *lectio divina* in terms of repentance. They do not mean the repentance of a rebel sinner seeking to be born again. Rather, they refer to the meaning of the term repentance (*metanoia*), “to turn.” As they withdrew for reading for holiness, they

²¹⁴ Taylor, “HH 69.5”; Neil E. Hightower, “An Open Letter to the Editor, Re: The Abortion Issue,” ed. W. E. McCumber, *Herald of Holiness* 69, no. 15 (August 1, 1980): 9, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/334; Gene Van Note, “Advertisement for Dialog Series Sunday School Curriculum,” ed. Wesley D. Tracy, *Herald of Holiness* 70, no. 13 (July 1, 1981): back cover, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/308.

²¹⁵ Paul D. Tarrant, “Caring for the Homosexual,” *Herald of Holiness* 78, no. 6 (March 15, 1989): 16–17, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/114; Wright, “HH 69.23.”

²¹⁶ Tracy, “HH 79.3,” 22.

²¹⁷ Weigelt, “HH 80.9.”

²¹⁸ Freeborn, “HH 85.10.”

were turning back to the Word, turning from the cares, chores, and noise of the world to the cleansing, restoring reading of the Word.²¹⁹

While there is a “softening” of the position on repentance in the life of the believer, the one thing that is lacking is direction on what to do with human error. For instance, Frank Moore affirms that sanctification “will probably not change your personality or strip you of prejudices it took a lifetime to learn, and it will not free you from temptation or human error.”²²⁰ However, no suggestions are offered as to how to address prejudices, temptation, and human error.

In summary, the *Herald of Holiness* periodical from 1912-1999 reveals a strong emphasis on entire sanctification and Christian perfection. While allowing for human weakness, there is a general reticence to embrace repentance, repentance being a spiritual activity primarily to address sin proper. As the magazine—and the denomination—moved forward in time, a softening of the position on Christian perfection seems to have given way to a shift in focus to spiritual formation. Nonetheless, connecting repentance with sin prompts most writers to avoid a direct call for repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer.

²¹⁹ Wesley D. Tracy, “Reading for Holiness,” ed. Wesley D. Tracy, *Herald of Holiness* 85, no. 10 (October 1, 1996): 24–25, 28–29, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/34.

²²⁰ Frank Moore, “Entire Sanctification: The Questions You Asked,” ed. Wesley D. Tracy, *Herald of Holiness* 86, no. 3 (March 1, 1997): 30–31, https://digitalcommons.olivet.edu/cotn_hoh/15.

Appendix D

A Short History of Interpretation of Romans 7:14—8:13 with a Focus on Σάρξ (*Sarx*)

Paul's discourse in Romans 6—8 is so powerful and carries such theological weight that the Church has wrestled with its meaning since its early beginnings. However, the theological climate has always shaped the discussion. In commentary from the early Church Fathers, the general interpretation of σάρξ is a rather plain reading of the term. It should be noted, however, that the early Church Fathers did not specifically deal with the term but rather interpreted from the translated language they were working with. In other words, their cultural, ecclesial, and theological milieu was focused on other issues and did not call attention to interpreting σάρξ beyond what a plain reading would suggest, namely "flesh".

Irenaeus tends to understand flesh in positive terms. He sees the flesh as essentially the body and affirms the goodness of the human body. In fact, he affirms life in the flesh and understands Paul's exhortations to be related to passions and desires of the human body. For example, when commenting on Romans 8:13 ("For if you live according to the flesh, you will die."), he states that Paul "does not prohibit them from living their lives in the flesh, for he was himself in the flesh when he wrote to them; but he cuts away the lusts of the flesh, those which bring death upon a man."²²¹ Elsewhere he equates the flesh with our physical bodies and states that "spiritual cleansing is not to be referred to the substance of our bodies, but to the manner of our former life."²²² Furthermore, Irenaeus sees the flesh as essential to human existence while underscoring that following the desires of the flesh leads to sin:

²²¹ Schaff, *ANF01*, 1:1323.

²²² Schaff, 1:1324.

There are three things out of which, as I have shown, the complete man is composed — flesh, soul, and spirit. One of these does indeed preserve and fashion [the man]—this is the spirit; while as to another it is united and formed—that is the flesh; then [comes] that which is between these two—that is the soul, which sometimes indeed, when it follows the spirit, is raised up by it, but sometimes it sympathizes with the flesh, and falls into carnal lusts.²²³

It should be noted that Irenaeus, like the rest of the Church Fathers, was writing from a context in which there were various heresies afoot either demonizing the human body or disconnecting it from the soul. For this reason, much of his discussion about the flesh is essentially a defense of its validity and not so much a treatise on its moral character and merits. It simply was not a high concern; there were many other more pressing heresies to deal with.

Likewise, Tertullian focuses on affirming the flesh while guarding against the works or the passions of the flesh. In discussing the phrase, “They who are in the flesh cannot please God,” Tertullian asserts almost tongue in cheek, “Now, when shall we be able to please God except whilst we are in this flesh? There is, I imagine, no other time wherein a man can work.”²²⁴ He goes on to logic that if we put off the flesh then we are essentially dead.²²⁵ He further asserts that Paul is not talking about the flesh proper, but the works of the flesh that lead to death.²²⁶

Tertullian speaks more about the flesh than most of the other Church Fathers. However, once again, it is primarily in the context of defending the reality of the flesh against Marcionic

²²³ Schaff, 1:1319.

²²⁴ Philip Schaff, ed., *Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian, Appendix*, CCEL, vol. 5, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 985, <https://ia902205.us.archive.org/18/items/AnteNiceneFathersCompleteVolumesIToIX/Ante-nicene%20fathers%20-%20complete%20volumes%20I%20to%20IX.pdf>.

²²⁵ Schaff, 5:985.

²²⁶ Schaff, 5:1003.

doctrine. For this reason, he often affirms that Jesus' flesh was of the same substance as any other human flesh, even though sinless.²²⁷

Clement of Alexandria has little to say about flesh but does make an inferred case for the unity of the body and soul when he highlights a heretical doctrine disconnecting the two. That doctrine also held that the soul was spiritual and good and that the body was evil. The result, according to Clement, was a philosophy that encouraged death as a means of freeing the soul from the body.²²⁸

A lesser-known Church Father, Methodius, is presented here because of his unique perspective. In his thinking, the flesh is natural and has the voluntary power to choose between right and wrong. The desires of the natural body lead to sin and death whereas the law of God generates desires for goodness and life.²²⁹ However, he also states that “the expressions: ‘That which I do, I allow not,’ and ‘what I hate, that do I,’ are not to be understood of doing evil, but of only thinking it. For it is not in our power to think or not to think of improper things, but to act or not to act upon our thoughts.”²³⁰ In other words, the essence of carnality is not in the flesh, but in the thoughts related to the flesh.

²²⁷ Schaff, 5:1195.

²²⁸ Philip Schaff, ed., *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria (Entire)*, CCEL, vol. 2, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 867, <https://ia902205.us.archive.org/18/items/AnteNiceneFathersCompleteVolumesIToIX/Ante-nicene%20fathers%20-%20complete%20volumes%20I%20to%20IX.pdf>.

²²⁹ Philip Schaff, ed., *Fathers of the Third Century: Gregory Thaumaturgus, Dionysius the Great, Julius Africanus, Anatolius and Minor Writers, Methodius, Arnobius*, CCEL, vol. 6, The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 851, <https://ia902205.us.archive.org/18/items/AnteNiceneFathersCompleteVolumesIToIX/Ante-nicene%20fathers%20-%20complete%20volumes%20I%20to%20IX.pdf>.

²³⁰ Schaff, 6:849.

Interestingly, Origen speaks very little on this topic. Even in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, very little is said concerning the “flesh” in Romans 7—8.²³¹ When he does address the issue in his works, he speaks of the deeds of the flesh as opposed to a spiritualized entity, or sin nature.²³² He also is highly metaphorical and finds the subjugation of the flesh in unique passages. For instance, dealing with the feeding of the five thousand from Matthew’s Gospel, he writes:

For what is meant by the words, “And He commanded all the multitudes to sit down on the grass?” And what are we to understand in the passage worthy of the command of Jesus? Now, I think that He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass because of what is said in Isaiah, “All flesh is grass;” that is to say, He commanded them to put the flesh under, and to keep in subjection “the mind of the flesh,” that so any one might be able to partake of the loaves which Jesus blesses.²³³

Moving on to the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Augustine holds to the natural understanding of the flesh but also sees the flesh as motivating many passions that demand to be met. In his Confessions, he is continually speaking about the passions of his flesh that drove him to act contrary to the ways of God. He was keenly aware of his passions and desires: “Thus I came to understand, from my own experience, what I had read, how that ‘the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.’ I verily lusted both ways; yet more in that which I approved in myself, than in that which I disapproved in myself.”²³⁴

²³¹ Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Books 1 - 5*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, vol. 103, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), muse.jhu.edu/book/20960.

²³² Philip Schaff, ed., *The Gospel of Peter, The Diatessaron of Tatian, The Apocalypse of Peter, the Vision of Paul, The Apocalypse of the Virgin and Sedrach, The Testament of Abraham, The Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena, The Narrative of Zosimus, The Apology of Aristides, The Epistles of Clement (Complete Text), Origen’s Commentary on John, Books 1–10, and Commentary on Matthew, Books 1, 2, and 10–14.*, CCEL, vol. 9, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 992, <https://ia902205.us.archive.org/18/items/AnteNiceneFathersCompleteVolumesIToIX/Ante-nicene%20fathers%20-%20complete%20volumes%20I%20to%20IX.pdf>.

²³³ Schaff, 9:840.

²³⁴ Schaff, *NPNF0101*, 1:269.

Augustine's struggle toward conversion is expressed in his struggle to let go of the desires of the flesh. With great distress, he writes: "The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my old mistresses, still enthralled me; they shook my fleshly garment, and whispered softly, 'Dost thou part with us? And from that moment shall we no more be with thee forever? And from that moment shall not this or that be lawful for thee forever?'"²³⁵

The clear perception of Augustine was that the flesh carried desires and passions that were not innately sinful, but could often lead to sin. When speaking of crucifying the flesh, for instance, he does not talk about a spiritual principle of sin, but rather the passions and acts of the flesh: "The period during which our labours tend to the weakening and destruction of the body of sin, during which the outward man is perishing, that the inward man may be renewed day by day,—that is the period of the cross."²³⁶

Chrysostom continues the trend to affirm the body while taking a slightly different angle. His teaching focuses on the superiority of the soul over the flesh and thereby reads Paul as simply diminishing the flesh as opposed to condemning it. He writes: "Paul in saying, that 'in my flesh dwelleth no good thing,' is not finding fault with the body, but pointing out the soul's superiority."²³⁷ Again:

And this Paul here points out, giving the governing power to the soul, and after dividing man into these two things, the soul and the body, he says, that the flesh has less of reason, and is destitute of discretion, and ranks among things to be led, not among things that lead. But the soul has more wisdom, and can see what is to be done and what not, yet is not equal to pulling in the horse as it wishes. And this would be a charge not against the

²³⁵ Schaff, 1:282–85.

²³⁶ Schaff, 1:701.

²³⁷ Schaff, *NPNF0111*, 11:766.

flesh only, but against the soul also, which knows indeed what it ought to do, but still does not carry out in practice what seems best to it.²³⁸

Chrysostom speaks more than most of the Church Fathers about the flesh. However, it is almost always in this context of elevating the soul rather than diminishing the flesh.

Ambrose says little directly related to the nature of the flesh. Although most of his arguments are couched in the context of his defense of the spirit of Christ (in the flesh) and the spirit of God being identical,²³⁹ he also makes a unique appeal to repentance as a means of defeating the flesh and growing in the Spirit.²⁴⁰

Moving on to the 13th Century, Thomas Aquinas continues in this vein, reading “the flesh” in quite natural terms. His focus is on the influence of the flesh on reason. He often speaks of the “spark” of corruption brought on by the sin of Adam.²⁴¹ Aquinas is a little distinctive in that he teaches that reason is influenced by the flesh, meaning the natural desires of the body and, as such, can be carnal even in the life of a believer: “Humans are called carnal because their reason is carnal in two ways. In one way, reason is subject to the flesh; it consents to those things to which the flesh incites it.... In another way, reason is said to be carnal because it is assailed by the flesh.... In this way, reason is understood as carnal even in a person established in grace.²⁴²

Again, Aquinas asserts the possibility of a believer acting according to the flesh, not out of evil intent, but out of a desire for the natural things of the flesh: “This statement can also be

²³⁸ Schaff, 11:766.

²³⁹ Philip Schaff, ed., *Ambrose: Selected Words and Letters*, CCEL, vol. 10, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 340, <https://ccel.org/ccel/s/schaff/npnf210/cache/npnf210.pdf>.

²⁴⁰ Schaff, 10:218.

²⁴¹ Levy, Krey, and Ryan, *The Letter to the Romans*, 163.

²⁴² Levy, Krey, and Ryan, 163.

understood about those in a state of grace. Indeed, they do evil. They do not, however, follow through on an evil action or carry it out with mental consent. Instead, they do evil as a result of coveting in accord with a movement of the desire of the senses.”²⁴³

By the time we get to John Wesley in the 18th Century, the concept of the flesh and the general interpretation of Romans 7 has shifted to encompass a stronger sense of control exerted by the sin principle in humanity. We find the beginning of a polarity arising in which anything related to the flesh is sinful and is indicative of an unregenerate person. Wesley brings this out as he discusses Paul’s first-person exchange concerning the control of the flesh in the unredeemed. As such, he reads Romans 7 as a “digression” to teach the inefficacy of the law and the inner turmoil of the sinner. Commenting on Romans 7:7:

What shall we say then?—This is a kind of digression, (to the beginning of the next chapter) wherein the apostle, in order to show in the most lively manner, the weakness and inefficacy of the law, changes the person, and speaks as of himself, concerning the misery of one under the law. This St. Paul frequently does when he is not speaking of his own person, but only assuming another character. (Rom. 3:6; 1 Cor. 10:30; ch. 4:6.)²⁴⁴

Wesley not only moves toward an in-or-out kind of theology but also emphasizes the irresistibility of the influence of the flesh.²⁴⁵ Furthermore, the work of the Holy Spirit to deliver is stressed with a recurring polarity: Commenting on Romans 8:9—“In the Spirit—Under his government. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ—Dwelling and governing in him: he is none of his—He is not a member of Christ: not a Christian: not in a state of salvation. A plain, express declaration, which admits of no exception. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”²⁴⁶

²⁴³ Levy, Krey, and Ryan, 164.

²⁴⁴ Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 391.

²⁴⁵ Wesley, 392.

²⁴⁶ Wesley, 393–94.

From John Wesley forward, the polarity and dogmatism associated with it simply increases. It does not seem to matter which theological camp one was coming from, the common interpretation is that flesh=sin/unregenerate and Spirit=life/regenerate. Adam Clarke, a staunchly Wesleyan/Arminian commentator, states that “to be in the flesh, or to be carnally minded, solely respects the unregenerate.”²⁴⁷ This position becomes rather harsh at times with the assertion that “in an unregenerate man there is no good” along with only emotionally charged and degrading descriptions of the lusts of the flesh.²⁴⁸ There is little acknowledgment of the more subtle influence and attitudes of the flesh, but only the gross and sensuous acts.

In the Reformed camp, Charles Hodge is more eloquent and refined but no less dogmatic. Although he affirms that Paul often uses the term *σάρξ* in the plain, natural sense, he boldly asserts:

Besides these common and admitted meanings of the word, it is also used in a moral sense. It designates man, or humanity, or human nature as apostate from God. The works of the flesh, therefore, are not merely sensual works, but sinful works, everything in man that is evil. Everything that is a manifestation of his nature as fallen, is included under the works of the flesh.²⁴⁹

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown likewise maintain the polarity between flesh and spirit, assigning total depravity to the flesh.²⁵⁰ However, as we move forward in time a bit, Marvin Vincent and A. T. Robertson both present a more balanced viewpoint. They both still see the fleshly person as being unregenerate, but they are more amenable to the flesh being an influencer rather than a domineering controller.

²⁴⁷ Clarke, *Adam Clarke*, 6:86.

²⁴⁸ Clarke, 6:88.

²⁴⁹ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 144.

²⁵⁰ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (1871)*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc, 1997), 237–38.

The modern commentators I dealt with generally continue in similar patterns as was initiated with Wesley, although they take some creative angles and are a bit more nuanced in their language. However, there are a couple of commentators that should be specifically noted at this point.

Ben Witherington III is a leading commentator in the socio-rhetorical tradition of interpretation. His approach to this passage takes into account rhetorical techniques and epistolary patterns that he believes give insight into Paul's argument. He also believes a lack of rhetorical understanding has led to errors of interpretation: "Failure to recognize this rhetorical way of introducing the next argument before concluding the previous one has helped lead to the incorrect conclusion that Paul is speaking about Christians in 7:14–25."²⁵¹

Witherington, although at times seeming to backtrack a bit, is very confident in his presentation and holds quite firmly to the prevailing positions, namely that those in the flesh are controlled by the sinful nature ("not able not to sin")²⁵² and that Romans 7 is a flashback to "a pre-Christian set of conditions."²⁵³

An intriguing modern commentator is Neil T. Anderson. Anderson is known for his work in freedom ministries, particularly through his books popularizing his "Who I Am In Christ" affirmations and *The Steps to Freedom in Christ* guide to freedom from demonic influence and faulty beliefs. Although trained theologically, Anderson's writing is much more focused on the general public and uses the vernacular as opposed to the language of theology. That being said, he does address theological themes and specifically the meaning of the term *σάρξ*.

²⁵¹ Witherington and Hyatt, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 196.

²⁵² Witherington and Hyatt, 199.

²⁵³ Witherington and Hyatt, 195.

Anderson's approach to this topic and scripture is quite balanced. As such, he seems to be able to reconcile the power of the truths presented with the reality of common experience while not diminishing the truths themselves. His approach is one of gradation. In other words, his understanding of the flesh and its relation to human spirituality is not black-and-white, in-or out, but rather he espouses degrees of influence.

Firstly, he defines "flesh" as "that tendency within each person to operate independent of God and to center his interests on himself."²⁵⁴ He then defines three different identities, or human conditions, related to the flesh: the natural person (life "in the flesh"), the spiritual person (life "in the Spirit"), and the fleshly person (life "according to the flesh").²⁵⁵ In all of these, the emphasis is on the amount of influence the person experiences from the flesh and from the Spirit. The natural person is unredeemed and virtually exclusively influenced by the flesh as he has defined it (independent self-interest). The spiritual person is influenced almost exclusively by the Spirit, so much so that it can be said they are living according to the Spirit. The flesh is still present, but its influence is minimal. The fleshly person is one who is redeemed but still functions predominantly under the influence of the flesh.

Anderson delineates the difference between living in the flesh and living according to the flesh this way:

There is a difference in Scripture between being in the flesh and walking according to the flesh. As a Christian, you are no longer in the flesh.... You are in Christ. You are no longer independent of God; you have declared your dependence upon Him by placing faith in Christ. But even though you are not in the flesh, you may still choose to walk according to the flesh (Romans. 8:12,13). You may still act independent of God by

²⁵⁴ Anderson, *Victory over the Darkness*, 79.

²⁵⁵ Anderson, 87–106.

responding to the mind-set, patterns and habits ingrained in you by the world you live in.²⁵⁶

According to this understanding, old patterns of behavior have been ingrained into the fabric of the individual. While living as a natural person, the “old self trained and conditioned your actions, reactions, emotional responses, thought patterns, memories and habits in a part of your brain called ‘the flesh.’”²⁵⁷ According to Anderson, these ingrained life patterns remain after salvation.²⁵⁸ It is now the responsibility of the new believer to retrain the mind to live according to the Spirit and to crucify the flesh.²⁵⁹

Although Anderson does not take into account a crisis of faith in which the believer is filled with the Spirit and empowered to live according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh (which is the confession of my Nazarene tradition), he does nonetheless describe a viable means of sanctification.

One final contemporary interpreter is Steve DeNeff. DeNeff is a Wesleyan minister whose writing seems to reveal a strong passion to communicate the message of holiness and sanctification in very practical terms. Allowing experience and theology to intersect, DeNeff uses the analogy of the venom from a snake bite and its effect on the body as a metaphor for the need to address the natural inclinations of our fleshly existence:

Even after we have killed the serpent (or have been cleansed of our sinful nature) and shaken off the bite (or gotten over the sin), there are things like low self-esteem, laziness, stubbornness, foolishness, flippancy, and a restless or busy spirit that can damage us for

²⁵⁶ Anderson, 80–81.

²⁵⁷ Anderson, 79.

²⁵⁸ Anderson, 80.

²⁵⁹ Anderson, 81.

the rest of our lives. These “toxins” are active and progressive. They intrude into our lives and debilitate us.²⁶⁰

He further discusses how our personal history impacts our human existence (flesh) in such a way that it creates a “trigger” on which temptation and sin can attach itself. Therefore, “even when we are free from the power of sin, we will never be free from the temptation to sin, because sin can attach itself to one of these triggers and slip unnoticed into our lives.”²⁶¹ He then continues to discuss the power of systematically addressing these “triggers” in order to progress in holiness.

²⁶⁰ DeNeff, 7 *Saving Graces*, 22.

²⁶¹ DeNeff, 25.

Appendix E

Outline of the Epistle to the Romans

By: Larry J Lain

1. Introductory Comments (1:1-1:17)
 - 1.1. General Greeting (1:1-1:7)
 - 1.2. Desire to Go to Rome (1:8-1:15)
 - 1.3. Thesis (1:16-1:17)
2. Gospel Truth (1:18—11:36)
 - 2.1. True Law (1:18—8:13)
 - 2.1.1. Judgment (1:18—3:19)
 - 2.1.1.1. No Excuse for the Wicked (1:18-1:32)
 - 2.1.1.2. No Excuse for the People of God (2:1-2:11)
 - 2.1.1.3. Judged With or Without the Law (2:12-2:16)
 - 2.1.1.4. “Jew” and “Circumcision” by the Spirit (2:17-2:28)
 - 2.1.1.5. No Advantage to Jews (3:1-3:18)
 - 2.1.2. Law and Faith (3:19—4:25)
 - 2.1.2.1. Righteousness by Faith (3:19-3:31)
 - 2.1.2.2. Abraham and Faith (4:1-4:25)
 - 2.1.3. Grace, Wages, and Gifts (5:1—6:23)
 - 2.1.3.1. Justified by Faith (5:1-5:11)
 - 2.1.3.2. Death in Adam; Gift of Life in Jesus (5:12-5:21)
 - 2.1.3.3. Error #1—Sin So Grace Increases (6:1-6:14)
 - 2.1.3.4. Error #2—Sin Because Not Under Law but Under Grace (6:15-6:22)
 - 2.1.3.5. Summary (6:23)
 - 2.1.4. Law of Life (Spirit) and Death (Flesh) (7:1—8:14)
 - 2.1.4.1. Authority OF and Release FROM the Law (7:1-7:13)
 - 2.1.4.2. Conflict of Mind and Flesh (7:14-7:25)
 - 2.1.4.3. Freedom by Living According to the Spirit (8:1-8:13)
 - 2.2. True Israel (8:14—11:36)
 - 2.2.1. Sonship (8:14-8:39)
 - 2.2.1.1. Adoption (8:15-8:16)
 - 2.2.1.2. Present Suffering and Weakness (8:17-8:27)
 - 2.2.1.3. Assurance (8:28-8:39)
 - 2.2.2. Election Explained (9:1—11:36)
 - 2.2.2.1. Desire for Israel (9:1-9:5)
 - 2.2.2.2. Children of Promise (9:6-9:18)
 - 2.2.2.3. Objection—Why Blamed? (9:19-9:29)
 - 2.2.2.4. Faith vs Law (9:30-9:33)
 - 2.2.2.5. Continued Desire for Israel (10:1-10:21)
 - 2.2.2.6. Israel Not Rejected (11:1-11:12)

- 2.2.2.7. Gentiles Grafted In (11:13-11:27)
 - 2.2.2.8. Mercy for All (11:28-11:32)
 - 2.2.2.9. Doxology (11:22-11:26)
- 3. Gospel Praxis (12:1—15:13)
 - 3.1. Living Sacrifice Instructions (12:1—13:14)
 - 3.1.1. Living Sacrifice and Transformation (12:1-12:2)
 - 3.1.2. Instructions for Holy Living (12:3-12:21)
 - 3.1.3. Relationship with Governing Authorities (13:1-13:6)
 - 3.1.4. Debt of Love (13:7-13:10)
 - 3.1.5. Wake Up and Live in the Day (13:11-13:14)
 - 3.2. Mutual Respect (14:1—15:13)
 - 3.2.1. Food Convictions (14:1-14:4)
 - 3.2.2. Sacred Day Convictions (14:5-14:9)
 - 3.2.3. Do Not Judge but Account for Self (14:10-14:12)
 - 3.2.4. No Stumbling Blocks (14:13-14:23)
 - 3.2.5. Bear with One Another (15:1-15:12)
 - 3.2.6. Blessing (15:13)
- 4. Closing Comments (15:14—16:27)
 - 4.1. Summary of Calling and Mission (15:14-15:22)
 - 4.2. Itinerary (15:23-15:29)
 - 4.3. Request for Prayer (15:30-15:33)
 - 4.4. Commendations (16:1-16:2)
 - 4.5. Greetings to Friends (16:3-16:16)
 - 4.6. Warnings (16:17-16:20)
 - 4.7. Greetings from Co-Workers (16:21-16:24)
 - 4.8. Benediction (16:25-16:27)

Appendix F

Survey of the Epistle to the Romans

Survey of the Epistle to the Romans		Epistle Structure																
General Materials:		Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10	Chapter 11	Chapter 12	Chapter 13	Chapter 14	Chapter 15	Chapter 16	
Authorship: Paul (1:1)		1:1—1:32	2:1—2:29	3:1—4:1	4:25—5:1	5:1—6:23	6:1—7:25	8:1—9:3	9:3—10:1	10:1—10:21	11:1—11:36	12:1—12:21	13:1—13:14	14:1—14:23	15:1—15:33	16:1—16:27		
Audience: “all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people.” (1:7)																		
Purpose: To proclaim and clarify the gospel that “brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.... a righteousness that is by faith.” (1:16)																		
Specific Materials:																		
INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS		LETTER BODY																
		Gospel Truth						Gospel Praxis						CLOSING COMMENTS				
		True Law		True Israel		Living Sacrifice Instructions		Mutual Respect										
		Judgment	Law and Faith	Grace, and Gifts	Law of Life (Spirit) and Death (Flesh)	Sonship	Election Explained											
1:1-1:17	1:18	3:19—3:10	4:25—5:1	6:23—7:1	8:14—8:13	8:14—8:19	9:1—9:3	12:1—12:21	13:14—14:1	15:13—15:14	15:14—16:27							
Observations Pertinent to Understanding Σάρξ (Sarx, “Flesh”):																		
1:3	2:28—3:26	4:1	6:19	7:5—8:13 (16x)	9:3, 9:5, 9:8	11:14	13:14	15:27										
				[7:5, 7:14, 7:18, 7:23, 8:3(3), 8:4, 8:5(2), 8:6, 8:7, 8:8, 8:9, 8:12, 8:13]														
				6:6, 6:12	7:4, 7:24, 8:10, 8:11, 8:13, 8:23	12:1, 12:4, 12:5												
THROUGHOUT:																		
Of particular note: sinful behavior in chapter 1; sinful and righteous behavior in chapter 2; offering members of the body to sin or righteousness in chapter 6; doing and not doing in chapter 7; living according to the flesh or the spirit in chapter 8; exhortations to godly behavior in chapters 12-15.																		

Appendix G

Survey of the Romans 7:1—8:13 Segment

Survey of Segment: Romans 7:1—8:13

“THE LAW OF DEATH (FLESH) AND LIFE (SPIRIT)”												
The Law of Death in the Body					The Law of Life in the Spirit							
7:1	Authority OF and Release FROM the Law				Conflict of Mind and Flesh			8:1	No Condemnation		8:13	
7:1	7:1-7:4	7:5-7:6	7:7-7:12	7:13	7:14	7:14-7:20	7:21-7:25b	7:25b	8:1	8:4-8:5	8:8-8:9	8:11-8:12
Example of Marriage from the Law	Release from the Law through Christ Jesus	Holy Commandment	Sinful Sin	Living in Me	Sin Always Present	Evil Always Present	Slave to God's Law and Sin		Life by the Spirit	Mindset	Obligation to Life in the Spirit	
7:1	7:1-7:4	7:5-7:6	7:7-7:12	7:13	7:14	7:14-7:20	7:21-7:25b	7:25b	8:1	8:4-8:5	8:8-8:9	8:11-8:12
Observations Pertinent to Understanding Σάρξ (Sarx, “Flesh”):												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurrence of Σάρξ (Sarx, “Flesh”) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:5.....7:14.....7:18.....7:25.....8:3(3b).....8:4.....8:5(2b),8:6,8:7,8:8,8:9.....8:12.....8:13 • Recurrence of Σῶμα (Soma, “Body”) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:4.....7:16.....7:24.....8:10.....8:11.....8:13 • Recurrence of Summarization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7:12.....7:21.....7:25b.....8:12-13 												
“So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.” (7:12)					“So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.” (7:21)			“So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.” (7:25b)			“Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.” (8:12-13)	

Appendix H

Reflections on Sarx in the New Testament

Dr. James Davison, D.Min.
June 2023

The following is the personal musings of Dr. James Davison, in connection with a study of the appearance and usage of the Greek word σάρξ (SARX) in the New Testament. These reflections are not intended to be authoritative, but they do represent the study of a former Greek professor at Winebrenner Theological Seminary (2004-2011).

There are three words connected to this study that I examined from the Greek New Testament (hereafter referred to as GNT). One is the noun σάρξ (SARX), the other two are related adjectives: σαρκικός (SARKIKOS) and σάρκινος (SARKINOS). These three words are listed, along with their New Testament occurrences and passages, on the three worksheets of the accompanying Excel workbook entitled "SARX." Also, the translations used in this workbook and in this study come solely from the New International Version (NIV 1984).

As you can see, the word SARX appears 147 times in the NT. The first adjective SARKIKOS appears seven times, while the second adjective SARKINOS appears four times. First, we will look at the noun, and then briefly address the two adjectives towards the end.

First, here is the frequency of SARX in the different NT books:

- 5 – Matthew
- 4 – Mark
- 2 – Luke
- 13 – John
- 3 – Acts of Apostles
- 26 – Romans
- 11 – First Corinthians
- 11 – Second Corinthians
- 18 – Galatians
- 9 – Ephesians
- 5 – Philippians
- 9 – Colossians
- 1 – First Timothy
- 0 – Second Timothy
- 0 – Titus
- 1 – Philemon
- 6 – Hebrews
- 1 – James
- 7 – First Peter
- 2 – Second Peter
- 2 – First John
- 1 – Second John
- 0 – Third John
- 3 – Jude

7 – Revelation
147 – TOTAL

If we sort these according to authors, and add a percentage total of the whole, we see an interesting and probably predictable result:

5 – Matthew	3.4 %
4 – Mark	2.7 %
5 – Luke	3.4 %
23 – John	15.6 %
91 – Paul	61.9 %
6 – writer of Hebrews	4.1 %
1 – James	0.7 %
9 – Peter	6.1 %
3 – Jude	2.0 %

Predictably, Paul has a seemingly inordinate high proportion of the uses of SARX in the NT, unless you perhaps look at the theological reasons for his emphasis.

By the way, you should probably quote me, whether it refers to these statistics or to any conclusion that I draw from this data, since this is my work. You are permitted to review my data in total and cite any part that you desire to use in your project.

As for the translations of SARX (in the NIV), here is the list:

34 times it is translated “flesh.” This number might vary, depending on who examines the data. By that I mean that there are times when the GNT uses SARX multiple times in a verse, but the NIV uses a more elliptical translation, inserting other words rather than “flesh.” A good example would be 1 Cor. 15:39, which uses SARX four times, while the NIV has “flesh” twice and “another” twice. Instead of saying “another flesh,” the NIV simply abbreviates its translation by saying simply “another.” That’s what I refer to as an ‘elliptical’ translation.

Another example is in the passages in Matthew 19:5-6 and Mark 10:8, where Jesus says of husband and wife that they “will become one flesh.” He goes on to say, “So they are no longer two, but one.” The word one is actually “one flesh,” but the NIV only renders “one.”

7 times it is translated “one.” Twice that “one” is “one flesh,” as mentioned above. The other five times it is referring to “any person” or “any man,” or some such designation, and simply says “one.” Two examples include “If those days had not been cut short, no **one** would survive” (Matthew 24:22) and “Therefore no **one** will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law;” (Romans 3:20). In each of these cases, along with three other passages, the text says “no flesh...”

2 times it is translated “another.” This is the other elliptical translation found in 1 Corinthians 15:39. You can check this for yourself.

1 time it is translated “such.” This is yet another elliptical translation found in Philippians 3:4. In the latter part of the verse, Paul speaks of “confidence in the **flesh**,” but in the first part, he calls it “**such** confidence.”

3 more times it has another elliptical translation where the word SARX is ignored in the NIV. Each of these is found in Revelation 19:18, where the GNT speaks of the flesh of generals, the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses. The NIV simply ignores the seeming redundancy of repeated the word “flesh” in these three examples, and just renders, “generals, mighty men, of horses” instead.

21 times it is translated “body.” In these passages it has an obvious reference to the physical body, otherwise called the “flesh.” Perhaps the idea is to refer to the physical body

without the nuance that comes with the word “flesh.” These 21 occasions are worthy of independent examination. (Hint!)

4 times it is translated “man.” The verses are Matthew 16:17, a contrast between God and “man” (SARX), and Galatians 1:16, in which Paul claims that his source for preaching is not “man” (SARX). It also appears in Philemon v. 16 and First Peter 1:24.

1 time it is translated “mankind.” This is in Luke 3:6, a reference to all of humanity.

6 times it is translated “human.” Three of these are just “human,” another reference to our existence as beings of flesh and blood, while three others are “human nature” (Romans 1:3) and “human effort” (Galatians 3:3) and “human ancestry” (Romans 9:5).

3 times it is translated “people.” I read this as referring to human beings.

2 times it is translated “physical.” This is in Paul’s evaluation of circumcision happening in the SARX (Romans 2:28). “Physical” is normally a contrast with “spiritual,” but note that the physical act of circumcision creates a spiritual union with God within the nation of Israel. The other passage is Colossians 1:22, a reference to “Christ’s **physical** body.” Since the physical body is a receptacle for our human spirit, this is an interesting translation...

1 time it is translated “race.” This rendering (Romans 9:3) is in the same context as Romans 9:5, which is “human ancestry,” and seems to agree in meaning.

2 times it is translated “life.” One passage is Paul’s warning about those who choose to marry who will “face many troubles in this **life**” in First Corinthians 7:28. The other actually speaks of “Jesus’ life on earth,” referring to his physical/fleshly existence on this world (Hebrews 5:7).

If you’re keeping track, there are 60 more renderings yet to go.

4 times it is translated “world.” All four of these appear in Second Corinthians (10:2; 10:3; 10:3; 11:18). You have to read these to see if Paul means simply the physical world in which we all live, or does it refer to that “world” that John refers to in First John 2:15-17, which is opposed to God. There seems to be a little of both ideas here...

3 times it is translated “worldly.” Again, all three are in Second Corinthians (interesting coincidence?) and it reads “a **worldly manner**” (1:17), and “a **worldly** point of view” (5:16). In this latter verse, there is another elliptical translation, where it reads, “in this way,” referring to the “worldly point of view” in the same verse.

2 times it is translated “natural.” Once it is “natural” children, who are contrasted with God’s children (Romans 9:8). The other time it is “your **natural selves**” in a very interesting verse (Romans 6:19), which you should examine carefully.

2 times it is translated “the ordinary way.” This is a reference both times in Galatians 4. In verse 23 it is the son of “the slave woman” who was born in the ordinary way, as opposed to the son of the free woman who “was born of a promise.” In verse 29, “the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit.” This is obviously primarily a reference to natural/physical birth, but there is something more to it...

3 times it is translated “earthly.” There are “**earthly** masters” to slaves (Ephesians 6:5) and the same in (Colossians 3:22). The other passage is First Peter 4:1-2, where we are told that “he who has suffered in his **body** [SARX] is done with sin” (v. 1). “As a result, he does not live the rest of his **earthly** [in SARX] life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God” (v. 2).

2 times it is translated “outwardly.” In Hebrews 9:13 the writer refers to a connection between what is “ceremonially clean” and what is “**outwardly** clean.” It refers to the effect of sprinkling blood on a physical animal sacrifice. The other passage is Galatians 6:12, which says,

“Those who want to make a good impression **outwardly** are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.”

1 time it is translated “birth.” Paul refers to those who “are Gentiles by **birth** and called ‘uncircumcised’ by those who call themselves ‘the circumcision’ (that done in the **body** by the hands of men)—” (Ephesians 2:11).

1 time it is translated “external.” This is in Hebrews 9:10 and refers to “**external regulations**” that he describes as matters of food and drink and ceremonial washings.

1 time it is translated “personally.” In Colossians 2:1 Paul speaks of those “who have not met me **personally.**” I think of this as seeing someone ‘in the flesh.’

1 time it is translated “matter.” This is an odd one, for sure. In Romans 4:1, Paul wrote, “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this **matter?**” In the last three verses of chapter three, the subject is whether God is the God of Jews AND Gentiles, that He justifies both “through that same faith.” He then goes on to show that Abraham fits that pattern perfectly, that he is justified by his faith (4:1-5). It fits the context, but it is strange that Paul uses SARX, that Abraham discovered this in his own flesh? It seems odd to me to use that word.

For the last 42 translations, these are more negative in nature:

25 times it is translated “sinful nature.” I feel this is an interpretive translation by the NIV. That does not mean it is incorrect. I believe they have looked contextually at the whole of Scripture and concluded that this nature of the SARX leads man into sin, and so the phrase “sinful nature.” The majority of these passages are in Pauline passages: 13 times in Romans, 1 in First Corinthians 5:5, 7 in Galatians, 1 in Ephesians 2:3, 2 in Colossians, and 1 in Second Peter 2:10. There is plenty of material to examine thoroughly there...

2 times it is translated “that nature.” These are more examples of elliptical translations, in Romans 8:5 and Galatians 6:8. He starts out with “sinful nature” and follows up with “that nature” in referring to the same SARX noun later in the verse(s).

2 times it is translated “it” (or “its”). This is the same scenario as above. In Romans 8:12 and in Ephesians 2:3 the pronoun “it” refers to the sinful nature. In Ephesians 2:3 the “it” is possessive in form and reads “its.”

4 times it is translated “sinful man.” This is an alternate rendering to “sinful nature.” It appears twice in Romans 8:3, once in Romans 8:6, and once in First John 2:16. What is interesting is that in the first usage in Romans 8:3, the word for “sin” appears right next to the word SARX, while in none of the other three appearances is there such a connection. In each occasion, there is no compelling contextual reason to include the word “man” in the translation, and except for the first of the four usages, there is no compelling reason to include the word “sinful.” This is definitely an interpretive translation...

1 time it is translated “sinful mind.” Again, this is wholly contextual, because there is nothing in the word SARX that indicates “mind” or “sinful,” unless you gather it from the context. The passage comes from Romans 8:6.

1 time it is translated “sinful human nature.” After translating SARX as “sinful nature” in Second Peter 2:10, he follows up eight verses later with the translation “**sinful human nature,**” which includes the concept of humanity with the inherent sinfulness of the original sin in man.

2 times it is translated “illness.” This is in the consecutive verses of Galatians 4:13. I feel it is as though Paul considers physical illness a weakness of the flesh. There might be more, but this seems reasonable to me.

1 time it is translated “unspiritual.” This makes sense, in light of what we said earlier that there is a contrast between the physical and the spiritual. The passage is Colossians 2:18, in which Paul says, “...his **unspiritual** mind puffs him up with idle notions.” Note that the word for “mind” does appear in this verse.

1 time it is translated “sensual.” This word also refers to the physical, but has a shade of meaning of sinful thoughts or activities in the NT. In its appearance in Colossians 2:23, Paul doubts that the regulations mentioned in verses 20-22 “lack any value in restraining **sensual** indulgence.” The fact that SARX here is connected with indulgence is further indication of the context of sinfulness.

1 time it is translated “perversion.” In this passage, Jude v. 7, the writer specifically calls this sinfulness a matter of going after strange flesh. The word is “other,” meaning another of a different kind, not another of the same kind. The marriage bed, the joining of the two sexes, is blessed by God as “honored” and “kept pure” (Hebrews 13:4). Going after strange flesh, the type that is of a different kind than God blesses, is called “perversion” here in the NIV. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns were known for their pursuit of “other flesh” or “strange flesh.”

This accounts for all 147 uses of SARX in the GNT.

Some other thoughts after looking at all of these things:

(1) SARX is not evil by nature, according to several passages. It is part of our human nature, and yes, we are sinful creatures. I think Jesus said it well, “The spirit is willing, but the body [SARX] is weak” (Mark 14:38). We need to guard our SARX to keep it in agreement with the Spirit and Kingdom of God, or we might fall into sin. SARX can see salvation (Luke 3:6). David said his SARX would live in hope (Acts 2:26). SARX can be declared righteous (Romans 3:20). Our obligation is NOT to live according to the SARX (Romans 8:12). The life that we live in the SARX is lived by faith in the Son of God (Galatians 2:20). We do not hate our SARX, but feed it and care for it (Ephesians 5:29). The “dreamers” can “pollute” their own SARX [Note that it is not already polluted.] (Jude v. 8).

(2) One of the very significant points seems to be the connection of SARX with Jesus. If SARX is so evil, why would Jesus “share in their humanity,” but that “by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death...” (Hebrews 2:14)? Jesus himself said, even after His resurrection, that He had SARX and bones (Luke 24:39). This makes sense, because John says that “the Word became SARX and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). In John 6, Jesus speaks of His SARX, which He gives to the disciples to eat, “which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:51). We have no choice but to partake of His SARX (John 6:53-56). Paul said that Jesus’ connection to David was in His SARX (Romans 1:3). He also said that God reconciled you by Jesus’ SARX through death (Colossians 1:22). Peter said that Jesus was put to death in the SARX but made alive by the Spirit (First Peter 3:18). The SARX was part of the process, part of God’s plan! Finally, remember that confessing that Jesus was coming in the SARX was a confession of orthodoxy in the early church (First John 4:2; Second John v. 7).

(3) The problem is that an unrestrained and unspiritual SARX can be devastating to anyone. The discussion begins in Romans 6:19 and pretty much continues until Romans 9:8. It is also key in Galatians 5:17-21. Also look at Ephesians 2:3 and Colossians 2:13-23 and Second Peter 2:10-18.

(4) Our response is to bring the SARX under the restraint of the Spirit in our lives, in which case we can be saved by the grace of God. Watch and pray to avoid temptation and overcome the weakness of the SARX (Matthew 26:41). We need to eat the SARX of Jesus and

drink His blood (John 6:51-56). We need to be honest about our own SARX (Romans 7:18). God sent Jesus in the SARX to condemn sin in our SARX and bring us to salvation (Romans 8:3-6, 9, 12-13; 13:14). See also First Corinthians 5:5, Second Corinthians 5:16, 7:1, Galatians 5:13-16, 5:24, 6:8, Philippians 3:3-4, Colossians 2:13, Hebrews 5:7, and First Peter 4:1-2.

Also, can you make theological sense out of Second Corinthians 12:7 in light of this discussion?

Okay, this is enough for now. I hope this helps stimulate your thinking and gives you some biblical framework for your study. Feel free to take issue with anything here, or even cite anything here. Just use this work to help make your work better. Why else would you use it, right?

Godspeed brother!

Appendix I

Σάρξ (*Sarx*) Word Study

ΣΑΡΞ (SARX)

Standard Gloss: flesh; body; portions of meat; pieces of flesh or membrane (Liddell, Scott, and Jones)
body, physical body (Louw-Nida)

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative	NIV Reading
Matthew	16	17	σάρξ	man		Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man , but by my Father in heaven.
Matthew	19	5	σάρξ	flesh	X	and said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh ?"
Matthew	19	6	σάρξ	one	X	So they are no longer two, but one . Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."
Matthew	24	22	σάρξ	one		If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.
Matthew	26	41	σάρξ	body		Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.
Mark	10	8	σάρξ	flesh	X	and the two will become one flesh .' So they are no longer two, but one.
Mark	10	8	σάρξ	one	X	and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one .
Mark	13	20	σάρξ	one		If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.
Mark	14	38	σάρξ	body		Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."
Luke	3	6	σάρξ	mankind		And all mankind will see God's salvation.' "
Luke	24	39	σάρξ	flesh		Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."
John	1	13	σάρξ	human		children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	NIV Reading	
					Clearly Figurative	
John	1	14	σάρξ	flesh		The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
John	3	6	σάρξ	flesh		Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.
John	3	6	σάρξ	flesh		Flesh gives birth to flesh , but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.
John	6	51	σάρξ	flesh	X	I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh , which I will give for the life of the world."
John	6	52	σάρξ	flesh		Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"
John	6	53	σάρξ	flesh	X	Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.
John	6	54	σάρξ	flesh	X	Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.
John	6	55	σάρξ	flesh	X	For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.
John	6	56	σάρξ	flesh	X	Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.
John	6	63	σάρξ	flesh		The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.
John	8	15	σάρξ	human		You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one.
John	17	2	σάρξ	people		For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.
Acts	2	17	σάρξ	people		In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people . Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.
Acts	2	26	σάρξ	body		Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope,

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative	NIV Reading
Acts	2	31	σῶψ	body		Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.
Romans	1	3	σῶψ	human nature		regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David,
Romans	2	28	σῶψ	physical		A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical .
Romans	3	20	σῶψ	one		Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.
Romans	4	1	σῶψ	matter		What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter ?
Romans	6	19	σῶψ	natural selves		I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves . Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.
Romans	7	5	σῶψ	sinful nature		For when we were controlled by the sinful nature , the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.
Romans	7	18	σῶψ	sinful nature		I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature . For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.
Romans	7	25	σῶψ	sinful nature		Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative	NIV Reading
Romans	8	3	σάρξ	sinful nature		For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature , God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,
Romans	8	3	σάρξ	sinful nature		For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,
Romans	8	3	σάρξ	sinful nature		For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man ,
Romans	8	4	σάρξ	sinful nature		in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.
Romans	8	5	σάρξ	sinful nature		Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.
Romans	8	5	σάρξ	that nature		Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.
Romans	8	6	σάρξ	sinful man		The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;
Romans	8	7	σάρξ	sinful mind		the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative	NIV Reading
Romans	8	8	σάρξ	sinful nature		Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.
Romans	8	9	σάρξ	sinful nature		You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.
Romans	8	12	σάρξ	sinful nature		Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature , to live according to it.
Romans	8	12	σάρξ	it		Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it .
Romans	8	13	σάρξ	sinful nature		For if you live according to the sinful nature , you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,
Romans	9	3	σάρξ	race		For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race ,
Romans	9	5	σάρξ	human ancestry		Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.
Romans	9	8	σάρξ	natural		In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.
Romans	11	14	σάρξ	people		in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them.
Romans	13	14	σάρξ	sinful nature		Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature .
1 Corinthians	1	26	σάρξ	human		Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.
1 Corinthians	1	29	σάρξ	one		so that no one may boast before him.

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative	NIV Reading
1 Corinthians	5	5	σάρξ	sinful nature		hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.
1 Corinthians	6	16	σάρξ	flesh	X	Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh ."
1 Corinthians	7	28	σάρξ	life		But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life , and I want to spare you this.
1 Corinthians	10	18	σάρξ	people		Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?
1 Corinthians	15	39	σάρξ	flesh		All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.
1 Corinthians	15	39	σάρξ	flesh		All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh , animals have another, birds another and fish another.
1 Corinthians	15	39	σάρξ	another		All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another , birds another and fish another.
1 Corinthians	15	39	σάρξ	another		All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.
1 Corinthians	15	50	σάρξ	flesh		I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.
2 Corinthians	1	17	σάρξ	worldly manner		When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, "Yes, yes" and "No, no"?
2 Corinthians	4	11	σάρξ	body		For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body .

	NIV Reading				
Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative
2 Corinthians	5	16	σάρξ	worldly	So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.
2 Corinthians	5	16	σάρξ	this way	So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way , we do so no longer.
2 Corinthians	7	1	σάρξ	body	Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.
2 Corinthians	7	5	σάρξ	body	For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn--conflicts on the outside, fears within.
2 Corinthians	10	2	σάρξ	world	I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world .
2 Corinthians	10	3	σάρξ	world	For though we live in the world , we do not wage war as the world does.
2 Corinthians	10	3	σάρξ	world	For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.
2 Corinthians	11	18	σάρξ	world	Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast.
2 Corinthians	12	7	σάρξ	flesh	To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh , a messenger of Satan, to torment me.
Galatians	1	16	σάρξ	man	to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man ,

NIV Reading

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative
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Galatians	2	16	σῶπξ	one	know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.
Galatians	2	20	σῶπξ	body	I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body , I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
Galatians	3	3	σῶπξ	human effort	Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort ?
Galatians	4	13	σῶπξ	illness	As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you.
Galatians	4	14	σῶπξ	illness	Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself.
Galatians	4	23	σῶπξ	the ordinary way	His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way ; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.
Galatians	4	29	σῶπξ	the ordinary way	At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.
Galatians	5	13	σῶπξ	sinful nature	You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature ; rather, serve one another in love.
Galatians	5	16	σῶπξ	sinful nature	So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature .
Galatians	5	17	σῶπξ	sinful nature	For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

NIV Reading

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative
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Galatians	5	17	σάρξ	sinful nature	For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature . They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.
Galatians	5	19	σάρξ	sinful nature	The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;
Galatians	5	24	σάρξ	sinful nature	Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.
Galatians	6	8	σάρξ	sinful nature	The one who sows to please his sinful nature , from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.
Galatians	6	8	σάρξ	that nature	The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.
Galatians	6	12	σάρξ	outwardly	Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.
Galatians	6	13	σάρξ	flesh	Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh .
Ephesians	2	3	σάρξ	sinful nature	All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.
Ephesians	2	3	σάρξ	its	All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

	NIV Reading				
Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative
Ephesians	2	11	σάρξ	birth	
Ephesians	2	11	σάρξ	body	
Ephesians	2	15	σάρξ	flesh	
Ephesians	5	29	σάρξ	body	
Ephesians	5	31	σάρξ	flesh	X
Ephesians	6	5	σάρξ	earthly	
Ephesians	6	12	σάρξ	flesh	
Philippians	1	22	σάρξ	body	
Philippians	1	24	σάρξ	body	
Philippians	3	3	σάρξ	flesh	

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by **birth** and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)--

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the **body** by the hands of men) by abolishing in his **flesh** the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,

After all, no one ever hated his own **body**, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one **flesh**.

Slaves, obey your **earthly** masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.

For our struggle is not against **flesh** and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

If I am to go on living in the **body**, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!

but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the **body**.

For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the **flesh**

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative	NIV Reading
Philippians	3	4	σάπξ	such		though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:
Philippians	3	4	σάπξ	flesh		though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh , I have more:
Colossians	1	22	σάπξ	physical		But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--
Colossians	1	24	σάπξ	flesh		Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.
Colossians	2	1	σάπξ	personally		I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally .
Colossians	2	5	σάπξ	body		For though I am absent from you in body , I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.
Colossians	2	11	σάπξ	sinful nature		In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature , not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ,
Colossians	2	13	σάπξ	sinful nature		When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature , God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,
Colossians	2	18	σάπξ	unspiritual		Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.

	NIV Reading				
Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative
Colossians	2	23	σάρξ	sensual	Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.
Colossians	3	22	σάρξ	earthly	Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.
1 Timothy	3	16	σάρξ	body	Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body , was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.
Philemon		16	σάρξ	man	no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.
Hebrews	2	14	σάρξ	flesh	Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--
Hebrews	5	7	σάρξ	life on earth	During the days of Jesus' life on earth , he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.
Hebrews	9	10	σα<rc	external	They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings-- external regulations applying until the time of the new order.
Hebrews	9	13	σάρξ	outwardly	The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative	NIV Reading
Hebrews	10	20	σάρξ	body		by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body ,
Hebrews	12	9	σάρξ	human		Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!
James	5	3	σάρξ	flesh	?	Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.
1 Peter	1	24	σάρξ	men		For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall,
1 Peter	3	18	σάρξ	body		For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,
1 Peter	3	21	σάρξ	body		and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
1 Peter	4	1	σάρξ	body		Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body , arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.
1 Peter	4	1	σάρξ	body		Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.
1 Peter	4	2	σάρξ	earthly		As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative	NIV Reading
1 Peter	4	6	σάρξ	body		For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body , but live according to God in regard to the spirit
2 Peter	2	10	σάρξ	sinful nature		This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings;
2 Peter	2	18	σάρξ	sinful human nature		For their mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature , they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error.
1 John	2	16	σάρξ	sinful man		For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man , the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.
1 John	4	2	σάρξ	flesh		This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,
2 John	7	7	σάρξ	flesh		Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh , have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.
Jude	7	7	σάρξ	perversion		In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion . They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.
Jude	8	8	σάρξ	bodies		In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies , reject authority and slander celestial beings.

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative	NIV Reading
Jude		23	σάρξ	flesh		snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear--hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh .
Revelation	17	16	σάρξ	flesh		The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire.
Revelation	19	18	σάρξ	flesh		so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."
Revelation	19	18	σάρξ	generals		so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals , and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."
Revelation	19	18	σάρξ	mighty men		so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men , of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."
Revelation	19	18	σάρξ	horses		so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."
Revelation	19	18	σάρξ	flesh		so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."
Revelation	19	21	σάρξ	flesh		The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh .

ΣΑΡΚΙΚΟΣ (SARKIKOS)

Standard Gloss: human, natural (Louw-Nida)

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative	NIV Reading
Romans	15	27	σαρκικός	material		They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.
1 Corinthians	3	3	σαρκικός	wordly		You are still worldly . For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly ? Are you not acting like mere men?
1 Corinthians	3	3	σαρκικός	wordly		You are still worldly . For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly ? Are you not acting like mere men?
1 Corinthians	9	11	σαρκικός	material		If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?
2 Corinthians	1	12	σαρκικός	wordly		Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace.
2 Corinthians	10	4	σαρκικός	of the world		The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world . On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.
1 Peter	2	11	σαρκικός	sinful		Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

ΣΑΡΚΙΝΟΣ (SARKINOS)

Standard Gloss: of or like flesh, fleshy (Liddell, Scott, and Jones)
 human, of people (Louw-Nida)

Book	Chapter	Verse	Greek Word	English Translation	Clearly Figurative	NIV Reading
Romans	7	14	σάρκινος	unspiritual		We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual , sold as a slave to sin.
1 Corinthians	3	1	σάρκινος	worldly		Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly --mere infants in Christ.
2 Corinthians	3	3	σάρκινος	human		You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.
Hebrews	7	16	σάρκινος	ancestry		one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.

Appendix J

Figurative Uses of Σάρξ (*Sarx*)

By Larry J. Lain

There are two clearly figurative uses of the term that make up eleven occurrences of the appearance of σάρξ. The first usage references marriage/sexual relations and “the two becoming one flesh” (Mt 19:5-6, Mk 10:8, 1 Cor 6:16, Eph 5:31). The second figurative usage is a comparison between Jesus and bread that is to be eaten, with the declaration that his flesh is to be eaten (5 instances in Jn 6:51-56).

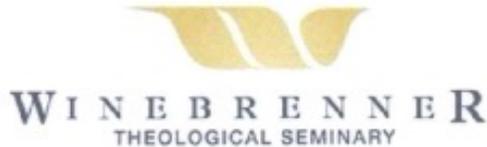
Two other potentially figurative uses deserve being noted: Paul speaks of a thorn in his σάρξ in 2 Corinthians 12:7. Is this figurative or literally a physical issue? Is the σάρξ figurative or is the “thorn” figurative? The “thorn” is clearly not a physical thorn, but a metaphor for some difficulty in Paul’s life. The fact that it is in his σάρξ could indicate that he is dealing with some physical issue, or he could be making reference to a non-tangible part of his being, such as emotional or mental anguish. Neither would be literal, even though they would be connected to his σάρξ.

The second questionable usage is found in James 5:3—“Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire.” In this instance there seems to be a combination of metaphorical images. However, within the image, corrosion eating away at flesh seems to be quite literal. In other words, the fact that corrosion can be acidic means that the flesh can actually be burned. That being said, the general sense of the phrase is a metaphorical image, namely that wealth illegitimately acquired and hoarded will be a destructive force in the individual, either in this realm or in the age to come.

Thus, there are no more than 13 out of 147 occurrences (8.8%) that are clearly figurative.

Appendix K

IRB Communication



Institutional Review Board

Research Proposal Recommendations

Principal Researcher: Larry Lain

Proposed Research Title: A Re-Envisioned Theology of Repentance and Entire Sanctification: How a Natural Reading of Σάραχ Unlocks an Unexpected Friend of Holiness

Dear Larry:

Congratulations! Upon review of your research proposal and related materials, the Winebrenner Institutional Review Board has approved your research proposal indicating that you may begin to implement your research procedures according to the timeline established by you and your research advisor.

Please note, your informed consent document still has a "NOTE TO RESEARCHER" on the final page which may be confusing to your participants. We realize that this is just an oversight, but we did want to make you aware of the error.

Once again, congratulations and best wishes upon implementing your research. May God grant you His wisdom, knowledge, understanding, strength, and persistence as you carry out this work. In all, may He be gloried.

Please contact me if you have any questions (iiames@winebrenner.edu).

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary A. Iames".

Dr. Mary Steiner Iames

Winebrenner Theological
Seminary Institutional
Review Board Chair

Larry J. Lain

3710 Franz Rd., Amelia, OH 45102

Phone: 513-713-0145 **E-Mail:** Larry.Lain@outlook.com

MAY 6, 2024

Dr. Kathryn Helleman

Winebrenner Theological Seminary

Dr. Kathryn Helleman,

This letter is in reference to my proposed doctoral research and the IRB requirements. According to the attached approval letter from the IRB, no further reporting is required at the completion of the research.

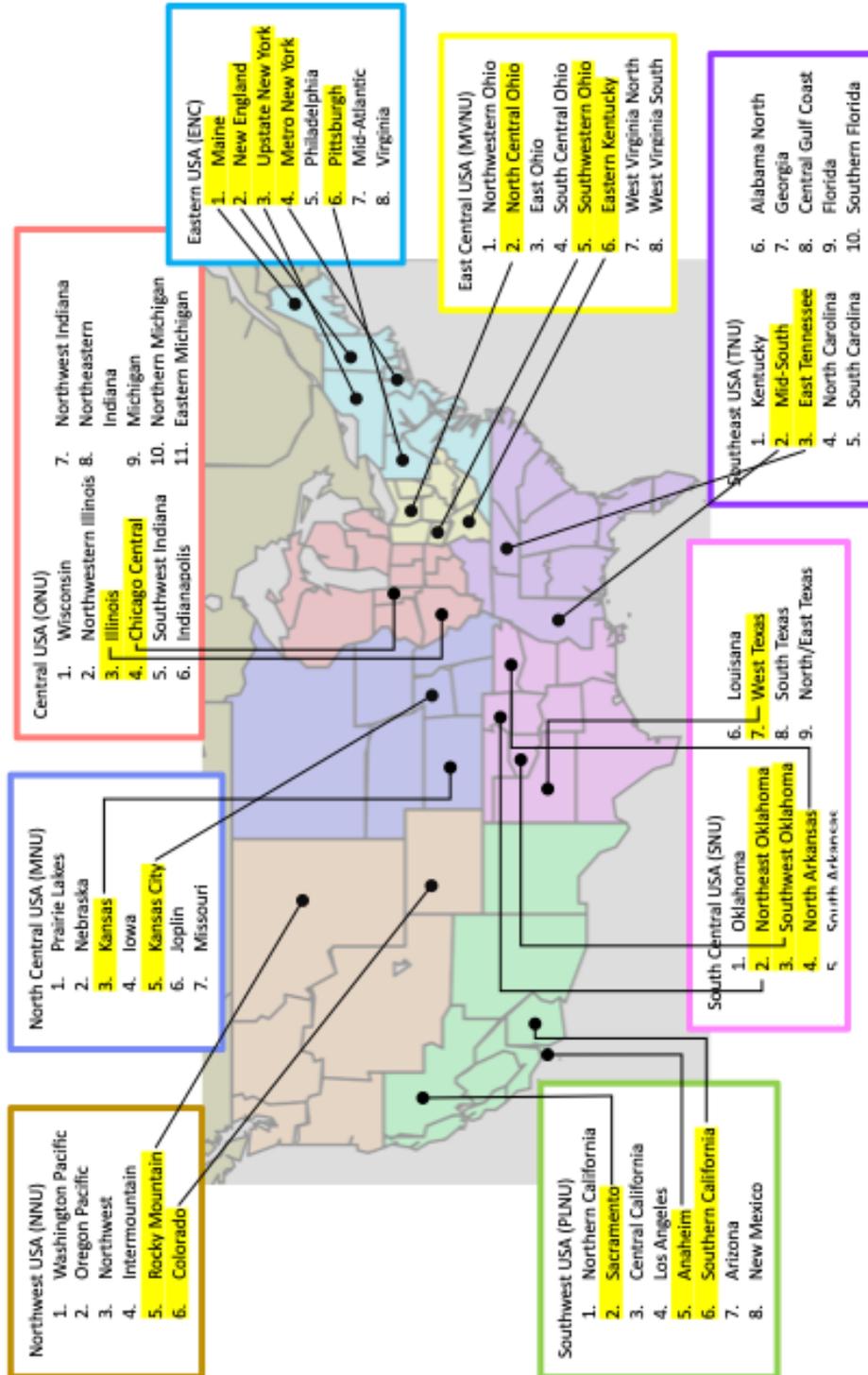
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry J. Lain". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

LARRY J. LAIN

Appendix L

Districts in the USA Region of the Church of the Nazarene and the Participating Districts



<https://www.usacanadaregion.org/districts#:~:text=The%20USA%2FCanada%20Region%20is%20one%20of%20six%20global.5%2C000%20intreconnected%20local%20churches%2C%20organized%20into%2078%20districts>. Accessed September 18, 2023.

Appendix M

Email Transcripts to District Superintendents

Initial Email to District Superintendents:

Dr. / Rev. _____

My name is Larry Lain. I am a Nazarene pastor here in the Cincinnati, Ohio area and a doctoral student at Winebrenner Theological Seminary in Findlay, Ohio.

My dissertation project is focused on growth in Christian holiness after entire sanctification. A central part of my doctoral research is to discern the way Nazarene pastors across the United States would answer the question, *"What is the place of repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer?"*

I have developed an online survey that I would like every Nazarene pastor in the United States to participate in. A PDF copy of the survey as well as a preview link is provided here for your review.

Is this something you would be willing to send out to all of your pastors?

If you are willing to forward on the survey to your pastors, please reply to this email and I will send you a preformatted email you can simply forward on to your pastors.

While there is no way to adequately thank you for your partnership, I will offer you a "first look" at the findings of my research, which will be available no later than the first of the year. I will send you a personal email detailing the results of the survey. For privacy reasons, I am not able to narrow it down to how your district pastors responded, but I will be able to parse out the information based on USA missional fields. I also welcome further discussion with you and will let you know when the final dissertation is published and how to download it.

Thank you for your consideration!

For the Sake of a Mature and Holy Church,

Larry J. Lain
Pastor, Amelia Church of the Nazarene
Southwestern Ohio
DMin Candidate, Winebrenner Theological Seminary

Follow-Up Email to District Superintendents:

Dr. / Rev. _____

My name is Larry Lain and I am a Nazarene pastor from Southwestern Ohio. I sent you an email about a week ago regarding a doctoral survey I am conducting. For your convenience, I have included the original email below.

I sent the email out to every District Superintendent in the contiguous United States in order to have a broad representation of Nazarene pastoral perspective. However, only eleven districts have chosen to participate in the survey to date.

If you missed the original email, would you review it below and consider allowing me to send you an email to forward to your pastors? If you received the email and opted to not participate, would you reconsider? I would be most grateful! The efficacy of the research is dependent on wide representation.

Thank you for your time!

For a Maturing, Holy Church,

Larry Lain

Email to Pastors/Survey Participants

Dear Pastor,

My name is Larry Lain. I'm a Nazarene pastor in the Cincinnati, Ohio area. I'm also a doctoral student studying the intersection of the spiritual discipline of repentance and the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification.

You are invited to participate in this research by clicking the link below to access an online survey exploring how Nazarene pastors across the United States answer the question, "What is the place of repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer?"

The survey is comprised of 20 questions. About half of them are multiple-choice and the other half are open response. It should take 20-30 minutes.

I would be most grateful for your participation!

Follow the link below to access the survey. The survey is entirely voluntary. You are able to skip questions you do not wish to answer, and you may exit the survey at any time. Furthermore, your responses are entirely confidential.

Thank you for your consideration!

For a Maturing, Holy Church,

Larry Lain
Pastor, Amelia Church of the Nazarene
D.Min. Candidate, Winebrenner Theological Seminary
LLain.research@gmail.com
513-713-0145

[Doctor of Ministry Research Questionnaire](#)
["What Place Does Repentance Have in the Life of an Entirely Sanctified Believer?"](#)

Appendix N

Doctor of Ministry Research Questionnaire

“What Place Does Repentance Have in the Life of an Entirely Sanctified Believer?”

Background

This questionnaire explores the place repentance has in the life of believers. Surveying only Nazarene pastors in the United States, the goal is to discern how Nazarene pastors and their congregations understand and practice repentance as a spiritual discipline. Of particular interest is how repentance intersects with our doctrine of entire sanctification as delineated in the *Manual* (specifically Article of Faith X.) In this survey, *repentance* is defined as *acknowledging a truth, need, or error and changing one’s mind in order to embrace the truth, surrender the need, or correct the error*. The twenty-question survey is divided into four segments: doctrinal/theological, scriptural, personal practice, and corporate practice. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete, depending on how much you wish to contribute in the free response sections. Once again, Nazarene pastors are the sole recipients of this survey. Therefore, please complete the questionnaire from your perspective as a pastor. **Your participation is deeply appreciated, and your candid and forthright responses are valued.**

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Project Title: A Re-Envisioned Theology of Repentance and Entire Sanctification: How a Natural Reading of Σάπχ Unlocks an Unexpected Friend of Holiness

Primary Researcher: Larry J. Lain

Research Advisor: Dr. James Davison

Institution, Graduate Program: Winebrenner Theological Seminary, Doctor of Ministry

Purpose of Research: The purpose of the research is to determine how Nazarene pastors across the contiguous United States understand the spiritual practice of repentance as it intersects with the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification.

Description of Research Procedures: This survey is entirely online and the results will be processed by SurveyMonkey. Once the survey is complete, SurveyMonkey will generate reports of the data for evaluation. No personally identifiable information will be retrieved, all data will be secure, and all data will be anonymous.

Potential Risks of Participation & How Risks Will be Addressed:

- Risks:
 - a. While the risks are minimal, there is a possibility you may experience psychological discomfort due to prior experience with the topic being surveyed.
 - b. The only other risk is that the IP address from which the survey was taken could be traced back to your location jeopardizing the confidentiality of your responses.
- Redress:
 - a. Should the topic cause distress, I am deeply sorry for your discomfort. It is that distress that is a motivator for this research. That being said, you can opt out of individual questions or the entire survey at any time and are encouraged to do so should you experience significant distress.
 - b. The data retrieved from SurveyMonkey is encrypted and secure. Therefore, the possibility of the participant being traced is highly unlikely and would require a high level of technological expertise.

Potential Benefits: The benefits to the participant is found in the long-term discussion of holiness in the Church of the Nazarene, which may extend into other church traditions.

Confidentiality of Data: All data will be collected electronically through the SurveyMonkey platform. None of the questions have personally identifiable information, although a participant could voluntarily divulge that information in an open response question. Furthermore, SurveyMonkey will encrypt and anonymize the data before it is retrieved by the researcher for evaluation. The reports will be permanently housed on the researcher's electronic storage

resources. However, the raw data will be destroyed by eliminating it from the SurveyMonkey platform after a legally appropriate duration.

Costs and/or Compensation for Participation: There is no cost nor compensation for participation. The participants will be provided the online location of Winebrenner dissertations should they wish to review the final project when it is complete.

Circumstances for Dismissal from the Research: At any time during the survey, participants can skip questions or opt out of the survey. There are no circumstances in which a participant can be dismissed from the research by the researcher.

Compensation for Injury: Winebrenner Theological Seminary and institutional employees are exempt from any and all charges and/or compensations due to research subjects who are harmed by their voluntary participation in research.

Contact Persons: For more information concerning this research, please contact

Larry Lain at 513-713-0145.

Kathryn Helleman at 419-434-4200

If you believe that you may have suffered a research-related injury, contact Dr. Mary Steiner liames at 419-434-4200.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to participate or to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason, without penalty to yourself nor the researcher. If you do withdraw from this study, the information you have already provided will be kept in a confidential manner as described in "Confidentiality of Data." Additionally, if you do not want your information/data included in the research and findings, you may also request to have your information/data destroyed at no penalty to your nor the researcher.

CONSENT: Federal regulations require precautionary measures to be taken to insure the protection of human subjects on physical, psychological, social, and other issues. This includes the use of informed consent procedures as stated in this document.

By selecting "Yes" below you consent that you have been adequately informed regarding the risks and benefits of participating in this research. This also indicates that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate and your shared information at any time without penalty to yourself nor the researcher. You are affirming that all questions you had about your participation in this research have been fully answered. You are welcome to print this consent for your records.

Do you consent to participate in this research?

- Yes
- No

Demographics

Select the response that best represents your demographic.

1. What is your age range?
 - 20-29
 - 30-39
 - 40-49
 - 50-59
 - 60-69
 - 70+
2. How many years have you been a part of the Church of the Nazarene?
 - 0-9
 - 10-19
 - 20-29
 - 30+
3. How many years have you been in pastoral ministry in the Church of the Nazarene?
 - 0-9
 - 10-19
 - 20-29
 - 30+
4. In which USA/Canada missional field do you serve?
 - Central USA (ONU)
 - East Central USA (MVNU)
 - Eastern USA (ENC)
 - North Central USA (MNU)
 - Northwest USA (NNU)
 - South Central USA (SNU)
 - Southeast USA (TNU)
 - Southwest USA (PLNU)

Doctrinal/Theological Perspectives

5. What place does repentance have in the life of the believer professing the experience of entire sanctification?
- None
 - Only for known sin
 - Only for character flaws and human weakness
 - For known sin as well as character flaws and human weakness
 - Other _____
6. What does the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification teach concerning repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer? _____

Biblical Perspectives

7. True or False: The Bible teaches that repentance is a normal part of the Christian life.
- True
 - False
 - Other _____
8. What scriptures come to mind in support of your response? _____
9. In Romans 7-8, Paul speaks about living according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. How do you understand the term “flesh”?
- The body
 - The sinful nature
 - Other: _____
10. How does your understanding of “flesh” influence your view of repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer? _____

Personal Practice

11. What should the frequency of repentance be in the believer professing the experience of entire sanctification?
- Minimal. It is reserved for known sin, which is rare in the sanctified life.
 - Occasional. It should focus on persistent misdeeds or general categories (e.g., disregard for the underprivileged, etc.), especially during seasons of reflection such as Lent.
 - Frequent. It should focus on any hindrance to godly character and Christlikeness.
 - Daily. It should focus on the sin we commit every day, knowingly or unknowingly.
 - Other _____
12. How would you describe your personal practice of repentance?

13. How public is your personal practice of repentance?
- As a sanctified believer, I do not believe in the practice of repentance.
 - Very private
 - Open and transparent except for the most personal matters
 - Open and transparent even with the most personal matters
 - Other _____
14. How does your understanding of the term “flesh” (particularly from Romans 7-8) influence your personal practice of repentance? _____

Corporate Practice

15. Do you publicly encourage your people to practice repentance?
 Yes
 No
 Other _____
16. How would you describe your church's practice of repentance?

17. How does your understanding of the term "flesh" (particularly from Romans 7-8) influence the way you lead your church in the practice of repentance?

18. What place does repentance have in your regular Sunday worship service?

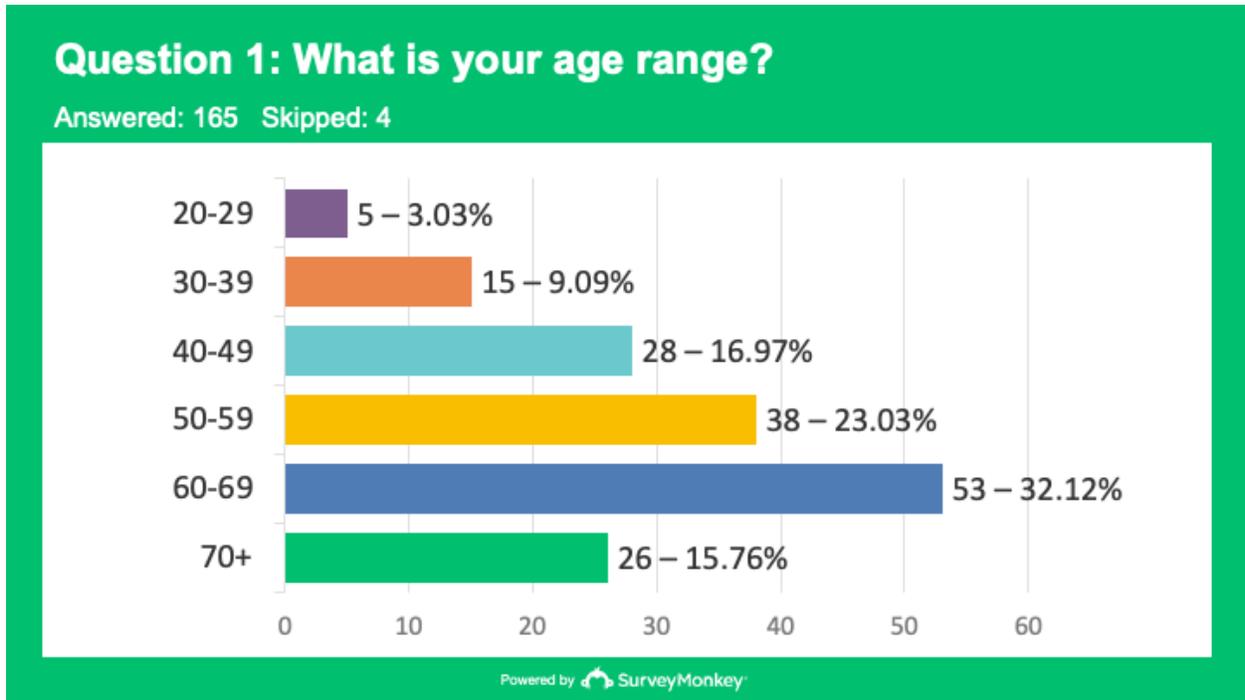
19. What place does repentance have in other regular meetings (e.g., home groups, prayer meeting, Sunday School, etc.)? _____
20. What else would you like to say concerning the practice of repentance in the life of the sanctified believer? _____

Thank You!

Thank you for your participation! The dissertation project is anticipated to be completed and available Fall 2024 and will be accessible at the Winebrenner Theological Seminary website for your perusal. The dissertation section archives can be accessed at <https://winebrenner.edu/doctor-of-ministry-projects/>. I welcome your continued dialog with me and the topic at larry.lain@outlook.com.

Appendix O

Figures and Tables of Survey Data

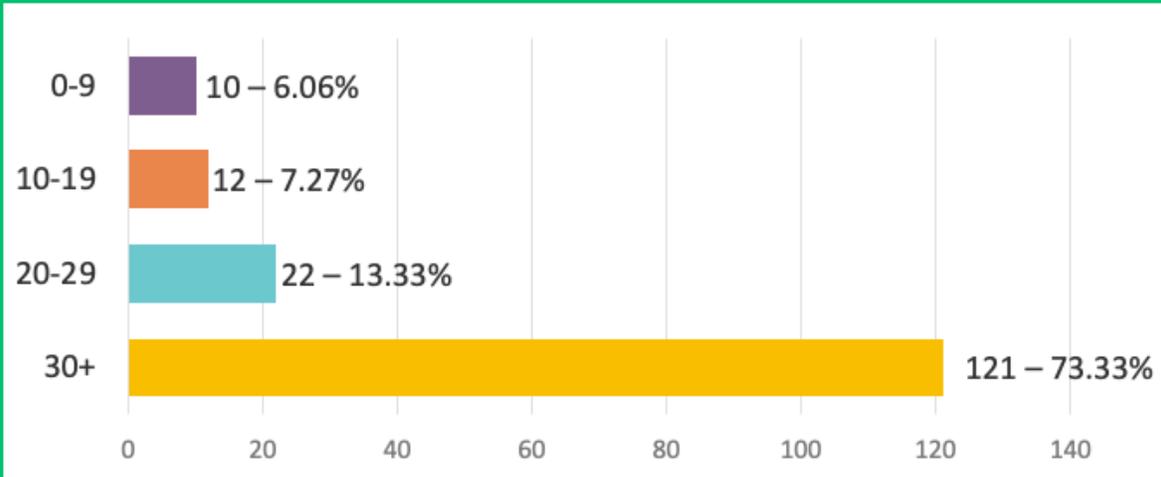


Ages of Nazarene Pastors in the USA (Nazarene Research Department)

USA/Canada Pastors' Age Categories					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20 to 29	50	1.1	1.2	1.2
	30 to 39	389	8.8	9.1	10.3
	40 to 49	926	21.1	21.8	32.1
	50 to 59	1123	25.5	26.4	58.5
	60 to 69	1248	28.4	29.4	87.9
	70 to 79	439	10.0	10.3	98.2
	80+	77	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	4252	96.7	100.0	
Missing	NA	144	3.3		
Total		4396	100.0		

Question 2: How many years have you been a part of the Church of the Nazarene?

Answered: 165 Skipped: 4



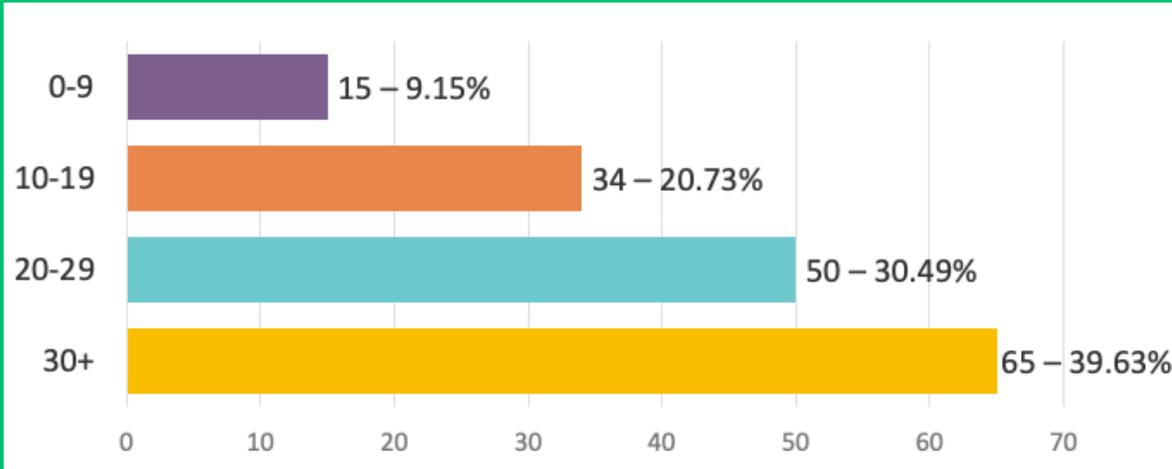
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Years Nazarene compared with Age Range

YEARS NAZARENE:	0-9	10-19	20-29	30+	Total
Age Range					
20-29	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	0	5
30-39	3 (20%)	4 (27%)	3 (20%)	5 (33%)	15
40-49	2 (7%)	3 (11%)	5 (18%)	18 (64%)	28
50-59	0	4 (11%)	4 (11%)	30 (79%)	38
60-69	2 (4%)	0	7 (13%)	44 (83%)	53
70+	1 (4%)	0	1 (4%)	24 (92%)	26

Question 3: How many years have you been in pastoral ministry in the Church of the Nazarene?

Answered: 164 Skipped 5



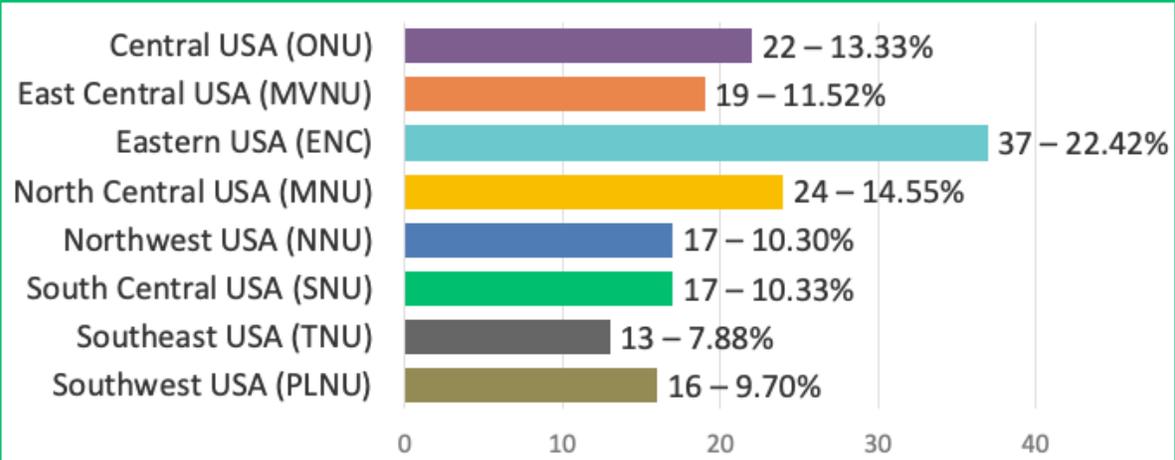
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Years in Ministry compared with Age Range

YEARS IN MINISTRY:	0-9	10-19	20-29	30+	Total
Age Range					
20-29	4 (80%)	0	1 (20%)	0	5
30-39	4 (27%)	10 (67%)	1 (7%)	0	15
40-49	1 (4%)	12 (44%)	13 (48%)	1 (4%)	27
50-59	4 (11%)	5 (13%)	18 (47%)	11 (29%)	38
60-69	1 (2%)	5 (9%)	8 (15%)	39 (74%)	53
70+	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	9 (35%)	14 (54%)	26

Question 4: In which USA/Canada missional field do you serve?

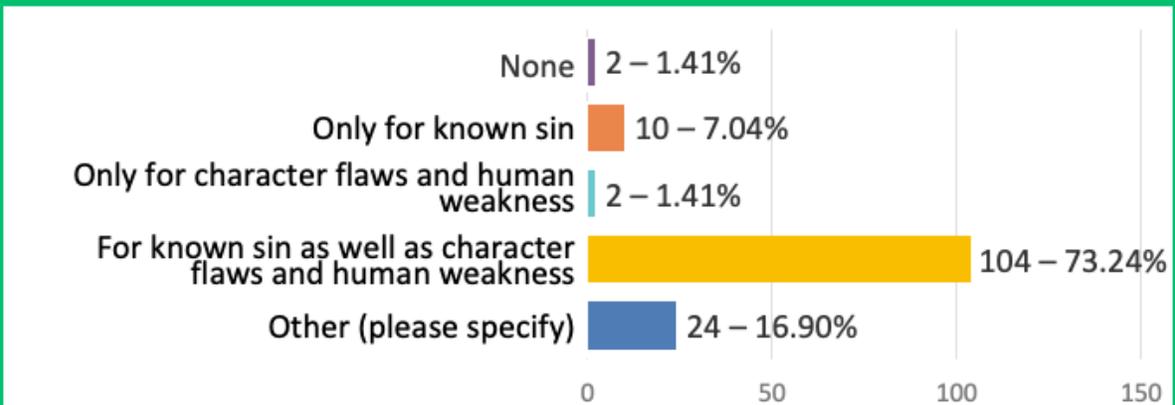
Answered: 165 Skipped: 4



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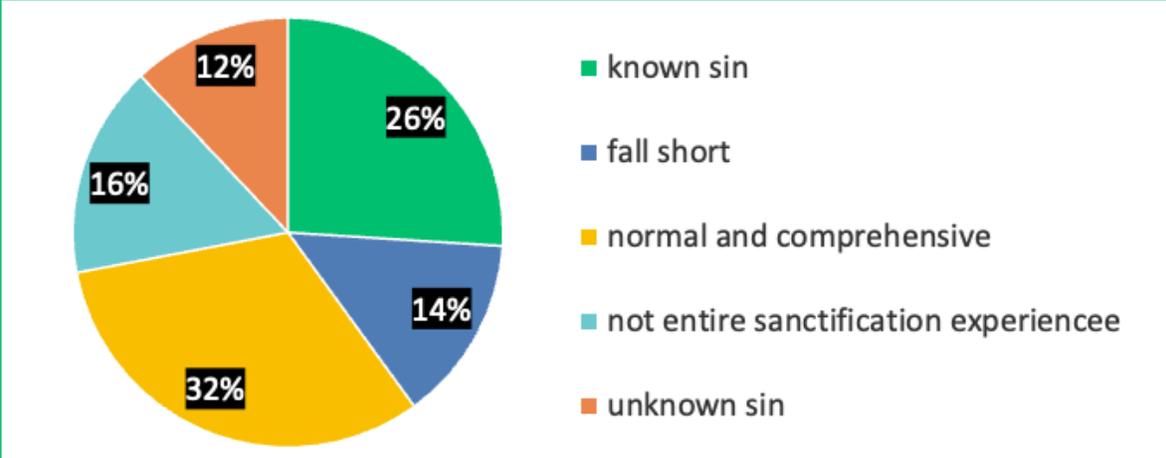
Question 5: What place does repentance have in the life of the believer professing the experience of entire sanctification?

Answered: 142 Skipped: 27



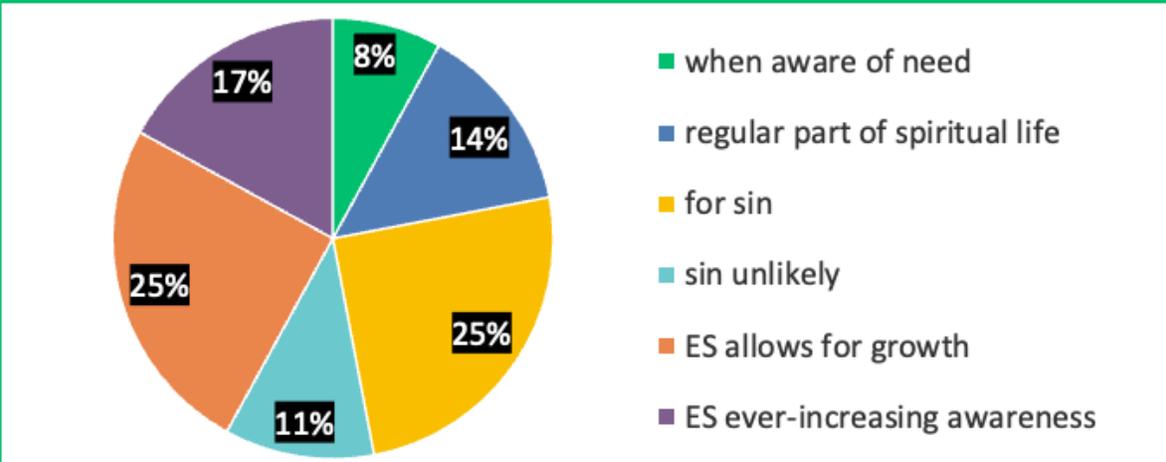
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Question 5: What place does repentance have in the life of the believer professing the experience of entire sanctification?



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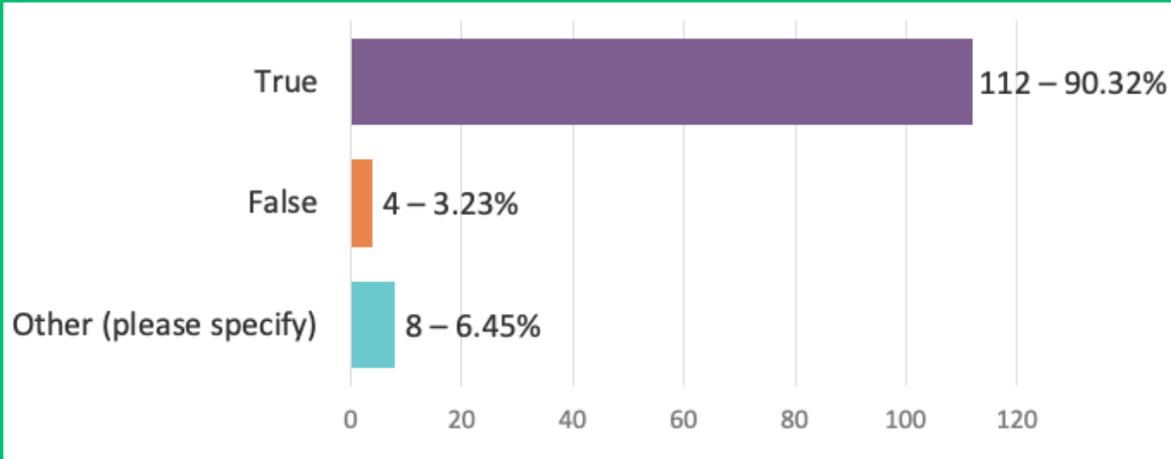
Question 6: What does the Nazarene doctrine of entire sanctification teach concerning repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer?



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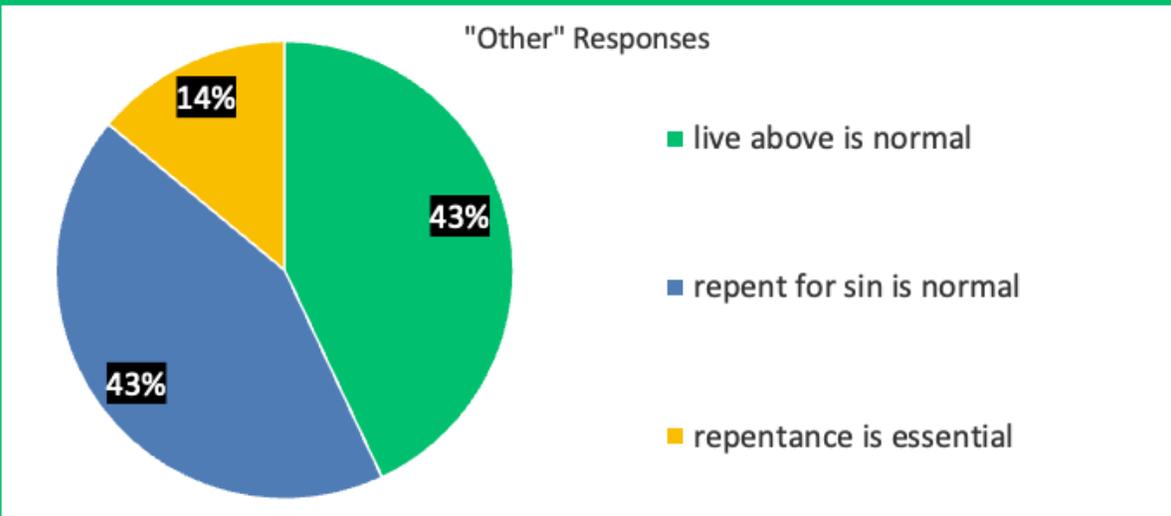
Question 7: True or False: The Bible teaches that repentance is a normal part of the Christian life.

Answered: 124 Skipped: 45



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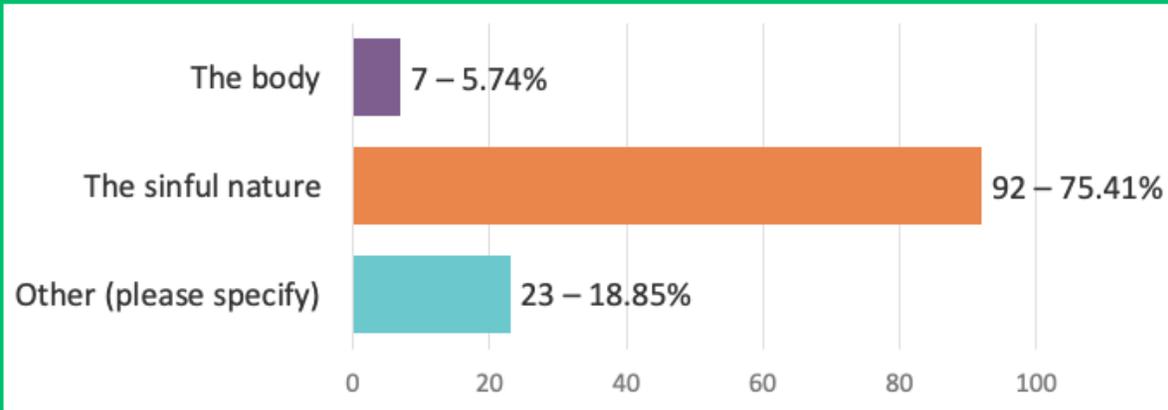
Question 7: True or False: The Bible teaches that repentance is a normal part of the Christian life.



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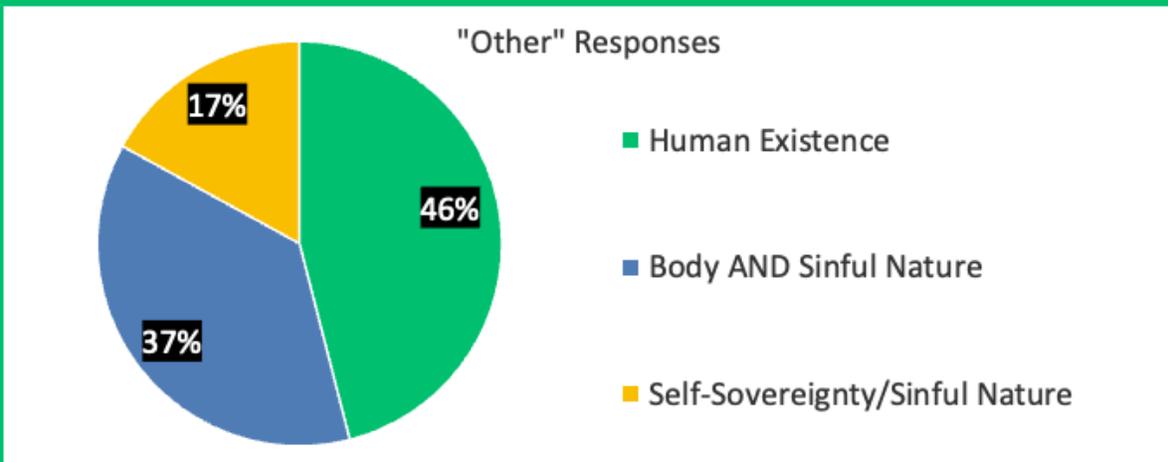
Question 9: In Romans 7-8, Paul speaks about living according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. How do you understand the term "flesh"?

Answered: 122 Skipped: 47



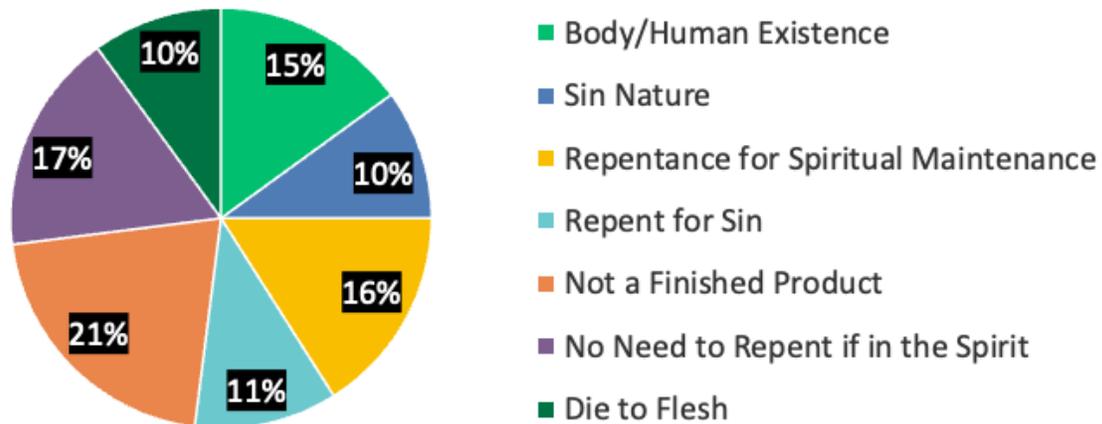
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Question 9: In Romans 7-8, Paul speaks about living according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. How do you understand the term "flesh"?



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Question 10: How does your understanding of “flesh” influence your view of repentance in the life of the entirely sanctified believer?



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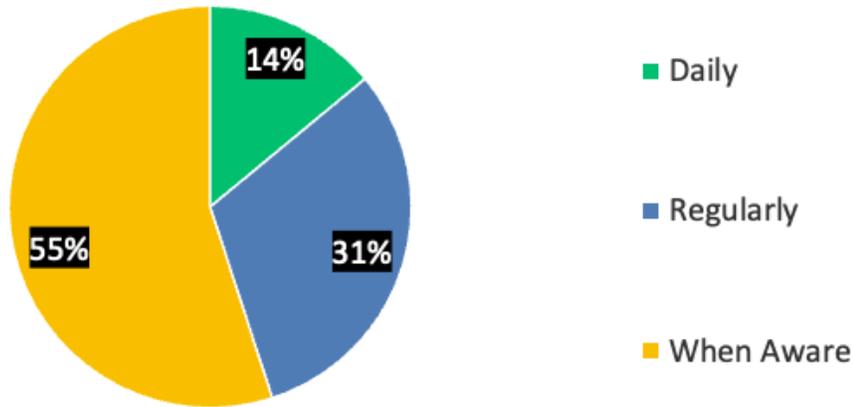
Question 11: What should the frequency of repentance be in the believer professing the experience of entire sanctification?

Answered: 120 Skipped: 49

- Minimal.** (8 – 6.67%) It is reserved for known sin, which is rare in the sanctified life.
- Occasional.** (2 – 1.67%) It should focus on persistent misdeeds or general categories (e.g. disregard for the underprivileged, etc.), especially during seasons of reflection such as Lent.
- Frequent.** (52 – 43.33%) It should focus on any hindrance to godly character and Christlikeness.
- Daily.** (24 – 20.0%) It should focus on the sin we commit every day, knowingly or unknowingly.
- Other** (please specify) (34 – 28.33%)

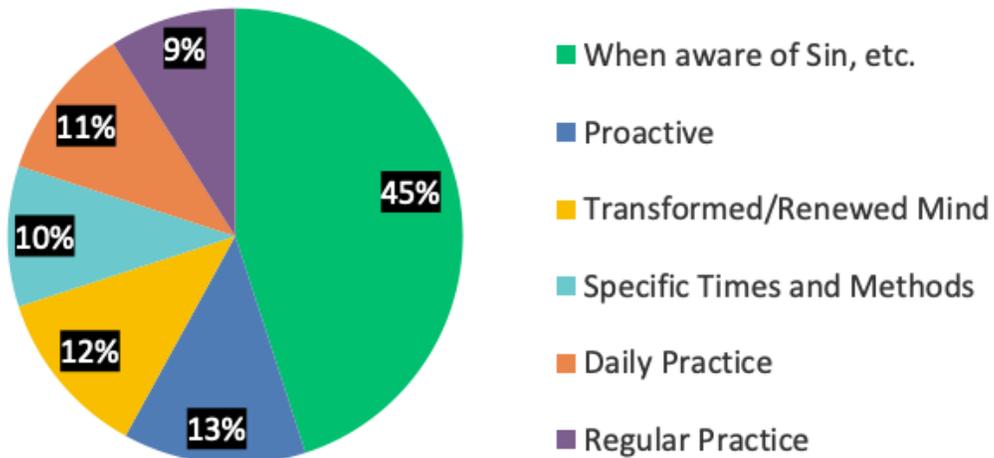
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Question 11: What should the frequency of repentance be in the believer professing the experience of entire sanctification?



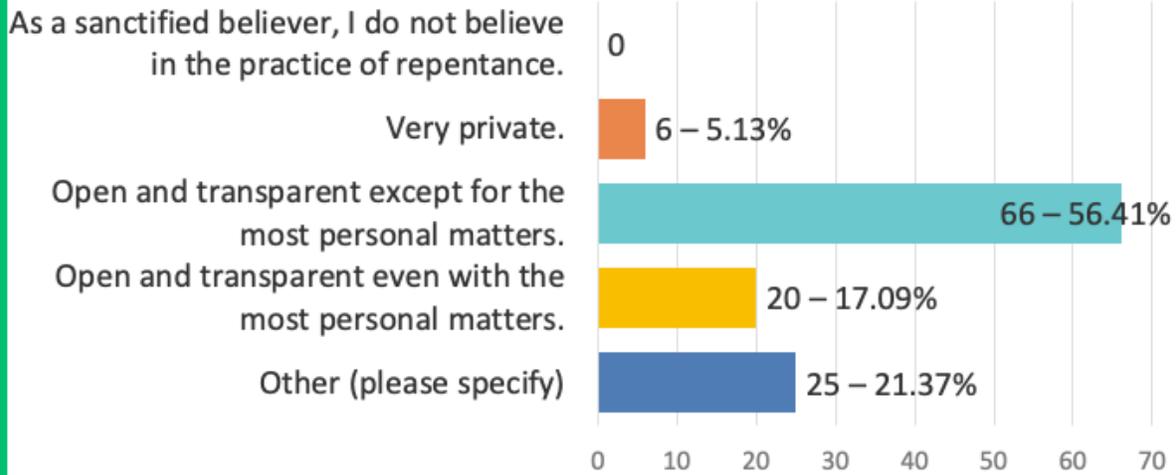
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Question 12: How would you describe your personal practice of repentance?



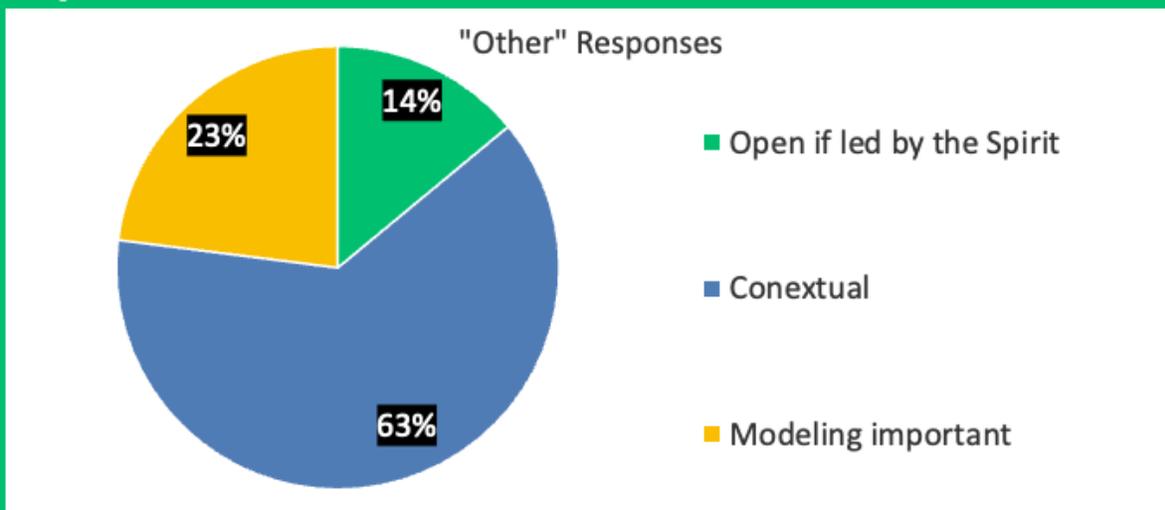
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Question 13: How public is your personal practice of repentance? Answered: 117 Skipped: 52



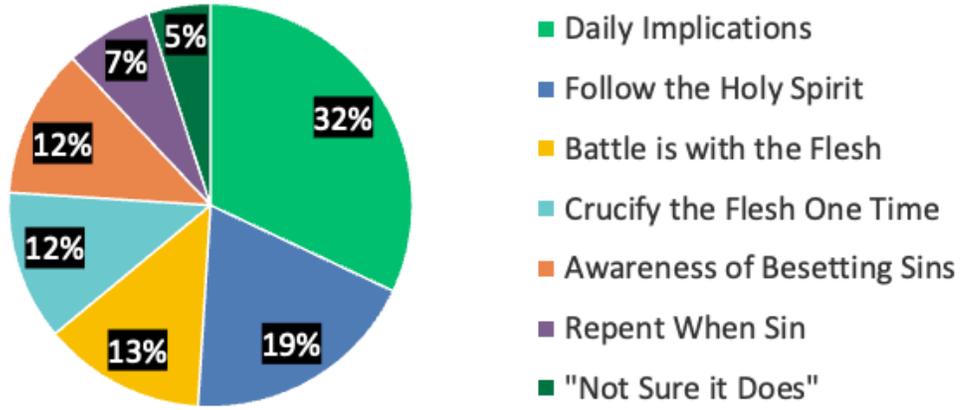
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Question 13: How public is your personal practice of repentance?



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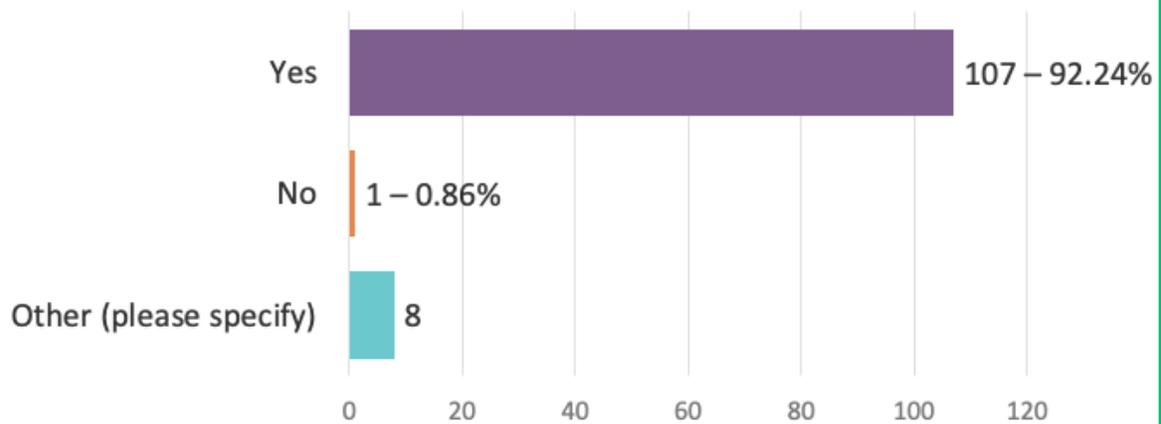
Question 14: How does your understanding of the term “flesh” (particularly from Romans 7-8) influence your personal practice of repentance?



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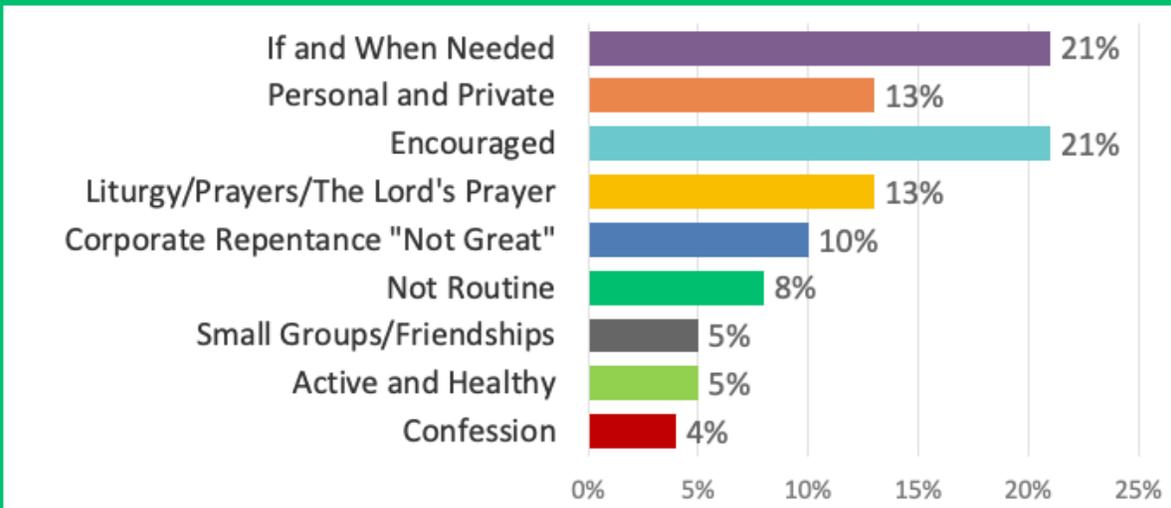
Question 15: Do you publicly encourage your people to practice repentance?

Answered: 116 Skipped: 53



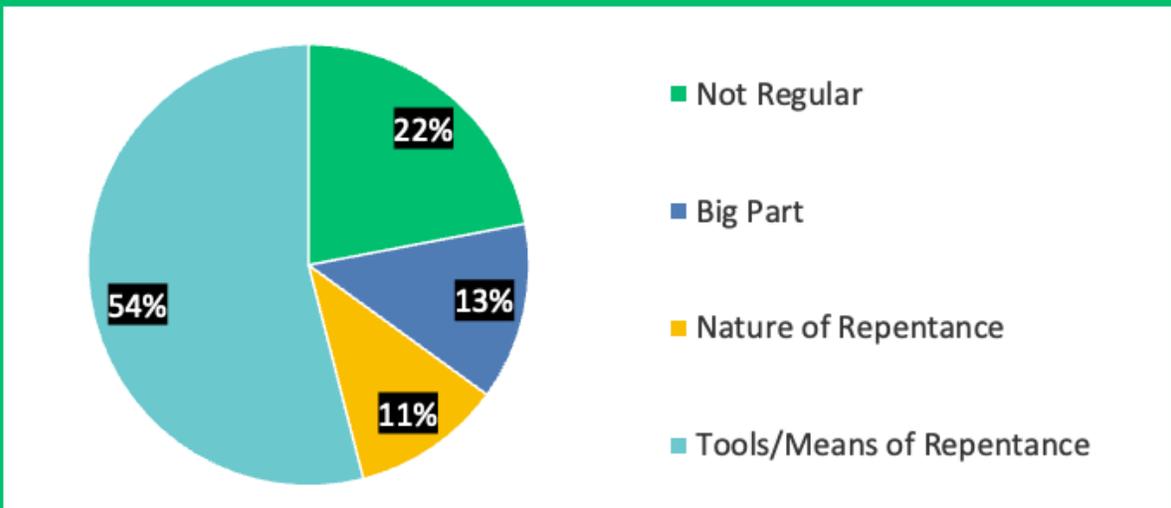
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Question 16: How would you describe your church's practice of repentance?



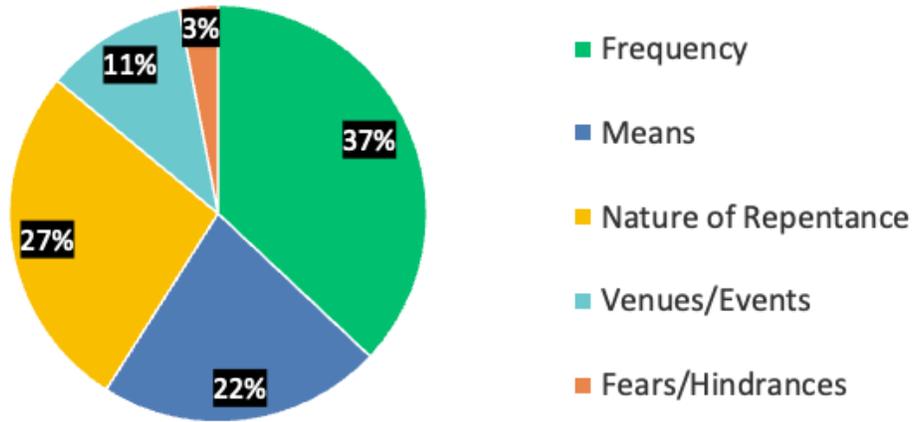
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Question 18: What place does repentance have in your regular Sunday worship service?



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Question 19: What place does repentance have in other regular meetings (e.g., home groups, prayer meeting, Sunday School, etc.)?



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Appendix P

Scriptures Related to Repentance

Scriptures in Support of Repentance is Normal

(repeated scriptures are indented)

Exported from Logos Bible Software, 3:31PM October 23, 2023.

Exodus 18:19–21	Hosea 14:1–2	Mark 1:4–15
Exodus 19	Zechariah 1:6	
Leviticus 5:5	Matthew 3:2	Mark 1:15
Leviticus 21	Matthew 3:2–11	Mark 1:15
2 Chronicles 7:14	Matthew 3:6	Mark 1:15
2 Chronicles 7:14	Matthew 3:8	Luke 3:3–8
2 Chronicles 7:14	Matthew 3:8	Luke 5:31–32
2 Chronicles 32:26	Matthew 3:8	Luke 5:31–32
Job 36:9–11	Matthew 3:8	Luke 5:32
Job 42:1–6	Matthew 3:8	Luke 9:23
Psalms 27:13	Matthew 3:11	Luke 11:4
Psalm 32:5	Matthew 4:12–17	Luke 11:4
Psalm 32:5–6	Matthew 4:17	
Psalm 32:5–6	Matthew 4:17	Luke 13:1–5
Psalm 38:18	Matthew 4:17	Luke 13:5
Psalm 40:4	Matthew 4:17	Luke 16:30
Psalm 51	Matthew 4:17	Luke 17:1–4
Psalm 51		Luke 17:3
Psalm 51:12	Matthew 5:23–24	Luke 17:3
	Matthew 5:23–24	Luke 17:3
Psalm 139:23		Luke 17:3–4
Psalm 139:23–24	Matthew 6:12	Luke 17:3–4
Proverbs 1:23	Matthew 6:12	Luke 22:32
Proverbs 28:13	Matthew 6:12	Luke 24:46–48
Proverbs 28:13		Luke 24:47
Proverbs 28:13	Matthew 6:9–13	John 3:3
Isaiah 30:15	Matthew 6:9–13	John 3:16
Isaiah 55:6–7	Matthew 6:9–13	John 3:17
Isaiah 55:6–7	Matthew 6:9–13	John 16:7–11
Isaiah 55:6–7	Matthew 6:9–13	John 21
Isaiah 57:14–21	Matthew 7	John 21:15–17
Jeremiah 31:18–19	Matthew 18:15	Acts 2
Ezekiel 18:30–32	Matthew 18:22	Acts 2:38
Ezekiel 18:31–32	Matthew 21:32	Acts 2:38
Ezekiel 36:27	Mark 1:4	Acts 2:38

Acts 2:38	Galatians 2:11–21	1 John 1:8–2:1
Acts 2:38	Galatians 2:20	1 John 1:8–2:2
Acts 2:38–41	Galatians 2:20	1 John 1:8–9
Acts 3:8	Galatians 5:16–18	1 John 1:8–9
Acts 3:19	Ephesians 4	1 John 1:9
Acts 3:19	Ephesians 4:13	1 John 1:9
Acts 3:19	Ephesians 4:23	1 John 1:9
Acts 3:19	Philippians 3:12–4:1	1 John 1:9
Acts 5:31	Philippians 3:15	1 John 1:9
Acts 15:36–41	1 Thessalonians	1 John 1:9
Acts 17:29–31	1 Timothy 4	1 John 1:9
Acts 17:30	2 Timothy 2:15	1 John 1:9
Acts 17:30	2 Timothy 2:19	1 John 1:9
Acts 19:18	2 Timothy 2:25	1 John 1:9
Acts 20:21	Hebrews 6:1–6	1 John 1:9
Acts 26:20	Hebrews 12:1–11	1 John 1:9
Acts 26:20	James 4:1–12	1 John 1:9
Romans	James 4:8	1 John 1:9
Romans 2:29	James 5	1 John 1:9
Romans 2:4	James 5	1 John 1:9
Romans 2:4	James 5:13–20	1 John 1:9
Romans 3:23	James 5:16	1 John 1:9
Romans 5–8	James 5:16	1 John 1:9
Romans 6	James 5:16	1 John 1:9–10
Romans 6	James 5:16	
Romans 6:23	James 5:16	1 John 2
	James 5:16	1 John 2:1
Romans 10:9–10	James 5:16	1 John 2:1–14
Romans 10:9–10	James 5:16	1 John 2:1–2
Romans 10:13	James 5:16	1 John 2:11
Romans 12:1–2	James 5:19–20	1 John 5:13
Romans 12:1–21	1 Peter 1	Revelation 2:5
Corinthians	2 Peter 2–3	Revelation 2:5
1 Corinthians 9:24–27	1 John	Revelation 2:5
1 Corinthians 13	1 John	Revelation 2:16
2 Corinthians 5:17		Revelation 2:21
2 Corinthians 7:8–11	1 John 1	Revelation 3:3
2 Corinthians 7:9–10	1 John 1	Revelation 3:19
2 Corinthians 7:9–10	1 John 1:6	Revelation 3:19
2 Corinthians 7:10–11	1 John 1:6–10	Revelation 3:1
2 Corinthians 12:21	1 John 1:8	
2 Corinthians 13:5	1 John 1:8–10	

Scriptures in Support of Repentance is NOT Normal

(repeated scriptures are indented)

Exported from Logos Bible Software, 3:31PM October 23, 2023.

Matthew 3:2

Matthew 4:17

Mark 1:15

John 16:8

Acts 20:21

Romans 10:9–10

 Hebrews 6:1

 Hebrews 6:1–2

1 John 2:1–2

Appendix Q

A Sample Litany of Repentance (based on 1 Peter 1:16; Leviticus 19:2)

By Larry J. Lain and Lauren G. Lain

Minister:

Lord God, we come boldly yet humbly before your throne of grace today.
You are our holy God.

People:

We are your holy people.

All:

We stand in awe of your covenant grace.
We stand fully assured of your consistent love and care for us.
In response, we fully assure you of our love and devotion.

Minister

You have called us to be holy because you are holy.

People:

Indeed, by your saving grace, sanctifying power, and indwelling Holy Spirit, you have made miraculous provision for us to be your holy people.

All:

We give you thanks!

Minister:

We also recognize that your Holy Word calls us, your holy people, to ever-increasing expressions of holiness.

You have said...

All:

“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have a sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.”

People:

You have called us to be holy because you are holy.

Minister:

Even as you have filled us with holy love, you still call us to love better.
And so today, we confess that we do not love as you love.

All:

We show favoritism.

Men:

We prefer some and overlook others.

Women:

We care for some and neglect others in their time of need.

Minister:

At times our actions express “love”, but our inner thoughts and attitudes betray our lack of sincerity.

Women:

Today, we turn from making love and kindness into a show.

Men:

Today, we turn from thinking judgmental thoughts.

All:

Together, we confess our duplicity and repent of insincere love.
Make us holy as you are holy.

Minister *(to the people)*:

I challenge you today to allow God’s Holy Spirit to reveal a specific relationship in which you harbor this kind of duplicity.

Should the Spirit of God bring one to mind, turn from your duplicity and ask God to help you “love...deeply, from the heart.”

Take time now to reflect, confess, and turn towards sincere love.

Allow a moment of silent reflection.

Minister:

We give you thanks, Holy God, for your holiness.

People:

We stand in awe of your covenant grace and give thanks for the specific ways in which you make us your holy people.

All:

Amen.

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