

“I always enjoy reading what Jennifer Kennedy Dean writes because it is always biblically accurate, deeply profound, and invariably inspiring. She has done it again in *Altar’d*. This book is filled with nuggets that will inform and change your life. I highly recommend it!”

—*Dr. Richard Blackaby, coauthor of EXPERIENCING GOD, REVISED EDITION, and SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP*

“Jennifer Kennedy Dean has written a powerful 40-day devotional book which is one of the clearest teachings on the difference between the flesh and the spirit I have ever read. You will be forever altar’d after reading this book.”

—*Carole Lewis, First Place 4 Health national director*

“Forty days of WOW! I can count the number of books I’d like to read twice on one hand. Yet I can’t wait to give Jennifer Kennedy Dean’s *Altar’d* the next read. And the next. Enlightening teaching, endearing transparency, and magnificently life-changing concepts keep the wow factor revved to the max from beginning to end. I don’t think I’ll ever see *altar* as a noun again. It’s been totally “verbed” into a place of sweet action. *Altar’d* is a must-read. And a must-read again.”

—*Rhonda Rhea, author of HOW MANY LIGHTBULBS DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A PERSON?*

“Jennifer Kennedy Dean is one of our favorite guests to have on the show. Her love for Jesus and knowledge of God’s Word consistently sets the stage for powerful and life-changing dialogue. Jennifer’s new book, *Altar’d: Experience the Power of Resurrection*, invites readers on a journey to discover the transforming power of the risen Christ within a teachable heart. As Jennifer noted, ‘The call to crucifixion is always to make a way for resurrection.’ If you’re done with status-quo and stagnant spirituality and you’re willing to die to self that you might live more fully for Christ, take this book and take your time. Read one day at a time, let it get under your skin, in your bones, and into your heart. In due time you’ll learn the glory, the power, and the promise of Christ within you.”

—*Susie Larson, host of LIVE THE PROMISE WITH SUSIE LARSON, author of THE UNCOMMON WOMAN*

“The title alone is enough to grab you but the heart of the author and the passion that drives her will inspire you. Jennifer communicates profound biblical truths in a way that creates a hunger for more of the Jesus she loves. While she seeks to understand and live the altar’d life, you can’t help but want to join her. What I’ve read and learned here has challenged and encouraged me. Thank you, Jennifer.”

—*Jill Kelly, author of NEW YORK TIMES bestseller*

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—*Matt Fry, lead pastor of C3 Church, Clayton, North Carolina*

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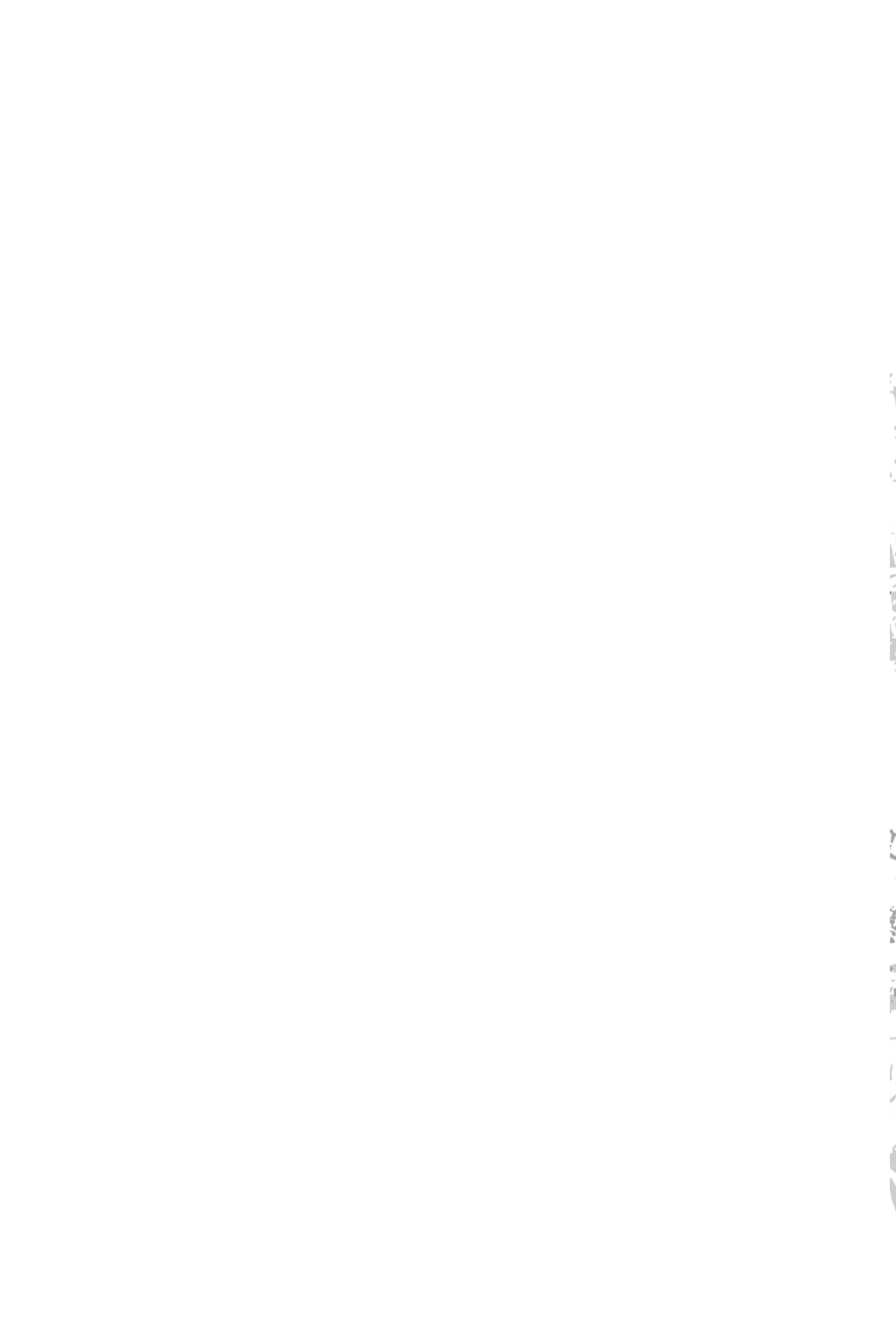
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jennifer kennedy dean.



# altar'd

40  
DAYS  
OF TRANSFOR  
MATION

EXPERIENCE  
THE POWER OF  
RESURRECTION



# altar'd

**EXPERIENCE  
THE POWER OF  
RESURRECTION**

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## INTRODUCTION

I can't trace how many years God has been teaching me about crucifixion of the flesh, and its consequent release of the Spirit's power. I have written about it—or at least mentioned it—in nearly every book I've ever written. I can see the seeds of the concept in my first book 20 years ago, and can trace its progression through subsequent books. I remember how it all started.

My husband went through a long period of unemployment. It was agony for me. The humiliation, the uncertainty, the fear, the loss of stuff, the tension. I tried every prayer secret I'd ever heard of to get God to come through. Fasting, begging, confessing, then confessing some more, getting others to pray . . . the list goes on.

On June 17, 1988, I wrote the following: "Reading Romans 12:1. What does it mean to be a living sacrifice? How do I die to myself? Just abstract concept to me, but I want to really know it. I want You to have all of me." Then I went back to whining and kvetching about my difficult situation that seemed to have no end.

A couple of weeks later, I seemed to have an *aha* moment. "Nothing I'm feeling right now could have origins in the Spirit. So only one other possibility? The flesh? Fear = flesh. Anger = flesh. Humiliation = flesh. I get that. So now what?" Without walking you with me through the years of prayer journals, suffice it to say that slowly, piece by piece, one baby step at a time, *aha* moment upon *aha* moment, I started to get it. God exposes flesh. I can choose to ignore that flesh and relegate it to its rightful crucifixion. I have come to call that a crucifixion moment. When that flesh succumbs to its prescribed death—crucifixion—then the power of resurrection takes its place. While I had been railing and wailing at God to take my problem away, He had been lovingly redefining the experience as a crucifixion that would lead to a resurrection. He was bringing flesh out of hiding and forcing it into the light where I could

choose—yield to crucifixion, or resuscitate my flesh and keep on giving it power in my life.

God is about recreating. He doesn't just change you, He remakes you. The In-the-Beginning God is still the same Creator He has always been. He creates the same way. He brings form out of formlessness. He brings light out of darkness. He brings order out of chaos. He brings beauty out of ashes and fills up the empty places.

The recreating happens on the altar—at the Cross—where flesh goes to die.

In this 40-day devotional, I get to pull all the pieces together in one place. These concepts have revamped my life, and reoriented my view of every situation I encounter. For me, it has been a journey of deep-down recalibration—an uprooting of poisoned personality traits, an excavation of harmful responses on autopilot, an extraction of what is precious from what is worthless. I pray that I can adequately communicate this long and ongoing transforming journey I am on.

## Altar'd

The noun *altar* is usually understood to be a place of worshipful offering. Something of value is offered up and released on the altar. The offerer relinquishes ownership and yields control to Another—a Power beyond.

Let's see what happens when we turn the noun *altar* into a verb. Altar our fear, our failure, our possessiveness, our need to control . . . all those things that hold us captive and keep us from running the race at full throttle.

Live in an *altar'd* state. Surrendered, yielded . . . free. Not offering sacrifice to appease a god who is vengeful; or to placate a god who is withholding; or to win the approval of a god who is angry. Live in an *altar'd* state to cooperate with the God who is committed to seeing you free of the toxic flesh that works against your freedom. Let the altar do its work in you, transforming fear to faith, worry to worship.

Each time that old pattern starts asserting itself in your thoughts, overlay it with the new reality: *I'm altar'd*.

On the altar, flesh is surrendered to crucifixion. Crucifixion is the prelude to resurrection. *Altar'd* living frees us to live in the power of His resurrection.

## The Word Made Flesh

When Jesus came to live out His life on earth, the Word became flesh. He was the eternal Word of God manifested and made visible in the form of flesh. When the Word came to indwell us, He began a work of renewal, transforming our human flesh to become the lived-out Word. Once the Word was made flesh. Now, our flesh is being made the Word. We are not the messengers. We are the message. He is manifesting His message in our lives.



Day 1

## THE NATURE OF FLESH

Since we will be using the word *flesh*, I want to take some time to work through a definition. In our main use of the word, flesh does not mean physical flesh. Succinctly, it refers to the parts of your human nature that are still operating on their own sin-producing power and not surrendered to the power of the indwelling Spirit. The word *flesh* as we will use it expresses itself through your body in actions, thoughts, words, attitudes, or responses, so the flesh includes the body, but the body is only the vehicle for the flesh to express itself.

A person without the indwelling Spirit of Jesus is all flesh in this sense. The person in whom Jesus has housed Himself and taken up residence has pockets of flesh still active. Like sleeper cells, they are activated by certain cues from the outside, but until activated, flesh might stay hidden. Hidden or disguised flesh is wreaking havoc inside like undetected cancer cells—free to destroy unchallenged.

We can't go exclusively by the word *flesh* in the biblical text because it is sometimes used to mean physical material—the corporeal body in which our personalities are contained. The act of translating from one language to another, like from Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic into English, is more than simply replacing one word with another. It requires translating linguistic context and cultural meaning. Depending on what translation of the Bible you might be using, the same word or concept might be translated “flesh” (meaning soft body-tissue) one place and then “human nature,” or “carnal nature,” or “old man” in another. Or, the word might always be translated “flesh,” but the textual setting interprets it as something more than the physical body. It is usually easy to tell the difference.

We will be talking about flesh as our unsundered sin nature. All of us still have active and uncrucified flesh. The process theologians call

*sanctification* is the process of dragging flesh out of hiding, naming it what it is, and surrendering it to crucifixion. We are going to call it *altar*ing. Living in an *altar'd* state, with flesh yielded.

## Flesh Has a Tell

Though we can make all kinds of excuses for flesh, dress it up in religion and piety, flesh has a “tell.” It *acts* like flesh. Whatever is born of flesh is flesh. Any action, attitude, emotion, word, or thought that has its roots in flesh is all flesh. Flesh and Spirit never act in harmony, One or the other, never both at the same time (Romans 8:4–8).

*“Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit”*  
(JOHN 3:6).

*“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life”* (JOHN 6:63).

From these two statements Jesus made, we can glean several things about flesh. In John 3:6, Jesus is having His famous conversation with Nicodemus about being born of the Spirit. In this statement, He is talking about physical flesh, but the physical flesh that comes prepackaged with unredeemed human nature. The only thing that flesh can produce is flesh. Do you see in this statement the complete disconnect between flesh and God’s Spirit? Either flesh or Spirit, but not both.

Then in John 6:63, Jesus says that flesh gets you nowhere, has no profit in it, conveys nothing of value. But, in contrast, Spirit gives life. Either/or, but not both. Jesus’ words are spirit because their origins are in the Spirit. If it is born of the Spirit, then it is Spirit. If it is born of the flesh, then it is flesh.

So, what is the tell? How does flesh give itself away and reveal its nature?

Flesh is proud, possessive, demanding, grabby, angry, envious, wants to own and manage and manipulate and get its way. Flesh caters to its appetites—physical and emotional. Flesh is self-conscious. Flesh demands its own way. Flesh is all about the “I.” I want. I will. I did. I feel.

Flesh’s tell is not always easy to spot in ourselves. (By the way, don’t try to spot it in others. That’s not your job.) Flesh doesn’t always look

ugly on the surface. In fact, it cleans up very nicely sometimes. Flesh that has religious training can masquerade as all kinds of admirable qualities. Through this 40-day journey we'll learn how to identify flesh. We'll find our own flesh's tell, and then how to surrender it to crucifixion.

## Flesh Versus Spirit

Flesh and Spirit cannot reach a compromise or form a peace treaty. The very presence of one eliminates the other. Like light and dark. Where it is dark, there is no light. Where it is light, there is no darkness. One cancels out the other.

*“For the sinful nature [flesh] desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature [flesh]. They are in conflict with each other” (GALATIANS 5:17).*

*“Those who live according to the sinful nature [flesh] 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).*

With this in mind, let me reiterate: what does not come from the Spirit comes from the flesh.

When I started processing this in my life, it was a surprise to me how much of my energy and effort came from flesh. I had evaluated my life as pretty spiritual. I prayed, studied, and memorized the Scripture, told the truth, tried to be kind. I have quite a long list of proofs that I was very, very spiritual. Really spiritual.

I only had a limited way to categorize. Good or bad. Sin or not sin. It was a flesh-engaging, me-focused kind of activity. With all its spiritual overtones, still it put me at the center of my universe. It's a way of living that might sound humble and noble, and it was certainly meant that way. Only much later could I look back and see that flesh thinks only flesh can straighten flesh out, so flesh had better be vigilant.

Then I learned a new way to see. I learned about flesh and Spirit.

As we move through this journey, don't worry that you will have to live a life of either constant examination and self-flagellation or self-congratulation. You will be freed from that. You will be freed from trying

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to measure up and from chasing your flesh around with a foam bat, trying to get it under control but having no effect. Those days are over.

## **REFLECT**

*How much time do you spend feeling guilty and discouraged?*

*In moments of harsh honesty, do you feel that you never quite measure up no matter how hard you try?*

*Are you tired of trying to live the way you long to live?*