

Fight! Winning the Internal Conflict

Part 2: Identifying Who You Are in the Fight

(preached 10/13/24)

Please turn to *1 Corinthians 2:10-16*.

LAST WEEK:

- The biggest battle is that going on inside of us and are we taking it seriously?
- The combatants are our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits.
- 4 different parts of us with their OWN goals, desires, and needs...that tend to conflict with each other.
- We need to be aware of and engaged in this fight and the good news is God has given us the tools to overcome, to reign over ourselves.
- When we were Saved we were forgiven of all sin and then our spirit was remade into the image of Jesus AND separated from the rest of us in the sense that it can't be corrupted.
- Our spirit is the part of us God made holy and blameless, righteous and upright.
- It's the part of us given eternal life and that will ascend to Heaven when our mortal body expires.
- Jesus enthroned our spirit at His right hand inside of us: making it a king and a priest.
- It dwells in truth, is pure and its desires are aligned with that of Christ.
- Our hearts, minds, and bodies are still mortal and have sinful desires...but aren't "evil" in the Satanic sense.
- They believe that what they want is good...even if its not.
- Internal conflict starts when the desires of one part of us clashes with the desires of another part of us. Mind vs. Heart, Spirit vs. Body, etc.
- The good news is God has empowered us to corral our inward parts...and make them into a team who work together.

If you've ever watched *professional boxing or MMA how does it start? The combatants make their entrance!* The MC grabs the mic and announces "*making his way down the aisle and hailing from Addison NY, standing at 5' 11" and weighing in at 200 lbs, wearing the red trunks: Johnny the "wrecker" Dooooooooooooooooooooeee!*" "*And his opponent from Lindley NY, standing at 5' 10" tall and weighing 195 lbs, wearing the blue trunks: "Tricky" Ricky Smiiiiiiiiiiiith!*"

Everyone knows who the combatants are, what they want, where they're from, how much they weigh, how tall they are. Their pictures flash on the screen giving even MORE details: how old they are, their arm length, their record of wins vs. losses and the announcers discuss these in even more detail with those of us watching on screen. In the end, ***we know everything we need to about the fighters.***

AND SO MUST WE WHEN IT COMES TO THE PARTS OF US INSIDE WHO ARE FIGHTING WITH EACH OTHER, all of whom are trying to ascend to sit on the throne over our lives.

Next, **we need to know which combatant WE are....**

I submit to you that **we might be identifying with the WRONG ONE** which adds gasoline to the fire of internal conflict.

I used to watch WWE wrestling and loved **the Royal Rumble**. The RR was about 15 wrestlers in the ring all at once and the idea was to throw your opponents out of the ring and be the last man standing. It was chaotic! Men would usually form alliances against the bigger, stronger opponents and toss them out first...only to turn on each other right after!

Our internal battle can seem more like the Royal Rumble and therefore ***we MUST know where our loyalties lie.***

Let's identify our combatants and, just as importantly, what they want.

THE BODY/FLESH wants to live, survive, and protect itself. Therefore it desires food, clothing, drink, and shelter...and wants to ENJOY these things.

THE MIND likes to think and rationalize, to bring order to chaos, solve problems, make plans, get organized, and approach life logically.

THE HEART wants to feel and express itself whether joy or sorrow. It cares about how it feels, how others feel, and empathizes with the ones it loves. It's the creative side of us.

THE SPIRIT is one with Jesus and wants to be with Him. It wants to thank God, praise Him, worship Him, sing to Him, pray to Him, obey Him, serve Him, read His Word, fellowship with His people, go to Church, and become more like Christ.

In the beginning, before the Fall, ***all their desires were pure***—put there by God Himself Who designed them.

Adam & Eve were **given fruit to eat** and I can imagine said fruit was far superior to anything we eat now. 4 rivers flowed through Eden and I bet that drinking that water was an explosion of euphoria and refreshing.

Question: since Adam and Eve were still given physical bodies and commanded to eat and drink, **did their bodies tell them when it was hungry or thirsty?**

When they ate, *they enjoyed both the fruit and water immensely and were refreshed and energized by both?*

- Were their bodies and its DESIRES sinful?
- Was it a sin when they enjoyed the amazing fruit and refreshing water?

They were commanded to multiply which means have sex. IDK if they did that before the Fall but let's say they did and I fully believe God created it to be pleasurable and intimate—way better than now (like the fruit and water).

- If they had sex and enjoyed that: was it a sin?
- If they desired to have sex with each other, were their desires evil?
- The answer is no to all.

THE MIND was clear to think logically, collect knowledge, solve problems and worked WITH the heart & body as a teammate, playing its role in resonance with them.

The heart was free to experience and express the joy of being close to God, with each other, and living in the Garden w/o hampering the mind or the body but working together with them.

The Spirit worked as the overseer of all, prioritizing the Lord and all the other parts harmoniously submitting to its lead.

So what happened that now we read in the Bible that 1) some of our desires are sin? And 2) Our desires clash with each other causing internal conflict?

The Fall...when all our parts were cut off from the Lord and the virus of death and sin entered into them. **After the Fall, our parts became self-seeking and focused on pleasure.**

THE FALLEN BODY now prioritized and sought out the PLEASURE of eating, drinking, sleeping, sex, and clothing. Pre-Fall body ate, drank, had sex, etc. to survive and thrive, and it enjoyed all as God intended.

Post-Fall body turned this around, seeking pleasure first and thus going after whatever brought the same. Cookies & chips taste better than apples and broccoli, booze gives a “buzz” that water doesn’t, having sex with whomever whenever seemed to scratch that itch.

The mind now saw emotions and physical needs as weak and elevated rationality to the top, coldly trying to run its life on data, logic, and order. It likes to make rules for everyone else and now tried to CONTROL the heart and body so it could run things the way it wants to. It also tried to control its environment and other people for the sake of its desired outcome and falls apart whenever it cannot.

The heart became impulsive and self-centered, feeding on drama and gossip, being completely dictated by how it felt and not necessarily what was true. It felt a horrible void that it needed to fill at all costs, constantly needing affirmation from God and others, and was subject to paralyzing depression.

The spirit became lost in the void, wanting something beyond all these things but not knowing what...so it cleaved to false spirituality like the astrology, witchcraft, mediums, New Age, psychics, and the worship of other gods (polytheistic religion).

Before I continue let me repeat: ***each of our fallen parts desires what IT thinks is “good.”*** Our bodies, hearts, minds, and spirits all believe that what they want will benefit us.

We know that junk food is bad for our health, but our bodies are addicted to the dopamine fix that stuff gives it and craves the same because it feels good.

We know this relationship isn’t going to work out but our hearts long for connection, affirmation, and love and this person seems to be giving it to us...for now.

WE REALIZE WE CAN’T CONTROL OTHERS OR OUTCOMES, but our minds insist we try anyway and we live in constant stress and anxiety when we inevitably fail.

We’ve tried different religions, spiritual practices, meditation, and what not...but nothing seems to fill the void.

My opinion: ***I believe there’s a “memory” in us of what things were like before we fell*** and each part of us is trying to get back there...to do its best to restore that which was lost. But they never will because there’s only one Person Who succeeded at that....

If we're Christian we got Saved and something happened: **Jesus restored our SPIRIT back to its original form.** He reconnected it with Him by sending the Holy Spirit to sit right next to it. He then separated our spirit from the rest of us and built a protective "wall" so that it wouldn't be corrupted by the as-of-yet fallen parts of us.

Then He put it in charge. Made it King over the fallen parts.

God gave the fallen parts a purpose too: they're all parts of His Temple.

- Our bodies are the building itself that houses everything.
- Our minds represent the Menorah, the 7 aspects of God.
- Our hearts represent the Altar of Incense where God is worshipped, praised, and thanked.
- When the Resurrection takes place, those 3 will finally get their eternal promotion and purification and then we will truly be just like Jesus.

Until then we have internal conflict. **The first step to resolving it is knowing which one of your parts is the true you and identifying with it ALONE.**

That is going to require "repentance" on our parts because we've assigned ourselves a role in the internal conflict to a particular fighter. If we were to be introduced while we were heading down to the ring, the announced could tell all involved whether we're wearing the blue, red, or green trunks.

We must recognize which part of our fallen selves we've been identifying with, crucify said identity, and grab hold of the new one.

I'm confident that you would all answer correctly if I were to ask, so let's put that to the test (multiple choice). **Which one of your parts is the real you?**

- A) Your Body
- B) Your Mind
- C) Your Heart
- D) Your Spirit

You all answered "D" and that's correct... **BUT DO YOU IDENTIFY AS YOUR SPIRIT?** Or as one of your other parts? *Whatever we identify as is "who" we believe we are.*

It's how we act, it's our default mode. We're wearing the trunks of this fighter and the other ones are our opponents.

“Body” people pursue simple pleasures and may say things like “good food, good folks, and good fun is all I need.”

“Mind” people elevate rationality, logic, knowledge, order, and thinking things through.

“Heart” people are connected with their emotions, care about how they and others feels, and are often giving and compassionate.

Most of us “identify” with one of these as our primary, our default, the way we operate, who we are...and the other aspects of self are “the other guys” inside us. Speaking for me, I’ve identified with my mind for the vast majority of my life and “default” to that mode often. What do you identify with?

Whichever one we say is us is the one sitting on the throne of our lives.

Before we knew God, no one identified with their spirits...no, not one. Which is why we read verses like these:

[Rom 3:10-11 ESV] 10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 **no one understands; no one seeks for God.**

In order to begin resolving internal conflict we must repent of how we formerly identified ourselves and embrace the part that Jesus resurrected: our spirits. It's the only part of us Jesus elevated to Kingship.

[1Co 2:10-16 ESV] 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the [Holy] Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the [human] spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the [Holy] Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 The spiritual person judges

all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. 16 "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

- Capital "S" Spirit in the Bible means God the Holy Spirit.
- Lower case "s" means our spirit or another spirit. In these verses it means our human spirit.

Verse 10: God reveals EVERYTHING to us through His Holy Spirit. Not just doctrine or knowledge. Not just what the Bible means. Everything that God gives, everything that He is, all that He expresses is done to us through the Holy Spirit.

Verse 11: just as we have a spirit and other parts...so does God...because we're made in His image. God has a heart, mind, and a body. ***Yet the only part of Him & Jesus that's also called GOD is His Spirit:*** God the Father, God the Son Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit is the part Who both searches and understand "the deep things of God."

So now consider the magnificence of the NC! **God took His same Spirit—the One Who searches and understand God and all that comes from Him—and placed Him within us.**

Verse 14: the "natural" person is disconnected from God, cannot understand anything coming from Him, doesn't want it, and think they're "folly" which means foolish.

Please hear this: **our bodies, hearts, and minds are the natural man.** They haven't yet experienced their resurrection and purification. They're self-seeking and completely consumed in getting their needs met. They're not evil, ***but they need the team leader to step up and shepherd them and that TL is our spirit.***

If our body sits on the throne, it will indulge itself in its needs with no regard to God's commands or to its health. The heart and mind will do the same when they're in charge. Whichever part we identify with the most is currently sitting on our internal throne...and must step down.

End of v 14 and v 15: its only our spirit who receives the deep things of God and can be taught by the Holy Spirit. Again: not just knowledge and theology. God's goodness, love, joy, peace, patience, gifts, faith, endurance, His plan, everything. Our spirit was seated in the internal heavenly places at the right hand of Christ. ***As the only part of us that's resurrected and purified, it's the only part of us Christ will share with.***

It's the only part of us both qualified and empowered to lead.

2. That starts when it speaks the truth with love to all of our other parts.

When the body expresses desires that are sinful and harmful, our spirit gently but firmly reminds it that it's God's Temple and:

[2Co 6:14-17 ESV] 14 ...For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

When the mind elevates itself and tries to control the heart and body, its environment, and other people our spirit needs to speak up. The scriptures talk of being “puffed up, haughty, and high-minded” which means the mind trying to be like Lucifer: self-exalting. Gently but firmly quote or paraphrase God's Word, take thoughts into captivity, and remind the mind of its proper place as one of the sheep...not the shepherd. Romans 12 speaks of “the renewal of the mind” with the use of God's Word and it works. We become far less anxious and stressed when the mind comes off the throne and submits to our spirit.

I preached an entire series on the heart and what happens when we allow it to lead—the results are a disaster. When the heart's needs aren't getting met it “pouts” and since it's directly connected to the limbic system, it's our motivational center. People who experience consistent depression are those who've allowed their hearts to rule. A depressed heart loses motivation to do most anything and can paralyze a person for years. **When the heart takes it rightful place** as one of the sheep who follows our spirit and the Holy Spirit, it's the expression of God's love and compassion here on earth as it is in Heaven.

APPLICATION:

1. Honestly identify which of the 3 fallen parts is our default mode.
3. Have an internal meeting—with you sitting at the head of the table **as your spirit.**
4. Gently affirm to said parts that they're not evil and acknowledge that they believe their desires are good.
5. Gently but firmly speak that you—as your spirit—are now in charge. Don't be harsh or militaristic.
6. Speak the most to the part of you that you identified with in step 1.
7. In speaking said truths, explain how some of their desires have resulted in harm. That they've gone against what we know is right and best (God's commands).
8. Research verses of the Bible that will help you, then quote or paraphrase these to your other parts in response to their desires.
9. Tell them the goal is to operate as a team...and not opponents.