

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message

May 24, 2026. **"Fight Club: Fighting blaming others"** You are the custodian of your life.

I Intro.

We're flying through May and headed towards summer. Our schedule will slow down a bit, but there are still things happening. You'll want to keep up with everything that's happening at NCC. Stay connected through our social media to keep up with everything that's going on. This is our companion devotional to Sunday's message. It's just a part of all we have to offer to you. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey. We don't want you to miss out on anything. We consider you part of our community. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are fully committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family. If there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know.

II Recap.

We're in our series; **"Fight Club"**. The birthplace for these specific things to fight came from a curator of great content. Maria Popova publishes an online curation of content called; *"The Marginalian"*. A while back she published **"18 Life Lessons I've learned"**. For the month of May, we're hitting five of these important life lessons. The first week we talked about fighting *"unnecessary urgency"*. We live in such a fast paced society that values efficiency, speed that pushes this sense of urgency over quality and even emotional and mental health. We learned we have to trust in the timing and work of God. The second week we talked about fighting *"aloneism"*. The very real danger of not having, being in community. Having several communities we belong to are necessary for our emotional, mental, spiritual, and even physical health. And last week Katie did a fantastic job talking about fighting *"cynicism"*. That insidious place we often find ourselves when the world just seems out of control. Today we talk about fighting *"blaming others"*, or taking control of our lives.

III Sunday.

This is not a trick question. You probably know where I'm going with this.

Who is responsible for where you are in life?

There is a lot of complexity and nuance to a question like this. Don't feel like it's a trap. This is difficult to determine and work through because everyone of us has had significant events in our past that have had a huge influence on who we are. As Walt Whitman said; *"we contain multitudes"*, and I want to add; because we've been through multitudes. We are an amalgamation of everything that's happened to us in our past. We cannot just pass through life like water through a glass pipe. Some of us have had a 'lead pipe life'. What we've been through has deeply affected who we are. We're all carrying around within us, significant events, losses, wins, hurts, betrayals, wounds, all sorts of things from our past. I don't want to diminish or downplay if you still are still carrying scars, hurts, and even in some cases trauma from your past. Those are very real.

However, our emphasis today is; **we are the custodians of our own lives.**

Today's fight begins with this premise. *"We are the sole custodian of our life"*. No matter what we've been through, no matter how impactful our past was— at some point, we have to take control of our life. Custodians have always been my favorite people. I've always found them to be the most down to earth, real and earnest. Even consider Mr Johnson from *"Abbott Elementary"*.

We'll dig deeper into this phrase. **What is it that custodians do?**

ANYTHING and EVERYTHING required to keep the facilities clean, functionally working well, and useful for a greater purpose. The purpose isn't to have a clean, sterile building. The purpose is to continually do the work to bring a highly used building back to its proper shape. Custodians have to deal with things they didn't do, or cause, but still are responsible for. Even if they didn't throw up in the bathroom themselves, break the classroom door, spray paint the wall in the gym. It is their responsibility to bring everything back to the way it needs to be. Custodians are responsible for the work of keeping a place functioning and nice. It's not making sure those who made the mess take care of it. But taking on the responsibility of caring for the building themselves. Now sometimes you do bring the guilty parties back in and let them do some of the repair and cleanup themselves. Or at least let them know their responsibility for what you now have to do. The bottom line is; a custodian does the intentional work of bringing order out of disorder. **See where we're going?**

This doesn't mean all of who you are right now is only your doing. All of the little quirks, idiosyncrasies, what makes us unique, what we've been taught, how we have understood them, all come together to make us who we are. But— at some point, all of the hard, traumatic, possibly even scarring things that have happened to you in your past, you have to face and come to terms with. To be THE adult in your room. And face those things that have all come together to make you who you are. And we want to help you do that today. With the leading help of the Spirit.

I love our primary passage. One of my all time favorite verses is buried in this passage.

Galatians 6:4-10. Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. For we are each responsible for our own conduct. Those who are taught the word of God should provide for their teachers, sharing all good things with them. Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

I used this particular translation because of the phrase *"harvest of blessing"*. If you notice it's singular. Google docs flags it as a grammatical error. It should be *"blessings"*. I looked at a lot of translations, and it was often a different word. But the idea was the same. There is this singular life that is a result of taking control of our life. It's similar to the Fruit (singular) of the Spirit. One larger thing, made up of smaller things. It was this singular fullness that was complete, enough— more than enough.

What makes up being the custodian of our own life? (Fight blaming others)

1. Pay careful attention to YOUR OWN work. (vs 4) Think about the things you choose to *"pay careful attention"* to. Your finances. Health. Your kids. Your grandkids. Your house. Car. No matter how we struggle with self-discipline, the things that matter we *"pay careful attention"* to. Now think

about a time when you didn't "pay careful attention". Mostly likely it was when you were cooking or possibly even driving. **And how did that turn out?**

What else do you "pay careful attention" to? How does this look in your daily life, specifically?

The recipient of this "careful attention" is ONLY YOU. "Your own life". This is where the church constantly strays. We want to "pay careful attention" to what all those people out there are doing. This fight is the tendency to want to blame others. Especially when it comes to who we are and our past. We all have enough to keep us busy for a long while of all the stuff we need to pay attention to, without having to include paying attention to others. To fight this fight, we don't ignore what made us who we are. We identify and acknowledge it. But we move through those things, allowing the Holy Spirit to heal those places. It doesn't mean we act like nothing happened. We may have had to put boundaries in place. But we do our own work, on our selves, paying attention to those things.

2. The danger of comparison. (vs 4) This ties in perfectly with the; "pay careful attention to your own work". This isn't just; don't judge others. This is also; don't let the success or how well others take custodian of their lives affect us. Fight the 'er' monster. Constantly distracted by others who may be smarter, prettier, stronger, faster, richer, popularer (new real word). This is you focusing on only you. You're not responsible for anyone other than yourself. Or do you have to be like anyone else. This will be a constant battle. But it begins with this truth; **comparison steals joy.** Other people haven't been through what you've been through. Their story is different. The purpose of a good, Christ-centered faith community, is we walk alongside each other on that journey towards health and wholeness. But we continually remember, and remind each other, each of our stories are unique.

3. We are responsible for our own conduct. (vs 5) (This is said twice) Our culture, society reinforces calling out and managing other people's conduct. We are driven by outrage, grievance, and more, about the behavior of others than with ourselves. This is what fuels social media. Everyone needs correcting, and being set straight. The algorithm reinforces clapping back and dunking on others. When you answer for your life, you won't be asked why someone else did what they did. This should be liberating and empowering. You don't have to answer for people who aren't you! Surrender yourself to the work of the Holy Spirit, and custodian (a verb now) your own stuff.

4. What you plant is what you will harvest. (vs 7-8) How we live will come back to us. We kind of know this. But we mix a lot of other stuff in with "reaping and sowing". We tend to call this truth karma. Unfortunately Christians are drawn to, and incorporate a type of karma, into their understanding of judgment and cause and effect. "Who sinned that this man was born blind?" We all are driven by some sense and desire for justice. So, I want to talk about the difference between karma and "reaping what we sow". There is a lot here, and I'm going to try to keep it as simple as possible.

What is karma?

1. We make ourselves the center of what is and isn't karma. Karma only happens when we're satisfied. The person who deserves karma gets it like WE think they should.

2. Karma completely ignores and negates grace. It's a cold, impersonal system of punishment and reward, dispensed in a detached, in a highly inhuman way.

3. No one can really explain who is in charge of keeping score with karma. We say; "the universe", but what does that mean? How is reward and punishment dispensed, and by who?

4. Karma is highly impersonal, impossible to determine, because believed consequences may not have a direct line to behavior. Christians are bad at this. There are some that say natural phenomena, (hurricanes and tornadoes) and medical issues, are doled out punishments.

5. Karma is capricious and has no teaching component. You had a flat tire on the way to work because you yelled at your kids. There is no beneficial, redemptive, or restorative component to karma.

Life does have moral consequences. The choices we make do shape our lives over time, and affect others. And also who we are. Matthew 7 says; *“How you judge will be how you are judged”*. The ultimate purpose of karma is to maintain balance in the universe. **Is that even possible? ? Does it feel like that is actually happening?** Bottom line karma is basically transactional.

The purpose of *“reaping what you sow”*, is God is pulling you back to him for the purpose of transformation. NOT to punish you for what you did. There is a huge difference between correction and punishment. *“Reaping what you sow”* is to help you learn and grow into a ‘well-formed maturity’. And the truth that your actions affect the world around you.

5. Being the custodian of our lives, is to use what you have to do good. (vs 9) This is the ultimate purpose and reason for transformation. Our work of being the sole custodian of our own life is not to just be good. A school or building that never gets used, and stays nice, doesn’t really need a custodian. Our work of being the sole custodian of our own life is continual transformation (learning from our life) to DO good. But also remember; **NEVER give up**. Don’t let getting tired keep you from doing the work. Grow the ability to push through when you need to. And the wisdom to slow down, stop, when you need a break. Rest. There will also be times you will need some help with this. Remember to fight *“aloneism”* too. Ask for help when you just can’t anymore.

IV Challenge.

I want to reiterate this truth. Give yourself grace. We have not been the sole influence and force of who we have become. All of who we are is this mashup of everything that’s crossed the path of our life. Big consequential things, and things we can’t even remember. According to this passage, our work, purpose in life is to do and bring good to our world. The real meaning of God’s FIRST commandment in Genesis “to ‘rule’ over the land and sea means to steward. Which basically means the world is not ours. But we are to do the work of taking care of it, doing good with it, and keeping it nice. Which sounds like being what with the world? A CUSTODIAN! We are to take responsibility for the things in our life that don’t bring good. That may not even be our fault. Do our own work of turning those things into good things that do good things. This requires us to be intensely dedicated to discovering and rooting out those things that hinder us doing good.

Fight with everything you have to keep from blaming others. The primary issue in this work of becoming the custodian of our own life is internal self-awareness. Learn how to care for yourself well. And this will grow our relationship with God.