

Summer Series 2017

Facing^{#2}

the
F l a w s

of
my
Inner
World

From the Pulpit Ministry of Christ E Free Church
July-Sept 2017

Jesus Christ
Our Highest Calling
Our Greatest Purpose
Our Soul's Source and Joy
And Our All-Consuming Passion

Table of Contents

Introduction, p.5

Flaw of Gossip and the Trait of Love, p.6

Flaw of Doubt and the Trait of Faith, p.25

Flaw of Loneliness and the Trait of God's Presence, p.41

Flaw of Temptation and the Trait of Satisfaction, p.53

Flaw of Instability and Trait of Stability in Adversity, p.66

Flaw of Flesh and Trait of the Spirit, p.80

PIE – Personal Inventory Evaluation sheet, p.93

Free Resources, p.97

INTRODUCTION

As we began this series, we have focused on our need to allow the new life traits of Christ-likeness to be nurtured and the flaws of our inner world and our old ways of living to be starved.

‘The only enemy that can be defeated
is the one you fight.
The only sin that can be defeated
is the one we fight against.’

This is about fighting the good fight of the faith against the spoiled left-overs of our old life, in order to allow the Holy Spirit of God to rule and the likeness of Jesus to be exemplified in our countenance, character and lifestyle.

This is the narrow way.



“Facing My Inner Flaws of Gossip and Nurturing the New Life Traits of Love”

Series Title: “Facing the Flaws of My Inner World” **Aug13,20,2017**

Sermon Topic: Gossip and Slander: Love and building others up

Series Text: 2 Cor.5:14-17

Sermon Text: Eph.4:29-31

“His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression;
under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.”
-- Psalm 10:7

“The tongue can speak life of death; our words
can cause joy or sorrow; it can make friends or enemies”

INTRODUCTION

Aug 27, Sept3, 2017

Main Text;

2 Cor. 5:14-17 ESV For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; (15) and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (16) From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. (17) ***Therefore, if anyone is***

in Christ, then he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Main Idea: Our Inner Flaws or New Life Traits, can bless or hinder, our relationship with God and others, and our ministries..

REEMEMBER OUR Inner Flaws – are the spoiled, leftover remnants of our old way of living, which keep us from living the New Life that God desires us to live.(Rom.6:4)

Our New Life Traits –are the existing New Life qualities in Christ. Both imply personal awareness and responsibility. These responsibilities, include purposefully taking steps to face the flaws of our inner world and put these flaws to put to death. This is part of the New Abundant Life, Jesus came to provide for us.

As Christians, we progress spiritually, by steps- incrementally going forward, deeper and purer. Perhaps you can't tell if you are advancing or growing, but you are. Draw near to God and HE will draw near to you. (James.4:8)

** This morning we are Facing the Flaws and sin, of Gossip and Slander. In the Bible there are a variety of types of tongues mentioned, most of which are sins of speech.

TYPES OF TONGUES IN SCRIPTURE (in bulletin)

a flattering tongue (Ps. 5:9)	a proud tongue (Psalm 12:3; 73:9)
a lying tongue (Ps.109:2; Prov. 6:17)	Sharp tongue (Ps.140:3)
a deceitful tongue (Ps.120:2)	a soothing tongue (Prov. 15:4)
a perverted tongue (Prov. 10:31; 17:20)	
Strutting tongue (Ps.73:9)	Singing Tongue (Ps.119:72)
a wicked tongue (Psalm 10:7)	Shouting tongue (Ps.126:2)
Silver tongue Prv.10:20	Healing Tongue (Prov.12:18)
Soft tongue (Prov.25:15)	a slanderous tongue (Ps.15:3)
a destructive tongue (Pro.17:4)	a backbiting tongue (Prov. 25:23)



These are different ways in which Scripture refers to the sins of speech.

METAPHORS FOR THE TONGUE:

A Fire (James 3:6	a Sword (Prov.12:18; Ps64:2-4
a Tree (Prov.15:4	a Restless evil (Ja.3:8
a Poison (Ja.3:8	a rudder (James 5:5

As children, we used to go to the Doctor and he would tell us to “stick out your tongue”. In so doing, he could somehow determine the general health of the body. The tongue can reveal the health of the body, and can also reveal the health of the heart, that is, our speech can reveal the health or sickness of our spiritual life.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE TONGUE:

The tongue has 8 muscles associated with it. 4 are Intrinsic muscles, which control the shape of the tongue; 4 are Extrinsic muscles which control it’s movement, such as in swallowing.

Sticking out our tongue also allows us to make gestures in traffic, while keeping both hands on the steering wheel. And sticking out our tongue is the very first inflammatory gesture we learn as children.

INTRODUCTION

Our tongue helps voice our complaints, criticism, opinion, gossip and Slander. The tongue can characterize us as “God haters”.(Rom.1) With our tongue we can express love, share hope, and constructively build others up, encourage the faint hearted and share the inner most thoughts of our heart with another human.

With all the examples of improper use of the tongue, Scripture also gives us examples of the proper use of the tongue.

1Th 5:11 ESV Therefore encourage one another and ***build one another*** up, just as you are doing.

How the tongue is often misused

2Co 12:20 ESV For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish--that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, ***gossip***, conceit, and disorder.

These are inappropriate use of our tongue, lips, mouth or the words we speak. Our passage this morning offers both good and bad uses of the tongue.

Eph 4:29-31 ESV [PEW #1227] (29) Let ***NO*** corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but ***ONLY*** such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (31) Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and ***slander*** be put away from you, along with all malice.

Slander is an inner flaw which must be starved! I wonder how our conversations might change if we began to govern our words by that passage of Scripture? Gossip and slander are in reference to the attitudes of the heart, which evidence themselves in the expressions of our voice. “Corrupt” talk is that which is spoiled, rotten, or decaying. It refers to speech that has the stench of death in it.

Psa 15:1-4 ESV A Psalm of David. O LORD, who shall sojourn in your tent? ***Who shall dwell on your holy hill?*** (2) He who *walks* blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his

heart; (3) who does not **slander** with his *tongue* and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; (4) in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; who swears to his own hurt and does not change;

“Walks” refers to the way of living. “Heart” refers to the inner most reservoir of a person’s being. “Tongue” refers to the means through which the heart’s contents are expressed or conveyed.

Psa 39:1 ESV [PEW #573] I said, "I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my **tongue**; I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so long as the wicked are in my presence."

Imagine if we had an “app” that we could download – a gossip app. And it came with an alarm – a loud emergency kind of alarm that went off whenever we began to speak gossip or slander. Perhaps that would help guard our mouth or muzzle our inappropriate speech. But I guess we do have such a warning system. Every believing Christian has the indwelling Holy Spirit of God in him or her. When we sin, and gossip is sin, the Holy Spirit does what he is supposed to do and that is, He sends out a warning called “conviction”. No one else can detect it, but when it goes off, it is unmistakable and cannot be missed.

However, like the sleep snooze button on an alarm clock, we can squelch, ignore, discount and reject that warning. As years go by, and we continue nurturing the sin that the Holy Spirit has been convicting us over, the warning becomes more and more faint and practically speaking, is rendered ineffective, due to the calloused state of the once sensitive heart. After a while, gossip and slander becomes a way of life of a way of speaking that one may not even be aware of.

1Pe 3:10 ESV For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his **tongue** from evil and his lips from speaking deceit;

(1) We must be aware that this may be a problem in my life.

(2) WE must be willing to declare war on and repent from all sin and specifically that of gossip and slander.

So, we are considering...

STARVING THE INNER FLAWS OF GOSSIP & SLANDER

* Gossip is not necessarily determined by content, but also by intent.

Gossip Defined

The Old Testament word for Gossip refers to an evil, damaging or incriminating report of some kind; that which could be true or false, depending on the context and content.

The New Testament word for gossip is “whisperer” or backbiter: something said about someone that would not be said, if the person was present; talking behind one’s back; sharing something that might be inflammatory or defaming; that which is agitating or stirring up; provoking.

Slander defined

* Slander is verbal murder or character assassination. The Old Testament word for slander: a tale bearer; just talking about another person, whether good or evil; someone who passes stories along.

The New Testament word for slander: backbiting; defamation; to run down or speak in a manner which taints or calls into question, a person’s intent, character or motive; slander. It involves pointing

out another person's faults and weaknesses; perhaps with the intent of making yourself seem better to others.

Gossip and Slander are not necessarily lies or fictitious stories.

Gossip and Slander are not dependent necessarily on content.

Gossip and Slander are often the truth told about someone, but with evil or self satisfying intent. "Oh I'm just telling the facts". "I tell it like it is". IT may be true, and yet slanderous. Slander is blasphemy against God's creation – other humans, as being inferior to the one doing the slander. The slanderer may view others as lowly and not measuring up to them. And of course this has its roots in pride.

People may gossip about things or about another person that may make them feel good about themselves. Yet that is not always the motive. The human nature is drawn to sin, whether it is purposeful or self-fulfilling or not. It is an inner character flaw. Sin is sin. Gossip is sin and we are prone to fall back into the spoiled, rotten, stinking leftovers from our old life. We need to starve these things and Nurture the New Life traits of our New Life in Jesus Christ.

ILL) A Couple years ago, there were some women in the kitchen here at the church and I just happen to be out in the hall. One of the ladies shared something about a person and an event that frustrated her. At the time, it sounded to me like she was just needing to express what was on her mind and troubling her spirit. It could have turned to gossip, but the other ladies there, didn't accuse her of gossip or point the finger at her for her feelings, nor did they enter into the conversation to nurture that opportunity for gossip.

Instead, I heard those women, patiently listening, lovingly coming along side this woman, encouraging her, supporting her and directing the conversation in a mature, Godly manner which avoided gossip, yet helped the women work through her feelings and frustration. And I remember feeling so encouraged at how this

worked out and how they all avoided slipping into gossip or slander.

We have to understand that...

GOSSIP DECEIVES, DIVIDES & DESTROYS

1) Gossip can Deceive the speaker.

Jas 1:26 ESV If anyone **THINKS** he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but **DECEIVES** his heart, this person's religion is **WORTHLESS**

A person who gossips is most often deceived about themselves. They have the impression they are justified in talking the way they talk, and yet they don't realize they are deceived. Interestingly the person doing the gossiping may be deceived, but often those who are hearing the gossiping person understands quite clearly that they are gossiping; they just don't quite know what to do about it, without causing problems.

These people often think they are above the sin of gossip, but in fact their practice of gossiping reveals their religion is worthless. They have deceived themselves.

2) Gossip can be Divisive. Remember, the flaws of our inner world, can bless or hinder, our relationship with God and with others, and our can adversely affect our ministries. Gossip sparks conflict and controversy and rifts in relationships. It is divisive at it's core.

3) Gossip can be Destructive.

Jas 3:5-6 ESV So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! (6) And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The

tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

Gossip may sound like harmless words, but like a small spark can catch a whole forest on fire, words of gossip and slander can bring destruction to a person's reputation friendships, family relationships and even affect their relationship with God. Gossip is sin. Sin separates us from and adversely affects our relationship with God. To think that we can go on living in sin and God is OK with it, is nonsense. The person who thinks that is already deceived.

Though Gossip is technically *words*, yet it is a greater matter than that.

The Heart, The mind, and the will

“Tongue control” begins with heart change. The Spirit controlled mind (that we learned about 2 weeks ago) sees good and encourages others. The Christian heart that truly cares, demonstrates compassion through their words, so that the words convey love of Christ. This must be so for the Christian, because our heart desires to bring encouragement and our mind desires to build up and see the good, rather than tear down and see the bad.

Our Greatest desires will rule all lesser desires. If our greatest desire is to nurture gossip, then words of God's love and acts of kindness will get starved out.

***We must be actively seeking to starve the Inner
Flaws of gossip and slander.***

Scripture tells us...

THE POISONOUS EFFECT OF GOSSIP AND SLANDER

Gossip may result from personal discontent or a spirit of

Complaining, or the sins of envy, jealousy and pride. Gossip is contagious and spreads like the plague! Gossip is an air borne disease, that is, it travels through the air, via our words.

Gossip Tears down

* Gossip gives a bad reputation. Those who gossip often think that by making some people look bad by pointing out the flaws, weaknesses and struggles of others. Somehow it makes them look better or perhaps feel better about themselves.

Eph 4:29-32 ESV [PEW # 1227] (29) Let ***NO*** corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is **GOOD** for **building up**, as fits the occasion, that it may **give grace** to those who hear. (30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (31) Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and **SLANDER** be put away from you, along with all malice. (32) Be **kind** to one another, **tenderhearted**, **forgiving** one another, as God in Christ forgave you

“Corrupt talk” refers to that which is spoiled and stinking; something decaying due to death. Corrupt talk is the words we speak which contains the stench of death in them.

To put it away, means to put it to death, that which already has the stench of death. It means to starve it; declare war on it. “Gossip is a Darkness that pours darkness into the lives of others around them.” Gossip is dark, it is contagious, and it stinks like spoiled leftovers of death itself.

v.31) is the misuse of our speech

v.32) is the positive and appropriate use of our speech and reflects a healthy spiritual heart.

Divides; nurtures strife; fosters contention

Gossip feeds pride, ego and self exaltation. It causes people to see one another differently, and more negatively. Because of that, they

treat one another differently and relationships are affected and people are distrusted.

Gossip and Slander have other close associates or running buddies:

Jealousy & anger (2Cor.12:20)	Craving controversy (1Ti 6:4)
Lying (Mat.15:19)	Quarrelling/conflict (1Th.5:11)
Hostility & conceit (2Cor.12:20)	God Haters (Rom.1:30)

God haters; people who reject God's Truth and spiritual guidelines...

Rom 1:29-32 ESV (29) They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are **gossips**, (30) **slanderers**, **haters of God**, insolent, **haughty**, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, (31) foolish, faithless, heartless, **ruthless**. (32) Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

EXAMPLE: Many people tend to ***BE led***, than to lead. So those who are gossips, chronic complainers and Slanderers, tend to influence others to do the same. People will simply join in. And it spreads like the plague, and can take down everyone it infects. But also, there are some good examples; give others courage to step up and do what they need to do. You can be an Godly example of something that is not just a good example, but is a Christ-like example. You can nurture and evidence the New Life Trait of Christ in you as a new creation.

v.29) say no corrupt thing. Do not allow the stench of death to characterize your communication, tear down your Christian brother and thereby taint your Christian witness.

Speak Up. Take control of a conversation or at least attempt to give positive direction to a gossiping conversation. Remaining silent can make us part of the problem.

EX: “Boy so-and-so certainly dresses weird. Can you believe that outfit? What a slouch!”

RESPONSE: “You know she is one of the most caring and generous people I know.”

Counter gossip with positive and honorable speech. Offer positive and complimentary input about the person being slandered. One thing that allows you to graciously escape a gossiping situation is to remove yourself from the conversation completely. “**Excuse me just a minute please.**” And you go into the next room or to the rest room.” I’ve been with people who are going on and on and I have excused myself so many times, they must have thought I had one whale of a bladder problem.

This is an area that I have a hard time dealing with in a gracious manner. When people are backbiting, talking about others behind their backs, or tearing them down, etc. It is best for all involved if I just remove myself from the situation, for the sake of peace.

One more thing I have a problem with is ***Litter Bugs***. People who go down the road throwing garbage out of their car - drinking cups, hamburger wrappers, paper bags, etc. I can’t stand litter bugs. And **Gossipers are like conversational “Litter Bugs”**; they spread verbal garbage about other people. Conversational Litter Bugs, and they litter the landscape with criticism, insults, contention, gossip and slander.

Don’t just **BE LED**, but take the **LEAD** by being a Godly example in our conversations! Take the initiative. Don’t allow gossip to continue, whether by your silence or your presence. If you can’t re-

direct the conversation, then remove yourself from it. Hopefully the gossips will eventually get the hint.

Gossip and Slander have poisonous effects and can affect your relationship with God, with others and negatively affect your ministry.

NURTURING THE NEW LIFE TRAIT OF DEFERENCE; BUILDING OTHERS UP; NURTURING CHRIST'S LOVE.

*Practicing; repenting; practice acknowledging sins and flaws in scripture that you may be struggling with.

Php 2:3-4 ESV Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. (4) Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Put others interests before your own interests. God's love desires the best for others. Gods love defers to the interests of others. God's love for others needs to benurture in our hearts. God's love will starve out Gossip and slander and self-focused conceited conversation.

If you saw someone getting brutally beat up, you'd probably attempt to try to help if you could. If you heard someone getting brutally slandered, you should try to do something to put the death speech to an end, if you can. Our goal should be to encourage and build others up rather than tearing them down.^[1Thes.5:11]

We must begin to view others as, at the very least, equal to ourselves, or even above you. Lift them up; build them up; give verbal support, even when they are not around. Remaining silent while another is being brutally, verbally beat up, simply should not

be an option for a Christian. Take the initiative to introduce positive speech.

We must Practice focusing on positive conversation toward others

* Lead by positive example and others will likely follow. How can you uplift others in conversation? How can you divert attention from yourself to others in conversation? By nurturing the attitude that builds others up. Starve gossip and the tearing down of others. Nurturing takes time, effort, determination and more time and more effort and more determination.

The dictionary gives the antonym to slander as *compliment*.

Eph 4:29-32 ESV Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (31) Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (32) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Practice positive speech. “Building Others Up” is not just complimenting, but encouraging, supporting, defending the honor and reputation of another. “That person has value.” “She is a treasure of God’s creation.” “He has a God ordained purpose in God’s plan.” “I have always admired that person so very much.”

Practice building others UP, rather than tearing them down with complaints, criticism or insults. God wants us to see others as He does. Therefore, Starve Slander! Nurture “building others up”.

Consider some Old Sayings

Let’s step up and take the initiative, but providing a positive example of Godly speech for others to follow.

Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” If the Golden Rule was implemented tonight, we would wake up in a different world tomorrow. Consider this question; *Would you want people talking about you, the way you are talking about them?*

Specifically: Talk about people the way you would want them to talk about you. In the absence of others, build them up with your words, as you would want them to build you up, in your absence. How would you like it, if you found out that the person you are slandering, has been slandering you behind your back.

OLD SAYINGS:

If you can't say something good...*don's say anything at all.*

"Keep your tongue between your teeth"

"Think twice before you speak once."

The Scottish people have some proverbs:

"Keep your tongue a prisoner and your body will go free"

"A long tongue shortens friendships."

We are responsible for the words that we speak.

"And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned." (Matt. 12:36-37)

Leonard Ravenhill: The human heart can be a snake pit, a dungeon of devilry, a foxhole of filth, a pit of perversity. Actually, it's the manufacturing place of all uncleanness and all sin. The showcase of the heart is the tongue. My simple words cannot exaggerate the corruption of the heart. And the filth that comes out of a filthy heart comes through the lips. But when I've said all I can about it, the strongest thing is surely said in

Proverbs 18:21 - *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue...."*

Perhaps another prayer specifically for the sin of Gossip and Slander;

Psa 19:12-14 Who can discern his *own* errors? Declare me innocent from hidden flaws. (13) Preserve your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not rule over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression. (14) Let the expressions from my **mouth** and the contemplations from my **heart** be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Our mouths and our hearts - so closely connected to our actions. So our speech is really, not so much an issue of the tongue as it is an issue of the heart. When God gets ahold of the heart, the speech will change for the good.

CONCLUSION: 2 Cor. 5:17 –

Jas 3:6-12 ESV And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. (7) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, (8) but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. (9) With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. (10) From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. (11) Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? (12) Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

To the church, James writes this rebuke: The tongue is a destructive fire. Complaining, criticizing, insulting, arguing, gossiping, slander, craving controversy and conflict. Again, this is not a tongue or life or mouth issue, but a heart issue.

v.9) from the mouth, come blessings to God, but from the same mouth come cursings to those who are made in our Lord's image. They can praise the Lord, or appear to praise the Lord, while looking at others and entertain thoughts of "how low that person is; or how they other person needs to change".

v.10) From your mouth, come both blessing and cursing. How two faced is that. **What comes out the** mouth is what is inside the heart. The heart is like a **teapot** and the mouth is like the spout. Gossip, Slander, Criticizing, insulting is a heart issue, which is displayed through our speech.

Luk 6:45 ESV The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

People who practice gossip and slander; who consistently speak that way. Like a compulsive liar, lies for no apparent reason. A Gossip, or Slanderer often does so for no apparent reason; often times without even realizing it, because it is simply what is inside their hearts, because it has been nurtured.

Why can people who claim to be Christians, continue in gossip, slander, building themselves up as they tear others down? Because their inner spring is bitter; their heart is still wicked and as a Christian their heart and will have gone **unconverted**.

We often speak of a person who has trusted in Christ as being "converted". A person can be converted from an unbeliever to a believer, yet still have a heart that remains unconverted; never

changed by the Holy Spirit, never allowed God's Holy Spirit to come in and shine his spotlight of conviction upon our inner world and take control to change that heart. Gossip and slander must be starved. Building others up with positive Christ-like speech is a Christ trait, that must be nurtured in every heart.

Oh For a Heart to Praise My God", Charles Wesley

- 1) O for a heart to praise my God, a heart from sin set free;
a heart that's sprinkled with the blood, so freely shed for me:
- 2) A heart resigned, submissive, meek, my great Redeemer's throne;
where only Christ is heard to speak, where Jesus reigns alone:
- 3) A heart in every thought renewed, and full of love divine;
perfect and right and pure and good — a copy, Lord, of thine.
- 4) Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart, come quickly from above;
write thy new name upon my heart, thy new best name of Love

Psa 139:23-24 ESV Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! (24) And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

We must strive to nurture the New Life Trait of positive speech that builds others up, thus starving and putting to death, the spoiled flaws of gossip and slander.

For further study (Leonard Ravenhill)

Psalm 12:3-4
Psalm 39:1,3
Eccl. 5:6
James 3:2

Psalm 34:13
Psalm 120:2-3
Romans 3:4,13-14
1Tim.6:4

Psalm 37:30
Proverbs 20:15
II Cor. 12:20

BULLETIN INSERT**ASSIGNMENT:****Personal Inner Exam -**

As we look at the issues in this series, we will be asking questions:

(1) Why is [GOSSIP] a flaw? Why is [SLANDER] negative? Is it a sin?

(2) **How can [GOSSIP] hinder my relationship with God and with others?**

(3) **What affect could [GOSSIP] have in my ministries for Christ?**

* List areas of ministry
I am involved in.

* List the negative or adverse
effects [GOSSIP] could have
on each ministry?

(4) What would keep me from putting [GOSSIP AND SLANDER] to death?

(5) What might be the result, if I did nothing about [GOSSIP] in my life?

Purposeful Adjustment Steps —

(1) Search [GOSSIP] further in Scripture and learn more passages that deal with it. (psalm.46)

(2) Look at examples in the Bible of people who were [GOSSIP]. What was the effect? Some who manifested [HOPE AND WORDS OR GRACE]? What were some effects?

(3) Ask God's Holy Spirit for strength, grace and determination to work on putting [GOSSIP] to death and nurturing [ENCOURAGEMENT] to life.

(4) Steps of Action

* What steps can I take to begin to starve the Inner flaw of [GOSSIP] to death?

1.

* What steps can I take to begin nurturing the New Life Trait of [GODLY SPEECH] and to allow it to flourish in my life?

1.

Prayer to pray regarding our Inner Flaws and New Life Traits
for Holy Spirit to come in, shine His light of conviction upon your life.

Psa 139:23-24 **ESV** Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! (24) And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!



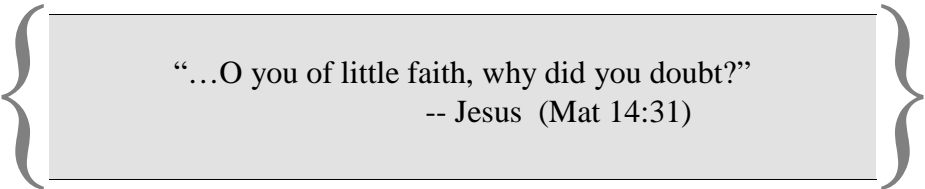
“Facing My Inner Flaws of *Doubt* and Nurturing the New Life Traits of *Faith*”

Series Title: “Facing the Flaws of My Inner World” Sept.17, 2017

Sermon Topic: Doubt and Faith

Series Text: Jesus’s questions in the gospel of Matthew.

Sermon Text:



“...O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”
-- Jesus (Mat 14:31)

INTRODUCTION

Faith is being certain of what we cannot see. Faith accepts and embraces the fact of the spiritual realm, even when there is no typical physical or otherwise sensory evidence that it is true.

Doubt is the rejection or lack of confidence that, that which is not seen, is true at all. Furthermore, doubt treats the Word of God- His Truth and promises – and treats them as non-Truth; less than real.

Every event that starves your faith and feeds your doubt, is also a potential opportunity for your faith to be nurtured and formed into a more mature mountain moving faith, and therefore starving your doubt to death.

Main Text;

2 Cor. 5:14-17 ESV For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; (15) and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (16) From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. (17) ***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, then he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.***

Main Idea: Our Inner Flaws or New Life Traits, can bless or hinder, our relationship with God and others, and our ministries..

REMEMBER OUR Inner Flaws – are the spoiled, leftover remnants of our old way of living, which keep us from living the New Life that God desires us to live.(Rom.6:4)

Our New Life Traits –are the existing New Life qualities in Christ. Both imply personal awareness and responsibility. As Christians, we progress spiritually, by steps- incrementally growing.

** This morning we are Facing the Flaws of **Doubt** and the New Life Trait of **Faith**.

Jude 1:22 ESV And have mercy on those who doubt;

SEEK ANSWERS TO SPIRITUAL QUESTIONS. THERE ARE ANSWERS.

Doubt can be an excuse not to seek truth and therefore feel as though we are not accountable to that which we don't not know for sure. And to seek Truth, we must first acknowledge its Source and the Truth we discover can foster faith.

5 questions from Jesus that may help us understand what nurtures doubt and starves faith. All these questions are surrounding the little phrase... **“YOU OF LITTLE FAITH”**, in the gospel of Matthew. Perhaps one of these questions has been the source of doubt in your life.

Q - WHAT WILL WE EAT OR DRINK? (Mat.6:27-33)

* This is anxious concern over Life's Necessities: a perceived threat of hunger; or a possible lack of provision.

This addresses spiritual faith in this earthly life.

Mat 6:27-33 ESV And which of you by being anxious [stress or worry] can add a single hour to his span of life? (28) And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, (29) yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) But **if** God so clothes the grass of the field [nurture faith], which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, (*then*) will he not much more clothe you, O **you of little faith**? (31) Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ¹'What shall we eat?' or ²'What shall we drink?' or ³'What shall we wear?' (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness[i.e. starve doubt], and all these things will be added to you.

What shall we drink? Did I not provide water from a rock? What shall we eat? Did I not feed your people in the wilderness with bread from heaven and quail? What shall we wear? Did I not cause you clothing and shoes to last while in the wilderness?

Deu 8:4-5 ESV Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. (5) Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.

Deu 29:5-6 ESV I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn off your feet. (6) You have not eaten bread, and you have not drunk wine or strong drink, that you may know that I am the LORD your God.

40 yrs in the wilderness. “Have you forgotten my track record?”

The Gentiles seek after these things, that is, those outside the family of God. What we can see, touch, taste, feel, hear or otherwise perceive with our senses, which is outside the realm of faith. These are the concerns of our earthly life, overshadowing the concerns of our spiritual life.

Lillies, grass and you, all are part of God’s creation. All are sustained by the Creator’s hand. If God provided for flowers and grass, will he not provide for us as well? God 1st. His kingdom 1st. His plan and His will 1st and His righteousness always first. Then trust Him to care for you in your earthly needs and physical situation, accordingly.

“Little Faith” = small faith, immature faith; too little faith, but it does not mean “no faith”.

Doubting

* Identifying the source of doubt. Doubt for the Christian, is always unfounded. Anxiety for the true believer is always unmerited. Anxiety fosters and nurtures doubt and starves faith.

Lam 3:20-24 ESV My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. (21) But this I call to mind, and therefore

I have hope: (22) The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; ***great is your faithfulness.*** (24) "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

Believing

* God allows our physical needs to build and nurture faith for our greater spiritual needs. The greater your earthly struggles, the greater your spiritual growth and development. At least that seems to be the intent.

SEEK GOD FIRST AND HIS KINGDOM, AND LIFE AND PROVISIONS AND FAITH WILL GROW.

Q: What will we eat or drink?[v31] _____

Facts: (1) God provides for His creation. (2) God knows your need. "your heavenly Father knows." Is this not enough to starve our doubt and nurture our faith? What will we eat, drink or wear? Remember who has made all things; who sustains all things and who owns all things. The physical experience itself will be enough that they need never again doubt God's provision.

For those who struggle with anxious concerns, Gods' help is more noticeable. Every meal is viewed as God's miraculous provision. Every bill paid, is recognized as a direct and specific answer to prayer. Each physical test works to build spiritual faith. This process is how doubt is starved and faith is nurtured.

WHY ARE YOU AFRAID? (Mat.8:24-27

* This is fear regarding the threat or danger. "What ifs?"

Mat 8:24-27 ESV And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. (25) And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us,

Lord; we are perishing." (26) And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O *you of little faith*?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. (27) And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

“Little Faith” = small faith; immature faith; too little faith, but it does not mean “no faith”.

(1) a “Great Storm” is that which is out of control, out of our control and representing the physical aspects of life that are out of control, whether real or perceived. Is this storm real or perceived? It is REAL.

(2) “...being swamped” (v24): Process of going down; supreme sense of danger; an imminent threat. Is this real or only perceived? Is the danger real or perceived? It is REAL..

(3) “Save us, we are perishing”: The situation, the storm, the boat; their safety is out of control. The heightened sense of desperation fosters a dependence upon something or someone outsider of ourselves. Is “perishing” real or is it perceived? You answer that for yourself.

Doubting

* “Why are you afraid?” The physical threat is intended to cause us to think realistically and to answer truthfully. Fear fostered doubt. Did Jesus not know? This question does not seek an answer. It seeks to cause the ones who are fearful and doubting to think things through. Clear the mind for a moment; Evaluate the circumstances; the storm, being swamped, the process of perishing. So why are you afraid? It seems to me that thus far, according to Jesus, their reason for being afraid was not reasonable.

When Adam and Eve sinned, God asked, “Where are you?” He knew where they were. The questions was intended to cause them

to look at their circumstances, as they were trembling behind a bush, attempting to hide from God.

“What is this you have done?” God knew exactly what they had done. The question was intended to cause them to think through the “unfortunate series of events”, with the choices they had made, and take note of the outcome of their actions. God’s questions are always meant to get us thinking.

Believing

* Answer the questions. This is what we are to consider, in order to starve doubt and nurture faith. Consider the history of God’s provisions. Consider the facts of God’s faithfulness.

(1) Jesus was literally in the same boat with them. Jesus is Creator, and Lord and Master and Sustainer.

(2) the Faithfulness of God has already been demonstrated in each of their lives, through both individual, as well as corporate experiences.

This Experience Itself is now reason for them to never again be afraid of a storm, at least while Jesus is with them.

LACK OF FAITH, CAN LEAD TO GREATER FAITH, IF WE GENUINELY SEEK ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS WE HAVE.

Q: Why are you afraid? [v26] _____

The process of evaluating our situation and answering that question; is a process to nurture faith and to put doubt to death.

Q- WHY DID YOU DOUBT? (Mat.14:28-33)

* These are challenges in the spiritual journey, perhaps to doubt regarding the abiding presence of God; their faith...our failure.

Another storm, but Jesus is not in the boat, but was walking on the water.

Mat 14:28-33 ESV And Peter answered him, "Lord, **IF** it is you, (*then*) command me to come to you on the water." (29) He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. (30) But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." (31) Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O **you of little faith**, why did you doubt?" (32) And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. (33) And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

“Little Faith” = small faith; immature faith; too little faith, but it does not mean “no faith”. Never be hesitant to follow the call of God. Though you may think at some point you have failed. Yet from God’s perspective, you have undergone and passed a tough, yet necessary test of your faith, because the experience has identified a weakness and highlighted your dependence upon God. What we perceive as failure, may be just one test to build our faith for the next step of our journey.

Doubting

Peter: “If” – doubt, clarification. Will God hear? Will He help?

Jesus: “Come” – a joyful invitation to physically express the faith he has in Jesus.

Believing

* Remember, Peter was responding to the call of God to come to Him.

The Experience Itself will become part of what God will use to make Peter into a mighty man of faith. Believe that God is a God

who hears the cry of the troubled and answers the prayer of the desperate.

TOO GREAT A FOCUS ON THE PHYSICAL WORLD, WILL DILUTE OUR FAITH IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

Q: Why did you doubt? [v31] _____

WE do all we can to keep ourselves out of the desperate situations. Yet God beckons us to step out in impossible situations and demonstrates there, His miraculous and supernatural presence, in a lesson that changes us forever. From heaven's perspective, earthly "failure" is not failure at all. It is an experience that identifies our own weaknesses, while highlighting our desperate dependence on God. This kind of "failure" can actually starve doubt and nurture faith.

DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND? (Mat.16:6-12

* This may refer to the intake of information and the understanding of Truth or the lack of understanding. The purpose of this question may be to keep him from forgetting the past and thereby missing the present. This may refer to the experience of God at work, while understanding and discerning Biblical truth.

Mat 16:6-12 ESV Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (7) And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread." (8) But Jesus, aware of this, said, "***O you of little faith***, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? (9) ***Do you not yet perceive?*** Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? (10) Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? (11) How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and

Sadducees." (12) Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

This may be due to too focused on the earthly to grasp the heavenly. Perhaps the disciples were stuck in the natural way of viewing kingdom ministry, rather than being aware of the Supernatural war. Again, "Little Faith" = small faith; immature faith; too little faith, but it does not mean "*no faith*".

Doubting

* Not paying attention. Not remembering Christ's work in the past. Not understanding what he is referring to in the present. Jesus is not referring to physical food, but to the spiritual teachings of the pharisees.

(1) Doubting when we don't understand the whole picture.

(2) Too focused on and too dependent on the physical, earthly way of thinking. Bread was never a problem for the Son of God, nor water, nor weather...

Believing

The Experience Itself lack of understanding Christ's teaching may result in lack of faith in Christ and His promises. Trusting the faithfulness of God's character and trusting in his track record; especially when the circumstances and challenges of our spiritual journey cry out to us, that "this is not going to work!"; "This is impossible". "Its not only hopeless it is utterly foolish!"

LACK OF FAITH MAY RESULT FROM LACK OF UNDERSTANDING.

Q: Do you not perceive/understand?[v8]

This could be claiming a promise from God for myself, when it was specifically meant for someone in Biblical history, in a

specific Biblical situation, for a specific act that God was going to perform.

Q-WHY COULD WE NOT CAST IT OUT? (Mat.17:16-20

* This is in the area of spiritual oppression or opposition. It may be taking God for granted. It may refer to their lacking in daily dependence on God and as a result, lacking in faith enough for what God wants to do in our situation.

Mat 17:16-20 ESV And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him." (17) And Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." (18) And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. (19) Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "***Why could we not cast it out?***" (20) He said to them, "Because of ***your little faith.*** For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

IN John 15:5, Jesus reminded his followers that “without me, you can do nothing.” **This time;** “Little faith” refers to the ***absence*** of faith; ***no faith***. In Matthew 10, Jesus sent out the 12 to do just what this man needed done, that is to cast out an evil spirit from his child. But they could not.

Question: Why could ***we*** personally, not accomplish a particular task in ministry?

Doubting

* Failures are specific and needed, ministry lessons to help us grasp our dependence upon Christ. Perhaps we have weak or lacking in faith. Perhaps we have misplaced faith.

In Luke 10, Jesus sent out 72 disciples in much the same manner as he did the 12. And Luke 10:17 states: *"The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!'"*

So what is the difference between why the 72 could cast out demons and why the 12 could not? I don't know if Scripture makes that clear to us. But we can consider the possibilities.

Perhaps they, like we have been, were too assuming in ministry. Perhaps they were possibly trusting in their own abilities or giftedness? Maybe they had taken for granted their dependent partnership with Christ? Possibly they were far too confident to pray effectively? Perhaps ministry had become so monotonous, that they were going through the motions, not realizing how desperate they truly were for His power to work through their obedience.

They failed to trust Christ for the very thing He had sent them out to do. It is interesting that in verse 20, Jesus describes the faith of the disciples, just as He described the faith of the unbelievers in verse 17.

Believing

* It is not the size of our faith that is important, but the object of our faith, that is the key. Maybe they were expecting nothing to happen. Often times we may be discouraged in ministry, because things did not happen as we had hoped or imagined. That is part of ministry.

Let me tell you this; Being disappointed in ministry is not the worst thing. The worst thing in ministry is not to be disappointed, because you really weren't expecting anything, anyway. That is the description of "faith~~less~~".

Disappointment in ministry serves a good purpose. It can make us detest the enemy all the more. Discouragement in ministry can make us more mindful of our desperate dependence upon God for even the smallest of ministry tasks. And Disappointment in ministry can cause you to return next time, in a greater state of spiritual readiness, having spent more time in prayer and engaging in the spiritual battle to open the gates of hell that may be encompassing your area of ministry.

And as a result, God can take disappointment and discouragement in ministry and use it for good, by using it to build faith more than if we had had some great success in our outreach. When we believe, but don't receive, we don't stop believing. Instead we continue to believe for that breakthrough the next time. But if it doesn't come then, then faith does not diminish, but continues to build, like a balloon being filled fuller and fuller and fuller with more air. But rather than our air popping the balloon -- our faith comes to the exploding point in God's timing and through God's power -- when the walls of the enemy's domain are demolished by the partnership of our built up faith and God's power and timing.

Within the last two weeks, I have had opportunity to speak with two different people and shared our outreach to HE. Both people said, "looks like it may be time to move on to another outreach."

I said, "absolutely not". I will not quit until God says quit. And I don't think God will say quit. But I do believe that we should allow our discouragements and temptations to doubt, to be turned into Holy Spirit empowered faith, that God wants to build into this church, so that together, those strongholds will come down.

Whatever barriers are keeping revival from breaking out in our mission field, is going to be broken down and demolished, in the name of Jesus and there will be a harvest of souls, and fresh disciples to nurture in their faith. It will happen. That is why God

has us here. We have to trust Christ, for the very thing He has called us to do.

Obstacles in ministry are often times mountainous. And Jesus tells us that all one needs is “a little faith”. The mustard seed is a small seed(v20), but with huge results.

MOUNTAIN MOVING FAITH IS NOT MOUNTAIN SIZE FAITH.

Q: Why could we not cast it out? [v19] _____

Even a small faith, can be a powerful faith, if the Object of that faith is powerful enough to achieve the intended or needed result.

The Experience Itself evidenced their need for Christ in order to accomplish or address the Supernatural.

At the Wedding at Cana, Jesus turned Water into Wine and “the disciples believed” (Jn.2:11) It doesn’t say they understood how he did it or even why. They simply believed in Christ. Even in disbelief of the event, they believed in Christ.

Doubt can arise because of lack of understanding. But we don’t have to understand everything. We don’t have to fully understand, how the end times will play out. We don’t have to fully understand how the world was formed out of nothing or when. We don’t have to hold a firm position on the Sovereignty of God and Free will of man. We just have to believe fully in Christ as sacrifice for our sins and then allow God to help us understand more over time – in his time.

CONCLUSION: 2 Cor. 5:17 – BULLETIN INSERT

From **Mat. Ch6-17**, Jesus describes the 12 as having “little faith”. Then in ch.17, He describes them as having “no faith”. The more of the heavenly nature a problem may be, the more likely we are,

as earth dwellers, to doubt the heavenly cure. That which is seen opposes that which is unseen. The earthly occludes the heavenly and the physical overshadows the spiritual.

The responsibility in ministry and faith in self, may overpower the responsibility in ministry and a desperate dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not the size of our faith, but the Object of our faith. This is why we should practice, not as a routine but as proper focusing in ministry:

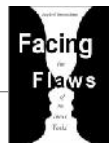
(1) Offering prayers, (2) Directing our focus and faith, (3) Considering the spiritual Needs, (4) Addressing our heavenly Source, ; (5) Making the kingdom request.

This doesn't remind God of anything, but it reminds us.

This doesn't inform God of anything, but it informs us of our hopelessness in each and every spiritual endeavor, apart from our supernatural partnership with God Himself.

We starve doubt by focusing on the person and work of our Lord Jesus. We nurture faith, by recalling to mind the goodness of the Lord and declaring aloud, the Greatness of our God in Faith; Standing on the faithfulness of His character and His provisions for your spiritual life and ministry needs.

There may be times when you must allow other Christian's of faith, to carry you along in times when your faith may be weak. For once you are strengthened, there will come a time, when others will look to you, to do the very same for them. Will we be prepared for that?



Personal Inner Exam -

As we look at the issues in this series, we will be asking questions:

(1) Why is [DOUBT] a flaw? Why is DOUBT] negative? Is it a sin?

(2) **How can [DOUBT] hinder my relationship with God and with others?**

(3) **What affect could [GOSSIP] have in my ministries for Christ?**

* List areas of ministry * List the negative or adverse effects

I am involved in. [DOUBT] could have on each ministry?

(4) What would keep me from putting [DOUBT] to death?

(5) What might be the result, if I did nothing about [DOUBT] in my life?

Purposeful Adjustment STeps —

(1) Search [DOUBT] further in Scripture and learn more passages that deal with it.

(2) Look at examples in the Bible of people who were [DOUBT]. What was the effect? Some who manifested [FAITH]? What were the effects?

(3) Ask God's Holy Spirit for strength, grace and determination to work on putting [DOUBT] to death and nurturing [FAITH] to life.

(4) **STeps of Action**

* What steps can I take to begin to starve the Inner flaw of [DOUBT] to death?

* What steps can I take to begin nurturing the New Life Trait of [FAITH] and to allow it to flourish in my life?

Prayer to pray regarding our Inner Flaws and New Life Traits:

Psa 139:23-24 ESV Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! (24) And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

“Facing My Inner Flaws of Loneliness and Nurturing the New Life Traits of God’s Presence”

Series Title: “Facing the Flaws of My Inner World” Sept.24, 2017

Sermon Topic: Loneliness

Series Text: 2 Cor.5:17

Sermon Text:

Main Idea: Our Inner Flaws or New Life Traits, can bless or hinder, our relationship with God and others, and our ministries

“God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.”

-- Psalm 68:6

LONELINESS; THE DARKNESS OF ALONENESS

Loneliness may mean to us: being alone, stranded, forsaken; referring to being in a valley, or Hiding from others; the result of keeping to myself, protection myself from deeper relationships; building personal barriers and protective walls. Loneliness may involve Self-Pity, a poor self-Image.

This is about being aware of our God Assured Identify & Acknowledging his purpose in my situation. We are focusing on Starving loneliness, barriers, self pity, and isolation; while Nurturing courage, confidence, assurance, security in Christ.

INTRODUCTION

Loneliness is a silent and easily concealable struggle. I'm looking at our topic this morning, and not real sure how many struggle with this. But this is one of our topics, and I feel the Lord may want to teach us something about loneliness today. Maybe loneliness is not an issue with you, but is still important to be informed on, as we may have the opportunity to learn and be prepared to help others.

Isa 41:10 fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

The flaw of loneliness – it distracts, deceives, and clouds us regarding our relationship with God. It also clouds our relationship with others and potentially hinders our ministry for Christ. Loneliness involved flawed perceptions and feelings, which often cause us to doubt God's love and our own worth and value. We can even forget that we are his children.

It is important to realize that out of our relationship with God, will flow all other relationships and all other perceptions of life's relationships.

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.” --Psalm 23:5 ESV

Loneliness is a complex and usually unpleasant emotional response to isolation. Loneliness often includes anxious feelings about a lack of connection or communication with other people, both in the present and extending into the future. As such, loneliness can be felt even when surrounded by other people. The

causes of loneliness are varied and include social, mental, emotional, physical and even spiritual factors.

Psa 25:15-17 ESV My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for he will pluck my feet out of the net. (16) Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am *lonely* and *afflicted*. (17) The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses.

Loneliness is an emotional affliction of the human spirit. It affects (1) our relationship with God, (2) our relationship with others, and (3) can affect our ministry.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING ALONE AND FEELING LONELY. **LONELINESS** refers to the emotional state of feeling rejected and desolate.

ALONENESS refers to the physical state of being separated from others

LONELINESS is usually a negative experience, and often accompanied by feelings of hopelessness.

ALONENESS may be a positive experience and possibly a time of contemplation and communion with the LORD.

[hopefortheheart.org]

First we look at Loneliness and...

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

* How can loneliness affect our relationship with God?

Mar 6:31 ESV And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

Aloneness can be a time of seeking and being directed by God, without the distractions and interruptions, of our attention being pulled or focused on another relationship. This could refer to

romantic relationships, platonic friendships or even a work relationship. Loneliness is an emotional darkness or specific kind of depression, due to the perceived or real, lack of desired, meaningful relationships.

Our Relationship with God Involves...

His Abiding Presence

Psa 23:4 ESV Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for ***you are with me...***

Jesus promised...

Joh 15:5 ESV I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Again the Psalmist wrote...

Psa 139:7-10 ESV Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? (8) If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! (9) If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, (10) even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

* Often times, physical aloneness from others, can cause us to feel spiritually alone and isolated from God. If others reject you, it is easy to feel as though God has also rejected you.

In loneliness, we would do well to remember that God the Father is a person; God the Holy Spirit is a person; and God the Son is a person. “God in 3 persons, the blessed Trinity.”

This is not just a song, but a musical declaration of the Godhead, fully expressed in each person of the Trinity and fully available to

each believing Christian, as we experience His abiding presence in our lives. He can be our most meaningful and all-consuming personal relationship, if we allow it.

Our Relationship with God Involves...

His Abundant Provisions

* The Bible promises that God has provided all that we need for Life, godliness^[2Pet.1:3]; in all our earthly and Spiritual relationships. This relationship with God, is that upon which all other relations are built, and out of which all other relationships flow. All other relationships will be determined by that and will be evaluated by that heavenly relationship.

Psa 68:4-6 ESV Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the LORD; exult before him! (5) Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. (6) God settles the *lonely* in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity..

Jesus told His disciples to give up everything and follow Him, in order to receive more than they could imagine.

Mar 10:28-31 ESV Peter began to say to him, "See, we have left everything and followed you." (29) Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, (30) who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. (31) But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Questions to consider asking yourself

Why am I lonely? What would it take to make you un-lonely?
Would you still love the Lord with all your heart, if HE saw fit to

withhold from you, that which you think would make you un-lonely?

Our relationship with God must be first and all other relationships will be based on that and will flow out of that. Many have experienced feeling lonely, even around others. It is a sense of not belonging or not connecting relationally with others. Loneliness is often accompanied by self-diagnosis, with *perceived* causes.

Loneliness can foster a misconception of marriage bringing satisfaction and fulfillment of a lifelong set of expectations. Loneliness can present a danger of depending on others. It can foster a belief that having a girlfriend or a husband is the answer to your sense of loneliness and lack of satisfaction in relationships. If marriage is all about making you happy, fulfilling your longings and becoming a satisfied individual, then marriage may only serve to make you more miserable, right along with the person you marry.

So How does loneliness affect my relationship with God?

Loneliness can bring us to express our dissatisfaction with God or to express our deep dependence upon God. However loneliness causes you to feel, will most likely be revealed in your relationship with others and in your ministry involvement. It is often how we feel about our relationships which colors all of life.

Now we look at Loneliness and...

OUR SERVICE TO GOD

* Aloneness can allow more unhindered freedom in service to Christ. How can loneliness affect our ministries? Can it distract us from fully giving our attention and expending our energies for kingdom work, or does it keep us worried, sidetracked and emotionally stirred up?

The Apostle Paul realized this tendency and briefly address ministry and aloneness.

1Cor 7:32-35 ESV (32) I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. (33) But the married man is anxious about worldly things, *how to please his wife*, (34) and his **interests are divided**. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, *how to please her husband*. (35) I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

Again, this is not siding against marriage or marriage relationships, but is referring to potentially any earthly relationship becoming a distraction and diverting us away from the Lord's work altogether.

God will be Gracious

* With God's presence comes His intervention, His help and His strength for whatever our struggle might be.

Isa 41:10 fear not, for ***I am with you***; be not dismayed, for I am your God; *I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

This promises that we have God's undivided attention. HE knows our loneliness or aloneness, whichever the case may be and He is able to help, sustain and carry us through any and all challenges. He is especially capable of sustaining and even satisfying us during the emotional (and often times extended) darkness of loneliness.

Experience God's grace in your satisfaction

* Sometimes once we lose something or someone, we may find consolation, not in overly focusing on the loss of that person, but

on the joy of the time you had while that person was with you.

In times of loneliness it might be helpful, not to focus so much on our negative feelings of loneliness, but to consider and give thanks for the things God has given, allowed and blessed you with.

Php 4:19 ESV And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

This kind of focus is not intended to forget about your feelings, but simply balance them out. God will supply for our needs. IF we can trust God for this in our finances, can we not just as fully, trust Him for this in our relationships or in the absence of such desired relationships?

Loneliness does not mean, you don't love God with all your heart. It does not mean that you don't fully trust Him. God created us as relational beings. Deeply desiring close, meaningful human relationships is not wrong, therefore we must not necessarily view loneliness as a sin.

Loneliness and Christian service

* We also have to understand that God has a plan and a time to provide what and *whom* we need.

Consider the blessing of aloneness or Singleness. You have greater freedom to do what you want, when you want. Your choices affect only yourself. You enjoy the ability to give yourself fully to some area of Christian ministry or personal pursuit.

God doesn't typically call people to live a life of isolation. However God may call us to a life or a portion of life, of singleness, in order that we be temporarily free from the cares and responsibilities and distractions of close, demanding relationships in order to fulfill a particular calling or ministry responsibilities – again, for a time.

For a time you will be free of typical marriage challenges and family concerns and responsibilities. For a time you will be free of the pain, frustration of emotional exhaustion of working through a deeply trying, relational issues.

1 Cor.15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast and immovable. Always abounding in the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Don't allow loneliness to steal away valuable time and opportunities to serve Christ fully! Allow aloneness or singleness to provide opportunities to do things and experience life and serve Christ until His time and His person comes into your life.

I don't know how many times I have heard people, who have not been in a hurry and made the most of their singleness, once the found that special person in God's timing, say, "It was worth the wait." He was worth waiting for. She was worth it."

If you are alone, consider the possibility that you may not be fully ready for the person God has for you. And consider the fact that the person God has for you, is still being prepared to be your help mate.

Consider...

WAITING ON THE LORD

* As Christians in times of aloneness God may want us to wait on Him and enjoy a season of lessened relational responsibilities, cares and troubles. It is a far better thing to be single and longing to be married, than to be married and longing to be single.

Psa 27:14 ESV Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Until Gods time comes for you, Turn your loneliness into productive aloneness. For now, allow Aloneness to be a blessing. Once we are convinced God has a plan and an person and a purpose for us, then the waiting is not an issue of “if”, but “when” God will bring it all together.

Experience God to be your All in All

* Don't waste your singleness. Don't blow your aloneness. For now, if you are alone, rejoice in God as your All in All.

Exo 15:2 ESV The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

Psa 18:2 ESV The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Psa 23:1 ESV A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Allow God to use this time to teach and equip you for something special and of eternal importance.

* God loves you. He has a plan and purpose for your life and for your aloneness.

Psa 28:7 ESV The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

Lam 3:24 ESV "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

Heb 13:6 ESV So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

CONCLUSION: 2 Cor. 5:17 – BULLETIN INSERT**CAUSES OF LONELINESS**

1) Overly Active: A very active person can feel lonely, because of being so busy and active, yet having so little time or natural opportunities to develop deeper, meaningful relationships.

2) Any variety of significant changes.. Especially loss of a person, relationship or even job; being Suddenly relieved of responsibilities, or change of routines.

So Again, ask these questions:

- 1) Why am I lonely?
- 2) What would it take to make me un-lonely?
- 3) Am I content in the situation where God has presently placed me? Why or why not?
- 4) Would I still love the Lord with all my heart if HE saw fit to withhold from me, that which I feel, would make me un-lonely?
- 5) Why do I want to change? What would it make better?
- 6) How would that which you are longing for, help in ministry or help achieve your calling from God?
- 7) Is there something you are presently involved in that requires your undivided attention? Perhaps God has you alone for this task, at this time.
- 8) Is there benefit in my aloneness, for the things I am now involved in?
- 9) Is there a way I could use my aloneness for the kingdom of God and for His glory?
- 10) Do I desire an earthly relationship more than I desire God?

DEALING WITH LONELINESS

(1) Look for ways to give of yourself for others. Take the focus off

yourself and feelings. Give and it will be given unto you.

(2) Seek to be a friend to someone. When we try to be a friend, we often gain meaningful relationships in return.

(3) Pray aloud to your Wonderful Counselor, regarding your Loneliness, aloneness and/or ministry? We are creatures of expression. Verbally express your heart and loneliness to God.

(4) Strive for contentment. The best place to be in our relationships, is in a state of contentment. Content with God. Content with where He has me. Content with the relationships he has blessed me with; until He brings or allows change.

(5) Allow your loneliness to drive you to God, as your Wonderful Counselor, your Stronghold.

Psa 62:8 ESV Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.

(6) Make your requests known to God; for change, for relationships, for loneliness relief.

Php 4:6-7 ESV do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (7) And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

If you are making relationship choices out of a feeling of discontent and loneliness, you may not be able to see or sense clearly what God has already planned for you. Make requests to God with a present contentment and experience His inner sustaining peace, until He answers that prayer for change.

Remember, God not only has a plan and a purpose for you, but He also has a person for you, just as unique for you as Eve was for Adam.

“He has made everything beautiful in its time..”--Ecc. 3:11a



“Facing My Inner Flaws of Temptation and Nurturing the New Life Traits of Satisfaction”

Series Title: “Facing the Flaws of My Inner World” **Oct 1, 2017**
 “Temptation Toward Compromise”

“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.”
 -- Exo. 20:17 ESV

Main Text;

2 Cor. 5:14-17 ESV For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; (15) and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (16) From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. (17) ***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, then he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.***

Main Idea: Our Inner Flaws or New Life Traits, can bless or hinder, our relationship with God and others, and our ministries..

REMEMBER OUR Inner Flaws – are the spoiled, leftover remnants of our old way of living, which keep us from living the New Life that God desires us to live.(Rom.6:4)

Our New Life Traits –are the existing New Life qualities in Christ. Both imply personal awareness and responsibility.

OCTOBER 1 - TEMPTATION TOWARD COMPROMISE

|| Confident Convictions Lust || Self control
 Addictions || freedom from bondage, deliverance ||
 dealing with life controlling issues

1Cor. 10:12-14 ESV Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. (13) No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (14) Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

INTRODUCTION

I've been thinking this week, that it seems like all we do is the same old thing, as we consider these flaws in our lives and begin to work at eradicating it out of our spiritual life. And yet that's what it all is. All this is about deliberately and consistently doing the same thing, that is we declare war on the sinful flaws of our inner world. And its not just through this series, but it will be a practice we implement for the rest of our lives. Because as much as we don't want to admit it, our old flaws have ways of seeping back into our present Christian life.

In our study of The Flaws of our Inner World, this one may be the most basic and fundamental of them all; in that if we have this one right, then all the others will fall into subjection to the Spirit of Christ.

Today we consider the Greatest Commandment, which is to love the Lord your God, with all your heart and with all your soul and all your might. The fact is, we are governed by our desires. Our greatest desires will govern us more powerfully.

Compromise; means to accept standards that are lower than what is initially desired; a lessening of standards; Compromise is a diminishing of conviction, and a surrender of that which is most treasured for a secondary cause.

Temptation; desire; lust; compromise; and lust in every area, not just sexual lust, which is what we typically think of. Lust is a deep, controlling longing; often focused on self and most often one that is forbidden by God.

Temptation can lead to moral...

COMPROMISE AGAINST GOD

* Compromise is a diminishing of conviction. It means to accept standards which are lower than what is desired.

The Inner Flaw of Covetousness

Exo 20:17 ESV "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

God prohibits us looking at someone else's possessions and wishing they were our own. That would be someone else's house, their wife, or husband, their servant, their ox or perhaps a work implement. We are not to long, lust or desire another man's donkey, which may translate into our means transportation. It refers to possessions or wealth or **anything** that belongs to our neighbor.

Covet - defined

COVETOUS: OT 1) to desire; take pleasure in; delight in (verb)

1a) to desire 1b) to delight greatly or desire greatly

2) something precious or treasured 3) a forbidden lust or hidden longing;

Covetous in the NT can refer to *fraudulency, extortion*:

Covetous means to desire, delight or take pleasure in something.

None of that really sounds all that bad, to be honest. Right?

Lust: = uncontrolled desire in general; Specifically refers to an intense longing of the sinful nature, for things outside of God's will and moral guidelines.

10 Commandments begin with putting God first and forsaking all idols.

Exo 20:3-5 ESV "You shall have no other gods before me. (4) "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (5) You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who **hate me**,

10 Commandments ends with Do Not Covet.

Exo 20:17 ESV "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's

This refers to an intense longing for what you do not have, but what your neighbor does have, and what you wish you had.

Col 3:5-6 ESV Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is ***idolatry***. (6) On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

So the 10 commandments begin with Putting God first and forsaking idolatry, and it ends with do not covet, forsake any form or level of idolatry.

Covetousness has some close associates – running buddies – some additional flaws and alternate expressions of our sinful nature.

Mar 7:21-23 ESV For from within, out of the heart of man, come *evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft*, murder, adultery, (22) *coveting*, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, *envy, slander, pride*, foolishness. (23) All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

This refers to evil thoughts in general or sexual immorality in specific, which is coveting other women / or men. Theft is the logical outcome of coveting another person's property that we don't have but have forbidden lustful longings for. We don't have it, so one resorts to theft, in order to make it their own.

Envy = jealousy. I want it. They have it. I deserve it. I will take it.

Rom 1:29 ESV They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, *murder, strife*, deceit, *maliciousness*. They are *gossips*,

ENVY; = to make jealous; ill will; spite; "I **want** what *he* has."

Pro 14:30 ESV A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but **envy** makes the bones rot.

Jealousy- She does not deserve what she has; I **deserve** what she has. Jealousy defined: often translated Envy – but a word that refers to indignation; enemy; zeal or heat; spite over another person's good fortune.

Pro 6:34 ESV For jealousy makes a man furious, and he will not spare when he takes revenge.

Pro 27:4 ESV Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?

Lust: This is evil, sexual thoughts or behavior; general filthiness; forbidden longing or desires for possessions or people.

Covetous toward our neighbors

* Desiring what your neighbor possesses.

Who is my neighbor?

Luk 10:25-29 ESV And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (26) He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" (27) And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." (28) And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." (29) But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "***And who is my neighbor?***"

Jesus then goes on to tell the story of the Good Samaritan. And the neighbor is not the person living next door across our property line, but is basically, anyone we come in contact with.

Exo 20:17 ESV "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your ***NEIGHBOR'S*** wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your ***NEIGHBOR'S***."

A longing from your sinful nature that lusts for something in specific or anything in general that belongs to someone else and that is outside of God's will for you personally.

TEMPTATION TO DO WHAT

Covet is Temptation to view God as inadequate. The idea that God or what God has provided is not enough; unsatisfying; or disappointing.

Temptation: defined is the opportunity to sin, but is not specifically a sin. Temptation is an open window to look into and desire sin. It may be an open door of opportunity to enter into sin. Yet temptation itself, is not a sin. Jesus was tempted in every way as we have been, but He did not sin.^[Heb.4:15]

Discontent with God (Mat.22:37ff; Lk.10:27)

Mat 22:37-39 ESV And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (38) This is the great and first commandment. (39) And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Discontentment with God often leads to:

- * the tendency to gravitate toward that which you lust for, and diminishes our desire for God.
- * the tendency to excuse your pursuit of that which you lust for, resulting from one's own discontent with God or God's provisions.
- * and ultimately the tendency to lie about what we desire, pursue and struggle against.

Coveting is...

Idolatry in place of God

* God is no longer first place. He is no longer satisfying. He is no longer our first love. If among the list of things you desire – you have a hard time thinking of something to be thankful for, you may be struggling with covetousness or discontent.

Jas 1:14-15 ESV But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. (15) Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Jeremiah Burroughs (Rare Jewel, p.138) We are discontent, and dissatisfied when we compare ourselves with those who have more. But if we were to compare ourselves to those who have

little, we would see ourselves as the Kings that we are; blessed, possessing abundance compared to those who have little.

i) Coveting will result in dependence upon that which you desire most.

ii) Coveting may result in great pleasure from that which you have come to desire most.

What prevents you from being thankful and content now?

“We don’t have what we covet, therefore we will not be thankful for that which we have.” –J.Burroughs

What would it take to make you satisfied in the area in which you covet? What would it take to make you thankful for that which you already possess?

Starving Covetousness and...

THE FIGHT FOR FAITH

* If your faith journey is not a struggle, then you may not be on the right path. The journey of faith in Christ, is a struggle against the flaws of our Inner World and a fight against the powers of Satan himself.

Coveting is like over-eating. You may desire to eat more; you enjoy over-eating, but until you desire most, that being the result of not over-eating, which would be better health, self-control and perhaps personal appearance – then you will continue over-eating. Our greatest desires always overshadow our lesser desires and govern our choices.

So what is the result of starving Covetousness (or any sin)?

(1) Greater contentment and deeper satisfaction with God; (2) Greater impact in helping others grow in their own love for the Lord; and (3) Perhaps a greater overall productivity in ministry for Christ.

Piper on covetous and contentment

1Ti 6:6-10 ESV But godliness with contentment is great gain, (7) for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. (8) But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. (9) But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. (10) For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

What makes it wrong? Pursuing out of discontent; desiring something or someone other than, or more than God; Lacking in thankfulness.

The actual word "covetousness" isn't used here but the reality is what this text is all about. When verse 5b says that some are treating godliness as a means of gain, Paul responds in verse 6 that "There is great gain in godliness with contentment." This gives us the key to the definition of covetousness. Covetousness is desiring something so much that you lose your contentment in God. "There is great gain in godliness with contentment."

The opposite of covetousness is contentment in God. When contentment in God decreases, covetousness for gain increases. That's why Paul says in Colossians 3:5 that covetousness is idolatry. "Put to death what is earthly in you: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry." It's idolatry because the contentment that the heart should be getting from God, it starts to receive from something else.

So covetousness is desiring something so much that you lose your contentment in God. Or: losing your contentment in God so that you start to seek it elsewhere. –J.Piper

Fight for Faith

1Ti 6:11-12 ESV (11) But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. (12) Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

i) Fight daily (*not once a month*) to Keep God first

Mat 13:44 ESV "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

God is the Treasure. We must see His value above all others. We must desire Him above all others. We must love Him (the Greatest Commandment) above all other possessions and people.

ii) glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism states: The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. He is to be our greatest Pleasure. He must become our greatest Satisfaction. He must be our greatest Treasure in life.

Psa 73:25 ESV Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

Love God Most. Desire Him most. In other words the fight against covetousness is nothing other than the fight of faith. This is one of the clearest proofs that the way to obey the Ten Commandments (one of which is, "Thou shalt not covet!") is by faith. It's also proof that covetousness is a state of unbelief.

We must nurture, not just an act of obedience, but satisfaction and contentment in God. We must grow to love God above all other loves and desire Him above all other desires.

When you think about it, that's just what the definition of covetousness implies. We said that covetousness is desiring something so much that you lose your contentment in God. Or: it's losing your contentment in God so that you start to seek contentment elsewhere. But now this contentment in God is just what faith is.

Jesus Christ:

our Greatest Purpose; our Highest Calling,
our Souls Source and Joy and our All-Consuming
Passion

Psa 139:23-24 ESV Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! (24) And see if there be any [**covetous**] way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

CONCLUSION: 2 Cor. 5:17 – **BULLETIN INSERT**

Too often people think they are trusting in Christ, but instead of finding their life in Him, they simply make him a part of their life, one of many pursuits; They make Jesus a part of their life, rather than making Him the Source of their Life or the focus of their life.

Col 1:13-19 ESV He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, (14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (15) He is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** of all creation. (16) For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. (17) And he is **before all things**, and in him all things hold together. (18) And he is the **head** of the body, the church. He is the **beginning**, the **firstborn** from the dead, that in everything he might

be **preeminent**. (19) For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

PREEMINENCE – First place; foremost; best; chief; Highest, greatest

Joh 6:35 ESV Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall ***not hunger***, and whoever believes in me shall ***never thirst***."

Jesus can be our most satisfying relationship.

Joh 4:13-14 ESV Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, (14) but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will ***never be thirsty again***. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

Jesus can become our greatest Desire. Temptation to covet is the temptation toward idolatry. Putting Christ 2nd place is idolatry. Desiring our own things, above the things Christ desires for us is covetousness – idolatry. I love the Lord but I'm keeping my lifestyle, is deceitful, lustful, idolatry, and covetous.

Covetousness breaks the last commandment and the first 2 commandments. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall have no idols. What is higher than Christ in your life? Where is your greatest love or desire?

What do you need to repent from?

Jesus Christ: our Greatest Purpose; our Highest Calling, our Souls Source and Joy and our All-Consuming Passion.

ANYTHING LESS, IS IDOLATRY.

Personal Inner Exam -

As we look at the issues in this series, we will be asking questions:

(1) Why is [Covetousness] a flaw? Why is [Covetousness] negative? Is it a sin?

(2) **How can [Idolatry] hinder my relationship with God and with others?**

(3) **What affect could [Envy] have in my ministries for Christ?**

* List areas of ministry
I am involved in.

* List the negative or adverse
effects [LUST] could have
on each ministry?

(4) What would keep me from putting [_____] to death?

(5) What might be the result, if I did nothing about [_____] in my life?

Purposeful Adjustment STeps —

(1) Search [_____] further in Scripture and learn more passages that deal with it. (psalm.46)

(2) Look at examples in the Bible of people who were [flaw]. What was the effect? Some who manifested [trait]? What were the effects?

(3) Ask God's Holy Spirit for strength, grace and determination to work on putting [_____] to death and nurturing [_____] to life.

(4) STeps of Action

* What steps can I take to begin to starve the Inner flaw of [_____] to death?

- 1.
- 2

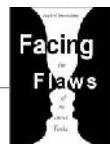
* What steps can I take to begin nurturing the New Life Trait of [CONTENTMENT WITH GOD] and to allow it to flourish in my life?

- 1.
- 2

Prayer to pray regarding our Inner Flaws and New Life Traits:

Psa 139:23-24 ESV Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! (24) And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Ask the Holy Spirit to come in, shine His light of conviction upon your life.



“Instability in the face of Adversity”

Series Title: “Facing the Flaws of My Inner World” **Oct 8, 2017**
 “Instability in the Face of Adversity”

“...he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”
 --James 1:8 ESV

Main Text;

2 Cor. 5: 17 ESV *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, then he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Main Idea: Our Inner Flaws or New Life Traits, can bless or hinder, our relationship with God and others, and our ministries..

REMEMBER OUR Inner Flaws – are the spoiled, leftover remnants of our old way of living, which keep us from living the New Life that God desires us to live.(Rom.6:4)

Our New Life Traits –are the existing New Life qualities in Christ. Both imply personal awareness and responsibility.

1Pet 5:8-11 ESV (8) Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. (10) And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm,

strengthen, and establish you. (11) To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Responding in love, patience and self-control.

Where there is conflict or controversy, there is little opportunity for ministry or spiritual input. But where there is stability and peaceful relations, there is more openness and receptivity to spiritual input in ministry.

This is about dealing appropriately with personality conflicts, adversity and personal opposition; and not responding how you were treated. Stability. Identity. Confidence. Security.

This begins with who we are...

IN CHRIST

* Our inner personal confidence and Inner stability in the face of adversity is dependent upon our understanding of our identity in Jesus Christ. ***We must understand our identity.***

Our Identity * Our key verse for this series

* *“...if anyone is in Christ, then he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” 2 Cor.5:17*

“IN Christ” = Believing in Christ as personal savior; being forgiven, reconciled and accepted in Christ. In Christ, we are New Creatures, through faith in Him. We are Children of God through faith in Christ. That doesn’t change no matter what adversity or what adversary we may face.

Col 2:11-15 (11) ***In him*** also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, (12) having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the

dead. (13) And you, who were [dead in your trespasses] and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made [alive together with him], having forgiven us all our trespasses, (14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (15) He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them *in him*.

v.13) “Trespasses” = sins; offenses.

v.14) “record of debt” = sins cancelled: the documented breaking of God’s holy law; and the violation of God’s holy nature; the harder we work to meet God’s requirements, the more we owe and the more judgment our unrighteous deeds pile up against us.

“legal demands” = that is, the judgment against our sin; we are guilty and deserving of the punishment of death.

All these things are made right in Christ. All our sins, failures, weakness, flaws and shortcomings, - all are made right *in Him*.

Our Focus

* The Fullness of God in Christ in us.

Col 2:9-11 ESV For *in him* the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, (10) and you have been filled *in him*, who is the head of all rule and authority. (11) *In him* also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

All things made right in Christ. We are accepted in Him. In Christ, we experience the Abundance of God, through the fullness of Christ. People who are like an adversary to us, oppose us and introduce adversity into our lives; often intimidating us, perhaps with the intent of manipulating us for their purposes. Intimidation

may affect our confidence and our personal stability. Like rocking the boat of our confidence, purpose and worth.

Adversity robs us of our peace and confidence before God in His ministry. This is the potential threat of opposition and adversity, as personalities, and adversity rock the boat of our inner world.

Adversity originates from ...

OUR ADVERSARY

* Adversity originates from the *Adversary*, the devil. He is the enemy, and the one who opposes you.

Joh 10:10-11 ESV The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (11) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Devil – Steal → **GOD** – Gives

Devil – Kills → **GOD** – brings to life and abundant

Devil – Destroys → **GOD** – builds up

A Hungry Lion

* Crush, Kill, Destroy.

1Pet 5:8 ESV Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

“Sober minded” = clear thinking; understand your adversary.

We must understand our identity, we must also understand our Adversary.

“Watchful” = Alert and on the lookout; stay awake. Aware of and expecting the attack of the enemy. Be informed and expectant.

Enemy's strategy and tools

* Conflict, controversy; personalities; Adversity; instability, doubt, fear, manipulation are strategies of our Adversary the devil; and are mental strategies to intimidate, manipulate debilitate and dominate us in attempts of rendering us ineffective in ministry for Jesus Christ.

Our Adversary the Devil makes us think that people are our enemy. When people act like an adversary toward us, it is only the Adversary using others as decoys, while drawing attention away from himself and placing it on others.

Resist Him (James. 4:7-8)

* Do not be manipulated or intimidated by the enemy or anyone the enemy may use to get to you.

1Pet 5:8-9 ESV Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) **Resist him**, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

Roaring is an intimidation technique of the enemy and he sometimes roars through the personalities of other humans. We however, must respond with humility, firm in the faith and with a Christ-like interest in the motivation of your “adversary”.

Jas 4:7 ESV Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist** the devil, and he will flee from you.

Why do people talk? To express something about themselves. Why do people get upset or riled? People aren't listening or caring or aren't responding as they expected. Perhaps they are upset that they feel people are rejecting their interest, input or perspective.

Why do people attempt to intimidate and manipulate others? It's the only way they feel they can make things work out like they want. The devil can use that to work his strategy of rocking the boat of our personal confidence in ministry and our inner peace and stability.

So we are seeking to deal positively and practically with people who bring contention, intimidation, and adversity into your life. These are people who, when they are around – if you aren't the one who compromises, and is gracious and introduces stability, then sparks will be sure to fly, because these people do not back down, they do not compromise and they do not bring peace into relationships. Relationships with people like this are one way streets. If you don't go their way, you can eventually expect a head-on collision.

This week, A friend was ranting on Fb about how rude the customer service was at a couple of the local stores where she lives; how she didn't deserve it; how she's not going to shop there anymore. And I thought about Instability in the face of Adversity. This gal experienced some adversity and she evidence her own instability. Stress and strife. I thought about how the devil makes us see others as the enemy. How he uses decoys to do his dirty work. He makes us see other people as the problem.

What I thought was, perhaps the people whose customer service is the worst, are those who need Christ the most. Now, because of her own instability, she plans to no longer shop at those stores, thus remaining isolated from the people who rub her the wrong way, yet who need someone stable, someone gracious, and someone willing to put up with some rude customer service in order to have opportunity to influence them for Christ. “Mark another one up for our Adversary, the devil.”

When dealing with an adversary or an opposing personality...

BE THE CHRIST HONORING, STABILIZING INFLUENCE OF PEACE

* Your “enemy” may be lacking in their own Christ identity; and may be lacking in personal confidence, inner stability and personal peace. Self-focused anger and frustration gives the devil something to work with. Its called a foot hold. And a foothold gives the devil something to work with. On the other hand, humility, Grace and peace give God something to work with, and its called the Spirit controlled life.

This is not something we can decide to do, and at a moment’s notice. In the face of adversity you think.... “I’m just going to be gracious.” Flip the switch and you are gracious, humble and stable.

Grace and humility in the face of adversity has to be nurtured over time. Fear and intimidation have to be starved and grace, confidence and inner stability is likewise nurtured over time, by being aware and assured of our relationship with God in Christ and allowing His Spirit to control our attitudes and actions when facing adversity.

GOD’S BIBLE PRINCIPLE OF RESPONDING TO AN ADVERSARY... or people who demand their way, or bring adversity into ministry, work, or other relationships.

Focus on your purpose from God

* How does God want me to respond in this situation? And am I willing? This is time to Stabilize and gain control of Spirit-controlled thinking. Its time to remain focused on God’s path, pursuing God’s purpose and evidencing Christ’s character. When faced with adversity, we retain our convictions and how God’s word directs us.

We respond wisely and obediently with Godly response. It seems like people who are adversarial often don't know how to respond to humble, gracious, Christ-like actions. In times of adversity we might be tempted to put someone in their place. This attitude is not from God. Treating others as they treated you? That is personal vengeance and is not from God.

I knew a fellow who, when someone insulted, or offended him, he would often reply; “***what is that to a dead man?***” This is about starving to death, the non-Christ-like flaws and responses that might be our first reaction when someone takes advantage of us or speaks offensively to us.

Retribution or retaliation is not from God. Mercy? That's from God. Humility? That's from God. Inner Flaws in control must be starved, while grace and humility must be nurtured and it takes time and maturity.

In Romans, Paul gives us Biblical Principles for strained and stressful relationships.

Rom 12:14-18 ESV ⁽¹⁾**Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.** ⁽¹⁵⁾ **Rejoice with** those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ⁽¹⁶⁾ ⁽²⁾Live in **harmony** with one another. ⁽³⁾Do **not be haughty**, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ⁽¹⁷⁾ ⁽⁴⁾**Repay no one evil** for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ⁽¹⁸⁾ If possible, so far as it depends on you, ⁽⁵⁾**live peaceably** with all.

To “bless” means to pour out unmerited grace to the undeserving recipient. Its not about getting even or putting someone in their place due to unfavorable treatment toward you. When we do that, *we are giving the devil something to work with.*

But bless those who persecute you. If someone is pretty arrogant and self-centered; rejoicing over their promotion or good fortune

and rubbing it in your face? Then why not rejoice with them. Celebrate whatever good fortune they are bragging about and rubbing in your face. Why? Because when we respond like this, *we are giving God something to work with.*

This is the Spirit's way of dealing with any enemy or an adversary. Haughty – prideful; If the adversary is acting out of pride and you respond in pride, what is likely going to happen? It will be like a fire fight with water balloons filled with high test gasoline.

v.17) Live at peace with everyone. Don't pour fuel on this fire. Don't allow your own pride to treat them the way they are treating you. Don't give them a piece of your mind, because you probably have none of that to spare. Don't give the devil a foothold, but Bless them. Commend them for their accomplishment. Demonstrate a little inner stability and Spirit control and Rejoice with them. Give God something to work with, in touching the other person's life and bringing peace and inner stability into the relational situation. And needless to say, this will not happen if our own emotions or our inner flaws are in control.

ILL) For several years I have been involved in what I would describe as an adversarial relationship in an area of ministry, locally around our general area. Since I have known this individual, they have bragged about all the things they have done; he has insulted me, the various ministries I am involved in; made many inflammatory accusations about my motives in ministry, the results of ministry involvement. Going on about 4-5 yrs I guess.

Just recently there were things going on in a ministry that we were both connected with at some level. I was needing some information from him. He was sending insulting emails, more outlandish accusations, etc. To be honest, I was thinking all kinds of things about this person. So I decided to try and meet and talk

with him, face to face. I requested a mtg through an email, but he never responded. A couple of weeks went by.

So I dropped in unannounced. But I have to tell you, that on the way to that person's office, the Lord intervened in my heart. He clearly showed me that what I was thinking about this person and how I was anticipating speaking towards him was completely inappropriate for a Child of God. So when I arrived, this person was in their office. I asked if we could talk and we went into another private office.

When we got in, I purposefully focused on 2 things. (1) I rejoiced in his rejoicing. This person was putting the finishing touches on a lengthy 3 yr project that was he had been working on and was obviously important to him, and of which he was obviously proud about. So I rejoiced with him and congratulated him on that achievement. (2) I asked him for a favor. I told this person I needed his help - some input on how to work out an issue, that he already knew about and had been the fuel for some of the comments he had sent me through some previous emails. Well of course, he had no end of input of how to correct my problem and do a much better job.

I thanked him; told him I was thankful that we were in ministry together and I left and went back to my office. Within 1 hr, he drove to my office, and personally handed me the info that I had been needing for the past 6 months. He was cheerful, polite and courteous. And he left.

Nothing magic happened, other than I had felt God would have wanted me to implement these relationship principles with this person, and in doing so, I believe I gave God something to work with – *obedience*.

Though I considered him as a bit of an adversary; nevertheless I rejoiced in his rejoicing and I placed myself in a needy position

before him in asking a favor and needing his help, advice and input. It changed his demeanor toward me immediately. Whether it stays that way, we shall see.

But I believe if I had treated him the way he had treated me – or if I had spoken to him in the manner in which I was feeling, things would have gone badly – very badly. Instead, I focused on my purpose from God, which was to be a Christ-honoring, stabilizing influence in that situation. I tried to humble myself before him and give God something to work with. God quenched the adversarial spirit.

Sometimes we need to ...

Consider the needs or weakness of your opposition

* Adversary; intimidation; manipulation; domination; criticizing;

- Does that person need attention? Do they need to feel they or their input is valued? Are they fighting to prove how importance he/she is?

Do they need their work, ideas or input acknowledged as valuable? Are they demonstrating the fact that they are starved for genuine encouragement, and perhaps deserving of appreciation?

Those things aren't necessarily wrong, only how we go about getting them. Some are adversarial or oppositional because they seek these things.

Sometimes the reasons we don't give these people what they need, is the same reason some people are being oppositional in trying to get them. Pride; needy; insecure. "They are mean or disrespectful or insulting or offensive of discourteous toward me, therefore I will treat them likewise."

GOD'S PRINCIPLE OF THE KINGDOM THAT COULD CHANGE THE WORLD

Mat 7:12 ESV "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

If we implemented that rule tonight, we would wake up in a different world tomorrow morning.

I want us to...

Remember The Spiritual Battle

* God has given us Spiritual instructions, for implementing Spiritual principles, for this kind of Spiritual battle. Our enemy is not people. We are tools, puppets or maybe decoys. Our Adversary will make us think other people are the adversary, so we will be angry, resentful and vengeful. Be sure that **WE** do not become the one whom the Adversary is using as a tool or as a puppet.

Every conflicting personality, every adversarial challenge is a spiritual issue, possibly for others, certainly for each of us. These situations are opportunities to be victorious in Jesus Christ, or to fall flat on our face as we respond with our own fleshly Flaws and broken human nature.

Rom 12:19-21 ESV Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." (20) To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." (21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. [Prov.25:21]

If your adversary is hungry for control, let him have some. If she is thirsty to have her way, why not let her have her way? Perhaps the reason he or she is fighting for control, is the same reason you are fighting against it; pride, fear, selfishness; attention; fighting to feel important;

This happens in businesses and Marriages. It manifests itself in ministry relationships and even in some everyday friendships.

If that person in your life is demanding attention – what would be the harm in giving them some of what they need most. If your adversary is fighting to stand out and to be acknowledged, why not do so? If they are hungry for a little encouragement, then it may behoove you both, if you stooped to give the person what they are really fighting for. ***“If you enemy is hungry, feed him/her”*** and in so doing, we give God something to work with.

Sounds like a pretty good strategy to quench the fires of relational conflict. Just compromise a little. Give a little. That’s what relationships are about anyway right? Everyone giving a little to make things work- at least ideally.

From recent personal experience, I have discovered that once we begin taking this kind of action, the person we viewed as an adversary, may just turn out to be less of an adversary than you had originally thought. Putting to death pride and intimidation. Starving Instability in times of Adversity and Nurturing the New Life Traits of personal confidence, inner stability and peace in the Holy Spirit, and not treating others as they have treated you. You can’t control your adversary or the adversity. But you can nurture and begin to take control of how you respond to those kinds of situations.

Starve Pride, personal interests, pursuit of my way, and instability. Nurture peace, kindness, confidence and inner stability. Do this and give God something to work with in your life.

I am going rephrase a quote I read last week.. ***“When Christ has your heart, when the devil comes looking for you, he will have to go through Christ in order to get to you.”*** In other words, when

Christ has your heart, we will respond more like Christ Himself would respond.

CONCLUSION: 2 Cor. 5:17 –

Retaliating, getting even, giving abusive people a taste of their own medicine; treating them as they have treated you, only gives the devil something to work with. Living at peace with others; being humble and gracious; obeying God’s Biblical Principles for strained and stressful relationships give God something to work with. It starves opposition and Inner Instability in the face of adversity and in turn, nurtures our New Life Traits of confidence, peace, stability, joy and love that we have in Jesus Christ.

Closing; “One Pure and Holy Passion”



“Starving the Flesh and Nurturing the Spirit”

Series Title: “Facing the Flaws of My Inner World” **Oct 22, 2017**
 “Instability in the Face of Adversity”

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked,
 for whatever one sows, that will he also reap .”
 --Galatians 6:7 ESV

Main Text;

2 Cor. 5: 17 ESV *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, then he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Main Idea: Our Inner Flaws or New Life Traits, can bless or hinder, our relationship with God and others, and our ministries..

Series Title: “Facing the Flaws of My Inner World” **Oct 22, 2017**
 “Starving the Sinful Flesh and Nurturing the New Life Traits of the Spirit.”

Main Text;

2 Cor. 5:14-17 ESV For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; (15) and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (16) From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. (17) *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, then he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Main Idea: Our Inner Flaws or New Life Traits, can bless or hinder, our relationship with God and others, and our ministries..

REMEMBER OUR Inner Flaws – are the spoiled, leftover remnants of our old way of living, which keep us from living the New Life that God desires us to live.(Rom.6:4)

Our New Life Traits –are the existing New Life qualities in Christ. Both imply personal awareness and responsibility.

INTRO

Today’s focus is on the Inner Struggle of our inner world, between our inner flaws and our New Life Traits in Christ; the struggle between the sinful flesh, and the renewed human spirit as born again Christians. It’s the struggle between pleasing God in obedience, and God’s displeasure in disobedience.

We can view the “flesh” as the source of all our inner flaws.

Flesh	“S”pirit	spirit
Human, physical, Self; sinful nature; Fallen sinful desires; passions; drives; appetites;	God’s Holy Spirit Indwelling each believer, Leading, convicting, influencing	The individual, personal inner spirit of each human; identity, and decisions.

The sinful flesh desires and pursues the fallen, sinful interests. The “S”pirit or the Holy Spirit indwells and fills the Christian. He desires to govern, direct and influence the renewed individual spirit of the new believer.

The spirit of the Christian is the individual eternal identity, sensitized conscious, and renewed awareness of the heart of God and the desires of the Holy Spirit to lead us in the knowledge of Truth and righteous living which is pleasing to God.

The Flesh is the old desires of the old life. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit of God at work in the Christian. The individual human spirit

is that part of us which is influenced by either the flesh or the Holy Spirit and chooses to act on one of those influences.

The Holy Spirit is that Source which attempts to influence us for Truth and Righteousness and to live to please God. The war or struggle is with the renewed human Christian spirit, which is influenced by both the residual sinful flesh and the Indwelling Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is that One who is closer than a brother.

The struggle between the sinful flesh and our renewed spirit is the result of...

THE LAW, THE GUILT, AND THE LIFE (Rom.8:1-4

* The Law brings guilt and comes from sin. The Spirit brings life, which is a gift from God. We are talking about the Law of God. The guilt which comes from sinning or breaking the Holy Law of our Holy God. And the Life is that which belongs to Jesus Christ, and is given to us who believe in Him.

As Christians we are referred to as being...

In Christ (v1

Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are [**in Christ Jesus**].

* In Christ, refers to the object of our faith and our journey of life. He is our Object of our desires and the Source of life and satisfaction. “In Christ”, there is no condemnation or eternal judgment.(Rom.8:1) , “In Christ”, the old sinful life is forgiven and is considered to be old and passed, while the life in Christ is new. (2Cor.5:17)

A true and genuine, born again believer in Jesus Christ, has their sins forgiven and the indwelling Holy Spirit of God within them.

There is no eternal judgement of God's wrath to be experienced by this believer, who is "in Christ".

As Christians, we are now to live...

In the Spirit (v2-3)

* The law of life, refers to the new life in Christ; forgiven, redeemed and living with a different purpose and greater Master.S

Rom 8:2-3 ESV (2) For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. (3) For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

"Law": that which governs or controls; it directs or influences or holds one accountable. It imparts to us an inner sense or conscience.

"Law of the Spirit of Life" = the Godly Governing Spirit of God, which Governs and influences the true child of God, in the direction of righteousness.

"Law of sin and death" = fleshly desires; the governing influence and sinful effect of our old nature and old ways, before Christ. These are the residual Inner Flaws and weaknesses and sins that tend to seep back into the genuine Christian life, if we allow them to.

Living in the Spirit refers to ...

Those who are Obedient (v4 | 2Cor.5:15)

* This refers to the unmistakable identification of those who are truly Christ's.

Rom 8:3-4 (3) For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of

sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, (4) **in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**

Paul states that the Law was “weakened” by the flesh. [Imperfect, Indicative, Active]. The sinful flesh did not make the law of God weak. But the sin of humanity, in the past, demonstrated the weakness or powerlessness or inability of that law to bring life. The Law did not fail, but it functioned as it was designed to function. It did not give life because God did not intend the Law to bring life. Sin demonstrated the weakness or designed inability of the Law. Sin did not render the Law of God weak, so as to overpower it. But sin demonstrated what the Law was always intended to do, which was to prove how hopeless it is for us to measure up to God’s righteous standards on our own.

So the law of God did not fail. Sin highlights what the Law was always intended to do, which was to reveal sin. This is the Law of God; given to reveal the sin and the Guilt of humanity; and to show the difference between the law and the Spirit whose purpose is to bring Life to all who are “in Christ”. (Rom.8:1; 2Cor.5:17]

What is it that God has done or accomplished?(v3) God sent His Son, Jesus to take on our sin and guilt, and paid our sin penalty; thus perfectly fulfilling the law of God for us, and allowing those who are “in Christ” to be credited with His own righteous life.

The struggle between the flesh and the spirit results in...

CHRISTIANS LIVING TO PLEASE GOD (Rom.8:5-8

* 2 Cor.5:15 – “that they who live, no longer live for themselves, but for Him, who died and was raised for them...” As Christians, we no longer live to please ourselves, but we now live with new

purpose, that is to please God. And we live for a new Master, that is Jesus Christ Himself.

For the true believing Christian, God has...

Our ATTENTION AND AFFECTIONS (v.5

* Where your attention and your thoughts are, is where your affections are. If anything and everything fills your mind, then anything and everything may characterize the desires of your heart.

Rom 8:5 (5) For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit

We see where the struggle often is nurtured, in the mind; our thoughts that we entertain. Our mind may be filled with thoughts, which nurture our desires, which govern our actions. The Flesh is our fallen sinful human nature; that which desires evil and sinful things. Our human spirit is renewed and sensitized by the Indwelling Holy Spirit. Then our human spirit is renewed and sensitized, and constantly influenced by the Spirit of God and begins to desire to live in a manner that pleases God in obedience to His Holy Word, with a sensitive receptivity to the leading of the Spirit.

As Christians there is a struggle within each of us. Or at least there should be! Sometimes our human spirit wins and responds by living according to the Holy Spirit's leading and influence. Sometimes, however, maybe even *often times*, the fleshly, sinful desires of our old life win out.

Our Attentions and affections grow as they are fed. That's why as Christians we must feed our faith with scripture, prayer, Christian fellowship, worship, active service and obedience. **This feeds our faith and gives God's Holy Spirit something to work with.** And it helps starve the fleshly desires and inclinations.

Living to please God results from...

A GOD MINDED LIVING (v6-7)

* Do you want to be reassured if you are truly in God's family and part of His kingdom? Are you seeking assurance in your faith journey? Look at your life. Are you living a life of purity? Are you striving against the earthly struggles of this temporary, flesh focused life?

Rom 8:6-7 (6) For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. (7) For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

A mind that focuses on sin, evidence a concern that the person may still be dead in their sins. What holds our attention and fills our minds, also has our affections and forms our desires. And our strongest desires over whelm our lesser desires and will ultimately govern our choices and lifestyle.

i) v6) Life focused on earthly desires will lead to death. Everything that is not of God is in process of passing away and decaying, under the death penalty of sin, even creation. Pursuing earthly desires is to be ignorant or apathetic towards eternal things.

ii) v7) earthly, physical, temporary things are hostile toward God. They don't desire God. They don't pursue God. They don't honor or obey God. They do their own thing. Some Do their own thing, while declaring, "Oh, I'm a Christian" "I'm a child of God." "I'm going to heaven." Yet, Scripture casts doubt on that kind of thinking. People who are aware of and content with their inner flaws being nurtured and thriving – Scripture says, its like a rotting corpse proclaiming to the top of its decaying lung – "I'm alive, do you hear?" I'm alive – just as alive as anyone else."

As Christians who are living under the “Law of the Spirit of Life”, we must practice filling our minds and focusing our thoughts and feeding our affections from Biblical Truth and things that come from the Spirit. These are things that starve the Inner Flaws of our sinful nature and in turn, nurture the new life traits of Christ, which are fed and stirred to life by the Spirit of God within us, and bears witness with our own renewed and sensitized human spirit.

Because...

Those whose Priorities are set on this earthly life, cannot please God. (v8)

* This is the bottom line of our faith. Are we pleasing ourselves or seeking and living to please God?

Rom 8:8 (7) For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. **(8)**
Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

God did not send His only Son, to be your only Savior, just so we could get our ticket punched for heaven and then keep living the way we always have lived- my direction, my interests, my plans, my lusts, my life and my desires. We are all living, either by our fleshly desires, or by our human Christian spirit, which is influenced and sensitized by Gods’ abiding Spirit of Holiness.

The struggle between the flesh and the Spirit is the result of being...

A TRUE BELIEVER.... (v9-10 /Gal.5:16)

* If you belong to Jesus Christ; then His Spirit is living in you. If you are struggling against sin, that is a good thing. In fact it is a necessary thing, because it is evidence of the new life, with new desires, with a renewed purpose and a new Master.

If God's Spirit lives in you, then our inner desires are at war; what our sinful nature desires, or what the Christian, sensitized, renewed human spirit desires. Our greatest desires will overcome our lesser desires and will influence our every decision and activity.

Through the struggle, God gives us...

Our Assurance in Christ (v9)

* How you live, will be determined by who you belong to.

Rom 8:9 You, however, are not in the flesh, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

* **If** you belong to Jesus Christ; *then* His Spirit is living in you; and your life has changed, and is changing. What are your desires? Where do you spend your time, energies and resources? What direction are you going? You check it out. You make the evaluation. Only you and God can know those answers.

The Spirit of God in you, is evidence that you belong to God. Changes that God brings about, occur suddenly, or gradually, but always continually.

Are you repenting regularly from the Inner Flaws and secret sins that slip back into your life? Are you easily and frequently convicted of the lifestyle that is not pleasing to God and which allows sin to seep back into your life? Are you confessing your sins, when God's Spirit convicts you? Are you struggling against sin in your life and against anything that is not Christ-like?

Fighting the good fight against sin is a necessary aspect of being genuinely and truly in Christ. If your life, is not characterized by conviction, confessing, repenting and struggling, then you need to examine and evaluate your spiritual life to determine if you are truly in the faith.^[2Cor.13:5]

“**In the Spirit**” = being led, or governed by; sensitized, influenced and controlled by the indwelling of Gods Holy Spirit. When God’s Holy Spirit influences our human spirit, and begins to defeat the flaws of our inner world, then we begin to experience victory over our old, broken, fallen, sinful human nature.

When the reality of Christ fills our mind and hearts, then...

The Spirit’s Life Rules over Sin’s Death (v10)

Rom 8:10 (10) But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is *alive* because of righteousness.

The body is dead – or dying; as good as dead, because all will die because of sin’s curse. But those in Christ, have the Indwelling HS of God in them, and where the Spirit of God indwells, spiritual and eternal life springs up.

“Flesh and death” – Rom.8; [Spirit and Life] – Rom.8:2,6,10,11

Joh 11:25-26 ESV Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, (26) and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

Do you believe this?"

If you answer “yes”

Therefore, Live Like It! (Gal.5:16)

Gal 5:16 KJV This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Live by the Spirit and you will not nurture the old, spoiled inner flaws. To “Walk in the Spirit” means to live each day governed, directed and controlled by the Spirit of God. It means to allow the Spirit of God to starve your flaws and sins and allow the Spirit of God to nurture your New Life Christ-like traits.

When this is happening, as God intended, we will not live a sin-filled and defeated Christian life. Many Christians don't realize they are living a defeated life, because they are living just as they please and that may feel great. It is only when we begin to be led by the Spirit of Holiness and begin to desire to live to please God, and intend to say no to sin, that we realize how fleshly, physical and earthly our life may really be. Only once we begin to purposefully live for Christ, do we realize how defeated we have been all along.

CONCLUSION: 2 Cor. 5:17 –

Be Filled with the HS – Confess that Jesus is Lord and live like it

1Co 12:3 ESV Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" *and no one can say "Jesus is Lord"* except in the Holy Spirit.

The idea is anyone can mouth the words. But to declare it as a creed of your heart and life – only the Holy Spirit can put that desire into a person's life.

Zachaeus met Christ and his life changed. The woman at the well met Jesus and her life changed.

How is the struggle against your inner flaws and the sins of your hidden life going? Great? Fully victorious? The true believer in Christ, who is fighting against sin, will find himself becoming more aware of his/her own sinfulness and more wearied by the constant battle to put those things to death. If “victorious” means you are winning the battle by the grace of God, you are being sustained daily with His grace and are starving your inner flaws, then praise the Lord. But if by “Fully Victorious” means no troubles, no problems, no struggles, no battles, then I would wonder if you are in the faith at all.

No battles means no victory. The only enemy we will beat is the one we fight. The only sin we will defeat are the ones we fight against.

Sometimes I think it is expected that Christians be fully inoculated and resilient of any real troubles or struggles. If someone is struggling, and God forbid if they are struggling with something that others can see or perceive – something that is not easily hidden - then they are labeled sinful, or fleshly, or maybe even ‘not a Christian’ at all.

I tell you this. I believe if we all came to church and there was some meter or detection device that revealed all the things each of us honestly struggled with – most of us would never come back. Either we’d be too embarrassed that everyone now knows what you actually struggle with or you would be so disgusted by the struggles you see in the lives of others that you thought were free of such heinous things, that you wouldn’t want to be associated with us any longer.

The Christian life, with the Spirit of God in us, necessitates the struggle! It mandates the battle! It authenticates the reality of whether or not we are truly in Christ or not! The struggle to be led by the Holy Spirit is the struggle to live a life that is pleasing to God.

What characterizes your life, the flesh or the Spirit? Are you characterized by “victory” with no problems, or the struggle each day against your inner flaws?

FLESH = death, sin, condemnation, evil desires, powerlessness, weakness, hostility toward God, displeasing to God, bondage, guilt of the law.

“SPIRIT” – no condemnation, freedom, spiritual power, increasing victory over sin, righteousness, fulfillment of the

righteous law, spiritual desires, life and peace.

What characterizes your thinking? Your decisions? Your conversations? Your treatment of others? What has your heart and holds your attention? Is it the leading of your own heart of death, or the leading of the Holy Spirit of life?

Psa 139:23-24 ESV Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! (24) And see if there be any **[grievous]** way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Forgive us from gossip; slander; a judgmental attitude; or a critical spirit; Living according to our own desires.



Personal Inner Exam -

As we look at the issues in this series, we will be asking questions:

(1) Why is [_____] a flaw? Why is [_____] negative? Is it a sin?

(2) How can [_____] **hinder my relationship with God and with others?**

(3) What affect could [_____] **have in my ministries for Christ?**

* List areas of ministry
I am involved in.

* List the negative or adverse
effects [_____] could have
on each ministry?

(4) What would keep me from putting [_____] to death?

(5) What might be the result, if I did nothing about [_____] in my life?

Purposeful Adjustment STeps —

(1) Search [_____] further in Scripture and learn more passages that deal with it. (psalm.46)

(2) Look at examples in the Bible of people who were [flaw]. What was the effect? Some who manifested [trait]? What were the effects?

(3) Ask God's Holy Spirit for strength, grace and determination to work on putting [_____] to death and nurturing [_____] to life.

(4) STeps of Action

* What steps can I take to begin to starve the Inner flaw of [_____] to death?

- 1.
- 2

* What steps can I take to begin nurturing the New Life Trait of [_____] and to allow it to flourish in my life?

- 1.
- 2

Prayer to pray regarding our Inner Flaws and New Life Traits:

Psa 139:23-24 ESV Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! (24) And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Ask the Holy Spirit to come in, shine His light of conviction upon your life.



Don't close this booklet yet

without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior or your soul and the Lord of your life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
--Rom 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come
from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him
to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of
Jesus Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were
still sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his
name, he gave the right to become children of God,
- John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you
are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins
and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

The ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. He already knows. Also Confess Jesus as you LORD. He desires and deserves to be your Lord.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:
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 Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

*It is our prayer that you find **Jesus Christ** to be...*
your highest calling,
your greatest purpose,
your soul's source and joy,
and your all-consuming passion.

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 1 PETER, pt.3-5 (3Vol): *The Church God Always Wanted*
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Life Line Resources

May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.

--- Downloadable free resources at: www.christefca.org --

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