



Our Nature

Women's Discipleship Class – November 16, 2017

Verses Covered This Week

Genesis 2:16 – 17

Genesis 3:1 – 7

Romans 6:16 – 17

Romans 8:1 – 3

Romans 6:6 – 8

Romans 8:4, 9 – 10

Romans 7:21 – 25

Romans 12:1 – 2

Romans 6:11 - 12

We're going to talk about something today that I've addressed before in the pulpit. We're going to look at it in a little bit of detail today. There was a metaphor that I grew up with that I heard when I was a kid. I heard it in vacation Bible school. I heard it in church illustrations and it really was a powerful metaphor, but probably wrecked my theology until I had to rework my way back through Scripture.

There was an old metaphor, actually a story, that this missionary went on an Indian reservation, I realize that's not PC today, but you're going to have to live with it. So he goes on the Indian reservation and he leads this Indian chief to Christ. So the missionary comes back a year later and he asks the chief, "How's it been since you came to Christ?" And the Indian chief looked at him and he said, "Well I feel like I've got a mean dog and a good dog in me and they're both fighting all the time." So the missionary said, "Well which one wins?" And the Indian chief said, "Well it's generally the one I feed the most." That was a powerful metaphor for me because it taught me, unfortunately it wrecked my life spiritually, because it's not true. And so I began to think, "OK if I read my Bible enough and pray enough and go to church enough and do all the right things then the bad dog would be overtaken by the good dog. And then I have these two dogs fighting in me and that's my problem; that I have two natures." You do not have two natures in you. You have one nature.

Now go over with me to Genesis chapter 2. And I think this is the only way you can understand exactly what's going on in your life. Now listen to verses 16 and 17.

¹⁶The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden; ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Now I want you to follow the text today and we’ll walk through a couple verses in Genesis and then we’re going to go to Romans and we’re going to look at a couple other places. If God’s told you that you can do anything you want except eat this tree right here; when you walk through the garden you’re not going to walk close to this tree. It’s going to bother you. It’s going to unnerve you. You’re not going to have any emotional tie to this tree. The emotional tie you have to this tree is probably going to be, “I want to stay away from this.” This is dangerous for me. It’s like a rattlesnake versus a puppy. You’ve got a rattlesnake; you’re going to back up. You’ve got a little puppy; you head towards it. It’s a distinction. And so the tree is more like a rattlesnake. You know this thing’s going to bite you, you know it’s going to hurt you, so you don’t walk over to it and if you see it you walk around it. You don’t go near it. Look at Genesis 3. By the way, one question, how many natures do Adam and Eve have? They have one. Is it good or bad? It’s good. They have no sin, right. So they don’t have the old Adamic nature. They don’t have the old man, whatever you want to call it, they don’t possess the old man. He’s not in there. They haven’t fallen, they haven’t sinned, so they have one nature in them and that is the nature that is committed to obedience to the Father. So that’s the nature they have. Now watch this.

¹Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” ²The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’”

Well God never said you couldn’t touch it. But she probably felt that. She didn’t touch it because if thing’s that dangerous, she doesn’t want to touch it. It is a fear factor to her.

⁴But the serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise,

Now verse 6; those are emotions, right. Has she sinned yet? No. But what’s happened? The emotional atmosphere in her soul has changed. This used to be something she wouldn’t even walk near. I’m not even going to touch it. Now, she hasn’t sinned, but now there’s a shift in her emotions. Now this thing she used to walk by and be afraid of, now this tree looks good. It is now emotionally appealing. Her emotions are moving toward the tree. That’s her flesh. Your emotions live in your flesh. When the Bible talks about your flesh, it’s a normal thing. Emotions are never anything but neutral. They follow perception or reality. They’re not right or wrong. And the thing you can’t do is let them drive you, but I simply want you to understand this for another time, your emotions follow perception and reality. So she’s now beginning to think, “Maybe this thing’s good.” And so now her emotions are moving toward the very opposite. Now it’s a puppy. It was a rattlesnake originally, but now it’s a puppy. It’s something to move toward. So watch this.

she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

So he takes her and he moves her from doubt to refutation. He said, “No, God’s a liar.” And then she begins to desire the tree. Now what’s the change in the text? What changed her desire from “I don’t even want to touch this thing” to “Man this is really good”?

YOUR EMOTIONS are going to be rooted in what God says versus what the enemy whispers.

What’s changed her desire? Her emotions have changed, but why? She’s changed her belief. Her belief prior to Satan showing up is, “This thing’s bad.” Why? Why is it bad? Why does she think it’s bad? God told her it was bad. Now Satan’s come along and now she looks at it and goes, “This is great.” Why? Because Satan told her it was great. So her emotions in her flesh, which are now going to drive her decision, are based on what she has chosen to believe. If she stays with what God says, she’s never going to sin because her emotions are never going to pull her to that tree. But she doesn’t choose to believe what God says. She believes what the enemy says to her and in response to that, her emotions now move to “This is really good.” So your emotions will drive your decisions a lot of the times. They’re going to be rooted in what God says versus what the enemy whispers.

When Adam and Eve have children, they pass down to them a new nature. One nature. Now they have a nature that is committed to rebellion against God. That’s the nature you inherit at birth. When the Bible says, in Romans 3:23, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, that was 2,000 years ago; that’s still true. You can fight that old nature a little bit, but it will always eventually overcome you. Listen to what the Bible says in Romans 6:16.

¹⁶Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one who you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,

So what does he say? There was a point in your life when you’re enslaved to sin. You cannot stop it. Prior to Christ, you’ve got a nature that is sold out to this tree and you can’t stop it. You can fight it a little, you can hold it down a little, but you can’t stop that nature. It is sooner or later going to pull you. As a matter of fact, we joke about it all the time, but you see it in the nursery. I always enjoy watching parents who are having their first child and they’re just so proud and they can’t wait for the birth of their little boy, and they get him in the hospital and he’s so cute and he’s cleaned up, thank God, when they bring him to you, but he’s all cleaned up and he’s so wonderful and they’re calling everybody. And after about two months they go, “Can we put this thing on Craigslist?” It doesn’t take long. And particularly once you get them into the nursery where you realize these are filthy, rotten, wicked little sinners. You take a little guy, he will get in there and he will grab everybody’s toys and put them in his pile and dare anybody to come over. That is not learned behavior, I hope. He didn’t see that at home where dad, at the supper table, grabbed everybody’s plates and pulled them over and said, “Deal with that.” It’s not learned behavior. It is innate. He has a little wicked, sinning heart in side him. He’s born with it. If Adam and Eve had made the right call, he would have been born with a nature that was totally sold out to God.

But your children are born with your nature, which you inherited from Adam and Eve; one nature that is committed to rebellion against God. Look at Romans 8.

¹Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

You've got the law, God's command, but your flesh won't allow you to do it because you've got a nature that makes you believe what the Bible says is true is not good for you. So this is what you inherit. Adam and Eve left that with you which is why you will emotionally desire the things that are going to wreck you. You've got this great verse in John 10:10, right. Should be the mantra. Should be the phylactery on everybody's forehead.

¹⁰The thief comes only to seal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

That is about as simple a statement as there is anywhere in the word of God. And yet most of us don't live that out. We choose the things that wreck us because we have this brilliant enemy and we have this nature that's enslaved. Now when you become a believer there are two things that happen. Look in Romans 6:6 – 8.

⁶knowing this, that our old self (your old nature) was crucified with Him,

Stop it there. If you're crucified, what happens? You die. So what's happened to the old nature? The metaphor is clear. Paul lived in the day of crucifixion. This is not some goofy metaphor. What is he saying? Your old nature has been killed off. It's gone. It's been removed. You no longer have in you a commitment to sin. It's been removed. Why?

in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

Here's his main point. When that old nature's there, you're enslaved. But that slavery's been removed because the old man has been killed off. The old man is gone. It's killed off.

Now here's the second thing, we looked at part of it, look in Romans 8:4. Here's the rest of the passage.

⁴so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Look in verse 9.

⁹However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. ¹⁰If

Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

So there are two things that have happened, right. The old man's gone and then God has placed a new nature in you which is the person of the Holy Spirit. He now indwells you. So if the old man's gone, and I only have the Holy Spirit, why do I wage a fight? When you hear that metaphor of two dogs fighting in you, it's the one I feed the most that wins, that seems to fit our experience. But Biblically, it does not fit our experience. The danger of the metaphor is now I'm trying to fight an issue that isn't there with weapons that are supposed to be the fruit of victory, not the cause of victory. And so what the enemy has done, and he did in my life with that simple metaphor, is he reversed everything in my life and I achieved no victory as a child of God. So the old man's gone. Now I live inside the Holy Spirit. Look at Romans 7:21 – 25. Now listen.

²¹I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²²For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Now look at Romans 12. When he finishes this entire section of theology on salvation, he comes to a "therefore" in Romans 23. Here's what he says.

¹Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, (*which is chapters 1 – 11*) to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

So he talks about the mind, that is supposed to be transformed, and Paul says in Romans 6 that there is a battle between the law of my mind and my flesh. So in your flesh you have your emotions. In your mind you have your choice. You have volition.

Flesh - emotions
Mind - choice, volition
You have the ability to choose between
God's Word and the enemy whispers

You have the ability to choose. We've already seen what you choose will determine the pull of your flesh. Your emotions will pull you based on what you choose. So now you have a battle in your life, right. And this is where the struggle really is. Now look at Romans 6:11 – 12. Now he goes through Romans 6, right, your old man's been killed off. Boom! We've got a new life. Here we go.

¹¹Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

It's interesting. That Greek word is *logizomai* which means, this is the Greek word, if you transliterate this, it is the word logic. We get the word logic from this Greek word where he says consider yourself. So he says, "I want you to use some logic and think through." You consider yourself, you logically deduce that you are dead to sin and alive to God.

Logic - Dead to sin/Alive to God

You believe

Why are you dead to sin and alive to God? Why are those things true? Because in Romans 6 the old man's been killed off and in Romans 8 he's planted His Holy Spirit in you. So he says the logic, you get up in the morning and you believe, you reckon yourself, you believe that you are dead to sin and you are alive to God. You believe that. You make a volitional choice that that's true in your life. Now that is the absolute key. So you are now back to where Adam and Eve were. Let me explain something. When Adam and Eve are in the garden, God is inside them, Satan is outside talking to them from outside.

Prefall - God is Inside / Satan is Outside

Postfall - Satan is Inside / God is Outside

Salvation - God is Inside / Satan is Outside

After they fall, God is removed from the inside, Satan is now inside, he's not planted a nature in you that's committed to obedience to him and God is now on the outside speaking to you. When you become a believer, it's reversed back. Now God is on the inside; Satan is on the outside. So now your battle is still, now you're right back to where Adam and Eve sinned. The reason you sin as a Christian now is because, not because inside you you can't control it, it's because you're believing the whispering of the enemy and when you listen to the whisper of the enemy, your flesh moves in its emotions toward what the enemy is telling you is best for you. So now your life is a choice between God's word and the enemy whispers. Now this is where your battle is now. It's not because you've got to natures in you and whichever one you feed the most wins. No! Now you're in this battle between what God says to you in His Word and what the enemy whispers to you from outside you. And remember, God's in you and the Holy Spirit, so the Holy Spirit's going to lead you into the Word. We've talked about all this. So now I've got inside me God's Word, but outside me the enemy's whispering. Whichever one of these I believe, will drive my emotions.

For example, I deal with a tremendous number of affairs in both lost and saved. Now when a lost guy has an affair it's because he can't control it. He sees this woman, she's gorgeous, he works toward her, he moves toward her, there's something in him that is pulling him toward her. A saved man does not have an affair because of that. A saved man has an affair because the enemy comes and he says, "Your wife's not good for you. She's not giving you value, this woman is. This woman will be better in bed. This woman will be better for you emotionally. This woman will make you happier." And he talks him into the affair. But if he believes what God says to him which is, "Remember your wife is the best thing that could happen to you because I gave her to you." If he believes what God says to him, he's never going to have an emotional appeal for another woman. He will have an emotional appeal for another woman if he begins to believe what the enemy says and then his feelings will follow that and he will walk toward a woman that he

shouldn't walk toward. It's the difference between being saved and lost. You don't have these two natures fighting and if he goes to church more, he won't have this attraction toward this woman. Church is not going to change that attraction. Bible study's not going to change that attraction. Prayer's not going to change that attraction. It's what he believes that will change that attraction. And that's true for all of us. Our battle is between two things: what God tells us and what the enemy whispers.

But you have two problems. You do have, as a man and as a woman for example, you have a memory issue. Adam and Eve didn't have this. They didn't have a memory of the pleasures of sin. Remember the Bible says, sin has pleasure for a season. You take a guy who spent his life growing up, particularly today, in pornography. There's a pleasure periodically over that's pornography's use in his life. So that even if he comes to a place where he believes what God says, "Hey this thing's not good." There will be a memory index that will kick in to him and go, "Yeah, God says it's not good, but remember how much fun that was?" And this is where sometimes addictions come from. They come from a memory index that Adam and Eve did not have. You do have, we all have, the memory index. So this is an issue that Adam and Eve didn't face that we have to face which makes it a little harder, I think, to trust in God's word. The other problem is: once versus all day long. God thinks He's God and He thinks you're not. So because of that He thinks if He says something once, you ought to pay attention. He'll tell you once. "Don't look at another woman." He says that once in Matthew 6. The enemy will all day long say, "Man this woman is going to be better for you than your wife." I have to listen to Satan's whispers all day long. God, thinking He's God, believes He should only say something once and I should make a choice to believe what He says. So your battle over sin in your life is not two dogs fighting in you. That's not it at all. Your battle is simply between believing what God tells you or believing what the enemy whispers to you. And he will whisper to you all day long. As a matter of fact, I've learned in my life, he will whisper to me until I settle on what God's told me. Now he'll then move to something else. He'll find some other thing to dog you. This is why you can pray all day, but if you don't believe what God says, your prayer's not going to make a hill of beans. You can read this all day long. We have thought that if I just read enough of this, some magic power will jump off, and I'll stop sinning. No. Reading the Bible doesn't mean I believe the Bible. Going to church and listening to some short, bald guy yell at you is not going to create this issue. So we've thought, in other words, I've thought all my life that if I feed the right dog, that by going to church, praying, reading my Bible, and I never could conquer sin, because I had it completely backwards. It's not two dogs in me, it's one nature in me and praise God now because of Romans 6, I can choose to believe what God says because the Holy Spirit's in me and now He can inside me confirm what the Scripture says. I can choose to believe what God says and the enemy's whispers can't affect me. But that's where your battle is. It's not two dogs in you. It's believing what God says versus what the enemy whispers to you. So you have one nature. You've always had one nature. Adam and Eve had one pre-fall. Adam and Eve had one post-fall. You had one pre-salvation and now you have one post-salvation. The difference is Satan was in you, God was outside of you. Now God's in you and Satan's outside of you. It's a great picture. You do have this amazing victory. You're still going to have your emotions. And if they get caught in the memory index, and you believe what the enemy whispers, the emotions will pull you away from what's best for your life in Christ. Your emotions are in your flesh. It's your mind that controls your emotions. What you believe is what your emotions are driven by. If I perceive that this other woman is better for me, my emotions will drive me there. If I perceive and believe

my wife's better for me than any other woman in the universe, these emotions will not follow me. They will go toward her.

Q. One thing you said earlier about Adam and Eve picking the wrong plan and if they hadn't taken the wrong plan, that we'd have children that weren't born with a sin nature. Was there a plan to have children?

A. Yes, because He talked about them replenishing the earth. Absolutely. Here's my theory. This is my Chris Osborne theory. There's nothing in the Bible about this. There is a verse in 2 Peter that says that God is not slack (2 Peter 3:9 KJV)

⁹The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us, not wishing that any should fail, but that all should come to repentance.

So there's a set number that God's waiting on to come to Christ. I think that's pretty clear from that passage. I think that set number, obviously if Adam and Even have children, at some point this world fills up with people and there's no more room. God would have to chunk us to another planet. So I think originally there was this intent for God to populate a certain number of people in His image from this planet that then He would use, according to one of the other statements in the New Testament is, that we will sit on thrones ruling with Him. That's a clear statement. So we have something to do in eternity beyond just harping and seeing what happened to Michael Jackson, or buying shiplap. So we obviously have a purpose and I think the number that God's plan for that purpose was the offspring of Adam and Even cut off at a certain point. And the other reason I believe that is that when we get to heaven, this is always tough for people, but when you get to heaven, your marriage is over. It says, "You're like the angels. They don't marry or are given in marriage." So even though you'll remember your husband, some of you may not want to do that, but you're going to have to. So you remember that, but that's no longer in vogue. So I think there is a sexual reproduction limited time here. And once that number's reached, then I think He's coming back. That's the Chris Osborne theory.

Q. How did Eve know what death was?

A. I don't know that she knew that. I think God told her in the day you eat that you will die. I don't know that she knew what that meant. I mean death in Adam and Eve's thing is they lost each other, they lost God, they lost the world, and they lost themselves. So they have four losses which is what death is. But they didn't cease to exist. I don't think she processed all that. I think it was God simply saying, "You're alive now and you're going to die. So you just trust what I'm telling you." I don't think He explained that.

Q. I have a question that kind of follows up from last week when we were talking about our children going off to college. What, as a parent, would you do or say when your children, as adults, start making decisions that don't follow God's Word in a way they've been raise?

A. I think once your children, as adults, start making decisions that are against God, you've just got to pray for them. I think you have to back off and assume you've done your best and pray for their conviction. I think that's all you can do. It's a tough thing. You have 18 years of training, teaching, loving, or 22 really for most people because generally you're doing some of that while they're in college. But once they're gone, you have got to let them go. Because your only hope, if you start giving them advice, all you do is push them away at that point. They're going to have to, I mean, it's a hard thing, a kid has to come to a place where it's no longer your faith, it's his faith. And some kids do that in college and some kids do it post college and most of the time they struggle pulling away. Very rarely does a kid not pull away in some way. But I think once they then shift from your faith to their faith, then it becomes reality in their life. But you've got to give them that timeframe to do that. But I would say nothing.

Q. You were talking about the memory index. Is it possible to break that?

A. No. You cannot break your memory index. I think the only way to stop the memory index from affecting you is to believe what God says. But your memory, even though pleasurable, has a bad consequence and so you're going to have to trust God even though this seems like it's going to be fun and I remember it being fun, it's not going to end well for me. I mean that's the hard thing. But I think that's a part of where addiction comes from.

Q. As far as the flip side of that, if you have memories of bad things, like child abuse or alcoholic parents, or whatever, I think in my life I have kind of felt like I don't remember a lot of that anymore. And because of siblings saying, "You're in denial." But I have felt like God has released those from me.

A. But that's a different thing than I'm talking about.

Q. So what I'm asking is that how God can handle those because they're, on one side, are convinced I'm in denial.

A. No I don't think they are. I think what you're talking about is God protecting you from a bad memory. This is Satan's ability to tempt you. And God gave him that before we fell. So anything he can use to tempt you, I don't think God's going to take away from him. Anything that would damage you in the past that is presently damaging you, His mercy would remove from you. So I think those are two distinct things. I think this is association with temptation. The other is damaged life and I think those are two totally different things.

Q. Is this addiction versus strongholds, is that kind of interwoven?

A. I don't know where the line is between addiction and stronghold. That's a good question. I'm not sure they're not real similar. And there are other things. The tough thing with memory, you also have physiological reactions. You have endorphins released. When a guy's involved in autoeroticism, there will be endorphins released. He'll remember that. There are all sorts of things connected with addiction that may be beyond memory. I think you can step aside

from this. It is just, and I think the memory includes everything, physiological, pleasure-senses, it's everything in there. And so I think probably the memory index for me is the key to addiction and to fighting it. You've got to step back and go, "Yeah, I remember this being great, but this is what God says."

Q. So you can't release the memory thing, but you can get rid of the stronghold.

A. No, I think you can get rid of the damage from the stronghold. I think we all have, it's part of Sunday morning's sermon. I think addiction and stronghold are different in one sense; that all of us have a stronghold in the sense that all of us have an arena we fear and that holds us. For example, so you do get one preview to Sunday morning's sermon which I don't even give my wife, generally. Solomon's dad was this tough warrior, right, killed a lion and a bear. Solomon probably couldn't whip the kids on the playground. So he grows up as king; he's terrified. I mean his dad's body guard is still there and not looking at him like they did daddy. And so he's the key. He's supposed to protect Israel. It's interesting, and I'm going to work through this Sunday morning, but there's a verse that indicates that David had conquered all the enemies. God gave Israel rest in David's time. So he's already done the work. Solomon doesn't have to do it. But Solomon comes in and he's terrified and so the first thing he does out of the box, God's wisdom says don't marry unbelievers, first thing he does out of the box, he grabs Pharaoh's daughter and marries her. And it says he made an alliance. So he set a deal with the Egyptians, "Don't come over here. I've got your daughter." And so you have kind of the beginning of a stronghold, a deep fear, "I know God says don't do this, but I don't think I can protect my people if I obey God because I'm not my dad." Now that's a lot of psychological stuff, but nonetheless I think that is what happens in his life. And I think that is kind of a beginning of a stronghold that becomes a stronghold because now he marries 700 women and concubines and everything else. All to set up allegiances. You don't have in that day the kind of nations that you do today. You have little cities that they each had their own kind of power and so he's got them all around him and so he's terrified. And I think that created a stronghold. Instead of trusting God's wisdom, he trusted in his ability to fix it. And I think that generally creates a stronghold which did become a stronghold in his life and ultimately took him down.

Q. Define stronghold.

A. I think a stronghold is, for me, a point where I quit trusting God for so long that now I almost can't come back and trust him anymore. Saul had the stronghold of fear in that arena. Solomon had it. David did not. Even David's failure was not a stronghold. It was an impulsive act over a period of obviously a couple months with her becoming pregnant and bringing the husband home. His is more impulse, not a stronghold, because he never does it again. Solomon struggled with it his whole life. I think when you have a place you just don't trust God, and you get to the place where you just can't you've stayed in it so long, I think it becomes a strong hold on you versus addiction.

Q. So this may be basic knowledge. God is inside. The Devil is whispering to us outside. So how does he give up on whispering to us in that certain area, like you said, without me speaking it. Or do I have to speak it? Because I feel like I'll be talking to myself all day long out loud.

A. No, I think Satan, let me share a couple things. That's a really good question. The Bible always says, like 1 Peter 5:8, right.

⁸Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

He really isn't the guy doing it. He's got all sorts of little imps out there. And they're under certain directions from him. And one of the directions is to, obviously, whisper to us to step away from God. I think if they can know, number one, they know your thoughts. They can read your thoughts. Anybody that says Satan can't read your thoughts, it's not in the Bible, I don't even know where that came from. Because if he can't read my thoughts, he's the luckiest guesser, when I pray, of anybody in the universe. So I think he does read our thoughts. So he will know when I have settled down and said, "Alright." In my own life, one huge stronghold was, it's still an issue for me, but it's not a stronghold, my wife and I are distinct in that when we walk in a room she thinks everybody likes her. When I walk in a room I assume nobody likes me. So I have this issue in my life that I can't, but it's not a stronghold anymore because when God called me to preach, it stung me in a good way in that I realized I was personal to Him and He had a particular purpose for me beyond anyone else. So those things kind of released from me, even though I still think no one likes me, it doesn't matter to me because I'm locked in to, "He's OK with me." So if the Creator of the universe is OK with me then I can live with the fact that people don't like me. So I can walk through that. So it still is there, but it doesn't control me anymore. I don't care whether or not anybody likes me, I like them regardless of that.

I think the enemy has, it's there, it's a factor in my life because of the home life I was raised in and because of what I went through in high school, so it's a factor in my life that will never go away. But the enemy's learned, they don't really whisper that to me anymore because they know I've set myself in this position. And that's pretty much been a done thing. And I think once they see you set there, it's like everybody at some point that's a believer struggles with assurance of their salvation. Everybody. If you don't struggle with it, you're probably not a believer because he's not going to bother you if you're not a believer. If you are a believer, he's going to bother the heck out of you. And it's a fight. Once you kind of settle and go, "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." I call on the name of the Lord. I'm done. When you really kind of settle there, they back off because they know they're not going to win there. Now they look for somewhere else. I think one of the stratagems, *methodios*, it's a Greek word in the New Testament, method. One of the schemes of the enemy is stay on him here while you're winning. When you quit winning here, find another place to get him. So I think he knows when you've settled and he'll move on. Now what he may do is wait two or three years and come back in. But I think when he comes back in and sees you're still settled, then he moves out and tries something else.

Q. So I got in a discussion with someone over this subject matter and not having two natures and having one. We were reading a book study, and I disagreed with the author, but they weren't necessarily knowingly referencing Romans 7 where he talks about I do think, I mean the title of the section in my Bible is The Conflict of Two Natures.

A. Because I think you have a conflict, you want to obey God, but you don't because the enemy's whispering to you with a memory index. "This is better for you than this." So we all struggle with that. I mean let's just put it down on the table in here. Y'all do have a tendency to be a little more unforgiving than men. We can kind of blow things off and y'all have a little trouble blowing things off. It's the little memory factor there. "I can punish my husband just a little more today." So that memory index, you struggle there with that memory index, and you're going, "I really shouldn't bust him one more time, but dadgum it's going to feel good." So that struggle is inside you because you're wrestling between what the enemy's whispering and what God says about loving and honoring your husband. So you have this battle. You do have this internal battle, but it's an internal battle between the whispering of the enemy and the insight of the Holy Spirit.

Q. So does, I have always referenced the flesh as being your old nature. But the flesh is not.

A. No. The flesh, I think, is exactly, God created you, Spirit, body, and soul, right. So He created you to be able to touch things physically, to emotionally connect with others, Jonathon's soul was knit together with the soul of David. And then, of course, your spiritual part relating to Christ. So they all interrelate, but my emotions in my body and in my soul, my soul's the housing of my emotions, they're going to follow whatever happens, or whatever I believe. And I don't think you can always control them. You can only stay away from them. You just can't let them drive you. If, for example, a guy's in a marriage and he's a believer, and it's not a good marriage, and his wife's really on him and he's really doing things as best he can. His wife is just busting him and he goes to work and this lady at work's going, "Man, you're a great boss. You're a great person." He's not going to be able to help the emotions are going to move here and away from here. He's going to feel better here than here. There's nothing you can do about that. Our emotions follow those things. You can't fight the emotions. That's part of the flesh. I have to in the Spirit of God say, "You know what, God, even though I don't feel as good about my wife as I do this lady who's telling me I'm the greatest thing since popcorn, because she doesn't live with me, I've got to choose Your holiness today. And I think that's the only thing, and sometimes your emotions, I tell people all the time inside a marriage, for example, we love and we're in love, right. Which basically means we love and we like. I'm responsible, under the Holy Spirit, for whether or not I love my wife. She's responsible for whether I emotionally like her. As I'm responsible for whether or not she emotionally likes me. If I don't treat her well, she's not going to emotionally like me. Her emotions won't be good for me. She'll still have to choose to love me, which is a periodic problem for her. So the way we treat each other drives the emotions. But my love is rooted in what I believe Scripture says to me about Christ.

Q. So those friends in the Exchanged Life Theology say you can be perfect under this...

A. You could be perfect; I think if you didn't have this (memory). If you didn't have this and this. So what happens when I die? I don't have my bad memories. He's gone. So perfection occurs. Right here I have him and my memory so I'm not going to be perfect.