

Walk in the Spirit: The War Between Flesh and Spirit

Don O'Connor

Galatians 5:16–24

Pastor Donald P. O'Connor | April 21, 2005 | Eureka

The Christian life is a continuing spiritual war. Victory comes as believers remember God's saving work, reject the world's values and self-righteousness, feed the new person through God's Word, and receive the gifts Christ supplies through His body.

Main Texts

Galatians 5:16-18; Deuteronomy 8; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 6:12; 1 Corinthians 12

Sermon Outline

I. The Christian Life Includes a Continuing War

The flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; this conflict remains part of the believer's daily life.

Trials expose what is in the heart, humble self-confidence, and teach dependence on every word that proceeds from God.

The wilderness is not meaningless. God uses it to make His people remember His provision, discipline, and faithfulness.

II. The Battle Is Spiritual and the World Presses Its Own Values

Believers are transformed by the renewing of the mind rather than conformed to the world's lust, pride, and human-centered system.

The struggle is not merely against people, but against principalities, powers, seducing spirits, and doctrines that oppose Christ.

The church and the family must recognize how entertainment, consumerism, false religion, and cultural pressure seek the hearts of adults and children.

III. Apathy Opens the Door to Temptation

David remained in Jerusalem when kings went to battle, and his idleness placed him where temptation could take hold.

God's people are called to active spiritual watchfulness; an empty or neglected inner life becomes vulnerable to returning bondage.

Children and young people need the life of Christ and a compelling place in His people, not merely rules that leave the world's attractions unchallenged.

IV. God's Law Reveals Sin and Directs Us to Christ

God's commands are absolute and good; they expose coveting and self-justification instead of allowing culture to define righteousness.

The law is fulfilled in love for God and neighbor, but it cannot become a ladder for establishing personal righteousness.

Freedom from condemnation is not lawlessness. Believers are joined to Christ, belong to Him, and live under His gracious mediation.

V. Identity in Christ Breaks the World's Slavery

The believer has been bought with a price and no longer needs possessions, success, appearance, or public approval to supply an identity.

The world's promises produce suspended dissatisfaction, but Christ gives a secure belonging that loosens the power of fear and coveting.

The house of the heart must be filled with Christ; merely removing outward evils without receiving His life leaves a person exposed.

VI. Rejoice in God's Salvation Instead of Living in Fear

Hannah's mouth was enlarged over her enemies because she rejoiced in God's salvation and deliverance.

Fear and worry are enemies, but believers can remember that God has delivered, does deliver, and will yet deliver.

God—not cultural approval—is the judge who weighs actions and discerns the intentions beneath outwardly respectable works.

VII. Feed the New Person and Starve the Old

On any given day, conduct follows the strongest desire; what is continually fed becomes strong.

Believers overcome the deeds of the flesh by walking in the Spirit, feeding on Scripture, and filling the mind with the living Word.

Growth in grace is not sustained by staring at forbidden behavior, but by hungering for God and strengthening the new creation.

VIII. Christ Feeds His People Through the Whole Body

The Holy Spirit supplies diverse gifts through the members of the church so that every person may profit and be strengthened.

The eye cannot reject the hand, nor the head the feet; no gift makes one believer independent of the gifts Christ gives through others.

Spiritual maturity requires nourishing food, mutual dependence, and continued reception of the grace that comes through the communion of saints.

Closing Charge

Remember God's salvation, fill your life with His Word, receive the gifts of His people, and walk in the Spirit.

Feed the new person until the desire for Christ becomes stronger than the desire of the flesh.

Scripture References Mentioned or Clearly Alluded To

Note: References are identified from the sermon context.

Galatians 5:16-18 - Walk in the Spirit; the flesh and Spirit oppose one another.

Deuteronomy 8:1-18 - Remember God's wilderness leading, humility, manna, and provision; people live by every word from God.

Matthew 4:1-4 - Jesus answers temptation with the word that man lives by every word from God.

Romans 12:1-2 - Present the body to God and be transformed by the renewing of the mind.

1 John 2:15-17 - Do not love the world or its lust and pride.

Ephesians 6:12 - The struggle is against principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness.

2 Samuel 11:1-5 - David stays home when kings go to war and falls into temptation with Bathsheba.

Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22 - False christs and prophets use signs and wonders to deceive.

1 Timothy 4:1 - Some depart from the faith through seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.

Revelation 2:18-23 - Thyatira tolerates Jezebel's seduction, idolatry, and sexual immorality.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9, 20-25 - Teach God's commands diligently to children for their good.

Romans 7:4, 7 - The law exposes coveting, and believers are joined to another, Christ.

Psalms 19:7 - The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

Psalms 1:1-3 - The blessed person delights and meditates in God's law.

Galatians 5:14; Romans 13:9 - The law is fulfilled in loving one's neighbor.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - Believers belong to God and are bought with a price.

Luke 11:13 - The Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask.

Matthew 12:43-45 - An unclean spirit returns to an empty house with other spirits.

Psalms 2:1-3 - The nations and rulers rage against the Lord and His Anointed.

1 Samuel 2:1-3 - Hannah rejoices in God's salvation; the Lord weighs actions.

2 Corinthians 1:10 - God delivered, does deliver, and will yet deliver.

Hebrews 4:12 - God's Word discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Luke 16:15 - What people highly esteem may be an abomination before God.

1 Corinthians 12:1-27 - The Spirit gives diverse gifts, and every member needs the others.

1 John 2:12-14 - Children, young people, and fathers represent stages of spiritual maturity.

Full Verbatim Transcript

Given for me, and by the grace of God, may we go to war today in our in our hearts, just as Jesus is at war right now for His church, that the Word would become our own. Jesus' name, Amen. Well, greetings from the brethren in Olympia. We've got your CD one copy so far. No, it wasn't us. We should have though, and we salute you. We do indeed salute you because it's well done. And yesterday I got to hear a little of the music, and I was really blessed by it, I couldn't get away. I just come downstairs to use the restroom, and I heard it was like a magnet.

So it's good to be among you since you prayed, David. Maybe we'll open up to Galatians five and 16 there to build on what David said. Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth, and some of your Bible translations would say warth. For the flesh warreth or lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. These are contrary to one another, that you cannot do the things you would. But if you be led of the Spirit, you're not under the law. So there's an ongoing war. Dave was pointing out. Hopefully,

we, in seeing that, a mighty fortress is our God. The Word above all earthly powers. The Word above all earthly powers. We do not fight in the flesh, but in the spirit. Jesus was tempted in a war. Matthew four, he came out of the wilderness, and the tempter in verse three came and said, "If you be if you be the son of God, command these stones to be made bread. And quoting scripture, Deuteronomy eight, he said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Maybe I ought to turn to Deuteronomy eight just to clarify that a little.

This is certainly a book for the church today, Deuteronomy is such a wonderful blessing to us. It opens up things. One of the key words in this chapter is "remember. Said at least four times, it's very important to remember because to forget is to go into captivity. This is what Hebrews understand. To forget God's story is to buy into another story, and all other stories lead us into captivity in this war. And verse 282, You shall remember all the way the Lord God led you

these 40 years in the wilderness. What for? And it clarifies to humble thee. Remember, humility is a passive thing in us.

Humility-it's one thing is for certain. One thing is absolutely certain. Thesis 18 of the disputation, Heidelberg disputation, is what? What is so certain that a Man, yes, he must despair-a man, not ultimate despair, but utterly despair of his entire whole life, his understanding, his perspectives. In short, his well, his self, the old self, Adam, before humility, the gift of God. But anyway, you will remember these 40 years God led you to prove you to know what was in your heart, whether we would keep His commandments. Now, of course, every every character we read, particularly characters with Jesus,

and then here, the more we understand that's talking about me. Individually, that there's something in every character. There's two of us. There's the older brother and the younger brother. Sometimes we just like to be the younger brother, but then sometimes I find myself being an older brother or a Pharisaic, going the way I think. But doesn't bother me, and we'll see why here in a minute. But so the Lord led you 40 years. He says to humble you, improve you, so you know what was in your heart. How many of us didn't know what was in our heart when we first came to faith?

And it seems like 40 years we've been finding out. There's out of the heart we know it's out of that, but then he's humbled thee, verse three, and suffered you to hunger. There's many forms of hunger too, of course. Hopefully, you know, and and he he fed you with manna that you that you didn't know, and neither did your fathers know that he might make it known to you that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth. God, so that's humiliating. It's a process where God takes proud individuals like me, and glory to God.

I can't do it. I can't, in my own strength, humble myself. I need the Lord to work that in me. And tribulation, or if you want a theological word in German, *infectung*. I'm sure you heard that from time to time. We all, whether you heard it or not, how many of you know you? If you never heard of *infectung*, you still get it. Even if you call it trials, you still get it. Okay, so every word. See, so we are indeed involved in a war, and the war is interesting today because we don't war against flesh and blood. Romans 12 one and two says, "Be not conformed to this world,

but be transformed. Now, what do we mean by the war? Is he saying withdraw from the world, join a monastery or a nunnery? No, engage the world, but First John says the world. What he describes the world is the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. That's what the cosmos say. Of course, it's also a place where salvation, the work of salvation, God is in the world. We were once the world. You once were darkness, Scripture says, but now you're light. You've been transformed, translated out of the kingdom of the darkness into the kingdom of His Son.

So, okay. So First John describes the world, and he says, Lord says, if any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Pride of the world. Pride would be the worldly man, autonomous, independent. See, and so war. We are called to war. War is our life. How many of you know if you don't go to war? Well, before you were a Christian, there was only one of you, flesh. But now there was no war between the flesh and spirit. You might have heard evangelists say, "Come to Jesus, and all your problems will be solved and be over. But it's just the opposite.

Sometimes you know there was no conflict. You just sinned, and how many felt real guilty when you sinned? Say you stole something or lied. No, there was no conflict then. But there becomes a tremendous conflict after you come to the Lord, and it may take 40 days. It could take 40 years, till I don't know. I guess it's up to the Lord the times, but we can certainly resist the Lord. So the war is not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. These powers is part of the culture that we live in. The cultures divided into subcultures where values are based upon what the culture puts out,

and when the church becomes, when the church becomes worldly in the sense that it has the spirit of this world or the spirit of the age, then it's very hard for people to distinguish. Well, what do you mean, church? What values? What do we value? The world's values live by bread alone, and Pharaoh will give you bread. Pharaoh's good at giving you bread; he likes to give you bread. And so, there's a lot of confusion. And in the church world, you know, if the church becomes so identified with the culture, then what's the difference? Okay. So be not conformed to the world,

but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Your mind. That is war. The war. You remember. Let's let's turn over to Second Sam. 11. There we go. And it came to pass after the year was expired, at a time when kings go forth to battle. At a time when kings go forth. How many of you know that you are a royal priesthood, a nation of kings, a nation of priests. At a

time when kings go forth to battle, David sent Joab and his servants with him, with Joab, and all of Israel that they destroyed the children of Ammon and besieged Rabbath. And David tarried still at Jerusalem.

Of course, you know the end of that story. It's it's like David tarried. It was a time when kings was David a king would go to war, but David didn't go to war. He tarried and went up on the roof. Sometimes the roof is up here, you know, and he looked out, saw Bathsheba, and so part of this world system is to keep us apathetic, not at war. Of course, our warfare reminding ourselves that we don't fight in the flesh; our words in the spirit. Okay, be not conformed. Ephesians 6:12 says we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and angels.

Angels, well, they are angels, principalities and powers. Sometimes against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, not with people, see, but with principalities and power. Our warriors. Seduction in the world to seduce our minds. We wrestle against these. Luke 13 says, "False prophets shall arise, showing signs and wonders to seduce the elect. Signs and wonders seem to have an attraction to the fleshly carnal mind. Well, this must be right. This is signs and wonders. But I've seen enough so-called signs and wonders to see the seduction behind it.

First Timothy 4:1 says, "In the last days, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. In the last days. Revelation teaches that that Jezebel. Well, God says not. Well, let's look at Revelation two a minute. These are the last days. They have been the last days since Jesus. See, God has a few things against the church that I retire. Of course, all these seven churches typify the whole church here in Revelation.

Notwithstanding, I have a few things against you because you suffered that woman Jezebel. Wait a minute!

I thought she died. I thought the dogs licked up her blood. How could she show up again here in Revelation? That's right. The same way Elijah could show up in John the Baptist. It's the Spirit, and the Jezebel Spirit. See, is a woman who calls herself a prophetess, and she they she was alive to teach and seduce my servants. Now, again, I don't necessarily think Jezebel needs a female body. Not that spirit. They don't care about what kind of bodies they come in. So, if you're thinking because you wear lipstick or something, Jezebel, no, not talking about that.

It's not what it's. It's talking about what's being prophesied, what's being spoken. See, and to seduce, see my servants to commit fornication, to eat things sacrificed to idols. In an age where we live, see the whole media, everything in media, whether it's television, video, news media, is saying, "Hey, look at the whole world! You people are weird. You're living in an old age. We have a whole different value system. You know, long live Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians from Hollywood. Long lift up this thing, and a man will find himself in a war with his own children.

Say, well, wait a minute. Other people or other Christians date. They do this. They do that. You know, you're always dealing with that spirit of this world trying to come in. Again, I mean, I can't. I'm not saying you know, under certain circumstances, what we call dating, we still believe in courtship. And it's interesting if you ask any group of kids I've ever asked, you know, and of course they'll give you the right answer, the one you want to hear. But if you ask them if they'd like to marry someone that had 20 or 30 boyfriends or girlfriends, I've really never had one of them say yes.

I think I would. I don't know. What do you children think? Do you like to marry someone that had 20 or 30 boyfriends? You know, I don't think so. But the world would convince you, say easily, that well you're missing out on something. What you're missing out on is death. But you know it's on the fathers to to explain to to convey that to their children, to show them something that's far more exciting than what the world has to offer. But what is not exciting, in fact, what's downright boring is the form of religion that denies godliness, that denies Christ.

Yeah. Well, again, I'm just laying some scriptural groundwork here. So there's a seduction going on the world, and remember that doctrine. She puts out different doctrines. Legalism's big doctrine, you know. Today, you know, morality becomes a big doctrine. So, what's morality? How does it differ from God's law? Well, God's law is absolute. The world has no absolutes. In what we could call today post-modernity, say, an age of post-modernity, everything's arbitrary. There's different subcultures. Well, we think this is right, and we have 100 people in our little subculture here to agree that it's okay to do this.

Well, we have a different subculture over here. That's all part of what is being put out, called the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life. And really, when you come and hear heresies from it, you can't really look at an individual anymore. That man's speaking heresy. No, he's just speaking the world's line. In other words, it's it's become so

institutionalized, so part of the culture that people just, you know, they are programmed, conditioned, however you want to say it, to just speak the company why. You know the big thing in life is success.

That's it. The big thing, lust of the eyes. I should have more. And of course, that that is a good formula for slavery. It is because if you can keep a person or a culture continually in a state of suspended dissatisfaction, as one man put it, then of course you have them continually slaves. Continually, they never get out from under the slavery. What's going to satisfy? You know the human heart. Only one thing. Now we've all tried to fill our heart with all kind of things, didn't we? You know the last thing we'd ever try would be Jesus, right? Oh, I'll try this and I'll try that, unless by some you know by the grace of God you've been born into a place where you see the truth, where the truth is spoken,

but the morality of the world-what it does-is it lowers the standard. I mean, what's moral? A moral person could be a person who works hard, feeds his children, takes care of their physical needs, doesn't swear, but the word of God, say, is absolute. Thou shalt not. Somebody says, "You mean you still believe the commandments? I thought you weren't under the law. If you're a Christian, I believe in the absoluteness of the commandments, and I believe also that if you, you know, when you break one of them, you covet, say, your neighbor's goods or something like that.

Then it forces you to go to some somewhere else. The first use of the law is to show us our utter ability to keep it, so that we go to the one who can keep it, Christ. The law is given. You read on further there, Deuteronomy six, where it says that the law, tell your children the law, teach them it, but teach them also it's for their good always. Say the law, but then you wouldn't know that with the law that you broke the law, or that you sinned until the law comes. But sin still kills you. The wages of sin will kill you even if you don't know. Paul said, "I didn't know I was coveting till the law said, 'Don't covet.' Remind me,

when I grew up back in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, there was no littering laws, none because there weren't a bunch of stores to buy things. Really, wasn't there were no takeout restaurants, so you didn't. There's just no littering laws. See, so I never knew it was just a normal thing. If you were in a car and you had a little popsicle and you threw the wraparound, I mean, there could be a police car behind you. That wouldn't wouldn't have bothered you or them. No kidding. You're looking to be funny. I know. I'm not that old. But the law came and said, "Thou shall not throw your litter away.

And I had friends then that wanted to throw litter away. They put holes in the roof or the floorboard so they could sneak it out. Again, because they thought, "Well, how many of you, when seat belts became illegal, maybe that would be a thing. Wait a minute, they're infringing on our freedom. I don't. And then there was a fine, so a lot of times though the law is good. How many of you like the law of speed limits, stop signs, and yellow lines in the middle of the road? How many of you don't like that? You're crazy. It's for your good always. How many of you like the law of don't kill, don't murder anyone,

and all the commandments. But see, it's been twisted around to where this is this big, heavy thing God's putting on you. Don't eat that thing, or you'll die. Don't eat that tree. I'll do what I want. You know. Well, the law has to be taught, particularly the children. Why? It's for their good always. Why we have yellow lines and stop signs? I remember there was a time in San Francisco, really, that people thought that if you just got rid of the police department, everything would work out great, and and there'd be bumper stickers. You won't believe it. You see how old I am,

but they would say, "Kill the pigs, and guess who the pigs were, right? But see, what would happen if you did? You'd have anarchy, which is worse than bad government. So the law of the Lord, though, is perfect, and for us, though, it takes on a different dimension now. Over in Psalm one, you've heard of that. Blessed is the man that what? See now the ungodly. Who are the ungodly? Well, it's the whole culture of this world system. It's the spirits behind that. The ungodly. Well, you you draw your own conclusion there. They have a council. Okay, but what do they do?

They don't, and nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the corner. But his delight is in the law of the Lord. Well, how could that be? Well, to begin with, all the laws of God are fulfilled in one word: that you love your neighbor, say, as you love yourself. Now, some of you would hear that abstractly and say, "Oh, good, I'm meet all the law. I love my neighbor, but it gets real practical loving your neighbor. If you probably noticed, because you know who your neighbor is, don't you? This person right next to you. Now, how many of you broke a commandment already today?

How many of you judged someone while you were in this room at church already? How many judged me already? Yeah, right. You know you're breakers. You're lawbreakers. See, I'm shocked. It's shocking this church. What are you doing, David? He's talking to his daughter. That's what he's doing. Hello. Anyway, as interesting thing it says in verse two, but not only

doesn't he walk in his counsel, but he delights in the law of God. Now, isn't that weird that you could delight in the law of God? Well, that's going to happen to you if it hasn't happened, because see, at one point, see,

you'll meditate in the Word not because you have to, but because you want to, and then you'll find find that when you find out what God has done for you, which I would submit to you. You don't know yet what God has already done for you. Say, when you find out what He has left you, your inheritance, then you will want to know the law because you will want to know how to please Him, how the law pleases your husband. You've been bought with a price. Let's see, God's not saying, "Yeah, now remember, I bought you. That's that's not it. No, but if you still want to say I belong to myself, go ahead.

But that's a bad deal, because see, if you belong to him, you know no one can mess with you. They touch the apple of his eye when they if you belong to him, and you do, but it would be a good thing if you and I could admit it on any given day that we belong to him. Finally, in the last analysis, we we know who we are. The world has no identity to hold out for us. That if you attain to a certain thing, if you're successful here, then you'll be someone. No, no. We know we are who we are. We are what? What are we? Say his, his. We're his. And what does that mean?

That means let's say you have children. Now Jesus went as far to say to disciples, if you having children want to give your children good thing, you being evil, he said to the disciples he was talking to people there, if you being evil want to give your children good gifts, how much more will the Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? Well, what's that, Don? What's the Holy Spirit? How many of you might say the Holy Spirit would immediately conjure up some religious things? Say, well, that is a reduction of the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit's a part of the Trinity.

He cannot be reduced to some concept, but. Anyway, remembering, say, the world is selling a story, and it will come into the church if we allow it. The story of the world is making a show in the flesh, making some outward show. Whether it's, you know, one of the biggest selling things in the United States today, under the name of health is outward beauty, you know, you know, you should look beautiful, and you need to do. You need to get down to the gym. I'm not coming against people to exercise, but I'm just saying you can make that more of a priority than the Lord.

But what's behind it? See, this Jezebel spirit say is behind it. You know, there's men look at the television. They see a beautiful woman. Well, why aren't? Why is my wife that way? She's only 70 years old. She's only had five children, and so there's this thing, this unconscious thing, continually be before put before men. You know, pornography isn't just on the paper on pixels. It's in men's minds. If you walk after the world, if you know you don't do, if you don't do what they're saying, if there's not something else going, something bigger going.

Remember,

there was a Jesus cast the devils out of a man, and then he said, "You know, when the devils are cast out of us, if if our house is empty, they'll come back. A devil that was cast out will not only come back; he'll bring seven more demons worse than the original one. So it behooves us to keep our minds, our hearts continually filled on something besides ourselves in the world. See, the world says no, no, no. The center of the universe is you. Move Jesus into the perimeter of something useful. You know, how many of you ever thought Jesus of being useful or the church as being useful?

How many of you never thought of that? How many of you came to Jesus because you finally figured out this is the way? Things are going great in my life, and no one, no one, no one comes to Jesus. If you had a brain, you'd run from him. I mean, when because when you don't know the Lord, He's not to get you. No matter what the evangelist said, he's not going to stop. Well, okay. So the war is between principalities, powers that drive the culture, and they seek in this culture to, well, reduce you down to a thing, an object, something useful, a consumer, something that can continually,

you know, be driven, identity. But but it's all over once you know you're his and what that means. That's it. The world has no power there. But see, you still might want some identity outside of that. That'll work. That will work. If you seek an identity outside of the Lord, then you become very vulnerable to being a pawn in the world's game. Yeah. Oh yeah. If you look down, do you see more about war? If you look at Psalm two, why do the heathen rage and people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves up in the rulers of the earth to counsel against the Lord and His anointed, saying, "Let us break the bands.

We don't need anybody giving us commandments, law. We're free, and you'll hear it in the church. Well, we're free. We're free. We're not under the law. You know, one of the philosophers, Greek philosophers, had a good thing when when somebody see what he would do is before Plato, and say, if you want to argue with people, here's a good way to argue: agree

with their presuppositions immediately. Agree with them. See, for instance, you ever, we're not under law anymore. You know, the antinomian view. We don't have to do that anymore. We can do this. We can do that.

We can go. We can do whatever we want. We're free now. Well, in a sense, that's true. You're not under the law. You're under Christ. You're married to another. And so now, see. But again, how's your husband? Imagine your husband. Imagine, imagine what he has given you and will yet give you that you're unaware of. Imagine Christ being married to Christ. Why doesn't he give us it now? You know, since he has everything, why doesn't he give us it now? Ah, he's smart. He still do want to work. He wait till you get to heaven. I want it now. I know. But what would you do with it?

Well, we've all been a prodigal son, haven't we? How many of you, the Lord gave you life, gave you strength? How many? You squandered some of it on loose living. Now, loose living may be living in here. You know, it doesn't. You're you're free to fill in whatever you want there about loose living. You know, it it would be like if I were God, I'd give everyone \$2 million. They should only give them a million, but inflation happens. The last time I was here, you know, thank God I'm not God anymore. Okay, okay. So the the heathen rage, the kings of this world rage.

That is the rulers and the principalities. They're against God. They're against His anointed. They're against the church. They're against families in particular. They want to drive a wedge. They want to, you know, take the father out of the family, get his mind on some other thing. So it's basically what we call a humanistic value system, where man is the center, and Christ is out there. He's useful now and then. Someone dies or something. You know, it's good to bring in. That's how the world views it. Okay, so much for that. Then there's religion, righteousness by works.

How many of you ever woke up in the morning, and before you get out of bed, the first thing you hear is what you didn't do or you should have done, and then you immediately fall into, "I'm going to stop doing that. I need to stop doing that. Help me, God, stop doing that. You're normal. You're normal. It's just see the Lord. I mean, the enemy wants to keep this thing hidden in us, so that we don't know that these temptations are common to man, so that we think we're the weird man and we gotta we gotta cover our sins. No, but the Lord Lord knows what to do with that,

and we'll get to that in a minute here. See, so we might seek then to establish righteousness. Where we're I'm making a resolution to stop doing that. I'm going to do that, or you can go the other way. Like I say, I'm not under the law, so I'm going to cast off. See, but bearing in mind though that what what does judge us? We have an absolute, more sure word of prophecy. We have what the Bible calls a mediator, and you look up the word in your kittles. It means he's an umpire. He's an umpire. He tells us what's right, what's wrong, what's off, what's out, what's safe.

However you want to view an umpire, umpire. The world does not describe our value system to us. We are a peculiar people with a peculiar speech and peculiar stories, and the stories though are interesting. There's an inner ring, you could say, of the stories of people who know the story. Anyone's invited. That's the strangest thing about you know. How many of you ever wanted to be in a clique or a ring? No one here. Yeah. How many you never wanted to be in a clique or a ring, you know something like that? It's a great little story. C.S. Lewis wrote in the book *Weight of Glory*.

It's a necessary. It's a story, the inner ring. But our inner ring, see, is strange. You can't be in it unless you want everyone in the world to get in. See, but you can't get in, see, except through stories, through the you have to enter through the gate. The shepherd brings you in, but these are strange stories. These are stories that are like code language. You could say it. Well, I don't want to use that. There was a book on that, but they are in a sense. See, they're in a sense they're the gifts of Christ. There are places where we find out truth about ourselves, both of us, in these stories.

See, so we have a mediator. That means a judge, an umpire, and I thought a good way to another way of saying that is if you read over in First Samuel, First Samuel, Hannah's song is such a wonderful song. Second chapter, Hannah prayed, my horn, my mouth. See, my horn is exalted. Verse one, my mouth enlarged over my enemies, because now here's a reason why your horn, your mouth-that is the trumpet, the prophetic word in you-is exalted over all enemies. See, you may have an enemy of fear today. You may be fearing this future thing that's going to happen, whether tomorrow or you may fear all kind of things.

That's an enemy. Fear is a spirit. Fear is a spirit that we haven't been given. But if our house is empty, it might come back and bring its friends. Worry, you know. How many of you ever worry? Can I see a show hands? You are worried. You are sinners. You're sinners. You already pay double, though. You'd be better off to smoke than worry. At least you get something. Out

of it, and I'm not advocating smoking. It's not too good for your lungs. But if I had to, like I've said, I've always I'd always take up. At least I can watch smoke, blow rings, you know, shoot butts.

Remember? How many remember when you first started to smoke? You smoked like girls, you guys. But then after a while, you get cool. You know, give it to James Dean. You could do that. It's better than worry, because smoking's mostly gestures anyway. It isn't even real. I mean, if it's real, remember to first smoke drag on a cigarette. You know how many of you hated it? How many of you said, "This is great. I like this. Sin is really like that. Have you learned to hate sin yet? No. No, but as you meditate in God's law, you realize as you know who He is, as you rejoice in God's salvation.

But then there's an abstract term, salvation, on a scale of one to 2 million, where do you think if you had to rate yourself, what number would you give yourself as what you know of salvation? Three, one and a half. Salvation. How many of you would understand eternity, that you have eternal life. Okay, we have faith, don't we? For for now, there's some things we just don't quite get. Uh huh. But anyway, her secret, Hannah, is her mouth enlarged over her enemies because why? Because she rejoices in thy, in his salvation. Now he has a salvation, but remember, salvation means deliverance.

And his salvation, his deliverance, he hath delivered us. He doth deliver us. Second Corinthians one here, and will yet deliver us. Half, doth, will yet is something I like because I always get myself in some kind of a jackpot or some kind of a thing in my head at least if not everywhere else. But I never have to worry anymore. I just start to rejoice in my salvation. Anyone can, and you know what happens? The mountains that we thought were so magnified in our life, these impossible mountains that we were up against, are thrown into the sea. And she goes on.

She says, "Talk no more exceedingly proudly. Let not arrogance come out of your mouth, for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him, actions are weighed, discerned. So our umpire, our mediator, isn't the world. By him, see Jesus. They hated Jesus because what did he do? See, he saw their works. He saw that their works were evil, and he said so, and they despised them. He saw all the religious works were evil. That's why they hated him, because he brought it to the light. They were evil. All the good things that they were doing, the religious system was evil.

It was keeping people in bondage. That's evil. But see, the Lord weighs actions, so we don't have the world's values. We have a mediator. See, the Word of God is our mediator. He's Jesus, and it's the Word of God is like a two-edged sword, sharp and discerning, say able to discern, get right in between the marrow and the heart and the bone, and discern the intentions of people's hearts, even though their outward works may be good. How many ever did an outward work that wasn't good? Maybe did two. Right, right. So things can be culturally acceptable and be evil,

but in in Luke 16, Jesus says, "Men seek to justify themselves before men. Then he goes on to say, "This is highly esteemed. He says, "What is highly esteemed among men, an outward show, is a to God it's an abomination. It's idolatry. It's idolatry. Whatever we do for an outward show, see, it's idolatry, sin, deep sin. See, and it's an abomination, which is a great sin in the sight of God. Even though culturally, what a person could do, see, it could be very moral. I do these moral things. I go to work. I do this. I pay my bills. I go to the PTA meeting.

I do this. I do that. And I don't do that. I don't do that. And by the way, I do so much good and don't do so much bad. I don't need the Christ. Christ didn't have to die for me. Say and. That's the Lord judges. He's the Lord that weighs actions. Uh huh. Uh huh. Yeah. Uh huh. So there is a war between flesh and spirit. Galatians 5:17 again. You don't have to turn to it, but it's a continual warfare. The flesh will always fight against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. So that's just normal. Now, who's going to win? Fight on any given day. Who's going to win the battle?

Basically, you'll do. You'll either walk after the flesh or after the spirit. You either sin or not sin. You either do something or not do something. But whatever you may not want to do a certain thing, what it'll come down to is what's the strongest desire? Is the strongest desire of the spirit of God, or is the strongest desire of the flesh? And you will go where the where the strongest desire would be-the lust, whatever has a lust, a strong lust. But the key, see, to getting our victory, is it's basically what you feed, what you eat, what you strengthen.

See, if you strengthen the flesh, then the flesh becomes strong. But if you are led of the spirit and strengthen the spirit, then the spirit you get victory there. See, and when we want to, the spirit is the new man, the new creation. See, that we would feed, and what do we feed on? Oh, you know, man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. I submit to you, you know, that we get lazy with our Bible. I do real lazy, real lazy with it. But as you feed on the Word of God. If you're going to be men of God, women of God,

you need to pick it up every day, and you know. And that's not the only place. The Holy Spirit comes through your brothers, sisters, all kind of ways. Okay, we'll we'll get that in a minute. But the key to growing in grace, see, is what you eat. To feed the new man is to starve the old man, and that's the way it's done. You don't try directly, you know. To you just you're not. If you walk after the Spirit, you don't fulfill the deeds of the flesh. In other words, I don't sit around thinking I God does not fulfill the deeds of the flesh. I'm just caught up in the Spirit.

So feeding your spirit, you know, by the grace of God, you're in a church, you're in a body, where the Word of God is proclaimed continuously, continuously, because every day, if the Word of God isn't going in, what is? Something's going to go in there. You mind? So, what are you feeding? What are you eating? Look, First Corinthians 12. It's an interesting opening line there. First Corinthians 12 one. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Now concerning spiritual gifts, I would not have you ignorant. Well, we have gifts,

and these gifts feed us. They feed us. The living bread works through individuals in the church. And he goes, "You read this. There's a diversity of gifts. Verse four, as ministration of the Spirit is given every man. Verse seven, to profit withal. One person has faith. We all have some faith, but one person in this church has more faith than someone else, and when they speak, their faith comes forth. But another person might have a different kind of gift-a discerning experience. We don't know yet, but it goes through some gifts. But these are only a few.

There could be 1000s of manifestations of gifts. Look at the gifts of the communion of saints of men that have gone on to be with the Lord, that we're still eating on their bones, you could say, picking them clean. I hope, you know. But see, here's a problem, though. In verse 2021, he says that the eyes. He say you're good, you have discernment. But say you're a deacon. Another man's a deacon. He's he's strong in in deacon works. Lord, the eye can't say to the hand, I have no need of thee. Nor again to the head to the feet, I have no need of thee. See, it's an allegorical way of saying something.

No matter what you are in one realm, you'll still need everybody else's gift to fulfill you, to complete you daily. See, and these gifts, see, are the grace of God. See, so you got to fill up on good food, you know. You give little babe pablum, or if they get to be three, four years old, and all they ever like to eat is McDonald's hamburgers, see junk food or potato chips, they don't get very nourished, dude. That's the same in the spirit. What you eat, see, if you fill up, fill

yourself up on good things, yeah. Been on a diet. How many of you ever heard that a lot of people their problem is they don't eat enough when they're on a diet.

They don't. They don't eat enough. I mean, how much good things can you eat? You know, if you get on a diet and you eat good things, you eat a lot of spinach and things. You know, you might not have room for a cheeseburger or something. Well, in the war that we're in, see what you eat. You know, you become what you eat, as they say. So starve. How do you starve the old man? By filling the new man by continually hungering and thirsting, say for God. Strong meat, but strong meat goes to those who are, you know, mature. And What's mature? Say, well, they know the father.

They're mature. First John speaks of three kinds of people the book is written to: babes, young men, and fathers. Clarifies what qualifies each each category. There, a way of saying something. So, Great.

SOURCE

Transcribed from an audio recording of a sermon by Don O'Connor.