

A Pastor's Heart

Encouragement from Pastor McGill

Winning the battle over self

1 Corinthians 9:26-27: *I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

The Apostle Paul here addresses a vital area in the life of the believer in order to ensure success with God. In essence, Paul is saying before I can put demons to flight and minister to others, I must first win the battle over myself. He let's us know that it is critical to win this battle first. The battle over self encompasses the mind and the flesh. Once the spirit of man has been born again, it is eternally secure and at rest. The mind and the flesh however, were not born again. Therefore, these two areas are responsible for the problems that hinder us from having success with God. We must know how to deal effectively with these two parts of our trinity. A failure to win this battle is a guarantee of defeat, even before our day begins. This battle must be won daily. Today, let's deal with the flesh. Our flesh is at constant war against our spirit. The bible tells us that in our flesh dwells no good thing (Romans 7:18). The flesh constantly and continuously wants to sin. Sin dwells in the flesh; therefore it must always be controlled. Paul states that he keeps his body under and brings it into subjection. He knows that a failure to do this will result in disaster not only for him personally, but for the ministry that has been entrusted to him as well. There is a great example in the bible of this type of control over the flesh in Genesis 39. Joseph is approached by Potipher's wife to commit adultery with her. She is the boss's wife, the boss has his trust, he is a slave, and nobody is around. I am sure that his flesh wanted to yield to her desires and I am sure the devil was really working on his mind. When you have these two things tugging at you, it is very difficult to resist. How easy would it have been for him to cave in to the desires of his flesh? Instead he refused to allow his flesh to lead him to destruction, despite the consequences of rejecting the boss's wife. Her scorn placed Joseph in prison. Long before Potipher's wife approached him, Joseph had won the battle over self. We see how great an example Joseph is for all of us who are trapped in this body of sin. No matter the obstacle, every one of them must be overcome in order to win this battle. This is not done passively but aggressively. No battle is won against a strong enemy without force. I will often deprive my flesh of certain foods or drinks that I really enjoy, just to remind the flesh who is control. If my flesh rises up in protest, I will extend the depravity even farther, just to let the flesh know who is in charge. This is not a fast; it is an exercise or practice of control over my flesh. Here are 3 keys to winning the battle over self.

1. Rise up before the flesh does. Never allow the flesh to lead in anything or lead you anywhere. It is a trap. It will always take you in the opposite direction of God.
2. Spend quality time in the presence of the Lord. This goes beyond a ritual of prayer. This is time based on a personal knowledge of God and a relationship with

God. Talk to the Lord about your weaknesses and your struggles. He is not going to judge you, He is going to help you and cause you to succeed. He desires truth in our inward parts.

3. Submit to God. Allow Him to lead and guide you to the place where you belong. Don't rush this point. Total submission may take some time, but this is what is ultimately required. It is only when we submit to God that we can resist the devil. Submission precedes resistance.

This is the one battle that is not the Lord's; this battle is ours. He has given us everything that we need to win it. Make it a Great day.

Blessings and Peace

Pastor McGill