

#37 Northside Natter

2 December 2020

Today, I'm taking a brief look at **Fighting God**.

In our journey along the path to righteousness, there can be times when we feel a little out of sorts. We may not be able to put a label on it, but we know we're not happy. Something feels wrong and we just don't know what it is, or how to deal with it to make it right.

Usually, we can go before the Lord and ask him to show us what the problem is. If we sit quietly, we can look at each issue that pops into our head and assess it; is this the culprit? For example, maybe something we said has caused the problem. Think on that for a bit and if it feels that we've hit the nail on the head, good. Deal with it. If not, move onto the next thing that shows itself. In quick time, we will find the issue that's causing the problem.

Here's a **secret** for you. The best counselling session we will ever have is the one we have with ourselves. Why? Because we are the only living being on this planet who has all the answers to our problems. Yes, we do. No-one else knows the things we know about our lives. No-one else has experienced things the way we have experienced them. No-one else has seen and heard the things that we have seen and heard in the way that we have seen and heard them. Get it? We, and only we, have the answers somewhere inside us that we are looking for. Of course, the Lord knows us better than we know ourselves so always include him in our inner search.

Perhaps we will find that we don't like something, or didn't agree with someone, or no longer trust certain others. Maybe someone let us down and we can't move past it.

This condition arises mostly because we are not forgiving another person or being merciful in our dealings. We are fighting God.

John 1

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

What does God say about forgiveness and mercy?

Luke 6:37 *Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not and ye shall not be condemned: forgive and ye shall be forgiven.*

Jesus showed us how to forgive others as he hung on the cross waiting for his final breath. *'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.'*

Most issues among the brethren arise accidentally. Someone says or does something unthinkingly and there it is.

What if we did it knowingly? What if we did it spitefully? What if we said it in anger?

1 John 4:20-21

If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this COMMANDMENT have we from him, that he who loves God love his brother also.

Even so, we have a way out when we do wrong.

Psalm 32:5

I acknowledged my sin unto thee and my iniquity have I not hidden. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Here's a list of some things that saints can do that is not in keeping with God's word:

- Not forgiving others
- Not loving our brothers and sisters as we ought
- Not being hospitable without grudging
- Not giving joyfully of ourselves
- Backbiting
- Gossiping
- Judging others when there is a log in our own eyes
- Leaving the work of God to others (*being lazy*)
- Not supporting the church
- Not witnessing to those around us when we can
- Not going to a brother or sister when they offend us, or we offend them, to sort it out
- Not praying and reading on a daily basis

When we do these things, we find ourselves out of step with the Word of God. Why does it feel so uncomfortable? Because we are feeling the pricking of the Spirit. We are, in fact, fighting God! We all know that when we fight God, we lose.

What's the solution? Stop fighting God. Start by reading and praying and spending some quality time with him. Decide to choose a better attitude towards others. Stop being lazy and engage with the church work where we can. Get out and witness. Support the church by tithing regularly. Love the brethren, whoever they are, and be hospitable – as if we are greeting Christ himself. Keep our opinions of others and the things we overhear to ourselves. In short, line ourselves up with the Word - side with God.

It sounds a simple thing to do, and it is simple. That doesn't mean that it's always easy to put into practice. As I mentioned, we are going against our own human condition to walk the path of righteousness. It's the opposite of all those awful human tendencies that we somehow fall into so easily. We probably thought nothing of them when we did them before coming to the Lord. But he has taught us a better way.

Old habits are hard to break, but it's not impossible.

Matthew 19:26

But Jesus beheld them and said unto them, "with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

God was not in the business of condemning us for the things we do wrong but always offered a solution and if one wasn't readily available, he created one. He always gives us a way out of our humanness; our awful tendencies.

If he will not condemn us, then neither should we condemn ourselves. Our focus is to get back on the right track and to move forward. I can guarantee you that giving over, changing our attitude and forgiving, loving, and helping others is going to take a lot less effort than fighting against the prickings of the Spirit. It will be a lot less painful too.

When we were younger, we hated to hear those things that our mothers said to us. "I told you not to do that, didn't I?" All the I-told-you-so's, all those idioms and the sage advice just rankled the hackles on the back of our necks. Yet even though they were for our own good, our human tendency to rebel kicked in.

Now here we are with a book full of I Told You So's, clever parables and very sage advice and once again, we find we want to kick against the pricking. How well did Paul say?

Romans 7:24

O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Jesus gave us the answer when he died on the cross for our sins and left behind a legacy for us to follow. A simple message, a simple roadmap, yet an arduous journey if we let it be. We don't have to let it be.

Let's cease to kick against the pricking of the Spirit. The Lord's only motive is to save us from the fires of hell and to keep us as the apple of his eye into the eternity of eternities. He wants us!

As parents, we realise our mother's nagging was for our benefit. She cared about us and loved us in her own way – imperfect as that was. The Lord loves us and cares for us in a much more perfect way so why would we not do as he asks?

Together, we make up the body of Christ so let's stop fighting God and walk beside him instead.