

Doctrinal Studies Bible Church
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Study: Beneath the Surface

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1 Sam.16:7
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Beneath the Surface – The Battle Within

We naturally focus on the outside: relationships & circumstances but God looks at the inside, the things of the heart – 1Sam 16:7

The battle within: the struggle in the heart of every believer to lay aside our self-centered view of life & adopt a God-centered view of life – transformation.

Self-Centered:

1. Personal need/desire must be fulfilled by human relationships & means - priority
2. Personal pain must be avoided – medicated, suppressed
3. Life/circumstances going as we want is our primary source of happiness
4. Secondary blessings are made priority over First blessings - God

God Centered:

1. Personal need/desire is attached to God – people in second place
2. Personal pain is embraced as God's instruction & training
3. Life/circumstances are accepted with gratitude day by day.
4. God is placed as first priority over secondary blessings

Marriage Conflicts – Each partner legitimately describes how the other deprives or hurts them, believing that if this situation would change, happiness would break out all around. The real battle is that they are both committed to having what they need/want, to avoid the difficulties of human relationships and for the situation to go well for them – self-centered. The goal is to accept what God allows and use it for growth and glory.

Rebellious Child – Parents do everything they can to help and correct the child. They refuse to let go and allow the child to freely choose – Believe that, if their child would straighten out, there would be happiness. The real battle is that they believe that fulfillment comes from their situation – life going well.

- a. Is it wrong to want your marriage to be pleasant and your children to find a positive direction in their life? No
- b. Is it wrong to devote considerable effort and resources to these areas of life? No
- c. What is wrong is making these things first priority and believing them to be necessary for your happiness – your belief system is based on earthly agenda

First Things – Relationship with God, submission to the divine priorities of life & aligning your desire/will with the divine purposes.

Second Things – Relationship with people and positive circumstances of life – blessings

- a. The human soul is designed for God to be the primary source of fulfillment
 - (Jn. 7:37-39) *koilos* – empty place that God fills in the soul to meet our hunger/thirst

- b. Separation from God has caused us to build our beliefs apart from God – we didn't have His direct influence making Him our primary source
- c. Without God in our core, we build our beliefs with 2nd things (blessings) as our source of happiness & fulfillment – Old Man belief system
- d. Pursuing gifts for happiness instead of the Giver leaves us unfulfilled & frustrated
- e. Our frustration causes us to blame our blessings for not providing us with the fulfillment & happiness we expect from them
 - Marriage partner – blame them & seek to change them
 - Children – fearful that they won't be/do what we think is best – pressure
 - Finances – compare our stuff with other people's stuff – security

1. The battle within is below the level of our normal awareness, is difficult to see and often we live without being aware of it.

- We focus our energies on changing & rearranging the outside of our life
- We operate on autopilot, oblivious to what God is really doing in our life.

2. The battle within can only be discerned through the Spirit and the word of God

- Human view can only see the outer and at best the mental connection to it
- Only the word as revealed by the Spirit reveals the true war for our beliefs.
- We must be willing to look beyond normal life with spiritual eyes

3. The battle is focused on what we place as our first priority for happiness.

- Emptiness (need) causes us to hunger/thirst within and drives us to find some person or object to fill the emptiness and satisfy the hunger.
- Whatever we believe is the primary source to fulfill us is what we will consistently decide is to be our primary pursuit - Romance, love, money, career, fame, success, sex

4. The Old Man (self-centered) has believed that blessings = happiness

- Believed in the past & habituated that belief through using it over and over
- Habituated ideas become unconscious automatic thinking – subconscious
- Habituated, automatic thinking must be intentionally rejected to be free of it
- World promotes & supports our continuing commitment to blessing

5. The New Man (God-centered) believes that relationship with God = happiness

- Replaces Old Man thinking with New Man thinking as a habituated way of life
- The New Man is able to “count it all joy” because we believe the training program of adversity will bring us closer to God – intimacy = happiness & fulfillment
- The New Man embraces God's training & discipline because we have attached our hearts to relating to God above any earthly blessing.

6. The battle within is the divine training experienced in the soul of the believer.

- We struggle to realize that God allows adversity to expose our reactions to it
- Our sinful reaction reveals the existence of OM beliefs that need to be removed
- Only failure & suffering is able to break our committed belief that earthly blessings are able to give us what we need.