

Break Free...

*A Thought for the Week From Patrick Kemper at
No Strongholds Ministries*

Week #2

Be the Mind, Not the Body

Galatians 5:16-18 (NRSV)

¹⁶ *Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

¹⁷ *For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.*

¹⁸ *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law.*

I was reading in Ephesians 6 today. At the beginning of the chapter, Paul was writing about parents disciplining their kids and slaves obeying their masters. He went on to explain how both parents and masters are to have an attitude toward their subordinates that fosters willingness for those subordinates to do as they are told. In verse 10 Paul reminds us that our strength to do the things we don't necessarily prefer, comes from God.

Ephesians 6:10 (TLB)

¹⁰ *Last of all I want to remind you that your strength must come from the Lord's mighty power within you.*

We must be careful to utilize all the tools available to combat our enemy... who can't wait to see us fall. The armor of God affords us protection in all areas and provides an offensive weapon to beat them into submission, as the situation requires. We need to remember that we aren't tangling with the stereotypical, neighborhood bully. Look at verse 12:

Ephesians 6:12 (TLB)

¹² *For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies—the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world.*

I began thinking about the spirits that spend so much time and effort trying to make us fall on our faces. I have often thought about this and how seemingly unfair it is to have such a committed enemy, one so dedicated to our downfall and destruction, and we can't see them to fight them.

You are a spirit.

You are a spirit contained in a body, living in a place where bodies are required... and your greatest predator hunts you using guerilla warfare tactics. You can't see them. You can only work to detect their presence (by being connected to God in humility and in obedience) and try to respond efficiently and effectively. This reminds me of a movie that came out a couple of years ago called, *Avatar*.

In this movie, humans have discovered a race of beings inhabiting a planet where there is a vast amount of a very popular, extremely expensive, element. In an effort to get this race of beings to move, the humans created imposters, these... look-alikes (characters that look just like the beings of the planet but are animated and manipulated by an assigned, human mind). The imposters are used in an attempt to lure, bribe, even coerce, these creatures away providing an opportunity to mine the substance buried under the place where the indigenous are currently living.

These human-mind-controlled-bodies function, and appear, just like the authentic beings and can experience all the benefits of the planet on which they exist.

But there is a catch.

If the human mind is disconnected from the body (the avatar), it just drops where it is until the human re-connects, mentally, allowing the body to move about again. A non-animated avatar is completely helpless and susceptible to all the potential hazards of the environment. The avatar walks and talks and lives – through the spirit of the human mind connected to it. If the avatar were to be annihilated by a creature, roaming the planet, the human controller wouldn't be affected, he would just no longer be connected. That human operator would live on in their true state.

Application

I believe we live in a scenario very much like this.

We inhabit these bodies, while here on earth, and are susceptible to all the predators and things that can cause us harm. When these bodies are killed (or just run out of batteries), we do not die with them. We then become *purely* what we are - spirit. We will function entirely in the form in which we were created (a spirit), no longer amid the dangers and distractions of the world in which we currently live.

While we don't want to go through the pain of being consumed by an earthly predator (be it another human, an animal or a sickness), we can live without fear of death in this environment. The termination of our existence here will immediately enable us to fully be who we were created to be.

It is in this perspective that we should look at life, as we know it now, and decide how we should use the time we have been given. We, as believers, are citizens of heaven but live on earth in bodies. We have to navigate the earth, this hostile environment wrought with danger and potential hazards, but we should not be subject to it.

We have a mission while we're here (and we should be focused on completing it so

we can leave here as soon as possible), but we should not be afraid of the things that can happen to us. Nothing that happens to us here will have lasting effects beyond this world. As I write this, the words “...*in this world but not of it...*” ring in my ears.

In the movie, unlike our situation, predators could be seen. For us, not seeing our predator doesn't make them any less viable or threatening, it makes them more dangerous. The mentality of today's world passes off the existence of this enemy as silly folklore... fairly tales. This opens the door for these predators to run rampant and unchecked, inflicting serious damage. We should use this preparation time wisely.

We should be more focused on what is beyond this earth - our *real* home in the presence of the Father. Don't leave here and discover you should have been working harder, smarter, or (worse) doing something completely different.

We should not get comfortable.

We should not spend our time, effort, energy and emotion trying to get comfortable here. Our comfort (even though we live in a world where bodies are required and are susceptible to environmental hazards) should never be the motivation for our choices or priorities.

The enemy of your soul wants you to focus on the here and now. They want you to focus on the needs that your earthly body demands. They work tirelessly, insisting you make those demands your highest priority.

Our focus, our choices, should be made in light of where we will ultimately reside - the place where our spirit (who we *really* are) will spend eternity when this life, and this world, have passed away.

C.S. Lewis said, “You are not a body, you are a spirit – you *have* a body.” Live as the mind, not the body.

Homework for the Week...

1.) Do you live your life understanding you are just an avatar, or are you more like the indigenous who believe this is home? Do you live in the confidence of being absent from the body is to be present with the Lord? What changes do you need to make regarding the way you operate in this foreign land? Do you need to be more brave? Do you need to understand the bigger picture better? What do you need to do in order to operate less encumbered in this present world and more in a way that demonstrates where your real home is? Ask God to help you understand how you operate and what changes you need to implement. If you ask in honesty, prepared to make whatever changes He requests, He will answer. What methods will you use to begin accomplishing this? Be specific. Who can you contact to help you?

2.) Mid-week check. List the opportunities you have had and how you responded (this is your obedience indicator). If you are still posting a doughnut, more than likely you weren't all that truthful when you asked God for chances to respond and improve. Check your heart; be authentic. Ask God to show you the way through what is blocking you from submitting in obedience.

3.) How are you doing compared to the way you started the week? If you still need improvement, refuse to move on to the next session. Stay here, submit, and choose to be obedient no matter what it takes. Explain how you have improved, or make a commitment to continue working. When you are operating in obedience in this area of your life... turn the page and move to the next session.
