

September 16, 2009

Soulsh Dominion: Which Way Does Your Index Finger Point?

You may be finding it hard to recognize that you are still under soulsh dominion. Maybe this will help. We used the Finger Diagram below in our book, ***Growing Relationships Through Confrontation***. Think about its application as to whether you may still be agitated by soulsh dominion. When you've been hurt by others or have a problem in a relationship with someone, which way does your finger point? Does it *point at them*, blaming them for your emotional suffering? Or, does it *come alongside them*, recognizing that the two of you must work through the issue together?

The Bible affirms that our Father uses negative circumstances as one of His ways of transforming us into the character of Jesus. The Word also affirms that our God is Sovereign in all matters. Nothing happens to us that He doesn't permit: ***"In his heart a man plans his course but the LORD determines his steps"*** (Proverbs 16:9); ***"A man's steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand his own way?"***(Proverbs 20:24). It's your full trust in His loving sovereignty that provides the foundation for you to get through painful situations, and to release through forgiveness those who have hurt you.

Satan had to get *permission from God* in order to test Job. And, boy did that "blameless and upright man who feared God and shunned evil" get tested, to the point of losing everything but his life! Jesus revealed to Peter, ***"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat"*** (Luke 22:31). Our Lord didn't say He would stop the sifting, but only that He would pray so that Peter's faith would not fail. Everything that has ever happened to us, every person who has ever hurt us, our God knew about and didn't stop. Why? Because He uses suffering to produce in us the character of Jesus (see Romans 5:3-5; 1 Peter 1:6-9, 2:21).

Remember the progression of how strongholds form:

- 1) Satanic-inspired **THOUGHTS** are introduced into your mind.
- 2) Entertaining these thoughts brings on **EMOTIONS**.
- 3) Giving in to emotions eventually leads to taking some sort of **ACTION**.
- 4) Continual participation in this behavior causes you to develop a **HABIT**.
- 5) Once a habit is developed, a **STRONGHOLD** is built by that spirit.

If you're to become free of soulsh dominion you've got to win the battle in your thought life. The question for us who follow Jesus isn't, "What would Jesus do?", but rather, "What would Jesus think?"

How To Respond to Those Who Hurt or Irritate Me

[adapted from the Institute in Basic Life Principles Seminar]

Below is a sequence that displays how your sin nature normally deals with others when you have interpersonal tension or they hurt your feelings. Notice how different (and redemptively) our Lord would have us respond to these situations. Follow your sin nature response from top to bottom, then do the same for our Lord's way of responding. There's nothing in common! That's because His way comes from the rule of His Spirit in your soul.

<u>His Reaction</u>	<u>Your Sin Nature</u>	<u>Jesus' Way of Responding</u>
1. He reacts to me	Defend myself	Examine myself "Blindspots"
2. He plans revenge	Discredit him	Discover his needs and wait
3. He prospers	Envy his prosperity	Rejoice in God's goodness
4. He encounters setbacks problems	Rejoice in his downfall	Quickly meet his needs
5. He is convicted	Cover up my problems	Seek his counsel and prayer

We've shared previously the words our friend Bert in Israel spoke twenty years ago: **"You can never walk in the fulness of Jesus until you wash the feet of Judas."** This truth has helped us often to overcome our sin nature's response to hurt. In the years to follow, with the help of our Lord, we and others who've cared enough to confront us have been freed from soulish dominion of past hurts. We can never heal ourselves from the hurt — that's the work of our Lord. But we CAN purpose to cast down any unforgiveness against anyone and appropriate His peace in so doing.

Since we've been freed from soulish dominion, we've experienced the Spirit of Christ within us in His power. He has brought forth from our hearts a deep, loving appreciation that He would use us as He does. But first we each had to be freed from the dominion of our soul that caused us to respond to people and events contrary to our Lord's will. We had to *turn away from* believing the unChristlike thoughts, agendas and feelings that this evil reign induced. Then we had to TRUST that our Lord's thoughts, purposes and our response to them from His wonderful love for us. This is the ONLY path for anyone who yearns to experience His spiritual power flowing through them for His praise and glory!

So please, don't nullify the grace He offers you to live free of the rule of spiritual strongholds and the motivations and behaviors they taught you. Signs of your freedom from soulish dominion are that you're merciful to those who once hurt you and you've forgiven them from your heart. Another indicator is that you can put your fingers together and say with joyful anticipation of what our Lord Jesus can do, "We have a problem!"

Lifebyte 69 shares the foundations to the spiritual power of the Kingdom of God on earth. It reveals our Lord's plan for its expansion — a Kingdom without clergy. It is a

Kingdom in which He alone rules the souls of His followers, a Kingdom in which the mutual cooperation of the gifts of His Spirit reveals the unity of His followers.

Please don't read Lifebyte 69 if your soul is still in captivity to any of the hindrances we've discussed in Lifebytes 66 thru 68. Rid yourself of these with the help of others who care for your sanctification — setting you apart as holy on your ongoing life transformation into Christ's likeness.

Striving with you for His glory,
Mike and Sue

PS "The strange opposition that I met with from Satan, in the study of the following discourse, hath put an edge upon my spirit, knowing that Satan strives mightily to keep these things from seeing the light..." You may be surprised to know that this quote from Thomas Brooks in *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* was penned over 350 years ago! We just finished reading this, reprinted by Puritan Paperbacks, and recommend it for his insights into spiritual warfare. Try Amazon.com or Christianbook.com for the best price!