

### Training Your Beast

**Proverbs 16:32** *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*

Inside of each of us is a beast. A carnal, selfish animal. Not very smart, not really even sentient; just a creature that thinks only of its own desires. It is motivated by laziness, lust, and pride, and nothing else.

**1 John 2:16** *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

This is in each of us – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These things are not, in and of themselves, wrong – it is not wrong to desire to do things with the least effort possible. Nor is it wrong to want things you see, or to be proud of your accomplishments.

But these things are only permissible *IF* they are ruled over by some higher power that is guided by some more noble motivation. The problem is, your beast considers these things more important than anything else in the universe. And that cannot help but lead to sin (**Romans 8:7-8**).

Ruling over your beast, guiding it, correcting it – this is harder than conquering a city. It requires strength of character that everyone *could* have, but practically no one even tries to exercise. The whole world is devoted to indulging their beast at every possible opportunity. At the slightest complaint from the beast they set everything aside to please it.

This is why, when you come to God, you should realize that you are no better than an animal, completely controlled by your own lusts and pride – and say, with David “*So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee*” (**Psalms 73:22**).

Learning how to change that is...

### LESSON 53: TRAINING THE BEAST

A few days ago I went on a horseback ride with a few friends. Five of us had five horses, and the riders' attitudes were as varied as the animals'. Two horses were simply lazy – they had learned that if they just played passive-aggressive and plodded along as slowly as possible, they could get away without really earning their feed.

Another one was lazy, but also grumpy – he liked to bite whenever you tried to make him walk faster. Another one was actually fairly well-balanced – it walked fast, and gave us few problems. The last one – mine – was “crazy” according to the owners. He wouldn’t stop. He wouldn’t walk. He wanted to trot the whole time. He tossed his head every time I suggested we go one way or another.

When we came to a fork in the road he ALWAYS had a strong opinion about which road to go down – even though he had no idea where we were going. It was a big fight to get him to go the direction I had chosen, every time. So I had to remind him that *I* was riding *HIM*, not the other way around.

When he made things difficult for me, I would make things difficult for him – and once he acquiesced I would show him some small encouragement. Within 20 minutes we had established that I was the rider and he was the horse, and from then on he was the best horse in the group.

The other riders were like “how did you get your horse to behave?” and I told them that I established boundaries, rules, and each time he broke them I enforced them – fairly, but sternly and most importantly of all – CONSISTENTLY.

You can’t let your horse gallop around and do what he wants for ten minutes, then expect him to listen to you the next ten; you can’t beat him for being lazy one minute, then ignore the exact same laziness next time. To train any creature, whether a horse, a child, **or your own nature**, the most important thing of all is to be the same person, with the same expectations “*yesterday, and to day, and for ever*” (**Hebrews 13:8**).

Other riders never got their mounts to obey them, because they were not worthy of obedience. They were too weak to be stern to the horse; they were too inconsistent, and confused the horse; or they simply were too overcome by laziness in their own internal beast to be bothered to rule the laziness of another beast – so they simply complained.

So I spent a few minutes riding and working with each horse, then returned it to the rider; and the horses were now willing to obey that person, because they realized that if they didn’t, I would come back and demand to know why. So in a sense, a chain of command was established in the horse’s mind.

There was nothing *wrong* with any of these horses. They had simply been allowed to indulge their beasts too much and needed to be reminded that we ruled them. In *precisely* the same way, there is nothing wrong with YOUR beast – it has simply been allowed to run wild far too long.

Much as a horse and rider become one creature (the origin of the centaur legend), so you and your own carnal nature are one creature. But like my friends on their horses, if you are not in charge of your beast, there will be a “war in your members”, between your mind – which follows the law of God – and your flesh, which follows the law of “me-me-me” (**Romans 7:14-18**).

Naturally, this constant battle between your poorly-mastered beast makes you frustrated, and exhausts you both. It also makes you and your beast wander back and forth all over the road, as you’ll see if you ever watch a baboon-like tourist ride a poorly-mastered horse.

So because you have spoiled your beast for a lifetime, he has developed bad habits. It’s harder now to get him to obey you with respect because you have taught him that he doesn’t have to. That when you

say “just one more piece of cake”, he only has to start whining before you give in and let him eat another, and another, each time agreeing to “just one more”.

And because you’ve been such a spineless rider his whole life, every time you give a command, he tosses his head because he knows you’ll let him. Every time you come to a fork in the road, HE has an opinion – he has no information on which to base that opinion, but he immediately chooses a path at random, then resents it when you correct him. So you must now treat your beast as Paul taught the church:

**2 Timothy 4:2** *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

You needn’t be cruel; although your beast, precisely like a spoiled child, will throw a fit at the slightest demand from you, and scream that you’re killing it, and that it hates you – but you must be stern, consistent, and, of course, righteous.

## **ESTABLISHING CONTROL**

The first thing you must do when you get on a horse is establish who is in charge. Should you be like that horse? **Psalms 32:9-10**. The primary problem with the horse can be expressed in terms of faith – the horse thinks he knows more than I do. He doesn’t *trust* that I can make his life better than he could make it by himself. He thinks he knows better, about everything.

Why? Does he have any evidence of that? Of course not. Likewise your carnal nature always assumes it knows better than you or anyone else. What it wants is all that matters. But those carnal natures who trust in your better judgment – to paraphrase **verse 10** – shall receive kindness from their master.

To reach that level of understanding and trust between you and your beast takes time, and it doesn’t start with love; what does it start with? **Psalms 111:10**. You are supposed to rule your spirit – you are supposed to be lord over your own spirit. Therefore, the FEAR of that lord – you – is the beginning of that spirit learning wisdom.

When you are training a horse, you always use a bit in its mouth – something that gives you a way to correct it by causing it some minor discomfort and teach it what pleases you and what doesn’t – or to put it as we did in Lesson 41, **to give it a reason to care what pleases you and what doesn’t**. In time, once it is trained, you can ride without a bit – even without reins, where merely a touch of the heel or a finger on the neck will turn the horse. That is the relationship you must build with your carnal nature.

Does God see much difference between horses and people? **Proverbs 26:3**. God must use a whip on a rebellious horse, just as He must use a rod on the back of a fool. That’s why when David was foolish, he said he was “as a beast”. How do we get horses to obey us? **James 3:3**.

So basically, you need to put a “bit” on your carnal nature; something that you can use to turn it right and left. Something it doesn’t like, but which will not seriously harm it. This means discomfort and self-denial for your beast, and that you must be firm and unrelenting in your convictions.

Fasting is one way; your beast likes to eat, and doing without food is a quick way to teach it that it doesn’t HAVE to get its way all the time. Start with a day or two, then work your way up to longer fasts

if necessary; but most importantly, pick a reasonable goal you know your beast can do *but under no circumstances back off of that goal until you accomplish it!*

Another way, and one I think is more useful, is cold water. No liquid water will cause permanent injury in a brief period. And your beast will *not* like it. So tell your beast “want to whine about 70F (21C) water when I tell you to get into it? Fine – let’s try 60F (15C)!” Your beast needs to learn, not only to take your commands, but to do so *gracefully and even cheerfully!*

A few days ago I went swimming in water flowing out from under a glacier, which quite literally had chunks of ice floating past. My beast didn’t like it – so I did it three times. Fully underwater. And as *coold* as it was, it felt great afterward!

I’m not saying I stayed a long time – that could have been dangerous, and I’m not trying to kill my beast – but I will *not* be governed by an animal, even if that animal is inside of me! You’re in training to become a child of God, a spirit being. No spirit being can allow themselves to be pushed around by an animal, **because if you can’t even rule over an animal, you can never rule over people!**

But you don’t have to jump into a glacier to prove the point to your beast. The cold water in most showers is enough to start. Turn it on all cold and walk into it. Don’t let your beast flinch – and don’t let it hold its breath. Just walk in there, stay calm, and breath normally. Set an egg timer to 1 minute before you get in, so you don’t cheat and hop right back out.

Make a commitment to doing it, and don’t back out! Do it tonight! Do it now! But do it, and see if your beast is in charge, or if you are! And once your beast does it, reward it with hot water! If the water is properly cold, you will not be able to breathe normally the first few times. So work on it.

You’re not trying to be mean, just trying to get it into the habit of obeying – and in the habit of trusting you to take care of it. And after the hot water, do cold again. (This is really good for you, anyway – and you’ll feel great afterward.) And when you master it, when it becomes too easy, too boring, do something else – until your beast responds without hesitation to the lightest touch.

When it finally does, you’ll have made great progress – but unfortunately that only trained your beast to overcome its laziness and discomfort, the “lust of the flesh”. Once you’ve done that, you’ll have taught your beast to look past its own suffering and obey your commands regardless of how it feels. But many, many philosophers have done this – it’s the cornerstone of most philosophies from Plato and Epictetus to Ghandi and Thoreau.

But is that what religion is all about? **Colossians 2:23**. To most ascetic and stoic philosophers, denying the body was an end in itself; avoiding pleasure was, itself, a noble goal. And while that sounds nice, it simply isn’t true. This is that “vain philosophy” (**Colossians 2:8**), which was extremely popular in the time of Paul.

You’re not denying your body because it’s inherently *good* to deny the body; you’re denying the body *to teach your beast to obey you*. Once it does, then there is no reason not to give it whatever will bring it/you happiness *provided* it is good for it. And provided it doesn’t ever get too spoiled again.

## LUST OF THE EYES

The lust of the flesh is about the needs and laziness of the carnal nature. About saying “go take a bath in 50F (10C) water”, “you can’t have another beer, you’ve had enough”, or “yes, sugar tastes good, but it’s bad for you”, and having the nature cheerfully accept your judgment, as you should accept God’s judgment without a fight.

But the lust of the eyes is about the dissatisfaction of that nature. About always wanting to be somewhere else, or to have something you don’t have. Your beast may have everything it ever wanted, but as soon as the eyes see something new and exciting, it forgets what it has and desires the new. This is the lust of the eyes.

Did Paul have this problem? **Philippians 4:11-12**. Should you be happy with what you have – however little that may be? **1 Timothy 6:6-8**. Is the lust of the eyes a lack of faith? **Hebrews 13:5**. Is this desire for that which we don’t have what guides the world? **Psalms 10:3**. How should your beast be taught to behave regarding things it doesn’t have? **Matthew 6:25-34**.

So the beast must be taught that what it has is enough – that it doesn’t need anything else. It needs to be trained to look inward for satisfaction, not outward. So every time you catch your beast being impatient to be elsewhere – when here is just fine – grab your bit and jerk the reins and remind it to enjoy what it has.

What do men use their eyes for? **Jeremiah 22:17**. What happens to those things you think are so important to you? **Proverbs 23:5**. Can the lust of the eyes ever be satisfied? **Proverbs 27:20**. If you haven’t recognized this tendency in yourself already, you have a very long ways to go. You know, that thing you used to think you couldn’t live without, which you finally got... and that you never use now? And yet you think *this* NEW thing will be different! You think IT will make you happy. But what does **Proverbs 27:20** say?

Solomon had pretty close to literally everything a man could have ever wanted. What his eye lusted after, he simply went out and got it. What did he learn from this? **Ecclesiastes 2:10-11, 1:8**. But we have access to a greater than Solomon – what did He tell us? **Matthew 6:19-21**. Yet what do men do? **Psalms 39:6**. How does God tell them to truly satisfy themselves? **Isaiah 55:2**.

All of this does *not* mean you cannot desire to be in a better place (**1 Corinthians 12:31**, for example). You SHOULD seek to better yourself and your situation. But you can work towards improving yourself, your life, and your possessions while still being content with what you *do* have.

**If you are not diligently working, and working hard every day, towards your goals you will never obtain them – but you can teach your beast to enjoy the journey, and not worry about the destination. Searching for glory is the lust of the eyes; enjoying what you have and working towards becoming a better person, that is contentment (Proverbs 25:27-28).**

If you allow your beast to eat all the honey it wants, it will vomit it back up and have nothing. Likewise if you allow it to follow after praise and glory, it will vomit them back up and bring you neither. So rule your spirit – or your city will be broken down.

This will give you great peace, when you are no longer ruled by the lust of the eyes. When you can enjoy a sunset without being on your cell phone, enjoy sleep without obsessing over the problems of tomorrow, or enjoy a vacation in a great place without wishing it was a *different* great place.

It's not exactly the context, but you'll know you've made great progress when you can really understand how Jacob and Esau were able to say "I have enough" (**Genesis 33:9**), and truly not desire that which belongs to someone else.

## **PRIDE OF LIFE**

You'd think once you worked on the first two lusts, this part would be easier. But actually, it's harder. Because the better you control your lust, the more you have to be proud of – and the more difficult it is to realize that **you're doing everything you do to be thought well of by others**. It's hard to face, but what little virtue you may have was developed for no more noble reason than that.

You are called as a carnal, selfish beast. You made some small changes, not because you loved the law, but because you were bribed, threatened, scared, or beaten into submission. You obeyed God, if and when you did, because He promised you salvation; He threatened you with hellfire; He scared you with the plagues or beat you with disease, poverty, loneliness, or whatever it was that motivated you best.

So while you may have made some progress towards becoming a righteous person, you did so for all the wrong reasons. You have no right to toss your head at God and act as if you chose to be this way, for you didn't – God led you here.

Imagine if my horse, upon finally making it to the top of the hill, tossed his head at me and said, "look at this great place I led us!" But he didn't lead us. He didn't even want to come, and if I'd listened to him, we'd have been lost a dozen times. True, he did do some of the work, and for that he deserves some credit – but without me, he'd have been wandering around the barn. Much like us. Were you chosen *because* of your deeds... or in spite of them? **Ephesians 2:8-9**.

Why did God choose you, and not someone else? **1 Corinthians 1:26-29**. You were chosen because you were MORE difficult to teach, and MORE ignorant, and MORE selfish than others. So that, when God did manage to force you down the right path, mostly against your will, you could not say "*mine own arm brought salvation unto me*" (**Isaiah 63:5**).

Working personally with one of the students recently, I saw every time he made a mistake, he would get frustrated, which of course made him make even more mistakes. So I asked him why he got frustrated. "Because I don't like making mistakes!" So I asked him why again. He looked at me like it was a stupid question – "Because I don't want to feel stupid." I asked him why again. It took longer this time to get an answer. "Because it's embarrassing."

And "why is that a bad thing?" I asked. Is it not because it hurts your *pride* to have *other people think you're stupid*? He grudgingly had to admit that it did. So once you peel back the layers, his frustration was caused by pride – pure and simple. The pride of life.

Most of the emotional issues people have boil down to pride. We come up with all sorts of excuses and justifications for why we feel the way we do, but when you ask piercing questions (usually just the word "why" repeated after every answer), you usually come to the same answer – you acted that way

because you were afraid of what people would think. You wanted them to think well of you, so you said this; you didn't say something when you should have because you were embarrassed.

You froze up when someone asked you a question because you were afraid to make a mistake – because you might look stupid. You were arrogant and obnoxious because you were hoping if you told other people you were smart loudly enough, they might believe you.

You were lazy and half-heartedly did everything you did because you were afraid if you tried – and failed – people would laugh at you. Pride. If you don't try, you can't fail – or so you instinctively think. In fact, that's the only certain way to fail.

You were cold and distant because if you let someone into your heart, they might reject and hurt you – and if they rejected you, it would make you feel worthless, as if other people didn't want you. Which, again, is pride. And what happens to proud people? **Proverbs 11:2**. How should you act? **Proverbs 29:23**.

Different people have different issues, and yours may not be addressed here – but you may be certain that your beast is driven by pride. God made it that way (**Romans 8:20**). By nature we care what people think of us. Is that wrong, you ask? Is it wrong to care what other people think? No. **Not if you're a horse.**

But if you're a leader, one who is expected to make decisions about right and wrong, the only opinion that should matter to you is the law's. And by extension, those people who love the law – God, for example, or to a lesser extent those who have shown that they rule over their beast, and are not swayed by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

You should judge others **and yourself, your words and your actions and emotions**, without respect of persons, not favoring the rich or the poor (**Leviticus 19:15**), nor – especially – favoring your own self in judgment.

## **THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY**

One of the effects of the pride of life is that your beast – you, until you control your beast – thinks he is the center of the universe. Anything someone else does, he can do better. Anytime he disagrees with someone, he is always right. Anytime he does something, it's never wrong. Proving otherwise is always a fight. Why is this? **Proverbs 18:17**.

You are ALWAYS the “first in your own cause”. You always know – and firmly believe – YOUR SIDE of the story. This is how the prideful beast acts, just like that horse who always had a strong opinion about which path we should go down.

So you always accept your own version of events without examination, then force everyone else to prove them wrong. And that is being a respecter of persons. You should hear both sides of the story, you should let the beast's neighbor “come and search him”, and only THEN should you draw a conclusion.

When you have a disagreement, consider the other person's side of the story FIRST. Look at things from THEIR point of view, not yours. Step out of your own shoes for a moment and consider how this looks to other people. Then you'll be able to understand the situation better, and more often than not

you'll realize it was you, not them, that was wrong. So apologize, humble yourself before the person you wronged. **This of course hurts the pride of the beast, which is precisely what it needs most.**

But if you try to see things from their point of view, aren't you just back to worrying about what other people think? No, it's not the same at all. You're not trying to see their side because you care about **what they think about you**, you're doing it **because you care about THEM** and doing what is best for them. Sometimes that will even make them hate you more, but that's not important – IF you aren't ruled by pride!

And when you get really good at this – when your beast's pride has been so well controlled that you are able to make decisions without its interference, then you can really begin to see things as they are. More importantly, you can start to understand your enemies. Begin to realize why they do things, and you'll see that everything they do is just as logical and necessary from their point of view as what you do is to you.

When you truly understand that, you will be able to really understand what Christ meant when He said, *“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”* (**Luke 23:34**). You have to be able to fully see things from their perspective, for they simply do not realize that they're murdering you. They really believe they're doing God a service.

This is true whether someone cuts you off in traffic, steals from you, or burns you at the stake. They have reasons for what they do; justifications which don't make it right, but they do make it right and even necessary *in their own mind*.

When you are ruled by pride, you can't get past thoughts like “how dare they do that to ME??” And even when you're right... that's wrong. Because your pride blinds you to their side of the story – and there is ALWAYS another side to the story. Look for it next time.

## **PART 2: WHAT ARE YOU?**

We are more complex than it seems at first. We are not just one person, one voice. We have many voices inside of us. Otherwise, why do we argue with ourselves? (**Romans 2:15**). Why else would lusts war in our members? **James 4:1**. What does your flesh – your members – war against? **Romans 7:23**.

In the context of our internal selves the Bible uses many words; spirit, soul, heart, mind, flesh, body, nature, etc. Some of these overlap – but not all of them. For example, if spirit and soul were the same, how could you divide one from another? **Hebrews 4:12**. In the same way, is the heart the same as the spirit? **Proverbs 15:13**.

Another overlap is the fact that “spirit” is simply a word that means “breath” or “wind” in Hebrew and Greek, which is used as both a thing (such as the spirit in man (**Job 32:8**)) and the substance of which that thing is created (**John 4:24, John 3:6-8**, etc.). It's rather like we say “a paper”, as in reading or writing a paper. What is a paper made of? Paper. Likewise, your spirit is made of spirit.

In **Genesis 2:7** God formed a clay statue. It didn't become a man until God breathed the “breath of life” – the spirit – into him, at which point he became a living *soul*. So first came the breath – the spirit – entering the man. Then the spirit *made* the man into a living SOUL.



Think of it like assembling a toy and then installing the battery. The spirit gave it life, and formed one part of the finished man, but while the man now *had* a spirit, the spirit was *not* the man. The man *was* a living *soul*. The word “soul” therefore referred to the whole, complete self of Adam, which INCLUDED a spirit as well as other things which we’ll see as we read more.

This is why people often substitute the word “soul” for “self” in the Bible. For example, did David say “rescue me”? **Psalms 35:17, Psalms 40:14**. He wasn’t talking about spiritual life there, not primarily anyway – he meant simply staying alive. There are many similar examples of soul referring to a person’s whole self, such as **1 Samuel 25:29** and **Psalms 3:2**.

What is it that goes down to the grave? **Psalms 89:48**. What is it that God brings up from the grave? **Psalms 49:15**. Notice that the soul WOULD be in the power of the grave forever if God did not *redeem it*, that is, pay for it to buy it back from the power of the law. Is it possible to destroy the soul? **Matthew 10:28, Luke 12:4-5**.

If men kill the body, the soul leaves it and goes somewhere. What happens to the soul when the body is killed? **Genesis 35:18**. Her soul was departing – to go somewhere, which explains why men cannot kill the soul. Can that soul come back? **1 Kings 17:21-22**. This proves that the body is not part of the soul, since the soul can leave the body behind. The soul is inside of the body, the body being merely a “temple” or “home” for our soul.

Since God must redeem the soul, the implication is that if He didn’t, the soul would be destroyed automatically. There is nothing that explicitly says where the soul *would* go, but there is something that tells us where the spirit goes – and it’s reasonable to assume they go together to the same place. So where does the spirit go? **Ecclesiastes 3:21**. What would happen if God didn’t grab the spirit (breath)? **Psalms 146:4**.

The spirit of man goes upwards because God has a use for it – God is redeeming it from the grave. This is not true of the animals, whose spirits – and presumably souls – are allowed to go “downward to the Earth”. But if – and when – God no longer has a future plan for a human soul, it, too, will be allowed to go downward and *return* to the Earth!

Notice that word “return”? Where did our soul come from? **Psalms 139:14-15**. I won’t attempt to fully explain this verse, but it is clear that “the lowest parts of the Earth” were involved in our creation before we were born. And where do we go when we die – if God doesn’t save us? **Psalms 63:9, Job 34:14-15**. What are we like? **2 Samuel 14:14, Deuteronomy 12:24**. Where does water that is poured out on the ground go? Mostly down, into the depths of the Earth, where we were “curiously wrought”!

Did God gave animals souls as well? **Genesis 1:24**. Most Bibles translate the word “soul” as “living creature”, but it’s the same word *nephesh* used in **Genesis 2:7**. And when the animals die, their spirit goes downward to the Earth. And what is at the center of the Earth? A molten core of liquid iron and nickel – a lake of fire! Which is the second death! (**Revelation 20:14**).

**The second death for humans, because it is appointed unto US once to die and AFTERWARDS to be judged (Hebrews 9:27)**, but unto animals there is no second death – their first death is like unto our second death, and they shall be as though they had not been (**Obadiah 1:15-16**). What is the normal end of “natural beasts”? **2 Peter 2:12**.

## YOUR CARNAL HEART

The easiest “voice” to explain is the heart. What comes from the heart? **Genesis 6:5, Genesis 8:21**. What makes us who we are? **Proverbs 23:7**. What is our heart like? **Jeremiah 17:9**. Where do the bad things men do originate? **Matthew 15:18-19**. Can you ever trust your heart? **Proverbs 28:26**.

So it is our hearts that is the source of our lust; our selfish desires; in short, the heart corresponds to our beast which thinks of nothing but itself and is ruled by the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

It is almost always the heart that is blamed for being proud; for example, **Obadiah 1:3, Psalms 101:5, Proverbs 21:4**, etc. Because the heart is the beast, stubborn and selfish. The same beast the first half of this lesson taught you how to tame.

You cannot change your heart into something more than it is – a selfish creature. **But you can teach it that the best way to receive its selfish desires is to obey you!** Which is all that training a horse does, it teaches the horse that the best way to get what it wants is to obey you.

But some people’s heart, like some horses, is extremely stubborn and difficult to train. What was God’s continual complaint about Israel? **Zechariah 7:12**. Would other nations have been easier to convince? **Matthew 11:21-24**. What did God want our beast to act like? **Psalms 34:18, Psalms 51:17**. What did David ask God to do to his heart? **Psalms 51:10**.

There is a very important distinction between the spirit and the heart there. David asks for God to CREATE a clean heart. He asks for a RENEWED right spirit. In other words, David says he never has had a clean heart, but he wants one! While he merely asks for his right spirit to be renewed *as it had once been!*

Like us, or any animal, David’s heart thought only of itself. His basic motivation was selfishness, lust, and pride. As I’ve said, while that was not evil, *per se*, it was definitely not clean either. So what is God going to do with our heart? **Ezekiel 11:19**. God is not going to save our old selfish heart!

God is not going to try to change a beast that is hard-wired to love itself into a being that loves others more than itself. What is He going to do instead? **2 Corinthians 3:3**. How is He going to do that? **Jeremiah 31:33-34**. What impresses God? **2 Kings 22:19**.

Jesus proved that the carnal heart can be fully dominated (**Hebrews 2:16-17, 4:15**). Jesus’ beast wanted its own way, just like yours does. But Jesus rode His beast, and never let His beast ride him. This may be one reason He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey (**Matthew 21:5**), the most stubborn beast there is, and one of the hardest to ride – to demonstrate that He not only ruled a carnal nature, but He ruled the most difficult carnal nature anyone has ever had! [Or that could be an unrelated coincidence].

Jesus proved that your beast can be “ridden” perfectly, and trained so well that it needs no bit nor reins; simply the touch of our higher nature should be enough to make our beast obey. And while that obedience must begin in fear, you should develop a relationship with your own heart that is based on a stronger bond of trust.

Josiah’s heart was tender (**2 Chronicles 34:27**), and he ruled it well – making it possible for God to guide him well in turn, leading him without a harsh bit in his mouth as so many of Israel’s kings needed

(2 Chronicles 16:12, 1 Kings 21:20-29, etc.). Even Paul needed a bit in his mouth (2 Corinthians 12:7).

But when I say “a bond of trust”, I don’t mean to imply **you can trust your heart to be righteous, left to itself. But you *can* trust it to obey you while you’re watching**, and it can trust you to give it what it needs. Just as a rider and a horse develop a bond and it becomes easy for the rider to guide the horse.

But while it may feel like your horse loves you, and certainly it is fond of you, the beast is only obeying you out of selfishness. It has learned that you know best, and that it is happiest when it obeys you. It should even be willing even to die if you ask it to do so – knowing you wouldn’t ask it if it wasn’t for the best.

**Just remember that you haven’t really *changed* your heart, only *trained* it.** If you were to abandon your beast, while your training would last for a while, eventually it would revert back to its old selfish ways. That is why the heart must die and be replaced by a new heart, one that God gives you – so that you cannot be tempted to sin anymore (**James 1:13**). But first you must prove that you can rule this beast. If you can rule your own, you can rule anyone’s.

## **YOUR SPIRIT**

Are the spirit and heart the same thing? **Psalms 77:6**. So the spirit “made a diligent search”, presumably within the heart. What does the spirit of man do? **Proverbs 20:27**. God uses the spirit as a candle, a flashlight to see the darkness elsewhere in the heart/belly.

What does God’s spirit do? **1 Corinthians 2:10-11**. God’s spirit “knows the things of God”, just as our spirit knows all about us. Back to **Psalms 51:10**, while the heart had to be CREATED clean, the spirit merely needed “renewed”. This means it is something that was once right and had only to be repaired.

When we are born we know neither good nor evil – but we DO know what we like people to do to us. No baby likes to be hurt, starved, ignored, its toys taken away, etc. As you’ve studied before, every creature is born innately knowing the law of God *as it applies to other people!*

What this means is that we are born with a perfect conscience; a perfect record we can compare our actions against. It knows right and wrong – it doesn’t *do* right or wrong, but it knows what they ARE, and it tells us.

But we are also born with a heart that doesn’t care about right and wrong. And that heart usually out-complains, out-argues, or simply out-shouts our conscience. “Who cares if it’s wrong,” our heart argues, “they’d do the same to me!” Or “if I don’t steal it, someone else will – so why not me?” That sort of reasoning comes from our heart and can drown out our conscience... if we let it.

## **THE COURTROOM**

So we have two characters in our internal courtroom, arguing right and wrong – two lawyers, with two different clients. But what is the name of the courtroom? **Romans 14:5**. It is in your MIND that you must be fully persuaded – by these two advocates.

What happens in the mind? **1 Corinthians 1:10**. If we are joined “in the same mind”, then we are joined “in the same judgment”, because judgment happens in the mind. Where do thoughts and dreams happen? **Daniel 2:29, Ezekiel 11:5**.

One trick you can sometimes use to explain difficult words is to compare how they are translated in the OT to the NT. For example, read **Hebrews 8:10**. Notice the word “mind” there. This was quoted from **Jeremiah 31:33**. Look how it is translated there – not as mind, but as “inward parts”. So rather than a distinct, singular thing, it is a *place* with other things inside of it – a courtroom with a heart, conscience, and a judge.

What goes on in our minds? **Romans 2:15**. What happens if the judge can’t make up his mind, or goes back and forth between decisions? **James 1:8**. Is this a common problem? **1 Kings 18:21**. Can your higher reasoning ignore the advice of the spirit? **1 Thessalonians 5:19**. Can you choose to be led by the spirit, or led by the carnal nature (the heart)? **Galatians 5:16-18**.

One part of your nature is ruled by the “lusts of the flesh” – your beast. The other part is ruled by the spirit – your conscience, hopefully guided by Christ’s spirit – the mind of Christ. These are against one another, just as I was against my horse and he against me.

As long as that state of war existed, we could not do anything we wanted to do. We were “double minded”, “halting between two opinions”. If you are going to get anything done, you have to choose to follow one or the other. So do you choose to please the beast? Or “do the right thing? **Romans 8:5-6**.

It’s a choice, every day, whether to give into your beast or to give into your conscience. Most people make the decision arbitrarily based on which one nags them the most. And so because there is never a clear victor, there is a constant struggle between them – neither is tamed by the other. And so they are “*unstable in all their ways*” (**James 1:6-8, Ephesians 4:14**).

Either one of these advocates can eventually be wearied to silence. You can rule your heart well enough that it mostly stops objecting to doing the right thing (**1 Corinthians 9:27**). Or you can break the will of your conscience (**1 Timothy 4:2**). If you quench your own spirit often enough, it will eventually give up, just as God’s spirit will. How do most people handle this conflict? **Ephesians 4:17-19**. And how SHOULD you handle this conflict? **Verses 20-32**.

All of that rather long passage is devoted to doing the OPPOSITE of things your beast would have you do (lying, stealing, being angry, speaking without thinking, holding grudges, etc.). So you have to make a choice whether to listen to the beast or the conscience.

## **THE JUDGE**

So this gives us two witnesses – a heart, which seeks to justify its selfishness, and a spirit or conscience, which seeks to do the right thing. Neither rules over the other, as both are only arguing a case before the judge in the courtroom of our mind.

But the courtroom is just a building. To make a decision between these two parties, we must have a judge. Someone to make the final decision about what will be done. By simple process of elimination, that can only be the soul.

The soul must be the judge of these inner voices. It is considered our “self” because it is the highest authority in our self and therefore is responsible for all the rest of our “inward parts”. Our soul has the ability to silence the conscience, or to silence the beast – it has absolute power. You might say it is the *soul* authority.

But most people do not exercise that power, just as Adam had absolute power over Eve and the Devil, but chose to give in to both. It takes effort to make hard decisions, and it is difficult to stand alone – as a judge must do – and make a choice even though part of you is screaming that it is unfair.

And as a judge you must be impartial; your conscience is born pure, but it has been defiled by the opinions of other people since your earliest childhood; definitions of right and wrong that don’t fit the Bible have been fed into your conscience your entire life and so while your conscience is always well-intentioned, it isn’t always right. So how do you make judgments? **Deuteronomy 19:15**.

You have two witnesses – your heart and your spirit. Most of the time that’s enough, but sometimes you simply don’t have enough information from either witness, so you need to bring in a third. Ideally, the third “guest” witness is the spirit of God. In practice it can come in many ways, from divine revelation to a Wikipedia article or anything in between. The point is to find the truth, and then to have the guts to make the decision and stand behind it.

And as a judge, you will make a mistake now and again – and your carnal nature will be only too happy to try and use that as an excuse to keep you from making decisions it doesn’t like in the future. Don’t let it – when you mess up, apologize, make it right, and move on. A mistake doesn’t change the fact that you are in charge, your soul is responsible, and you **MUST** rule your own spirit and heart and body.

Will your soul take on the character of the voice you follow? **Romans 8:5-9**. Your *mind* – your courtroom – will be dominated by one or the other voice, depending on what your soul chooses. What happens if you aren’t clear enough in your judgments? **Romans 7:18**.

The whole problem Paul was complaining about was that he knew the right thing – his spirit told him – but he did not have the strength to follow that path. What was he fighting against? **Verses 22-24**. It was the carnal nature, the heart, that was warring against him. So what did his mind choose to follow? **Verse 25**.

Regardless of the size of the fight in your mind, how will you be judged? **Romans 8:1**. It is the choice you make in your mind, how you actually *walk* which determines whether you will be condemned or not. Why? **1 Samuel 16:7, Romans 8:27**. And after your soul spends a lifetime judging between your heart and spirit, what is the goal? **Romans 12:2**.

As I mentioned earlier, your spirit means well, but it is not educated. Likewise, the heart is selfish and spoiled but not uncontrollable – it simply needs trained. And the soul has no experience choosing right and wrong, and it must also have experience. And the result of this process will create a clean mind that God will be able to turn into an incorruptible spirit.

The goal is not to oppress your heart, just as it is not your goal to take a spirited horse and whip him into a broken nag who just doesn’t care anymore. The goal is to rule him well, make him happy, but to make him serve you – for his own good, not just your own.

Because a happy beast makes it easier to educate your spirit (**Proverbs 15:13**). After all, the spirit can be willing – but if the flesh is weak, nothing happens (**Matthew 26:41**). Likewise, the spirit is vital to the process of training the beast, in finding out why it acts the way it acts and how to correct it (**Proverbs 20:5**).

And if you're doing your job well, your servants should be happy (**1 Kings 10:8**), and your whole self should work together as one blameless whole (**1 Thessalonians 5:23**).

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

In **Mark 12:29**, Jesus said that the greatest commandment was “Love God”. But He said that the commandment was to love God *in four different ways!* You must love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

We know that the second great commandment, to love your neighbor, can be subdivided into six separate commandments – the last six of the great ten. That leaves us with four left over, which happen to be the same number of divisions that Jesus gave this first great commandment! Surely this is not coincidental.

It is obvious that “love God with all your... strength” corresponds easily to the Sabbath – for when else do you honor God with your labor, than on the day God commanded you to rest from your labors as He rested from His?

So that leaves us with the other three commandments to connect to heart, soul, and mind. Comparing versions in **Matthew 22:37-38**, **Mark 12:30, 33**, **Luke 10:27**, and also **Deuteronomy 6:4-5**, we get several different versions and orders. Adding them all together we get Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength.

Each of the gospels records a slightly different version and order of these lists. But then, Paul didn't quote the last six in order in **Romans 13:8-10** either, nor did Jesus quote them in order in **Matthew 19:18-19**.

So we don't need them to correspond *in order* to the commandments. If order was important, it would be consistent – and besides, in **Mark 12:33** the scribe, repeating Jesus' words back at Him, replaced “mind” with “understanding”, and put “mind” before “soul”.

So we have to connect the commandments to the heart, mind, and soul by understanding what each of these words means, and then seeing which commandment is most relevant to that part of our nature. This will incidentally make a nice test of the definitions you've studied in this lesson.

Where do idols go? **Ezekiel 14:3**. Since idols are set up “in your heart”, it is your *heart* which must be told “**make no graven image!**” Our hearts are covetous – “lust of the eyes”, remember – which **Colossians 3:5** says is idolatry.

And think about it – what is your heart's basic problem? It is *selfish*. It thinks of itself before others, and instead of obedience to God, it obeys itself. In fact, in your mind it tries very hard to reshape God's commands into what it wants, and it remakes God in your own image – thus, making *yourself* an idol!

So that's commandment #2. As for #1, we know that the soul is the judge, and must choose whether to follow your heart – the idolatrous image – or your spirit or conscience. How do you show whom you serve? **Romans 6:16**. So if your soul obeys your heart, it serves your heart.

Your heart has then become the god of your soul – and thus, your soul has another god before the true God (**Philippians 3:19**). Instead of doing what David said in **Psalms 42:2**, their soul is turned aside by their deceived heart just as the idolaters in **Isaiah 44:20** did.

Our strongest temptation is to obey our heart instead of God, to obey the idols which are set up in our hearts instead of worshipping God in *spirit*, thus it is our SOUL that must be told **“thou shalt have no other Gods before me”!**

By process of elimination, this leaves us with the mind being told “thou shalt not take the name of God in vain”. This is among the most poorly understood commandments, but basically it means “thou shalt not make God look bad”.

By taking God's name and attaching it to yourself – saying you are a Christian – what happens if you don't live up to your own beliefs? **2 Samuel 12:14**. What happens to the way of truth when you who bear God's name don't follow it? **2 Peter 2:2**. What did the Jews who made up their own laws (while ignoring God's laws) do to God's house? **Matthew 21:13**.

How did ancient Israel feel about God's name? **Micah 3:11**. What did God tell them? **Jeremiah 7:3-14**. All of these people did the same thing – they took God's house, God's name, and associated it with their own evil actions, thus reflecting badly on God and making God's name “vain”, or “worthless”.

We are working on an entire creature, not just a heart or a soul. That's why the word of God works on ALL of our aspects (**Hebrews 4:12**), heart, soul, and spirit. But collectively, these make up a MIND – hopefully, a SOUND mind (**2 Timothy 1:7**), and only when all of these obey God in harmony do you reflect well on God – so it is your MIND, the entire courtroom, which must be told **“thou shalt not make God's name seem worthless”**.

There is much more to say about this subject – to show how this same pattern is revealed in the pattern of the temple, where the mind is shielded behind the veil in the most holy place (**2 Corinthians 3:14**), with the judgment throne of God in the middle, and two angels on either side...

Or another layer inside the ark, where the three contents of the ark represent God's basic nature (the law), Jesus' educated conscience (the manna), and the right of the priesthood to determine which to follow (the rod of Aaron)...

Or how the two trees and the river in the Garden of Eden fulfills the same pattern or even – remembering that the spirits of men and God are represented as water (**Revelation 17:15, John 7:38-39**) – think about how a water molecule has two hydrogen atoms (lawyers, heart and spirit) and one much larger oxygen atom (judge/soul), making one whole water molecule (mind)... But this is enough for today.

**Romans 11:33** *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*

For now, go ride your beast.

This work is completely non-denominational and is meant to fulfill Christ's great commission to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16:15). This publication is not to be sold; "*freely ye have received, freely give*" (Matthew 10:8).

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