

## Tim Armstrong - Setting Our Affections

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Setting our affections well, we would like to begin by asking two questions. Now brethren, these questions are pretty simple. These are not any large words or difficult to understand phrases associated with these questions. They are quite versatile though in that someone can ask these questions of us or we can ask them of ourselves as well as well as asking them of others. They can be used as a simple greeting or with a greater intensity for a more thought provoking examination.

There is no set time of the day when these questions are more or less appropriate. Finally, they are not exclusive to any one group like Bible students, but people in the world use these quite often as well. Howbeit with a different understanding. Perhaps, brethren, they do take on a more important meaning when these questions are asked or considered by the Spirit begotten Child of God. Those who are walking in the narrow way of sacrifice seeking to make their calling and election sure.

So the first one of these questions, Brother, is How in the world are you? How in the world are you? And the second is a follow up to that how goes the battle? Yes, these questions speak to us of self examination, inquiring perhaps of the condition of our heart, or perhaps the actions and activities or inactivity of our lives. When we think of these questions as they relate to the world, the saying comes to mind, the ship is safe in the ocean as long as the ocean does not get into the ship.

End quote we think of our Christian consecrated life as struggling to be both in the world and yet to be not of the world. We feel the Scriptures and our Lord and certainly the Apostle Paul and others throughout the Scripture writings give us examples of this. You know our Lord's Prayer? Not the Lord's Prayer, but our Lord's prayer in John 17 where he is praying for his disciples. We read in verses 14 through 18 I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth Thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so I also sent them into the world. End quote There is absolutely no doubt in our mind and from the Scripture presentation as to where the Apostle here, and consequently the entire church throughout the Gospel age, are going to be offering their sacrifice.

There are two defining statements here. The first one is that Jesus is praying that the Father would keep them from the evil one and second is that he would sanctify them through his truth. This would not only set them apart for holiness, but also supply them with a knowledge of God's plan and the wisdom and power necessary to accomplish God's will for them while they were living out their lives. You know, important thought is these words apply are available to us today as well. Brethren.

Now when we think of the word battle, we understand by definition that it means any fighting, conflict or struggle. There are at least four words used to describe events in warfare. There is the word battle, the word skirmish, the word action, and the word engagement. Now, a battle is a continuing fight and may last for many days or in the Christian's case, for a lifetime. A skirmish is brief and involves small groups of combatants.

An action is one of the events in a battle as by a part of the forces being engaged. An engagement refers to a period of action, active combat, but it may also be a complete battle or war. Brethren, we

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have left plenty of room here for you to plug in your own experiences to see how they fit within this overall battle that we are fighting and how we can have day to day. Several of these terms being applied to our struggles depending on how we are fighting and with what enemies we are fighting. We know certainly that the world, the flesh and the adversary are the three great foes.

And how we interact with them describes our battle worn experiences. We don't want to discount the experiences that brethren have also with health issues or job issues, family things going on or. Now, while these are not the primary battles that we fight, we are struggling against these things as well, and yet we know the Lord uses all of our experiences to help develop us as Christ, develop our Christlike characters. Also, you know, if there's nothing active going on in your in your life particularly that's devastating or a hard trial.

The Scriptures do indicate to us that there's always something to keep before the Lord, where it says in Matthew the sixth chapter, sufficient today is the evil thereof, and so when, even when we think about our brethren, if there's nothing specific that we know, we can always remember them in that general sense, knowing that the Lord knows exactly what's going on in each life, so we must always be on the alert because the adversary is alive and well. We learned from the Scriptures that as consecrated Christians, we are to expect attacks from multiple directions from many different enemies, and to make things even more difficult, these enemies quite often cooperate with one another, or at least it seems like they do. Yes, we know them as already mentioned as the world, the flesh and the adversary.

And the reason I repeated this is because we always say it in that order and wondering why we don't put the flesh first since it's our closest enemy, and actually we have a brother in our class who uses that expression. When he does, he always puts the flesh, the world, and the devil. So don't know exactly why this order of arrangement was given, but it doesn't lessen the effect of the enemies upon our struggles each and every day. We do not believe that every trial and difficulty, though comes upon us is necessarily from the adversary.

The Apostle James reminds us in James 1, 13 and 14, where we read, let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust. We see then that such temptations are of the flesh because we are members of the fallen race. So when our human nature, our flesh, because of its inherent weaknesses and its predisposition to those things that are depraved, selfish or sinful, become one of our chief enemies. Just a little aside on the word selfish there, which is interesting, that is one of the things that we are fighting against.

Certainly it is one of the primary focuses of the world itself. Yet our Heavenly Father uses it in both to try us and to develop us. But he is using it in the world too, to bring everything together at this time. You know, the pastor in the fourth volume, I don't have a page number here, but he really hits the nail on the head, so to speak, when he's discussing the conflict that we have been in and is going to escalate, and the quote is, it's selfishness on both sides of the issue.

The haves are going to try to and hold on to as much of what they have as they can, and the have nots are going to try to get as much from the haves as they can, end quote. It will be a constant struggle. We know that there are real rights that have been withheld from people throughout history, and we are certainly aware of many of those, and many are coming to the fore today, at least in a way that they're trying to address some of them properly and some improperly. But the scriptures certainly have described some of those as well.

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And yet we know also that at this time that people are not only going to be clamoring for their real or just rights, but they are also going to clamor for those fancied rights as well, and now that's part of what the difficulty is. When you go from real rights to fancy rights. Not everybody is on board with that. You know, the pendulum now never stops dead center.

The pendulum always keeps swinging to the other side, and I think that's what we see here as well. But it was interesting how another area where the pastor where the pastor was right on with his observations of how things were going to take place. So we asked the question earlier about the world. What is wrong with the world as being an enemy?

Why is it a problem for us? Well, dear friends, the world has become our enemy by reason of the fact that the world is an enemy of God, and also perhaps even more importantly, that we have been begotten again, as James says in James 1:18 of the Father of his own will begot he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. You know, this begetting in us by the Holy Spirit is producing in us new hopes, new aims in our life. Dear friends, our ambitions are now heavenward.

They are spiritually directed, and there are some radical changes that are taking place in our hearts. I think we see that, and some of those things have been described this day already, those changes that are taking place and how we struggle against those with the new creature, against the old creature. The world has no knowledge or sympathy for the most part of these changes that are taking place within the Christian heart, nor do they really care.

This thought is reflected in First Corinthians 2:12, where the apostle says, now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. End quote. The Apostle Paul picks up on this in another place, telling us what the Lord has given us and what he has not given us. In second Timothy 1:7 we read, we have not been given the spirit of fear. The Spirit of fear and the Spirit of the world are together, aren't they?

But we have been given the spirit of love and power and of a sound mind or self control. I think the verses in First Corinthians 2, not just the one we read, but in the 12th verse, but actually 10 through 16, are important also from the fact that we question once in a while why this knowledge or why are we the only ones that see this? And even sometimes when we're looking at our Christian friends and their understanding seems to be different from ours. Certainly here it's an indication that to understand the deep things of God. We need to have the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ in us, working in us.

And we know that unless someone possesses that spirit of God, they are not going to be able to understand the Spirit of God or those deep things. But it is also a confirming thing because it shows that those who do have the spirit of God will be understanding. They will grow and develop the things of God, the things of God's plan, the things of God's character and the details that surround those and make them more plain to us, and we will be able to connect the dots, as it were, to a greater understanding.

Remember a talk that Brother Alan Springer gave one time? I think it was. Might have been at our conventions. It was on the deep things of God, and he listed a number of things there and he encouraged us.

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He said, you know, we don't have to see all of those things all at one time. But if we're, and we don't have to see all the details even of, say, just take a dozen different areas of God's plan and how it's being worked out, we know that we gain a fuller understanding as we study that more fully as expressed by the brethren today already, how can we have a closer, more intimate relationship with God through Jesus? And I heard multiple times, it's spending more time in God's Word because then God's Spirit has something to work with. If we don't spend time in the Word, well, then the Spirit can try as hard as it might, but there's not anything there to work with.

But the fact that we do have an understanding of those deep things, even if it's more of a surface knowledge that we're building upon, we still have a better understanding of deep things, at least the overall perspective of God, than many others, and this is important to us because it will help our Christian growth. When we understand these things, see the purpose of them, and the direction that it should take in our lives, it can really make a difference when we face these difficult trials and experiences that are going to come our way. God is still the God of the mountain, so to speak, whether we're going through a difficult experience or when we're high on the mountain. It's not only when we're going through good things, good experiences that.

That we have this wonderful relationship. But perhaps even more so, brethren, when we are going through some of those difficult experiences that drive us to our knees, so to speak, to seek the help that the Heavenly Father has promised. Now, one of those scriptures that's a repetition from this Morning is Romans 12:2. Actually 1 and 2, and we look at these very prominent when we are beginning our walk in the narrow way, we are told not to be conformed to the world's schemes, but being transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Thus far, these changes that have taken place have taken place only in our hearts and our minds. To the degree that the new heart is able to exercise control over the human nature. We know the flesh, if left unchecked, will drift back towards the world. We would like to draw a thought from Brother Russell in reprint 2769. That's 2769 where we see this controversy between the world and the new creature concerning the human nature, where he says, the Christian is called upon to reckon himself dead, not only to sin, but to his own natural desires, appetites, inclinations, and to the world which is in harmony with sin and its perverted taste and appetites.

End quote. You know, even with those proper desires we have, we are encouraged, and we know the pastor does this numerous times as much as possible to even control those, so that we would have all the more to offer to the Lord in our sacrifice. Brethren, we would like to turn now for a while to Colossians, the third chapter, for a bit and to ask you a question. When you heard the title of the discourse this afternoon, Setting Our Affections, did you finish the Scripture in your mind? We have a choice, and that is why we did not finish the Scripture.

There's always a choice on how we are going to set our affections. Are we going to set them properly or are we not going to set them properly? The Heavenly Father, in the wonderful way that he laid out his plan, always gives us the free will of choice, even to us who are walking in the narrow way, even go beyond that, even to his very Son, our Lord and Savior. Jesus always had free will. God never violated his free will.

When the world got into a problem through sin, and as it's given to us in Isaiah, we're putting the question like a conversation that the Father might be having with the Son through Isaiah's writings. There he said, who shall we send? Who shall go for us? Well, the Son said, here am I. Send me.

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He wasn't coerced into doing that, but he offered. He volunteered to do it. Now, obviously it was the Father's will for him to do that, and he always did the Father's will. So we're not surprised about that. But there was no coercion there and it was a free will offering of our of our Lord.

And we know that to satisfy the ransom for Father Adam, that it had to be a free will offering given by the one who. Only one in the universe who was able to give that, and that was our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul, in the previous verses leading up to the third chapter, mainly Colossians 2, verse 20, where he said, if you have died with Christ, he is discussing, it is still possible to have obedience to outward rules while leaving sin and self unconquered. If you have died with Christ. He is really saying to us that if you are dead with Christ, then act like it, you know.

As we turn to verse one of Colossians, the third chapter, we read, if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Brethren, we know that we are risen by faith only at this time. We are not actually risen, but are risen by faith. We can be practicing that condition. We can be conducting ourselves as if that has taken place.

Brother Russell made a statement where he said, from the beginning of the Holy Spirit, the Christian begins the resurrected life. His change to a spirit body at the second presence is dependent upon the maintenance of this resurrected life that we have now on this side of the veil. End quote. Yes. When we look at that word seek, there is a footnote in the Weymouth translation which says seek means cease to concentrate your energies and your thoughts on mundane or earthly ordinances.

Referring to the previous verse in the second chapter. We are to focus on those things which are above, that is our new home, the things that are above, not to focus on things on this earth. This is not our permanent residence, is it? We are going to be leaving here. We are encouraged in Philippians 3:20, where we read our conversation, or better translated, our citizenship is in heaven.

That is where we expect the Lord. We are encouraged also to live as pilgrims and strangers, as aliens in this foreign land. Now back to Colossians 3, verse 2, where we are encouraged to set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. The word set, Brother Russell said, says that it indicates a continual setting or repeated setting. So it's not just a one time event like set your affections on things above.

And it's done. There's a commercial on television about eating more healthy, and I think there's a piece of broccoli or something there. One and done. You take that one bite of broccoli and you have good health from then on.

No, in the natural body you have to eat healthy repeatedly. Well, for the spiritual, we have to set, continually set our affections on those things above, and he made a statement where he said, we need to keep setting our affections if, if they would slip off. He said we need to reset them perhaps a thousand times in a day and that if we do this, keep putting them back, he said eventually they're going to stick. So it's that repetition, brethren, it's that keeping, keeping the, our sacrifice upon the altar, so to speak, until it is fully consumed as part of that continual life changing experiences that we're going through.

Back to Romans 12:2, be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our mind. So in our first study this morning, we are learning to think anew by these different applications of our closeness to Jesus and to the church, with each other and more intimate relationship, and here again, it's being used again in this lesson to indicate to us that we're learning

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to think new in setting our affections on those things above and the importance of it, and that we have to keep doing this repeatedly. You know, it reminds us, oh, it's, it's just a little note here that it's like set, set, set.

So just the repeated action that has to be applied here to help us keep those affections where they should be. It reminds us of the scripture that says, a righteous man falleth seven times and rises up again. So the thought about if we get up one more time than we fall down, then we are going to continue on the way that we should be progressing on. I like the way that the Good News translates that where it says in that Colossians scripture, you have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, set your hearts on the things that are in heaven. End quote.

You know, we hear often today the phrase that says, well, I really have my heart set on this. I really have my heart set on doing such and such, and of course, sometimes there's disappointment there where it says, I really had my heart set on doing and I couldn't do it. For some reason or another, people will scrimp and save and put money in the bank so that they can purchase a new house or a car, take a vacation, and they are willing to sacrifice because they have their heart really set on doing that particular thing. Do we have our hearts really set on fulfilling our covenant of sacrifice?

We know affections or mind or heart are equal words that are used as we set them on things above and not on things on the earth. So setting Our mind, setting our affections, setting our heart on those things that are above. How important that is for our continuing application of the things of the Spirit to our daily lives. Continuing. In Colossians the third chapter, verses three and four, we read, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ appears, He is our true life. This is from the Weymouth. Then you also will appear with him in glory.

We are encouraged to set our minds on those things now, to make the change in our minds, our hearts, not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed. The Lord will take care of the spirit body at the proper time. We need to do our part now, and we know that the Lord always does his part now. A part of setting our affections or our hearts on those things above is what is included in the next verse.

We cannot be setting our affections or our hearts on things above if we are continuing to dabble in the things of the world. It says in verse five that we are to put to death or to mortify your earthward inclinations.

And then it lists a number of fornication, impurities, sensual passions, unholy desires, all greed, for that is a form of idolatry. Verse 6. It is on account of these very sins that God's anger is coming, and you also were once addicted to them while you were living under their power. End quote.

When I read that word addicted, I remember there was a discourse that might have been given at Connellsville. It was called the Christian Addiction. Not sure who if it was Brother Rick Cunningham, but it was called the Christian addiction, and so we are no longer addicted to those things of the world or shouldn't be, but we can be addicted to the things of Christ, and I hope I'm not taking things out of context here, but remember the encouragement that it was because that we were addicted to those things of the world while we were under the power of the world.

But we have a different power working for us now, brethren, and working not only for us, but in us and through us. So that our addiction has changed. When we go to the eighth verse, we read. But

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now we must rid ourselves of every kind of sin, angry passions, outbreaks, ill will, evil speaking, foul mouth, abuse, so that these may never soil your lips. Do not speak falsehoods to one another, where you have stripped off the old self with its doings and have clothed yourself with the new self, which is being remodeled or remolded into full knowledge to become like him who created it.

End quote. You know, I thought the phrase soil your lips was kind of unique. You know, if I said to you fells Napsa, would you know what I was talking about? You know, as kids growing up, sometimes we learned the lessons the hard way about talking back to our parents. Hopefully we learned them early on.

But one of the treatments for that, one of the cures, cures all for that, was to get your mouth washed out with fell snaps of soap, bad taste and stuff. But like as consecrated Christians as children growing up, we hopefully learn those lessons early on from our parents, and certainly as a Christian growing up, a babe in Christ, hopefully we learn those kinds of lessons too, and brethren, by quoting these works of the flesh, really, as expressed in Galatians, the fifth chapter, very similar kinds of works that are being talked about here. We're not implying anything about any of our consecrated actually experiencing those things, but they are worldly things and it is the condition of the world.

And there are differences in without carrying them out. Indeed, so to speak, we can but even translated into having evil thoughts come into our hearts and minds, we need to dispel those things as quickly as possible, not entertain them. But it is a wake up call, so to speak, because the world certainly is expressing themselves in these kinds of deeds, and we are in the world, so we do rub shoulders with those in the world, and we don't want any of this stuff to rub off on us at all in any way, shape or form.

You know, the Apostle Paul in 2nd Corinthians 7:1 says, Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the reverence of the Lord, end quote. You know, we are to strip off the old self. If we have ever seen a contractor go to a house that is going to be renewed, say, even the siding, they. They strip everything down to the, to the bare metal, the bare wood, whatever the foundation and the superstructure is, and they have to get rid of all that, and then they can go through and put the new covering on the new siding on.

The only difference here is that the changes that are taking place within us are, need to be ingrained. They not, not just on the surface, but they need to be ingrained. We're not just trying to dress up the old creature, we're trying to change the old creature into the new creatures taking over. So the scripture in 2nd Corinthians 5, 7 said, Old things are passed away. Behold, all things have become new.

So we're not building, we're not building anything. On the old foundation. The other thought that came to my mind, I believe it's in Ephesians, the second chapter, where it's talking about the seven walks of Ephesians, and when it's listing some of those conditions that are worldly condition, the Scripture says, and such were some of you. But now are you washed?

Now are you cleansed? So the change is taking place within us. Much of this has been done away with, and we're looking at the little details, trying to get rid of those. I was impressed this morning by the.

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By the services that talked about just how high the high calling is and how much of a struggle it is. Brother David brought that out, and Dan too, how much of a struggle it is. It's not an easy thing. You know, there's a saying in the world, you know, if it was easy, anybody could do it.

But we know that this is not easy either, and not anybody can do it, and even those that have been invited to run for the prize of the high calling do struggle. It says many are called fewer chosen, and Revelation 17:14 says, we have to be called chosen and faithful to receive that prize of the high calling.

And we wouldn't want it any other way because it is the Father's design, it's the Father's plan, and he is conducting it in the way that's best suited for everybody, because he knows the end from the beginning. He knows what's needed to seat those on the throne of heavenly grace with His Son, with that condition of immortality, and we know that the Heavenly Father will never paint himself into a corner, as it were, and have a being in the universe that has not been tried and proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that would, that that would have immortality, that he would not be able to control or destroy, and so we wouldn't want it any other way either.

Continuing in chapter three, verse 12, we read here we get a new wardrobe. He said, these are our garments of holiness being described here. It says, clothe yourself therefore as God's own people, holy and dearly beloved, with tender heartedness, kindness, lowliness of mind, meekness, long suffering, bearing with one another and readily forgiving each other. If anyone has a grievance against another, just as the Lord has forgiven you, you must also forgive. You know, we say that in the Lord's Prayer.

Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. End quote. We know that it must come from the heart. Sometimes it comes superficially, but maybe that is as we are learning to Develop the heart better so that it can come from the heart as well. We see that these virtues listed here are the ones that are replacing the vices.

Back in the earlier verses that we talked about and looked at, we see that as we perfect this love, it says that.

It says that and over all these things put love, which is the perfect bond of union. It is like the outer garment. It ties everything together. It is the outer covering. That is what it means to be superficial, but it is what holds everything together.

It is inward as well. Now that brings us up to verse 15, brethren, and we read there and let the peace which Christ gives settle all questionings in your heart. The King James says rule, and the Revised says arbitrate. The peace which Christ gives is going to arbitrate between disputes that we have.

And we do have disputes, don't we? It is like an umpire who decides if you are safe or you're out. It is even greater here. It is the peace of Christ that helps in the decision, the proper decision that we must make concerning our differences and adjusting our misunderstandings. Moving on to verse 16, Brother Russell has a little note here that says we not only have to crucify our own wills, but we have to fully accept and use the Lord's will instead.

End quote. It is not enough to do just the one, we must do both. The verse reads, let the teaching command concerning Christ remain as a rich treasure in your hearts. That is, this reminds us of the Scripture back in Matthew. Don't lay up treasures where moth and rust corrupt, but we

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need to lay up those treasures in heaven where we are setting our affections.

Continuing in verse 16, we read in all wisdom, teach and admonish one another with psalms and hymns, spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God. End quote. Wow. Heart songs to God. What are your heart songs to God?

Do you sing in your heart to God? Do I sing in my heart to God? We do so by singing hymns to one another, and we do so in how we learn to think because we know that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The Heavenly Father can read our hearts before the words can even get to our mouth, our lips.

The Heavenly Father has already read our hearts. If we are willing to think new and to think right, then we are singing these heart songs to God because He can read our hearts. This that is a joyous thing to him, and certainly it is a benefit to us. As we go on to verse 17, we read, and whatever you do in word, and indeed do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, and let it be through him that you give thanks to God the Father. End quote.

We understand the words, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. It is not that we just invoke the name of Jesus whenever we do something. It has a much deeper meaning. We are exhorted to do everything as if it were in his presence. Have you ever seen the little plaque that some have in their houses saying about Jesus?

There's one that reads, he is the unseen guest at our table. It is like you would put a string around the plaque and hang it around your neck and take it with you wherever you go. If we could think, learn to think that way, to conscientiously realize that we are truly in the presence of the Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus wherever we go and whatever we do, it would have a lot more impact upon what we think and what we say and how we act and how we behave. Well, hopefully it wouldn't have a great deal more because we are thinking those things right now. We are aware of them.

We are conscious of them, and we know that we are endeavoring to have those in place in our daily lives. But sometimes we need to be reminded of those. Excuse me, brethren, sometimes I need to be reminded. There's. There's no fingers being pointed out from anywhere.

They're all. They all come back this way. Because we would always be conscious that Jesus is right alongside of us. Would we do if we. If that were true?

Would we do some of the things that. Would we do some of the things that we do if Jesus were actually walking alongside of us? So if we keep that in mind, it's a good reflection upon us in carrying out our daily activities in thought, word, and deed. We are reminded in Psalm 19 about, Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. In Romans 8, 26 and 27.

Sometimes we are reminded here that in our experiences, sometimes when we get quite distressed that we cannot even formulate a prayer, we are given the assurance that the Heavenly Father does know our prayers. He does know our thoughts, he does know our mind, and the more that we can formulate, the better we are. But we know that he has given us that assurance that he does know our situation. So many times in the Scriptures, like, not a bird falls to the air, the Father doesn't know it.

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Not a head, you know, the hairs of your head are numbered. Many different expressions that indicate that intimate relationship that we have with the Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus. However, his plan is that works that out, that he knows what's going on with each one of us. Someday we'll find out all the details and we'll stand in awe and amazed at just everything the Father had in place to keep track of all His Spirit begotten children. In Galatians 5:17, the apostle Paul writes, for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and there are these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would Brother Russell gives a thought in reprint 3858.

That's the 3858 and another one, it's the same one in the question book, page 649, which elaborates a little bit more on it, where he said there are certain fleshly weaknesses over which the new mind never gets as complete a mastery as it desires. End quote so after all the trying and the trials and difficulties and struggles, it doesn't mean that there's not a mastery. It just means that there's not going to be the mastery that we certainly would desire to have over that, and it doesn't absolve us from doing the best that we can at trying to be faithful over these difficulties that we're experiencing within ourselves. This mastery over these things, it doesn't absolve us of that responsibility.

But it is encouraging when the pastor said that try as we might struggle as we might, there are some things that we are not going to completely overcome like we would want to on this side of the veil. That is, Brother Russell uses a little three letter phrase repeatedly throughout his writings, and I've referred to this before as well, both in the volumes and the reprints. The phrase is in proportion to It's a little phrase, but it sure has a lot of meaning. One of those instances is in reprint 303-130-31, paragraph 5, where it says, in proportion as we yield to desires of the flesh, the spiritual new nature will languish, that is Become weak, feeble, or to grow listless. Those are end quote.

Those are three conditions that we do not want the new creature to become. If we think about that in a positive way, that we can say, as we do not yield to these things of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, then the new creature is going to grow and develop in a more proper way. The apostle gives us his way of dealing with this situation in his life, and we find that recorded for us in First Corinthians 9:27 where he says, but I keep my body under and bring it into subjection, least that by any means. When I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway that is become disqualified or rejected. Paul realized the responsibility that he had as an apostle, but he also knew the seriousness of the consecrated life and the harsh measures that were needed to keep him under control.

I like the way that Weymouth reads in that quote in First Corinthians 9:27, where he says, I am a boxer and do not inflict blows in the air that is wasted. No punches, but I hit hard and straight at my own body and lead it off into slavery. You know, we say slavery is not a good thing, and rightly so. But when we. When we put the old creature into a slave position, we are doing good, making it a slave to the new creature, because we are then having mastery over the human nature and doing the things that are better suited for the new creature.

You know, it's interesting because the new creature only has this old human nature to get around in. But if we give the old nature too much credit and too much leeway, you know, the old thought about give it a finger and it's going to take a hand. You give it a hand, it's going to take an arm. Well, the old creature is that way. So we have to be reminded of that all the time.

And we have to be reminded of our time, too. We are getting down there, and we're going to have to look ahead here at some closing words. Brethren, we know that we just remind us of the struggle

## Tim Armstrong - Setting Our Affections

against those three enemies. We have the armor that has been supplied for us. In Ephesians, the sixth chapter, beginning at the tenth verse, it says that we become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

We. We are reminded also that greater is he that is for us and all this that be against us. Us, if we put on that armor and use that armor as it's designed to be used, that it will produce for us the results that are designed to be used, the results that are designed by the Heavenly Father to take place in our lives as well. So in conclusion, then, let me just find my concluding thought here. It's a quote from Print 3331, where Brother Russell lists here five areas of testing that will give some indication on how we have been setting our affections and also on how we have been fighting the battle.

The five areas are loyalty, faith, zeal, patience and trust. Loyalty to God and His wonderful plan to His Son, Faith in His Word zeal for the truth. Where else are you going to go to find the truth of God's plan and God's Word as we understand that wonderful plan, so all encompassing for everyone to have that opportunity and we need to have patient endurance of reproach and persecution that might come our way even unto death, and also then the unwavering trust in the power and purpose of God to deliver and exalt his church in due time. You know, at the end of this month there's going to be a day called 28 October.

And as someone expressed, I think Sister Tony expressed it, and we appreciate that example of using songs in the night at the evening meal it gives to us. The comments are wonderful and I'd just like to close with those comments. It says, let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. That's from Psalm 141, verse 2. At the close of each day let us square our day's account with the Lord at his throne of grace, accounting so far as we are able, its opportunities used and neglected, its victories won and its defeats, its self sacrifices and its selflessness, thanking God for the grace that helped in time of need, and apologizing for all errors and defects, craving forgiveness in the name and merit of our Savior, and promising greater faithfulness and zeal by the Lord's grace the next day.

So brethren, and that's the end of the quote. We would like to conclude as we began by asking the two questions. Brethren, how in the world are you? And brethren, how goes the battle? May the Lord overrule anything said amiss and add his blessing.