

"Don't End Up with Mud on Your Face!"

He knew their thoughts, so he said, "Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A family splintered by feuding will fall apart."

Jesus Christ | Luke 11:17 (NLT)

In my corporate days we'd orchestrate team building activities, often outdoor games against local companies. What's better than an outside "enemy" to gel a team? Memorable was the Tug-of-War... aptly named... totally a war! We'd play to win. Who'd want to slip into the mudhole between?

Wars require strategy, right? We'd find our strongest, placing the biggest at the back - our anchor. Then, we'd muster a boisterous cheering team... couldn't win without them! Though small physically, our focus was intense. We never ended up with mud on our faces!

"The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions." The Apostle Paul (Galatians 5:17)

An outside enemy actively stirs a monumental spiritual Tug-of-War, a civil war within you, seeking to render you fruitless. He pits your Circle of Concern against your Circle of Influence. What's his strategy? What's yours? Are you playing to win?

Don't end up with mud on your face!

Reflect: What's my enemy using to pull me into the mudhole?

One winning strategy in a Tug-of-War is to lure your foe into feeling they could win. Your team gives a little ground. Becoming overconfident, your opponents lean back hard... "We've got this!" At that instant your team simply relaxes their grip for a blink. Down they go! Victory is just a quick tug away.

"Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall." (Proverbs

16:18)

How deceptive our spiritual enemy is! He fans the flames of our sinful nature's desire to feel superior compelling us to believe it's our job to change everybody "out there." Thinking "We've got this!" our loving intent waxes judgmental. He sets us up for a fall.

Another strategy is to whip up hecklers to deflate your opponent. "You're weak, insignificant, useless, no good... losers!" Who can survive a crushed spirit?

"The human spirit can endure a sick body, but who can bear a crushed spirit?" (Proverbs 18:14)

Or create distractions – instilling fear, fueling cravings... leveraging anything to draw your foe's eyes from the target. People are so gullible... without intense focus we really are weak!

"For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world." The Apostle John (1 John 2:16)

Your enemy uses these strategies and more to make you fall face first into the mudhole. He pulls you hard toward your Circle of Concern... in complete opposition to what the Spirit wants.

*Consider: **The Spirit pulls me hard toward my Circle of Influence.***

Against such an opposing force you must take up a winning strategy to stay in your Circle of Influence and out of the mudhole.

- **Set your Anchor:** *“Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God’s inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 6:18-20)*
- **Muster a boisterous Cheering Team:** *“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)*
- **Intensely Focus on your Circle of Influence.** *“Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.” (Luke 10:33-34)*

*Imagine: **I’m freely carrying out my Mission in my Circle of Influence.***

Nothing pleases your enemy more than to redirect your Mission toward your Circle of Concern. By leveraging genuine concern, he ties you up “so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.” He knows

you can't make a difference "out there!" But it sounds so noble!

"Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them. The Apostle Paul (2 Timothy 2:4)

The Spirit directs you back to the orders issued by your commanding officer. "Focus on your Circle of Influence, the Mission field Jesus placed you in...

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Go off the grid and ask these questions:

Coach's Questions

- Define my Circle of Influence... What are the Forums? Who are the people in them?
- What is my enemy using to draw me into my Circle of Concern? How much time am I spending there? How will I redirect it to my Circle of Influence?
- What strategies will I use to keep myself focused on my Circle of Influence?
- Don't know my Mission? [Start here!](#)

Spirit Talk

Post this where you will see it regularly.

My Circle of Influence is my Mission Field.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'"

Jesus Christ | Matthew 25:34-36 (NLT)



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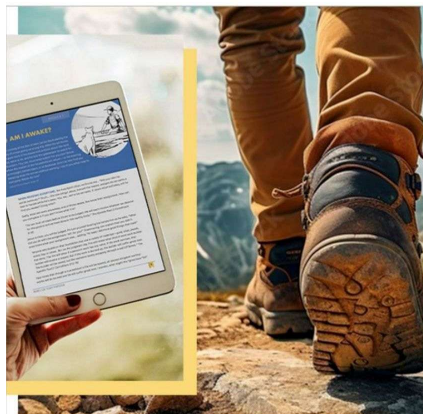


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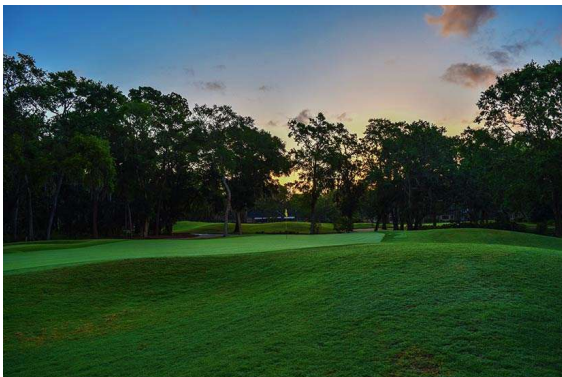
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