



**May 31, 2026 - Part 1**

## **Introduction**

This week we were challenged to consider what is really going on beneath the surface of our choices, relationships, and habits. Scripture describes reality as a daily conflict between the forces of heaven and hell, the Spirit and the sinful nature, and the question at the center of it all is this: Who or what is governing my life?

## **Read Together**

**Revelation 12:7-9; Genesis 3:1-7; Galatians 5:16-17; Deuteronomy 30:11-20**

As a group, read the passages aloud before discussing the questions below.

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Observation**

1. Have someone read Revelation 12:7-9. According to this passage, what happened to the “ancient serpent,” and where was he thrown?
2. Have someone read Genesis 3:1-7. What temptation did the serpent present to Adam and Eve, and how was it connected to self-governance or autonomy?
3. Have someone read Galatians 5:16-17. How does Paul describe the conflict between the sinful nature and the Spirit?
4. In the message, Joel described reality as “two forces, two realms, and one reality.” What are the two forces and the two realms he identified?
5. Have someone read Deuteronomy 30:11-20. What choice did Moses place before the people, and what did he urge them to choose?

### **Interpretation**

1. Why do you think the desire for self-governance — wanting to be our own authority — is such a powerful temptation? How does that show up in everyday life?
2. Joel said that Lucifer wanted to be a “replacement of God” instead of a reflection of God. Why is that distinction important for understanding sin?
3. In Genesis 3, the serpent questioned whether God could really be trusted. How does distrust in God’s goodness still lead people toward destructive choices today?
4. Paul says the sinful nature and the Spirit are “constantly fighting each other.” Why does this challenge the idea that we are simply free to do whatever we want?

5. The sermon framed God's commands not as restrictions to keep us from something, but as instructions to lead us toward life. How does that change the way you view obedience?

## **Application**

1. Joel asked, "How are you deliberately bringing heaven down into your life?" What is one habit, relationship, or practice that currently helps you align your life with God's Spirit?
2. Where are you most tempted to live in "unreality" — ignoring what is true because reality feels difficult, inconvenient, or uncomfortable?
3. The sermon warned that careless choices can "pull hell up" into our lives through things like anger, greed, jealousy, lust, division, or escapism. Which of these do you most need to be honest about right now?
4. Think about what you feed your mind with during the week. What is one source of influence — media, relationships, habits, entertainment, or thought patterns — that may be shaping you more than you realize?
5. Joel said there is more than just you at stake; our choices create collateral impact for family, friends, coworkers, and future generations. Who is affected by the way you are currently living, for better or worse?
6. Moses told the people to "choose life." What is one specific choice before you right now where choosing God's way would lead toward life, even if it feels difficult?
7. If someone in your group feels like they have "tried every other way," how could this group help them take one practical step toward surrendering control to Jesus this week?
8. What would it look like this week to pause in a moment of temptation, conflict, stress, or loneliness and recognize, "The battle is on"? What could you do differently in that moment?

## **Closing Summary**

This week's message reminds us that reality is bigger than what we can see. Scripture describes a world where heaven and hell, good and evil, the Spirit and the sinful nature are in conflict. That conflict is not only happening "out there" in the world; it is happening in our thoughts, desires, decisions, relationships, and habits. The central question is one of governance: Who or what is shaping the direction of my life? God's commands are not meant to withhold life from us, but to lead us toward life. Each day, in ordinary moments, we are choosing whether to reach toward the order and goodness of heaven or pull the chaos and destruction of hell into our lives. The invitation is clear: choose life by surrendering to God, trusting His ways, and allowing His Spirit to guide your steps.

## **Closing Prayer**

God, thank you for loving us enough to tell us the truth about reality. Help us recognize the forces that are shaping our thoughts, choices, and desires. Give us eyes to see where we have been living in unreality, excusing sin, ignoring wisdom, or trying to govern our own lives apart from you. Teach us to trust that your commands are for our good. By your Spirit, help us choose life in the small moments and the big decisions. Lead us away from anything that brings destruction, division, or chaos into our lives, and guide us toward love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Jesus, we surrender again to your leadership. Govern our hearts, guide our steps, and help our lives reflect the goodness of heaven to the people around us. In Jesus' name, amen.