

“Echoes of the Heart”

Reflections on Life and Community Living

Contact Dr. Frantz on the web at www.mlchurch.com

Dealing with temptation. Are there different voices in your spirit, contending for your attention? Do you have different impulses crying out to be appeased or satisfied?

How do we sort all of this out? What voices do we listen to?

As human beings, we all have our temptations in life, the different voices that do battle in our spirit. Temptations to want something more than we should want it; and because we want it so very badly, we sort of twist the truth around so that it fits. We *bend* the facts and, along with it, our good judgment, giving it a spin that somehow justifies our hoped-for result.

Another way of putting it is: *we play games with ourselves.* We make bargains seeking to manipulate circumstances to our advantage. For example, imagine for a moment that we're on a diet, and note the way *temptation* works in this cute little story.

What voices do we listen to? An overweight businessman is finally deciding it's time to take the pounds off. He's off to a good start, working out three times a week at the health club and meticulously watching what he eats. He's even altered his driving route to the office to avoid driving by his favorite bakery.

However, one morning he shows up at work with a gigantic, fresh-smelling coffee cake, obviously right out of the bakery oven.

Understandably, everyone at the office is disappointed in him, wondering how he could be so careless to just *blow off his diet.*

Undeterred, however, and with a glow on his face, he says, *This is a special coffee cake.* And then he explains.

Accidentally, I drove by the bakery this morning and there in the window were a host of new goodies. I felt, surely, it had to be a sign; so I prayed. Lord, if you want me to have one of these delicious coffee cakes, let there be a parking spot right out front. And sure enough, on the eighth time around the block, there it was.

Let us imagine, for a moment, what voices this *coffee-cake-deprived* man was listening to. Check it out: the battle in his spirit as he is on his way to work ...

Go ahead, drive by the bakery this morning. It's okay! You don't have to buy anything! It's just to check it out.

And then, the contending voice: *you know you shouldn't be doing this. Why are you going by the bakery again? You've been doing so well. Turn around! Go the other route.*

And then, later, driving by the bakery: *Whoa, check out that coffee cake! That's really special ...has to be a new coffee cake. Go ahead, buy it! You deserve it. You've been good. Anyway, you can share it with the people at the office. Go for it!*

And again, the contending voice: *you're not really going to buy that are you? You know this is NOT what you need to be doing. Drive on by. Drive to the office and get on with your day.*

What voices do we feed? We can relate, can't we? The contending voices in our spirit ... to do or say something that we know we might later regret. How do we sort it out? How do we stay on track with what the best impulses in our spirit want us to be?

An old Cherokee is having a reflective conversation with his young grandson. The old man is telling the boy about *the battle* that goes on inside people.

My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all. One is evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, greed , arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, lies, false pride and ego.

The other is good. It is hope, peace, joy, love, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.

The grandson thinks this over for a few moments and then asks, *but which wolf wins, grandpa?*

To which the wise old Cherokee replies, *the one we feed.*

Everyday we make choices about what forces within us we're going to feed, about what vision of our life we're going to live out. Our challenge through it all is to feed the voices that affirm the common good and to seek a closer walk with the One who is the Giver of life in all seasons.