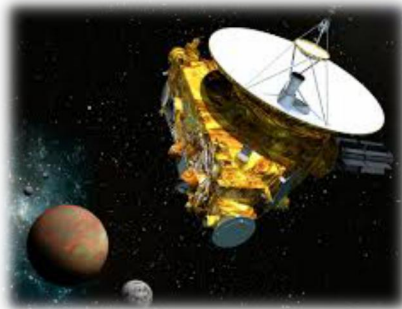


# THE BATTLE WITHIN



*Do the difficult things while they are easy and do the great things while they are small. A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step. Lao Tzu*

If we had all followed the advice of Lao Tzu's quote, most of us would be further along in our life pursuits and perhaps with less inertia than we currently feel. But if you are enrolled at the *School of Hard Knocks* like me, you will have and still are doing things the hard way and running into many circular paths and dead ends. Some lifetime pursuits are harmless, some are fun, but others are very painful. And it is these painful pursuits that started me on a journey to discover a better and hopefully less painful way. Little did I know that this new journey would take me to a place that was so close to me that I did not have to travel by car, train or plane; a place that was only as old as me; a place that has been waiting for me to explore, understand, and become a frequent preferred guest. This journey led me to the Space and Place inside me.....



## **Enter The Unknown**

I recently watched a documentary called Chasing Pluto. It was about NASA's exploration to the planet Pluto (I am still claiming Pluto as a planet). The New Horizons probe left earth on a speedy rocket, whipped around Jupiter at almost 50,000 mph, and completed its 9 year/3 Billion mile journey to explore the deepest parts of our solar system. And at about the same time my journey to *The Unknown* started. It started with me noticing a behavior of mine that I exhibited outwardly and I did not know why I exhibited the behavior. And I heard a Spiritual voice tell me, "your issue is not what you see on the outside....your issue is inside of you". I saw a small opening to the inside of me as I chased this path that

the Spirit was leading me to. Scientists once thought Pluto was alone at the end of our solar system....but with the invention of new telescopes, new revelation shows that there are many other Pluto like objects in what is known as the Kuiper Belt. And on my way to what I thought was one internal issue, I entered a place I now affectionately call *The Unknown* and I saw from a distance many undiscovered issues waiting for my examination and exploration.



### First Step

*But the bad things people say with their mouth come from the way they think. And that's what can make people wrong. All these bad things begin in the mind: evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual sins, stealing, lying, and insulting people. These are the things that make people wrong. Matthew 15:18-20*

The phrase "Watch out for that first step. It's a doozy." exemplified my first entrance into *The Unknown*. I was a bit in shock because I did not realize that I would find my whole existence on this journey inside of me. I found that every discretionary action that I exhibit on the outside of me comes from somewhere inside of me. The actions on the outside aren't just casually or coincidentally connected to the inside....there is a **HARD LINE DIRECT CONNECTION** from the **inside** of me **to** the **outside** of me....and not just for some things that I see on the outside but for **EVERYTHING I SEE AND DO** (good and bad) comes from the **INSIDE OF ME**. I started probing my daily outward discretionary actions....where I live, what I eat/drink, where I work, what I say, how I dress, who I am around, what I believe, what I've done.....and all of these outward actions led me back to a destination on the inside of me.



### My Two Countries Inside

I have always liked to travel to exotic places far away. I like to experience the different cultures, foods, beaches, terrain, and people that the Earth has to offer. And what I have found in my travels is there are differences in weather and food preferences, but people are mostly the same everywhere. I also learned

that how I viewed the countries that I visited really depended on what my internal state was at the time of the visit. On my journey inside of me into *The Unknown* I saw two very large countries. The first country I explored I liked great deal. I felt at home here. It was the country of residence for all of the internal sources of my good deeds on the outside. Here I saw the source for when I speak to and open the door for strangers.....I saw my patience to let other cars go in front of me.....I saw generous giving.....I saw the selfless acts of fatherhood, brotherhood, and friendship.....all residing in this country. These **positive outward acts are directly connected to internal sources** like:

- My desire to please my Creator
- My desire to please my parents
- My desire to be in harmony with my fellow humans.

The name of this country is "Spirit". Spirit was bright, fun, pleasing, and very familiar to me. But the pleasant country of Spirit was not the only country inside of me. Across the border was a country with many walled cities and gated communities that supported all of the internal sources of my bad deeds on the outside. Here I saw the source for when I yell in anger....I saw mistreatment of other people....I saw my impatience with people and circumstances.....I saw selfish acts of "*me-ism*" ....all residing in this seldom explored country. These **negative outward acts are directly connected to internal sources** like:

- My desire to conquer
- My desire to be praised
- My fear of trust

The name of this country is "Flesh". Flesh is a massive country but it was not pretty. Like Pluto this country is cold and far away from the light and warmth of the Son. The sources there are permanent residents of this country. Many sources in Flesh had a common name *Fear of \_\_\_\_*. They have citizenship and many have resided in this country and inside me as long as I have been around.



### **I Am Not Alone**

As I pondered on my new discoveries, I realized that if I have these internal sources that are directly connected to my outside behavior, then other people must have them also. I started examining everyone for this concept from toddlers to elderly. And my hypothesis was confirmed.....I am not

alone....**we all have internal sources that are directly connected to our external actions.** Some common internal sources shared by many people are:

- Fear of Rejection
- Fear of letting go
- The desire for acceptance
- The desire for affection
- The desire to be right

On a recent trip to Redondo Beach, California, I saw a young man yelling at a young woman in the parking lot of a grocery store. His behavior disgusted me because I could see the fear and anguish in the face of the young woman. Then I realized that I must look the same way when I yell at other people. And this self-realization was very eye opening and drove me to the point of exploration and change. But how could I change? How could I stop ugly outward behavior? How could I be the person that I wanted to be and see inside and outside?



### Winning The Battle Inside

*So I tell you, live the way the Spirit leads you. Then you will not do the evil things your flesh wants. The flesh wants what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit wants what is against the flesh. They're always fighting against each other, so that you don't do what you really want to do. Galatians 5:16-17*

To win the battle inside of me I had to recognize my own negative outward behavior and want to change it. I had to stare in the mirror and repeat Walt Kelly's quote, "We have met the enemy and he is us". I found that **ignoring my negative internal sources** and pretending that I was "ok" **did not prevent** those sources from launching missiles that led to **negative outward behavior**. Some missiles fired frequently and others only once in a while. So when I saw behavior that I didn't like, I slowed down and traced it to its internal source. This root cause pathfinding can be elusive and time consuming at first but eventually I got to the source. Once at the source, then what was I to do? How could I subdue my internal *Fear of Rejection* or my *Desire for acceptance*? I prayed to the Creator for guidance and the Spirit gave me three strategies: Examine, Let Go, and Replace.

- I first need to **examine** the root source....when did it start....why did I think I needed it....what impact was it having on me outwardly.....this examination takes time....and whatever time it takes, that time is what it is....don't rush it.
- Secondly I need to **Let Go** of this source.....I need to recognize that holding on to it isn't providing me with benefits....get past the fact that it has been a part of me maybe since I can remember....I need to know that sometimes I can get addition by subtraction.
- The third strategy is essential if I am to subdue my negative internal sources. I have to **replace** the negative source with a positive source. I liken this process to that of a healthy diet....you can't maintain a healthy diet by just restricting bad foods....you have to replace the bad foods with good foods.....then your diet is balanced and sustainable.

In order for me to let go of my true fear of being rejected by man, I have to come to an understanding that although I may be rejected, misunderstood, laughed at, left alone, I will never be abandoned by the Creator. I have to know what His Word says about His people...about me, about all of us. I have to connect the two countries that live inside of me. It may seem that they are always at war....but there is a reason for that war. It is the sculpturing process that is making me the person that I want and need to be. This process is on-going for life and will always be in the present tense. And this process is not just for me, but **every human being has "A Battle Within"**. So when you see outward behavior that is not positive in yourself or others, now you will know where to look. And now you may also know what to do to win the battle inside and become the **best of you**.