



Week 2: The Battle of the Mind

Key Texts: 2 Corinthians 10:1-8

Sunday, June 7, 2020

We don't wage war as humans do, but trust in God to destroy strongholds of worldly thinking and past living.

Setting the Scene:

"The Christian life is not a playground; it is a battleground, and we must be on our guard at all times." Warren Wiersbe

¹⁰ A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all **strategies of the devil**. ¹² **For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies**, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Ephesians 6:10-12

- Paul is writing this letter to a divided church, and the enemy was at work.
- We need to stop marching to the drum beat of the devil. The world's agenda is not our cause.
- Christ-followers are in a war, and they cannot win a battle they will not admit they are in.

³ But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. **Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist**, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here.⁴ But you belong to God, my dear children. **You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.** 1 John 4:3-4

1. The world will try to intimate you, but respond with gentleness and kindness. (2 Cor. 10:1-2)

- Test the Spirits

Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You **must test them** to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. 1 John 4:1

- Notice Satan (The accuser) will raise people to bring accusations.
- Show forbearance, not intimidation.
- Approaching people with gentleness and kindness (True spiritual power) is the ability to know when and how to engage people around you. Remember, man is not your enemy.
- Christ-followers need to examine strategy and motive. Does my attitude and thought pattern line up with the truth of who God is?
- Paul's motive was not to defeat his critics but to see renewal in the Corinth church. I (Pastor Matt) would rather win the soul than the argument. When we understand the battle and what is at stake, we will be able to maintain our faith.
- Paul's attitude of humility was one of his most potent weapons. The sin of pride plays right into the hands of Satan.

2. Christ-followers do not wage war like the world. (2 Cor. 10:3-6)

- Declare war on the right enemy. War in this passage can be translated as a campaign. There is a larger campaign of the devil trying to destroy the work of God.

Stronghold: a large fortified place; a fort or group of forts, often including a town; citadel.

Any place of exceptional security or a prisoner locked by deception.

- Often without even realizing we try to build strongholds to keep God out. When Satan attacks with lies, his goal is to build a stronghold in your heart. Often when it comes to strongholds, we want to treat the symptoms rather than looking at the core issue of the problem. Treatment can be helpful, but no change will happen without the power of the Holy Spirit. What is broken in my relationship with Christ? Free your mind from strongholds of lies that keep us from having a strong relationship with Jesus.

- Christ-followers will feel defeated every time if they look to the world (*worldly strategy, wealth, fame, politics, and strength*) to solve spiritual problems. You **will not** defeat the devil using worldly methods. You will not be able to win.
- These strongholds of human reasoning are tools of Satan.
- Often people believe what they feel. We need a biblical filter of the mind.

Once he has destroyed the enemy defenses, Paul takes every thought of the enemy "captive" by evaluating it in view of his own ministry of the cross and resurrection of Christ. Specifically, Paul argues for his conviction, and supports it evidentially, that as a true apostle of the crucified and risen Christ, he reveals the power of God ¹

- A tactic of Satan is to put a thought in our mind and then accuse us of having it. Satan is the father of lies, but his lies only have power when we agree with them. When we align our thoughts with God's thoughts, we will not believe the lies from the enemy.
- We must take captive of each thought and make it obedient to Christ. Take hold of God's promises to cast out wrong thinking.

⁸ And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. **Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable.** Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Philipines 4:8

3. Authority should be used to build the church. (2 Cor. 10:7-8)

His authority was to build up God's people, not to demolish them (see 13:10), yet he intended to deal firmly with these rivals when he came to Corinth (see 13:1).²

- Maybe you feel too small or inadequate to help someone who's being oppressed by evil. You can bring people into the presence of someone (Jesus) greater than the world. You can rest knowing that everywhere you go, you bring with you the authority of Christ.
- Who needs the authority living through you?

One Last Thought: We tear down strongholds of the devil through prayer, the Word of God, love, and the power of the Holy Spirit working in your life.

Discussion Questions:

- Often when we disagree with someone, we consider them an enemy. How are Christ-followers called to be different?
What does it mean for us to tear down strongholds (false ways of thinking)? What are some lies Christians believe but are simply not true? Practically, how do we feel our minds with the truth?
- How do we take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ?
- How does the truth that Jesus Christ has the final authority bring you peace and rest?

¹ Hafemann, S. J. (2000). *2 Corinthians* (p. 396). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

² *New Living Translation Study Bible*. (2008). (2 Co 10:7-11). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.