

Battle for the Mind – Lesson 2

Knowing the Battle

Introduction:

We saw in lesson 1 that what happens in our mind influences our whole being. Understanding this important principle helps us to see why we sometimes feel that our mind is a battlefield. Conflicting thoughts, attitudes, hopes, fears and aspirations seek to dominate our mind and consequently, our whole being.

1. The Battle is Spiritual:

As Christians we must first recognize that the mental battle we experience can be a spiritual conflict.

Winning the battle in these situations is not just a matter of “positive thinking,” it is waging spiritual warfare against those things seeking to bring confusion, doubt and fear into our minds. These can lock us up and make us ineffective in our Christian living.

Ephesians 6:12 – *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

2. Know Your Position:

The battle for the mind is not a conflict between spiritual armies seeking to dominate the empty ground of your mind. It is not a tussle between evil thoughts which seek to enter your mind from one side and godly thoughts trying to gain access from the other.

It is a battle waged from a place of possession – the ground of our mind is already Christ’s.

1 Corinthians 2:16 - *“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”*

Our battle is therefore to hold the ground of our mind for Christ.

Ephesians 6:11,13 – *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil...Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”*

3. Know Who You Are:

In Christ we have won our ground. Those things that seek to depose us are destined to fail as we stand firm in the sure knowledge of who we are in Christ.

2 Peter 1:3 – *“And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”*

1 John 4:4 – *“Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”*

It is a matter of identity, we are in Christ and therefore our identity is completely in him, we are his.

4. Know Your Weapons:

The spiritual battle for your mind will be won as you stand firm, knowing who you are in Christ and using the spiritual weapons at your disposal.

a. Truth

Ephesians 6:14 – *“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth”*

Jesus also said:

John 8:31-32 – *“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’”*

Filling your mind with the truth of God found in his Word brings freedom to our minds.

b. Righteousness

Ephesians 6:14 – *“Stand firm... having put on the breastplate of righteousness.”*

You have received the gift of righteousness and can therefore expect to reign in life:

Romans 5:17 – *“For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.”*

God's righteous ways are revealed fully in his Word, which tells us how to act or react in every situation of life. Fill your mind with God's righteous word.

c. The gospel

Ephesians 6:14-15 – *“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.”*

A readiness to share the good news of salvation with people you meet demands a prepared mind, full of the blessings of being in Christ. By dwelling on these blessings we arm ourselves to repel any thought which suggests that life is better outside of Christ.

d. Faith

Ephesians 6:16 – *“In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.”*

Faith comes by hearing 'the word of Christ' (Romans 10:17). Fill your mind with what God says you are in Christ, have in Christ and can do in Christ. This will produce a faith within you which will keep you in victory.

1 John 5:4 – *“For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.”*

e. *The hope of salvation*

1 Thessalonians 5:8 – *“But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.”*

The helmet protects the head. Our minds should be protected by the knowledge of our glorious hope in Christ.

Ephesians 1:18 – *“...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints”*

Hope in this context is not some vague wish. A more literal translation would be 'confident expectation'. In other words, what God has said will certainly happen. Fill your mind with the certainty of God's promises to you and the assurance that you will be with him forever.

f. *The Word of God*

Ephesians 6:17 – *“...and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*

Truth, righteousness, faith, the gospel and our hope of salvation are all described above as pieces of protective armor – yet they all have their roots in the Word of God, which is an offensive weapon. We wield the Word of God as a sword which cuts through Satan's lies and deceptions and helps us to stand firm in all that God has made us.

Your knowledge of God's Word is the mightiest weapon you have in fighting the battle for your mind. Therefore:

Colossians 3:16 – *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”*

5. The Battle Defined:

Based on what we have seen so far we can now define with some understanding the battle which takes place in our mind:

It is a conflict between what you know you are in Christ, based on the Word of God, and any thought which undercuts, minimizes or denies that truth.

When we let wrong thinking have a foothold in our mind it binds us and nullifies our effectiveness for Christ. We need to not “give any opportunity to the devil.” (Ephesians 4:27)

6. The Form the Battle Takes

In our daily lives we can at any time find ourselves with a battle in our minds. Although we have a knowledge of who we are in Christ and a genuine desire to live God’s way, any given situation can throw into our mind thoughts which undercut or deny the truth of all that we know. That becomes the point of conflict.

Sometimes these thoughts are a response to particular situations we find ourselves in, we could call these response thoughts. When problems or dilemmas arise we need to choose to respond to these situations out of God’s word, and put to death any lies or worries. This takes training, but by doing so you will find yourself responding to more and more problems with the Word and developing peace even in the midst of turmoil.

At other times they seem to arrive in our minds out of the blue, we could call these passing thoughts. In these we just need to be quick to dismiss and not dwell on anything that can lead us into sinful action. A quick and strong response from the Word is often enough to remove it completely.

7. Prepared for Battle

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 – *“Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.”*

Ephesians 6:11 – *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”*

Satan may try to outwit us with his schemes – but we are ready for battle. Filled with the Word of God we are armed for battle and confident of victory, knowing that:

1 John 4:4 – *“Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”*