

Spiritual Warfare-2

“Tactical Training”

Ephesians 6:10-13; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (NIV)

Hey Newsong!

I want to take a moment to welcome our first-time guests and those watching with us online!

We're in a series all about spiritual warfare...and if you missed last week's message, or if you're brand-new to church and you're thinking “what do you mean by spiritual warfare?” Let me review what we've learned so far...

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and

against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.-Ephesians 6:10-13 (NIV)

Last week we learned that every single person whether you're a Christian or not has a very real enemy...

We tend to think that our enemy is someone who betrayed us in some way, someone who mistreated us...but our enemy isn't our ex...it's not our boss...it's not the bus driver who closed the doors and drove off...when they clearly saw you running and waving your hands...

Our enemy is the devil...

We can't see him...but he's real, and he's dangerous...

He's organized...He has a strategy...He's calculated...He's deceitful...He's not always obvious...He disguises himself...And his one and only goal is to destroy you...

He wants to destroy your life...he wants to destroy your marriage...he wants to destroy your family...he wants to destroy your children...he wants your relationships...

He wants to do everything in his power to keep you from following Jesus...To keep you from knowing the truth...that God loves you...that God is for you...that God longs to have a relationship with you...

And when you look at our world and see that people are spiritually lost...what you're seeing is the fruit of the devil's labor...And he doesn't stop his scheming when you get saved...In fact, he amps it up, because now you're a threat to him...

So he tries to keep you distracted so you don't grow in your relationship with Jesus...he wants to keep you spiritually weak and immature...He wants you to become a casualty of this spiritual war...

This is why Paul tells us that we have to stand firm when the day of evil comes...when we find ourselves in a spiritual battle...

Which is why Jesus said...

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.-John 10:10 (NIV)

Jesus has given us everything we need to be victorious and we learned last week that although the devil is powerful...he's not as powerful as God...

So we looked at three weapons we can use everyday to fight against the devil and his demons...

The Name of Jesus

The Blood of Jesus

The Word of Jesus

With those three weapons we can Commit ourselves to God...Surrender our will and our ways to His will and His ways

Close any open doors...Ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts for things like unforgiveness, bitterness, jealousy, anger...by His power close any doors that may be giving the enemy a chance to come in...

Confront the enemy in prayer...The devil can distract you, and tempt you, but he can't stop you from praying...

If you're saved then you have the authority to pray in Jesus name, and the power to resist him!

That was our basic training from last week... With our time together today, I want to do some tactical training...

It's one thing to know our enemy...It's another thing to know where the battlefield is...if it's an invisible war then where do we fight the battle? How do we fight against an enemy that we can't see?

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the 3world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

6 And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.-2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (NIV)

The battle is in our **MIND**

What you need to know is that most of the attacks that we face from the enemy will come to us in our mind...in our thought life and he will begin to whisper lies about who God is, who we are, how we should live, what we should do...Once received, they become what Paul calls a stronghold...

The Greek word for stronghold is **okh-oo'-ro-mah** it means castle or fortress...So the enemy places a thought or idea in our mind that seems like an impenetrable fortress

“A stronghold describes someone who is chained, but they don’t realize that the chain isn’t strong enough to hold them down, they just think it is”-Chris Hodges

Tucker & the Shock Collar

Even though the truth was that the remote control was broken and Tucker could leave whenever he wanted...he believed the deception...and stayed in the yard

Likewise...thoughts and ideas come to us...and they actually contradict the truth of God's Word but we receive them as if they are true...

Once we receive them as true they actually hold us down...That stronghold then appears to be bigger and more powerful than God in our life and we become a prisoner that's kept in chains through deception...

The devil will keep you in bondage through lies and deception...He's nothing but a liar...Jesus said this about the devil

44...When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. -John 8:44 (NIV)

When we believe the lie we empower the liar...
How do I know if I'm in a stronghold?

Your mind is consumed by it...
It could be an addiction or a habit or a wrong
that has been done to you...and it causes you
to feel controlled by it. Overwhelmed by it...
It becomes your identity...

You'll start saying things like...

"I could never..."

"I will never"

"This is who I am"

"I'll always be this way"

Instead of being hopeful you become
hopeless...you start believing there's no way to
overcome this problem, no way to save this
marriage, no way to reconcile the relationship,
no way to break free from this addiction...no
way for me to make a difference in this world...

Once the enemy can get you to buy the lie...he's able to build the stronghold and keep you a P.O.W. in this spiritual war

Then the devil gets what he wanted all along... Which is to distract you from your God-given purpose and keep you from living the life that God has intended for you!

We think spiritual warfare is just casting out demons...Paul's saying that most of the spiritual warfare we'll face in our everyday life isn't casting out demons...it's casting out lies

The problem is that most people can't distinguish the lie from the truth...It's not because they don't know the difference between the two...but it's because the lines between them have been blurred, they've been distorted...The lie has just enough truth in it so that you accept it...

It's like a gift that's pretty and has a nice bow...but inside has a bomb that will do damage as soon as you open it

Remember, the devil has schemes...he's got a strategy...he's a deceiver...he adds just enough truth to his lie so that he gets you to receive it.

And these lies are always coming at us...and they're coming at us in different ways...

Let me give you some examples...

FALSE Teaching

4 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.-1 Timothy 4:1-2 (NIV)

Paul was warning young Timothy about false teachers who were actually influenced by deceiving spirits...

All other religions fall into this category...The idea that all roads lead to God is the doctrine of demons...

But there are doctrines of demons taught in the Name of Jesus...that's what Paul is warning Timothy about...He says some are going to abandon the faith because they're preaching a different Gospel...they're adding to, subtracting from, or redefining God's Word...

They were teaching things about marriage that were not ordained by God...Not only that, but they were making people follow a bunch of rules and regulations...you can eat this, but you can't eat that...

Did you know that the devil loves to make people religious? It doesn't matter if you're living like hell...it doesn't matter if you're living for yourself, for your pleasure...

It doesn't matter if you lie, cheat, steal, gossip, sleep around...as long as you believe in "God" ...

As long as you look good when you go to church! In his second letter to Timothy Paul says this, and tell me if this isn't true of our world today...

3 You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3 They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. 4 They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God.

5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!-2 Timothy 3:3-5 (NLT)

In the words of William Booth...

People want religion without the Holy Spirit

They want Christianity without Christ

They want forgiveness without repentance

They want salvation without regeneration

They want politics without God

They want heaven without hell...

His lies come as false teaching

False **THINKING**

The Bible warns us to be careful with our thoughts because our thoughts will become actions...

7 For as he thinks in his heart, so is he...-Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV)

Sometimes it's just a crazy thought...

You could be waiting for the train and then all of a sudden you think, maybe I should jump off...

Well where did that thought come from?

You could be sitting here in church...singing praises...taking notes and all of a sudden you get an impure thought that just comes out of nowhere...

You could be having a great day, and then all of a sudden you get a thought of doom and gloom and despair and the worst possible scenarios for you or your loved ones...

Or it could be a thought of total fear...

Or a thought of jealousy or anger...

You're just looking at someone and all of these vile nasty thoughts just pop into your mind...

These are the arguments and lies that are trying to influence your thoughts...

Which is why the Apostle Paul tells us to
**2 Set your minds on things above, not on
earthly things.-Colossians 3:2 (NIV)**

We've got to set our mind on God...on what He
thinks on what He would want...And not listen
to that thought that just told you to slap your
boss...

Those are lies and deceptions that come from
the devil...we'll talk about this next week, but
Paul calls them fiery darts from the enemy...It
just takes one to take root and become a
stronghold...

He comes at us with false teaching...

False thinking

Sometimes he comes at us with the

Trap of **TEMPTATION**

You're just minding your own business and then
boom a thought comes your way...

That thought is...interesting...and it doesn't look nasty...it looks enticing...it looks good...so we get a little closer...oh nothing happened...we get a little closer...we get more comfortable...We're giving that thought a seat at the table...and boom!

All of us know what it means to face temptation...all of us know what it means to be defeated by temptation...

“Temptation is solicitation to do evil” -Dr. Tony Evans

Temptation is nothing more than a trap from the enemy using our own evil desires as the bait...Did you ever notice that you're never tempted to eat something that you don't like? When you go fishing you use bait that the fish like...The devil uses our own evil desires as bait

13 When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.-James 1:13-14 (NIV)

Here’s what a masterful manipulator the enemy is...he’ll fire a dart our way and then he’ll condemn us for being hit by it!

So out of the blue a temptation will come and the enemy will be like...it’s no big deal...go ahead...you deserve it...and if you give in to whatever it is...he flips the script...

How could you? You call yourself a Christian? You haven’t changed! Are you even saved? You’re just like your Father...who was just like his father...God will never forgive you!

I like what Greg Laurie says about temptation...

“It’s not a sin to be tempted. The sin of temptation isn’t in the bait, it’s in the bite! If you refuse the temptation you’ve successively passed the test. It’s when I’ve taken that temptation into my thought process and made it my own”-Greg Laurie

Martin Luther once said, *“I can’t stop a bird from flying over my head, but I can stop it from building a nest in my hair”*

So in the same way, I can’t stop the thought from entering my mind, but I don’t have to ask it to stay for dinner...Paul says that we can demolish these arguments...how do we do that?

CAPTURE the lie and REPLACE it with the truth

5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive

every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
-2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV)

Now, I just got done tell you that our enemy is a master manipulator and deceiver...who is constantly lying...so how can we possibly know every lie he's throwing our way?

No...we don't study the liar, we study the Savior! We don't study the counterfeit; we get so close and personal with Jesus who is the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE that we can immediately detect the lie!

I read an article about deception, and the article was said that federal agents don't learn to spot counterfeit money by studying the counterfeits...

They study the genuine bills until they've so mastered the look of the real thing that it's easy to spot the counterfeit...

The Holy Spirit in you will always lead you closer to Jesus...closer to His Word... He will never lead you to do anything that would be contrary to His Word...The more you get to know Jesus, the easier it is to identify the enemy! Jesus said, You will know the truth and the truth will set you free!

Keep this in mind, and consider what Paul says in Philippians

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (So when those lies of the enemy come we can rejoice why? Because the Lord is near to us...) **5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious** (Because that's what the enemy wants you to do...he wants you to worry about it, be afraid of it, fall for it...)

about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and

your minds (remember that's where the battle is) **in Christ Jesus.**

So those darts come our way...false teaching, false thinking, temptations...I capture those things, and replace them with...

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.-Philippians 4:4-9 (NIV)

This is how we take our thoughts captive and make them obedient to Jesus

Just like you can't walk in two directions at the same time, you can't think two thoughts at the same time...

If you're thinking a pure thought, you can not think an impure thought at the same time...If you're thinking a loving thought, you can not think an unloving thought at the same time...

So the idea is that we have to reject what the world says, what the devil says, what my flesh says to be true, and we need to replace that thought with what God says to be true...

I'll give you an illustration from my life...

My brother died of cancer the same year that we launched NSC. My whole family was crushed. Besides going through the natural grief process...I remember these thoughts would hit me out of nowhere...

Some of them were accusations like...
You should have been there more often...

You spent all that energy starting the church...You could have been spending it with your brother...

Thoughts like...You prayed the prayer of faith for so many people to be healed, but you didn't have enough faith for your own brother to be healed...

Thoughts like you'll never see him again...See the devil doesn't fight fair...the devil will kick you when you're already down!

I had to learn to capture those lies and replace them with the truth of God's Word...In those moments the Holy Spirit would start to bring back to my memory scriptures to replace the lies...

No! My brother trusted Jesus as his Lord and Savior...And Jesus said...

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die...-John 11:25-26 (NIV)

I will see my brother again one day...he may not be here, but he's not dead...he's alive and in heaven with Jesus right now!

So I come against that thought in Jesus name!
I plead the blood of Jesus over my mind...that lie will not take root in my soul!

Notice how the weapons from our basic training last week are put into practice?

You need to recognize that every fiery dart that comes from the enemy is meant to pull you away from Jesus...

As we close I want to leave you with three things we need to put into practice to win the battle in our mind...

KNOW God's Word

11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.-Psalm 119:11 (NIV)

We say this all the time at NSC...If you want a Word from God, pick up the Word of God...It's living and active...it's our double-edged sword...it's our daily bread...

If you're not filling up on the word then you will fill up on the world...and you will become a casualty of war! We give you everything you need...bible studies, bible reading plans...

You've got to know the Word so that you can Know when to **STAND FIRM**

There are times in the battle when we're called to stand firm...to hold our ground...to resist the devil...We're taking a stand against the devils schemes...we're taking a stand against his lies...we're replacing those lies with the Truth! The Spirit of God in us will help us to fight by standing firm...

Now, you may be thinking man I'm really trying to stand firm, but I keep falling into temptation...I keep getting caught in this trap...

Know your **WEAKNESS**

Listen, we all have areas of weakness that make us vulnerable to the enemy's attack. This is why Peter tells us to be alert and sober minded...This is why Paul tells us not to give the devil a foothold...

So if you struggle with gossip don't hang out with people who talk about other people...

If you struggle with overeating don't have your bible study at Golden Corral...

If you struggle with lust...don't watch movies and shows that are full of it...

As Christians, we should avoid any situation that can lead us into sin...So we have to know our weakness because the devil does and he will use it against us!

Sometimes fighting is fleeing!

We're called to Flee Temptation (1 Tim 6:11)

We're called to flee sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:13)

Flee from idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14)

Flee from every form of evil (1 Thess 5:22)

We can win the battle by avoiding the trap...You only get burned when you get too close to the flame...

12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 13 No temptation[c] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted[d] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted,[e] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.-1 Corinthians 10:12-13 (NIV)

We need to remember that we're not in this battle alone...God is with you...and if you fall into temptation...and you will because you're human...don't let the devil fill you with condemnation...Instead allow the Holy Spirit to fill your heart with conviction...You're saying what's the difference?

I like how Greg Laurie breaks this down

When the devil condemns you...

He uses your own sins against you in a hateful way...

To make you feel hopeless...

He gets you to focus on your sin...and away from the cross...he wants you to feel regret and remorse...and He wants you to believe that you will never be forgiven...

When the Holy Spirit Convicts you

He uses the Word of God in love...

He seeks to bring you back into fellowship with your heavenly Father...

He gets you to focus not on your sin, but on your Savior...

He points to God and His forgiveness...

He draws you to the cross of Christ...

He leads you to repentance...

He moves you closer to Jesus

Don't you ever let anything keep you from coming to the cross and repenting of your sin and experiencing the wonderful, cleansing work of forgiveness in your life!

Remember...you are more than a conqueror...
Remember...that God loves you and nothing
can separate you from the love of God that is in
Christ Jesus our Lord!

Remember that in Jesus we have the
victory...and the battle belongs to the Lord!
Don't you quit...Don't you give in...Keep
swinging your sword!

What's the Holy Spirit Saying To You?
Altar Time