

Winning The War In Your Mind

4-3-24

The Mind is a Battlefield

I. Slide1 Intro:

A. Welcome to those watching online.

B. 3-part Series: *Winning The War In Your Mind*. I'll look at *The Mind Is A Battlefield*.

1. Defeat Your Negative Thoughts (AP). Calm My Anxious Mind (AL).

2. The Idea of this 3-part series is from *Craig Groeschel*. I loved His titles.

C. Does anyone have an ongoing war in your mind?

1. I want this to be really *practical* for us tonight. And for our lives forward.

D. Key: Identify your war in your mind. Lies of the enemy/flesh.

1. **I'm** insecure. I battle with feeling dumb. I still ask every week, *will this message even makes sense*. Should I even teach. Should I be teaching still. What if I let Jesus, my wife, my kids, & my church down?

2. Maybe you feel *helpless, hopeless, worthless*, or that life is *pointless*.

E. The battle in my mind swings from **Faith** to **Fear**, like *the metronome of a dogs tail back and forth*.

1. I want to **trust** God, and I want to **control** my life.

2. I want to enjoy the **peace** of God, and I want to **worry** so I feel like I'm doing something.

3. I want to live my life seeing the **positive**, *seeing the best in people*, and I like to brace myself for the **negative**.

4. I want to live for the **eternal**, and I also love the **worldly**.

F. The mind is a battlefield and most of life's battles are won or lost in your mind.

1. Both Scripture and neuroscience agree, it begins here, *in the mind*.

2. The good news is that God's Word is powerful. "*Not just to help you, but to transform you and renew your mind with truth!*"

G. Prayer:

II. Slide2,3 **THE MIND IS A BATTLEFIELD (2 Cor.10:3-5)**

A. 3 For though we walk in the flesh (human), we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons (truth) of our warfare (campaign. *stratia*/strategy. tactics) are not of the flesh but have divine power Sld4 (yes, walk in the flesh, not war in the flesh. Our weapons are Sp. Eg. Moses, 1st warred *in the flesh*/struck down Egyptian. After, warred *in the Sp* as he watched God move against Pharaoh/Egypt) to destroy strongholds Sld5 (*walls good or bad? Yes. Protects eg. Jeru/Neh; or Traps/dungeon/prison*). 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

B. Slided6 I see the problem here is *lie vs. truth. Not us vs. Devil* (though works against that also).

C. Here's how we wage war according to the flesh.

1. We buckle on the **belt** of *verbal abuse*. We strap on our **breastplate** of *self-righteousness*. We put on our **sandals** of *fake-quick-peace*. We put on our **helmet** of *heartache*. We slays others w/the **sword of our tongue**. We **pray** ... "*Lord, fix them!*" We are **watchful** ... "*of all their mistakes.*" And we **persevere** till we win the argument, or till the other party is exhausted and forfeits the win to us.

- a) Why won't we fight fair with the weapons of warfare God gave us? ... "*Truthfulness, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, His Word, Prayer, being watchful, and persevering.*"
- b) How will that type of fair fighting help your **marriage**? Help your **employee issues**? Help your **coworker issues**? [*i.e. speaking truth ... etc*]

III. Slide7a **TAKE EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE**

A. Evil thoughts, are **bricks/blocks** that build a wall around us, that trap us in (like this lil doggie). What **lie** is holding you hostage?

- B. The **lies** in your mind, may have been **whispering**/or screaming **something like this**:
You can't trust people. You'll never succeed. You're worthless. You're always going to be broke. You're never gonna have a good marriage. God doesn't hear your prayers. God doesn't care about you. You're never gonna make a difference. You're never gonna amount to anything.
- C. OK, so how do we do battle in our mind?
1. **Slide7b Destroy strongholds** (pull down) (4) - **demolition**, *tear down* a building
 2. Think **Joshua** and the **Victory** of **Jericho's walls**. Victory comes when we **count on God**. (divine power)
 3. Maybe Paul was thinking of Prov. 21:22 **A wise man scales the city of the mighty and brings down the stronghold in which they trust**. [we love tearing down others/strongholds. **What about our own?**]
 a) [1987 Mr. Gorbachov, *Tear down this wall!*]
 4. We have to **demolish/destroy** *the strongholds, the arguments, and lofty opinions raised against the knowledge of God*.
 5. We **take every thought captive** (why?) **to obey Christ**.
- D. Take every thought **captive** - with a **spear** (the only offensive weapon/*sword of the Spirit*, **The Word of God**). *Sword* - to cut away lies of the enemies.
1. *Present tense* - it's a continual struggle and warfare.
 2. **Slide8a** *"Christ counts evil thoughts as traitors not only to **us**, but also to **Him**."* F.B.Meyer
 a) In our **dependence on God & His Word**, our **divine power** helps us to *destroy* (pull down) *strongholds, destroy arguments, and every lofty opinion raised against God*.
- E. **Slide8b** It's a toxic thinking problem. *"Your life is always moving in the direction of your strongest thoughts."* C.G.
1. If that's true, **Are you excited about the direction of your thought life** (your inner dialogue) **and where it's taking you?**
 2. Let's answer that honestly and all agree, it's probably **no**.

3. Maybe it's *negativity, judging, fear, self doubt*.

a) *Our Prayer: Lord, help me. Lord help me, to renew my mind. Lord help me, to renew my mind, with spiritual truth.*

F. Tonight, **Identify the biggest stronghold** that is holding you back (again a stronghold is *a lie that has imprisoned you*).

G. Science lets us know that negative thoughts change the chemical makeup of our brains, **because every thought creates a neuralchemical change**.

1. **The good news** is that it also does this when we have **positive thoughts**, which release a very exciting drug called **dopamine** (every time your brain drops some dopamine, you get this hit, this buzz, this thrill).

2. Making new neural pathways, which science tells us that it's easier to **think that thought again**. And before long, **whatever we've been thinking becomes our default thought!**

a) **Slide9a** Think of it this way, if I got up every morning and walk straight across the middle of my lawn for 100 days straight *what would it do?* It would create a path. [same thing in my mind for 100 days straight, if I continue to *think on a lie* I have created a **path**] a Rut!

3. What you and I have to do, **with God's help** is ... we are going to **renew our minds**. We're going to **get off the old path**. We are going to **stay off the old path**. For 100 days straight.

a) This is not easy an easy walk. There will be more resistance. **But the grass is going to grow back!** [paths I've created on my hill in the backyard thru honeysuckle]

4. **Slide9b** Rom.12:2 NLT **Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.**

a) **Maybe** you have a **direct path** to your freezer and eat ice cream late every night, **and** it makes you feel bad because you're trying to lose weight.

b) **Maybe** when you're bored you've made a **path** to check your phone every 5 min.

IV. Slide10a LET'S DEMOLISH

- A. NOW name **the truth** that demolishes **YOUR** stronghold.
- B. Why does the truth matter? Because Jesus said, *You will know the truth and the truth will do what? set you free.* Slide10b John 8:32
1. Remember, **Lies** enshrine you in a prison of spiritual bondage.
 2. So far, we've all believed 1 of Satan's best lies ... *That we are locked in our prison cell of _____* , but actually the door is not locked! Actually it has never been locked. Believer, you and I have been stuck behind an *unlocked door*.
 3. Demolish the arguments with **His truth!**
- C. Can I play the devils advocate? - I'm stuck in the lie of ...
1. (rut) God just doesn't like me. (**Ask: what's my Truth as a believer?**) you're His child.
 2. (rut) I feel I can't do enough for God. (**A:what's my Truth as a believer?**) you are enough.
 3. (rut) I'm not worthy. (**A:what's my Truth as a believer?**) worthy is the Lamb. You're priceless.
- D. *****
- E. **Independence** (I can do it myself. I don't need God. I don't need others.) vs. **Connection** (connect with God & His word). It still is *not good for man to be alone*.
1. It's all how you read Ps.23. Not just don't fear evil. **But, Yea, though I walked through the valley in the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; (why?) for you or with me!**
- F. **Thought** (sense) = the content of what a person is thinking about.
- G. Keywords: mind, war, battlefield.

H. See Paul was honest to admit he struggled with it. He wrote a whole chapter on *his struggles w/carnality*.

1. Rom.7:21-25 *So I find it to be a law (a principle in life) **that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.** 22 **For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,** 23 *but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.* 24 *Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?* (answer) 25 **Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!***

a) Paul expresses gratitude for the provision of Jesus Christ. Through his death and resurrection, He gave people an alternative *to the ineffective law*, empowered people *to overcome sin* (as He did), and provided them with a relationship with God *that sin previously prevented*.

I. *We are not waging war according to the flesh* - Paul uses spiritual weapons - such as the *gospel, faith, truth, and prayer* - to wage battle against his opposition.

1. 2 Cor.6:6,7 NLT *We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us, and by our sincere love.* 7 *We faithfully preach the truth. God's power is working in us. We use **the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense.***