

Spiritual Battle

II Corinthians 10:3-7

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Intro

Paul changes the subject in chapter 10 and brings us into a matter of great spiritual importance. Paul writes that when he comes to Corinth he will deal with the matters there personally if necessary.

In these verses we gain insight for our own lives in regards to the battles that we have to face at times ourselves. Conflicts and confrontations are a part of life, but it doesn't mean that we must engage in conflicts the way that the world does, in fact Paul says that we should not at all.

These are insights we all need. We need to understand what to do in conflict, and have confidence that God's ways are better than the world's ways.

These are insights into the conflicts and confrontations of our lives.

I. Commit to Using Only Spiritual Weapons

A. Do not battle according to the flesh

- Paul says that though we walk according to the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.
- In other words, we must decide that we will not engage in conflicts with worldly weapons.
- What are some examples of worldly weapons, worldly ways? – Anger, badgering, yelling, nagging, backbiting, manipulations, trickery, deceit, etc.

James 1:19-20, “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.”

Illus – Sometimes in conflict, people are trying to accomplish a godly result, but they are using a worldly means.

II Timothy 2:24-25, “The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition,”

B. Godly weapons are divinely powerful

- Paul writes that there is divine power in godly weapons. Believing in all faith that God inspires and empowers the use of godly ways, we must stand on that faith and choose to use God's ways.

Illus – One of the best biblical illustrations of God empowering the weak is Gideon. He hid in the wine press to sift wheat when the angel of the Lord appeared to him...

Judges 6:12, “The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, ‘The Lord is with you, O valiant warrior.’”

- He was told to take down the high places of false worship which belonged to his father's house, but he was afraid so he did it at night.
- We need to trust in God's weapons – truth, grace, and love for example.

Colossians 4:6, “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

C. For the destruction of fortresses

- These are the high places standing against the knowledge of God. In other words, that is the real battle.
- If we’re fighting flesh and blood, we’re fighting the wrong battle. Our spouse, boss, neighbor or friend is not our enemy.

Ephesians 6:12-14, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”

- The real problem is our spiritual condition and the spiritual condition of those we’re dealing with.
- The real adversary is Satan. Though His defeat is certain, he battles to the end.

Illus – When the Allied forces invaded Normandy on June 6, 1944, 155,000 Allied soldiers fought in the greatest single military invasion in world history. With that success, Hitler knew the war would be lost, but they would fight to the bitter end. Satan knows that he is a defeated foe, but will continue to the end.

I Peter 5:8-9, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith,”

II. Take Every Thought Captive

A. Spiritual living begins with spiritual thinking

- Paul continues with the illustration of tearing down strongholds. He said that the weapons of spiritual warfare are divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- In other words, the lies of the enemy have been there so long that, brick by brick, a fortress has been established on the high places, the most prominent places of people’s minds. These must be torn down.
- And the thoughts that reside in those fortresses must be taken captive. Don’t let them run free to set up camp again.

Proverbs 23:7, “For as he thinks within himself, so he is.”

Illus – Many people desire to have godly character, but don’t understand that to have godly action, there must first be godly thoughts. And our ungodly thoughts must not be allowed to run free.

- *You can’t think mean thoughts and be gracious only in appearance; we would not be true, not authentic.*

Luke 11:38-41, But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised. Then the Lord said to him, “Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?”

B. Destroying that which destroys you

- Getting to the thoughts is to get to the root of the matter.

Illus – Israel allowed high places to be set up in the land. Places of worship of false gods only brought Israel trouble, because the battle for the soul is a battle of winning the heart and mind.

- **The high places in our hearts will determine who we are and who we will become.**

Luke 6:44-45, “For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

Galatians 5:22-24, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

C. The real battle is in the heart

Illus – I remember speaking to a businessman in Russia and he asked me if I thought money would fix Russia’s problems. I said no, “Money only amplifies what is in a man’s heart. What Russia needs is a new heart.”

- Verse 7; “you are looking at things as they appear outwardly,” Paul wrote.
- That is the issue exactly. The real battle is in the heart. That is where real change is going to happen.
- We need to remove anything that is poisoning the well.

Hebrews 12:15, “See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;”

- Then we need to be sure that we drink from the well that will truly satisfy the soul.

John 7:37-39, Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive;

Conclusion

Tearing down the high places in our hearts and then taking every thought captive must happen if we are to win the spiritual battle within, but we must also build up the temple of God. Do not leave that in disrepair. Build up and be edified.