

Winning the Battle of the Mind

10/14/07

Welcome:

Message:

Today we're going to begin a new series called, "Winning the Battle of the Mind," I really think it's going to be a good one... Why you may ask because... I can't think of no other subject or teaching that is needed in the body of Christ more than this subject of our thought life, of guarding our thought life, guarding our minds. "Winning the Battle of the Mind" and I encourage you to reach out to your family, friend and co-workers and invite them to come join us for this series. God's word, the Bible says, whatever captures your attention is going to capture you. Proverbs 4:23 *"Be careful how you think. Your life is shaped by your thoughts."* The spiritual battle for

temptation is fought in your mind and I encourage you to reach out to someone and invite people to come and consider the claims of Christ.

I know God's a Spirit and we've got to worship Him in spirit and in truth. And I know that really faith is of the heart. But we should never underestimate the tremendously important role that our mind plays in our Christian walk, in our walk of faith. See the Bible teaches that mankind is a three-part being. You are an eternal spirit; you live in a body; and you have a soul. Your spirit on the inside of your body, that's the real you, it's going to live on forever.

Hopefully in everlasting life with God, if you'll accept the free gift of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. But then there's a third area of mankind and that's the soulish area. And that is our mind that is our will and emotions. And that's the area I want to focus on for the next several

weeks, and more specifically I want to focus on the area of our mind.

You must understand this statement. The only entrance the enemy has into your personality, into your emotions, into your thoughts is through your mind. It all goes through your mind. And once you can really understand this and comprehend this, you'll realize that all you have to really do is close one door basically to the enemy, a very important doorway though, the doorway through your mind; a very important gateway.

You see everything starts with a thought. Have you ever thought about this...? Everything starts with a thought: obedience or disobedience, divorce, adultery, envy, jealousy. It all comes through your mind to be checked out. Your mind is the leader; your mind is the forerunner of all

of your actions and all of your thoughts. The mind is really the devil's playground, the devil's battleground.

And I've seen so many people live negative, defeated, miserable lives because they don't understand what I'm talking about. They don't understand you've got to guard this gateway. Everything comes through your mind.

The enemy knows that if he can keep us, if he can affect our thoughts he knows that he can keep us in bondage, in prison, in captivity for a month, for a year, for a whole lifetime. All by affecting the way you think. You must understand your mind is the bull's eye of Satan's target. That's what he's shooting for. Proverbs 23:7 says, "*As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.*" You cannot live a positive life with a negative mind. And many times the problems that we face are created from wrong thinking patterns that actually produce the problems.

Well the first thing we need to understand is that we are in a warfare. **1. We are in a battle.** Ephesians 6:12 (NLT) makes it real clear. It says that, *“For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.* Doesn't that make it clear?

Listen friends, you and I need to know we are in a battle. The Bible makes it very clear that there is a battle, a warfare going on. But listen, it says it's not a physical warfare, it's not tangible. In other words this battle we can't see it, we can't touch it. The Bible says it's intangible or in other words, it's in the unseen world that all this battle is taking place. So the first thing we need to know is that we're in warfare. There's a battle going on around us

and it's in the most important world that there is, the unseen world, the world that's going to last forever.

Well if you and I are in a battle, the first thing I want to know is, **2. Who Is My Enemy.** I've got to know who I'm fighting against. And the Bible makes it clear in Ezekiel 28, I am going to tell you about this chapter but I encourage you to read it this week. It talks about that Satan was in heaven at one time and he was perfect in beauty and full of wisdom. And the Bible says that he began to exalt himself and to get proud and to get real haughty. And he tried to equal himself with God. He tried to get equal with God and God would have none of that. And the Bible states how God cast Satan out of heaven and it says that now *“Satan is the god of this world”* II Corinthian 4:4. God's word, the bible also tells us, very clearly, it says, *“Be careful! Watch out for the attacks from the Devil, your*

great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour” 1 Peter 5:8. So God’s word, the Bible makes it clear that Satan is our enemy. He was cast out of heaven. He was full of wisdom and beauty, but God cast him out. And it makes it clear that we, that is those who have made Christ their Lord and Saviour, we are on enemy territory here on earth. Why, because Satan is the god, little g god, of this world. John 10:10 says, “...*he comes to steal and to kill and to destroy from us.* So we must know that we are in a battle, we’re in this warfare in the unseen world, and we know that our enemy is the devil and demon forces.

Know the truth is some people say, "Bill, you know that sounds like something made up. That sounds like a fairy tale. That sounds like something dreamed up by you after you ate too much pizza one night and went to bed."

But friends listen, whether you believe it or not, it is the truth. I wish I could tell you if you hid your head in the sand and not believe then it won’t bother you that it would go away. I wish I could tell you if you hid your head in the sand, then it won’t be there. But if you’re born again, if you have stepped across that spiritual line, you’ve got an enemy and you’re in a battle and you need to realize you’re in that battle and if you don’t the devil will have a hey-day with you all of your life.

You can’t stick your head in the sand and say, "You know Bill, if I don’t bother the devil, surely he won’t bother me." It doesn’t work that way. Satan just laughs all the way and says, "Look, they’re not even paying attention to me."

You know if that is the case I liken that to being in a boxing match. You know that if you’re in a boxing ring and you’ve got an opponent and the bell sounds, the match

is on whether you know it or not. Now, you can go stand in the corner and say all you want and think you're not in the boxing match. You can think as positive minded as you want that this isn't a real thing... but you know what will happen? Every once in a while that guy will come up and slap you up side the head a couple of times. You know what I mean? Knock you down several times! He doesn't care. He'll just laugh and say, "Hey look gang they're not even paying attention to me."

That's why the Bible talks about "*you've got to be sober, you've got to be vigilant, and you've got to put on the whole armor of God.*" There's a whole battle going on around us. We can't ignore it. Just because we can't see it, it's still happening.

And I'm amazed at people in 2007 who don't believe in the devil and demon forces. You don't have to look around to

far to see it in this world, to realize that there is an evil influence in this world. Just watch the news.

Okay let's move on the next thing I want to know **if I am in a battle is what kind of tactics does he have? What kind of weapons does the enemy have if I'm fighting** against him? I want to know what Satan uses against me. Well Jesus made it very clear in John 8:44. He called Satan, "*... from the beginning he has always hated the truth. There is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.*" Satan's number one weapon in this great battle is lying to you, just not telling you the truth. Has he ever lied to any of you before? Certainly, he's lied to me and every one of us.

And that's why it's so important for you and I to know this and to lay this foundation to show you that this warfare is

going on. We've got an enemy that was cast out of heaven. What weapons does he use? **He uses lying, deception and lies.** Where does the battle take place then? It takes place in our mind. **This whole battle is going on in our mind.** And that's why I said earlier that it's so important if you can guard the doorway to your mind, you can defeat the enemy and become all God wants you to be. But you've got to close that doorway. No, don't give him a place in your mind. Don't listen to his lies that come to you. Don't listen to his evil, negative thoughts that come to your mind. You've got to be able to cast them away.

So let's talk about that for a little while.

You know, I know we say that the devil is dumb and I do believe the devil's dumb for getting kicked out of heaven. I don't like to give him any credit but he is a master deceiver. He is very cunning. He's clever. He meticulously

plants thoughts, suspicions, fears, doubts, and wonderings in your mind. And you know what he does? He plants them there and then he backs up and he says, "Let's see what they'll do with it. Will they accept it or will they cast it down?" And listen, if you accept it, you know what he does? He just laughs and says, "That's great because I've got another one for them and it's going to take them further than this one did."

You see, he's been working on human nature for years and years. He's been experimenting. He knows how human nature usually reacts. He's a very experienced deceiver. And I don't say this to scare any of you. Don't even think that. God's power is much greater than the power of the enemy. I know first hand it is. Amen. Let's give the Lord a handclap that greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world.

Listen what I am talking about today I don't say to bring to bring fear to your life. But you and I need to know how he works. And then we can defeat him.

What is deception? Deception is something that deceives you, lies to you, gets you off track and you didn't know it was right. Satan comes to attack you at your weakest point, I'd say, at your greatest need. He knows, and don't let this scare you, but he knows your fears. He knows your insecurities. He knows your weaknesses. And that's the area he wants to attack you on.

He attacks us at our weakest point, in our greatest need.

And we have to be on guard, we have to guard our mind.

And listen the devil's willing to invest any amount of time it takes to defeat you. One of his strongest assets is patience. Why, because he is wanting to set up strongholds in our minds. **What are strongholds?** Strongholds is an

erroneous thinking pattern that is contrary to God's word, that will hold you captive, hold you in bondage, hold you back from being all God wants you to be. That's a stronghold and this is his goal. And people we've got to examine our lives and make sure we don't have strongholds in them. We need to cast them down and the Good News is the Bible says we can pull those down, they don't have to have power over us. But some people, he's been working on for years and years and years, and they don't even know they are strong holds; he's such a good deceiver.

Years ago I met with a nice young lady... she had a very interesting story and after years of being in a small group with me and meeting together she told me if sharing her story to other people would ever help someone I could share it. Her story goes like this she started telling me

about her earliest time that she could remember that her dad just always told her how she was never going to amount to anything, that she was so clumsy, she was never going to make it in life. The dad did the same thing to the mom. He was hurting man for sure and he was allowing all his stuff to come out on the daughter and to the mom.

And she told about how she grew up with this domineering father that would just vent his anger on her for no reason at all. Negative words shared are like seeds in our spirit and the enemy uses that. Here's what he does. He'll use something that somebody said to you to begin a stronghold. And that girl that I am talking about not even at a fault of her own, at a very early age was starting to get a very bitter, negative attitude towards men. Satan was using that way back there. But she went on to say by the time she was 18, she was literally brainwashed by Satan, for lack of

better words. He had caused her to replay those thoughts of her dad saying that "You'll never make it. You're never going to amount to anything," thousands and thousands and tens and tens of thousands of times and it hurt. How was she supposed to be productive when she had this terrible stronghold in her mind?

Strongholds start from one thought. People have said to me, "Bill, I can't come to God because I don't live the right kind of life." They don't realize you give your life to God, you come just as you are and then He begins to change you and that's a stronghold. That will keep people in bondage. Let me show you how Satan works. And apply this principle to your own life. Satan will come to you and let me pick on the ladies this Sunday. He'll come to you and he'll say, "You know your husband really doesn't appreciate you any more. He's taking you for granted."

And you know what? He gives you that thought and like I said a while ago, he steps back and he wants to see what you're going to do with it. Are you going to listen to it? Are you going to cast it down? If you listen to it, he'll wait until you totally digest it to give you that next thought. It might be an hour, it might be a week, it might be six months, and it might be a year. He's not in any hurry. So he gives you that thought. And if you accept that and give it credence, you know what he'll do? At the next point he'll come give you another thought and he'll say, "Hey, not only does your husband not appreciate you, not only does he take you for granted, but he really doesn't even love you any more." You know he takes you a step at a time to try to get us off track.

And if you'll believe that, you know what will happen? All of a sudden your attitude's affected, your emotions are

affected, and your personality is affected all based on lies. He is a master deceiver. We can cast them down and they'll die or we can accept them and they'll start to grow. And you've got to remember this whole battle's going on and it's going on in our minds. The devil's main tool is trying to lie to us.

And you know what he'll do? He'll take it a step further. He'll try to make you see everything wrong about your husband, try to get you to see everything negative. One day your husband will walk in the door. You won't say a thing to him. You'll just think it. Look at him, what a mess, what in the world is wrong with that man?" "Look what he's wearing. Those clothes don't even match and he has had them forever. He always wears shorts and he must be color blind and look at the gut on that man. You think that is not the man I married." You see everything negative about

your husband. And you know what, everything's affected and it's all based on lies. It doesn't stop there one day your watching TV and guess what comes on, The Guiding Light." And you see a beautiful lady and a handsome hunk of a man. They're sitting there having a candlelight, romantic dinner. You know the background is the Pacific Ocean. The sun's going down. The wind's blowing their hair. Are you getting the picture? And what will come in your mind that stronghold, "I am missing out. Look how everybody else lives, man." Satan will tell you all the time, "The grass is greener on the other side. You ought to find yourself somebody else. You should have married somebody like this." Like I heard someone say once, "You know the grass may be greener on the other side, but it still has to be mowed."

What Satan tells you? Is, "Man, you're missing out on romance." Listen, I'll tell you this from practical experience. Edna-Wynne and I, we used to be very romantic, and then we got married. No listen seriously. What I wanted you to see today is that the devil is a master deceiver and he would love for you to ruin your life and your families and guide you into making foolish decisions based on his lies.

I have Good News for you today. I want to tell you that we can overcome. See God's word says we have weapons also and they are not human, carnal, they are not natural; they are supernatural weapons and it talks about they are mighty through God. And the Bible says that we can pull down these strongholds. Friends listen you with God in your life can do it.

You all are so easy to come and talk to and it's a joy for me to share with you. If you'd bow your heads in prayer? And You know one of the biggest tragedies is for Satan to blind your mind of really accepting Jesus as your Lord. And it's not something hard to do. All you've got to do is call upon the name of the Lord. And I just want to pray a simple prayer with you. If you'll repeat it after me and mean it, God will change your life.

Just say, Jesus, come into my heart and save me. Be my Lord. Be my Savior. I repent of my old sins, my former sins. God, I'm going to serve You all the days of my life.

Listen, I believe you prayed that prayer. Listen, what you need to do is get involved into one of our small groups and learn and grow in God's word, the Bible. Learn the things of God and you'll never regret giving your life to God.

He'll do you nothing but good. I'm not saying you're not

going to have some challenges. But He will show you how to overcome in every one of them. God bless you.