

The Battlefield of the Mind

Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses (strongholds). We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:3-5).

It is a well-known fact is that we do not struggle against flesh and blood. Elijah Company has a mandate to help others know their call and move into it. Recently we talked to three separate individuals who are planning to go to the mission field. Each one of them told of the incredible struggle they are having with feelings and thoughts of wanting to quit. Each one was thinking, "Is this really the Lord's will? Maybe I should just give up." Can we hear evil speaking in this case? Does the devil speak in ways that we hear? Could this be one of his schemes to stop us?

Many times we share that from the early 80's through the mid 90's we had a prosperous, almost utopian ministry life. Then things started to take a downward turn. Stress, conflicts, misunderstandings and depression began to consume my life (Norm). It was during this time that I learned the greatest truths that now form the basis for most of the work we do to prepare workers for the harvest. They are what we call "the treasures found in darkness." The mystics refer to these times as "the dark night of the soul." I don't think that anyone is really prepared for ministry unless they, too, have passed through times like these.

At the height of these dark days, I felt that all was lost. Depression and hopelessness closed in on me. I was invited to a ministry called "Healing for the Nations." It was there that Steve, the leader, asked me what my thoughts were in that situation. As I listed these thoughts, they led to the conclusion, "I have no value because I am (personally) bad." Steve then asked me, "Is this what God is saying?" and I responded, "No." As you know, it is not Scriptural to say we are valueless because of personal performance or lack of it. Value is based on who we are as humans and believers. Somehow the powers of darkness found a receiver that corresponded with falsehood, and I opened the door and let it come in. This is called a spiritual stronghold. My belt of truth was not in place. I was listening to the lies of the enemy. I confessed my unbelief in the Lord's Word as sin and received cleansing. The result was immediate.

We all struggle with our thoughts because the enemy comes in through our minds. Because we are human servants of the Lord, we are also under strategic attack in our minds and hearts. Since gaining that understanding, we have helped hundreds of people to understand the false beliefs (strongholds) that they accept on a heart level. We all must battle to maintain truth in our souls. When I received calls this week telling me about mental attacks on those whom we have trained, I just thought, "I told you so." This is no surprise. The intensity of the battle, especially when one prepares to go into unreached nations or people groups, gets downright vicious.

Jesus said to His disciples, "The prince of this world is coming but he has nothing in Me" (John 14). How do we hear? As with a hand-held remote for any electronic device or toy, there is no actual physical connection between the remote and the device, but when a signal is sent which finds a receiver in the device, a response happens. When Jesus said that the prince of this world had nothing in Him, it meant that the devil could begin to hurl every imaginable signal in evil speaking, abuse, rejection, danger, worry and unimaginable fears, and they would find no place to rest in Jesus. If anyone ever had a reason for hopelessness, dejection, fear, anxiety, anger or bitterness, Jesus did. He was mocked, beaten, misunderstood, falsely accused and more. Yet Scripture says that for the joy that was before Him, He endured the cross and despised the shame. We can be like Jesus if we understand the battle we are in, and apply what He has provided for us.

Understand the Battle

Finally, brothers, 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 (Philippians 4:8).

- Realize that you will be under constant attack –There will not be a day in which you can take off your armor and take it easy.

“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” (Ephesians 6:12).

- Realize that your emotions are a barometer of spiritual fortitude – If you are defeated by depression, anxiety, anger, bitterness or have any emotion contrary to the peace and joy that comes from your well-being in Christ, then you are under attack of an evil power. You are not taking your stand against the devil's schemes in your life.

“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes” (Ephesians 6:10–11).

- Realize that your weapons have divine power – Think about the fact that we can be strong in God's mighty power with His armor. It would not be too much to say that spiritually speaking we are coming against an anthill with a nuclear bomb. We have the responsibility to raise the weapons and use them.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” (Ephesians 6:10).

- Realize that your thoughts are behind every emotion – We must identify what we are thinking at the time of a spiritual attack and compare it with what the Word of God (the sword of the Spirit) says. The thought that we have allowed to have access is what we are to confess as sin. We can apply I John 1:9 which says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).

- Realize that the truth will set you free – We must know God's truth in our hearts, and we must say “no” to the enemy's lies. We must learn to stand firm with the belt of truth in the day of evil attack. Think of Who God is, what Christ has done, and who you are in Him. This truth will set you free.

“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist” (Ephesians 6:14).

Imagine a father holding his newborn son in his arms saying, "Son, I love you and I will always be here for you." And the next day he takes the son and says the same thing, "Son, I love you and I will always be here for you." The next day he says the same. Time passes and every day the father says the same. Into the second year, third, and up to the fifth year and on into the child's teen

years, the father says, "Son, I love you and I will always be here for you." Then one day the young man looks at his aging father and says, "Father, every day of my life you have said, 'Son, I love you and I will always be here for you.' But I was told that you can not be trusted." How would the father feel?

Our Father in heaven has spoken to us at many times and in many ways. He speaks to us through creation, through the Word and through the death and resurrection of Jesus. He says, "I love you, I love you. I am with you always. Do not fear." But in times of spiritual struggle, we allow thoughts to come into our mind that contradict His Word. That is a transgression and an offense to God. We are choosing to believe a lie. When we confess it as sin, Christ's blood immediately cleanses and sets us free.

We are in a battle, but we can be victors. We do not have to believe the lies of the enemy. We can win this battle that goes on in our hearts and minds. We can believe the truth that God says about us. We can stand firm with the belt of truth buckled around our waist. Since that day in 1996, I have learned what the disciples of Jesus said, "Even the demons submit to us in your name." I have learned to believe God's truth in His Word, and I have learned to reject the lies of the enemy. I am learning on a daily basis to stand firm in the Lord.

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through
our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers,
stand firm. Let nothing move you.
I Corinthians 15:57-58