

Sermon Series – Winning the Battle

Part 1 – “The Battlefield of the Mind”

Pastor Dale Campfield - October 23rd, 2011

Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

Current Sermon Series: Winning the Battle

Theme Text: **2 Cor 10:5** “Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

Premise of Series: Our faith has increased, our love is abound, now what? Throughout the past two sermon series we have looked at the fact that without FAITH it is impossible to please God. We must not only have faith, but we must walk that faith out on a daily basis. Then, we looked at different aspects of LOVE and how we use our faith to love others.

The fact is, as we go out, walking with faith to love others, the enemy is going to do everything possible to keep us from achieving the goal of making an IMPACT – reaching souls in the path of our lives for the Kingdom of God; Loving, growing and serving; he devil will throw everything he possibly can at you to keep you defeated, depressed and distracted. That is why it is of utmost importance that we bring every thought that we have into captivity in order to walk in obedience to Christ.

Today’s Sermon Title: The Battlefield of the Mind

You have an amazing machine inside your head we call the brain. You may not have a high IQ, maybe only average or even below average intelligence. But your brain is still something amazing.

- Did you know that inside the skull of your head is more information stored than in the **library of congress and all 17 million volumes**? That is pretty amazing for a little machine that only weighs about **3 pounds**.
- **Psychologists tell us that each person has about ten thousand thoughts per day.**

Did you realize that many thoughts go on inside your head each day? I find that an encouragement. You see that means you have at least a one in ten thousand chance of having a good thought every day.

Much of the whole thought process remains a mystery to scientists and psychologists. But one thing is not a mystery about the mind.

- **How you think is going to affect your Christian life.**

How you think will make a profound difference in how you represent our Lord Jesus Christ.

You know in the hospital before a surgeon is about to do surgery he is going to scrub his hands over and over. Why? Because no one wants that surgery performed until the surgeon's hands are clean. As Christians we have a ministry to perform, an IMPACT to make in our lives that God has called each of us to do. And just like the surgeon who needs clean hands for surgery we need to have clean minds.

Philippians 4:8

“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.”

In these verses Paul emphasizes the need for a good thought life. The Christian life is more than just the external. It is more than a list of rules, obeying the dos and refraining from the don'ts. The Christian life is something internal and that is more challenging than obeying a set of rules.

Christianity is about the internal and about your thought life. We must transform our thought life. You may need a revival of the mind. The Bible speaks about this kind of transformation in your life. It will transform your Christian life if you can keep your thoughts on things that are pleasing to God.

When someone commits a sin it is most likely a manifestation of what has already taken place in their mind. Do you remember when that little shepherd boy, David took a smooth stone and put it in a sling and embedded it in the head of the giant Goliath? After that giant fell David became known throughout the land and people were singing a song and the refrain went, Saul has killed

his thousands but, David his ten thousands.

Well Saul began to think about that and the jealousy brewed inside of his mind. Before long Saul was hurling a spear to kill David. Why? Because it began in the thought life.

Even king David himself had his famous sin with Bathsheba. Where did it begin? It began in the thought life. If we really want to transform the Christianity in the church then we need to transform our mind. There needs to be a revival of the mind.

So...let's take a look at the Battlefield in your mind; for that is where the battle in life that we fight usually always starts – in the mind. It is a battlefield.

You look at the battles being fought around the world right now; and you look at the possibilities of battles yet to come that seem to be imminent. These battles will not be like anything we've ever seen before. They may involve Patriot missiles, Stinger missiles, laser-guided weapons, the Tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided missiles, and a whole host of other technologically advanced weaponry. These staples of modern war are vastly different than the weapons of former generations.

Most of us have never fought in a war, and many of us never will. The closest that we will get to war will be sitting at home watching it unfold on the News.

War is imminent, but not just the war in the Middle East or other places around the world. Do you realize that right now each of us is engaged in a battle? Even before we witness one bomb being dropped, there are battles already raging inside of each one of us.

I am not talking about battles that are fought with biological weapons and chemical warfare that will be used on the battlefield.

No, I am talking about the constant battle that we have every minute of every hour and every hour of every day and every day of every year of our lives. I am talking about the struggles in the theater of our minds.

Romans 12:2

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Our world is bombarded with visual images and advertising campaigns that fight for our attention. In fact, companies spent 2.1 million dollars for a single 30 second advertisement last year in the Super Bowl; and most of those use sex appeal for the advertising. It seems as if the advertisements lean toward the sensual and the seductive. There's no doubt that explicit ads gather the most attention. The sad reality is that the images that parade across our screens present only one side of the story. They fail to mention how many people are wounded with the arrows of alcohol. They fail to mention how many diseases are spread and how many marriages are hurt

by promiscuity. Advertisers have a way of presenting half-truths and making it seem like the whole story. It's a game they play - a mind game.

Modern advertisers are not the first ones to play with our minds. Since the Garden of Eden we have been wrestling with an evil force that seeks to destroy everything that is good in our lives. This evil force is named Satan. He is more than a cartoon character; he is an enemy that wages war against you. His primary battlefield is in your mind. He seeks to control you through negative self-talk, static images, and obsessive thoughts.

- **You need to remember that Satan's great weapon against you is deception.**

If he can convince you to believe things that are not true, then he can control your life.

Remember the words of...

Proverb 23:7

"As a man thinks in his heart, so he becomes."

If Satan can get you thinking negative thoughts, then you will become a negative person. Satan is a deceiver. He promises you one thing, but gives you another. He tricks you into thinking you are a helpless victim who will need years of group therapy the rest of your life.

Satan tells you that sin is just a part of being a man, and there is nothing you can do about it. He knows a lot about addictions and he makes you believe that you're not really addicted. He convinces you that you are off the hook and that you are not required to live an obedient life because God understands your situation and wants you to be happy.

God is more concerned about your holiness, than He is your happiness. The Bible says that Satan is a liar and the father of lies.

John 8:44

"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

How do we combat this evil influence? How do we win the battle of the mind? How do we conquer the negative images that parade across the screens of our psyche? Let's be practical?

How do you win any great war? You have to have a strategy; you have to have a battle plan. Each military operation has at least two strategies: an offensive strategy and a defensive strategy. If we are going to win the thought battle, then we need a strategy.

We'll begin this strategy by understanding the strongholds that the enemy throws at us in order to get us to trip up, thinking and then acting upon those thoughts that lead to sin, thus decreasing our IMPACT.

What are some of the vices or Strongholds that Satan uses in our minds?

The Vices (strongholds) of the mind that Satan Uses

A. A Wandering Mind

A mind that wanders from one thought to the next. Day dreaming. This can especially happen when you are in a celebration service and the word of the Lord is being spoken or you're sitting in a classroom or at your desk at work.

Ecclesiastes 5:7

"In spite of many daydreams, pointless actions, and empty words, you should still fear God."

B. A Wondering Mind

Question things. I wonder what the weather will be like. I wonder if the celebration will be good. I wonder. I wonder if my wife loves me. I wonder if my friends like me, etc. etc. This can cause you to doubt. Sometimes we use doubt to keep us from being hurt. Satan uses it to keep us from receiving a blessing.

John 13:22

"The disciples began looking at each other and wondering which one of them Jesus meant."

The disciples were just told by Jesus that one of them would betray Him. They are now wondering. We are often times told things by God, only to wonder what He means by it. Sometimes we go through things and just wonder, does God really know what He's doing?

C. A Confused Mind

This happens when we think too much about something instead of just trusting the Lord. We start thinking about things that we can't control and things we have no idea in how they really work, and then we get confused and start questioning God instead of trusting Him.

Luke 1:29

"Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean."

D. A Doubtful Mind

We doubt God. We doubt each other. We doubt our friends and family.

Luke 12:29

"And do not give too much thought as to what you will eat and drink, and do not let your mind be full of doubts."

E. A Double Mind.

Trying to have it both ways. It's like trying to stand in two different ways about the issue, being double minded. Doubt is to stand in two ways. It is as a double minded person.

James 1:8

"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

F. An Unbelieving Mind

It is pure disobedience. It is as not believing.

Titus 1:15

"To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted."

G. An Anxious, Worried or Fearful Mind

It is to cause to feel anxious, distressed or troubled, a source of nagging concern.

It just places thoughts in our mind that just have no purpose or reason to be there. They are just useless and it will turn to doubt then disbelief. It makes us fear and worry.

2 Timothy 1:7

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

H. A Judgmental, Critical, and Suspicious Mind

This is the type of mind that always looks for the bad instead of the good. Always has to be critical instead of being uplifting. Always wondering what the motive of the person is who is nice.

1 Samuel 18:9

"Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on."

David had just killed Goliath and the people were crediting and honoring David. Saul killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands. Saul was now critical and watching with suspicion everything David does because of his jealousy of him. He began to constantly look for the bad.

I. A Passive Mind

Lack of feeling, lack of desire, lukewarmness, riding the fence.

Revelation 3:16

“So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”

J. A Reprobate Mind

Romans 1:28

“And since they considered it foolish to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to perform acts that should not be done.”

“reprobate” means ‘to take a test, and fail it’. God looks on the “minds” of the lost ... and they FAIL the test. WHY? Because their minds are filled with everything ... but God!

Their “minds” are “vanity” ... ‘empty’, when it comes to spiritual life, God-centered thoughts, anything that pleases God. Ephesians 4:17 – “ This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,”

That’s not to say that the lost can’t DO good things, SAY good things, ACT in good ways. They CAN ... BUT ... they do it in the flesh ... AND ... God doesn’t honor it, because it doesn’t honor God. Titus 1:15 – “but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”

K. A Blinded Mind

2 Cor. 4:4

“Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.”

The LOST are BLINDED to the things of God. UNLESS/UNTIL their “minds” are opened by the Holy Spirit, they will continue walking in darkness.

Conclusion:

So.....How do we battle these mindsets?

Come next week, for that’s what we’re going to look at.

But for now... allow me to encourage you to look at these different vices of the enemy that he would throw at you, recognize which ones you’re dealing with, and then go to battle.

Here it is....

Question: What Am I Supposed to do With this Information?

- 1 – Go back through the list.**
- 2 – Discern which ones you deal with regularly.**
- 3 – Keep a journal of your experiences. (who, what, where, when, why, how)**
- 4 – Commit to pray over them daily.**
- 5 – When you blow it – start over again.**

And as you do...

You watch... you wait... you'll see!