

THE WAR IN OUR MINDS

THE WAR WITHIN

(Part 2)

DEPRESSION
ANGER
GUILT
INFERIORITY & LOW SELF-ESTEEM
ENVY & JEALOUSY
LONELINESS
GRIEF
ANXIETY

All of these are potentially paralyzing and life altering issues that we may face in our lifetime.

Each of these is the result of a battle that takes place in the mind. This battle can be influenced by mental illness and biological issues which may necessitate a medical doctor's help.

Regardless of whether there is a biological issue or not, the battle also includes the spiritual. By that I mean, we need to learn to think like God tells us to think. This has nothing to do with the power of positive thinking or being able to think away our problems from a human perspective. It has nothing to do with religion or a list of do and don'ts that will somehow earn us favor with God. It's about a real relationship with God where we want to follow Him and do what He says in the Bible.

To best understand how to address each of these issues , we need to understand the WHY behind each one. Why do I struggle with depression or anxiety, or grief, etc. To establish the why, we are laying a foundation of Biblical principles that explain this war that takes place in our mind.

THE WAR IN OUR MINDS

We have been discussing the 4 characteristics of the war in our minds and last time we learned that this war is a **Spiritual War**. This means God must be involved if we are to win because it's his strength and his power that wins the war, not ours. Practically, this simply means we must be a believer and have received Jesus as our personal savior and then we must walk with him each day endeavoring to live by the principles of the Bible. We also must realize that we are going to sin and make mistakes but God has provided a way of forgiveness so we can get back up and keep going.

So, now let's look at the last 3 characteristics of this war in our mind.

INNER WAR

Second, this war is an inner war. It takes place inside us not outside. Paul said this about our spiritual fight:

Ephesians 6:12 NLT

For **we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies**, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

Romans 7:23 NLT

But there is another power **within me** that is at **war** with my mind. This power makes me a slave to **the sin that is still within me**.

This sin that is still within us is our sinful nature. It is that part of us that does not want to obey God and it never will. Listen to what Paul says about this:

Romans 8:7 NLT

For **the sinful nature is always hostile to God**. It never did obey God's laws, and **it never will**.

THE WAR IN OUR MINDS

Unfortunately, this part of us will remain inside of us until we get to heaven. It is this inner desire that becomes a major part of this war in our mind. Remember, this sinful nature exists in every human being.

1John 1:8 NLT

If we claim we have no sin, **we are only fooling ourselves** and not living in the truth.

1John 1:9 NLT

But if we confess our sins to him, **he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins** and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

Rom 3:23 NLT

For **everyone has sinned**; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

Because this war is fought on the inside of us, we can't grab the enemy and punch it and that makes this war more difficult. Another point I want to make about this inner war - because it is on the inside of us, other people may not know what we are battling with. This can create loneliness. Thus, it becomes important to have Christian family and friends to confide in, talk to and pray with to help us. Look at these verses in 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11:

1Th 5:9 NLT

For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us.

1Th 5:10 NLT

Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever.

1Th 5:11 NLT

So, **encourage each other and build each other up**, just as you are already doing.

MENTAL WAR

Third, this war is a mental war. It is the war in our MIND! Let's look at what the Bible says about this mental war.

Romans 7:22 NLT

I love God's law with all my heart.

Romans 7:23 NLT

THE WAR IN OUR MINDS

But there is another power within me that is **at war with my mind**. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.

Romans 7:25 NLT

Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So, you see how it is: **In my mind** I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

With the war taking place in our minds, it becomes imperative that we learn to think properly.

To think properly means we learn to think like Jesus and not like the world. Here is what the

Bible has to say about the importance of how we think:

Romans 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**. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Mat 22:37 NLT

Jesus replied, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.

Philippians 4:8 NLT

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. **Fix your thoughts** on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

Philippians 3:18 NLT

For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ.

Philippians 3:19 NLT

They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and **they think only about this life here on earth**.

Romans 8:5 NLT

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature **think about sinful things**, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit **think about things that please the Spirit**.

Romans 8:6 NLT

So, letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But **letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace**.

As we can see from the Bible, it is very important that we learn to think like Jesus, and we are taught to think like Jesus from the Bible.

THE WAR IN OUR MINDS

ETHICAL WAR

Finally, this war is an ethical war. It is a war between right and wrong. As we have already established, the Bible is the basis for all we do. It is the law of God that teaches us what is right and what is wrong.

Romans 7:12 NLT

But still, **the law itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good.**

Romans 7:13 NLT

But how can that be? **Did the law, which is good,** cause my death? Of course not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation to death. So, we can see how terrible sin really is. It uses **God's good commands** for its own evil purposes.

Romans 7:14 NLT

So, **the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good.** The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin

So, we see that this war is a spiritual war, an inner war, a mental war, and an ethical war. The result of this war is critical to the quality and purpose of our life on this earth. Let's close this lesson by revisiting these verses in Romans:

Romans 8:5 NLT

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature **think about sinful things,** but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit **think about things that please the Spirit.**

Romans 8:6 NLT

So, letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But **letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.**