

Basic Training for Spiritual Warfare

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Mike Miller

Straight Paths Bible Church

1 Timothy 1:18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

I. The Christian life is described as a warfare.

A. We are soldiers in this warfare:

2 Timothy 2:3-4 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

B. A big part of being a soldier is training.

C. Wars are not won by simply putting anyone and everyone out on the battlefield without first preparing them for battle and training them on how to stay alive and how to defeat the enemy.

D. This has been a great failing of the modern church and is part of the reason that the enemy has invaded and taken so much ground in the churches and in the lives of people who profess to be saved.

E. We are up against an enemy who has every advantage, and we are fighting in his domain.

F. He has been fighting to destroy humanity here on this earth one person at a time for 6000 years and each of us only has a few years of experience in this war.

G. We have no power at all against him in ourselves; all the power we have against him is through God working in us,

H. Our protection from the devil is dependent upon our obedience to God.

I. Our obedience to God starts with what know God expects from us.

J. We cannot be ignorant of our enemy and how he uses the way God designed us to defeat us.

K. So training in spiritual warfare must include a thorough understanding of how we are led into the devil's traps and snares.

II. We have talked about appetites, desires, and lusts for a couple of weeks now.

A. Appetite refers to natural desires, given by God, which are not wrong or sinful of themselves.

AP'PETITE,

1. The natural desire of pleasure or good; the desire of gratification, either of the body or of the mind.

B. Natural appetites are necessary to sustain life, and God, in his goodness, made the fulfillment of them pleasurable for us.

C. Natural appetites are really very few: food, water, shelter, clothing, love, etc.

- D. Most of our appetites can be called covetousness because their objects are things we do not really need, but what we have been influenced and persuaded to desire for ourselves.

DESIRE,

1. An emotion or excitement of the mind, directed to the attainment or possession of an object from which pleasure, sensual, intellectual or spiritual, is expected.

- E. To desire something that God has designed for us to have is never wrong as long as it is governed by the moral law of God.

LUST,

1. Longing desire; eagerness to possess or enjoy; as the lust of gain.
2. Lust is something different than appetite, and it is beyond simple desire; it is a longing desire, an obsession of the mind, an urgent demand to have or to enjoy, that presses past the boundaries of the moral law of God.
3. Concupiscence; carnal appetite; unlawful desire of carnal pleasure.

WILL,

1. That faculty of the mind by which we determine either to do or forbear an action; the faculty which is exercised in deciding, among two or more objects, which we shall embrace or pursue. The will is directed or influenced by the judgment. The understanding or reason compares different objects, which operate as motives; the judgment determines which is preferable, and the will decides which to pursue. In other words, we reason with respect to the value or importance of things; we then judge which is to be preferred; and we will to take the most valuable. These are but different operations of the mind, soul, or intellectual part of man.

- F. So we have natural appetites that are part of God's design, and we may also have unnatural appetites for things that are not necessary to sustain life.
- G. We have a desire for the things we have an appetite for, which simply means that they appeal to us and we imagine they will bring us pleasure.
- H. Lust is a step further than desire; it is when desire becomes a demand and the internal dialog turns into a battle against the mind to force the will to submit.
1. This is temptation and enticement to sin, that the Scripture promises God will never lead us into. We get here by our own carelessness and lusts.
 2. At this point we are in grave danger, because few are able to back step from here.

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father **ye will do**. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

3. Lust is desire throwing open the door and casting off any restraints, and wrestling with the will in order to proceed to action.
4. When desire becomes lust, then lust conceives, or frames in the mind a plan to obtain the object desired.
5. Unless the mind is steadfast in its insistence on truth and righteousness, the will is soon taken captive by the lust.

Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

6. The devil makes sure we can see the object, our natural appetite is what makes us stop and gaze, and the resulting desire is what makes us act upon it and cross that line.
7. The desire turned into lust will willingly agree with the lies offered by the tempter to justify the taking of what you want.
8. The battle therefore, is in the MIND.

III. The Bible is very clear about this progression happens and how we are defeated by the devil.

James 1:14-16 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.

- A. We are drawn away by our own lust.
 1. Notice it is our lust, not simply a desire, natural or unnatural.
 2. We are drawn away when we have obsessed with the desire long enough for it to gain a stronghold and turn into a power we cannot resist.
- B. We are enticed to go ahead and take what we want.
 1. We would be wise right here to ask "By whom are we being enticed?"
- C. Lust conceives (to form in the womb; to frame in the mind)
 1. In other words, lust comes up with a plan and a strategy to get what is desired.
- D. The next step is sin: "...it bringeth forth sin" and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.
- E. So the place to watch closely is desire; be careful what you set your eyes upon and begin to want for yourself.

IV. Now desire can be of the heart or of the mind.

Ephesians 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

- A. The desires of the heart are based in appetites and lust, and include emotions and feelings.
- B. The desires of the mind are based upon mental excesses, or thinking too much about something.
 1. OCD is a mental defect, not a talent, gift, or a virtue.
 2. The same thing that we call OCD is what causes a person to have desires of the mind that are as out of bounds as adultery, fornication, murder, lying, and stealing.
 3. All habits are mental, not of the heart, or the body.
 4. These are mental issues, caused by fleshly indulgence, and then treated as physical issues, and therefore never cured.
- C. A mind that is indulged in obsessive thinking will take you to the same place that a heart that is focused on carnal desires will.

V. The answer to all of this is simply a new birth.

- A. The New Covenant differs from the Old Covenant in this important matter.
 1. The law of God is written on our HEART and our MIND.

Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Hebrews 10:16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

- B. The law and the commandments were written on stone and paper and were able to be known by the mind.
- C. This is clear from Romans 7 where Paul is describing the man who has the law of God written in his mind, but not his heart.

Romans 7:22-23 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

- D. When the law of God is written on the heart it changes our desires from selfish, worldly, carnal desires, to God himself, and things eternal and spiritual.
- E. This explains why so many appear to get saved, but fall by the wayside.
 - 1. They understand with their head, but their heart is never really yielded to God and changed.
- F. This explains why there are some who just cannot cross that line and go into sin, and others can without much hesitation.

Romans 10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- G. Only the new birth changes both heart and mind and therefore the desires of the soul.
- H. There can be no new birth without the death of the old man, that heart set on self and lust and pride must be exchanged for a soft heart that is set on God.
- I. That mind that is full of false knowledge, lies, opinions, prejudices, and strategies for self gratification and self-glorification, must be exchanged for the mind of Christ.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

1 Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

1 Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;