

Breaking Free: Session 5: WARFARE

Small Groups

- Share your experiences of the presence of God. (10 minutes)
- Share a time when you did something different that you would have because of the thought "What am I sowing right now?"
- Do you have an accountability partner? What steps did you take last week to bring your life into the light?
- Quote Gal. 5:16, Isa.55:2, and Pr.5, and Gal.6:7-8
- Extra time - share your thoughts from reading the Sermon on the Mount

WARFARE

W_____ by the _____ (Gal.5:16)

"Is this what the Holy Spirit is leading me to do right now?"

Be aware of God's presence in the room, and His eye on you and on your heart. Imagine Him looking through your eyes.

Cling to the Scriptural truth you are meditating on that day, and quote memorized verses.

Pray in the Spirit

Get help (fellowship)

A_____ / **A**_____

A_____:

Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.

1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Satan prowls around looking because he can't devour anyone. He can only devour believers who are not alert. Understand his schemes. What lies has he fooled you with in the past? What time of day is he prone to attack? In what circumstances? The victims he has brought down are legion.

Proverbs 7:26 Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng.

The greatest saints in history are among his casualties. If you are not alert and on your guard, you *will* fall – especially if it doesn't seem like you will fall.

1 Corinthians 10:12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

A_____:

Romans 13:14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Lit. make no provision for the flesh with regard to lusts.

If you usually fall to 1 out of every 10 temptations, and you expose yourself to 100 temptations, you'll fall 10 times. If you can reduce that to only 3 or 4 temptations, you might not fall at all. Remove as much temptation and opportunity to sin as much as possible in your life.

Proverbs 5:8 Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house

Ecclesiastes 7:8 says, "Her (temptation's) hands are chains."

This might require drastic measures in your life that are extremely inconvenient or difficult or painful. But it's worth it.

Matthew 5:30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

R_____ and _____

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to his flesh, from his flesh will reap destruction; the one who sows to the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

In the law of sowing and reaping, the reaping is far greater in volume than the sowing.

Mark 4:8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times."

Always be asking, "What am I sowing right now?" Perhaps you're watching a TV show, or reading a news article, or chatting with a friend, or having a daydream, think about what effect that is having on your flesh. Is it weakening and killing the flesh, or awakening and strengthening it? Even if the movie or book is just stimulating your flesh only slightly, that sowing will later on reap 30 or 60 or 100 times greater problems.

The thrilling truth is – that same principle applies to sowing to the spirit and reaping wonderful spiritual benefits!

F_____ !

James 4:6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

The word **flee** in v.7 means to run in fear, or to run for one's life. If we fight the right way against Satan, he really will flee.

Repent

The context of James 4:7 is all about repentance. He is speaking to people who are befriending the world in unfaithfulness to God. He is calling them away from that. He tells them to purify their hearts, cleans themselves, change their laughter to grief, etc. The greatest blow you can strike on the mouth of Satan that will make him run for his life is repentance.

Be Decisive!

Genesis 39:9 ... How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

John Piper suggests: "Say NO to every lustful thought within five seconds. And say it with the authority of Jesus Christ. "In the name of Jesus, NO!" You don't have much more than five seconds. Give it more unopposed time than that, and it will lodge itself with such force as to be almost immovable. Say it out loud if you dare. Be tough and warlike. As John Owen said, "Be killing sin or it will be killing you." Strike fast and strike hard."

Titus 2:13 while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

Remember – Jesus didn't just die to pay for your sins, He also died to prevent them. He desires our purity and eagerness to do good so much that He paid the ultimate price to purchase it. When you are trying to say "no," remind yourself, "Jesus died to purchase my purity."

IMPORTANT: The sins we have the most trouble with are the ones that just don't really seem all that evil to us. It's essential that we train our hearts to see those sins as wicked. Until they taste like poison, we will not have long term success in resisting them.

A_____ / **A**_____

A_____

2 Corinthians 10:4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

The main way we jump the guardrails of conscience and decide to go ahead with a sin is because of some rationalization. That rationalization was a lie that we believed. In order to avoid falling for that lie in the future we must *demolish* it. Pick it apart, expose its folly, tear it to shreds, smash it to smithereens.

A_____

The reason we sin is because of some form of covetous desire (also called greed). And one key solution to covetous desire/greed is gratitude. The heart cannot feel greed and gratitude at the same time.

Ephesians 5:3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed ... but rather thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is what displaces greed from the heart. At the onset of temptation, turn your attention to the things you have to be grateful to God for.

R_____!

1 Corinthians 10:13 ... when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 14 Therefore ... flee

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee the lusts of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

How do you flee from a desire/lust? As the desire begins to rise in your heart, put distance between you and that desire by running in the direction of righteousness, faith, love and peace *with others* (don't try to do it alone).

Draw Near to God

The passage in James about resisting the devil also says draw near to God.

Any kind of fighting against Satan that doesn't involve drawing near to God isn't real fighting. And keep in mind the crucial importance of humility in the process (see the surrounding context in James 4:6-10).

John Piper: "Move into a useful activity away from idleness and other vulnerable behaviors. Lust grows fast in the garden of leisure. Find a good work to do, and do it with all your might. "Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord" (Romans 12:11). "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Abound in work. Get up and do something. Sweep a room. Hammer a nail. Write a letter. Fix a

faucet. And do it for Jesus's sake. You were made to manage and create. Christ died to make you "zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14). Displace deceitful lusts with a passion for good deeds."

Keep Running

One of the most important principles of fighting temptation is perseverance (James 1:2-15).

John Piper: "Here is where many fail. They give in too soon. They say, "I tried to push it out, and it didn't work." I ask, "How long did you try?" How hard did you exert your mind? The mind is a muscle. You can flex it with vehemence. ... Hold the promise of Christ before your eyes. Hold it. Hold it! Don't let it go! Keep holding it! How long? As long as it takes. Fight! For Christ's sake, fight till you win! If an electric garage door were about to crush your child you would hold it up with all your might and holler for help, and hold it and hold it and hold it and hold it."

E_____

All of the principles above will only work momentarily unless you turn to a greater, more satisfying delight. The sin offers some kind of pleasure or satisfaction, and you will eventually gravitate back to it unless your heart latches on to a more satisfying alternative.

Preferring

Look at it and point to it and say the words: "You can't satisfy me. You reflect some wonderful things about God – you have that going for you, but you, yourself, cannot satisfy me."

We do not glorify God just by resisting sin. We glorify Him by preferring Him above sin. Whatever you prefer, you glorify as the greatest treasure. Experiencing God's presence and favor is more delightful and satisfying than anything else life has to offer (Ps.36:3). But the decision to sin forfeits that.

Jonah 2:8 Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.

2 Samuel 12:7 This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more.'

If you have a box of cookies in the house and you are constantly tempted to eat them, the solution is easy – buy a box of better-tasting cookies. Then you won't be tempted at all with that first box. That's the way God wants us to fight temptation – to open our eyes to the truth that experiences of His favor are a far better box of cookies.

You have never experienced pleasure from a sin that was more satisfying than His presence would have been at that moment, and you never will.

Godliness Training Exercises

- Set up a routine for reviewing the principles from this class, spending a month or two working on the godliness training exercises for each session.
- Some of the disciplines you learned in this class will stick, others will fade. No one will remember all the principles after one time through the class. Each time you find yourself being pulled back into enslaving sin, go back through the material and find which areas are being neglected.
- Until you have lasting victory, keep reading good biblical counseling books on the topic you struggle with. Find trustworthy books and reviews at this website: <http://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/books/lists/>