

your finances and be angry towards those you believe are responsible. What truths from God's word will bring your fear and anger into obedience to Christ?

3. How do we do this?

Romans 12:2a NLT - 2 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.

Philippians 4:8 NLT - 8 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.

Paul told the Romans to allow God to transform the way they think. In the battle for our thoughts, we have a choice of what to dwell on.

List some specific things that you should choose to fix your thoughts on according to Phil 4:8. (If you didn't notice, Jesus fits all these categories and so many more- you can fix your thoughts on Him)

WRAP-UP

We are fighting spiritual battles every day. One of the places we want to defend is our mind. The enemy will set up arguments based on human reasoning that defy God's truth. But if we allow our minds to be transformed by God and fix our thoughts on Godly things, then we can defend against the assaults of the enemy and take our thoughts captive and bring them into obedience to Christ.

MEMORY VERSE.

Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.
- Ephesians 6:13 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life _____

Challenge.- Identify the areas where you know there are "minefields" and avoid lingering there.

"Thought Battle Plan" **Every Day Holy- #4**

INTRODUCTION

It is easy for us to forget that we are engaged in a battle every day. We are spiritual soldiers, and we need to keep up our guard on all fronts. One of the battlegrounds in this war is our minds. In this sermon series we looked at how our armor, our holiness and prayer are used in these battles. Now let's consider the tactics of our enemy and prepare strategically in advance so that we might be successful in controlling one key area of this war, our thoughts.

Ice Breaker

What song tends to get stuck in your thoughts, even when you don't want it there?

Key Passage

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NLT - 3 We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. 4 We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. 5 We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. This is War

When you hear the term "spiritual warfare" you might have no context for it, or you might have come face to face with something so evil you knew you were staring down "the enemy". The idea of spiritual warfare can conjure up ideas about the end of the world. But we are in a battle every day of our lives even in the most mundane tasks.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NLT - 3 We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. 4 We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments

Paul saw the church at Corinth assailed by alternative religions, philosophies, and dark magic. In this passage he is preparing them to defend themselves and engage in a battle for their faith. He begins by saying this isn't the kind of war they are used to.

In contrast to how we engage in an earthly war, what does Paul say we are to use against our spiritual enemy? What is the target of those weapons aimed at?

Thankfully the weapons we employ have power supplied by God. Paul refers to strongholds of human reasoning. A stronghold or fortress of human reasoning would be the arguments that fortify erroneous opinions. You will hear many different opinions expressed on a subject and some will be passionately defended by human reasoning. The question is, "How do we sort out those erroneous opinions from God's truth?"

Take a moment to review the thought influencers in your life. Which of these have the greatest influence on your opinions:

- *Friends (either through time spent together or on social media)*
- *News*
- *Politics*
- *Family of origin (I was brought up to believe this way)*
- *Entertainment (books, movies, TV, podcasts)*
- *Church/Bible*

The best way to recognize error is to be familiar with truth. We all are exposed to input from this list, but if we haven't taken time to immerse ourselves in God's word and His presence, then we may be swayed to believe the false arguments Paul warns against. Arm yourself with God's truth by remaining consistently in the study of His Word.

Do you have a regular way to stay in God's word? Share that with your group.

2. The Battleplan

2 Corinthians 10:5 ESV - 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

Paul's battle plan has a two-pronged approach; destroy and take captives.

How does Paul describe those things we are called to destroy? What arguments have you heard that would oppose God's truth?

Perhaps the place where we have the greatest opportunity for victory is in taking every thought captive. We walk this life through a minefield of thoughts in opposition to Christ. Images we view, lyrics we listen to, opinions spoken can all elicit responses in us that are ungodly. These can include anger, lust, unforgiveness, greed and any number of reactions to thoughts that pop into our heads every day. The thoughts will come, but it is in how we deal with them that we can gain or lose ground in our battle.

The strategies in taking our thoughts captive begin by avoiding enemy territory. You are probably aware of the areas you are most vulnerable and tempted into ungodly thoughts.

Step 1 – don't linger in enemy territory. Identify the places you know you should avoid. Are there websites, newscasts, movies, friends that inevitably lead you in the wrong direction. Don't go there.

Step 2 – have a response planned. If you find yourself suddenly thinking thoughts you know are not from God, remove yourself from the influence. If it is a person, excuse yourself and leave, if it is anger, don't dwell on it, defuse it with God's words of forgiveness and mercy. If it is an image, turn and walk away.

Step 3 – invite God into the moment. When ungodly thoughts come, stop, and pray for God's wisdom and strength. Don't fight this battle unarmed, bring the power of God against the enemy. Allow the Holy Spirit to bring to mind God's truth in the situation regarding that thought.

How would you turn this thought around and bring it back into God's truth – You watch a newscast that reports on the dismal outlook for the economy. The situation is causing you to worry about