Wednesday Night Groups

Study Series: March - May 2014

“Spiritual Warfare”

Summary

The Christian life is a great blessing and a great battle. Truth never triumphs without fierce opposition from the evil one. God intends for our development in the Christian life to be accompanied by suffering. Affliction and persecution facilitate our spiritual growth and help us to see the glory of God.

In our conflict, we face three determined enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil. Each of these enemies has a specific strategy, but they seldom operate apart from one another. It is needful to know the strategy of enemies in order to be wise in implementing the biblical defense.

This battle always leads us to the cross. Here we find the foundation for our victory in Christ. His finished work, the power of the Spirit, and the truth of the Word will guide us in walking in the victory of Christ.

**Dates and Passages:**

March 12 “The Call to Arms” Ephesians 6:10-12

March 19 “The Enemies Revealed” Ephesians 2:1-3

March 26 “The Wiles of the Devil” Genesis 3:1-7

April 2 “The Defense Against Satan” 1 Peter 5:8-9

April 9 “The Defense Accomplished” Matthew 4:1-11

April 16 “Standing in the Armor of God” Ephesians 6:13-18

April 23 “The Desires of the Flesh” James 1:12-15

April 30 “The Defense Against the Flesh” 1 Corinthians 10:13

May 7 “The World and Conformity” 1 John 2:15-17

May 14 “The Word and Transformation” Romans 12:1-2

Study framework consists of six basic questions to cover each week:

1. What does this passage say?
2. How does the immediate Biblical context help us understand it?
3. What does this passage teach us about God?
4. What does this passage teach us about ourselves?
5. What does this passage teach us about the Gospel?
6. How can we apply this passage to our lives and our prayers

**Recap and launch of next study:**

 By: Pastor Gary Custis

 Date & Time: Wednesday May 21 @ 7-8 PM

Location: Hillcrest ChapelMemory Verses

Memory Verses

Weeks 1 - 3 Ephesians 6:10-13

Weeks 4 - 6 1 Peter 5:8-9

Weeks 7 - 8 1 Corinthians 10:13

Weeks 9 - 10 1 John 2:15-17

**Ephesians 6:10-13**

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

**1 Peter 5:8-9**

8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

**1 Corinthians 10:13**

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

**1 John 2:15-17**

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

March 12 Lesson 1

“The Call to Arms” Ephesians 6:10-12

Memory Verse: Ephesians 6:10-13

Christians are called to stand firm in their faith. A cosmic battle of evil forces is being waged all around us. These spiritual enemies are fierce and powerful. The are determined to attack and destroy the faith of Christians. We are to be strong in the strength of the Lord. It is God’s power, not our feeble strength, that enables us to stand firm.

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March 19 Lesson 2

“The Enemies Revealed” Ephesians 2:1-3

Memory Verse: Ephesians 6:10-13

Before God saved us in Christ, we were “the walking dead”. We were born into life physically alive but spiritually dead. The spiritually dead walk according to the world, the devil, and the flesh. These are the spiritual enemies. With malicious intent, they encourage the children of wrath to walk through life in spiritual darkness and then face the judgment of God. The only hope is a “... but God ...” intervention (Ephesians 2:4). Only God can save us by grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:1-10).

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March 26 - Lesson 3

“The Wiles of the Devil” Genesis 3:1-7

Memory Verse: Ephesians 6:10-13

Satan (“adversary”) is a fallen angel and leader of the demonic host. He first appears in human history as a serpent (Revelation12:9) tempting Adam and Eve to disobey God. The strategy of the devil (“slanderer, accuser”) is to attack the word of God. He first questions the goodness of God, then directly denies the Word of God. The focus of his attack is always on God and His Word.

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April 2 - Lesson 4

“The Defense Against Satan” 1 Peter 5:8-9

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 5:8-9

Satan is the great deceiver – seeking to mislead the whole world. He is first revealed as a serpent, but also depicted as a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. The defense against this great deceiver is to hold fast to the Word of God. We resist him by being firm in our faith. He scorns and denies the truth of God, but the defense against the father of lies is to uphold the Word of God. Do not be deceived! Boldly stand before the lion with the truth of God!

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April 9 - Lesson 5

“The Defense Accomplished” Matthew 4:1-11

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 5:8-9

Jesus Christ is not only our Savior, but also our Example. He was tempted as we are – yet He never sinned (Hebrews 4:14-16). When Satan tempted Jesus, the Lord displayed the perfect way to resist the satanic attack. Jesus resorted to the Word of God. Three times He said, “It is written, ...” Jesus proved the defensive strategy – “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). We resist the devil by standing upon the Word of God.

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April 16 - Lesson 6

“Standing in the Armor of God” Ephesians 6:13-18

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 5:8-9

The biblical imagery of the Christian is a soldier in armor. This implies a battle. We must defend ourselves against attack and courageously assail the numerous fortresses of unbelief (2 Corinthians 10:3-6) The prescribed weapons for the battle are not physical, but spiritual. Our spiritual armor includes truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God. Equipped as a soldier in spiritual armor, we are to face the foe and do battle for the kingdom of God. May God give the victory in Christ!

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April 23 - Lesson 7

“The Desires of the Flesh” James 1:12-15

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:13

The strategy of the flesh is to tempt our inward desires. In Christ, we have a new nature, but the principle of our old nature remains in us. This is the target of our temptations. In the face of trials, blessing is promised to those who endure, but a warning is also given. We think we can control our lusts, but God warns that lust is likened to a conception. The pregnancy then gives birth to sin – and sin accomplished brings forth death. Christians beware! Once this awful chain of events is set in motion, we are not strong enough to break it apart.

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April 30 - Lesson 8

 “The Defense Against the Flesh” 1 Corinthians 10:13

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:13

The strategy against the flesh is flight. We cannot endure; we cannot control; therefore we must get away. There are no super temptations that secure our failure. Temptations are always powerful but ordinary. And, when we are tempted, we hope in the promise of God’s faithfulness. He will never allow us to be tempted beyond our ability; and He will always provide the way of escape. In the face of temptation, flee from both the object of your temptation and the place where you are tempted. And in your flight, remember that you are on the pathway that your faithful God has provided for you. Be faithful to Him in fleeing!

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May 7 - Lesson 9

“The World and Conformity” 1 John 2:15-17

Memory Verse: 1 John 2:15-17

The strategy of the world is to press its image upon us (Colossians 2:8). This outward impression is intended to govern our inward hearts. Man was originally created to conform to God, but in his sinfulness he now conforms to his own lusts (1 Peter 1:13-16) and to the world (Romans 12:1-2). We can be lured to love the world by our desires, by the things that we see, and the desire to be in control of our lives. All of this is passing away, but those who do the will of God will abide forever.

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May 14 - Lesson 10

“The Word and Transformation” Romans 12:1-2

Memory Verse: 1 John 2:15-17

The defense against the world’s strategy of conformity is to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. The world seeks to influence our minds through the gradual process of conformity. If we will only let the world impact our minds, hearts, mouths and bodies just a little, then all is well with the world. Grand victories are accomplished by small compromises. Christians are to stop being conformed to the world – it is a never ending battle. God promises to transform our lives as we renew our minds to agree with Scripture. As we conform our thinking to the Word of God, He is faithful in transforming us into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). In this way we prove that only His will is morally good, well pleasing, and sufficient to bring us to the goal.

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