

## The Battle for Your Heart & Mind



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

Paul had his battles in ministry. (1) Paul faced external opposition from the religious establishment in the cities where he evangelized and planted churches. (2) He also experienced internal opposition within the churches where false teachers had infiltrated or immature self-centered church members resisted his ministry. (3) His apostolic authority was challenged. (4) He was criticized as not being an interesting and dynamic speaker (cf. 11:6), plus more.

Paul had an amazing devotion to Christ. Any other individual would not endure the disrespect and hardship Paul experienced (see 11:22-28).

### Central Lesson:

**Winning the battle for hearts starts with changing minds.**

#### 1. The Church is at **WAR** with the evil in the world (10:3).

*"We are human, but we don't **wage** war as humans do."*

Warren Wiersbe: "Many believers today do not realize that the church is involved in warfare, and those who do not understand the seriousness of the Christian battle do not always know how to fight the battle. They try to use human methods to defeat demonic forces, and these methods are doomed to fail. When Joshua and his army marched around Jericho for a week, the spectators thought they were mad. When the Jews trusted God and obeyed orders, they brought down the high walls and conquered the enemy (Josh. 6:1-20)."

#### 2. The battleground is the hearts and **MINDS** of people.

*"... strongholds of human **reasoning** and to **destroy** false arguments." (10:4). "We **destroy** every **proud** obstacle..." (10:5). "... rebellious **thoughts**..." (10:5).*

The Bible says that Satan is a liar ( John 8:44) and targets the hearts and minds of people with deception (Rev. 20).

The Bible says that God will transform our minds (Romans 12:2).

#### 3. God's **WEAPONS** are different from the world's weapons (10:4). God empowers His weapons!

*"We use God's mighty **weapons**, not worldly [fleshly] weapons to **knock down** the strongholds..."*

Warren Wiersbe: "Paul used spiritual weapons to tear down the opposition—prayer, the word of God, love, the power of the Spirit at work in his life. He did not depend on personality, human abilities, or even the authority he had as an apostle."

#### 4. Both a spiritual **DEFENSE** and **OFFENSE** is required for winning the hearts & minds of people (vs.4-5).

Paul used both a defense and offense as he reasoned with people and sought to win them to Christ (2 Corinthians 6:7), "*We faithfully preach the truth. God's power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for **attack** [offense] and the left hand for **defense**.*"

(a) **DEFENSE**: Deconstruct (knock down; destroy) intellectual "**STRONGHOLDS**" and **FALSE** arguments (10:4-5).

*"... to **knock down** the strongholds of human reasoning and to **destroy** false arguments. <sup>5</sup> We **destroy** [to take down, pull down] every **proud** obstacle that keeps people from knowing God."*

Strongholds refer to enslavement, imprisonment, and entrapment. If Satan can enslave your thinking, he can control your life.

Notice the phrase "**proud obstacle**." Pride often accompanies error. Satan's first sin was pride (see Ezekiel 28:17; Isaiah 14:12-14).

Warren Wiersbe: "There are walls of resistance in the minds of people, and these walls (like the walls of Jericho) must be pulled down. What are these 'mental walls'? Reasonings that are opposed to the truth of God's Word."

**Tactic:** Ask questions that cause them to examine the basis of their belief. Is it just an opinion, an emotional issue, a misconception, a lack of essential facts, etc.? *How did you come to that conclusion or opinion? Why do you think...?*

(b) **OFFENSE**: We must seek to communicate God's truth in a way that is **CAPTIVATING**, interesting, and attention getting.

*"... We **capture** their rebellious thoughts..." (10:5).*

Scripture, reason, and the Holy Spirit's convicting work are the weapons for captivating rebellious thoughts.

**Tactic:** Ask questions that lead them to consider truth, information, facts, evidence... *"Have you considered...?"* Or give them literature, books, testimonies, etc., that point to the truth.

#### 5. Our ultimate goal is to **TEACH** obedience from God's word (10:5). *"... We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ."*

### Central Lesson:

**Winning the battle for hearts starts with changing minds.**

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group.
- ▶ Read the Bible this week. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.