

Week 30: "We Are In a Battle"

Week Thirty: "We Are in a Battle"

Day One: "The Enemies of Our Sanctification"

Read: Ephesians 6:10-11, Jeremiah 17:1-18

Reflect: Do you think the Christian life gets easier as we move along the pathway of becoming more holy, or does it get more difficult? Why or why not?

Dig: Of our three sworn enemies (the world, the flesh, and the devil) which one does this text emphasize?

See vs. 9

What is the big contrast between the person pictured in verse 5 and the one pictured in verse 7?

What is the main command God gives us so that we can become like the tree pictured in vs. 7-8?

Why is it significant that Jeremiah uses the metaphor of a "spring of living water" in verse 13?

Look up John 7:37-39. What does this scripture add to your understanding of God as "living water"?

Apply: It seems true that the battle is likely to intensify as we grow in Christ. Since that is the case, ask God to teach you less reliance upon human (self) strength and more reliance on and trust in Him.

Conclude with this prayer (I would encourage you to pray this out loud if possible):

Dear Lord God, I know how easy it is to allow other things and other people to become more important to me than You. I also know that this is offensive to your holy eyes as you have commanded that I "shall have no other gods before you." I confess to you that I have not loved you with all my heart and soul and mind. As a result, I have sinned against you, violating the first and greatest commandment. I repent of and turn away from this idolatry and now choose to return to You, Lord Jesus, as my first love. Please reveal to my mind any and all idols in my life. I choose to renounce every idol that would give Satan any right in my life. In the name of Jesus, the true God, Amen.

Week Thirty: "We Are in a Battle"

Day Two: "Defining the Flesh"

Read: Ephesians 6:10-11, 2 John

Reflect: Was Jesus just as human as we are? If he indeed was tempted "in every way as we are, yet without sin," how does that affect the way we understand Jesus?

Dig: How were people being deceived, according to verse 7?

What does verse 10 tell you about the importance of maintaining the set of teachings exactly as they are handed down to us?

What does this tell you about tradition?

Turn to Galatians 5:17-21. Each time you read the phrase "sinful nature," replace it with the word "flesh," since that is the accurate translation of the Greek word. How does the word "flesh" in this context differ from the meaning of the word "flesh" in 2 John 7?

Apply: Turn to Hebrews 4:15-16 and read this passage out loud so that you can have confidence to admit to anything before God and can ask for his forgiveness. Enter this day knowing that Jesus has been tempted in every way that you are going to be tempted on this day. Then ask God for the strength to say "no" to temptation just as Jesus did.

Week Thirty: "We Are in a Battle"

Day Three: "Overcoming the Flesh"

Read: Ephesians 6:10-11, Haggai 2:10-14

Reflect: When have the people you have spent time with drawn you into the wrong way of thinking and acting? Why did you spend time with them?

Dig: What is the principle you can glean from Haggai 2:10-14 regarding defilement?

What does 1 Corinthians 15:33 add to your understanding of this principle?

How can we be set free from indwelling (hard to get rid of, habitual) sin?

How can we be set free from defilement?

See Romans 7:21-8:3

See 1 John 1:9-2:2

Apply: In prayer, ask God to help you get rid of relationships (bad company) which ruin your character and to spend time with those who build you up so that you can overcome the flesh (sinful nature).

Week Thirty: "We Are in a Battle"

Day Four: "Defining the World"

Read: Ephesians 6:10-11, Zephaniah 3:8

Reflect: There is an old saying that we have "three sworn enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil." How is "the world" your enemy? Where do you see this force for evil in your life?

Dig: Read the context of chapter 3:8; that is, read verses 1-7 of chapter 3 and answer these questions:

Who is God speaking to in these verses?

What does that tell you about where we can find worldliness?

Does God become angry with worldliness? (see verse 8)

Does God still become angry with worldliness? (see Hebrews 12:25-29 p. 1436)

Apply: Worldliness usually includes lust for things that do not properly belong to us, and boasting.

What do you desire that is not good for you and what do you boast in that is only your pride?

Confess these to God, asking him to cleanse you of your worldliness.

Week Thirty: "We Are in a Battle"

Day Five: "Lectio divina"

Read: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the Devil's schemes."

Ephesians 6:10-11

Lectio divina (a Latin expression, which means sacred reading) is done in three stages:

Reading: you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness: after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.

Meditation: you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life; write down memories of events or conversations or other Scripture passages.

Prayer: you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer-- thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.