

## **Week Forty-two: "The Battle for our Minds"**

### **Day One: Small Group Guide**

Read: 1 Chronicles 21 (p. 457)

Read: Commentary (p. 458)

Reflect: What thoughts do you suspect that Satan tries to put in your mind? Are there certain "footholds" that you can identify?

Dig: Why might Satan suggest to David to count all his men? Why might that be offensive to God? See Psalm 20:7 (p. 604) for a biblical answer.

What was part of David's course of correction?

See verse 18 (what contemporary connection can be made here—does God also sometimes require some sacrifice on our part? See Matthew 5:27-30 p. 1082)

What principle do we learn from verse 24 of this chapter?

How can we defeat the design of Satan to fill our minds? See Ephesians 5:18 (p. 1361).

Apply: Read Ephesians 5:18-20 (p. 1361) and right now do the very things that God commands as you are filled with the Spirit.

### **Day Two: "Satan's Schemes"**

Read: 2 Corinthians 2:10-11 (p. 1329)

Read: Commentary (p. 1329)

Reflect: What might Satan's most useful schemes be in your life? Does he attack your weak points?

Dig: Most Bible teachers say that what Paul was referring to here (see verses 5-9 of 2 Cor. 2) is the incident coming out of 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 (p. 1309). Read the passage to get a sense for what was going on at the church.

Notice also what Jesus says about the seriousness of unforgiveness. What does Matthew 6:13-15 (p. 1083) add to your understanding of this text in 1 Corinthians?

Satan is said to try to "outwit" us. How does he try to do that according to 2 Cor. 4:4 (p. 1330)?

Finally, go to Philippians 4:4-7 (p. 1371). Answer this question: what is our part here to guard our minds and what is God's part?

Apply: Do what Philippians 4 tells you to do: make a list of what you are grateful for and simply put your requests before God. Then trust him to keep and guard your mind today.

### **Day Three: "Led Astray"**

Read: 2 Corinthians 11:1-15 (p. 1339)

Read: Commentary (p. 1339)

Reflect: If you are being tempted, do you know you are being tempted?  
If you are being deceived, do you know you are being deceived?  
What might be Satan's favorite tactic, deception or temptation?

Dig: What analogy (word picture) is Paul using in the first few verses of this chapter?

What does this picture have in common with Matthew 18:1-4 (p. 1101)?

Paul warns here about false teachers. Notice also that Jesus speaks of false teachers in Matthew 7:15-20 (p. 1085). What is proof of true teaching according to this passage?

What "false teachings" are you aware of that are creeping into the church today? Is your "crap detector" tuned up?

Apply: Turn to page 1513 in the back of your Freedom in Christ Bible and recite out loud the eleven statements of truth! Now live in that truth today and defeat Satan's attempts to deceive you with false teaching.

### **Day Four: "Deceiving Spirits"**

Read: 1 Timothy 3:14-4:5 (p. 1398)

Read: Commentary (p. 1399)

Reflect: Is there a battle going on for the control of your mind? Is this mainly a "power encounter" or a "truth encounter"?

Dig: How is the church described in verse 15? What implications does this have on our exposure to good teaching and pastors and teachers who are well trained?

What does it mean that people's "consciences have been seared as with a hot iron"?  
See Ephesians 4:17-19 (p. 1359) for a biblical answer to this question.

What is the Holy Spirit's main role in the life of the believer (and thus you can discern whether any idea or ministry is from the Holy Spirit)?  
See John 16:12-14 (p. 1223) for a biblical answer to this question.

Apply: Where you have sinned (especially habitually or grievously) and your own conscience has been seared, ask God to deliver you from that sin and its effects so that you might again have a tender and sharp conscience.

### **Day Five: "Mental Illness"**

Read: Daniel 4 (p. 965)

Read: Commentary (p. 966)

Reflect: How would you define mental health? Are you mentally healthy?

Dig: What was the source of Nebuchadnezzar's strange wanderings?  
See Daniel 4:26-27 for an answer to this question.

How can we assure ourselves that our mental anguish comes not from Satan but maybe from simple chemical imbalance?

See James 4:7 (p. 1446).

Notice that sometimes when Jesus healed, the origin of the illness had nothing to do with demons or evil spirits (see Mark 7:31-35 p. 1135; Mark 8:22-25 p. 1136) and other times he healed by casting out a demon (Mark 9:14-29 p. 1137). What does that tell you about being careful to make judgments about the source of mental or physical anguish?

Apply: since we are dealing in this chapter with a teaching about dreams and our thought life at night when we are asleep, turn to page 1523 of your Freedom in Christ Bible and read the "Bedtime Prayer" both now and when you turn in tonight.