

The Battlefield for the Mind

We Win or Lose by How We Choose

George Stahnke--The Road 05/01/22

Introduction: For the past several weeks, Pastor Steve has been speaking on spiritual warfare. Even as we meet today, there is a spiritual battle going on for the hearts and minds of men and women around the world. Why does he hate us? Why is he so intent on our destruction? Because as Christians we bear the image of our savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NIV) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

One of his strategies is to invade our thoughts, to confuse, manipulate, and deceive us, leading us ultimately to a place of compromise!

Genesis 3:1-5 (NLT) Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the creatures the LORD God had made. "Really?" he asked the woman. "Did God really say you must not eat any of the fruit in the garden?" 2 "Of course we may eat it," the woman told him. 3 "It's only the fruit from the tree at the center of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God says we must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die." 4 "You won't die!" the serpent hissed. 5 "God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."

2 Corinthians 11:3 I am afraid, however, that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may be led astray from your simple and pure devotion to Christ.

The "Unregenerate" Mind

(not reforming or showing repentance; obstinately wrong or bad) New Oxford Dictionary

Ephesians 4:17-19 (NLT) With the Lord's authority let me say this: Live no longer as the ungodly do, for they are hopelessly confused. 18 Their closed minds are full of darkness; they are far away from the life of God because they have shut their minds and hardened their hearts against him. 19 They don't care anymore about right and wrong, and they have given themselves over to immoral ways. Their lives are filled with all kinds of impurity and greed.

Paul uses the strongest language he can with the understanding that he has the supportive authority of scripture and of God himself.

Ephesians 4:17a (TMNT) And so I insist—and God backs me up on this.

Titus 1:15-16 (NIV) To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

Be Mindful of Associations

Remember, one of the strategies of the enemy is to invade your thoughts, to confuse, manipulate, and deceive you, leading you ultimately to a place of compromise! He does not care who he uses!

1 Corinthians 15:33 (AMP) Do not be so deceived and misled! Evil companionships (communion, associations) corrupt and deprave good manners and morals and character.

“ . . . he who frequents the company of bad or corrupt men will soon be as they are. He may be sound in the faith, and have the life and power of godliness, and at first frequent their company only for the sake of their pleasing conversation, or their literary accomplishments: and he may think his *faith* proof against their *infidelity*; but he will soon find, by means of their glozing speeches, his faith weakened; and when once he gets under the empire of *doubt*, unbelief will soon prevail; his bad company will corrupt his morals . . . ”

—The Adam Clarke Commentary

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NKJV) ¹But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

2 Timothy 3:5 (NLT) They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. You must stay away from people like that.

Do not be deceived, if you keep company with those whose minds and consciences have been corrupted, YOUR actions can be compromised and YOUR thought life corrupted. One cannot play with fire and not be scorched or burned. Continue to compassionately evangelize the lost but guard your heart on how intimate you become with them.

The Carnal Mind

Romans 8:5-8 (NKJV) For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. ⁷Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

You must understand that your thought life will affect your entire life. If you choose to think on those things which are carnal and fleshly, your feet will eventually take you there! Please remember that . . .

- Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. Colossians 1:21
- If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear. Psalm 66:18
- If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

The Transformed of our Mind

Romans 12:1-2 (AMP) I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, {and} beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent)

service {and} spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, {even} the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

Romans 13:14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Ephesians 4:22-24 (NIV) You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

The GIGO Mind

Remember the old saying “GIGO”, garbage in garbage out? What we take in through our eyes, ears, what we allow our minds to dwell on is critical to our emotional and spiritual wellbeing. We will win or lose by what we chose!

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

2 Peter 3:1 Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.

Marcus Luttrell is a retired United States Navy SEAL who received the Navy Cross and Purple Heart for his actions in June 2005 against Taliban fighters during Operation Red Wings in which he was the lone survivor.

“The real battle is won in the mind. It’s won by guys who understand their areas of weakness, who sit and think about it, plotting and planning to improve. Attending to the detail. Work on their weaknesses and overcome them. Because they can.” --Marcus Luttrell

We will win or lose by what we chose!