

Living Life VICTORIOUSLY

Christian Life Center Discipleship Institute | Spiritual Warfare

2 - AREAS OF SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

As Hitler's army began to march across Europe with its tanks and advanced weapons, some of the underdeveloped nations were not able to resist Hitler's aggression. It was no battle at all because these nations were not equipped and fought back with "primitive" weapons.

In the same way, many believers do not even know there *is* a war going on or choose not to believe it. Even more distressing is the fact that many do not understand the nature of Satan's schemes and the spiritual weapons which God has provided. This course is designed to give us an understanding of this spiritual conflict and the powerful weapons we have already been given in Christ.

THE CONFLICT

1. Just as the Kingdom of God exists in the earth, so Satan's "kingdom" exists (Matthew 12:26-27).
 - A. In Ephesians 6:12 Paul compares the evil supernatural realm to an army with levels (offices) of spiritual forces and clearly describes this massive, complex hierarchy with which the believer is at war. (See lesson 1, page 6 for a detailed breakdown of the levels.)
 - B. Satan is the ruler of his demonic kingdom and the commander of an army of demonic beings set over geographical, religious and cultural areas, nations, and cities, all the way down to individual people.
2. Paul also likens this conflict as wrestling, a physical competition between two or more competitors who attempt to gain and maintain a superior position.
 - A. Ephesians 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*



AREAS OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Our spiritual enemy, the devil, systematically targets our weaker areas which range from our thought life, our unsubmitted flesh nature, the world and relationships (especially within the church). With this in mind let's take a look at the areas or channels he uses.

1. The _____, our thinking and our paradigm, or the way we view the world.

- A. The battleground of the mind is where life's greatest victories are won or lost. - Joyce Meyer
- B. Because Satan knows us, he bombards our minds with thoughts of doubt, fear, insecurities, offenses, etc. Through time these thought patterns can develop into strongholds.
- A stronghold is an entrenched pattern of thought, an ideology, value or behavior that is contrary to revealed, Biblical truth, emanating from the human, carnal nature, and exploited by satanic forces. (Tom White)
- C. Three ways the enemy uses our thoughts:
- _____ means to believe a lie. Actions based on deception create destructive endings. (Genesis 3:1-7; 2 Corinthians 11:3)
 - _____ often follows deception. The enemy deceives us about God's Word/His commands and makes the "fruit on the forbidden tree" look good. Temptation is first pleasing, then easy, then frequent, then habitual. (Romans 8:5-6)
 - _____. The devil is known as our false accuser, our slanderer. He accuses you to God, God to you, you to others and you to yourself. (Revelation 12:10)
- D. 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,...*
2. The _____, our unsubmitted self. (Romans 7:21-23, 8:5-8; Galatians 5:17; James 4:7)
- A. When the Bible speaks of the sin nature it is referring to that natural inclination to sin and the seat of willful defiance and rebellion against God's authority. Given the choice to do God's will or our own, we will naturally choose our own will.
- B. All of us have a sinful nature inherited from the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden.
- Romans 5:12 *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.*
 - Romans 3:23 *...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,...*
- C. Satan has authority in our lives through areas we have not given over to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. But those areas which are given to His Lordship bring victory! Jesus said it this way in John 14:30 *...the prince of this world is coming and has no hold over me,...*
- D. The _____ principle. The "acts of the sinful nature" in Galatians 5:16-21 (grouped into moral, spiritual and social sins) are like the handle of a cup and are areas of unsubmitted weakness where the enemy has authority in our lives. He effectively uses these "handles" to manipulate and torment us. By conquering these areas (breaking off these handles) the enemy has no hold on us as well!
- E. Attempting to rid ourselves of deep seated behavior in our own strength may be discouraging. Because it is a heart issue, the power of the Holy Spirit is required.
- Matthew 15:19 *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* (Jeremiah 17:9)



- Psalm 51:10 *Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

3. The _____, conforming us to its pattern.

A. Romans 12:2 — We are not to be conformed to the world’s pattern (shaped into the image of the world’s system and values as a cookie cutter shapes the dough) but we are to renew or to reconstruct our mind with the Word of God. This reconstruction takes place when we allow the Word of God to be the guiding standard of our thoughts and our actions. (Proverbs 22:17; Hebrews 4:12)

B. The influence that the world can have over the believer is just as much spiritual warfare as the struggle with the flesh nature. However, the world is only a channel the devil uses. If we are free of the hold of temptation, then the world has really no influence over us!

C. 1 John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

- The lust of the flesh originates from _____. It continually wars against us to conform us to the pattern and sensual value system of the world which is fueled by the god of this world. (James 1:13-15)

- The lust of the eyes is to be captivated by _____ without inquiring into the real value or motivation.

“This is the attitude which sees nothing without wishing to acquire it. It proclaims that happiness lies in the things which the eyes can see and money can buy.” (Anonymous)
Examples are Eve in Genesis 3:6; Achan in Joshua 7:21; King David in 2 Samuel:11:2.

- The pride of life is the behavior of the “self-sufficient person who boasts of his or her own independence and abilities. Everything is judged by the appetites of the sinful nature. He is the slave to pretentious display of ability and possessions. He makes himself bigger than he really is.” (Barclay)

D. The “Velcro” principle — Temptation from without has no power until there is a corresponding desire within! By dealing with internal desires the world has no power over us.

- James 1:13-15 *When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

4. The _____, the enemy’s focus to make the church a powerless force by...

A. Dividing relationships.

- Ephesians 4:30-32 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*
- See Addendum 2, Overcoming Offenses, on page 6

B. Exchanging our first love for something else.

- Revelation 2:4-5 *Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will*

come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

C. Growing cold.

- Revelation 3:15-16 *Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.*



If Michael the Archangel understood Satan's power, how much more should we be clothed with the Spirit and stand in the power of God when contending with demonic forces!
Jude 9 *Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"*



KEYS TO ONGOING VICTORY

1. James tells us that our victory over the devil is directly related to our _____ to God!
 - James 4:7-8 *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*
2. Choose not to commit the “_____,” then we will not fall into larger sins.
 - Psalm 19:13-14 *Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.*
 - Song of Solomon 2:15 *Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.*
3. Be aggressive with your _____, this is where the real spiritual battlefield exists and the origin of our behavior.
 - 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*
 - James 4:1-7 *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?...*
4. We are victorious over sin when we live in fellowship with the Holy Spirit!
 - Galatians 5:16-18 *So I say, live by (in step with) the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.*
5. Develop a lifestyle of _____ with someone you trust.
 - Proverbs 27:6 *Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*
 - Be accountable in our relationship with God, spouse, kids (if married) and friends, use of money and time, moral and ethical behavior and areas of personal struggle.

ADDENDUM 1 — TEMPTATION AND FORGIVENESS

James 1:13-15 *When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted (enticed) when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.* (Also 1 Corinthians 10:12-13; Titus 2:11-12)

1. The hook is _____. Tempted (enticed) means to bait a hook.
 - A. Temptation has no power until there is a corresponding desire within. (Velcro)
 - B. _____ areas are attacked.
 - C. The appeal is to our sensual desires.
 - D. The _____ are hidden.
2. God's authority is challenged. (Genesis 3:4)
3. You make the _____. Will I or will I not submit to the Word of God and to His Commandments? (See chart 1 on page 10)

King David's sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11 - 12:20)

1. Can a person who is called, anointed, blessed beyond imagination, faithful, and a model leader who experienced great victories fall into temptation and sin? King David did! Here is the "anatomy" of David's temptation, sin and the process of forgiveness from 2 Samuel.
 - A. David was _____ and vulnerable, not at war where he belonged.
 - B. David _____ that Bathsheba was beautiful. (1 John 2:15-17)
 - C. David sent someone to find out about her.
 - D. David _____ upon his desire to sin and sent messengers to get her.
 - E. David dealt with his sin by _____ it up and "fixing it."
2. How was it finally dealt with? (2 Samuel 12:7-14)
 - A. _____ *You are the man!* (12:7)
 - B. _____ *I have sinned against the Lord!* (12:13)
 - 2 Corinthians 7:8-11 ...*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret,...*
 - C. _____ *The Lord has taken away your sin!* (12:13)
 - D. David had godly sorrow and there was brokenness of heart and spirit.
 - E. The sin was not _____, David called it "sin" and "blood guilt."
 - F. David acknowledged the source of his sin: _____.

- G. His confession was personalized and *to* the Lord.
 - H. His confession was based on God's great _____.
 - I. David accepted the consequences. The sowing and reaping principle would devastate his family and kingdom but his relationship with God was restored. (2 Samuel 12:10-14)
3. David's heart was so struck with the conviction of his sin that he wrote Psalm 51, a public confession to God.

Steps to receiving forgiveness (1 John 1:5 — 2:1-2)

Receiving God's forgiveness may not change the past but it does change the future!

1. Never _____ to be sinless.
2. _____ with God about the sin ("Confess" is *homologeo*, to agree with).
3. State the sin(s) _____ to God.
4. _____ God's forgiveness (Psalm 103:1-14).
5. Put on "garment of praise" and thank God for forgiveness. Be _____.
6. Force the steps above into a habit! (Romans 12:1-2).

ADDENDUM 2 — OVERCOMING OFFENSES

See an expanded version on DiscipleshipDevelopment.org, "Guarding Against the Defilement of an Evil Report"

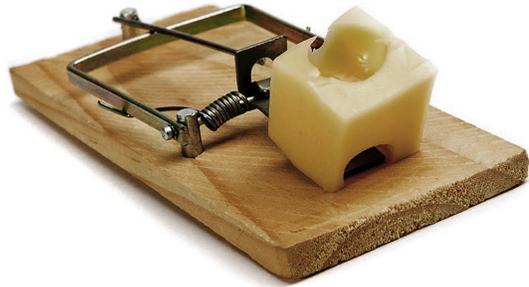
1 Peter 5:8-9 *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith,...*

1. One of the devil's main weapons against God's people in the Church is to cause us to be offended with one another. Although this may seem like a small thing (because for many it's become a way of life) it is, in reality, a spiritually life threatening emotion that leads to other destructive behavior.
2. Following are a few Biblical examples where an offense led to betrayal and hatred.
 - A. Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1-8 — Cain was offended that God accepted his brother Abel's sacrifice. This led to the first murder recorded in the Bible!
 - B. Joseph's brothers in Genesis 37-50 — Joseph's brothers were offended by his dreams. Joseph's coat given by Jacob only added "fuel to the fire."
 - C. Absalom in 2 Samuel 13-19 — Absalom's offense toward Amnon, his half brother and against his father, King David, caused him to divide the Kingdom and bring tremendous destruction to Israel, ultimately costing his life.

The meaning of the word

1. The word for _____ in Matthew, Luke and many other places in the New Testament is the Greek word "skandalon" and meant the part of a trap to which the bait is attached.

A. The modern day mouse trap is a great example. The opportunity for offense is the bait. When the bait is taken, the trap stick/trigger is released and the bar slams down, killing its victim. In the same way, our enemy, the devil, provides us with an opportunity for offense (the bait). As we take the bait and act on our offense, we are caught in the devil's trap to do his will! (Matthew 18:34; John 10:10)



2. Ancient people built walls around cities for safety against their enemies. The stronger the wall, the greater the safety. An offended person builds walls around themselves.
 - A. Proverbs 18:19 *A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle.*
 - B. Offended people are introspective and filter everything through past hurts, rejections, offenses. They ultimately find it impossible to believe God and others who are not “on their side.”
3. Notice the condition of society in the last days. Many (a great number, most) will be (constantly) offended.
 - A. Matthew 24:10-13 *And then many will be offended (skandalizo: creating a snare for others), will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.* An unchecked offense leads to betrayal and betrayal leads to hatred. It also opens us to deception.
 - B. Paul's description of the end time in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 is very similar.
4. The parable of the unforgiving (offended) servant in Matthew 18:21-35 reveals the terrible consequences for acting out an offense.
 - A. The offense — Even though he was in great debt (millions of dollars by today's standards), he was unconditionally forgiven! However, he quickly found someone who owed him a very small amount (about \$20 today). Not able to pay him back, he had him thrown in jail until the amount was paid.
 - B. The consequence — The unforgiving man was handed over to the tormentors! An offense, allowed to stay, will grieve the heart of God and will release torment upon OUR life, not necessarily on the one who offended us.

What to do when you are offended...

1. The Bible states that offenses _____ come (Matthew 18:7; Luke 17:1). Jesus is telling us to deal with offenses immediately and radically, if necessary.
 - A. Matthew 18:7-8 *Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire.*
2. The Bible also states that we CAN live above things that cause us to stumble, sin or be offended!
 - Psalm 119:165 *Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.*
2. By human standards, Joseph (Genesis 37-50) had cause to be greatly offended and angry with his

brothers who wanted to kill him but sold him into slavery instead. Then, when Joseph was in Egypt, he was slandered, mistreated and forgotten in prison. But God saw his righteous spirit and delivered him with a great deliverance, making him second to Pharaoh himself! When he finally had the opportunity to reveal himself to his brothers he made a very freeing statement:

- Genesis 50:19-21 *Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.*

3. Three steps...

- A. Joseph _____ every thought that wanted to hold on to the offense or be avenged of their terrible crime. 2 Corinthians 10:5 *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.* There is a big difference between resisting, facing and holding at bay, and tearing down, absolute destruction of the thought before it is acted upon.
- B. Joseph _____ his brothers. Forgiveness is based on decision not on feelings. It is also not depended upon whether the one who offended repents or changes. It is an issue of the heart. (Proverbs 17:9; Matthew 6:12, 14; Matthew 18:21-22, 35)
- C. Joseph _____ evil with good. How did he do this? (Romans 12:14-21)

A word about unity

1. Although Matthew 18:18-20 is used in the context of binding and loosing the enemy and agreement in prayer, the real meaning lies in people forgiving each other and agreeing with one another. When we do that, God’s blessing is upon us!
 - A. Binding that which is broken and loosing forgiveness — Matthew 18:18 *Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*
 - B. Where people forgive offenses and hurts, God’s Presence is in their midst — Matthew 18:19-20 *Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.*
 - C. The Lord commands the blessing in our unity — Psalm 133:1 *How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!... For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.*

ASSIGNMENT

1. Read the lesson and fill in the blanks.
2. Go to our website, DiscipleshipDevelopment.org and read, “Guarding Against the Defilement of an Evil Report.”
3. Memorize Romans 8:11.
4. Journal on Psalm 1:1-3. Explain the 5 things a blessed man does and what are the results?
5. Meet with your accountability partner/group and discuss the lesson.

CHART 1 - THE POWER OF OUR CHOICE

THOUGHT OR TEMPTATION CLASHING AGAINST GOD'S STANDARD

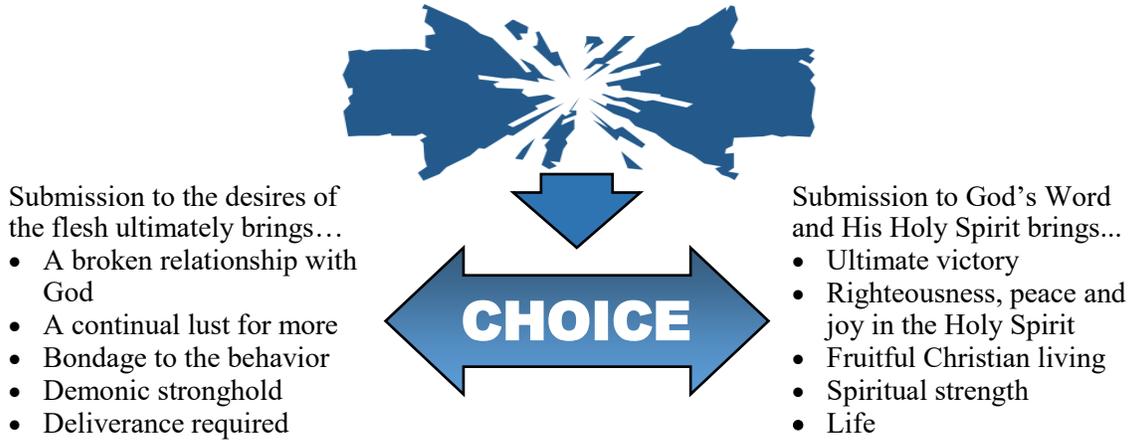
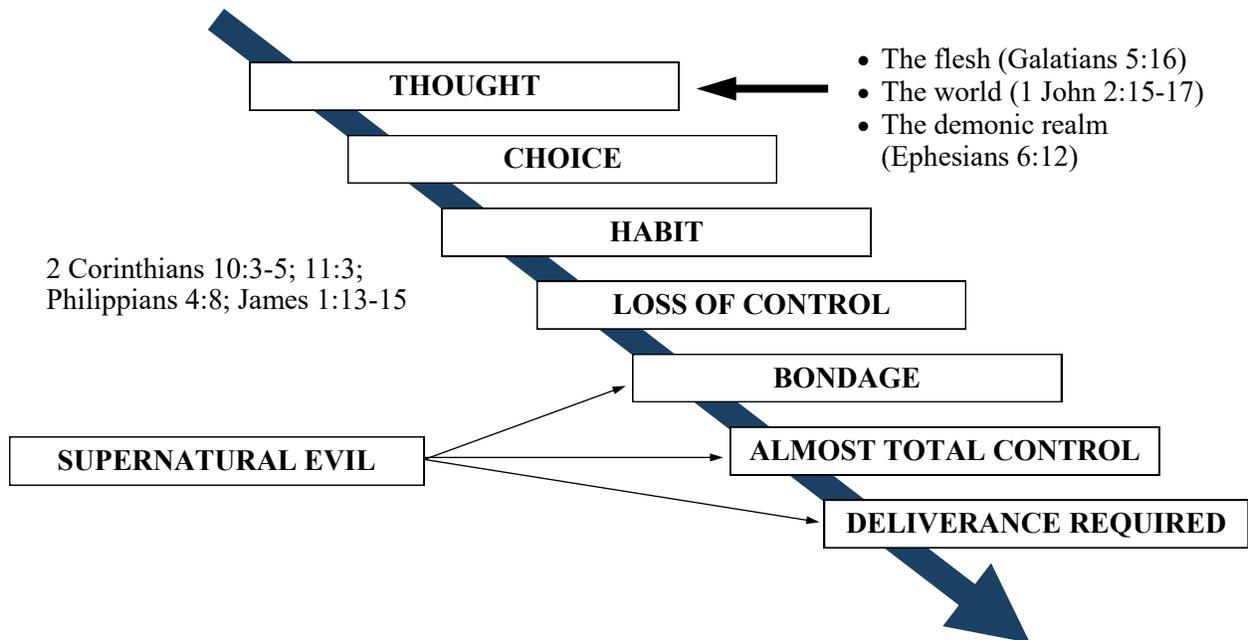


CHART 2 - THE CONTINUUM* OF SIN

**An uninterrupted ordered sequence*



ANSWERS - LESSON 2

mind

Deception

Temptation

Accusation

flesh

handle

world

within

outward show

church

submission

little sins

thought life

accountability

baited

vulnerable

consequences

choice

idle

saw

acted

covering

Confrontation

Conviction

Cleansing

excused

himself

mercy

pretend

Agree

specifically

Accept

expressive

offense

will

took captive

forgave

overcame