

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE | THE WORLD

### OVERVIEW

1. Spiritual Warfare is the daily and ongoing conflict of the Christian life:
  - a. "Scripture treats spiritual warfare as a normal, everyday part of the Christian life, and so we should as well. It's not about spooky special effects. It's about how we think, feel, live, desire, and act in the presence of our enemies." (David Powlison)
2. Overview
  - a. The Flesh: Internal desire and propensity to rebel against God (Romans 8:5-8)
  - b. The Enemy (Satan): Enemy who desires to destroy the people of God; created, fallen, and limited (Matthew 4, John 8:44, 1 Peter 5:8)

### THE WORLD | 1 JOHN 2:15-16

1. Defining and Understanding "the world"
  - a. The world is external influence and opposition to God and the people of God
    - i. People, action, influence or culture, or worldly virtues (idolatry);
    - ii. The world and the flesh work in concert with one another; Satan uses that to deceive Christians
      1. "Satan's first device to draw the soul into sin, to present the bait - and hide the hook; to present the golden cup and hide the poison; to present the sweet, the pleasure, and the profit that may flow in upon the soul by yielding to sin- and to hide the soul the wrath and misery that will certainly follow the committing of sin." (Thomas Brooks)
    - iii. Identifying Idols
      1. Answer: "I will feel happy and my life will have meaning if \_\_\_\_\_"
2. Engaging The World
  - a. Christians must practice and grow in the skill of discernment
    - i. "Discernment is the skill of understanding and applying God's Word with the purpose of separating truth from error and right from wrong." (Tim Challies)
    - ii. "But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil." (Hebrews 5:14)
  - b. Christians must walk in humility to practice discernment and stay alert (2 Peter 1:3-8)
  - c. Both humility and discernment require knowing the truth of God
    - i. The opposite of discernment is arrogance; the opposite of humility is pride (legalism);
    - ii. Practical Tool: Reject, Redeem, and Receive.

### ENGAGING THE WORLD | MENTAL HEALTH

1. Applying discernment
  - a. The Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (truth of God);
  - b. The Unholy Trinity: The Flesh, The World, and Satan (Opposition to God)
  - c. A Tempting Trinity: Therapy, Self Care, and the New Psychology (Helpful and Harmful)
2. Two Extremes
  - a. Rather than applying and practicing discernment, the Christian forfeits the truth of God and surrenders the the tempting trinity;
  - b. Rather than applying and practicing discernment, the Christian forfeits the truth of God and refuses to receive help or make changes.

- c. In both extremes, the Christian forfeits the truth of God.
  - i. "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ." (Philippians 1:9-10)

Discernment takes practice and requires knowing the truth of God in order to make sound decisions, apply wisdom, and to receive clarity. To deny discernment is to be persuaded by every doctrine (Ephesians 2:14-15), deny God's glory, and elevate our understanding above the authority of Scripture.

#### ENGAGING THE WORLD | SPIRITUAL OPPRESSION

- Rooted in an innate understanding that we are not well. (Romans 5:12-21)
- Fallen nature is at odds with our natural created state

*Psalm 139:14*

*I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

*Wonderful are your works;*

*my soul knows it very well.*

Physical and spiritual creatures (1 Corinthians 15:44)

Spiritual oppression can be:

- mental health, anxiety, stress, fear, unease, doubt, uncertainty in identity, self-hatred, feelings of worthlessness

The answer is Jesus the Healer

*1 Peter 2:24-25*

*<sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

*John 16:33*

*I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*

Healing found in Jesus, the Church, and professionals

- Prayer, spiritual disciplines, therapy, community/support systems

#### ENGAGING THE WORLD | MYSTICISM

- The belief that finding God is through emotion and experience from within

Emotion is good. And experiences define our worldview.

But always test them to Scripture

*1 Thessalonians 5:19-22*

*Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.*

Dangers of mysticism

1. Authority of Scripture is compromised
  - a. Sola scriptura (2 Timothy 3:10-17)
2. Denial Christ's sufficiency
  - a. Sola fide (1 Corinthians 1:30)
3. You always come down from a high