

## PART 35 – DEFINITELY NOT MY FAULT

One of the baseline principles that we have addressed throughout this study is that **your mind is the battlefield**. Your mind is where you win or lose the spiritual battles and struggles that you face. Your mind is where the enemy attacks you and deceives you, and if you miss that one simple principle, then you have no chance of winning the spiritual battles that you inevitably face each day. You need to know where the battle for your life is being fought or you have no chance of winning. You cannot fight a war if you do not know where it is.

Years ago, I developed a series on how to win the war that is always going on in your mind, and the primary principle that I developed at that time I called “The Principle of Replacement”. It was a very simple principle - when you have a wrong or ungodly thought, you have to replace it with God’s thought. You have to take the devil’s lies and replace them with God’s truth. It is a very, very simple principle that seems so difficult for people to implement into their life. We will address this principle in more detail as we progress, but suffice it to say that you must see that when the enemy confronts you with a lie that is totally contrary to God’s Word, that you have to replace that lie with God’s truth. God’s truth is always your weapon, always that which anchors your life and strengthens you to win this war that is going on in your mind. Listen to what Jesus said in [John 8:44](#) when speaking of the devil and his lies,

**Jn 8:44 (NKJV) You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.**

“**There is NO truth in him.**” What an important truth to learn. Once you “get it”, then you have to determine how to overcome those lies that he will ALWAYS be placing into your mind. This goes on day after day after day. This is never ending and, on your part, it requires great endurance and perseverance. Please remember that the enemy is much more patient than you are, so he is always willing to simply “wait you out”.

Now, I want to address one enormous lie that the enemy will place into your mind. Remember that wrong thinking is bad thinking and NEVER produces the results that you want it to produce. Very often the problem is that the devil has convinced you that someone else is your problem. This is huge, enormous. **He has convinced you that your problem could be caused by anyone but you or him.** He will tell you that it is your spouse, your boss, your mom or dad, an old friend, some hypocrite at the church, your pastor, or anyone who has offended you in some way. Normally, you believe that it is someone who is the closest to you. Why is that? It is because that is the relationship that the devil wants to damage the most. The closer that person is to you, the greater mileage the devil gets out of destroying that relationship. The truth is that none of these people are your enemy, but you may believe the lie that they are. Listen carefully. This is very important.

**Normally the person that you struggle with the most is the very person that God is using the most to reveal what qualities of His that you lack the most.**

In reality, other people are not your enemy, but God’s tool to help change your life. For example,

1. You will never learn to love like God loves until you are around someone who is unlovable.

2. You will never learn self-control until you are around someone who angers and irritates you.
3. You will never learn patience until you are around someone who always makes you impatient.

If you do not understand these simple spiritual realities, then you have been greatly deceived by the enemy and will always be fighting the wrong battles and creating the wrong struggles in your life. God will always use difficult people to reveal to you some area of your life that you need to bring into alignment with His perfect will for your life. You have to stop fighting against God. Here is what I have learned from being a Christian for over 51 years.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 123: THE MORE YOU DWELL ON YOUR PROBLEMS, THE DEEPER BECOME THEIR ROOTS, AND THE LESS YOU SEE GOD'S SOLUTIONS.**

I wish there was a spiritual pill I could buy for you that would take care of all of these kinds of things, but that pill does not exist. Whether you like it or not, this is simply how God works. This is something that you have to accept spiritually about the Christian life, or you will constantly be defeated by difficult people and difficult circumstances. They will anger you, frustrate you, irritate you, steal your joy, and deplete you of your emotional strength. They will make you impatient and cause you to say things that you should never have said. They will make you bitter and unforgiving. Until you see difficult people and difficult circumstances as one of God's primary tools to change you and to change those things in your life that need to be changed, you will always be struggling in your Christian life.

If the devil convinces you that the other person is the problem and that they need to get things straightened out in their life before your life can be what God wants it to be, you will make little to no spiritual progress. Most people who are struggling think like this: "*When God gets that other person straightened out, then I will be just fine.*" Not really. I doubt that. No good reason to think that, but it is exactly how the devil wants you to think. We all need fixing, not just "them". Eventually and unfortunately that other person you are struggling with becomes your perceived enemy, and you buy into Satan's lies. Here is the issue.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 124: IF YOU BELIEVE SATAN'S LIES, YOU WILL ACT ON THEM AS A RESOLUTION TO SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS.**

Nothing could be any worse than that. I.e., when you believe the devil's lies, those lies become the basis for your actions. How good does that sound – replacing God's truth with Satan's lies as a solution to your problems? Once again, please do not forget that your mind is the battlefield where all of this gets played out. Your mind is where you win or lose, so the mindset that you must develop is that you have to enter the war that is trying to control your mind. This is not without effort. This is not getting up and just saying a little prayer. This battle goes on 24/7. Let me define the battle.

**God is trying to get you to believe His truth and the devil is trying to get you to believe his lies.**

Listen carefully. It is not that you have to make a decision, but rather that you **WILL** make a decision. If you are ever going to win a war, then you have to be engaged in the war. Think of the war this way. The enemy is going to tell you that resolving your problems God's way will be too hard, too painful, and much too time consuming – and the average Christian will accept that and act on it accordingly.

**What and how you think controls you and influences you more than anything else in your life.**

So, you must learn to let God control your thoughts, control what you think, and control what kind of mindsets that you develop in your life. Your thoughts will either motivate and help you, or they will greatly hinder and strangle you.

It is critical to understand that because you actually have a very real and invisible enemy that you will always have wrong thoughts. I never get up in the morning thinking “*I am sure that I will not have any wrong or ungodly thoughts today.*” Trust me, but that never happens. Because you cannot see your enemy, it is like it hypnotizes you into believing that he is not there. That is exactly what he wants you to think. The point is simple – **if you never see him, then you never see him as your enemy.** Rather, you see other people as your enemy because you can see them and hear them and be hurt by them. So one of the lies that the enemy wants you to believe is that all of your problems are someone else’s fault. That is a huge lie that the devil will always be placing into your mind.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 125: YOU CANNOT STOP THE DEVIL FROM TELLING YOU HIS LIES, BUT YOU CAN STOP BELIEVING THE LIES.**

Satan’s lies will always be there to tempt you to believe and think the wrong thing and then to both doubt and disbelieve God’s Word. That is a given that you must understand and accept. This is a part of your life that will never change – the devil lying to you. He lied to you yesterday, he is lying to you today, and you can be assured that he will lie to you tomorrow. His lies are the tools and weapons of his craft. We all know exactly what Jesus did to combat the lies and deception of the devil in [Matthew 4](#) when the devil tempted Him in the wilderness. Jesus stood on the Word of God. Satan’s weapons were his lies and half-truths, and Jesus’ weapon was the Word of God rightly divided and rightly used. Jesus used a specific word for a specific situation – what is called the “*rhema*” of [Ephesians 6:17](#). If Jesus did that, then it only seems reasonable that you should take the same approach. He refuted and disarmed the devil’s lie with a specific truth. It is a very simple principle – replace a lie with God’s truth.

Once again, every Christian must realize that they are in an unseen spiritual war that is being fought in their mind. Listen to [Romans 8:5-6](#) which says,

**Ro 8:5 (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. <sup>6</sup> For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.**

You can only be “**spiritually minded**” if you have a mind that thinks like the Holy Spirit thinks, and He has revealed to us in His Word both what He thinks and how He thinks. [Colossians 3:2](#) simply says,

**Col 3:2 (NKJV) Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.**

Now, it is not my intention to try and convince you how easy all of this will be – not at all. There are no easy wars – none, and the battles that you will face to discipline yourself to think like God thinks will not be easy. There will be days when you are incredibly successful and there will be days when you will feel like a complete failure. There will be days when you are deeply encouraged and days when you will be completely discouraged. You are in a war against an enemy who will do everything in his power to destroy you, and his chief weapon is his lies and deception. Whatever he convinces you of will never

produce the fruit for which you are looking. So, what do you need? Well, you need weapons with which you can defeat your enemy. They are spiritual weapons (let me say that again – they MUST BE spiritual weapons) because you have no chance against an invisible spiritual enemy with worldly weapons and personal ideas. Good luck with that strategy.

Just think what it would be like if the Army sent their soldiers out to fight, but they did not give them any weapons. We would all laugh and say that was utterly insane and ridiculous. I mean, how can you fight a battle without the proper weapons and protective gear? Well, you cannot fight a battle without proper weapons, but for the average Christian they are not even aware that they are engaged by default in a spiritual warfare against enemies that they cannot even see. Listen to how Paul identifies this conflict and the need for spiritual weapons in [Ephesians 6:10-19](#),

**Eph 6:10 (NKJV) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**

If you do not put on God's armor, you have no chance – none. Why do you think this verse is even here?

**<sup>12</sup> 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.**

Notice what this verse clearly says. It says that your battle is NOT against people. Meditate on that. Fix that as your mindset. Anchor that truth into your mind. If you start fighting people, you will quickly find yourself completely outside of the will of God.

**<sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand**

What is the “**therefore**” there for? It always points you back. It is to remind you that you have spiritual hosts (plural) of wickedness whose one single goal is to completely destroy your life – both presently and eternally.

**<sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; <sup>18</sup> praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints--**

Now, what is critical to discern from these verses is that God only gives you two weapons with which to fight. The first is the “**sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God**”, and the second is “**prayer**”. Those are your weapons, and everything else is armor. You do not fight with your helmet or your body armor or your shoes. So, if you do not clearly understand that reality, then you have no chance of being spiritually successful in your life or of being able to solve the problems with which life invariably confronts you. The term that the Holy Spirit used for the “**word**” of God is the Greek word “*rhema*” which does not refer to the whole Bible, but to a verse or a passage of the Bible. It is much more specific, where the word “*logos*” would refer more to the entirety of the Scriptures. So, what Paul has said in [Ephesians 6:10-19](#) is that your weapons for fighting the enemy are a specific verse or a specific passage

used in conjunction with prayer. You must have both. You knit the truth of God with prayer. It takes some time if you are serious about being a disciple, but the fruit it bears in your life is well worth the effort both to you and those that you may be hurting with your spiritual indifference.

What the Greek word “*rhema*” is actually telling you is simple. If you are struggling in an area of your life, you do not have time to read the whole Bible to determine how God would want you to respond. At that moment, you need a specific **w**ord from the **W**ord. It is interesting that the word for “**sword**” is not a long sword that goes into a long sheath. Rather, it is the Greek word “*machaira*” which means more of a dagger, or a small knife. It is something that a soldier would use in hand to hand combat. It is the same word that was used of Peter in [Matthew 26:51](#) when he “**drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear**”.

The point is really very simple. The “**sword of the Spirit**” is a specific word or a specific verse from the Scriptures for a specific battle you are facing. Every verse is not for every trial or struggle that is challenging you. When combined with earnest “**prayer**”, it is what God uses to strengthen you in the battles that you face. So, you have to do three specific things:

1. Identify the problem that confronts you – anger, bitterness, impatience, fear, worldliness.
2. Identify those parts of God’s Word that address your specific problem.
3. Resolve to integrate and apply God’s truth to that specific problem.

I have consistently stated that what you do is always a direct result of what you think, so the enemy will always tempt you to think the wrong way. If you have a negative mind, an impatient mind, or an unforgiving mind, you will always, always have a miserable life.

**Everyone develops root thinking patterns (mindsets) that either debilitate you or deliver you, that put you into bondage or give you freedom, that hurt you or help you, that destroy you or strengthen you.**

Satan’s schemes are so clever and so well developed, and to make it worse he knows what troubles you and makes you insecure. He knows what makes you afraid and what easily troubles you. He knows who irritates you and makes you angry and who consistently frustrates and disappoints you. We know that Satan is not omnipotent, but his fallen angels listen to what you say and watch what you do, so they know exactly what is bothering you and where you are weak. I made a list of just a few of the ways that he entices you to think like he thinks when he sees and hears things in your life.

1. He will place nagging, cranky thoughts into your mind.
2. He will make you afraid of things that should never make you afraid.
3. He will make you skeptical, suspicious, and leery of other people, always finding their faults while never seeing your own.
4. He will tell you that you are right and everyone else is wrong.
5. He will convince you that you really are above having to spend time in God’s Word or being with God’s people.
6. He will put doubts into your mind about the trustworthiness of God’s Word.
7. He will place impatient thoughts into your mind that make you impatient and irritable.

So, where does the list end? It never ends. Your enemy is patient and well-organized and he believes that he has your number.

Now, listen very carefully because this so super important. For me, this is spiritually monumental.

**The glory and wonder of God's truth is that it is ALWAYS simple.**

How about that? That is so good. God does not have confusing, complex, difficult, complicated solutions to the problems that you may be facing in your life. They do not exist and the sooner you understand and accept that spiritual reality, the more spiritually successful you will become in your life.

Let us just assume that you complain about things a lot. Honestly, there seems to be a lot of things to complain about, but that is not what God wants you to do. The reality is that if you complain about something with your mouth, it only means that you have already thought about it a lot in your mind, in your thought life. Just think about the Israelites after they left Egypt. They complained and complained about everything at every opportunity. The result? They died in the wilderness. So, listen to [Philippians 2:14](#), and what God says about complaining. This is so very simple, so do not let it allude you.

**Phil 2:14 (NKJV) Do all things without complaining and disputing,**

What is it about that verse that you may not understand? It is as simple as it gets, nothing complicated, just the simple reality of what God would want you to do – “do all things with complaining”. As a personal test, just see if you can go one day without complaining about something.

**At some point, you have to figure out that you have to apply very simple truths to your life.**

Someone is going to ask, “*Well, what if there is not a specific verse that deals with my problem?*” That is a very legitimate question. At that point, get some spiritual counsel from people that you respect who may understand the Word of God better than you do. God's Word has great principles that are very applicable to various situations, and you have to find a way to understand what those principles are and where they are. Other people may certainly be able to help you. Often times God's solutions are so simple that you may completely miss them. They just seem too simple. If you complain all the time, just sit down and meditate on [Philippians 2:4](#) because that is God's solution for complaining. Some people just want something more complicated. Good luck with that. The Bible tells the thief exactly what to do. It says stop stealing. Duh with an exclamation point! If you worry a lot, the Scriptures tell you to look at the birds and the flowers of the field. In this series, we have developed Key Principles to help you think like God thinks.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 126: THE WORD OF GOD WILL NOT HELP YOU IF YOU DO NOT KNOW IT, BELIEVE IT, AND APPLY IT TO YOUR LIFE.**

If you do not know the Word of God, then in reality you have no weapon with which to quench the “**fiery darts of the wicked one**” when you are spiritually, emotionally, and mentally struggling. Learn to pray from the Bible. Highlight verses and pray those verses back to God when you are struggling in your life. If your weapon is a specific word or verse from the Word, but you are never in the Word to know what it says or even means, then in reality you will probably be easily defeated by a very deceptive enemy.

Why is that? It is because you have no spiritual weapons with which to defend yourself. In any struggle you are having, you must apply God's Word to that struggle. That is how you win the war in your mind.