



Good and Evil

PART 2

BUILD YOUR LIFE ON THE FOUNDATION OF 11 CORE BIBLICAL TRUTHS



Life Change Objective

To enable you to live with victory over evil and Satan:

In one specific thought

In one specific habit

In one specific relationship

In one specific problem



Key Personal Perspective

You are victorious over Satan!

Everyone who is a child of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world—our faith.

—1 John 5:4 (NCV)

God stripped the spiritual rulers and powers of their authority. With the cross, he won the victory and showed the world that they were powerless.

—Colossians 2:15 (NCV)

But we thank God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

—1 Corinthians 15:57 (NCV)

Overwhelming victory is ours through Christ who loved us enough to die for us.

—Romans 8:37 (LB)

In the last session we looked at the overall problem of evil. In this session we will focus on the personal battle that we all have with evil. As you see from the verses above, God has guaranteed us victory, but it does not come without a struggle. In this study we're going to look at how to win the battle with evil in your daily life.

Set Your Mind on Victory

Be _____

The Bible gives us two powerful pictures to help us to be alert and aware:

1. We live “_____.”

We know that we belong to God even though the whole world is under the rule of the Evil One.

—1 John 5:19 (GNT)

2. Satan is a “_____.”

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

—1 Peter 5:8

Be _____

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

—James 4:6–7

In every case, you start resisting Satan by _____ to God.

Be _____

- Confident because of God’s presence

The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

—1 John 4:4

- Confident because of God’s promise

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

—Romans 16:20

- Confident because of your prayers

Jesus told us to pray with faith for personal victory over evil.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

—Matthew 6:13

Understand the Three Channels of Evil

While Satan is the source of all evil, there are three different channels, or pipelines, through which evil has an opportunity to influence us as individuals. To live with victory, you must understand what these channels are and must know the biblical strategy for victory.

The _____**Know your enemy**

In any battle, one of the keys to victory over an enemy is knowing and understanding that enemy.

The world means the philosophy and influence that reigns on this earth.

For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.

—1 John 2:16

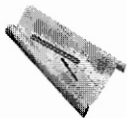
Strategy for victory

What is the personal choice that I can make to begin to enjoy victory on this particular battleground?

_____ the Lord.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

—1 John 2:15–17

The _____**Know your enemy****A Fresh Word**

Two meanings for flesh in the Bible:

1. Our physical bodies (1 Cor. 15:39; John 1:14)
2. Our spiritual “disposition to sin” (1 Cor. 3:3 NASB)

This is important stuff! There is a huge difference between saying, “Our bodies are evil” and “Our flesh is evil.”

Remember our study of the Holy Spirit? Our bodies are meant to be temples of the Holy Spirit! First Corinthians 15 tells us that our bodies will one day be resurrected to eternal life. Sin starts in our unwilling hearts, not our physical bodies. Sin comes from the inside out rather than outside in. The heart is where the evil is. We don't think evil things because we live in an evil world; we live in an evil world because we think evil things (Matt. 15:10–20)!

Strategy for victory

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. . . . So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

—Galatians 5:13, 16

_____ one another in love.

_____ by the Spirit.

The Devil

Know your enemy

See the last session's study.

Strategy for victory

Put on spiritual _____.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

—Ephesians 6:13–18

What is this armor? Don't focus so much on the picture of belts and breastplates in Ephesians 6; focus on what the picture is communicating. Paul discusses seven things that are armor against the Devil's schemes:

1. Truth
2. Righteousness
3. Readiness to share the Good News
4. Faith
5. Salvation
6. God's Word
7. Prayer

Overcome Evil in My Daily Life

There are many ways that we must face the reality of evil in the choices and circumstances of our daily lives. How do I enjoy God's victory when I face these different types of evil in my life?

Sin

We face evil because of our personal choice to sin.

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

—John 8:34

Want victory? Decide to _____.

But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing.

—1 John 1:9 (TEV)

Repent, therefore, and return, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

—Acts 3:19

Trials

We face evil because we live in this fallen world. And we face the painful circumstances that are an inevitable part of living in this fallen world. We can bring those trials on ourselves, but they sometimes come through no fault of our own.

God whispers to us in our pleasures,
speaks in our conscience,
but shouts in our pains:
it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.¹

—C. S. Lewis

Want victory? Decide to _____ (Matt. 5:12; Rom. 5:3–4).

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

—James 1:1–4



Key Personal Perspective

Two reasons God allows problems in our lives:

1. To develop maturity (James 1:1–4; Rom. 5:3–4).
God can bring ultimate good out of temporary evil (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28).
2. To enable _____ (2 Cor. 1:3–7 LB).

Temptation

We face evil because Satan tempts us to do wrong.

Want victory? Decide to _____ (Luke 22:46; Luke 4:1–13).

Four truths to remember about temptation:

1. Temptation will always be a part of our lives (Luke 4:2; 1 Thess. 3:5).

Jesus was perfect, and he was tempted.

2. It is not a sin to be tempted; it's a sin to give in to the temptation.

Jesus was tempted, but he never sinned (Matt. 4:1; Heb. 4:15).

3. We all face the same temptations.

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

—Genesis 3:6

These are the ways of the world: wanting to please our sinful selves, wanting the sinful things we see, and being too proud of what we have. None of these come from the Father, but all of them come from the world.

—1 John 2:16 (NCV)

4. There is _____ a way of escape.

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

—1 Corinthians 10:13



A Closer Look

An Often Asked Question

How do you deal with a “habitual sin”—the cycle of sin, confess, sin, confess?

Change the pattern to “sin—confess—*refocus*.”

Sometimes we become our own worst enemy. The more we focus on what we're *not* going to do, the more we're tempted by it and drawn into doing it. If you get into a tug-of-war with Satan, you'll lose! The solution: Drop your end of the rope and walk away. Refuse to play Satan's game.

Here are four ways to refocus your thinking.

1. Worship.
2. Radical departure (Matt. 5:29–30).
3. Tell the truth; accountability with another person.
4. Faithfulness over time.

Don't be discouraged if you do not feel an immediate change. Think of it as balancing a scale. As you continue to put weight on the positive side, one day the scales will tip.

The Number 1 Principle for Overcoming Evil

Take the offensive!

- When faced with inner accusation, picture the _____.

God took away Satan's power to accuse you of sin, and God openly displayed to the whole world Christ's triumph at the cross where your sins were all taken away.

—Colossians 2:15 (LB)

- When faced with outer confrontation, picture yourself as _____.

The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

—2 Timothy 4:18

[He] gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age.

—Galatians 1:4

- When faced with evil, do _____.

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

—Romans 12:21

This extremely significant verse tells us how important our focus is. You'll never defeat evil by focusing on evil: Satan and demons and the evil forces of this world. Evil is defeated by focusing on what is good and living what is good.

We come through all these things triumphantly victorious, by the power of him who loved us.

—Romans 8:37 (NJB)



Acting on the Truth

How can you overcome evil with good this week?

In one specific thought: how can you change your focus from what is evil to what is good in the way that you're thinking?

In one specific habit: how can you change a bad habit by instead committing to a good habit?

In one specific relationship: how can you begin to see what someone might have meant for evil as something that God can use for good?

In one specific problem: how can you rejoice in what God is doing in your life through a problem you're facing right now?

Finish memorizing memory card 8, "The Truth about Good and Evil."



Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do you see God reminding you to put your confidence in him and not in yourself? Do any examples come to mind of how your confidence in Christ has been strengthened?
2. Through which "channel" does evil seem to exert its influence on you more often: the world, the flesh, or the Devil? Why do you think that is?
3. Which of the seven pieces of armor listed in Ephesians 6 have you found to be the most effective in giving you protection from evil? How do you put on this armor in your daily life?
4. What have you found to be the most effective way for you to deal with personal temptation? Do you struggle most with overcoming pride, pleasure, or possession (the temptation to be, to do, or to have)?
5. Talk together about how you would answer the four questions about our thoughts, habits, relationships, and problems in Acting on the Truth at the end of this study. Ask your group to pray for you in one of these areas this next week.