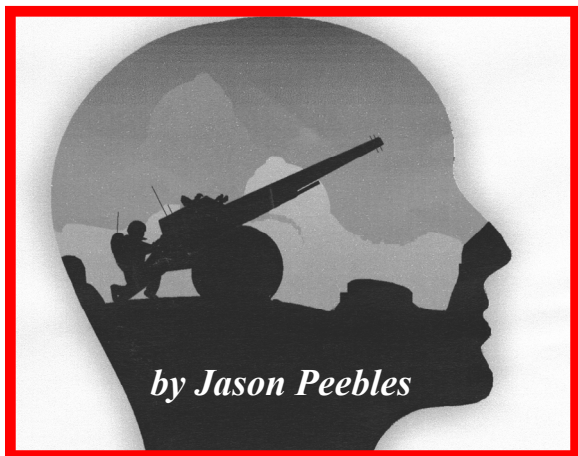


Psychological



by Jason Peebles

Warfare

“Winning the battle of the mind”

If you, or someone you love, have been dealing with discouragement or depression, then this study is for you! We all face the normal “ups and downs” that come with life -- but at times, the battle can get very intense. This is especially true when you’re hit with problems at home or on the job, disappointments, and financial struggles. And, if you’re taking medications (or have any type of chemical imbalance or dependency – meds, drugs, alcohol), then the warfare that you “feel” in your emotions can seem greatly magnified.

All of us have been mentally and emotionally knocked down at times. Some people never get back up or even contemplate suicide. Satan, the enemy of our souls, wages psychological warfare against us. He wants to torment you, render you ineffective, and stop God’s plan. But the wonderful news is that YOU CAN WIN this battle! The apostle Paul identifies the answer when he describes one of the most discouraging moments of his ministry. 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 says, *“We were pressed out of measure, beyond strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. But we determined that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.”* Likewise, your key will be learning how to trust in GOD’S ABILITY and not your own. God’s strength (His grace) can take you far beyond

your own power. This study will help you win the battle of the mind.

Military Mind Games

Throughout the centuries, armies have understood the power of psychological warfare. If you can “*get inside the enemy’s head*” then you can defeat him. Astute military leaders have understood this weapon and employed it to win battles. In ancient times, it might have been as simple as instructing the troops to “shout” as they went into battle. Anyone faced with 10,000 *shouting* warriors would definitely feel intimidated! In World War II, both sides used psychological warfare via radio to undermine the morale of the other side. Can you see the spiritual analogies?

If Satan can “*get in your head*” and mess with your thoughts and emotions, then he can cause you problems. Fears about your future, guilt, and the idea that “*you’re just no good*” are some of his best tools. The Bible teaches that we are involved in a spiritual warfare between good and evil, God and Satan. Ephesians 6:12 says, “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*” The battle is spiritual in nature, but the battlefield is in THE MIND

Spirit, Mind, Body

You need to realize that you are basically comprised of three “parts.” You are “one” person but there are three dimensions to your being: spirit, mind (*mind, will, emotions*), and body. When you become a believer, Christ takes up residence in you by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13 / Eph 3:16,17). Your SPIRIT is instantly made alive and you become a new spiritual creation (2 Cor 5:17). However, your *mind and emotions* are a different story. Your mind and emotions take time to be renewed. Your mind can still be plagued by old habits, memories, and feelings. Thus, the second area that God seeks to influence is your MIND. He wants to change the way you “think.” As you renew the way you think your outward behavior will change too. Old habits will start dropping by the wayside. In fact, you will even start “feeling” different in your emotions as this transformation takes place. This is precisely why Satan wages psychological warfare. He wants

to stop the transformation process that takes place as you renew your mind (Rom 12:1-3).

Jesus in the Garden

Did you know that even Jesus was hit with psychological warfare in the Garden of Gethsemane? Satan launched an all-out attack on his mind. Mark 14:32 says that Jesus was “**sore amazed**” and “**very heavy**,” so much so that he “**fell on the ground.**” Have you ever felt heaviness and discouragement so strong that you wanted to fall over? Many people have. Luke 22:44 says that he was “**in agony**” and under so much pressure that he sweated “**drops of blood.**” What was going on? What was Jesus experiencing?

He was experiencing psychological warfare. Satan was attacking him! Additionally, Jesus knew what was before him, because he knew the prophecies about the Messiah’s suffering and crucifixion (Is 53). Jesus didn’t want to suffer any more than you or I would. He prayed, “*If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*” Thank God he stayed faithful! Thank God he fulfilled His mission! He prayed, “*Nevertheless, not my will, but Thy will be done.*” It will help you win your battles if you understand Satan’s goals in psychological warfare:

- 1. To flood your mind with fears and doubts about God’s plan and your future.** Satan is the master of doubts. He wants to undermine your confidence with doubts.
- 2. To blur your vision so that you no longer have God’s perspective.** God wants you to have 20/20 spiritual vision – but the enemy wants to blur your vision so that you no longer see what’s at stake.
- 3. To weaken you emotionally and physically.** Discouragement and depression can affect you physically, which makes it even more difficult to make right choices.
- 4. To wear down your desire to choose the will of God, especially when it involves sacrifice and pain.** It’s easy to obey God when the blessings are flowing! We all need to learn from Jesus’ prayer: “*Nevertheless, not my will but THY WILL be done.*”
- 5. To press you into temptation – that is, to make wrong decisions that will have devastating consequences.** What would have happened if Christ had not gone to the cross? And in your life, if you decide to go your own selfish way, how would it affect your future, family, children, and friends?

The Armor of God

To win the battle of your mind, you must use GOD’S ARMOR. In Ephesians 6:10-18 the apostle Paul lists our armor. He says, *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of HIS MIGHT. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the enemy.”* Paul compares God’s armor to the armor of a Roman centurion. Let’s look at each piece of armor that Paul lists and how it can help you win your battles. I’ve started from the head down:

1. Helmet of Salvation – In Paul’s day, Roman soldiers wore a protective helmet. Even today, our troops wear helmets. Why? Your head houses your brain and your thought life. If you sustain a head injury, everything else comes to a screeching halt! You can’t think or act properly. Do you see the analogy? God wants you to wear a *“spiritual helmet of salvation.”* What does this mean? **It means that you must protect your mind at all costs.** You must learn to think according to God’s Word. As a believer, your “world view” (the way you view right and wrong, the way you discern events and respond to them) must be based on God’s Word.

Furthermore, it’s called the helmet of *“salvation”* – *NOT condemnation or fear.* Do you even know what God has provided in your salvation? Study Psalm 103:1-5. *“Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all thine iniquities; who heals all thy diseases; who redeems thy life from destruction.”* **Don’t allow thoughts to linger in your head that are contrary to God’s blessings. Refuse them!** My friend, you ARE forgiven! You CAN be healed! Things CAN change for the better. You must start protecting your thought life. Control what you permit to enter your mind via TV, the internet, movies, and music. Dedicate your mind to God. Romans 12:2 says, *“And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”*

You may be at a place in your life right now where you feel tormented with fears, addictions, remorse, or guilt. But take courage! In time, even the way you “feel” will improve as you change the way you “think.” Make reading God’s Word a priority. Mark all the verses in this study guide in your own Bible. Let God’s Word transform you.

All the other pieces of the armor are important, but protecting your “head” is paramount. **Change the way you think and you’ll change your future.**

2. Breastplate of Righteousness – The next piece of armor covers the entire chest area, where your heart and vital organs are. In modern terminology, we would call this a bullet proof vest. Paul calls it the *breastplate of “righteousness.”* In the battle of the mind, you must stand in the righteousness that God has freely given you. You can’t earn it and you don’t deserve it, but Christ paid for it! The devil will try to defeat your mind by flooding you with guilt and condemnation. Simply remind him of 2 Corinthians 5:21 – *“For he made him to be sin for us that WE might be made the righteousness of God in Christ.”* My friend, in Christ, you have been declared righteous! **God took your sins and put them on Christ – then he took Christ’s righteousness and put it on you.** Don’t allow the enemy to defeat you with guilt and condemnation.



3. The Belt of Truth – This piece of your armor works in conjunction with the breastplate. The centurion’s belt was actually an entire armor-plated skirt that extended below the breastplate. It covered the loins and upper legs. Paul calls it the *“belt of truth.”* How do “truth” and “righteousness” work together? Though you have been “declared” righteous, God still requires “truth.” It means that when you sin you admit it. Admit it to yourself, to God, and to others if necessary. If you have bad habits or addictions then confess them to God. No, you’re NOT to carry the burden of guilt and condemnation (see #2) – but God wants to cleanse you. David said, *“Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts -*

create in me a clean heart” (Ps 51). God will help you. 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Proverbs 28:13 says, “He that covers his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy.” **Your mind will be at peace when you walk in truth and honesty.**

4. The Shield of Faith – When a centurion went into battle, he had a shield that “covered all.” His shield would stop incoming arrows. Paul says that Satan shoots “fiery arrows” at us that must be stopped with the shield of faith. Here are three simple keys to help you develop strong faith: **SEE IT - SAY IT - DO IT.**

If you want to develop a strong shield of faith, then you must start “**SEEING**” God’s answers. “See” yourself happy again. “See” yourself employed. “See” yourself well and strong. Second, you must start “**SAYING**” God’s answers. Stop complaining and start speaking faith. Stop saying, “*Things will never change.*” Learn to speak faith and talk in agreement with God’s promises. Third, start “**DOING**” something in faith. Ask God for a plan and then take action. When the enemy shoots fiery arrows in your head (“*I’m no good / Things will never change / I’m beyond hope*”) – then lift high your shield of faith by trusting in God’s ability.

5. The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God – *Yes, you have an offensive weapon!* Like the modern day rifle, the centurion’s sword allowed him to attack the enemy. For the Christian, Paul says that our sword is God’s Word. The Bible is filled with wonderful promises for every area of life: family, children, finances, health, and on and on (2 Pt 1:4). Learn the promises and use them! Joshua 1:8 clearly connects God’s Word to blessings – “*then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success.*” As mentioned in #4, part of faith is **SAYING** the Word. Learn to speak God’s promises over your situations. Satan and his forces are repelled by God’s Word. If you want to win the battle of the mind, you must start using God’s Word in your daily life. The promises of God are your “sword” in the spiritual realm.

6. Shoes of the gospel – “*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (vs. 15).*” The shoes that a soldier wears are extremely important for battle. They allow him to run and fulfill his mission. If you want to win the battle of the mind, you need to realize that God has a mission for you to accomplish. It’s not just “about you.” Part of your armor includes sharing God’s love with others. **Your mental health will benefit when you stop thinking about “you” all the time.** Reach out to others! Your feet are meant to carry you on a mission. Look for someone to encourage each day.

7. Praying Always – Paul also lists prayer as part of your armor. In warfare, “communication” is extremely important. Many of today’s soldiers have radios built in the helmet. *They talk AND listen.* With the radio, they stay in constant contact with their platoon and headquarters. Do you see the analogy to prayer? Prayer allows you to “communicate” with headquarters. If you want to win the battle of the mind, you must develop the habit of talking to God throughout the day. Pray about everything. Pray about your decisions. *And listen!* Often, the Holy Spirit will attempt to guide you through a verse that you’re reminded of, a strong impression, or the still small voice.

Dear friend, I pray that you will learn to use the armor of God every day. I pray for you to win the battle of the mind by trusting in Christ and His ability. ■ -- **Jason Peebles**



Key Memory Verse:

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Romans 12:2

Prayer for Victory in the Mind

“Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sins. I accept His sacrifice and commit my life to Him. I want to use the armor of God. I want to win the battle of the mind through YOUR STRENGTH. I give you my mind, will, and emotions. Protect my mind and renew it by your Word. I give you permission to show me habits that need to change. Work in my heart and help me both to “will” and “do” what you want. Thank you for your love. In Jesus Name – Amen.”

We hope this Study Guide helps you. *World Outreach Ministries* was founded in 1979 by Jason Peebles. We are the home office for missionaries in Asia, Africa, Europe, Central and South America, and the islands of the sea. Our missionaries are from all types of church backgrounds and are involved in a variety of outreaches – evangelism, schools, medical clinics, children’s shelters, aviation, translation work, broadcasting, leadership training, and support roles. God’s kingdom has all kinds of workers!

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