

## **Fighting the Good Fight**

Living the Christian life is an ongoing battle against the forces of darkness as Neil Anderson describes in his book *The Bondage Breaker*. When we sin, Satan gains a foothold (Ephesians 4:7). If we continue to sin, Satan gains a stronghold (II Corinthians 10:4). To live in victory over temptation, we must fight the good fight (II Timothy 4:7).

### **We Fight On Four Levels:**

#### **1. Against the Body of My \_\_\_\_\_ (Flesh)**

- a. *“For we know that the law is spiritual but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.” Romans 7:14-17.*
- b. Both your body and soul (your mind, will, and emotions) are fragile and tainted by sin. You must recognize your weakness as well as your desperate need for God and his grace all day long! *“Walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16.* Instead, you will be filled with the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, etc.).

#### **2. Against A Rejection of the \_\_\_\_\_ (Good)**

- a. *“For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want.” Romans 7:18-19.*
- b. Living the Christian life is not complicated. You must read your Bible, pray, worship, go to church, and develop Christian friendships to truly grow as a believer. Although these practices are universally agreed on and easy to understand, they are not easy to do.
- c. Many Christians struggle with prayer, as there often is not an immediate response. We have to fight against laziness and apathy and overthinking things. *“Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9.*

#### **3. Against the Attraction of \_\_\_\_\_ (Evil)**

- a. *“For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.” Romans 7:19-21.*
- b. Temptation is something we never outgrow as a believer. *“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” Proverbs 4:23.* The heart is the seat of your emotions. It is the core of a person, your spiritual center.

- c. Here's how you guard your heart: *“Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.” Proverbs 4:24-27.*
- d. The devil knows how to make evil look attractive. That's why we have to fight temptation with vigor and tenacity. *“We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Ephesians 6:12.*

#### **4. Against the Entrapment of \_\_\_\_\_(Sin)**

- a. *“What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.” Romans 7:24-25.*
- b. John Wimber was a rising musician before he came to Christ. After his wife dragged him to a Bible study, he broke down sobbing one night, under conviction of sin. At first self-conscious, John remembered seeing a man who was walking the streets of Los Angeles carrying a sign that said, “I am a fool for Christ”. On the other side it read, “Whose fool are you?”

**You have a choice. You can be a slave of the devil or a slave of Christ (Romans 7:25). If you wish to follow Jesus, it will not be easy. You must first choose to fight the good fight. Is that your desire?**

# Discussion Questions

## Fighting the Good Fight

1. What have you learned about the intensity of the fight against sin? Do you know anyone like the public school superintendent who outwardly looked peaceful but inwardly was full of turmoil? What can we learn about fighting sin from Ephesians 4:7, II Corinthians 10:4, and II Timothy 4:7?
2. Read Romans 7:14-25. What does the Bible mean when it uses the word “flesh” (ESV) or “sinful nature” (NIV)? How is your body tainted or infected by sin? How is your soul (your mind, will, and emotions) affected by sin? Why is it so important to understand our weaknesses and frailty when it comes to fighting sin? Why is it important to know that we are in desperate need for God and his grace all day long? Can you share a situation in your life when you successfully fought against sin? How about a failure? What is taught in Galatians 5:16?
3. Look at verses 18-19. What five practices are important in growing as a Christian? Which of these are the hardest for you? Which are the easiest? Have you ever struggled with prayer? How? What have you learned? When are the times in your life that you have prayed the most? Why? What is taught in Galatians 6:9 about doing good?
4. Look at verses 19-21. Do you think temptation gets easier to overcome or harder to overcome as you get older? Why? What is taught in Proverbs 4:23? What is meant by the “heart” in the Bible? How is fighting against sin harder now than it was twenty years ago? What is taught in Proverbs 4:24-27 about overcoming temptation? What is taught in Ephesians 6:12 about fighting temptation?
5. Look at verses 24-25. Can you relate to John Wimber’s testimony about feeling like a fool because he was sobbing over his sin? Would you rather be a fool for Christ or a fool for the devil? Why is it hard for people to understand that these are the only two choices available to us? Have you ever felt like you were a slave to sin (see Romans 7:25)? Why is it critically important to understand that following Christ is not easy? Are you willing to fight against sin with all your might?

