

Courageous Hearts
“With All My Heart, I Will Love you”
Session Seven
Frontal Attacks from the Enemy

“The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are attentive to their cry” – Psalms 34:15.

Overview:

Strongholds can be formed in our hearts through:

1. Sins done to us against our permission (abuse).
2. Generational sins passed down to us.
3. Sins we choose to cultivate.
4. Accidents, war, nature etc.

Flesh patterns are natural reactions or any action we accomplish in our own strength independently from God.

Evidences (aka “clues,” “out of control reactions”, “negative consequences”, “difficulties in life”, etc.) indicate a deeper inner-heart problem that will move us toward isolation.

Distractions are anything that pulls our attention and focus away from God. Distractions always demand our time and attention. The more we are distracted, the less important God is in our life.

Conflicts are opportunities to extend grace, mercy and love to someone when they don’t deserve it. The Holy Spirit can help us to look past the faults of others and love and forgive them.

The following scriptures remind us how the Holy Spirit fills us, lives in us and what He does for and in us:

1 Cor. 6:19-20, 2 Cor. 1:22, 2 Cor. 7:11, Gal. 5:16 & 17, Gal. 5:25, Eph 5:15, 18, 1 Thes. 5:23.

Thirteen Areas of Sin

Unresolved hurt, pain, disappointment, fear and deep sorrow can turn into bitterness. Bitterness can turn a tender heart, once capable of loving, into a hardened heart full of resentment, anger and unforgiveness. Unforgiveness is sin. Forgiveness conquers bitterness.

Pride involves control. Pride usually causes us to become frustrated or angry when things are not done or do not turn out the way we want. Pride is also involved whenever we do anything independently from Him. God hates pride because He is jealous of His relationship with us and our pride gets in the way.

Temporal values are when we give more importance to other (temporary) things than God. Examples are buying things, work, eating habits, exercise, sports, hobbies, reading, etc. There is nothing inherently wrong with any of these things until we give them more value, more focus and more passion than we give God. They become our false gods.

Rebellion is an outward or inward opposition to any authority. A rebellious heart will resist wise counsel and can shut down communication in a relationship. It will hamper your Christian walk toward an abundant life in Christ.

Abuse comes in many different forms. Physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and spiritual abuses are all sins done to us without our permission. Unforgiveness toward the abuser allows the enemy to create

and build strongholds in our heart and feed us lies through them. When we carry unforgiveness in our hearts we continue to believe Satan's lies and let him influence us. Unforgiveness is sin.

Evil for evil responses are when we return an insult or injury. Attacking one another, finding fault in the other person, criticizing, casting blame, and looking at the other person as the enemy, are all foundations for building an evil-for-evil relationship. Evil for evil responses will destroy relationships.

Negative thought patterns are usually spoken in first person pronouns in our own voice and are straight from the enemy. Negative thoughts cause us to withdraw from everyone, including God, and focus on our inward pain. Focusing on ourselves instead of God is a form of pride, which is still sin.

Occult activities include any participation of activity in the enemy's domain. Innocent activities of playing with a Ouija board or studying horoscopes are very dangerous for your spiritual life.

Hypocrisy is anytime we profess something different than what is true about us. No one enjoys admitting failure, a weakness, or lack of self-control, so we put on a front to protect ourselves, usually fooling ourselves as well as others. In the end, others are damaged and we ourselves are deceived by the enemy.

Moral failure begins in the heart and is carried out in thoughts and actions as the will submits to temptation. It can often be controlled for periods of time. The lie from the enemy is often when we think, "I've got it under control." Do not be deceived. Regardless whether it's significantly affecting your behavior or not at the moment, it is a problem.

Jealousy comes from coveting something someone else has. Jealousy causes you to be critical of someone and perhaps gossip about them – trying to get others to also think negatively about them.

Expectations occur when you expect another person to act, think, speak, or feel a certain way. Unfulfilled expectations will leave you disappointed, frustrated, angry, critical and eventually bitter. Unfulfilled expectations expose your lack of control and can leave you discontented and angry.

Perfectionism is putting high expectations on yourself. You feel pressure to perform and need everything around you to be perfect. Perfectionists often are dissatisfied with another person's performance and feel justified to judge them. That pressure and judgment makes others feel not good enough and that they will never measure up to the eyes of the perfectionists.

Courageous Hearts Assignment:

On a sheet of paper in your notebook, list the thirteen areas of sin, plus any other you think of yourself. Answer the following questions for each sin:

1. Did your parents have this sin evident in their lives? How are you aware of it?
2. Do you have evidence of this sin active in your life? How does it show itself? How does it affect you and your family?
3. Can you remember ever experiencing or participating in this sin? When? Ask God to help you discover the source and pray the forgiveness prayer from your heart.
4. Sin is not always obvious. Distractions and flesh patterns are not always defined clearly even though they greatly hamper a born-again and committed Christian from walking the path Jesus

made for him or her. Write down an area of sin on a piece of paper even if it's not apparent in your life. For a day or two, carry this in your pocket or put it someplace you will notice it during the day. It will remind you to think about it and keep asking God if this sin affects you and how. A sample prayer might be, *Jesus, will you show me if this sin is active in my life and I don't know it? Will you show me if it is secretly destroying my relationships? Will you help me to be honest with myself? Amen.*

5. As you discover each source of sin, forgive anyone who may have had a part and give control of that area to God. Then, invite the Holy Spirit to fill that area of your heart with godly characteristics. Replace fear with His peace. Replace rejection and abandonment with His love and security, etc. Finally, ask for His love to fill your heart so the Holy Spirit can love others through you.

Group Discussion

1. How can bitterness be a sin?
2. Why does God hate pride so much?
3. Is temptation sin?
4. How does sin distract us from focusing our attention on God?