

Session 6: Heart of a Winner

What's The Secret To A Life Of Victory?

READY

It seems most of us are born competitors, with the quest for challenge, adventure, and victory arising from deep inside us. As athletes, we're willing to give our blood, sweat, and tears to defeat an opponent.

1. How do you prepare for a game or competition against a ruthless rival who wants to take you down? What motivates you to push yourself to gain the victory?

Competition gives a clear picture of the two opposing sides in the spiritual realm that are battling fiercely to win the prize. Good and evil—God's army and Satan's forces—are battling for your allegiance and your heart. Because of your value to God, you are the prize.

SET

Our Ruthless Opponent

Read Ephesians 6:10-12 and 1 Peter 5:8.

2. Who is our unseen adversary and what does he intend for our lives and relationships? Do you think we'll ever be free from temptation and the need to fight to retain the freedom we've been given?

Although God has already sealed Satan's fate through Jesus' death and resurrection, Satan is still "prowling around" (1 Peter 5:8), using his primary tactic of deception to take us out! He tries to get us to believe that God is not good, he puts a twisted perspective on every event, he wreaks pain and havoc in our lives, and he ultimately works to destroy us. The Bible makes it clear that the Devil and his demons are ruthless and purposeful.

Strong Offense And Defense

To protect against enemy attacks, we need disciplined preparation, a strong defense, and a strong offense. Seven strategies built around the word PREVENT* will be our allies as we resist the Enemy and the temptations from our own distorted desires (the "flesh").

Prevent Strategy 1: Prepare

Read Ephesians 5:15-17 and 1 Peter 1:3.

3. What are some ways highlighted in Ephesians 5:15-17 and 1 Peter 1:3 that will help us prepare before we face the temptations that will come?

Prevent Strategy 2: Reevaluate and Repent

We must continue to evaluate ourselves. When we're wrong, we promptly admit it, and turn back to truth and light. Turning away from sin and to God is called repenting. The word repent comes from the Greek word metanoia, which means to change (meta) our mind-set or understanding (noia).

Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-2,6 and Romans 12:1-2.

4. According to 2 Corinthians 4, what is God's part in radically changing us from the inside out? What's our part? What two decisions do we need to make in order to allow God to renew our minds and transform us (Romans 12:1-2)?

Prevent Strategy 3: Envision Your Future Glory

It's easy to get bogged down in routines and struggles. We must continually shift our focus back to the larger story as we live out of our glory and long for all that awaits us.

Read Romans 8:16-19.

Prevent Strategy 4: Value Your Heart

If we value and guard our hearts, we set protective boundaries, and we connect our hearts to God.

Read Proverbs 4:23 and Psalm 119:9-11, 15-16.

5. Why is it so important to guard our hearts (Proverbs 4:23)? What are some ways that we stay connected with our hearts and with God (Psalm 119)?

Prevent Strategy 5: Escape Temptation

Sometimes temptation jumps into your lap, and there's no avoiding it. When you find yourself in a tempting situation, take off in the opposite direction as fast as you can!

Read 1 Corinthians 10:12-13.

Prevent Strategy 6: No Provision For The Flesh

Spit into the wind, and you'll regret it. Eat contaminated food, and you'll pay dearly. Live in a way that leads to trouble, and you'll find it. Beware of falling back into your old ways.

Read Romans 13:12-14 and Ephesians 5:6-8,10-11.

6. The "flesh" is old baggage we still carry—distorted desires and old habit patterns. How can we "make no plans to satisfy the fleshly desires" and "live as children of light"?

GO

Prevent Strategy 7: Teamwork and Accountability

There's great power in a team of people who can lift up one another. Christianity is a team sport. The enemy would like nothing more than to isolate us and take us out!

Read Hebrews 10:24-25 and James 5:19-20.

We're engaged in a brutal competition for our hearts and our legacies. However, as children of God, we have access to divinely powerful weapons. Stay in tune with the Holy Spirit at all times, and execute the plays as He directs the action.

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

7. What are some ways we can demolish "strongholds" (verse 4)? How can we take "every thought captive" and make it obedient to Christ (verse 5)?

Taking one day at a time, dumping the garbage, and maintaining accountability will be the core of your program for the rest of your life. God never intended us to push through hardships on our own. He designed us to lock arms and take the journey together.

*Adapted from *Stop the Madness* by Serendipity.



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