

Memory Verse: 3:2

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Review: Spiritual Self-Defense

Lesson 6 **Living with Focus**

Discussion: Civil Wars

What do we recall from history about the internal damage civil wars can cause?

Civil wars can sidetrack businesses, sports teams, political campaigns, marriages, families, and churches, and entire denominations.

Record what Jesus said in Matthew 12:25 _____

What kind of civil wars do we face in our personal lives?

Are you waging a civil war against yourself?

Read Colossians 3:1-2

Paul gives us the crucial principle in winning the civil war. It requires that we live with focus. It means that your head and heart must be moving in the same direction or inner conflict will erupt. There must be focus in your life. Our heart and our desires must be directed toward 'things above.' The "things above" are those things which war against God's purpose and plan for our lives.

The Battle Ground Exposed

Read Romans 7:21-23

What is the real problem? Where does Paul say the battle begins?

What do you think the old saints meant by asking God to help them keep their minds "stayed" on God?

Discussion: What happens when your heart doesn't want the same thing your head does?

How can you get you head and heart to move in the same direction? Name practical things that have worked for you.

What happens when your desires conflict with your coming closer to God?

Jesus pinpointed this problem in Mathew 6:24.

What is the problem with trying to serve two masters?

One of the things the Apostle Paul emphasizes is letting go of the past.

Read Colossians 2:20 and 3:1-8

As long as you hold on to the past, you will never be able to win the civil war. Whenever you find yourself wanting to do something you shouldn't want to do, you have to remind yourself. That part of my life is in the past!

Consider these:

- That part of me is gone!
- That's the old me!
- That person is dead!

Exercise.

You were given a note card and an envelope. Write a thank you note to God for delivering you from a struggle. Even if you aren't totally delivered, write it in faith. Place the completed note card in the envelope, seal it, and take it home. Put it in your family Bible or a safe place.



Action!

The next time you are tempted to go back to that old place or bad habit. Remember the note you wrote and thank God for delivering you. Ask God to give you strength to overcome it! Read Mark 11:23. Say it! Believe it! Trust God!

Hold yourself to a higher standard.

What do you think it means to declare war on sin? What would that look like in your life?

That's what God wants from you! The only way you can do this is to be focused on Him. God doesn't want any obstacle standing in your way.

Read Hebrews 12:1

What is the weight that has you weighed down?

Pray for the person seated next to you! Pray specifically for the weight in their life as well as yours!