

## Living Godly Lives 2: The Christian and the World

### INTRODUCTION:

1. It is important that we talk about this because:
  - A. We must live *in the world* (Jn. 17:11) and shine God's light upon it (Mt. 5:16 – “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”).
  - B. We must not to be *of the world*, as Jesus was not of the world (Jn. 17:15-16 – “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”).
  - C. This *hybrid* existence, or how we must live an otherworldly life according to Christ's word, while living here in this world, creates certain problems for us.
    - i. Jn. 15:18-19 – “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were **of the world**, the world **would love its own**; but **because you are not of the world**, but I chose you out of the world, because of this **the world hates you.**”
    - ii. Jn. 17:14 – “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”
2. With these things in mind, I want to talk about how living godly lives requires:
  - A. Understanding that the Christian must live their life as a soldier
  - B. That we fight by faith

### BODY:

#### **I. We are Soldiers:**

- A. Jesus promised His disciples an abundant life (John 10:9-10 – “I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be **saved**, and will go in and out and **find pasture**. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it **abundantly**.”).
  1. Life in Christ means **salvation** from sin and its condemnation that is coming on the world.
  2. It means **finding pasture**, or what we truly need—sustenance, security, peace, etc.
  3. It means Jesus wants more for us—**abundant life**—here, as well as in the life to come.
- B. Yet, these promises are fulfilled while the Christian is engaged in battle!
  1. That may sound enigmatic, even contradictory, but it is true.
    - a. For, this battle has been going on since the beginning when sin entered the world (Gen. 3:14-15 – “The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this [connived to bring sin in the world], cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; <sup>15</sup> and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”).
    - b. Sin has brought enmity [hostility, hatred, war] into this world between Eve's righteous children, which includes the Christ, and Satan and his children.
      - i. We need to see our lives as part of this **bigger picture**, as part of this great battle that is raging in this universe!
      - ii. For, everyone, including non-Christians, are a part of the battle whether they realize it or not. And, if you do not realize it, you are vulnerable and will not likely survive it!
  2. This is a spiritual battle won with spiritual weapons (Eph. 6:10-12 – “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. <sup>11</sup> **Put on the full armor of God**, so that you will be able to stand firm against the **schemes of the devil**. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is **not against flesh and blood**, but against the **rulers**, against the **powers**, against the **world forces of this darkness**, against the **spiritual forces of wickedness** in the heavenly places.”).
    - a. Christians are engaged in a spiritual war against Satan and his rulers, powers, forces of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places. We need to stop and think about the magnitude of this war.
    - b. Paul in another place described the fight this way (2 Cor. 10:3-5 – “For though we walk in the flesh, we are not **waging war** according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our

warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We destroy **arguments** and every **lofty opinion** raised against the knowledge of God, and **take every thought captive to obey Christ**").

- i. This is a battle to bring the heart, the mind, the soul into subjection to Christ!
  - ii. God wants every thought taken captive, seeing only when the heart and mind are fully subjected to Christ will our lives be also!
- c. Fortunately, **God** has provided all that we need to wage this war (Ephesian 6).
- i. We can be strong in the strength of **His might** (6:10).
    - 1) Self-empowerment is of no value, despite how much our society promotes it!
    - 2) It is only through Christ's strength that we can resist Satan (John 15:5 – "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, **for apart from Me you can do nothing.**").
  - ii. We are to put on God's armor (Eph. 6:13-17 – "Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and **having done everything, to stand firm.** <sup>14</sup> Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with **truth**, and having put on the breastplate of **righteousness**, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the **gospel of peace**; <sup>16</sup> in addition to all, taking up the shield of **faith** with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of **salvation**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word of God.**").
    - 1) So God provides all that we need to fight this war.
    - 2) Yet, we have to choose to use it, to equip and arm ourselves with these to win.
- C. We must know the enemy and have the proper mindset to face him (1 Pet. 5:8-10 – "Be of **sober** spirit, be on the **alert**. Your adversary, **the devil**, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> But resist him, **firm** in your **faith**, knowing that **the same experiences of suffering** are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. <sup>10</sup> **After you have suffered for a little while**, the God of all grace, who called you to His **eternal glory** in Christ, will Himself **perfect, confirm, strengthen** and **establish** you.>").
1. We must face each day with the knowledge that Satan Himself is our enemy.
    - a. He is the one behind every temptation, behind the pain, suffering, chaos, and destruction we may experience and also see happening around us.
    - b. We must know that his war plan is based on deception and lies presented with malicious intent to devour you, enslave you, destroy you now and eternally.
  2. This is why we must be sober and alert, knowing that the suffering we face in resisting Satan is required of all who live in Christ.
    - a. To fight as a soldier in battle is a struggle, a matter of suffering for a goal.
    - b. But we fight because that goal is worth the short but difficult journey (5:10 – "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of **all grace**, who called you to His **eternal glory** in Christ, will Himself **perfect, confirm, strengthen** and **establish** you.>").
- D. To win the war against sin, we must be aware of how the battles affects us personally and God's answer (Rom. 7:21-8:2 – "I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. <sup>22</sup> For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, <sup>23</sup> but I see a different law in the members of my body, **waging war** against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup> **Wretched man that I am!** Who will set me free from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup> **Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ** our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. **8** <sup>1</sup> Therefore there is now **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.>").
1. Again, we must be aware that the battlefield upon which this great spiritual battle is fought is, so often, within our own selves!

2. The most constant struggle we face is between the lusts of our own flesh, our body, and the knowledge of the pure and holy ways of Christ that we have in our heart, our mind.
3. But as Paul said, thanks should be poured out to God because He has provided the way to victory in Jesus, leading us to freedom from the law of sin and death (8:1-2).

## II. We Fight by Faith

- A. Because faith is the way of overcoming the world.
  1. Remember, we must be in the world, but not of the world.
  2. That call to be different, to be godly, is what we are fighting for in this war.
  3. But how do we successfully fight and win? How do we overcome the assaults of Satan? The answer is faith (1 John 5:4 – “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—**our faith.**”).
- B. We must fight by faith because it changes our approach to life (Philippian 3:7-14).
  1. Faith changes our values (3:7-11).
    - a. Paul counted every “thing” as loss for the sake of Christ. The things of this world that so many value and strive for Paul saw as garbage!
    - b. He could do so because by faith he saw the real value of knowing Christ, His righteousness, and attaining to the **resurrection from the!**
    - c. Like a true soldier Paul was able to live the soldier life and fight on because he believed that the objective was worth the sacrifice.
      - i. And Paul sacrificed, living a life of want, persecution, imprisonment, and ultimately death. I am unsure we can really fathom what his life was like.
      - ii. I asked the kids’ class I taught last year how they would feel about becoming Christians if they knew their life would be like Paul’s. What do you think about that?
  2. Faith changes our view of the past, present, and future (3:12-14).
    - a. Living by faith in Christ gave Paul a new and liberating view of life.
      - i. By faith Paul, once a hater of Christ and persecutor of the church, was not shackled by his past and the doubts it often brings to the present.
      - ii. By faith Paul could confidently strive toward righteousness and life, knowing that he would lay hold of it because **that is why** Christ had laid hold of him!
    - b. This is so important because a good soldier cannot be disheartened by past failures but must fight on each and every day with confidence of victory in the future.
- C. We fight by faith because it provides renewed strength (2 Corinthians 4:16-18 – “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our **outer man is decaying**, yet our **inner man is being renewed day by day**.<sup>17</sup> For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an **eternal weight of glory** far beyond all comparison,<sup>18</sup> while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the **things which are not seen**; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are **eternal.**”).
  1. Everything we see about us is decaying, dying, and passing away!
  2. Yet, faith gives us renewed strength to fight on because we can see beyond the battle, beyond the temptations and afflictions of this world to the eternal prize.
  3. That is what a good soldier must do.
- D. Faith helps us live like we are dead.
  1. I know that sounds horrible, morbid, even crazy. But hear me out.
    - a. I once watched a series on WWII where in one scene a young soldier addressed the paralyzing fear felt by a fellow soldier who had just entered combat.
    - b. His words went something like this: “Your problem is that you do not understand that you are already dead.”
      - i. He was saying that the moment you entered that war you were sentenced to death, you died, which seemed so disheartening, discouraging.
      - ii. Yet, to the young man who said it and those who listened, it was liberating and allowed them to do what their mission required without hesitation.
  2. As I have thought on those words, I have found applicable truth in them for the Christian and the life we live by faith.

- a. A life lived by faith is a *crucified life* (Gal. 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ; and **it is no longer I who live**, but Christ lives in me; and **the life which I now live** in the flesh **I live by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”).
- b. A life of faith is a life lived as being dead to the lure of worldly lusts and sin (Rom. 6:11-14 – “Even so **consider yourselves to be dead to sin**, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup> Therefore **do not let sin reign in your mortal body** so that you obey its lusts, <sup>13</sup> and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. <sup>14</sup> For **sin shall not be master over you**, for you are not under law but under grace.”).
- c. A life of faith is a life lived as having died to this earth while living for the coming glory of heaven above (Col. 3:1-3 – “Therefore if you have been **raised up with Christ**, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> **For you have died** and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”).
- d. So, the freedom of a godly life comes from living it as one who is dead, who has died to self so that Christ might live within.
- e. Until I am willing to live like I am dead, there will never be enough room for Christ to truly fill my heart and life, direct my choices, and bring to me the glory of eternal life.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Living godly lives requires:
  - A. That we understand that the life of a Christian is the life of a soldier fighting in the great spiritual battle between God and Satan that is fought for our very hearts, minds, and souls.
  - B. Fighting that war by faith which:
    - i. Changing our approach to life.
    - ii. Provides renewed strength to fight despite the physical decay
    - iii. Helps live like we are dead, having died to the world and its many allurements.
2. So, if you want to live a godly life in the hope of eternal salvation, I encourage you to ponder these things and apply them to how you approach your life.
3. Of course, godly living cannot begin without first giving your life to Christ in F-R-C-BP. Will you do so today?