

Segment Two: The War

Flesh Versus Spirit

Key Points (Stop video at 1:58)

1. Galatians 5:17 says, . . . *for the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other.*
2. The mind of the flesh is at war with the mind of the Spirit.
3. The word opposition in the Greek is *antikeimai*.
4. It means fighting against each other, entrenched in bitter warfare, one with the other.
5. Acronym—WAR
W stands for word of God and power of the Holy Spirit.
A stands for attack and defend.
R stands for repentance.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think that you are fighting a spiritual war?
Answer: Have the men respond and share their thoughts on spiritual warfare, and what it means. We are in a spiritual war that uses spiritual weapons. *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.*
– **2 Corinthians 10:4 NIV**

There are three primary areas of spiritual warfare.

- a. *For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.*
– **Galatians 5:17 NIV**
 - b. *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*
– **Ephesians 6:12 NIV**
 - c. *Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.*
– **1 John 2:15-16 NASB**
2. Do you act like you are fighting in a spiritual war?
Answer: Have the men consider if they live their lives like they are in a war.
 3. What do you consider to be pornography? Is a Victoria Secret ad pornography?
Answer: *Yes it is!* Ask the men if they agree with the following information: It is amazing how much the Christian community has lost in the spiritual war that we are in. The church's heart is growing cold and embracing the world's view on sexuality. We allow immorality into our homes so that we can be entertained. We allow our children to view soft pornography because we no longer consider it pornography or inappropriate. Our eyes do not see, and our ears do not hear. We are embarrassed to take a stand, to even talk about it. God help us men to be leaders—to be God's man.

4. How is it that some men see a picture of a scantily dressed woman, and it does not stimulate lust?
Answer: Have the men remember the cookie metaphor and the change of meaning that took place when the truth was revealed. When meaning changes, so do the chemicals that are released into the brain. If a man knows the meaning of a Victory Secret ad from a spiritual warfare perspective, he will see the trap of the enemy, and the visual will not produce chemicals of lust but disgust that the devil is so bold and men are such sheep. It will also alert him and become a warning that the enemy is near.

Note to Facilitator: Show the *Matrix* video of the woman in the red dress. Have the men discuss this video and how it relates to a Victoria Secret ad. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pl0MXYBztdg>. Men, you need to train your brain to see the truth so that when a Victoria Secret ad appears on a poster in the mall or as an ad on TV, you will not be stimulated to lust because you will see the enemy's evil attempt to harden your heart, destroy your marriage, and rob you of your ministry. Become aware of Satan's schemes and live in freedom from the lusts of the world.

5. Does lust and pornography do any harm? If so, what harm does it really do?
Answer: *¹⁷So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. – Ephesians 4:17-18 NIV*

Conditioning installs habits of thinking, feeling, and acting. Our spirit is at war with our flesh. So pictures from the Sears catalog can be pornography because of what lies inside of a man. When you give birth to sin, you harden your heart and become insensitive to the movement of God in your life. It becomes easier to sin again. You resist the Spirit (Acts 7:51), grieve the Spirit (Ephesians 4:29-32) and eventually can quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:12-22). All kinds of immorality and consequences occur for those who walk after the "mind of the flesh." Have the men discuss what they believe happens when someone succumbs to lust and pornography.

Circles

Key Points

Note to Facilitator: The men need to know that their brain is a chemical, electrical warehouse the needs to be managed. **You** are to master your thoughts and emotions.

1. At the top of the circle are **thoughts**.
2. Thoughts stimulate **chemistry** that generates and maintains **feelings** that in turn motivate **behavior** and **actions** that we do.
3. Sexual love is about the way you **think**; it is much less about your body and much more about the **meaning** that is in your **brain**.
4. Sexual love is designed to create a **bonding** experience with the person you are **married** to.
5. We desperately want **relief** from the chemistry that generates feelings and motivates our behavior.
6. The sexual stimulation of **pornography** is putting these powerful, feel-good chemicals into your brain.
7. This pattern keeps repeating itself redundantly until we are in danger of staying in the **darkness**, no longer able to find the **light**.

Discussion Questions

1. What happens when the chemistry of lust is stimulated?

Answer: Men are pulled into a deeper and deeper pit because the first entry into lust and pornography that stimulated the brain is no longer enough to give them the chemical high that they once had. They go darker and deeper into the pit. The heart gets harder and harder, and it usually means consequences are going to happen very soon. If men ignore the consequences, the process deteriorates even more. Have the men discuss how this happens.

2. Have lust/porn/sex been a path to any other sin?

Answer: Have the men discuss this from their point of view.

3. Do you want to love and be loved?

Answer: Have the men discuss. Ask them how lust and pornography can prevent love from happening. When the heart is hardened from consuming lust and pornography, it becomes insensitive to the things of God—God is love. So the ability to give and receive love is thwarted. You wonder why you are not confident in your relationship with God and why your relationships with loved ones aren't working. The hardened heart becomes like the path in the parable of the sower. The seed of the Word bounces off the hard path of the heart and that person bears no fruit. The fruit that comes from the Spirit comes forth from love, which has an outcome in a life and produces characteristics within the person: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). If you are insensitive to the Spirit and think you will love or be able to receive love, you are living in deception. . . . *but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. – 1 Corinthians 13:1*

4. What do lust and pornography do to the heart that makes it incapable of loving and being loved?

Answer: The process of hardening the heart takes time. When a person uses lust and pornography to inappropriately meet their sexual needs, a number of deteriorating processes can occur (see answer in question 1 above). There are so many possibilities, but often men will open themselves up to seek affairs and other sexual outlets. They stop talking about the issues that really need to be addressed in their lives—intimacy in their marriage, stress, loneliness, emptiness, shame, overwhelm.

Tune-Ups

Week Two

The following exercises accompany the Tune-Up for this day. Have the men discuss the exercises.

Tune-Up Day 3

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. – Philippians 4:9 NASB

Today be objective and intentional. You are in control of your brain and when you are objective, you are able to access the truth of God's Word and the power of His Spirit.

Prior to an image appearing in your mind, call it forth and be decisive. Turn the lie—the disgusting picture—into glass and SMASH it into little pieces or turn it into paper and light it on fire. Be bold! Attack the garbage of the world that has infiltrated your mind. Teach your brain the truth. You are designed by God to run your

brain. You are in control of your brain and when you are objective, you are able to access the truth of God's Word and the power of His Spirit. Be objective! Do this 10 times today.

*Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence . . . **2 Peter 1:3***

Do not trade the abundant life for the momentary pleasure of sin. Today consider how God desires you to live—to have life in abundance, now and forever. Move toward the truth and away from the lies about sex. Practice and practice some more; it will become you. Think about it today!

Tune-Up Day 4

*Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence . . . **2 Peter 1:3***

Do not trade the abundant life for the momentary pleasure of sin. Today consider how God desires you to live—to have life in abundance, now and forever. Move toward the truth and away from the lies about sex. Practice and practice some more; it will become you. Think about it today!

- Decide (practice as a habit of life) to add to your faith moral excellence. Men, practice seeing older women as mothers and younger woman as sisters in all purity. Don't wait! Teach your brain the truth.
- Decide (practice) ahead of time to put on the mind of Christ regarding the meaning of messages that come from the world's system. Pay attention to what you hear externally and internally!