

# MAN BATTLES

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In every man's life there is a battle being fought that cannot be seen with the human eye. It's a spiritual battle that challenges our faith, identity, and purpose. This battle is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces of darkness as described in Ephesians 6:12. The battle manifests itself in struggles with temptation, pride, prayerfulness, and the pressures of living up to society's expectations.

Over the next 12 months, our prayer is to equip you to face this battle with confidence in Jesus. The power of a small group cannot be underestimated. Jesus took a group of 12 and changed the world. As you walk through these studies, it is our hope that iron will sharpen iron (Proverbs 27:17), and that you learn how to recognize these battles, rely on God's strength, and walk in the victory that Christ has already secured for us.



# MARCH | IT'S A SPIRITUAL BATTLE

## MAIN SCRIPTURE: EPHESIANS 6:10-18

The Bible repeatedly depicts the Christian life in this world as a battle, urging believers to don the armor of God and engage in warfare against spiritual forces. For Christian men, understanding and embracing this reality is crucial to living a victorious life in Christ. Yes, to be a genuine disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, you must be willing to die daily of yourself and wage war on self, sin, the world's ideas, and, most prominently, the spiritual forces of wickedness all around us.

We need to be prepared for the conflict, armed with God's Truth both proclaimed and lived out. Our lives should be marked by the righteousness that is ours in Christ, and with faith in what God provides. This enables us to resist the schemes of the Devil that would otherwise take us down. Ungodly behavior, doubt, and despair from within, and persecution and false teaching from the outside are deadly enemies, but they cannot stand against us when God is fighting for us. The salvation provided to us now and always in and through Christ, and Word of God are powerful enough to protect us and enable us to go on the offensive as well. Then we too can pray for boldness to be faithful ambassadors, even if we are in chains like the Apostle Paul.

## DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." (Ephesians 6:10)
2. Why do you think Paul emphasizes the need to "put on the full armor of God?"
3. In Ephesians 6:12, Paul mentions "rulers," "authorities," and "spiritual forces of evil." How do these shape our understanding of spiritual warfare?
4. In your own words, how would you define each piece of spiritual armor? (The belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit.)
5. Discuss some practical ways that as a man of God you can "stand firm" when facing the battles of everyday life.
6. Paul mentions prayer in v.18. How does prayer contribute to spiritual warfare. Discuss the vitality of prayer in the life of a battling believer.
7. Peter speaks of our enemy in 1 Peter 5:8. He also encourages us to be "alert and sober minded." Why are these qualities of importance to believers?
8. Peter describes the devil as a "roaring lion seeking for someone to devour." What does the enemy use in your life in an attempt to destroy you as a follower of Christ, as a husband, and as a father?
9. What areas in your life do you feel you might be spiritually vulnerable? What practical steps can you take to be more alert specific to attacks from the enemy?
10. Who is the audience that Isaiah is speaking to in Isaiah 54:17? How does this apply to believers today.
11. Share with your brothers a battle you are facing, and then pray together for God's strength and wisdom as you fight the good fight of faith.

# APRIL | IDENTITY

## MAIN SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

Our culture is very interested in the journey of discovering individual identity. You can find all sorts of identity assessments on-line. It seems that everyone is searching for something or someone to tell them who they are and where they belong.

Many search for their identity through their circumstances in life. You may seek to find your identity through financial success, through status in the community, your appearance, or your reputation. However, none of these are permanent and can change quickly without warning. A sudden job loss, financial crash, break up, or health scare can leave you questioning yourself.

As a follower of Christ, it is vital that you know and understand that your identity is IN CHRIST. As we walk through the Scriptures, there is one phrase you will find over and over that should help solidify your identity....IN CHRIST. As a man of God, your identity is sealed, secured, and unshakable IN CHRIST.

God, however, is unchanging. He is reliable. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. If you find your identity in Him, you will never ultimately be let down because He has proven time and time again to be trustworthy.

## DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:

1. In our main Scripture passage, Paul speaks of being "in Christ", what does it mean to be "in Christ?"
2. What does "old things passed away" refer to in a believer's life?
3. Are there aspects of your "old life" that you find challenging to let go? How do you deal with this?
4. Paul describes our identity in Christ in Ephesians 1:1-10. Discuss the truth that we are "saints" that are "blessed" "chosen" "adopted" and "redeemed"
5. At the core of your existence, what do you base your identity on? What drives your sense of value?
6. John also helps us to find our identity in Christ in 1 John 3:1-3. How does being called a "child of God" shape our identity? How does this passage challenge us to show God's love to a world that does not know Him?
7. When you become a child of God, you are accepted into His family with delight. He delights in making you more like Himself. Discuss Zephaniah 3:17 and how this relates to your identity in Christ.
8. Past sin often hinders you from fully embracing your new identity in Christ. Discuss the following verses about your forgiveness. Psalm 103:12, Colossians 2:13, 1 John 1:9
9. What are some practical ways you can embrace and live out your "identity" in Christ? (As a follower of Christ, as a husband, as a dad, as a friend, as a leader.)

# MAY | LUST

## MAIN SCRIPTURE: JAMES 1:14-15

In this text, James gives us the progression of the birth of sin. The enemy uses the bait of our desires to conceive sinful lust in our hearts that ultimately leads to death and destruction. In the area of sexuality, what God has meant for good, our sinful nature and our enemy have distorted to use to destroy our lives and the lives of others around us.

We live in a sex-filled society. Because of immodest dress, sensual advertisements, and the availability of pornography on mobile devices, there are only 2 kinds of men: those who admit a struggle with lust and those who lie about their struggle.

While it is true that social and spiritual maturity can help “curb” these tendencies, the lust of the flesh is something a man will never completely outgrow. Let’s take a look at what God’s word says about lust and how we can live victoriously, through Christ, in this area of our lives.

## DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:

1. Read Matthew 5:27-28. Jesus gives us no wiggle room about whether looking at a woman lustfully is sinful. What does our sin, in this area, reveal about our hearts?
2. While women are responsible for their clothing and appearance, who is responsible if a man lusts after a woman?
3. Read Psalm 101:3. The text indicates that the author has made a decision, or made up his mind beforehand, about what he would not allow his eyes to see. How does making up our minds beforehand help us win in this battle over lust? How is this better than trying to make up your mind when temptation is before you?
4. If we were to place some guardrails in our lives to help us “set nothing wicked” before our eyes, where should those be placed? For example, movie channels or accounts, places we may go for vacation or entertainment, social media, etc.
5. Read Psalm 119:9-11. This text offers at least three ways that will help you win in this area. What should you heed? Who should you pursue? What should you hide?
6. Read the following verses and discuss “How can hiding these verses in my heart help me live in victory over lust?”  
1 Corinthians 6:18, Hebrews 13:4, Job 31:1, 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
7. Read 2 Timothy 2:22. We are told to flee something and pursue something WITH those “who call on Lord.” How can fellowship with other believers help us live victoriously in this area? On the other hand, how does close and continued fellowship with those that are not pursuing righteousness hinder or success in this area?
8. For further study, read Proverbs 5-7. The warning of a father to his son is great insight to why we need to be sure we win the battle of lust. “Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.”
9. Take a moment to pray for the men in your group that we will each honor our Lord and the women in our lives with our eyes, our thoughts, and our actions.

# JUNE | OFFERING FORGIVENESS

## MAIN SCRIPTURE: EPHESIANS 4:32

Do you need to forgive someone? It can be a difficult process, but as Christians, it's something that we're commanded to do. Whatever your situation, here are some practical ways you can forgive that person that wronged you, and be free from the bitterness that comes with unforgiveness.

Through a consistent prayer life, ask God to help you arrive at a place where you sincerely desire to offer true forgiveness. Ask the Lord for strength to offer the kindness and forgiveness to that person that has wronged you.

Then, pray for the person that wronged you, by name. Pray for their good. Ask God to help you to love them the way He loves them. This will be very difficult at first, but as you consistently pray for that person, you will sense God softening your heart and you'll arrive at a place of forgiveness.

Finally, do the first two steps again and again until you truly have offered forgiveness. Sometimes our thoughts go back to the anger and hurt even as we are praying for them. Don't be discouraged, this is completely natural. It's almost like lifting weights. Each time you lift, you get a little stronger. Each time you pray for the person that has wronged you, you will be strengthening your "forgiveness muscle." This takes time, but be faithful to pray for that person and God will help you to truly forgive.

## DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever been hurt by someone who was supposed to be on your side, only to throw you under the bus? How did you respond initially? Does it still bother you? Do you believe you have offered true forgiveness?
2. According to Ephesians 4:32, how should I respond when wronged by someone? How is this even possible?

3. Jesus speaks of forgiveness in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:14-15. Discuss this command to forgive and the consequences for unforgiveness.
4. Discuss the following Scriptures about forgiveness in your group. Colossians 3:13, Matthew 18:21-22, Luke 6:27, 1 Peter 3:9
5. Isaiah 53:7 speaks of the oppression that our Lord would endure. What was His response? How can we reflect that kind of response in our own lives?
6. In Luke 7:36-50, Jesus demonstrates for us the depth of forgiveness we have received. Discuss the differences between Simon and the sinful woman. Why was the sinful woman moved to tears? What does her example teach us about forgiveness?
7. Read the prayer of Jesus in Luke 23:34. How can we offer that same sincere forgiveness to those who have wronged us?
8. What do you believe some of the major obstacles are in forgiving others?
9. Read Matthew 18:21-22. How should I respond when I am wronged again and again?

# JULY | PRIDE

## MAIN SCRIPTURE: PROVERBS 16:18

The Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary (HIBD) says that “pride is easier to recognize than to define, easier to recognize in others than in oneself.” That is a true statement. We can recognize pride, especially in others, even if we can’t define it with words.

But the HIBD definition goes on to say that pride is “undue confidence in and attention to one’s own skills, accomplishments, state, possessions, or position.” Put more simply, pride is thinking more highly of ourselves than we should. No matter what we have accomplished or wish to accomplish, we always need others to attain our goals. When we consider only ourselves, never acknowledging the help and support of others, we are exhibiting our tendency to be prideful.

The ultimate expression of pride is a total disregard for God as Creator, Owner, and Redeemer of all things, including ourselves.

The Bible describes pride as sin that is characteristic of a carnal person who loves worldly things. John told Christians, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:15-17)

## DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:

1. Read Proverbs 16:18. What are some ways that pride is destructive? List some consequences that result from being prideful? How has pride negatively impacted your past?
2. Daniel chapter 4 records a historical account of a man riddled with pride, Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. Look at how he describes himself in verse 30; then compare this to Daniel’s description of God in Daniel 2:20-23. Pay close attention to what Daniel says about how kings are made. Compare and contrast what you read in these passages.
3. Read Daniel 4:30-33. What does this passage teach us about God and His view of human pride?
4. Read Daniel 4:34-36. Here we see a significant change in Nebuchadnezzar’s attitude. What is different about his words? He was previously praising himself, who is he praising now? How might his life have been different if he would have had this approach from the beginning?
5. Read 1 Peter 5:5-6. How does this text instruct us to achieve victory in the battle with pride. How can you apply these truths?
6. Luke 14:8-11 records a parable taught by Jesus. What warning do we see here against pride? The parable ends with a statement similar to the end of the passage we looked at in 1 Peter 5.
7. If we do not humble ourselves, God will humble us. What are some of the ways He can do that?
8. Someone has said, “Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is thinking of yourself less.” What is the difference between humility and low self-esteem?
9. What do the following verses teach us about pride?  
2 Corinthians 10:17-18, 1 Corinthians 10:12, James 4:10

# AUGUST | PRAYERFULNESS

## MAIN SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

One of the most neglected spiritual disciplines is without a doubt the discipline of consistent prayerfulness. We have access to unlimited power on bended knee, yet we often allow days to pass without speaking to our heavenly father. If we are to ever be followers of Jesus, husbands, fathers, or friends we have been called to be, it will only happen as a result of consistent prayer.

The history of God's people is dominated by men and women of prayer. Volumes have been written about men and women of God who know how to fall on their faces before God at an altar of prayer until their prayers are answered. I know of no greater accolade on this side of heaven than to be known as a prayer warrior.

Prayer is the means by which we can know God and His will for our lives. Prayer is our means of communication with God. Prayer is also the way we have spiritual power. All of this is modeled in the prayer life of our Savior Jesus Christ. We often find Jesus retreating to a quiet spot to have fellowship with the Father. I am always struck that Jesus spoke with the Father and the Father spoke to Jesus. It's a reminder that prayer is not always a monologue, but is a dialogue. Take time to be still and listen to the Lord as He speaks.

One famous preacher put it this way: "Much prayer. Much power. No prayer. No power." I could not agree more.

## DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:

1. What is prayer, and why is it important in the life of a believer?  
Philippians 4:6-7
2. How would you describe your prayer life? What practical steps can you take today to make your prayer life more consistent?
3. Read Matthew 6:9-13. How can the model prayer serve as a prayer guide for you?
4. How would you describe God's response to our prayers?  
1 John 5:14-15, Psalm 34:17
5. What are some of the reasons we should be people of prayer?  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Psalm 66:18-20
6. The Scriptures teach us that persistent prayer is important. How do you think the Lord responds to persistent prayer? Would you consider your prayer life to be one of persistent prayer?  
Luke 18:1-8, Matthew 7:7-8
7. What role does faith play in our prayer life?  
Mark 11:22-24, James 1:6-8
8. Have you ever felt like your prayers have gone unanswered? How should we respond?  
2 Corinthians 12:7-9, Romans 8:26-28
9. What are some of the obstacles to having a consistent prayer life, and how can we overcome them?  
Isaiah 59:1-2, Psalm 66:18
10. Share a time when prayer brought clarity, peace, or transformation in your life.



# SEPTEMBER | TAMING THE TONGUE

## MAIN SCRIPTURE: PROVERBS 18:21

Imagine if your next thought could potentially be heard by hundreds or even thousands of people, and potentially shared so that it's known to millions. For most of human history, that ability was limited to only a handful of the most influential people on the planet. Yet today, because of communication tools like social media, our every utterance—whether silly or profound, wise or foolish—can be sent across the globe.

Such power should make us extremely cautious about what we say or write. And yet we tend to be less careful about what we say than ever before. The gratification that comes from instant communication entices us to be quick to speak our mind—often before we've measured our words.

The Bible is clear such behavior is foolish. "Do you see someone who speaks in haste?" says Proverbs 29:20. "There is more hope for a fool than for them." How then can we be less hasty? One way is to set a time limit before you speak or write on a public platform. If the thought seemed witty or funny isn't worth saying after a cool-down period of a few hours or few days, then maybe it wasn't as interesting as you thought.

We will be better followers of Christ, better husbands, better dads, and better friends when we learn to tame our tongue. Remember, God will hold us responsible for every ungodly remark we make. (Matthew 12:36)

## DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:

1. Can you think of time that you spoke without thinking and later regretted it? What did you learn from that experience?
2. What are some words or phrases you hear that often have a positive or negative effect on others.

3. Read Ephesians 4:29. What steps can we take to ensure that our speech is edifying and encouraging?
4. Jesus tell us that the mouth speaks what the heart is full of., and we will give an account for every word. Read Matthew 12:34-37 and discuss how this should impact the words we choose to use.
5. Think back over this past week. Would you describe your speech as uplifting or harmful? How can you ensure that your speech is "seasoned with salt"? Read Colossians 4:6.
6. What do the following verses teach us about the tongue? Psalm 19:14, Psalm 34:17, Proverbs 16:24, Proverbs 17:28, Proverbs 21:23, Proverbs 29:20
7. Jesus said in Matthew 15:11 that it is not what goes in the mouth, but what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person. What can you learn from this?
8. One of the greatest passages on the tongue is found in James 3:5-6. Read and discuss the POWER of the tongue. What practical things can you put in place in your life to help you tame your tongue?



# OCTOBER | ISOLATION

## MAIN SCRIPTURE: PROVERBS 18:1

In March of 1876, Alexander Graham Bell made the first-ever phone call, which, in time, came to dramatically transform how we relate to one another. On the surface, the communication revolution has seemed to render isolation something of an endangered species — we're more connected than ever, right? And yet it seems we are more isolated than ever before. This is a dangerous place to be for a believer in Christ. Isolation will hinder your walk with God, your ability to lead your family, and lead you on a joyless journey in life.

We are more connected than ever, yet lonelier. Digital connections and social media offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other. We'd rather text than talk. We spend hours "alone" yet with all of our "on-line friends."

The Scriptures warn us about the dangers of isolation. When we isolate ourselves, we become more vulnerable to spiritual attacks. We also miss out on the promise of iron sharpening iron. (Proverbs 27:17)

It is my hope and prayer that these simple bible discussions and gathering in groups will encourage you to no longer be isolated. The joy and the sense of belonging that happens when you gather with friends around the Word of God is so valuable to your Christian walk.

## DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:

1. Are you someone who would prefer to be alone? Why do you think that is the case? Is it out of your comfort zone for you to participate in a group like this?
2. What does the Bible say about being alone versus being in a community? Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and Genesis 2:18.

3. How does spiritual isolation differ from physical isolation?  
Mark 1:35, Psalm 46:10
4. What are some reasons people isolate? (fear, shame, hurt)  
Proverbs 18:1, Genesis 3:8-10
5. What are some of the benefits of gathering together in a group like this?  
Proverbs 27:17
6. What are some of the dangers of isolating ourselves and lacking Godly relationships and accountability?  
1 Peter 5:8, Hebrews 10:24-25, James 5:16
7. Jesus modeled for us a life of balance between solitude and community. How can we learn from His example?  
Luke 5:16, Mark 3:13-15
8. Have you ever experienced a season of isolation? How did it impact your relationship with others (wife, kids, friends)?
9. What practical steps can we take to re-engage with community? If you have gathered tonight with other men, you have already taken an important step.  
Philippians 2:3-4, Colossians 3:12-14

# NOVEMBER | ANGER

## MAIN SCRIPTURE: EPHESIANS 4:26-32

God created males and females differently. Our culture wants to blur those lines of distinction. But as God has created us as men, one of the differences we have is in the area of anger. This certainly does not mean that females cannot get angry. But even with different hormones, body structure, and typical thought processes, men can struggle with anger in ways that are very specific to being a man.

Regardless of your age, the emotion/feeling of anger is something we possess. It can be manifested in word, action, and thought either positively or negatively.

Anger can be good and beneficial if biblically displayed. Righteous (appropriate) anger is anger aligned with what angers God such as mistreatment of others, injustices, abuse, racism, abortion, homosexual activity, and the like. Christians are right to get angry over certain things.

But if we are honest, righteous anger is not what we battle most when it comes to this issue. Unrighteous, uncontrolled. Rather, we as men tend to struggle with unguarded and unwarranted anger. It leads to mental, physical, and spiritual heartache and heartbreak. Sinful anger is a work of the flesh (see Galatians 5:19-20) and that is what we need help to control.

## DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:

1. Verse 26 tells us to, "Be angry, and do not sin." This means it is possible to have a non-sinful anger. Can you recall a time when Jesus was angry? Why was He angry?
2. What are some things that should anger a Godly man.

3. Is it possible that Godly anger is, in some way, uniquely given to a man because of the responsibilities he's been given by God?

4. Do you have a choice in whether or not you get angry?

5. What are some practical things a man can do to avoid outbursts of anger?

6. What dangers (emotional, physical, spiritual) come with anger?

7. What are some ways to avoid the sin of unrighteous anger?

Discuss the following verses from Proverbs:  
Proverbs 10:19, Proverbs 14:29, Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 16:32,  
Proverbs 19:11, Proverbs 22:24

8. Read and discuss James 1:19-20? How does this passage teach us to respond to things that could create sinful anger?

9. If we have sinned through unrighteous anger, or by a failure to express righteous anger, what are we to do?  
1 John 1:9, Proverbs 28:13, Psalm 51:1-2

10. Share a prayer request with your group, if possible, as to how these brothers can pray for you in the area of anger.

# DECEMBER | GENEROUS GIVING

## MAIN SCRIPTURE: MALACHI 3:10

It's been said that there are 3 things that a man has that you do not mess with. 1. Don't mess with a man's wife. 2. Don't mess with a man's kids. 3. Don't mess with a man's money. I would concur on all three. However, in my time as a pastor, I have seen too many men hold on to their money tighter than they hold on to their wife or their children. The Lord spoke on matters of money more than most think. His concern is not that you have money. His concern is that your money has you.

If you were to read all the verses in the Bible dealing with money, you would find that a vast number of them are about generosity - giving to the work of the Lord and helping people in need. Over and over, God tells us to be generous people.

Regardless of your financial situation, God wants you to look for ways to bless others. Let the following examples from the Bible encourage you to use your resources—your money and your home—to further the kingdom of God.

Mary Magdalene and others helped support Jesus & the apostles (Luke 8:1-3).

Joseph, a wealthy man, provided his own tomb for Jesus (Matthew 27:57-60).

Nicodemus supplied expensive spices for the burial (John 19:39).

The Corinthians gave money to help impoverished Christians in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8 and 9).

## DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS:

1. What is the biblical definition of generosity? Would you consider yourself to be a generous giver?  
2 Corinthians 9:6-7, Luke 6:38

2. Why does God call His people to be generous?  
Proverbs 11:25, Act 20:35

3. One of the most familiar verses in all of the Bible speaks to God's giving of His only begotten Son. (John 3:16) How do we reflect God's character when we give generously?

4. What can we learn from the widow's offering in Mark 12:41-44? How does this challenge our view of giving?

5. The early church lived generously. Read Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:32-37 and discuss how the early church embraced the idea of generous giving.

6. What emotions come over you when you hear a preacher speak about giving? Why do you believe you react that way?  
2 Corinthians 9:7

7. How does generous giving bring joy to the giver and the recipient?  
2 Corinthians 9:10-12, Philippians 4:18-19

8. How does giving demonstrate a trust in God's provisions?  
Matthew 6:19-21

9. What are some of the obstacles to you being a generous giver and how can they be overcome?  
1 Timothy 6:17-19, Matthew 6:24