

“Winning the War Within”

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

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connect
groups

PATH

Pastor Levi Lusko is the pastor of Fresh Life Church in Montana and is the author of *Through the Eyes of a Lion*, *Swipe Right*, and *I Declare War*. We all have our own struggles, but in Christ “we are more than conquerors” (Romans 8:37). In his message, “Winning the War Within”, Pastor Levi provides strategies we can employ to win the battle with our own minds and encourages us to be single-minded in planting ourselves in God’s house.

I. Mind Your Head

II. Use Your Words

III. Carry a Big Stick

POINTS

Mind Your Head

- In a statement made during the Spanish-American War, President Teddy Roosevelt noted that, as he chose to charge San Juan hill, “a power like a wolf rose in his heart”. This was a defining moment in Roosevelt’s life as a leader.
- Christians must rise up in the war with self, learning to let Christ lead our lives.
- Leadership is not a title, but a life one lives; it is influence. People may listen to what you say but will follow what you do. Readers are leaders, and leaders are readers. Writing is important as well; record your life’s joys and sorrows.
- We are often our own worst enemies; though Satan is evil incarnate, we can trip ourselves up through our God-given free will. Our fallen nature leads to fallen actions.
- In the war within, our minds matter. As Christians, we must control our thoughts.

We must control the high ground; the quest in any battle is to remove strongholds. Our highest ground as humans is our mind—our thought-life.

- We must assess if our thoughts are good. Our mind is under new management—Jesus.
- Every thought is like a train—we must ask, “Where is it going to take me?” We must take our thoughts captive.
- We can’t live right if we don’t think right; positivity is not a goal, but a response to God; it’s difficult to worry and worship at the same time.

Use Your Words

- Every word we speak is either tearing down or building up—words are either a poison or a blessing.
- We must carefully choose the words we use, in order to control the atmosphere of faith.

- By choosing the right words, we can create a life we love instead of a life we loathe.
- Christians can impact the world through our words. Will it be a gift or a gully of hate?
- One of the main concepts we must incorporate is gratitude. We must use our words to show thankfulness and appreciation; to love and bless others.

Carry a Big Stick

- Using a phrase from Teddy Roosevelt, Christians must “carry a big stick” to hit back against the things that cause us to fail and fall.
- The “big stick” is a metaphor for the power of the Holy Spirit.
- We must seek God’s Spirit to do God’s work through God’s power.

PRACTICE

Connect Up: As the creator of the human mind, the Lord knows how to use the mind for His glory. Use the following texts to discuss the role of the mind and our thoughts in our relationship to God and others.

- Deuteronomy 30:19
- Proverbs 3:5
- Proverbs 23:7
- Proverbs 28:26
- Romans 12:2
- 2 Corinthians 10:5
- Philippians 4:8

Connect In: Words can hurt or heal. Look up James 3:5-18. Why is it important to guard our words for our life with self and others? Take time to share examples of when words hurt (“full of poison”; see James 3:8), and heal (thanks, praise, etc.). What would James say is the solution to wayward words (see James 3:13-18)?

Connect Out: Although Christians are not called to literally carry a big stick (Jesus called His disciples to show compassion and care for others, including our enemies, in Matthew 5:38-40), we can employ the metaphorical usage of the phrase, as Levi states, to refer to the Holy Spirit. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in helping Christians overcome sin and temptation? Look up what Jesus had to say on the subject: John 16:13. How is the Holy Spirit speaking God’s truth, leading us to God’s will and way?