

Developing a Personal Battle Plan Against Sin

Goal— For you to able to:

1. **Prepare** a personal plan to fight against sin
2. **Implement** your plan
3. **Grow** in image-bearing Christlikeness for your good and God's glory.

Plan for Tonight's Seminar--

Debrief (or review) our purpose

- The reason we fight for holiness
- Why there is a fight against sin
- The source of sin—Our heart

Determine what sin to personally fight against

- Look at tools useful in identifying the heart idolatries that cause us to sin

Develop a Personal Battle Plan

- Go through how to make a battle plan so that you have a clear understanding of how to prayerfully come up with and implement a plan
- Break into groups to work on plan

I. Debrief

A. The Reason We Fight:

1. NOT to earn His favor

a) *Because He Loves Me*—we *have* his favor. This is the gospel!!

b) But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord... Gen. 6:5

c) Imputed with the righteousness of Christ

i. His grace is a gift not as a result of works—Eph. 5:8-9

ii. Sanctified by same grace—Rom. 8:29

iii. His love is immutable and not dependent in any way on our performance—Rom. 8:39

2. To Live our Purpose

a) Image-bearers who were created to enjoy an intimate relationship with God, walking with Him, loving Him, serving Him and obeying Him. Col. 3:8-10. you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices,¹⁰ and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—

b)Worshipers whose delight in God leads to obediently loving and serving Him and loving and serving others. Matt. 22:38-39

c) Result--A life of obedience that is the result of a relentless fight against sin results in blessing in both the inner and outer man:

I) Inner Man

i. Intimacy w/ God—Is. 66:2--To this one I will look who humble and contrite of spirit and trembles at his word.

ii. Peace and pleasure of God-- Luke 2:14 And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.

iii. Blessings that come from obedience—

A—Genesis 4:6--If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up?

B-- James 1:25--But the one who looks intently at the perfect law...and abides by it...this man will be blessed in what he does.

II) Outer man

A--God is glorified by our life as we display Christ's character in our lives, i.e. words and deeds

B--Living our purpose as image-bearing God-worshippers

B. Why there is a fight:

Flesh: The enemy resides within us, in our flesh.

- Unbelievers can only do evil

Rom. 3:12—There is none who does good, no not one.

Gen. 6:5—Every intent of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually

- Believers can please God because they have been regenerated and can bear Christ's image

John 8:29—for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.

2 Cor. 5:9—Therefore we have as our ambition...to be pleasing to the Lord.

God has given us a heart to please Him in regeneration:

- Ezek. 36:25-26—Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean, and I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, **I will give you a new heart** and put a **new spirit within you**; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a **heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you** and **cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.**

b) Flesh is relentless; it is always wanting--“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.” Gal 5:17

2. External enemies:

i. Satan—1 Peter 5:8-9—Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him...

ii. The world—1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things of the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father but from the world.

3. Commanded to fight:

i. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature. NIV (νεκρωσατε, mortify)

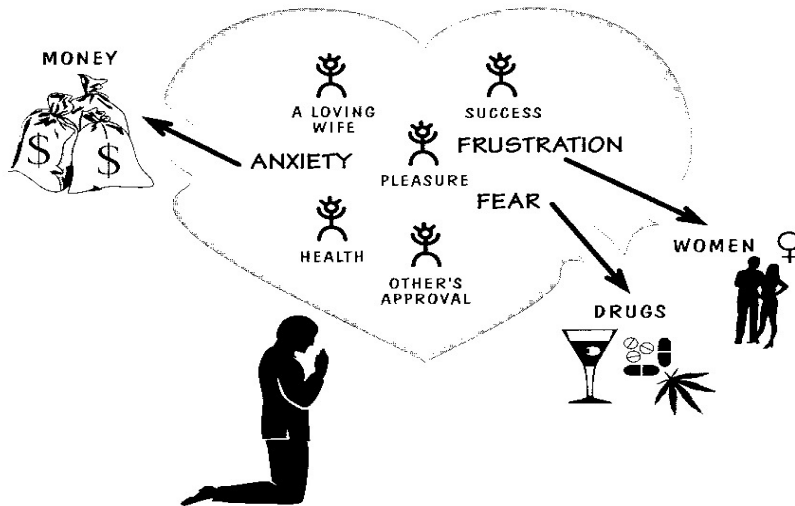
ii. ...let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.” 2 Cor. 7:1

Do not let sin reign: Rom. 6:11-12—Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

C. The Source of our Sin: The Heart

- Heart is bent toward evil
 - For from within, out of men's hearts come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All of these evils come from inside and make a man unclean. Mk. 7:21-23
- Jer. 17:9--The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?
- Heart is the inner man—John Owens 1656
 - The *mind* as it reasons, discerns and judges;
 - the *emotions* as they like or dislike;
 - the *will* as it chooses or refuses

The root of the fruit is the heart-- The good man out of the good treasure (treasury, storehouse) of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart." Luke 6:45



Conclude: We have seen:

Reason we fight—Not to earn God's favor but to be the image-bearing God worshipers we were created to be. This results in our blessing and His glory.

Why we fight—Though we have been given a new heart, we still have enemies: our sinful flesh, Satan and the world.

The source of sin—our heart

II. Determine Root Idolatries to Attack

A. Possibilities:

1. Mastery sins

a) "Addictions"

b) Sins that seem to master you, where you have no control over--18 years ago on my living room floor "I feel like I'm in bondage!"

c) You have struggled against a long time and will remain a fight the rest of your life.

2. Sin the Lord has been pointing out to you
 - a) Repeated conviction
 - b) Personal testimony: Submission
3. Wives--challenge you to prayerfully consider your relationship with your husband
 - a) Eph 5:32—Marriage primary image-bearing relationship
Number one way you display the image of Christ is in your relationship your husband.
 - b) Your marriage should display the gospel.
 - i. Can live your purpose even if husband not living his (image-bearer)
 - ii. If husband is disobedient to the word, you can declare the gospel of how the church responds to Christ by how you are responding to your husband.
 - a) Helping him—Gen. 2:18
God has given you one main job if you are married---to be your husband's helper. I don't know what God will ask me about my ministry as a biblical counselor, but I do know He will hold me accountable for how I helped John.
 - b) Loving him—Titus 2:4
 - c) Reverencing him—Eph. 5:33
 - d) Submitting to his authority—1 Pet. 3:1-3

B. Tools

1. List of Common Idols
2. Psalm 18
3. Identifying Personal Idols
4. Drawing Out the Purposes of the Heart

III. Develop Personal Battle Plan--Review elements of plan using my Gluttony Plan as an example and telling them to have the blank Personal Battle Plan before them.

1. Describe the problem in detail. Be specific.
 - a) How does the problem show up in your behavior, words, thoughts, emotions?
 - b) When, where and with whom does it appear?
 - c) How often is it a problem?
 - d) How intense?
 - e) How long-standing?
 - f) What was the starting point?
 - g) What has helped in the past?
 - h) What has hindered change?
2. Identify your goals for working on this problem.
3. This behavior or attitude comes from what heart idolatry? Please be specific.
 - a) Examples:
 - i--"I desire and live to keep things under control"
 - ii--"I make people my refuge."
 - b) If you need help identifying heart idolatries
 - i.—Ask close friends or family
 - ii.--. Tools
 1. List of Common Idols
 2. Psalm 18

3. Identifying Personal Idols

4. Drawing Out the Purposes of the Heart

4. Seek the Lord's forgiveness if you haven't already
 - a) How specifically have you sinned?
 - b) Confess and pray for repentance (2 Tim. 2:26)
5. Seek forgiveness of anyone who has been impacted by this.
 - a) Confess specifically
 - b) Ask for forgiveness
6. What behavior or attitude—and the wrong worship it reveals—needs to be “put off” from the heart? (Eph. 4:22, Col. 3:5, Matt. 5:28-30)
 - a) List what you need to stop doing specifically
 - b) Make a commitment to put off the old attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors. (Dan. 1:8, Gen. 39:29)
7. What behavior or attitude—as an expression of right worship—needs to be “put on” in likeness to Jesus?
 - a) List what you need to start doing specifically
 - b) Make a commitment to change and put on new attitudes, thoughts, behaviors.
8. How will you do this and when? Be practical and specific.
 - a) Idolatry Repentance Plan of Action is a possible tool to use
9. How do you need to grow in your love for or trust in the Lord in this/these areas?
10. By God's grace, how will you seek to do this and when?

Emergency Action Plan:

Questions To Ask Myself When Tempted:

1. What are the **circumstances**?
2. What is the **root** of my temptation? (Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, pride)
3. Will I begin to **obey God in all areas**, no matter how seemingly insignificant?
4. Will I take personal responsibility that **my sin a deliberate choice to do something God hates** and call on the grace of God?
5. Will I allow God to **transform this temptation into worship** as I express **contentment and thankfulness** to God instead of giving into my own desires?
6. **“How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?”**
As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her...Gen. 39:9b-10a.

11. Who will you ask to hold you accountable and how will they do it? Ideally, this should be someone in your local church or a close brother or sister in Christ.

12. What literature will you commit to reading to help addresses this subject?
 - a) See “Suggested Resources” for books that address specific issues.

Closing: Going to break into groups and go over the personal battle plan outline together.

Thoughts to remember:

This is our part...

2 Peter 1:3—God's part is the provision of the Word, the Holy Spirit and the church.

Power of the Holy Spirit—

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be My witnesses...Acts 1:8

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that is at work within us...Eph. 3:20-21

You did not receive a spirit of timidity but of power, love and self-discipline. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me his prisoner but join with me in suffering for the gospel according the power of God. 2 Tim. 1:7-8

PERSONAL BATTLE PLAN: A PLAN FOR CHANGE

C. Foldberg

Gluttony—May 2011

1. Describe the problem in detail. Be specific. How does the problem show up in your behavior, words, thoughts, emotions? When, where and with whom does it appear? How often is it a problem? How intense? How long-standing? What was the starting point? What has helped in the past? What has hindered change?

Throughout my life I have had an inordinate desire to eat excessively for pleasure, which the Bible describes as gluttony. This manifests itself in eating more food than I need, finding intense pleasure and comfort in food, prideful rebellion against the restriction of food, and my mind dwelling on food and eating. Gluttony manifested itself in the fifth grade when I was experiencing bullying at school and my father was diagnosed with cancer. It has been a constant problem and has varied in intensity. The Lord has brought sanctification in this area, but I still sin daily in my thoughts and behavior regarding food. Learning what Scripture says regarding gluttony and also regarding sanctification has helped in the past. The greatest help has been to combine this renewal of my inner man with eliminating sugar and refined carbohydrates from my diet (since these foods seem to trigger a desire to eat excessively.) However, because I have to eat every day, I continue to struggle with being obsessed by food and being mastered by my fleshly appetite. (By way of contrast, I have also looked to alcohol for pleasure and comfort, but I am able to be obedient simply by not drinking it.)

2. Identify your goals for working on this problem.

My goal is to not sin against God in all areas of my eating, not matter how seemingly insignificant. This holiness would be cleansing myself (through the power of the Holy Spirit) from all defilement of flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7:1), meaning it would be manifested both in my inner and outer man. My goal is that my thoughts would habitually dwell on the glory of the gospel and things above (Col. 3:2) instead of food and that my emotions would find joy, delight, and pleasure in the presence of God instead of eating (Ps. 16:11). Further, that my outer man would also manifest holiness by planning when and what I will eat and being satisfied with (and not eating more than) my daily portion.

3. This behavior or attitude comes from what heart idolatry? Please be specific.

I worship myself by pleasuring and comforting myself through food. The roots of pride and rebellion nourish the idols of pleasure and comfort, because I am prideful and rebellious against God's authority to limit what I am to eat.

4. Have you asked the Lord's forgiveness?

As a child of God struggling with a habitual sin, I have asked the Lord's forgiveness so very many times, simply because I sin against Him in this area so often. I ask forgiveness of Him as I experience the conviction of my sin.

5. Have you asked the forgiveness of anyone who has been impacted by this? When will you?

This is something I really haven't considered. How has my gluttony affected others? In what way have I sinned against them? I need to ask my husband to forgive me for the financial effect of buying and consuming so much excess food over 26 years of marriage, and of eating out in restaurants (one my pleasures). My gluttony has manifested itself in my body by excess fat which is not pleasing to him, so I need to ask him to forgive me for that as well. I also need to ask my daughters to forgive me as my sinful habits regarding food have affected them as well. Although the Lord is helping all of us exercise self-control, I know that my sinful thoughts and behaviors regarding eating have greatly influenced them. I will ask the girls to forgive me today and John tonight when we Skype.

6. In what ways do you need to die to this idolatry? What behavior or attitude needs to be “put off?” How could you or should you practice the principle of “radical amputation” demonstrating your sincere desire to change?

The most significant way I need to die to this idolatry is to accept nothing less than holiness in this area. Because I have eliminated sugar and refined carbohydrates from my diet (by God's power and grace) the cravings and warrings within my flesh have subsided. However, I still crave food and am greedy. I eat impulsively. I am not satisfied and content after my meal but want more. I need to require diligent obedience *in every area* and never give in to the epithimia desire for food or drink. Though I hate to write it because it seems so restrictive, I need to put off all unplanned, undisciplined eating. THIS IS NOT A DIET. It does mean, however that every day I plan what I will eat (and these foods are in accordance with sound nutrition) and how much.

7. What behavior or attitude needs to be put on?

This has eluded me ever since I started the MABC and did my PIP for “Introduction to Biblical Counseling.” However, I believe that the “put on” for gluttony (greed for food) is contentment and thankfulness. Instead of wanting to indulge my fleshly appetite with more and more food, I need to put on a heart of being content and thankful for the delicious food the Lord graciously provides me with every day.

8. How will you do this and when?

Paul learned the secret of being content (Phil. 4:11-13): he could do everything through Christ who strengthened him. This dovetails with *The Pursuit of Holiness* and the power that I have through the Holy Spirit (Christ in me) to live a holy life. I will grow in contentment by renewing my mind in gospel and Scriptural truths (question 13) and ask myself, “How can this temptation be transformed into worship as I express gratitude and contentment rather than pleasing myself?” when I am tempted to indulge my flesh with unplanned eating.

9. How do you need to grow in your love for or trust in the Lord to these areas?

Do I really believe that He can change me to truly walk before Him blameless in this area down to this smallest level of obedience and worship? Can I truly be holy in my eating the rest of my life? I need to grow in trust that He is the one at work within me both willing and working this for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). Not only do I need to grow in trusting Him, but also in loving Him more. He promises that if I love Him I will keep His commandments (Jn. 14:15). I need to grow in my love for Him so that the flowing fountain of living water is more delicious to me than the stagnant dreges from a broken cistern (Jer. 2:13). I will grow in trusting and loving

God through intentionally evaluating what I am reading in Scripture (using Dr. Horner's ten chapters a day reading plan) how what I have read grows my love and trust for God.

10. How will you do this and when?

I will start immediately. I will put on contentment by memorizing/meditating on key Scriptures, praying that the Holy Spirit would work holiness in me in all areas of my life, and practice contentment throughout the day as I am tempted to respond to trials and temptations by indulging my flesh or my spirit (thoughts). Specifically regarding gluttony, when tempted I will follow my "Emergency Action Plan:"

Emergency Action Plan:

Questions To Ask Myself When Tempted:

7. What are the **circumstances**?
8. What is the **root** of my temptation? (Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, pride)
9. Will I begin to **obey God in all areas**, no matter how seemingly insignificant?
10. Will I take personal responsibility that **my sin a deliberate choice to do something God hates** and call on the grace of God?
11. Will I allow God to **transform this temptation into worship** as I **express contentment and thankfulness** to God instead of giving into my own desires?
12. **"How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"**

As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her...Gen. 39:9b-10a.

11. Who will you ask to hold you accountable and how will they do it?

I will ask Jess to hold me accountable. I will send her an email in the morning with my planned food, and will report the next day whether I stuck to the plan. She is the type of sister who will lovingly and faithfully confront me when I am sinning and exhort me to holiness.

12. What literature do you need to read that addresses the subject?

I have already read *Love to Eat, Hate to Eat*. I have ordered and will read after our July SIP sessions *The Seven Deadly Sins: Gluttony, Break Free From Compulsive Overeating, Overcoming Sin & Temptation* by John Owen, and John Stott's commentary on Romans 5-7 in *The Message of Romans*.

13. What verses do you need to meditate on or study?

Who I am in Christ: Col. 1:5-6, 1:1-14, 1:21-22, 1:26-27, 2:3, 2:6, 2:9-14, 2:20, 3:1, 3:3-4, 3:11-12, and 3:2. Power of the Holy Spirit: Acts 1:8, Ro. 15:13, 1 Cor. 1:13, 1 Cor. 1:22-24, 1 Cor. 4:7, 2 Cor. 12:9, Eph. 3:16-17, Eph. 3:20-21, 2 Thess. 1:11-12, 1 Tim. 1:7-8, Heb. 1:1-3. Holiness: Luke 1:68, 71, 72, 74; 2 Cor. 7:1, 1 Tim. 4:7-8, 2 Tim. 2:19, 1 Pet. 1:15-16.

Common Idols

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able but with the temptation will provide a way of escape so that you may endure it. 1 Cor. 10:13

Lusts of the flesh:

- Comfort
- Pleasure
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Food
 - Gluttony
 - Bulimia
- Sexual Sin
 - Pornography
 - Fantasy
 - Fornication/Adultery

Lusts of the Eyes:

- Money
- Shopping
- Materialism/Things
- Entertainment/Travel
- Sports/Recreation
- Hobbies

Pride of Life sins:

- Anger
- Marriage
 - Godly spouse
- Children
 - Godly children
- Success
- Fear /Worry/Anxiety
- Fear of Man
- Control
 - Anorexia
 - OCD
 - Self-Injury
- Politics
- Education
- Beauty/Physical Fitness
- Health

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2. Identify your goals for working on this problem.

3. This behavior or attitude comes from what heart idolatry? Please be specific. For example, “I desire and live to keep things under control” or “I make people my refuge.” (If you need help identifying heart idolatries, see “Psalm 18” attached).

4. Have you asked the Lord’s forgiveness? When will you?

5. Have you asked the forgiveness of anyone who has been impacted by this? If not, when will you?

6. In what ways do you need to die to this idolatry? What behavior or attitude—and the wrong worship it reveals—needs to be “put off” from the heart? How could you or should you practice the principle of “radical amputation” demonstrating your sincere desire to change (Matt. 5:28-30; Col. 3:5)?

7. What behavior or attitude—as an expression of right worship—needs to be “put on” in likeness to Jesus?

8. How will you do this and when? Be practical and specific.

9. How do you need to grow in your love for or trust in the Lord in this/these areas?

10. By God’s grace, how will you seek to do this and when?

11. Who will you ask to hold you accountable and how will they do it? Ideally, this should be someone in your local church or a close brother or sister in Christ.

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