



The War Rages!

“... and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” (Matthew 10:38-39)

You and I are in a war today. The war often seems complicated and difficult but the strategy for victory is simple: follow Jesus. We have published over 300 pages on spiritual warfare but it simply boils down to two words “follow Jesus.” Just typing that two-word strategy even seems trite and oversimplified in the midst of all the complicated things that can happen in a day’s time — so many decisions to make, temptations to overcome, sins to deal with. And the fiercest of all battles we will face has to do with our **“reoccurring sins.”** You know the one(s). You pray... and you fight... and you struggle... but over and over again, you find yourself falling down the same old hole.

Why do we do that?

Most of the time the solution is simpler than you think. We decide not to follow Jesus. We know the things, places, and people that tempt us to give in to the sin that has us by the throat. We simply refuse to make the sacrifice to rid our lives of those things, people, and places.

We work on a job where there is a constant temptation to fall, but we justify our continued involvement in the work through “noble” excuses.

- “I’ll never find a job that pays this well anywhere else.”
- “It is my responsibility to support my family, you know.”
- “I’ve invested too many years in this company to start over.”
- “I like my job, and besides, God will give me the strength to overcome the temptations that exist here.”

We hang with a group of people who pursue lifestyles and activities that are ungodly and worldly, yet see no reason to change peer groups.

- "How will they ever get to know Jesus if I don't spend time with them."
- "I know they pressure me into sinning, but every once in a while I've been able to stand up to the pressure."

Our secret sins flourish in the dark places that we visit when we think no one is watching, then we keep going back for more.

- "I probably should get out of these ungodly chat rooms on the Internet, but I use them for so many other useful things."
- "I can't just stop going to the store around the corner! I know that its easy access to the alcohol next door that has a hold on me, but avoiding the store isn't going to help."
- "It's not what you think, she and I are just good friends. So what if we spend time alone. We need each other to help work out some of our problems."

Here's the bottom line. You know it and I know it. We won't win the battles if we refuse to lose the things in life that keep us from following Jesus. I'm not just talking about the end result things; I'm also talking about those little steps of compromise along the way. So, let's pick up our cross today and lose our lives for Jesus' sake. Let's find a way to stand up to the temptations on the job or find another job if necessary. Let's stay in touch with worldly friends, but chose godly people for our closest friends. And by all means, let's turn away from those dark, secretive places and run for the light! We'll never lose anything in life worth keeping if we give it up for Jesus' sake!

"Father, we confess that we have sin in our life . . . some of which we just keep repeating. The cycle of fighting and falling and feeling remorse has kept us in the war, but our strength is fleeting. If we really don't recognize the things that keep us falling, please reveal them to us. But the reality is that most of them we know and we've refused to lose them. Forgive us, in Jesus' name, and lead us away from those temptations, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."