



How Do You Confront Wicked Powers When You are Powerless

RETURN Conference, Breakout Session
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Session 1: Three Ways of Confronting Darkness

I. Introduction

- A. This last year we have all encountered emotions that looked more like roller-coaster rides than placid lakes. We have witnessed acts of incredible injustice, as well as being confined to limited contact with the outside world. In the midst of all of this, we can feel incredibly powerless, frustrated at the reality that we can't do or change anything. Many in society have resorted to Social Media to satisfy the ache in their soul to just do something and say something. The question is, what is the biblical way forward? Luckily for us, Scripture has very clear pathways for us, there is a way to confront wicked powers without even needing to leave your home.
- B. In this breakout session I have split them into three categories: inward, outward, and upward!

II. Inward (Heart Attitude)

Probably the most difficult thing to deal with is our very own heart. We have lived with ourselves for many years, yet we still don't know what is going on the inside. Scripture points us to several key things that will help us get our heart go from a roller-coaster ride to the placid tranquility of a smooth lake surface.

A. Setting your mind on things

- 1. The first thing is to meditate on heavenly things. The things that are good and noble. The things that are positive in your life right now however small they may seem.



2. This helps getting out of the muck, and breathing clean air. In other words, it shifts your perspective away from what is happening to you right now, to a transcended reality.
3. We all went through varying degrees of quarantine and some of us still are. For the mum stuck at home with her kids, or the men on 9-5 zoom meetings setting your mind of things above can change the course and the conversations of your day. Brother Lawrence who lived in the 1600s encountered God at the kitchen sink because he taught himself to keep his mind on things above – this is available for us.

**²“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”
(Colossians 3:2-4)**

**⁸“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”
(Philippians 4:8)**

B. Thanksgiving

1. After having your eyes cleared and your perspective slightly adjusted there is one more step. Thanksgiving!
2. Really, thanksgiving and setting your mind on things above go hand in hand. Giving thanks is one of the most powerful re-alignment tools in the kingdom, yet we seldom use it.



3. Giving thanks, even for the smallest of details enable you to see situations as God did. Betsie and Corrie Ten Boom in a Nazi concentration camp, Betsie tells Corrie time and time again to be grateful for the fleas in the beds...who would be grateful for that?! Months later, Corrie realizes that it's the fleas that prevent the guards from coming into their rooms, therefore preventing the expulsion of their bible and their medicine which the Lord had miraculously enabled them to smuggle in in the first place.
4. When we give thanks it literally changes our emotional makeup, and it's as if our body can breathe again. For this reason, thanksgiving is not an option, it is a command!

***⁴ “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”
(Philippians 4:4)***

***¹⁶ “Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
(1. Thessalonians 5:16-18)***

***² “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”
(James 1:2-3)***

C. Forgiving

1. With this renewed perspective of setting your mind on things above and determining thankfulness despite the surrounding circumstances we now come to the last point. Forgiveness. There is nothing as powerful in the kingdom as true forgiveness. We have been forgiven by Christ, now we are called to forgive others.



***³¹ “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³² And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”
(Ephesians 4:31-32)***

2. No matter the unfair circumstances, in order to be truly free one must forgive. Otherwise your own heart is trapped and can't experience the fullness of God's emotions.
3. What we can fail to realize is that bitterness and unforgiveness is like a tree in our hearts. You plant a tiny seed and slowly, but surely, if left unattended becomes a large tree, overtaking the nicely kept gardens of our heart. A practical way to keep on top of our unforgiveness is given to us:
4. We ask the Holy Spirit of truth to keep is in check, to be quick to forgive.

III. Outward (Action)

A. Come to Jesus.

1. This almost goes without saying. Yet it must be said. The first and foremost action we need to take in unjust, hurtful and situations where we are powerless is to talk to the Creator of the Universe. The One who has unending good-will towards and desires the best for us!
2. When we talk about being powerless, the first story that comes to my mind is the story of Esther. Queen to King Xerxes, Esther calls her people, the Jews, to fast with her when she hears of Haman's plot to annihilate all Jews. Talk about powerless. During the 3 days of no food and no water, Esther finds wisdom from God to know to approach the King and seek mercy for her people. This is a large example, but God cares for the smallest of situations and wants to meet us and give us wisdom where we are.



3. Letting Him wash us with His Word is the one thing that will ground us in any circumstances.
4. Jesus lived out His ministry from the place of being loved by the Father:

**¹⁶ “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. ¹⁷ And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”
(Matthew 4:16-17)**

5. So it is for us. We cannot do, what God has called us to do without hearing His voice of love over us!

B. Serving

1. Jesus, the greatest Man that ever lived, lived from His place of identity and being loved, took off his outer garments and started to wash His disciples' feet. The greatest of all became the lowest servant.
2. This is our model that we are following after. Remember, Jesus did not just wash the perfect disciples' feet. Peter would renounce knowing Him within hours, and Judas would sell Him like a common slave within minutes of this encounter. Yet Jesus gladly served.
3. A way out of your circumstances is often to hear the voice of Jesus and from that place go and serve others. Friend or Foe.



²“And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him, ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ⁴rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.”

(John 13:2-5)

C. Acting in the Opposite Spirit

1. One of the ways the kingdom is set up is by acting in the opposite spirit. With that we mean that instead of fear we choose faith. When confronted with a financial situation, sometimes the right thing to do is to give more money away. When confronted with injustice against oneself, the right answer is not always speaking up, but blessing instead of retaliating. The way of the kingdom is upside down from that of the World.

¹⁴ “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.”

(Romans 12:14)

⁷ “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”

(Galatians 6:7)

IV. Upward

- A. This will be discussed during the Live Session

