

Headspace
Week 2: Replace
2 Corinthians 10:3-5

On December 26th, 1944, in the final months of WWII, a Japanese soldier named Hiroo Onoda (show picture) was dropped on an island in the Philippines with orders to hamper enemy attacks anyway he could. He was told to destroy a nearby airstrip and a pier at the harbor. His orders also told him that, under no circumstances, was he to surrender.

Well, Hiroo went about carrying out his orders, unaware that the war ended shortly after he arrived on the island. In October 1945, leaflets were dropped urging him to stop fighting and come down from the mountains. He thought it was Allied propaganda, so he ignored it. More attempts were made over the years to convince him the war was over, but he didn't believe it. In 1952, the Japanese military dropped letters and pictures from his family, pleading with him to surrender so he could come home safely. Again, he thought it was a trick and continued his guerrilla activities.

Finally, on March 9th, 1974, Onoda's commanding officer flew to the island to relieve him of his duties. For 29 years, Hiroo Onoda fought a war that didn't exist, but he thought did.

Today, I want to propose to you that the **opposite** is true for many of us. We're not fighting a war that doesn't exist. Instead, there is a war going on all around us, and most people don't even know they're in it. And this war is taking place on the battlefield of our mind. Our thoughts about ourselves, about others, about our past and the future, our thoughts about God...all of these thoughts are waging war in our minds.

I don't know about you, but so often, thoughts of fear and faith battle within me. I want to live by faith, but thoughts of "Yeah, but what if..." wage war against it. I want to experience more peace, but worry and anxiety are right there to steal it away. I want to surrender control to God and trust him more, but my need for control takes it right back. I want to walk in the freedom of grace, but memories of past sin continue to haunt me. I want to feel more confident and secure, but then I remember some random dumb thing I said when I was like in Middle School, or something, and I'm right back to feeling like a loser.

Anyone else feel these battles? Sometimes they can feel crippling and overwhelming. We feel like there's no way we can win. But, the good news is, God's Word is powerful. And it doesn't just help you in this battle, it completely transforms you and gives you the strength you need to fight off every thought that wages war in your mind.

If you have a Bible or Bible app you like to use, I invite you to turn with me to our Scripture for today. 2 Corinthians 10.

Now, if we're going to win the battles that are raging in our minds, we have to know that we're in a battle to begin with and where it's taking place, but we also need to know who our enemy is.

And, here's a hint...your enemy is not your spouse, it's not your boss or your ex or the person on social media that you got into an argument with last week. Your adversary is not the person who said that thing to you, and every time you remember it, it takes you right back to that moment. Your adversary isn't the politician who holds different values than you do. You may feel like you're at war with all of these people and fight against them like you are, but it's the wrong war against the wrong enemy.

Your adversary in this battle taking place in your mind is a spiritual enemy whose sole mission is to steal, kill, and destroy anything good in your life. Especially the good that Jesus wants to bring to it. Satan wants to devour you. To keep you from finding the life and joy God desires for you. He wants to rob you of your peace and fill your headspace with all kinds of worries, fears, and anxieties. With guilt and with shame.

Satan is our real enemy. And if we're going to engage our enemy in battle, we need to know the weapon he's using so we can counter it, and there's only one. There's only one weapon our enemy uses: **Lies**.

Satan's strategy in the war taking place on the battlefield of your mind is to persuade you to believe his lies over God's truth. And so, he bombards you with lie after lie after lie. You'll never be good enough. There's no way God could love you. You're always the victim. You never get it right. You're so stupid.

Satan's favorite weapon, really, his ONLY weapon, is the lies he tells us. In fact, Jesus even says this about Satan in John 8:44. He says, **"When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."** Satan is our enemy waging war on us by filling our headspace with all kinds of lies that hold us captive and keep us from living in the freedom Jesus wants for us.

So, how do we fight this spiritual battle taking place in our minds? Our text today says the only way to fight spiritual battles is with spiritual weapons. Let's look at it together. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5...(READ)**

The Apostle Paul says the weapons we use in this spiritual battle have divine power, they have the explosive power of God within them. And, we need that power because, here's the thing, you and I don't have it on our own. You and I don't have the power we need to fight the battles and win the war in our mind. But, we don't have to because the weapon God has given us holds His power to demolish Satan's lies.

I think it's interesting. The word "demolish" is used twice in these verses. It's the same English word, but in the Greek, they're actually two separate words with different meanings. The first one, in verse 4, says our weapons have divine power to demolish strongholds. "Stronghold" is a

military term. It was a fortress that was often built in the middle of a city or in a place that was hard to reach. It would sometimes be surrounded by walls that were 20 feet deep. This is where military officials would be kept safe during battle to carry out their strategy, but it's also the place where prisoners would be held.

So, spiritually speaking, the stronghold in your mind is the place where Satan is leading his attack and holding you as a prisoner with his lies. Paul says the weapons we use in this battle have divine power to demolish these strongholds. Literally, to tear them down into a pile of rubble. To make them flat with the ground. That's the first "demolish."

He says they also have the divine power to demolish arguments. This "demolish" means the destruction or undoing of an argument. It's like untying the knot of lies Satan has created in our minds.

The weapons we use to fight the spiritual battle we're in have the divine power to demolish strongholds we are imprisoned in and lies we believe that make us live in fear, guilt, and shame. Two destructive powers in our life waging war in our minds, but there's one weapon that is able to defeat them both. Paul says, "...and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Now, watch this. This is so cool and it's so important to winning the war in our minds. Our enemy, Satan, wants to build strongholds in our minds that keep us locked up like prisoners; slaves to our sin. Bound to our hurts, habits, or hang-ups. And he is constantly berating us with lies. "God can't love you." "He's not good." "He's holding out on you." "You can't do anything right." "If people knew the real you they wouldn't love you." Lie after lie after lie attacking us on all sides throughout the day.

Paul says, "take those thoughts captive!" It's one word in Greek and the root of it means a spear or sword. In other words, it means **To take captive with a sword.** If you're a student of the Bible, that ought to bring something to mind. If you're new to Scripture, the Bible, the Word of God, is referred to a couple of times as a sword.

In Ephesians 6, Paul talks again about this spiritual war we're in and the armor we use battle. We have the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith. All of these are defensive protections in this spiritual battle, but there's one weapon we carry for offense. He says, **"...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."** The word of God is our weapon against spiritual attacks in the battlefield of our minds.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us a little more about this weapon we carry. It says, **"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword..."** It is strong and it is sharp, and it's able to cut through any lie our enemy throws at us.

So, **The Word of God is your weapon to tear down strongholds [that have imprisoned you] and destroy the lies waging war in your mind.**

But, how do we use this weapon? A few things as we wrap up. First, you have to **Identify the lie** that has created a stronghold in your life and is waging war in your mind. You cannot defeat what you do not define. Identify the stronghold. Identify the lie so you know what you're up against.

I was thinking about the difference between a lie and a stronghold during my run yesterday. And, I think a lie is something Satan tells you. He whispers it in your ear to erode your trust in God or keep you living in condemnation and shame. That's a lie.

A stronghold is a lie that you tell yourself. Satan doesn't have to tell you that lie anymore because he said it for so long that it just runs on auto play in your mind. You say it to yourself now and it is deeply rooted in your life, your faith, your identity.

And, often times, a stronghold is accompanied by places where you run to escape the pain of the lie you believe. You run to a substance, an unhealthy relationship, a website. You scroll through social media trying to numb the pain or fill your life with noise trying to drown it out. Lies become strongholds when we start telling them to ourselves and they have more power over us.

So what lie is Satan telling you that's keeping you locked up and holding you back? What stronghold is controlling you? You cannot defeat what you do not define, so the first step is to know the lie or lies you're believing.

Once you identify the lie, the second step is to **Replace it with the truth**. Combat the lie with the truth of God's Word. Take the lie captive with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and make it obedient to Christ so you don't become obedient to it. Make the lie your prisoner instead of you becoming a prisoner to it.

So, in my own life, it looks like this. There's a stronghold in my mind that has been built on a lie for as long as I can remember. The voice of condemnation speaks in my mind, "You're not enough" and it's built on the lie that I have to be enough. I have to have all the answers. I have to get it right every time. And, if I don't, then no one will love me, let alone like me. This lie has held me in prison for much of my life, it's been reinforced by experiences over time, and there's not enough "*power of positive thinking*" to fight it off.

Instead, I have to pick up the divine power of God's Word and fight that lie with the truth. And the truth is, I don't have to be enough because God is enough! God's power is made perfect in my weakness. He is enough and will make me enough, and I can rest in that!

Maybe you believe the lie that you are worthless and your life doesn't matter. The truth of God's Word says you were crafted and formed by Him. You are fearfully and wonderfully made and his image on you gives your life more meaning and value than you could ever imagine.

Maybe you believe the lie that you're a failure and always will be. The truth of God's Word says that you are His masterpiece and that failure is an event, not a person. You are not your failure and it doesn't have the final word in your life. Grace does.

Maybe you believe the lie that you need someone in your life to complete you. The truth of God's Word says that in Christ, you have been made complete. You don't need anyone else to make you whole. Only Christ can do that and he is the only one that can truly satisfy that longing inside you.

Maybe you believe there's no way God can forgive you and that your past will always define you. But the truth of God's Word says that, in Christ, you are a new creation. The old has gone and the new is here. That, in him, we have redemption and the forgiveness of sin. Not because we deserve it, but because of God's love and grace.

For every lie you believe, there is truth in God's Word that wants to fight it off. That has the power to take it captive before it takes you captive. And, we've compiled a list of 10 common lies we believe and the truth of God's word to combat them. You can find it on our website at socc.org/headspace. We'll be putting some resources on that page as we go through this series.

Alright, one last thought as we wrap up today. You are in a war taking place on the battlefield of your mind. Satan, your true enemy, is constantly berating you with lies and the only way to fight him off is with the truth of God's Word. But listen, **Don't fight alone.**

You don't have to fight this battle alone. God has given us community for a reason, so we can fight with and for each other. We can be honest with one another about the battles we face and the lies we believe and we can encourage each other with the truth and grace of God's Word. We need one another, and others need you, to be in the battle together.

The best way to do that is through groups, and we want to help you get connected into one. We have men's groups, women's groups, mixed gender groups, couple groups, married with kids groups, and sewing groups and on and on and on. If you're looking for your people, we probably have people who are looking for you and would love for you to join them.

So please, please stop by the Connect Gathering happening today from 10:45 to 12:15 down in the Fellowship Hall. You'll be able to meet our group leaders, ask questions, and find a small group to connect with so you don't have to fight this battle alone.

Church, we are in a war. And, it's not with another country, or with the other side of the aisle, or with people who believe and behave differently from us. We are in a spiritual battle and the weapons we fight with are not the weapons of this world. Spiritual battles require spiritual weapons, and our weapon is not some puny pocket knife.

It's a weapon filled with divine power to not just defeat our enemy, but demolish him. To tear him down to the ground and destroy his lies. That is the power behind the truth of God's Word and Jesus says, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

And, here's the best part...truth is not just a concept or words on a page. It's a person. Jesus is the Truth and He has the power to not only set us free from the strongholds keeping us captive and the lies holding us back. He has the power to demolish sin in our lives, free us from our slavery to it, and bring us back to God, where we belong.

Jesus is the only one who sets us free from all sin and guilt and shame. And we can have this victory through faith in his life, death, and resurrection.