



### ICEBREAKERS

- If a movie was made of your life, what genre would it be, who would play you?
- What was your least favorite food as a child? Do you still hate it, or do you love it now?
- 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s: Which decade do you love the most and why?

### **Open in prayer**

### **Message Review**

What we are doing is getting spiritual things out into the open and talking about them. The church doesn't understand the spiritual realm and doesn't want to fool with it, but it leaves us with a bunch of people wrestling things that they can't see and recognize. They have desires on the inside of them that they don't know how to stop or make go away. Christianity is not a behavior modification course. You are not free when you change your behavior. You are free when your desires change. You are free when you and God want the same thing.

People are doing things that make them say, "I don't even like what I'm doing. I don't like that I attract that kind of woman or man and I don't like that I go to activities like

this. Why do I do it and can't stop?" The answer is that there is a spiritual conflict going on in your life and we can't be ignorant of it. The Bible says that my people perish for lack of knowledge. What you don't know hurts you and that's why we're talking about spiritual dynamics. When you see your enemy, he's not as lethal.

There are two things that you're fighting: nature and nurture. Generational curses are a part of nature. The Bible says in Exodus 20 that curses can flow through three or four generations. These are family sins that have stayed in the bloodline for years. Somehow something got the permission to get in your family bloodline and flow in your family. Alcoholism, not being able to sustain a relationship, abandonment and hurting others are some examples of curses that stay in the bloodline. People have a whirling inside of them that leads them towards decisions they don't like, but they can't identify its source and don't know how to correct it.

The church doesn't recognize the demonic realm and all the powers of darkness that are at work. As a result, we try to counsel and medicate a demon, but you can't counsel and medicate a demon. Things like this have to be broken in your life by the power of the Holy Spirit. God is asking that we take the posture of, "This ends with me". This will not go down to your children and be perpetuated into your bloodline. You are going to be the person that is going to stand in between what was and what will be and break the curse causing change in your family.

The second thing we talked about is yokes. Yokes are a part of nurture. Those are the things that happen. The same way that an ox gets yoked when it's young to take on the pattern of the yoke and be easily controlled, the devil wants to plant the seed of pornography in you at an early age, for example, so that it can yoke you. The devil wants you to see something at the age of 8 or 11 that you shouldn't see and don't know how to process so that he can yoke you and control you. Then all of a sudden, you're 40 and watching things you shouldn't in the middle of the night and hoping your wife doesn't find out. Why? Because something got sown in you at an early age that has now produced a cycle. Seeds produce cycles and they come along seasonally. That's why people can stay clean for 6 months and then they get back to their addiction.

Today we are going to lay the groundwork for strongholds. Strongholds are in the mind. They are fierce and lethal because your enemy does not have the power to make you do anything. The only thing the devil has the power to do is make you believe a lie. And as a man thinks, so is he. The devil doesn't have to make you depressed, poor, and lonely, for example. He just has to make you think you're depressed, poor and lonely. As a man thinks something in his heart and embraces it to be true, it defines his reality. How did you get to this point? You thought your way all the way here. You say, "No, I'm a victim". And yes, because you were victimized, you think like a victim. You thought your way as a victim to this point.

As a man thinks in his heart, his thoughts define his reality. If the enemy can get your thinking off kilter, he can get your life off kilter. If he can have you thinking wrong about your marriage, he can destroy your marriage. If he can have you thinking wrong about money, he can keep you enslaved to it your whole life. If he can get you thinking wrong about yourself, he can get you living as an imposter and you never know your potential. All the enemy has the power to do is make you think. He's a mouse with a microphone.

His real power to influence your life is limited, but he has the power to affect your life through your mind because he speaks relentlessly. He's always putting thoughts in your head that you can't control. There are things flying in and out of your head all day long. The thoughts that come to stay and become a part of your belief system define who you are. What you think about politics, defines your politics. What you think about family, defines your family. What you think about relationships, defines your relationships. What you think about money, defines your economy. It all depends on your mind. If you could whip something in your mind, you can whip it out of your life. If you could whip depression, poverty, sadness or weakness in your mind, you can whip it out of your life. All you have to do is win the battle in your head.

### **Romans 7:15-18**

These verses will set you free. Paul is saying I don't understand what I'm doing. I don't do what I want to do, but I do what I don't want to do. If I'm still doing things that I hate, then there is still some sin somewhere in me. Paul is saying that I've gotten saved and my spirit is alive. I want to do the right thing and serve God, living the blessed life, but when it comes to executing what I need to, I'm not able to do it. His desires and actions are in conflict. Have you ever done something you hated the whole time you were doing it? He says twice: Now if I keep doing what I don't want to, it's no longer I that does it, but there is still sin somewhere in me. There is something compelling me to action. He's saying inside my spirit I love God and want to do the right thing, but I see another law at work in my flesh warring against my spirit. Both the Spirit and the flesh send your mind signals and bring you to captivity.

People have been born again and are still handcuffed to what they can't break. What you can't break, you hide. Then you're one thing in life and something else when you come to church. You tell everyone that you're blessed and highly favored at church then when you leave the atmosphere of God the war is on inside of you. Nobody wakes up wanting to be a hypocrite, but there is a conflict inside of you. Paul is an apostle who

wrote over half of the New Testament and he's saying I'm struggling. The thing that compels you to do the wrong thing is in your flesh.

God is trinity. He is one but we know Him in three ways: Father, Son and Spirit. We are made in His image. We are a trinity: Spirit, soul and body. It's those three components that makes a person. When you get saved, your spirit is perfected. There is nothing that can be added to it. It's done. In your mind, you are being saved. Your body is not saved. The Bible says you will have a glorified body when you are in heaven. So, you have been saved in your spirit, you are being saved in your mind and shall be saved in heaven on that day in your body. However, your body now is not saved and sin dwells in your body, which is your flesh. The law of sin is compelling you to action. If your flesh is not saved, then you have to be able to subdue it and manage it. The worst thing you could say is I'm going to do what I want to do. If you let your flesh loose, it'll ruin your life before the end of the day. You don't need the devil to do that. Galatians 5 talks about the twenty-six works of the flesh that can destroy you and that's without the help of the demonic realm. You have to be able to manage and subdue your flesh. You can't let it do whatever it wants to. Your flesh listens to spirit. Your spirit doesn't listen to your flesh. You have to train your flesh.

*Do you find yourself struggling to do the right thing?  
What are some examples of training your flesh that you can avoid?*

### **Genesis 2:9**

There were two trees in the garden: The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Your mind has to deal with nature and nurture as well. When Eve took the fruit from that tree, nothing happened. When Adam took it, everything changed. Every vile thing known to the imagination flooded the human psyche that day in that rebellion. God told them you can have everything in the garden except for these two trees. What did they do? They went straight for those two trees. They had paradise. They didn't even have to work. God told them to be fruitful and multiply and not worry about anything else. But as is the nature of man, they went right to what was forbidden. At that point everything that God did not want in the human psyche went right into it. As a result, we are born with a natural mind that has eaten from that tree. Why do you have to train your kids to do right and not wrong? Why do you have to train your children to say yes instead of no? You, as a parent, are constantly trying to train their mind to do right. Your kids have doing wrong and saying no down pat because it's in their nature from when Adam and Eve ate from that tree.

I used to think that midst meant that the two trees were in the middle of the garden. When I looked up the word "midst" in Hebrew, I learned that it also means

suspended. You got a garden with every tree in the ground producing fruit and you have two that are hanging. They have fruit, but no roots. *God said that Adam and Eve would die if they ate from those two trees so why didn't they drop dead when they ate from the trees? What was the spiritual and mental and eternal consequence of Adam and Eve's rebellion? What are some ways that you could overcome your urge to rebel and sin?*

#### Revelation 2:7

Those two trees were not rooted in the ground. If those two trees were earthly trees, then Adam and Eve would have physically died. The two trees were rooted in heaven, so they spiritually died when they ate from the spiritual fruit. Now we know that man is soul and flesh, but his spirit is dead. The Bible says that when two or three agree together then it will be. So, now you're living your life comfortably at the age of 30 doing whatever you like because your mind and flesh agreed on everything. Your flesh gave your mind the signal and your mind made the decision. Now your born-again spirit comes into the equation and causes confusion. Your spirit and flesh both send your mind signals, and your mind feels like it's going crazy. In fact, in Romans 7:24 it says that this conflict is not fun and asks who will deliver me? *What is the dynamic of internal conflict, and have you experienced it? What would Adam and Eve's life look like spiritually and mentally if they never rebelled?*

#### Romans 8:5-6

What is the answer to this? For those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh. Those who live according to the spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit. If you set your mind on the things of the flesh, everything will die. If you set your mind on the things of the spirit, you will gain life and peace. Set your mind. Whether your life is awful or blissful, will depend on your mindset. The word "set" is a medical term like when the doctor has to reset a broken bone. God is presupposing that when you come to Him your mind is broken and has to be reset. This is where the conflict comes from. The battle is not just over generational curses.

The battle is over your mind because God has set the head above the body and determined that it's the decision maker. If you've been saved, your mind is getting two signals every day. You have the desire to do right and the pull to do wrong. The one that you feed will win. If you compare how much time you spend on social media as opposed to reading your Bible, then you know why your flesh is such a monster. Whichever of the spirit or flesh that you starve will die. Whichever of the two that you feed lives. And if you have a desire in your life that you can't overcome, go back in your week and see which of the two you have been feeding. Some of your spirits are starving because you only give it this hour and half of food on Sunday. That's not enough. If you

want your spirit to rule your life and not your flesh, then feed it and get that life and peace that it offers.

*How influential is your mind in the battle of the spirit?*

*What are some ways that you can feed your spirit and starve the flesh?*

### **Prayer Focus and Requests**

Ask your members if they have any prayer requests or praise reports. Encourage one another to stir up your faith and pray BIG prayers this week and expect God to blow your mind with His answers.