

1. Considering various aspects of Spiritual warfare in Nehemiah

Those things we can expect when God calls us into greater service

A. **Doubt, discouragement, dread, division and distraction**

- 1). These are all up on line to download

2. Seen the characteristics of a godly leader

- A. They are people of the Word and prayer who deal with personal sins
- B. They have a confidence in God that exhibits itself in calmness when adversity hits
- C. They are focused on the task God has given them
- D. They must have courage to do the right thing

3. This week I want to return to the verses we saw two weeks ago

- A. Last time we saw the attack of spiritual distraction – losing focus on what you should do
 - 1). You exchange the weighty things of God for the weightless and temporal
- B. As I was reading through this – I saw another issue – the attack of *spiritual compromise*

I. SPIRITUAL COMPROMISE

Ne 6:1–2 (ESV) Now when Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies heard that I had built the wall and that there was no breach left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates), ⁽²⁾ Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, “Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono.” But they intended to do me harm.

1. Reminder: The enemy has many angles he comes at us from

- A. Talking with Taylor – studying boxing – to become more exact in the angles of his punches
 - 1). You block a jab – but here comes an upper cut that goes around your defense
You defend against a hook and he sneaks in a cross
 - a). Different angles meant to sneak through your defenses
- B. The devil is like that – we block one attack and here comes one from a different angle
 - 1). All with the same goal – to stop your effectiveness for God – to cool your love for Christ
 - 2). One tool he uses so effectively to do this – is compromise = worldliness
John Blanchard: Jesus did not pray that his Father would take Christians out of the world, but that he would take the world out of Christians.
 - a). But Satan is always trying to reverse that – to reestablish a worldly foothold
- C. This can come so subtly – seem so innocent – for the devil disguises himself as an angel of light
 - 1). Here it may have come to Nehemiah in the guise of a harmless invitation
“Nehemiah, we know we’ve had our problems in the past, but we’re reasonable people. Why don’t you come out to the plains of Ono and we’ll talk this over. Look, you’ve been working so hard and this will give you a chance to relax and rest. You deserve it. What do you say?”
 - 2). Tempting. Plains of Ono were located 20 miles north of Jerusalem – in a beautiful, lush valley

Thought: The devil loves to get believers to be in places they shouldn’t be

He has all kinds of tactics that sound so reasonable to bring that about – watch out!

- A. Remember David when he fell with Bathsheba – he should have never been in Jerusalem at that time
Samuel writes something very important: 2 Sa 11:1 (ESV) In the spring of the year, *the time when kings go out to battle*, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel.
 - 1). He was supposed to be out fighting – on the front lines – engaged
 - a). Instead he’s at home lounging
 - 2). I can only assume he had listened to the subtle whispers of the enemy
 - a). Nothing wrong with not being at war David! That’s why you have an army!

- b). Send them – just this once – stay home and enjoy the fruits of your hard work
- 3). David compromised and compromise will take you where you don't want to go
- B. Notice God is always faithful to warn us – that is part of the Spirit's ministry
- Ne 6:2 (ESV)** Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come and let us meet together at Hakkephirim in the plain of Ono." *But they intended to do me harm.*
- 1). That was the Spirit warning him – "Danger, don't do it. Stay away from it."
- 2). See the same thing in Paul's ministry
- Acts 20:23** ...in every city the Holy Spirit *warns me* that prison and hardships are facing me.
- a). Shows why we need to stay close to God – sensitive to Him – so we hear these warnings
- 3). I'm sure David had this same warning
- "Don't stay behind, go out with your men. Do what a King is supposed to do."
- a). God even uses others to warn us – He is faithful
- 2 Sa 11:3 (ESV)** And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, *"Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"*
- "David, isn't that the wife of Uriah? Another man's wife David! Uriah David!"
- 1a). Uriah one of David's most loyal men - lone of his mighty men in 1 Chron. 11
- C. But David is now in the grip of lust – compromise has led to compromise
- Francis Schaeffer:** Accommodation leads to accommodation which leads to accommodation ...
- 1). It started with being where he shouldn't be – so he saw things he shouldn't see
- It moved to gazing upon Bathsheba when he should have turned away
- Then sending for Bathsheba to spend the night with Him in an adulterous affair
- a). In the end it will end up with a pregnancy – Uriah will be murdered
- A baby will die as the result of a judicial act of God

2. These stories are given for us to learn from

- A. Learn to listen to the warnings that God is faithful to give – those troublings as we think of something
- "You shouldn't be in this environment" "You shouldn't be around that person"
- 1). Men struggling with the things they look at on their computers
- "You shouldn't turn on your computer right now. You're vulnerable."
- Thought:** There is a real necessity to respond quickly to these warnings
- A. The longer we toy with sin – the more God vanishes in our thinking
- 1). Kent Hughes said this about lust – but I think it is true of all temptation
- Kent Hughes:** When lust takes control, "at that moment God is quite unreal to us." In other words, when you are in the grip of lust. God seems to evaporate. I think that is an immutable spiritual law. *The longer David gazed at her the more unreal God became. That's what lust does. It's done it millions of times. Lust makes God vanish.*
- a). Why you must respond to that warning quickly while God is still very real
- To toy with it is to lose the reality of God in your thinking
- 1a). Your thinking will become spiritually irrational and you'll be weakened
- B. How foolish to hear the whispers of warning and not heed them
- Prov 27:12 (NIV)** The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.
- Point:** Start getting into the habit of heeding that warning the Spirit faithfully whispers quickly
- Transition:** Because compromise is so prevalent in the church – we're all vulnerable - let's dig in a bit
- A. I want to examine the process compromise can take – so we can notice it – stand against it

II. A CLOSER LOOK AT COMPROMISE

1. Compromise has such negative connotations – but is it all bad? No!

- A. There's healthy compromise that is part of every good relationship – a give and take
- B. We make decisions while taking into consideration another's preferences
 - 1). Where to go to eat – what movie to see – even letting our wife touch the TV remote
- C. We could define this healthy type of compromise in this way

"An ability to give in to another's preferences *without* sacrificing our own values & beliefs"

Transition: There is compromise that is good – that's not what we're talking about here

2. Unhealthy compromise

- A. There is a compromise that asks us to abandon views and standards we hold that are correct
 - 1). To go in a way we know will contradict the clear principles in God's Word
- B. This is the compromise the devil seeks from us – and it is spiritually devastating

Transition: I want to look at four steps downward that are common in compromise

- A. We'll tie back in to David's fall at times – since we've already used him

THE FOUR DOWNWARD STEPS OF COMPROMISE

First Step Downward: **A Forbidden Gaze**

1. Looking at something we know we shouldn't be looking at

- A. David's sin was lust – let's stay there for a moment – huge problem in church is pornography
 - 1). 30% of Christian men admit to being addicted – problem for women too
 - 2). I know there are some – "We're Christian's. This is church! Don't mention that!"
 - a). So we keep sweeping under the carpet something that is ripping Christianity apart
 - b). To sound Christian we allow Christian's to be destroyed – No thanks!
- B. Let's talk about where this can start – little compromises – not at the porn sites themselves
 - 1). Legitimate sports sites on the web – but on side is the advertisement "Hot NFL wives" "No big deal! I just want to see what my favorite stars family looks like"
 - a). All these girls dressed in alluring ways
 - 2). Do you think you can put things like that into your mind without starting a fire burning

Prov 6:27 (NLT) Can a man scoop fire into his lap and not be burned?

 - a). Do you think when that fire starts you'll be able to control it
 - b). The flesh when engaged wants more – needs more to be thrilled
- C. Whatever the sin is – initial beginnings are usually small – but lead deeper
 - 1). Why the beginning of compromise in *any sin* must be seen as dangerous

Thought: Ever hear of Rudy Giuliani's idea of zero tolerance in New York City

- A. Interesting idea – allow little crimes and you create an atmosphere bigger crimes flourish in
 - 1). So he instructed the police to give tickets for - open containers in public

The squeegee men who accosted drivers in their cars to scrub their windshields

Petty drug dealers, graffiti scribblers, and the like – *would no longer be tolerated*
- B. The idea: Dealing with smaller crimes would bring all crimes down worked. It worked
 - 1). Crime rates across the board plummeted. Felonies, murders, rape, robber and burglary
- C. I heard that and thought – there is a key for holiness – Zero Tolerance
 - 1). Little sins tolerated creates an atmosphere in the heart for bigger sins to occur easily
 - a). But stop tolerating little sins – you'll create a habit that deals with larger sins too

Question: Is there anything like this in the Scriptures? I'm glad you asked. There is!

Turn. Mt 5:29–30 (ESV) If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ⁽³⁰⁾ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

- A. Not saying to physically cut off hand – gouge out eye
You'll still have another hand and another eye – no eye you'll see it in your mind!
- B. This is saying to deal with sin in your life takes radical surgery
 - 1). A cutting away of everything that leads to that sin – zero tolerance
All those things that are forerunners that weaken you so that you eventually fall
- C. Good exercise – get a piece of paper – draw a circle in the middle and write that sin in there
It may be materialism – gossip – lust – drinking – drugs – anger - envy
 - 1). Now draw lines out – write down everything that weakens you - eventually leads to a fall
It may be legitimate for others – for you it isn't – Zero Tolerance
 - 2). If you're a shopaholic – credit cards maxed out – it might be shopping shows - catalogs
 - a). Write those down and cut them out – zero tolerance
 - 3). If your sin is gossip – you might have a relationship you need to step away from
 - a). Every time you're with them you gossip – read what God says about that
 - b). Write it down cut it out – better to be right with God and wrong with another
 - 4). If it is pornography – what websites weaken you?
 - a). On the edge just enough to entice the flesh – write them down – cut them off

2. It starts with a gaze – looking at something that weakens you

- A. This is what happened to Eve before the fall
Ge 3:6 (ESV) So when the woman *saw* that the tree was good for food, and that it was a *delight to the eyes*, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.
 - 1). The tree is forbidden Eve – why are you even looking at it? Zero tolerance
- B. Listen to how God ties in the heart and the eyes
Prov 23:26 (NIV) My son, give me your heart *and let your eyes keep to my ways*,
Psa 101:3 (NKJV) I will set nothing wicked before my eyes...
Transition: Reason we need to guard ourselves at this stage is because it opens the door to the next
 - A. We've already hinted at this but we need to bring it out and isolate it

Second Step Downward: A Forbidden Attraction

1. Here is the result of gazing upon something over a period of time

- A. Whether that gazing is physical or imaginary in your mind
- B. Something will happen in your heart – the gaze turns into attraction – to a desire – a must have
 - 1). The flesh becomes so attracted it must have what it has been gazing upon
 - 2). David isn't it – He gazed upon Bathsheba until eventually he must have Bathsheba

Transition: Zero tolerance because a forbidden gaze will turn into a forbidden attraction

- A. Now you're in real danger – because this leads to the next step

Third Step Downward: A Forbidden Action

1. How could David the man after God's own heart do what he did?

- A. It was a matter of one compromise opening the door to another – then another

- 1). Began with being somewhere he shouldn't have been – that was rationalized
- 2). Which led him to looking upon something he shouldn't have looked at
 - a). As he gazed and didn't turn away – that gaze worked its way from his eyes to his heart
- 3). His attraction for the forbidden became so strong it turned into an action
 - a). When you're at this point you lose all ability to think rationally
 - 1a). King David was willing to gamble his reputation and his kingdom over this
 - 2a). Sin makes you sloppy – and eventually you are found out
 - b). His men knew he called for Bathsheba

When Uriah was murdered his men knew who ordered it

Transition: Now we're going to turn to David's Son Solomon for our last point

- A. Fortunately David recovered – though there would be scars the rest of his life

Fourth Step Downward: **A complete abandonment**

1. The story of Solomon in a nutshell

- A. Solomon was completely devoted to God – so blessed by God
 - 1). But he had a weakness for foreign women – even though God had warned His people
God's instructions to the Dt 7:3-4 (ESV) You shall not intermarry with them (foreign women), giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, ⁽⁴⁾ *for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods.*
 - 2). Look at the compromise in Solomon's life – knowing the command of God
1 Ki 11:1-2 (ESV) Now King Solomon *loved many foreign women*, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ⁽²⁾ from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." *Solomon clung to these in love.*
 - a). Like Eve with the tree – why are you looking at those ladies Solomon
 Where is that going to take you? You KNOW what God said.... Don't even look
 - b). He gazed on the forbidden – was attracted to the forbidden – then acted on the forbidden
 - 3). The tragic result
1 Ki 11:4 (ESV) For when Solomon was old *his wives turned away his heart after other gods...*
 - a). He started worshipping all these false gods these foreign women brought in
 Worshipping the way they did – burning incense – offering sacrifices

Point: This one so dedicated to God has now abandoned God

- A. He didn't want this to happen – he didn't think it would – just a little compromise I can control it
 - 1). I know I shouldn't go there but I can handle it
 I know I shouldn't look at that but just this once
 I know I shouldn't be around these people – but I'll influence them – not the other way around
 - 2). We think – even though God has warned us about certain actions
 - a). We'll be the one that can still do them and not get burnt – our heart won't be affected
- B. Solomon would have never imagined he would have ended up in this tragic place
 - 1). None who have been ruined by compromise do

Transition: What can we do to stand against it – I have four thoughts I think will help

- A. It all revolves around thinking correctly. Sin always starts in the mind

APPLICATION

First: How to Think Correctly - Renew Your Mind

1. Compromise has its birth in our thought life – incorrect thinking

A. I need to correct the way I think = incorrect thinking always leads to incorrect choosing

Question: How do I change the way I think? By filling my mind with truth

TURN: Ro 12:2 (ESV) Do not be conformed to this world, *but be transformed by the renewal of your mind*, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

A. If I don't change the way I think – by renewing my mind through the Word

1). I will continue to make choices that lead to a conformity to the world

Point: Commit yourself to regularly holding the truth before your mind - Saturating yourself

A. The more diligently you input truth – the healthier your choices will be

Transition: The more truth you have the more naturally the next steps will be

Second: Thinking Correctly - The Proper Attitude Toward Sin

1. You must come to a place where you make a clean break with sin

TURN: Rom 6:10-12 (NIV) The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. (11) *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.* (12) Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its *evil desires*.

A. See sin for what it is – evil – enemy AND Be ruthless with it in your life

Count yourselves as dead to sin once and for all – you're done with it

B. If you're thinking that sin is still an option – you will take that option

Rom 6:13 (NIV) Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, *but rather offer yourselves* to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

Point: That is a determination that you make – an intentional choice to live for God – put sin to death

Col 3:5–10 (ESV) *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:* sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁽⁶⁾ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁽⁷⁾ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁽⁸⁾ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁽⁹⁾ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ⁽¹⁰⁾ and have put on the new self, which is being *renewed in knowledge* after the image of its creator.

A. What knowledge are we renewed in – the knowledge we find in the Bible

Third: Thinking Correctly – About the Ways of The Enemy

1. Never forget he is the father of lies

A. He's a master at making sin sound like an enhancement to your life not a reduction

TO EVE: Gen 3:4-5 “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. (5) “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

1). Eve - don't believe that dying thing - the truth is - do this it is going to enhance your life

a). The truth is you're going to be like God! Isn't that going to be great EVE!

B. Hey sleeping with that person before your married - come on - it's no big deal - it'll be fun

1). Look at how much those other people seem to be enjoying it! Seems to be adding to their life

2). After all why did God give you those desires if he doesn't want you to fulfill them

C. Here's a great one - "Anyway, God will forgive you, just try it this once and then you can stop"

1). He attempts to take the sting out of sin - reducing it to what seems to be inconsequential
“Everybody does it – I know they all act perfect – but believe me they're not”

Transition: Be warned - the devil's lies can almost seem reasonable - but he is out to destroy you

A. You know he's a liar – you know he wants to devour you – SO don't listen to his lies

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- B. He makes it seem inconsequential – but the next point is the truth
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Fourth: Thinking Correctly - The Exchange Rate of Compromise

1. Compromise demands I give up something to receive something

- A. Unhealthy compromise always requires us to abandon our godly views and standards
- 1). We're asked to give up: Our purity, honesty, integrity, our belief in the Word of God
- B. But the exchange rate is lousy – you never get back anything of equal value
- W T. Purkiser:** Sin would have few takers if its consequences occurred immediately."
- 1). Please remember this – I can't choose sin and come out ahead – it never works that way
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CONCLUSION

1. QUESTION: Has something come to your mind you're toying with?

- A. Something forbidden you've begun to gaze upon? Physically or mentally in your mind
- 1). You've even begun to rationalize it – “Just a little thing. No big deal”
 - 2). No such thing as a little sin – because of its power
- John Trapp:** "One sin liked and loved will make way for every other"

2. Right now say “No” to that compromise – put it to death

- A. Do not allow yourself to gaze upon the forbidden! To desire what God has said NO to
- 1). That will start a downward slide – who knows where it ends

3. Start thinking correctly

- A. Renew your mind in God's word
- B. Have the proper attitude towards sin – “I'm done with it”
- 1). Christianity is a turning away from sin to turn towards God by faith – embracing Him
Christianity is a choice to follow God and His holy ways
 - a). Be intentional – do that!
- C. Have the proper awareness of who you're dealing with - "The father of lies"
- 1). He is able to paint such an appealing picture of sin - it is a lie!!!
- D. Realize the terrible exchange rate of compromise
- 1). You exchange your purity, honesty, integrity, reputation - for some type of pleasure, satisfaction
 - a). Sin's exchange rate is never a good deal – you always lose