

Systems and Strategies for Fending Off Spiritual Attacks

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[0 : 00] Welcome to the Providence Podcast.

My name is Chris Oswald, Senior Pastor at Providence Community Church. First time ever on the Providence Podcast, we have a guest. First time ever on the Providence Community Church.

Some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies.

You know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome, but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

[1 : 32] God may perhaps grant them repentance, leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil after being captured to do his will.

So with that passage read, let's introduce Dove. Hi, Dove. Hey, Chris. Hey, Providence. How's it going? We are going to talk today about fighting the devil, correct?

Yes. Yeah. Yesterday during the sermon, there were five points. The last point and the fifth point was talking about acknowledging and fighting against our enemy, as is talked about in the last verse of 2 Timothy 2, 20 to 26.

So verse 26. Yeah, and the idea of that verse, just to read it again, it says in verse 26, well, verse 25, correcting opponents with gentleness, God may perhaps grant them repentance, leading to a knowledge of the truth that they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil after being captured by him to do his will.

And so the underlying theological idea here is that people can get trapped. People can get ensnared by the devil. And this verse is telling us how to handle people that are that way.

[2 : 46] But also, in some respects, if we pay careful attention to the text, we can actually kind of see how to avoid the snare in the first place. Yeah, absolutely. We need to be watching ourselves.

We need to be checking our thoughts. One of the points from the message yesterday was just that we need to test our thoughts. We need to be aware of what's going on inside of our minds, inside of our hearts, and making sure that we are listening to the right shepherd, the right master, the one that loves us.

Yeah, I feel like that comes through quite a bit, or has come through quite a bit in different things that we've talked about this year. I know the ladies, a number of them have read *Spiritual Depression* by Martin Lloyd-Jones, and probably the number one quote from that book is something related to, you know, many Christians suffer defeat and don't experience a victorious Christian life because, how does he put it, something like, because they listen to their thoughts instead of, they listen to their hearts instead of preaching to their hearts.

They're not taking every thought captive. Yeah, they're not talking to themselves, and like you said, taking every thought captive. Yeah, they're not leading themselves. And then that verse has come up quite a bit in our Theological Leaders Training, the Take Every Thought Captive verse.

Mm-hmm. And then, you know, two weeks ago, we talked about just a level of casualness toward thinking about ideas and so on. So I think one of the things that keeps emerging, and I think this is probably also just a product of wanting to care for what is, you know, primarily a younger church, a church full of younger people, is it's one of the last things you kind of figure out how to do, which is to like, hey, you need to be in charge of your own thoughts.

[4 : 19] You need to be thinking about your thinking and so on and so forth. Yeah, absolutely. And I think there's the long-term approach and the short-term approach, right? We have to be monitoring all of our thoughts in the short term, and then we have to be investing in different spiritual disciplines and different physical disciplines so that we can be strong in the Lord through long-term investment as well.

Yeah, and that's kind of, I mean, that's kind of a part of why we do this podcast in general. And that's just, if you're not careful, you can really easily feed yourself a diet of stuff that's really from Team Devil.

Yeah. And you have to be intentional to seek, you know, things that are telling you the truth. I love that base camp message that's going around now where everybody's talking about their favorite musicians or their favorite Christian music.

Yeah, yeah, I love it. Like, that's kind of like one of the main things for me is being careful, because I love music so much, being careful to make sure that my diet is mostly nutritious.

Like, I still listen to some garbage now. But, you know, it really is a huge means of grace to just, like, find music that you like, but more importantly, music that likes Jesus.

[5 : 29] Yeah, yeah. I mean, music made such a difference in my life, whether it be the music that we sing at church, like a Shane and Shane or a City of Light, or like a Poor Bishop Hooper, that, you know, folky, neat sound, and then capturing biblical truth, even through that special sound.

Yeah, yeah. Well, you've got a list here prepared for us to go through related to fighting the devil. And the first thing you bring up on this list is faith. So what do you have to say about faith and the role of fighting the devil?

Yeah, so I think the first way, the first attack that we can do against the devil, is just believing what's true of us in Christ. Knowing that Christ is praying for us, that he's given us a spirit, that he's given us a new birth, that we are totally forgiven of our sins and adopted into God's family.

I feel like just resting in that and that passive obedience and those thoughts and resting in that is really key for remembering and for fighting against the onslaught that the devil can send our way.

Yeah, I think that the devil has been most successful in my life when I am taking the gospel for granted. And because when you start taking the gospel for granted, you kind of start thinking in terms of not getting what you deserve.

[6 : 50] It feels like a massive, and I mean that in an entitled way, it feels like a massive open door for the devil is when you start feeling like embittered toward someone, your spouse, your coworkers.

You know, you feel like you should be getting recognition that you're not getting. You feel like you should be getting affection you're not getting, whatever. And it's all kind of like cloaked in this I deserve kind of thing.

But then the gospel is basically the cure for that entire category of thinking, right? Yeah. Yeah, I mean, always remembering that we are totally coming across totally empty-handed, that we are fully deserving of God's wrath and God's judgment, but then also that we are fully accepted by God.

Those two truths held together, I feel like, are really key. Yeah, so we have people at our church who would not have come from what we would call gospel-centered church where, you know, the gospel is put forth as sort of the touchstone, the pattern, the everything of the Christian life.

One guy said, I thought this was good, he said that the gospel isn't the diving board, the gospel's the pool. Yeah. So that's where we're coming from. But then if you hear that and you're not from a church that thought that way, you might be thinking, okay, but why the gospel-centeredness?

[8 : 08] What is this actually doing for me? And one example is what I was talking about with faith, where it reminds you of who you actually most fundamentally are, both for good and for bad.

Like that song that we sing, Two Wonders Here That I Confess, I forget how that part goes. My worth and my unworthiness. Yeah, my worth and my unworthiness. Like, that's what the gospel says.

Yeah. Like, it's the most, it's the truest, quickest way to understand who you really are, both for good and for bad, is the gospel. And it also is the truest, quickest way to know who God really is.

Yeah. Yeah, remembering he's holy and just, but also merciful and compassionate and willing to send his sons that we could be forgiven, as we could be in his presence forevermore.

Yeah. So faith is really sort of seeing things as they really are. And what we're really talking about here is through the gospel, seeing ourselves as who we really are.

[9 : 05] We're not worthy of God's love, and yet we are loved in Christ. And then seeing God as he really is, he is loving and kind and full of mercy, but he's also holy and hates sin.

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Okay, so that's faith. That's one thing you've got on the list here in terms of fighting the devil. So why don't you just go through some of the other things on your list? So I'll list off, like I said, like Chris said, I'll list off a bunch of ways that I think are good strategies to fight the devil.

And then, Chris, I think you can dig in where you'd like. So one thing would be devotion, spending time with God on a regular basis, commuting with him. Second thing would be gratitude.

So keeping a thankful heart is a good way to ward off any accusations or any evil thoughts. I think taking care of yourself physically, exercise, eating well, resting.

Boy, what a switch flips on when I get on that treadmill and I start going. I feel much better through doing that. That helps me. That helps my thoughts. Fellowship with other believers, obviously.

[10 : 08] Great way to remind ourselves of truths and be within a gospel-centered community where we're encouraging each other. Prayer, another one. Getting out in nature and seeing the sun and exposing ourselves to just sunlight.

Chris had a great sermon back in the wintertime. Let's try on Proverbs about that. Thinking of others. So loving others, looking to others' interests, and not just being self-consumed.

That can be a great way to fight for joy in the Lord and against the devil. I think making and keeping promises and commitments to ourselves and others. Psalm 15 talks about swearing to your own heart hurt and not changing.

So keeping your commitments. I think it's a good way. Keeping your word. Another one. Confessing and repenting of sin. Recognizing evidence of grace in others. And then just soaking yourself in scripture.

Integrating scripture into your day any way you can. And that's what Jesus did when he was out in the desert fighting against the devil. So it was just a list of ways, strategies that we can fight.

[11 : 16] That's excellent. It reminds me of some of the Sun Tzu part of war stuff where it just talks about your battles are basically won by the ground you choose, right?

And really, battles are won way before you ever even see the enemy. Yep. There was another, I think it was a general in Special Forces who said something like, if you're scared you didn't plan well enough or something like that.

And that's an overstatement. But this idea of, if you know you're going to fight, then the time spent getting yourself in a position where you have favorable ground from which to fight.

And you have the armaments you need and the armor you need and so on and so forth. Like that makes a huge difference. I think as we care for people and people are experiencing defeat, maybe they've got, you know, a persistent sin that's just hanging on, so on.

A lot of times when we talk to those people, what we really typically find is like they don't have a system. They're just kind of living life as it comes and they're just like, you know, hey, like tomorrow's tomorrow.

[12 : 29] Like what does it have to do with today? And like they're not really architecting their life to win. You know, they're not engineering it to win. Yeah. I mean, you have to make time and effort and emotional investments to build up that spiritual capital and build up that spiritual muscle to be able to fight.

Right. So this list is really in some ways evocative of the atomic habits quote of, you know, we don't rise to the level of our goals. We fall to the level of our systems. Right. Right. What you're doing here is really you're just saying like you need a system.

You need a bunch of things all working together. And a bunch of these things are just things that they're not taking in more time. They're just really taking the time you have now and just having, I guess, a clearer agenda with that time.

Yeah. I mean, I think being purposeful and, you know, talking to a community group about rhythms, I think these are practices that can be easily built into the rhythm of your day. Right.

Or just, you know, like we talked about seeing the sun, just acknowledging and noticing it and appreciating and giving thanks and gratitude for it. It's, it does, there's, there's the system, there's the habits, and then there's the ad hoc.

[13 : 42] Let's just, let's just acknowledge the blessings in our lives. Okay. Well, I want to go through the list a little bit specifically here. And first one is that you mentioned besides faith is devotions.

And what I want to do here is just talk about our, each of us, our devotional habits of the journey that we have gone on, you know, to fight for consistency and so on and so forth.

So tell me kind of your, your devotional story as quickly as possible about like, you know, there was probably some point where you were told this is what you need to do.

And then how did it go from there? Yeah. So I was, I was super blessed. You know, became a Christian. God called me between high school and college. And then got quickly into a navigators group as well as campus crusade in college.

And then got settled into sovereign grace church out in New Jersey. But boy, were the navigators. Man, they're, they're not joking. Yeah. They, so my, my navigators guy, his name, he was just a great guy.

[14 : 47] Um, and he invested a lot into me. And so he was very big on getting me on devotional habits, getting me in the word, uh, reading and praying every day. Was that off putting to you at all? Or did you just, were you just like, yeah, okay.

I was, I was hungry. Yeah. Um, as a college student. So, um, so that, that wasn't all putting. That was, that was a blessing. Yeah. It's, I think it's one of those strike where the iron's hot.

I've never heard of a new believer begrudge being told, yeah, you got to read your Bible every day. Sure. You know what I mean? Like new believers, like, okay, you know, yeah, that's probably part of the deal. Yeah. But I think as people get a little fat and sassy in their Christian life and you tell them you got to read your Bible every day, they're like legalist.

Like, no man, like this is for your good. Yeah. Yeah. It's like, you got to eat every day. Right. So, right. Yeah. So did you, what did you start doing? How was it a navigators program or what did you use?

So I would, I would read through the Bible one chapter at a time and then I journal about it. I had lots of journals that at one point I, I just threw out because they were just hanging around the house and not having much value.

[15 : 52] I wasn't reading through them, but I kept quite a journal for quite some time. So you just did one chapter a day. That was kind of your main initial? And then journal through it. Yeah. Yeah. Pray through it.

How long did you, how long did you do that until you changed? Like, um, I was doing, I was doing that, um, probably till my, from about 20, from, well, from college time until my late twenties.

Okay. And then what did you do after that? Um, one, well, one book that they got me was, uh, that I started to go through just focused on the gospel was, uh, the 50 reasons that Jesus came to die, uh, Piper book.

Yeah. I did devotions in that maybe two or three times where I, that I did one reading a day. Uh, and that's 50 reading. So, yeah, I've got a couple of copies of that. I, I finally got a lot of my books put away and, uh, I've got a couple of copies of that in my office.

If you want one of those, um, just let me know. I know I've got a number of them and like I've said, it's, it's, what is it? Probably a page and a half. Yeah. It's not real long, but it's really good, really good, good thoughts.

[16 : 52] 50 of them. Yeah. So you could, that's, that's 50 days easy right there. Yeah. Yeah. And I, I, I just asking the practical question because I think a lot of people, you know, this is where they get hung up.

Um, I see a lot of people enter into some kind of weird self-consciousness when they're reading their Bibles as if they're, they're guys probably every day when I read my Bible, I catch myself drifting at some point.

That's just me. And I think people will tell me, I'll ask them, are you reading a Bible? Like, no, I just, I just don't think my heart's in it and so on and so forth. I'm like, yeah, mine either. And you just do it.

Right. Yeah. So that's, um, so recently that's been something I've been trying to attack. Um, so for the new year, um, my goal has been to come up with one verse that I can put in a note card and carry with me throughout the day.

Um, and so reading with a pen and just underlining keeps me engaged and keeps me focused. And that's, that's such, that's been such a blessing. Yeah. Um, one of the things I want to tell folks about devotions is that getting something out of it, of course, is the point, but I would say there's a point above that.

[18 : 02] And that is, you're essentially behaving like God wrote a book and that you need to know what God has to say. So whether or not you reading Leviticus chapter 30, you know, one day and you're like, I'm not getting anything out of this.

Well, what you're doing is you're setting aside time to say, God wrote a book and I'm a human being called to follow the God of the universe.

So you're always getting something out of it. Every single time you sit down and, and open the book, you're saying something about who you are and about who God is and about the nature of reality and so on and so forth.

Yeah. And Piper talks about how the spirit just broods over the word. And I feel like when I, when I open the Bible, just sit there, uh, read and then pray. Um, God, I just feel like the spirit comes and meets me.

Yeah. So that that's actually, you've got a Bible verse for this one, James four, seven through eight, which ties in perfectly with that idea of God meeting you. Yeah. So James four, seven, submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you, draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

[19 : 09] Yep. And, uh, uh, day after day, you know, will you experience that every single day? Well, one of the things about these habits is you've got to do them a long time before you recognize trends.

You need a pretty reasonable data, you know, pretty sizable data set. So you can't do this three days and say, God didn't draw near to me. Right. You know, do it for 30 days. Yeah.

It's like walking the treadmill for three days. Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah. So my practice, uh, as you might expect, is probably less structured than does. Uh, but for the longest time I just, and I'm back at it.

I just read five Psalms a day. Now at some respect, uh, I get away with that maybe because I'm going to read other pieces of the Bible because of my job, right?

I'm going to be reading a lot of different parts of the Bible because it's my job. Um, but on the other hand, I can say that the Psalms are so robust and contain so many other of the ideas expressed in scripture, so much theology that I, I know there was probably a five or six year period where all I did was read five Psalms a day and it was more than enough.

[20 : 25] It was, it was a very rich time. So, um, now a lot of people, I think this is good too. A lot of people will do the five Psalms and, um, one proverb, you know, one chapter of Proverbs every day.

And I think that's a really good practice as well. The way you do that, if you're interested in that is you just look at the date and you just multiply times five. So today's the 26th. So I would start reading in Psalm 130 today and I would read the next five chapters.

And then today's the 26th. So I'm good at Proverbs and read chapter 26. But anyway, yeah. Draw near to the Lord. He will draw near to you. Uh, as we're fighting the devil, having quality devotion time is key.

And I don't know, let's just, let's just get even more practical time. How long does it take you? Uh, 15 minutes, 15 minutes. Yeah. 15 minutes a day. Yeah. Yeah. I'm probably somewhere around there, 15 to 20 to 30 minutes.

And, um, yeah, I think we're both at the age where we're just not concerned with people judges for that. We're just grateful with all else we've got going on that we get to do that.

[21 : 33] Yeah. Yeah. So don't be, have some kind of performance anxiety that thinks, you know, you need to do more than that. Like if you can, if you can read a chapter a day, that's probably going to be less than 15 minutes, I would say.

Yeah. Normally. Um, unless you're a really slow reader. But just do something. Yeah. And if you find, uh, that you get hung up in places like Leviticus or so on and so forth, we're not all as disciplined as Dove.

Uh, you know, there, there are, there are books of the Bible that I'm convinced are not necessarily meant for just pure devotion reading. You know, the Bible has many uses.

So, so if you want to not read Leviticus and, and, and skip that for a couple of years and then go back and read Leviticus with a commentary or something like that, you can do that.

Just, just spend time in the word every single day. Uh, last habit I had before I went back to the Psalms was I read, uh, uh, two chapters of a gospel and I would read the chapter that I'd read the day before.

[22 : 31] And then I'd read a new chapter. And so I was always reading every chapter twice over a two day period. That really was beneficial to me as well. And again, that was probably 15 minutes as well.

Okay. Related to, uh, the list here from devotionals. Well, we probably can't go through everything on this list, but, uh, gratitude is so important. We got to talk about that too. We did kind of get into this and we talked about how faith and thinking about the gospel helps us to see what we do and do not, what we don't deserve from God and so on and so forth, but do you have additional thoughts about gratitude?

Yeah. So I'll tell you a story. Um, we recently got a couch in our house, uh, sectional, we just moved into a new house. We got a new sectional, um, ended up to the section that was delivered, um, on our driveway in negative 10 degree weather.

Uh, and that was a really, um, opportune time for me to be hit with temptation to grumble and complain because we had to get that couch into the house. Um, so for the next half hour, 45 minutes of getting that couch into the house, house is a four piece sectional.

I was just thanking God. Thank you God for this couch. Thank God for this, for this trial. Thank you God for testing my faith. Thank you God for, um, this adventure of trying to figure out how to get this couch into the house and down our stairs and into our room.

[23 : 46] Um, and that, that really changed the tenor of moving the couch into the, into the house. Um, what could have been a really tempting situation for me to grumble and complain, uh, and, uh, and frankly, get upset, um, really turned into just an adventure of getting this couch into our house.

That's excellent. What you did there is essentially what you might describe as dropping down a layer. And I see this a lot with people that struggle with ingratitude. So for instance, if I'm grumbling against my wife, I dropped down a layer and I say, I have a wife.

That's what you did with the couch. Yeah. You're like, you're like, um, grumpy because the couch got dumped on your driveway and your kids are too little to do it.

That's the real problem. Anyway. Uh, but you dropped a layer and you're like, thank you. Thank you God that I have a couch. And then, you know, you could drop more layers and be like, thank you God that I have health that I can do this.

Yeah. Thank you God that I have a house that I can put the couch in and so forth. Yeah. Most of the time when we're grumbly, we're grumbly about like the lack of the cherry on a Sunday. We just need to look down, you know, an inch and see the whipped cream and the ice cream and so on and so forth.

[25 : 02] Yeah. Yes. I'm so, like you said, so blessed to have a house to go put the couch in, supposed to have the couch. So blessed to have a wife that can help me get this couch into the house. Um, you could be impressed by your muscles.

Oh yeah. Oh, she's impressed. Yeah. I'm sure she is. Uh, yeah. So dropping a layer is just this idea of just like when you are not having a good attitude about something that's not working out, you're in traffic.

Well, why are you in traffic? You're in traffic because you have somewhere to go. That means you have a life that's somewhat meaningful. Take a look over at the nursing home you pass and realize how many people wish they had somewhere to go, you know, so on and so forth.

So a lot of our presumptuousness comes from, um, not thinking fundamentally about life and like looking down layers. So I love your couch analogy there.

And you've got a verse for this Philippians four. Yeah, sure. So let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

[25 : 59] Let your request be known to God and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Excellent. So I've got one that I for sure want to hit before we're done, but is there another, is there one here that you would make sure you want to make sure we covered before we completed?

This podcast? Uh, you go for it. You go for it. Well, mine is, well, no, it's not the last one. Mine is the make and keep promises to yourself and others.

Um, I read a book a number of years ago. I don't think it was a Christian book. I don't remember it very well. Well, I say I read it. I did audible and I did it. I think I did it at the gym.

So it was kind of, you know, half observed, absorbed, but the book was called never get angry again. Um, and, um, it was essentially about this sort of inner indictment that comes from being the person you know, you shouldn't be.

And it was probably overly psychologized, but it resonated to me to some respect. Cause as I dealt with anger and I dealt with anger with other people, other people's anger issues and my own anger issues, there was this sense of sort of an inner condemnation about, uh, really about stuff that I really should have been handling.

[27 : 14] I should have been taking control of. I should have been doing better and so on. It wasn't so much that I needed, you know, grace in that moment, uh, in the sense of forgiveness. I really almost just needed the Holy spirit to come and say, Hey, you know, if you want to have a brighter face, do what is right.

That's what God tells Cain. If you want your countenance to be lifted, do the right thing. Right. And doing the right thing. I mean, this is, I don't know how familiar you are with, you know, 12 step programs and so forth, but a fundamental that I've always thought was admirable.

And I have, you know, issues with some of that stuff, but one of the fundamentals that I thought was so admirable was they do press this idea of, uh, like an unyielding integrity where it's like, don't cut corners.

Yeah. It's almost like there's this inner critic, your conscience that is keeping a record of how you're doing and whether you're living up to your commitments and so on and so forth.

So that's what I thought of when you, when you wrote this down, what, what were you thinking? This is just kind of, it kind of comes out of left field to me a little bit. So, so, yeah. So I think what you're talking about with not opening yourself up to accusations from the devil, uh, in terms of your integrity.

[28 : 29] Uh, I think obviously we, we always confess our sin. He's faithful and just forgives our sin and purifies us and cleanses from all and righteousness. We do miss a commitment, um, and we can trust in that.

Um, but we want, but I really think there's, there's this bank of joy that you can, every time you make, you make a commitment and you keep it to yourself or to someone else, you're putting a dime or you're putting a dollar or you're putting a five spot into your bank of joy that is building up, uh, through making, keeping commitments to yourself and others.

And just, I think it builds up emotional fortitude, uh, character fortitude. Uh, and I think that just helps to build up. Yeah. Cause we, we would both have some experience with pride and sure, but I think we would both say that what we're talking about here, isn't that, you know, that this isn't, it's not so much that when you were talking, when you're talking about a bank of joy that comes from keeping your commitments, it's, it's not the same thing as feeling good about yourself.

Right. No, no, no, no, no. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's something else. I, I, I think of it in some ways as, you know, from the negative side of like this condemnation that you feel, uh, that's appropriate, the shame you feel that's appropriate, uh, guilt and shame can be of God, of course.

Yeah. And I, I think that there's this, this way of like just living life with some integrity and friends, sometimes integrity just means confessing your sin to the Lord.

[29 : 53] When you sin, it doesn't mean it doesn't. I mean, you know, I, I felt like the other day, like I just really knew I just stepped on the Holy Spirit's toes. I'd really just, I just had the wrong thought about something.

And in that moment, the tension there is ignore that and just go on with my day and feel this kind of low grade impairment in my relationship with the Lord or lack of joy or however you want to describe that.

Sure. Or I just, at that moment, just say, Hey, really, really sorry about that. I know that Jesus died for this and I need, I need to be forgiven. Uh, so sometimes integrity is where, where integrity manifests itself.

It's just confessing sin. You know, we're not talking about being perfect as you stipulated. Right. But yeah, I'm with you. I think there's something to this idea of, of kind of keeping your commitments.

Um, yeah, I don't, I don't know. I think that was interesting. Yeah. Swearing to your own hurt and not changing as Psalm 15 says, uh, if you say you're going to do something, do it.

[30 : 55] Um, so yeah, I think that, I think that helps fight against the, the accusations of the devil and build up our joy so we can fight, fight against him and fight for the honor of the Lord. Yeah. And sometimes, you know, I've made commitments that I just did not understand properly.

Yeah. So I have to ask for forgiveness. Yeah. But what I'm doing there is I'm asking for forgiveness. I'm asking for grace and so on and so forth, but I don't want to get too sidetracked because I want to bend into another point and this helps.

So this idea of just showing up and just keeping your commitments, it's actually tied in with a couple of other things on the list, right? So it's, it's tied in with thinking of others and loving others.

It's tied in with fellowship because kind of a fundamental, a fellowship is, is people knowing that you're going to show up people knowing that you're going to keep your commitments so forth.

And of course, part of loving others is, is following through with what you said you were going to do and so on and so forth. So any thoughts about the role of fellowship and also serving others?

[32 : 00] Cause I think those are pretty tied together. Yeah. Um, I just, anytime that I can get outside of myself and focus on other people and loving, serving other people. I mean, you know, the, the cliché Piper talks about the, uh, like you, you feel best when you're like your best feelings are when you're looking at the grand Canyon and you're, you're not thinking about yourself.

Um, I think, I think the best feelings yet grand Canyon is great. Uh, but also just focusing on other people, recognizing evidence is a grace in other people, encouraging other people, building other people up.

I feel like that's a great way to, to build up joy and, and, uh, emotional fortitude and, and fighting against fighting against the devil. I would say that I think you probably agree with this, that, that, you know, life's always spiritual warfare to some extent.

Your easiest days are the days when you're completely outside of yourself. Yeah. And your hardest days are the days when you're not, you know, uh, if you put like neuroticism and self analysis and, you know, over introspection and all about yourself on one end of the scale.

And then you put like just a free and easy day where you're helping someone move, um, you know, and you go from that to like going to dinner with some people that you love and so forth.

[33 : 14] And you just had a full day that wasn't about you. Well, those would chart directly to like your experience of spiritual warfare for the most part. Yeah. So we just did a workout routine a couple of Saturdays ago with, uh, I think there were 12 guys there, uh, in, in someone's basement.

Um, and we got it set up and the leader of the exercise routine got it set up where he worked in teams and we had to, we had to just, we had a minute at each station, um, to get whatever exercise is done and we rotated.

And the whole point was just to contribute to your team, work as fast as you can. And boy, did I forget about myself and what did I push myself harder and that I exercise better. So I wanted to, to build up the team, contribute to the team, uh, and just was, was forgetting myself, uh, through the whole process.

Yeah. It's weird how that, uh, navel gazing is really prime devil territory. Yeah. Yeah. Uh, I've always thought that the fundamental of the wilderness temptation for Jesus was the, was the isolation.

Yeah. Yeah. You know, cause you, you know, I fasted with people before and, you know, anytime I've ever fasted for a long period of time, I've always done it with people. I've, I've just always assumed I'm not going to be able to do this unless I've got a team.

[34 : 29] So, you know, but, but, but I've done hard things with people before and your ability to do hard things is, you know, quadrupled at least, uh, with people. I think the real central piece of the challenge in the, in the wilderness wasn't the fasting.

It was the isolation and the, the, the way that he had to, you know, really just contend as an individual. Yeah. Yeah. On his own.

Yeah. Yeah. But with the word of God, but with the word, with the spirit, yeah. Um, with, with communion with the father and so on and so forth. So, so friends, I think, I think really, uh, this, this is just a tremendous service to you, uh, in your fight against evil and in your love of the good.

And, uh, would you wrap us up by reading, uh, Ephesians six, 10 through 20, and we'll just close out with that. Sure. So finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might, put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

[35 : 40] Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness and a shoes for your feet, having put on the redness given by the gospel of peace.

And all circumstances take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one and take up the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Praying at all times in the spirit with all prayer and supplication to that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

Awesome. Thank you so much for preaching on Sunday and for preparing this list. And this podcast went pretty well. I don't think either of us were sure how this would go. Like I haven't done one with somebody in forever.

Yeah. So I thought it went pretty good. We'll listen to it and see. Yeah. What was it fun? Now I have to make sure I don't accidentally delete it. I feel like there's incredible pressure every time I get done with a podcast that I don't accidentally delete it, but I think I'll figure it out.

All right, everybody. May God bless you. Richly keep you this week in Christ's name. Have a wonderful week.