

Studies in Christianity Private Worship #5

S#1.

Walking Daily With God?

S#2.

Text : **Ephesians 5: 1-21**

A. As a young man I was very competitive.

S#3.

1. Most everything was an occasion to compete ... even bible study.
2. We found a way to race most everything.
 - a. Foot races gave way to bicycle races which gave way to car races.
 - b. We competed in every kind of sports that were common at the time.
 - c. Almost lost a good friend over beating him in a horse race.
3. We competed over physical skills.
 - a. Holding our breath, staring eye-to-eye
 - b. Climbing trees
 - c. Holding hand over a candle, or cigarette between arms
 - d. Weight lifting
 - e. Distance running
 - f. Eating (ate 16 grilled ham & cheese sandwiches in expensive restaurant)
 - g. Shooting

B. From years of competition, I learned that there are some not so obvious factors.

1. One must learn to be skilled at picking his opponents.
 - a. Does he have something to lose or even care?
 - b. Is he relatively evenly matched with you?
2. One must learn to be wise in choosing his battles.
 - a. One would be foolish to compete where he has no skill. (*Me pitching horseshoes*)
 - b. Never rely on a skill that you don't have. *Not a good shot? Don't challenge a shooter.*
3. Take advantage of your rival's weaknesses.
 - a. For Example : Those who are of high pride can be goaded into bad contests.
 - b. I won many races against much guys with high pride and faster cars by goading them into a short race against my 6 cylinder ford w/ high torque rear end. It was quick off the line but done after about a block.

C. The “X-Factors” in being a winner are three fold :**S#4.**

1. Be totally committed to winning.
2. Approach the contest realistically.
3. Do not allow yourself to be distracted.

D. With this lesson we want to apply these “X-Factors” to our Christian race.**I. The easiest race to win is one in which only one is racing.****S#5.****A. We have all had times when we competed against ourselves.**

1. When I was seriously jogging I would run against my best time.
2. When raising pigs I was constantly competing against my previous litter average.

B. We also raced to beat someone when they did not know we were racing them.

1. My neighbor would always have to first tomato in spite of my efforts to beat him.
2. Come to find out my grade school son had told his son I was trying to be first.

C. Satan is like I was when racing to raise a ripe tomato before my neighbor.

1. Spiritually, even if we don’t know it, Satan is involved in a struggle against us.

Eph. 6: 11 – Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. **12** For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. **S#6.**

2. The devil hates you and daily is seeking to destroy your soul.

I Pet. 5: 8 – Be of sober spirit, **be on the alert**. Your adversary, the devil, **S#7.** prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. **9** But **resist him**, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

3. Satan blinds the eyes of unbelievers. *Don’t let him blind you !*

II Cor. 4: 4 – It is veiled to those who are perishing, **4** in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. **S#8.**

4. Satan lies to unbelievers and believers alike.

John 8: 44 – You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires **S#9.** of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

D. Many Christians are going along their merry way unaware of Satan's war.

1. That is why the Apostle Peter admonishes :

I Pet. 5: 8 – Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, **S#10.**
prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

2. He then encourages us :

I Pet. 5: 9 – But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

3. The devil cannot stand against the Christian when resisted to his face.

a. **James 4: 7** – Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

b. The first step in resisting the devil is to “Submit therefore to God.”

***E. We must be aware of the struggle and totally committed to our victory.** **S#11.**

II. We must approach our warfare realistically.**S#12.****A. We must acknowledge the strength of our opponent – the devil.**

1. Overconfidence has caused many superior teams to lose, apply spiritually. **S#13.**

I Cor. 10: 12 – Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

2. The Spirit of God refers Satan as “the god of this world.”

II Cor. 4: 4 – It is veiled to those who are perishing, **4** in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

3. The Holy Spirit says the devil controls this whole world.

I John 5: 19 – We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. **S#14.**

B. The most powerful angel in Heaven respected the power of Satan.

1. **Jude 9** – But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"
2. Jesus was not deferential, but He did not take Satan lightly.

C. Christians must always keep their eyes on their objective and never become overconfident.

1. **I Cor. 10: 12** – ..let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. **S#15.**
2. No Christian EVER matures to the point they are not in danger of falling.
3. Given the right circumstances, there is NO sin you cannot / will not commit.

***D. We must approach our struggle against Satan realistically.** **S#16.**

S#17.

III. We must not allow ourselves to be distracted from the struggles we face.

A. Life is a distraction that lasts as long as one's heart beats.

S#18.

1. Every life is filled with good and needful activities.
 - a. We must learn how to interact with other people, **i.e.**, develop social skills.
 - b. Educate ourselves in preparation for employment so we can stand.
2. Raising our families is a major distraction which can easily consume us.
 - a. Must find a mate.
 - b. Build a nest (*This should be first, but most often isn't.*)
 - c. Reproduce ourselves
3. At this point our children compete with God for preeminence in our lives.
 - a. Family is of supreme importance, but **NOTHING** can come before God.
 - b. Children are quick to notice when they are above God in your life.
 - c. When children grow up knowing they are or something else is above God in your life and they will, in turn, put other things ahead of God in their life.
4. When the number one things matures and leaves the nest, we become anxious to replace them with grandchildren **so God is still left out.**
 (*God will never settle for second place in your life, He is #1 or nothing.*)

S#19.

B. Religious activities can be a distraction from God.

S#20.

1. Canadian Classmate wanted a wife, but would not accept beautiful Christian girl.
 - a. She really liked him and wanted to marry a preachers, but he rejected her.
 - b. She seemed religious; she was at church for every assembly and every activity.
 - c. John said he rejected her because she was “not spiritual, she just likes church.”
 - d. He said, “How can I have a marriage with her when we can't even pray together.”
2. Church can easily become a cultural thing to us.
 - a. When I was young in a small southern town, even the crooks went to church.
 - b. Often those of us who grew up going to church just keep on doing it because ...
3. For many “Christians” church has become a habit.
 - a. Church on Sunday is as automatic as Lawrence Welk on Saturday evening.
 - b. We look forward to the activities (acts of worship) that we have always done.
 - c. We feel a sense of satisfaction when we have completed the services.
 - d. We defend the process as worship, though our heart has not been centered on God.

C. Thus, the series of lessons in which we have been engaged has sought to draw us back to a place where our heart is centered on God.

1. Whether private or public, our worship must truly express our hearts.
2. Because, whether we assemble or worship in our home, God views our hearts.
 - a. **Isa. 29:13** – Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote, S#21.
 - b. Jesus Quoted Isaiah saying :
Matt. 15: 7 – You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: **8** 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me.

D. God chooses people with whom He has a heart-to-heart relationship.

1. God took Enoch to be with Him because He “Walked with God.” **Gen. 5:22-24**
2. God saved Noah’s family because Noah “Walked with God.” **Gen. 6:19**
3. David was chosen to produce the lineage of Christ because he was a man whose heart was compatible with the heart of God.
 - a. **I Sam. 13: 14** – But now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you. S#22.
 - b. Though Saul tried to kill him, respect for God prevented David from killing Saul.
I Sam. 26: 11 The Lord forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed; but now please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go. S#23.

CONCLUSION :

- A. The purpose of this series of lessons is to develop our hearts for God. S#24.
- B. The purpose of this lesson is to emphasize the importance of staying on target.
 1. We must be constantly aware that we are in a struggle and stay totally committed.
 2. We must acknowledge the power of our enemy and fight realistically.
 3. We must not allow life to distract us from our battle for Spiritual survival. S#25.
- C. No matter how religious we are, if God is not #1 in our heart He is not in it. S#26.
- D. Question : Am I seeking daily to make my heart one with God’s heart ?

INVITATION : **Amos 3: 3** – Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? S#27.
Are you walking with God ?

Lesson Text :**Ephesians 5: 1-21**

1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; 2 and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

3 But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; 4 and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them; 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light 9 (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; 12 for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. 14 For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation (*decadence or debauchery*) but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; 21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.