

Understanding War

Small Group Discussion Guide

"Understanding War" -- Pastor Willie Russell

1. SERMON RECAP

Pastor Willie Russell opened by establishing that every believer, whether they recognize it or not, is engaged in a real and ongoing spiritual war. He challenged the congregation to shift their perspective from fighting for a victory to fighting in a victory that Jesus already won at Calvary. Using five practical points drawn from the principles of natural warfare, Pastor Russell equipped the group to engage the enemy with confidence, strategy, and purpose.

2. KEY SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 6:11

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

3. ICE BREAKER

Think of a time you were caught completely off guard by something -- not necessarily spiritual, just in everyday life. What was your first instinct, and how did things turn out?

4. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Point 1 -- Know Your Enemy

Pastor Russell emphasized that spiritual warfare is ultimately a war over souls, and that the enemy's primary strategy is distraction. He pointed out that the enemy uses things like fear, sickness, and offense to pull believers away from their kingdom purpose.

- In your own experience, what kinds of distractions has the enemy used most effectively to pull your focus away from what God has called you to do? How did you recognize what was happening?

Point 2 -- Know the Terrain

Pastor Russell identified the mind as the primary battlefield of spiritual warfare, and he stressed that believers must actively and deliberately set their minds on things above rather than passively allowing circumstances or the enemy to set the agenda.

- What does it look like practically for someone to "set their mind on things above" in the middle of a genuinely difficult season? What habits or disciplines have helped you, or someone you know, stay anchored in that kind of mindset?

Point 3 -- Stay in Constant Communication

Pastor Russell outlined three communication tools God has given every believer: prayer, including praying in the Holy Spirit; reading and meditating on the Word of God; and sharing personal testimony. He noted that neglecting these tools leaves a soldier unprepared for battle.

- Which of those three communication tools -- prayer, the Word, or testimony -- do you find most difficult to stay consistent with, and what tends to get in the way? What has helped when you have stayed consistent?

Point 4 -- Maintain Surprise

Pastor Russell drew from the account of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20 to illustrate that when believers respond to attacks with praise and worship rather than fear and retreat, they introduce an element of surprise that confuses the enemy and opens the door for God to move.

- Can you think of a moment, either in your own life or in someone else's story, when responding to a difficult situation with praise or gratitude rather than fear produced an unexpected result? What made that kind of response difficult, and what made it possible?

Point 5 -- Understand the Economics of the Battle

Pastor Russell made the case that money is the fuel of war, and that the enemy intentionally targets believers' finances because he understands the direct connection between financial generosity and the advancement of the gospel through souls being reached. He challenged the group to see tithes and offerings not merely as a religious obligation but as a strategic weapon in spiritual warfare.

- How does thinking about your giving as a weapon in a war for souls, rather than simply a church expectation, change the way you approach it? What would it look like in your own life to give from that perspective?

5. APPLICATION CHALLENGE

This week, choose one morning before the day gets busy and spend fifteen minutes on the offensive rather than the defensive. Begin by reading one passage of Scripture, then make three or four specific declarations out loud over your day based on what that passage says about who God is and what belongs to you in salvation. Write down the declarations beforehand so they are ready. Come back next week prepared to share what that experience was like.

6. PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that each group member would develop a clear and consistent prayer life and time in the Word, so that they are trained and ready rather than caught unprepared when the enemy attacks.
 - Pray for a shift in perspective across the group regarding finances, that each person would begin to see their generosity as a direct contribution to the war for souls and would trust God to meet them as they take steps of faith in giving.
 - Pray for anyone in the group who is currently under heavy attack, facing fear, discouragement, grief, or financial pressure, that they would experience the peace and strength that come from standing firm in the victory Jesus has already won.
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7. MEMORY VERSE

2 Corinthians 10:4

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds."