

QUESTION: I'm exposed to too many unbelievers here, and I feel "dirty" - like I'm swamped in dirty, obscene, lurid, vulgar speech and conversations. What can I do to battle this?

ANSWER: There are two parts to this answer, or two "fronts" on which you must battle:

(1.) Standing up for Christ and God's standards with those around you; and

(2.) Keeping yourself from falling into temptation or sin by putting on the armor and doing spiritual warfare against the principalities and powers behind the wickedness.

(1.) Standing up for Christ and God's standards with those around you.

Jesus said we are to be light and salt in this dark and wicked world. Light exposes the things hidden in darkness, and salt is a preserver, such as in preserving meat, to prevent it from rotting. As you "**let your light shine**" to others around you, you show them how much they are in darkness. When you speak up against something that is wrong, you are being that "salt" that is attempting to **hold back the corruption** and rottenness in this world. People may feel under conviction when you speak up, and you may suffer persecution for your stand. That persecution may be anywhere from people just making fun of or bad-mouthing you, to losing friends, to actual beatings and physical death in some instances.

- **Matthew 5:10-16** "Blessed are those who are **persecuted for righteousness' sake**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile (say ugly things) and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. **You are the salt of the earth**; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. **You are the light of the world.** A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that **they may see your good works** and glorify your Father in heaven."

God's word tells us that **we are children of LIGHT**, and that we are not to be partakers with those who are in the darkness, but instead, our light should help to **expose their deeds of darkness** for what they are. We are not to participate in "filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting." This includes dirty jokes, "talking smack," making sexual innuendos (suggestive remarks with double meanings), and listening to or showing approval of others' sexual exploits. "Filthiness" includes any and all kinds of pornography. If "everyone is doing it" then you may have to make a stand by asking them to go do it somewhere else, because it is offensive to you and to your God!

- **Ephesians 5:3-13** "But **FORNICATION and all UNCLEANNES**s or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; **neither FILTHINESS, nor FOOLISH TALKING, nor coarse jesting**, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the WRATH of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, **do not be PARTAKERS** with them. For you were **once DARKNESS**, but now you are light in the Lord. **WALK as children of LIGHT** (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), proving what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of

DARKNESS, but rather expose them. For it is **SHAMEFUL even to speak of those things which are done by them in SECRET**. But all things that are EXPOSED are made MANIFEST by the LIGHT, for whatever makes manifest is LIGHT."

God sees and hears all the filthiness and vulgarity that is going on around you. His wrath and judgment are coming, maybe quite soon, against the "sons of disobedience," which means those who have never **come to Jesus Christ for salvation and cleansing**. In the meantime, He is lovingly and patiently calling all those who will come to Him and REPENT of their wicked lifestyle, and will turn their hearts and lives over to Jesus Christ. Unless you come to Jesus, and **His blood purges and cleanses you of every dirty, filthy word you've spoken or thought you've had**, you will be held accountable for each one at the Day of Judgment.

- **Romans 1:18 & 29-32** "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven **against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men**, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." "Being filled with all unrighteousness, **sexual immorality**, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil mindedness; they are whisperers (gossips), backbiters, **haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things**, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful, who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who PRACTICE such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also APPROVE of those who practice them."
- **Matthew 12:34-37** "Brood of vipers! **How can you, being evil, speak good things?** For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that **for every idle word men may speak, they will give account** of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Finally, God calls us to separate ourselves from the evil and filth of the world. That will probably mean that you can't "hang out" with a lot of your old friends, unless you select the place and use it as an opportunity to witness to them. Invite them to go to church with you, or go for coffee and talk about the Lord, but don't go to your old hangouts with the old gang. In the workplace or other environment where you have no choice, you can **kindly but firmly let people know** that certain things are offensive to you, and most of the time, they will leave you alone - they don't like the conviction. The most important thing you can do is to PRAY for those people who are using the Lord's name in vain, using filthy language, telling dirty jokes, and so on. Prayer is the mightiest weapon you have!

- **II Corinthians 6:17-18 & 7:1** "Therefore come out from among them and **be separate**," says the Lord. '**Do not touch what is unclean**, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, **let us CLEANSE ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting HOLINESS in the FEAR of GOD.**"
- **Psalms 1:1-2** "Blessed is the man who **does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly**, nor stands in the way of sinners (hangs out with them), nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night."

(2.) Keeping yourself from falling into temptation or sin by putting on the armor and doing spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness.

Putting on the ARMOR is the AWARENESS and KNOWLEDGE of WHO you are IN CHRIST. **You must ARM YOURSELF with that knowledge** (see I Peter 3:22-4:2) - knowledge of your POSITION in CHRIST, your righteousness in Him, and the KNOWLEDGE that you are a NEW CREATION in Christ Jesus. In Col. 3:10 & Eph.4:23-24 is it called PUTTING ON the new man

(the "new creation" that you are in Christ). The individual pieces of the armor are specific areas where you NEED TO KNOW who you are and what resources you have available to you in Jesus Christ. If you do not know WHO YOU ARE as a believer in Jesus Christ, or maybe you're just shaky on some points, you MUST get into the word of God and renew your mind! There is no substitute, there is no short cut to renewing our minds with the word of God.

- **Colossians 3:10** "And have **put on the NEW MAN** who is **RENEWED in KNOWLEDGE** according to the image of Him who created him."
- **Ephesians 4:23-24** "And **be RENEWED in the spirit of your MIND**; and that **YOU put on the NEW MAN**, which was **CREATED** according to God, in righteousness and true **HOLINESS**."
- **Ephesians 6:10-18** "Finally, my brethren, be **STRONG** in the **LORD**, and in the power of His **MIGHT**. **Put on the whole ARMOR of God**, that you may be able **to STAND AGAINST the wiles (tricks) of the DEVIL**. For we do **NOT** wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (demonic forces in the atmosphere). 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. Stand, therefore, having girded your waist with **TRUTH**, having put on the **BREASTPLATE** of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the **SHIELD** of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **WORD** of the Spirit, which is the **WORD** of God."

Any Christian has the right and authority to use the name of Jesus and resist the devil, but not all Christians are **PREPARED** for battle. **The first condition is to SUBMIT yourselves to God**, before you can **RESIST** the **DEVIL**, and have him flee from you (James 4:7). Paul also compared it to the athlete who strips down of **ALL** excess weight and entanglements in order to run the race. If you are not prepared for battle by being completely **SURRENDERED** (submitted) to God in every area of your life, you will be open to attack from Satan (see I Peter 5:7-8).

- **II Timothy 2:4** "No one **engaged in warfare** entangles himself with the affairs of this life...."
- **Hebrews 12:1-2** "Let us **lay aside every WEIGHT**, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **RUN** with endurance the **RACE** that is set before us, looking unto Jesus..."
- **I Peter 5:7-8** "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary **the devil walks about** like a roaring lion, **seeking whom he MAY devour**. **RESIST him**, steadfast in the faith...."

Before you can put on the armor and resist the devil, you must also confess your sins to God, and **REPENT** of anything that is not pleasing to Him. Repent means to **turn around and go the opposite way** from what you were going. If you aren't willing to repent and submit to God, you might as well forget about resisting the devil. Bitterness, resentment, and not being willing to forgive are also sin, so you must **FORGIVE those who have offended you or HURT YOU**. Another sin that sometimes gets overlooked (denial?) is **PRIDE**. You may not think you have a problem with pride. Pride is not just thinking you are better than others, but it can also be **holding onto YOUR OWN will - YOUR right to make YOUR OWN decisions**. You must **SUBMIT** yourself and **SURRENDER** yourself entirely to God, becoming a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1-2) by sacrificing and **turning your WILL over to God** completely.

- **James 4:6** "But He gives more grace. Therefore He says, '**God resists the PROUD**, but gives grace to the **HUMBLE**.'"
- **I John 1:9** "If we confess our sins, **He is faithful** and just **to FORGIVE us our sins**, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- **James 4:7-8** "Therefore SUBMIT to God. **RESIST the devil** and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. **CLEANSE your hands, you SINNERS**; and **PURIFY your HEARTS**, you double-minded."

Another big part of spiritual warfare and **resisting temptation** is taking your thoughts captive (controlling your thoughts). This goes together with holding up the "shield of faith" and putting out the flaming arrows that the enemy shoots at you. You need to cast out wrong thoughts and take them captive to the obedience of Christ. I believe Jesus Himself gives us an example of how to do this in Matthew 16:21-23. Peter had tried to tell Jesus that He wouldn't have to go to the cross and die (same temptation that Satan gave Him in the wilderness, Matt. 4:8-10). Jesus immediately RECOGNIZED that suggestion was AGAINST the will of God for Him, and He said, "**Get behind Me, Satan!** You are an offense to Me, for **you are not mindful of the THINGS of GOD**, but the things of men." You could say something like this, "I command these thoughts to get out of my mind, in the name of Jesus! These thoughts (suggestions, temptations, negative thoughts) are AGAINST God's will, and I WILL NOT entertain these thoughts." Then immediately, replace those thoughts with the TRUTH from God's word regarding that particular temptation or doubt, by saying Scriptures out loud! With your FREE WILL, **make a DECISION** and **CHOOSE to believe God's word ahead of time**, BEFORE you get in the middle of some crisis, or you will end up **believing your emotions** and going with your feelings. Get some Scriptures ready to quote OUT LOUD (either memorize them or write them down) when doubts, accusations, fears and evil thoughts of any kind come to you. This is your "way of escape"!

- **II Corinthians 10:3-5** ".....the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (merely human), but mighty through God to the **pulling down of strongholds**; casting down imaginations, and every high thing (thoughts, lies from Satan) that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity EVERY THOUGHT** to the OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST."
- **I Corinthians 10:13** "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, **but with the temptation will also make a way of escape**, that you may be able to bear it."