

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

The Art of War
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Want to do something with your small group?** How about a Sushi Party? April 7, 7:30-10 PM. For more information, visit <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/1590/>.
- **Small Group Essentials Training, Part II** – Saturday, May 20, 8-11:30 AM, includes breakfast. Topics to be discussed are Leading Difficult People, Effective Conflict and Confrontation, Leadership 101 – How Leadership Works, and Raising Up the Next Generation of Leaders. RSVP by May 12 to andrewr@therocksandiego.org or 619.226.7625 x242.
- **Do you have the gift of administration?** Are you available during normal business hours? Are you interested in volunteering to help the Small Group Staff with administrative duties? If so, contact Carolyn York at carolyny@therocksandiego.org or 619.226.7625 x247.
- For all other Rock Announcements please go to <http://www.therocksandiego.org/announcements/> or see the Rock Event Calendar at <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/>.

MEMORY VERSE

- *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.* I Corinthians 9:27

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – THE ART OF WAR

Getting Started

The 1998 blockbuster movie “Saving Private Ryan” tells the story of a group of soldiers who are sent behind enemy lines to retrieve a soldier (Private Ryan) whose three brothers were killed in battle.

In one scene the eight soldiers who were sent to find Private Ryan pass through a town in ruins from enemy bombing. As they move down one street the soldiers happen upon a French couple and their daughter who still live in a half-destroyed building. When the father pleads with the men to take his daughter to safety one of the soldiers climbs the rubble and takes her in his arms. Captain Miller (the Tom Hanks character) scolds the soldier for taking the little girl and carries the girl himself back to her parents. Then tragedy strikes.

Next, the movie switches to the viewpoint of a German sniper who targets the rescuing soldiers through the scope of his rifle. In the confusion of trying to help this family the soldiers lose track of where they are—the middle of a town saturated with enemy soldiers. As they argue about what to do next they stand in the open, exposed and vulnerable. A moment later a shot rings out and the soldier who climbed the rubble to save the girl falls dying from the sniper’s bullet.

It is one of the most compelling scenes in the entire movie. A soldier on a mission *loses track of his context*. Somehow, in some way, he forgot the danger of warfare. He acted as if he had forgotten that the dangers of battle were all around him.



There is an old adage that says, “The worst thing is not being in a battle. The worst thing is being in a battle and not knowing you’re in one.” That’s the mistake the soldier in this movie made *and that’s the mistake you and I are in danger of making*. God tells us in the Bible that we are locked in an epic war and we don’t have the ability to see it because it isn’t being waged in the physical world. In other words, *it is easy to forget our context*. With that in mind, think through and discuss the following questions.

1. Think about the above story for a moment and talk it over with your group members. Did you see “Saving Private Ryan” and do you remember that scene in the movie? What are the implications of being in a battle and not knowing it?
2. The Bible tells us we *are* in a battle—a very serious battle. How does 1 Peter 5:8 describe the one who is raging war against us?
3. Think back to the movie scene again. 1 Peter 5:8 tells us that we are being stalked just like the sniper hunted the soldiers. Satan does a superb job of making us forget, doubt, or not take seriously this war. Consider the world we live in—how does the world distract us from recognizing and taking seriously the battle we are in?

Digging Deeper

Even though Satan works hard to distract us from the battle we are in, God’s word has given us the context, information, and tools we need to fight back.

4. What do these passages tell us about our enemy?
 - ♦ Genesis 3:5
 - ♦ John 8:42-44
5. What do these passages tell us about the battle we are in?
 - ♦ James 1:2–18
 - ♦ 2 Corinthians 4:8–12
 - ♦ 2 Corinthians 10:3

The Devil is the Deceiver (Text taken from <http://net-burst.net/tough/holy.htm>)

“Satan is a con artist. He wants to rip you off, cheating you out of everything that is rightfully yours. He’s the enemy of everything good, hating you with all his filthy fury. He offers the soft,

warm bomb that will explode your life into a million pieces. He generously gives momentary relief and fun that leads to deeper bondage and torment; the shortcut to heaven's ecstasy that ends in hell. With Christ having rendered all of Satan's weapons inoperative against Christians, the Enemy has nothing left but psychological warfare – illusions, false accusations, attempted brainwashing.

Suppose you were a soldier at war, and an evil enemy had the opportunity to attempt brainwashing you. The enemy would try to wear you down by repeatedly putting thoughts into your mind that the side you serve:

- *is wrong, or not worth serving*
- *will lose the war, or is not strong enough to protect you*
- *has rejected or abandoned you, or does not care about you.*

The enemy would also try to:

- *isolate you*
- *make you feel useless*
- *destroy all hope*

That's the diabolical enemy you face everyday. He's the master of the half truth."

6. Think about the psychological tactics listed above. Can you recognize any of those being used against you in your life?
7. What "half-truths" has the devil told you? How about outright lies—what is Satan trying to get you to believe?

Bringing it Home

If Satan's primary weapon against us is psychological warfare, then we must *prepare our minds for action!* (I Peter 1:13-14)

8. How do these verses empower you to fight the message Satan plants in your mind?
 - ♦ Ephesians 5:1-2; 8-21
 - ♦ Philippians 3:20-21
 - ♦ Colossians 1:17-23
 - ♦ Hebrews 12:1
 - ♦ Romans 5:7-8
9. What is one thing you can do to stay clear on the fact that you are in a battle and that warfare is happening all around you?