

4. Spiritual Warfare

Introduction

Successful fishermen know their fish. They know it is not just a matter of putting *Bait* on a hook and hoping for the best. No. They *study* their prey to determine the most enticing bait and how best to dangle that bait before their target. *Successful Fishermen* don't leave much to chance.

A similar thing happens in the *spiritual world*. There, **Christians** are the *Prey*, **Satan** the *Fisherman*, and the **World** his *Bait*. **Satan** knows the best *Bait* to use to ensnare each **Christian**, and how best to present it. Christians who understand *the Devil* and his schemes will be better equipped to withstand his attacks!

Our Adversaries

The Christian is Opposed by Three Enemies.

The World: *a system of thinking and values* that oppose **God's Truth**.

The Sinful Nature: that *nature* within us that opposes **God's Will**.

Satan: *a spirit being* who opposes **God's Rule**.

The World

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives for ever."

1 John 2:15-17

✓ Underline God's command concerning our relationship with the world.

Love means to *value* or *cherish* something or someone.

✓ Frame each of three things in the world.

✓ Underline why we should not value the world.

✓ Underline why we should value God instead.

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

1 Timothy 6:10

✓ Frame what is the *"root of all kinds of evils"* according to 1 Timothy 6:10.

✓ Underline what can happen when we *"love money"*.

Note: Money, *by itself*, is not the root of evil as many believe this verse to say, but rather it is the *love* of money!

When you became a Christian, you automatically made three enemies - The World, The Sinful Nature & Satan. You also allied yourself with the One True God who will one day destroy your adversaries and their power.



James 4:4

- ▶ How would you define each of the three things in the world?
- ▶ Why does the world present such a strong temptation for Christians?
- ▶ How are the things of the world temporary?

- ▶ What evil have people done for the love of money?
- ▶ How can the love of money affect our faith in God, and even bring us grief?

The Sinful Nature

“For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.”
Galatians 5:17

- ✓ Circle the *one* word that describes the *relationship* between the *Sinful Nature* and the *Spirit*.
- ✓ Underline the *result* of this conflict.

Resisting the Sinful Nature

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”
Galatians 5:16

- ✓ Frame what we are commanded to do in *Galatians 5:16*.
- ✓ Underline the *result* of obeying this command.

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

Colossians 3:1-2

- ✓ Underline all we are to do according to *Colossians 3:1-2*.

Satan

Satan Described

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”
1 Peter 5:8

- ✓ Circle the *one word* that describes the devil in relation to us.
- ✓ Underline what the devil is *compared* to.
- ✓ Frame *two attitudes* we must have when combating the devil.

“And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”
2 Corinthians 11:14

- ✓ Frame Satan’s *disguise* in *2 Corinthians 11:14*.

As an ‘angel of light’ Satan is able to *deceive* and *seduce* Christians. That is why we must be “*self-controlled and alert*” to his schemes and deceptions!

“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”
John 8:44

- ✓ Frame the ways Jesus describes the devil in *John 8:44*.

Jesus repeatedly calls the devil a liar. Satan’s *primary goal* is to *deceive* us and to *seduce* us to believe his lies. (See *Genesis 3:1-5* for examples of Satan’s deceptions.)

 Mark 14:38

- ▶ Describe a conflict between the sinful nature and the Spirit in your own life?

Live by the Spirit

When we live by the Spirit, it is **impossible** for the sinful nature to exert itself. But the choice is ours!

- ▶ How does who we are affect what we do? Christians are called “saints” in the Bible. What do saints do?
- ▶ What does it mean to set our hearts and minds on things above?

Satan = Adversary
Devil = Slanderer

Satan’s Origin

Read *Ezekiel 28:12-15*

Note all the superlatives God uses to describe Satan in this passage that most theologians believe is a description of Satan’s origin. In light of Satan’s beauty and perfection, what “wickedness” do you think was found in him?

Read *Isaiah 14:12-14*

Observe and Describe the desires that filled Satan’s heart before his fall from God’s heaven. Why do you think he had these desires? How do they relate to Sin?

- ▶ What were some lies Satan used to seduce Eve in *Genesis 3:1-5*?
- ▶ What are some lies Satan uses to deceive people today? How does Satan get us to doubt God?

► Resisting the Devil's Attacks

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:1-4

- ✓ Underline the devil's temptation in v 3.
- ✓ Underline how Jesus responded to the devil's temptation.

Notice that Jesus resists temptation by *declaring God's Word out loud*. God's Word is *God's Sword* (Ephesians 6:17) and *proclaiming* it shines God's light on Satan's lies and eliminates their power to seduce us!

► Guard Your Thoughts

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

- ✓ Frame what *divinely empowered weapons* are for.
- ✓ Underline what it means to "*demolish stronghold*".

The word "stronghold" literally refers to a *fort* or *castle*. It also came to mean the "*arguments and reasons*" we use to *fortify* an opinion against an opposing idea.

- ✓ Underline what kind of *arguments* are referred to here.
- ✓ Frame *why* we are to take every thought captive.

"and do not give the devil a foothold."
Ephesians 4:27

Every time we sin against God, we give Satan an opening in which to gain a hold of our lives. The word "*foothold*" refers to a place or region marked off from the surrounding area. The devil is looking to control our lives a "*foothold*" at a time! *The secret is not to give him even an inch!*

Application

Parry Satan's temptations for us to doubt and disobey God by utilizing the *Sword of the Spirit ~ God's Word*. **Look up and match** the Scriptures on the right with the *lies* and *temptations* of Satan on the left:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. You really can't do it. | a. 1 Peter 5:6 |
| 2. You're worthless! | b. Philippians 4:19 |
| 3. You really can't trust God. | c. Romans 5:8 |
| 4. Sexual Immorality | d. 2 Timothy 2:13 |
| 5. Pride | e. Philippians 4:13 |
| 6. Material Needs | f. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 |

As you experience temptations to doubt or disobey God, search God's Word for *His Truth* so that you might draw *His Sword* to fend off Satan's attacks! *Memorize Scripture* in order to be ready the next time you're tempted!



► From Jesus' response, what is the real reason behind Satan's temptation? How does Christ use God's Word in parrying Satan's temptation? How was Christ able to recite the appropriate Scripture, and do it so quickly?

► What does it mean to "demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God"?

► What are some *arguments and reasons* that oppose the *knowledge of God*?

► What does it mean to "*take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*"?

► According to *Philippians 4:8*, what are the only types of thoughts we are allowed to pass through our minds?

► How do we do this?

"Foothold" = *topos* (Greek)
Where we get our English word *topography*.

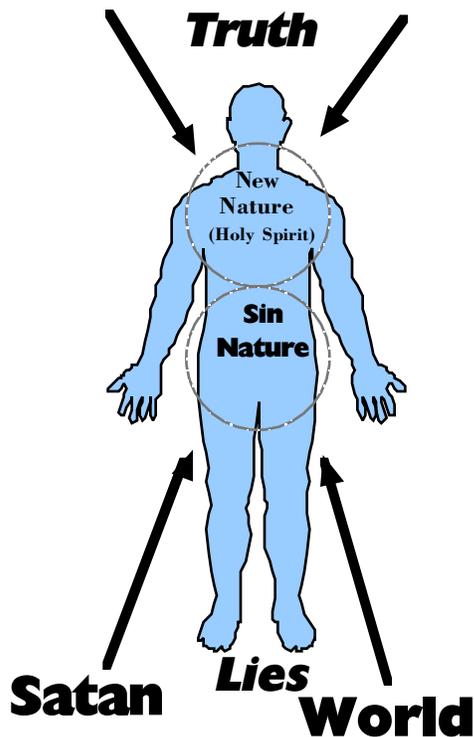
► What are some areas Satan tries to gain a "foothold" in our lives according to Ephesians 4:26 & 2 Corinthians 2:10-11?

► What are some other areas Satan tries to gain a "foothold"?

We Belong to God

One basis for guarding our thoughts is the fact that God owns us (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)! We are simply stewards of our minds and bodies. We do not have the right to allow either Satan or the Sin Nature to dictate what we can think or do! God, who possesses us and loves us as no other, has dictated the limits, and by His love, we are constrained to obey Him!

GOD Word



Under the Influence!

Victory in Spiritual Warfare depends on our *awareness* of the forces that seek to dominate us.

Satan uses the World to entice the **Sin Nature** to bring us under its influence. Like the *Fisherman* we began with, **Satan** baits his hook with the empty promises of the **World** to tempt our **Sinful Nature**. *Once he gets us to bite and swallow his "line", we're hooked!*

God uses His Word and the **Holy Spirit** within us to enable our **New Nature** to live *victoriously for Christ*. When we trust God's Word and live by His Spirit, *we cut Satan's line and free ourselves from his deceptions!*

When Under Attack!

Stop & Pray!

Don't allow your *emotions* or *physical desires* to control your decisions when temptation strikes. Instead, **Stop** and **Pray!** *Focus your Mind and Heart on God!* Then allow Christ's Spirit to *Live* in you! (*Psalm 46:10 & Mark 14:33*)

Resist the Devil!

Draw the Sword of the Spirit, the *Word of God*, to cut through Satan's lies. **Memorizing God's Word** allows you to bring it to bear quicker, and *the more you know, the bigger your Sword!* **Declare God's Word** out loud as you confront Satan's lies, and *fight back!* (*James 4:7, Ephesians 6:13-17 & Psalm 119:11*)

Stand Your Ground!

Determine to stand against Satan's quest to defeat you and turn you against God. *Affirm that your citizenship is in Heaven and declare your allegiance to the King of Kings!* (*Ephesians 6:10-13*)

Affirmation

1. God is Greater than all my enemies.
2. God is my Protector.
3. I will guard my heart and my mind.
4. I will stand my ground.
5. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (*Phillipians 4:13*)

A Prayer

"Lord, You are the omnipotent God and Your enemies are helpless before You! May your Spirit empower and enlighten me that I might resist the temptations of Satan, the deceptions of the World, and the lusts of the Sin Nature! Amen"