

Spiritual Warfare

How Does The Enemy Make War?

Prayer School

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Key Scripture:

Ephesians 6:10-13

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” (ESV)

Battle Strategies

How Does The Enemy Make War?

Paul says the devil uses “*schemes*” that we should prepare to stand against. These schemes are methods, or strategies, the devil uses to lead us to our eternal death.

1. Accusation

The name “*devil*” actually means “*accuser*.” One of the devil’s primary tactics against believers is to accuse and condemn.

A. Satan Accuses God to Us.

Genesis 3:4-5

- In the garden, Satan accused God’s motives to Eve regarding the consequence of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:
- “*But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’”*
- He planted the seed of doubt in her mind about God’s goodness and faithfulness.

B. Satan accuses us to God.

He tempts us to sin until we do it. Then he runs to God and accuses us to Him!

Revelation 12:10

“... the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.”

C. Satan accuses us in our own minds.

Matthew 4:3, 6 “If you are the Son of God...”

- Satan will challenge our identity with God, our salvation. He also works to revive our guilt and shame.
- We must understand that temptation is not sinning. Demonic forces work to condemn us over every temptation we face, as though we had already embraced and acted on it.
- The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin but never condemns us – He speaks the truth to us in the love of God.

D. Satan accuses others to us.

- He sows discord and disunity among us. ‘Divide and conquer’ is not a military or political strategy; it’s a demonic one!
- **1 Timothy 6:4-5**
“... an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth...”
- We should be careful what thoughts we accept about each other.
- **1 Corinthians 13** says we are to “*believe the best*” of one another.

2. Deception

John 8:44

“[The devil] does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

- A. We've seen that Satan is the god of this world. Because he's the father of lies, the world is filled with lies about creation, sexuality, what defines success, beauty, wisdom, and righteousness.

The world is full of depression and hopelessness because hope is built on truth. Hope built on lies never comes to pass, making hearts sick!

- B. Satan deceives people about the Word of God.

1 Timothy 4:1

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons."

Some wrong Biblical teachings are actually demonically inspired. The antidote to lies is truth – this is why we must immerse ourselves in THE truth, the Word of God!

3. Persecution / Fear

2 Timothy 3:12

"Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

Jesus defined persecution:

Matthew 24:9-10

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another."

Satanic forces will use fear, the natural human aversion to experiencing harm, to turn us aside from following the Lord.

- Persecution can thwart the active spread of the gospel to some degree.
- Fear of persecution can keep us from ever getting started.

4. Affliction

2 Thessalonians 1:4

"Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions **and in the afflictions** that you are enduring."

John 16:33

"In the world you will have tribulation..."

In addition to persecution, there are other afflictions or hardships that all humans face – illness, financial hardships, accidents, etc. The devil uses these troubles to discourage us.

As with persecution, fear of affliction can distract and paralyze us into inactivity.

5. Our Flesh

1 Peter 2:11

“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.”

Our flesh is the unredeemed part of our nature that temptation works through. When we yield to the desires of our flesh, we open the door for the devil to work in us.

Ephesians 4:26-27 talks about how giving in to anger, for example, gives opportunity to the devil.

6. The World

Romans 12:2 *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”*

- God uses His Word, full of truth, to renew our minds to think like Him.
- The devil uses the world, full of lies, to twist our minds to think like him!

James 4:4

“Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

We get a clear picture of this as Jesus is telling his disciples that He was going to be arrested and killed...

Matthew 16:22-23

“And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.’ But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.’”

Peter’s worldly thinking about what Jesus’ mission involved made him an enemy – THE enemy – to the mission!