Introduction

Many people become Christians with the mistaken idea that everything is going to be easy and pain free from that point forward. The rude awakening they receive is often a shock that can take years to overcome. The Christian life, they discover, is all-out total war. It is a constant and ferocious battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Those who do not understand these enemies and their tactics cannot effectively fight them.

God calls every Christian to the goal of righteousness and holiness. Pleasing God is our high calling in this life and the next. Our Christian life does not begin and end with our justification. We are to press forward in sanctification, always looking forward to our final glorification when the remnants of the sinful flesh will finally and completely be put to death. As the Apostles’ Creed states it, we believe in and look forward to the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

As Christians, we are called to bear one another’s burdens. May this series assist and encourage you with the burdens you bear and the battles you face in your walk with Christ.

Sincerely,

R.C. Sproul
The Goal of Christian Living

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION
What is the “big idea” of Christianity? When the Reformers answered that question, they said that the essence of the Christian life is to live coram Deo—“before the face of God.” That is, the essence of the Christian life is to live all one’s life in the presence of God. In this lesson, Dr. Sproul examines what it means to live in the presence of God, to be a seeker of the kingdom of God every day of one’s life.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. To begin to understand what it means to live life coram Deo—“before the face of God.”
2. To be able to explain the importance of pressing on toward the goal of the Christian life.

QUOTATIONS
Let us not cease to do the utmost, that we may incessantly go forward in the way of the Lord; and let us not despair because of the smallness of our accomplishments.
—John Calvin

Resolved, never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.
—Jonathan Edwards

LECTURE OUTLINE
I. What is the “big idea” of the Christian life?
   A. According to Luther, the essence of the Christian life is to live one’s life coram Deo.
      i. Coram Deo literally means “before the face of God.”
ii. One must live all of life openly in the presence of God, under the authority of God, and to the honor and glory of God.

B. Jesus says, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).
   i. We sin nevertheless.
   ii. We live in the absence of God, in defiance of God, and to our own glory.

C. We must press forward through those times of frustration and paralysis in our spiritual growth.
   i. Often when we reach a difficult plateau, we quit.
   ii. The only way to advance, though, is to persevere through that level of paralysis.

II. All of us are called to please God.
   A. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).
   B. The violent take the kingdom by force (Matthew 11:12).
   C. The Parables of the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8ff.), the Pearl of Great Price (Matthew 13:45–46), and the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11ff.) illustrate the importance of pressing into the kingdom of God.
   D. So many times we start something without ever finishing it.
   E. What pleases God is someone who signs up for the duration.
   F. According to Jonathan Edwards, “The seeking of the kingdom of God is the chief business of the Christian.”

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What Latin phrase did Martin Luther use to express the “big idea” of the Christian life?
   a. Extra ecclesiam nulla salus
   b. Coram Deo
   c. Contra mundum
   d. Simul iustus et peccator

2. How many Christians live all of life in the constant sense of the presence of God and do everything in submission to the authority of God?
   a. All Christians
   b. Only those Christians who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit
   c. Only a minuscule number of perfect saints
   d. No Christians

3. When Jesus says that “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force,” what does He mean, according to Dr. Sproul?
   a. The enemies of the kingdom of God use violence to try to oppose God's reign.
   b. The kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God are locked in an eternal and violent struggle for the souls of men.
c. Those who mean business about pleasing God are not casual in their pursuit of the kingdom.
d. The kingdom of God is to be advanced on earth through the use of violent means.

4. What is the main point of emphasis in the parables of the Prodigal Son, the Lost Coin, and the Pearl of Great Price?
   a. The growth of the kingdom of God
   b. The gracious character of the kingdom of God
   c. The importance of pressing into the kingdom of God.
   d. The law of the kingdom of God

BIBLE STUDY

1. What do the following parables teach us about seeking God’s kingdom?
   a. Matthew 13:45–46
   b. Luke 15:8–10

2. What do the following passages of Scripture teach us about the Christian’s relation or approach to the kingdom?
   a. Matthew 6:33
   b. Luke 11:2
   c. John 2:17

3. What is righteousness? Before you read the following verses, write out a brief definition in your own words. Then read and briefly summarize the biblical understanding of righteousness.
   a. Proverbs 21:21
   b. Isaiah 1:17
   c. Micah 6:8
   d. Matthew 25:34–40

4. Some of the following verses speak of the kingdom of God as coming. Others speak of it as already a present reality and still others as something for which we ought to strive. Do these verses relate in a consistent way? If so, how?
   a. Matthew 3:2
   b. Matthew 6:33
   c. Romans 14:17
   d. Hebrews 12:28
   e. 2 Peter 1:10–11
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do we so often strive for spirituality and piety but not righteousness?
2. Must we feel God’s presence in order to live coram Deo? How can we foster an awareness of God’s presence?
3. What motivates you to live a life pleasing to God? What should motivate you?
4. Why does our enthusiasm and zeal for God’s kingdom sometimes cool off? What specific things have dampened your enthusiasm for seeking God’s kingdom?

APPLICATION

1. Read Galatians 5:19–23 and study the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Limiting yourself to one choice from each list, choose those that you believe God would have you pay particular attention to in the coming week. During the week, devote an extra amount of time in prayer specifically directed toward those two areas.

2. What things in your life do you find yourself doing for your own glory, rather than for the glory of God? How can you change this so that you are doing these things for God’s glory?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Bridges, Jerry. The Practice of Godliness
Bridges, Jerry. The Pursuit of Holiness
Beware the Leaven of the Pharisees

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

When Jesus said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you,” He was indicating that the chief goal of the Christian life is righteousness. In this lesson, Dr. Sproul examines the meaning and importance of seeking true righteousness.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the level of righteousness to which Christians are called.
2. To understand the meaning of righteousness.

QUOTATIONS

*It appears, from the nature and design of the ordinances and duties which God has appointed as means and expressions of true religion, that true religion lies very much in the affections.*

—Jonathan Edwards

*Holiness is the end of redemption, for Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.*

—Charles Hodge

LECTURE OUTLINE

I. What does God want most?
   A. The chief goal of the Christian life is righteousness.
      i. Jesus said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).
ii. Here, the word “first” does not simply mean first in a sequence of events, but foremost in terms of importance—the top priority.

B. We must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20).
   i. “Unless” defines a necessary condition of salvation.
   ii. By faith in Christ we receive the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.
   iii. Luther used the phrase *Simul iustus et peccator*, which means “at the same time just and sinner.”
   iv. Genuine and authentic faith produces the fruit of righteousness.

II. How righteous were the scribes and Pharisees?
   A. Pharisees, like the Puritans, wanted to restore godliness to the nation.
   B. The word “Pharisee” means “set-apart one,” and the Pharisees’ sole purpose in life was the pursuit of righteousness.
   C. The Pharisees were zealous for evangelism (Matthew 23:15).
   D. The Pharisees paid their tithes scrupulously (Matthew 23:23).
      i. Only a small percentage of professing Christians pay their tithes today.
      ii. How can someone seek first the kingdom of God and, at the same time, rob the kingdom of God?
      iii. Unless we are faithful in little things, it is very unlikely that we’re going to be faithful in the weightier matters of the law.
   E. The Pharisees were serious students of the Bible (John 5:39–40).
   F. The Pharisees prayed long and diligently (Matthew 6:5, 16).
   G. The Pharisees’ religion was strictly external; they were hypocrites.
      i. Godliness is obeying the letter and the spirit of the law—the external and the internal.
      ii. Authentic righteousness involves obedience to the commands of God.

III. Righteousness means doing what is right.
   A. We are to seek to do what is well-pleasing to God because it is good and is the right thing to do.
   B. Then and only then do we exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the chief goal of the Christian life?
   a. Righteousness
   b. Spirituality
   c. Morality
   d. Piousness

2. In Matthew 6:33, what is the meaning of the Greek word *protos*—translated “first”?
   a. Before something in space
   b. Before something in time
   c. Before something in terms of importance
   d. Both a and c
3. What statement does Dr. Sproul say is one of the most frightening to have ever come from the mouth of Christ?
   a. If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.
   b. Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.
   c. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.
   d. Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

4. Dr. Sproul says that the Pharisees were the ancient counterparts to what group of people?
   a. The Founding Fathers
   b. The Roman Catholic Church
   c. The Puritans
   d. Civil magistrates

5. What does the word “Pharisee” mean?
   a. Righteous one
   b. Set-apart one
   c. Fair one
   d. Merciful one

6. Which Old Testament prophet did Dr. Sproul cite because the prophet taught that withholding one’s tithe was the equivalent of robbing God?
   a. Malachi
   b. Obadiah
   c. Micah
   d. Nahum

7. According to the survey cited by Dr. Sproul, what percentage of professing evangelical Christians tithe?
   a. 1%
   b. 4%
   c. 10%
   d. 24%

8. What is the meaning of the Greek word translated “hypocrite”?
   a. One who prays publicly
   b. One who is religious
   c. One who is a playactor
   d. One who is a government official
BIBLE STUDY

1. Read Romans 6:1–2. Since our sins are already forgiven, why does it matter how we live? Why should we strive to live righteously?


3. According to Galatians 2:21, what should we keep in mind about the grace of God in our pursuit of righteousness?

4. Examine the following passages and describe the reasons for which Jesus criticized the Pharisees.
   a. Matthew 23:4
   b. Matthew 23:5–7
   c. Matthew 23:13
   d. Matthew 23:15
   e. Matthew 23:16
   f. Matthew 23:23
   g. Matthew 23:25
   h. Matthew 23:28
   i. Matthew 23:29–31

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why was Jesus so angry with the Pharisees?

2. Why is it so easy for us to dismiss the statement of Jesus that our righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and the Pharisees?

3. In what way has your impression of the Pharisees been changed as a result of this study?

4. How can we resist the danger of reducing the Christian life to externals?

APPLICATION

1. Are there ways in which you have been attempting to make an outward show of your righteousness? Why?

2. In the next week, consider ways in which you have neglected the weightier matters of the law. What steps can you take to rectify this?

3. What kind of changes would be necessary in order to produce authentic righteousness in your life?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Bridges, Jerry. *The Pursuit of Holiness*
The Battle with the World

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

Martin Luther said the Christian struggle for spiritual growth involves battle with three basic enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil. In this lesson, Dr. Sproul examines the Christian battle with the world. He explains what Scripture means when it speaks of the “world” and how the Christian must be in the world but not of it.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the meaning of the biblical use of the term “world.”
2. To begin to understand why the temptation to conform to the world is so seductive.

QUOTATIONS

“The Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have begun thinking less of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at heaven and you get earth thrown in; aim at earth and you get neither.”

—C. S. Lewis

“I looked for the church and I found it in the world; I looked for the world and I found it in the church.”

—Horatius Bonar

LECTURE OUTLINE

I. Christians are involved in warfare that takes place on three fronts.
   A. The triad of enemies that confront the Christian are the world, the flesh, and the devil.
   B. These three are intimately related to each other.
II. The Christian struggles with the world.
   A. In the New Testament, the term “world” is used in more than one way.
      i. It can simply refer to this planet as a geographical location.
      ii. It can also refer to the fallen sphere of this planet—the perspective that
          is anti-God (John 17:12, 15).
   B. Paul said, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing
      of your mind” (Romans 12:2).
   C. To conform means to be a part of the structures of the current world system.
   D. The seductive power of this world is the pressure to conform to the spirit of the
      age, or the zeitgeist.
   E. Nietzsche complained that the nineteenth-century people lived by the dictates of a
      “herd mentality” and that the superman would be the ultimate nonconformist.
   F. Nonconformity is not to be artificial—in other words, nonconformity for the sake
      of nonconformity.
   G. To be transformed means to go above and beyond the structures and standards of
      the present world.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. When Scripture tells Christians to not be conformed to the world, what does the
   word “world” mean?
   a. Planet earth
   b. All human beings
   c. A fallen worldview that is anti-God
   d. All created life

2. In what chapter of Scripture are you prayed for?
   a. John 17
   b. Romans 12
   c. Matthew 8
   d. Luke 10

3. Dr. Sproul says that the Pharisees’ doctrine of salvation can be referred to as sal-
   vation by _____________.
   a. Segregation
   b. Conformity
   c. Faith alone
   d. Mysticism

4. What is the meaning of the German word Zeitgeist?
   a. The superman
   b. Timelessness
   c. Spirit of the age
   d. Conformity
5. What philosopher declared the death of God and advocated something he called biological heroism?
   a. Søren Kierkegaard
   b. David Hume
   c. Immanuel Kant
   d. Friedrich Nietzsche

6. What is the meaning of the German word Übermensch?
   a. Spirit of the age
   b. Superman
   c. World
   d. Conformity

7. Which of the following does Dr. Sproul describe as “superficial types of non-conformity”?
   a. Not dancing
   b. Not going to movies
   c. Not playing cards
   d. All of the above

8. What should Christian education be, according to Dr. Sproul?
   a. Excellent education from a Christian worldview
   b. Studying only the works of other Christians
   c. An education that is sheltered from the pagan philosophies that have been held through the centuries.
   d. None of the above

BIBLE STUDY

1. Read Acts 5:17–40. How did the world react to the faith of the apostles? What was so threatening about the apostles?

2. According to Matthew 5:11–12, how should we react when the world treats us harshly because of our faith?

3. What do the following passages teach us about our relationship to the world?
   a. Matthew 5:16
   b. Matthew 16:25–26
   c. 1 Corinthians 2:12
   d. Ephesians 5:8–9
   e. Colossians 2:20
   f. 1 Thessalonians 5:5–6
   g. James 4:4
   h. 1 John 2:15

4. According to John 17:13–19, what relationship does Jesus want us to have with the world?

5. Read 1 John 5:3–5. What is our most important weapon in our struggle against the world, according to this text?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so attractive for Christians to want to withdraw from the world or separate themselves from it?

2. Why is superficial separation from the world as much of a problem as conformity to the world?

3. What are some of the dominant axioms of the “spirit of the age” today? What world-view is presented by the popular media, the schools, the sciences, the arts, etc.?

4. How can Christians be aware of what is happening in the world without being seduced by it? How should Christians approach music, art, and literature that are not explicitly Christian?

APPLICATION

1. Do you find yourself more tempted to premature separation from the world or conformity to the world? What steps can you take to battle your own temptation without giving in to the opposite extreme?

2. What are some ways in which you find yourself conforming to the world? How can you fight this temptation?

3. What are some ways in which you find yourself being superficially nonconformist? What can you do to renew your mind in this area?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Bayles, Martha. *Hole in Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty & Meaning in American Popular Music*

Billingsley, K. L. *The Seductive Image: A Christian Critique of the World of Film*


Johnson, Phillip E. *Darwin on Trial*

Myers, Kenneth L. *All God’s Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture*

Pearcey, Nancy R. and Charles B. Thaxton. *The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy*

Postman, Neil. *Amusing Ourselves to Death*

Schlossberg, Herbert and Marvin Olasky. *Turning Point: A Christian Worldview Declaration*

Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. *Reading Between the Lines: A Christian Guide to Literature*

Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. *State of the Arts: From Bezalel to Mapplethorpe*

Wilson, Douglas. *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning: An Approach to Distinctively Christian Education*
The Battle with the Flesh

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul writes in Romans that “those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” A misunderstanding of what the Bible means when it speaks of “the flesh” has led to numerous problems in the church. In this lesson, Dr. Sproul examines the Biblical concept of “flesh” and explains what our struggle with it involves.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the biblical concept of “flesh.”
2. To be able to explain why the physical creation is not evil.

QUOTATIONS

Original sin is in us, like the beard. We are shaved today and look clean, and have a smooth chin; tomorrow our beard has grown again, nor does it cease growing while we remain on earth.

—Martin Luther

Though we as Christians are like Christ, having the first fruits of the Spirit, yet we are unlike Him, having the remainders of the flesh.

—Thomas Watson

LECTURE OUTLINE

I. There is a conflict between the flesh and the Spirit.
   A. Augustine lamented the fact that he had committed sin for the sheer joy of doing it.
      i. Vandalism is an example of committing sin for sin’s sake.
      ii. The Holocaust contains many examples of this mentality.
B. Paul speaks of a state of humanity that he calls the “flesh.”
   i. This does not refer simply to the body but to the power of sin in our natural
   fallen humanity.
   ii. There is a war going on between the flesh of man and the Spirit of God.
   iii. The flesh is not totally annihilated at conversion.
   iv. The carnal, or fleshly, mind is at enmity with God, and it cannot please
   God.
C. God does not hate the physical world; He created it and called it “good.”
D. Christianity does not believe in resurrection from the body, but resurrection of the
body.

II. Paul lists the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19–21.
   A. There are physical sins such as drunkenness and adultery.
   B. There are also spiritual sins such as lying, envy, and hatred.
      i. Envy motivates many other sins.
      ii. Envy is destructive to human relationships.
   C. The flesh is a reference to the old fallen nature.
      i. Christians continue to perform works of the flesh when in the Spirit.
      ii. If a person is only flesh without the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, then
         he is outside the kingdom of God.
      iii. If a person has the Holy Spirit indwelling him, he is a spiritual person.
      iv. Paul struggled with the carnal nature, according to Romans 7:14.
      v. The struggle with the flesh will continue for the rest of our earthly
         lives.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who is generally agreed to have been the greatest theologian of the first 1000
   years of the Church?
   a. Augustine
   b. John Calvin
   c. Thomas Aquinas
   d. Origen

2. In what classic Christian book did the church father Augustine explain his
   remorse for the sins of his youth?
   a. The Anti-Pelagian Writings
   b. The Bondage of the Will
   c. The City of God
   d. The Confessions
3. What crime did Dr. Sproul refer to as one of the most selfish of all possible crimes?
   a. Theft
   b. Vandalism
   c. Gossip
   d. Fornication

4. What does the Scripture mean when it speaks of the “flesh”?
   a. The body
   b. Sinful human nature
   c. The mind
   d. The soul

5. According to Scripture, the physical world is ________________.
   a. Evil
   b. An illusion
   c. Good
   d. Neither good nor evil

6. What do we find in Galatians 5:19–21?
   a. Examples of works of the flesh
   b. A list of the fruit of the Spirit
   c. Paul’s personal testimony
   d. A defense of justification by faith alone

7. If a person is only flesh, then that person is ________________.
   a. Without a soul
   b. A typical example of those in the kingdom of God
   c. Probably not in the kingdom of God
   d. Outside the kingdom of God

8. According to Dr. Sproul, who is the best New Testament example of a “carnal” Christian?
   a. Peter
   b. Paul
   c. Timothy
   d. John

BIBLE STUDY

1. Read Galatians 5:19–21, 24; Romans 6:19; 7:5; and 8:1–18. How does the Bible characterize the flesh in these passages? Why is the flesh not to be generally equated with the physical body?
2. What is the nature of the relationship between the Spirit and the flesh, according to Galatians 5:17? Why is this internal struggle a continual battle, according to Romans 7:21–25?

3. Read Romans 8:5–9. What is the difference between living according to the Spirit and living according to the flesh?

4. What kind of relationship do people have with God when they are led by the Spirit, according to Romans 8:12–14?

5. Read Romans 13:12–14. What strategy has God given us for the battle with the flesh?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why has there been so much confusion over the concept of “the flesh”?

2. Why doesn’t God annihilate the flesh at the point of conversion to Christ?

3. Which works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19–21 are most evident in our culture? How are they promoted and encouraged?

4. Why is it wrong to consider the physical creation evil? How do the words and actions of Christians often betray this mistaken notion? How should Christians relate to the physical creation?

APPLICATION

1. Too often we blame our sins on the world or the devil, seeing ourselves as victims of those influences around us. What does this lesson say about our own responsibilities regarding our personal righteousness? Single out one area in which you need to accept personal responsibility and make it a focus of daily prayer throughout the week.

2. This lesson speaks of our engagement in spiritual battle. What are some ways in which you can act as an ally to others in your family? In your church?

3. How are the “works of the flesh” manifested at your workplace? How can you, as a Christian, bring a spiritual mind-set to bear there?

4. Which battles are you dangerously close to losing at this time? Where do you need to concentrate your attention?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Bridges, Jerry. *The Pursuit of Holiness*

Ferguson, Sinclair. *A Heart for God*

Ryle, J. C. *Holiness*

White, John. *The Fight*
The Battle with the Devil

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION
In our modern culture, to speak about Satan is to attract ridicule. Our culture has decided that Satan is a myth, and many Christians have followed this way of thinking. Other Christians have gone to the opposite extreme, virtually attributing to Satan divine attributes, such as omnipresence. In this lecture, Dr. Sproul examines the Biblical teaching about Satan and explains his true power and methods.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. To understand what the Bible teaches concerning the person and power of Satan.
2. To understand some of the reasons why our culture rejects the existence of Satan.
3. To recognize the primary means of attack that Satan uses against the Christian.

QUOTATIONS
The Devil was educated in the best divinity school in the universe, namely the heaven of heavens.
—Jonathan Edwards

Our journey is uphill with a dead body upon our backs, and the Devil is doing what he can to pull us down.
—Philip Henry

LECTURE OUTLINE
I. It is important to affirm the reality of Satan.
   A. People of the sixteenth century, including Martin Luther, had a preoccupation with the reality of Satan.
B. Few believe in a real, personal devil today.
C. We have to consider the source for affirming such realities.
   i. Scripture teaches the reality of Satan.
   ii. There is a profound misunderstanding of medieval history.
   iii. In the Lord's Prayer, we pray for protection from the evil one.
D. Many people believe in an evil “force” rather than an evil “being.”
   i. Forces have no moral capability.
   ii. In the Middle Ages, the church did believe in the reality of Satan and decided that the best way to resist a prideful being was to make fun of him.
   iii. Satan is a created being who is gifted with craftiness and subtlety.
   iv. Satan can appear as an angel of light.

II. Not only is Satan real and clever, but he is also formidable.
A. In Scripture, Christ is called the Lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5)
B. Satan is called “a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).
C. Jesus told the Apostle Peter that he would betray Jesus, saying, “Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat” (Luke 22:31).
D. Satan should never be underestimated because he is stronger, smarter, and more deceptive than any human being.
E. Paul tells us to put on the armor of God so that we can stand against Satan.
   i. The battle goes beyond flesh and blood.
   ii. We're wrestling against cosmic evil in an unseen realm.
   iii. Even though this evil is invisible, it is very real.
F. Christians face two main dangers in dealing with Satan.
   i. One danger is underestimating the power and reality of Satan.
   ii. The other danger is to overestimate his powers and attribute to him characteristics and powers that only God has.
G. Satan's two principal activities in the life of the Christian are tempting him and accusing him.

STUDY QUESTIONS
1. What German word did Luther use to describe the unbridled assault that Satan brought against him?
   a. Übermensch
   b. Heilgeschichte
   c. Zeitgeist
   d. Anfechtung

2. What is the meaning of the Greek word poneros?
   a. Fornication
   b. Evil one
   c. Lion
   d. Battle
3. What did medieval Christians believe Satan’s greatest point of vulnerability to be?
   a. His pride
   b. His ignorance
   c. His indecisiveness
   d. His guilt

4. How did many medieval Christians decide to attack Satan’s point of vulnerability?
   a. By humiliating him
   b. By ignoring him
   c. By denying his threat
   d. By adoring him

5. To what animal are both Christ and Satan compared in different contexts in order to describe strength?
   a. A lion
   b. A tiger
   c. A bear
   d. An elephant

6. What are the two main dangers of dealing with Satan?
   a. Ignoring him and taunting him
   b. Trusting him and believing him
   c. Overestimating him and underestimating him
   d. Believing he exists and acting on that belief

7. What are Satan’s two main methods of attacking believers?
   a. Temptation and physical assault
   b. Temptation and accusation
   c. Physical and mental assault
   d. Accusations and lies

BIBLE STUDY

1. Read 1 Peter 5:8. According to this verse of Scripture, how dangerous is Satan?

2. How does Matthew 6:13 direct us to pray in regard to Satan?

3. Read the following Scriptures and briefly summarize what each says about the activity of Satan.
   a. Genesis 3:1
   b. Job 1:6–7
   c. Zechariah 3:1–5
   d. Matthew 24:24
   e. Mark 1:13
   f. Mark 4:15
   g. Luke 22:31
   h. John 8:44
   i. Acts 5:3
   j. 1 Corinthians 7:5
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is so alluring to non-Christians about the mysterious power of evil as reflected in many films and books?

2. How has our culture generally portrayed Satan? How accurate is this portrayal?

3. How do Christians often underestimate Satan? How do Christians overestimate Satan? What makes it so difficult for Christians to maintain a balanced and Biblical view of Satan? How can we maintain such a view?

4. If Satan is able to disguise himself as an angel of light, how can Christians recognize him?

5. If Satan is a personal, intelligent, and crafty being, why would he fight what he knows to be a losing battle against God?

APPLICATION

1. Where are you most vulnerable to an attack from Satan? What can you do to strengthen your defenses?


FOR FURTHER STUDY

Leahy, Frederick S. *Satan Cast Out: A Study in Biblical Demonology*

Lewis, C. S. *The Screwtape Letters*
Guilt and Forgiveness

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION
The problem of unresolved guilt can affect a person throughout his life, shaping his very personality. In our modern culture, pop psychology has attempted to address this problem, but it is inherently unable to do so. Guilt requires forgiveness, and real forgiveness can come only from God. In this lecture, Dr. Sproul examines the problem of guilt and the forgiveness that is available in Christ.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. To understand the nature of guilt.
2. To understand the nature of true forgiveness.

QUOTATIONS
Poor souls are apt to think that all those whom they read or hear of to be gone to heaven, went thither because they were so good and so holy. Yet not one of them, not any one that is now in heaven (Jesus Christ alone excepted), did ever come thither any other way but by forgiveness of sins.

—John Owen

We need not climb up into heaven to see whether our sins are forgiven: let us look into our hearts, and see if we can forgive others. If we can, we need not doubt but God has forgiven us.

—Thomas Watson

LECTURE OUTLINE
I. Satan’s primary work in the life of the Christian is in accusation.
   A. Through accusation Satan torments the conscience of the believer.
B. Secular psychology sees significance in self-image.
   i. We are a guilt-ridden people.
   ii. Psychiatrists say that the number-one problem they have to deal with is unresolved guilt.
C. At the heart of the biblical message is an announcement of forgiveness.
D. Guilt is one of the human spirit’s most powerful, paralyzing forces.

II. In Zechariah 3, Satan accuses Joshua.
   A. Satan accuses Joshua of being filthy and unfit for the ministry.
   B. God silences Satan.
      i. God snatched Joshua from the fire, just as He also snatches us.
      ii. God saves us while we are filthy.
   C. God replaces the filthy garments with clean ones and removes iniquity.

III. We are called to have assurance of our salvation.
   A. If we do not have assurance, then we are vulnerable to the accusations of the enemy.
   B. The very first fruit of justification is peace with God.
   C. Satan is called the slanderer.
      i. He accuses us of things we have not done.
      ii. Sometimes he accuses us accurately.
   D. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin in order that we might repent.
      i. The Spirit always communicates that He is for you when He convicts you of your sin.
      ii. Real guilt requires real forgiveness.

IV. We need to understand the difference between objective and subjective guilt.
   A. Objective guilt is a transgression of the law of God.
   B. Subjective guilt is how we feel; it is not necessarily related to objective guilt.
   C. The rationalization of guilt will not alleviate actual guilt.
   D. Real guilt needs real forgiveness, which requires real confession and repentance.
   E. God promises to forgive us of our sins when we are truly repentant.
   F. God’s forgiveness is an objective reality that does not depend on our feelings.
   G. Satan cannot lay any charge against the elect.

STUDY QUESTIONS
1. What problem does Dr. Sproul say is most often dealt with by psychiatrists?
   a. High self-esteem
   b. Unresolved guilt
   c. Nihilism
   d. Paranoia
2. In what chapter of Scripture do we find the vision of the confrontation between Satan and Joshua the high priest?
   a. Zechariah 3  
   b. Joshua 3  
   c. Romans 3  
   d. Revelation 3

3. What does Scripture identify as the first fruit of justification?
   a. Faith  
   b. Peace with God  
   c. Regeneration  
   d. Glorification

4. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin in order that we might
   a. Renounce our physical bodies  
   b. Do penance  
   c. Despair  
   d. Repent

5. What is objective guilt?
   a. How we feel about sin  
   b. Rationalization of sin  
   c. Transgression of the law of God  
   d. An excuse for sin

6. What is subjective guilt?
   a. How we feel about sin  
   b. Rationalization of sin  
   c. Transgression of the law of God  
   d. An excuse for sin

BIBLE STUDY

1. Read Zechariah 3:1–4. How did Satan try to hinder Joshua? How did God deal with Joshua’s sin?
2. How do we find forgiveness for our sins, according to Acts 10:43?
3. Read the following passages and briefly explain the interrelatedness of the ideas expressed within them: forgiveness, confession, asking for forgiveness, repentance, restitution, assurance of pardon, cleansing, and restoration to fellowship with God and others.
   a. Psalm 51  
   b. Isaiah 6:1–7  
   c. Zechariah 3:1–7  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does our society tell people to deal with their guilt feelings? How would you evaluate the advice given by our society?

2. What are some of the consequences people experience from the guilt they carry?

3. How can guilt paralyze us in our Christian growth or neutralize us in our service to others?

4. How can we tell the difference between Satan’s accusing us of sin and the Holy Spirit’s convicting us of sin?

APPLICATION

1. Do you have any sins that you need to repent of and confess to God? If so, go now before God in prayer and confess these sins.

2. Do you have assurance of salvation? If not, find a pastor or elder with whom you can talk and pray and try to discover why you lack assurance.

3. If there are people in your life whom you have failed to genuinely forgive because of past offenses against you—real or imagined—you are required by God to forgive them as God has forgiven you. Ask God for the grace to truly forgive them. Then contact those people this week and do what you can to get rid of the fruits of remaining bitterness.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Adams, Jay. *From Forgiven to Forgiving: Learning to Forgive One Another God’s Way*

Bridges, Jerry. *Transforming Grace*

Wilson, Jim. *How to Be Free From Bitterness*