

How the devil works:

Eph. 6:11-

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the **wiles** 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. 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.”

I want to approach this message today with the focus of unraveling the mystery of how the devil attacks people.

- If you understand how the enemy operates, you will understand how he is coming at you with his attacks and you will become able to understand where you are in the process of his attack.

There are five basic words in the New Covenant that reveal how the enemy operates:

Some may ask: Why are you focusing on the enemy and not on what the Lord says we have in victory over him?

2Cor. 2:11 Paul says: “Lest satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

- Too many of God’s people are ignorant of how the enemy works, therefore; they continue to fall as prey to him when he comes at them with the same old strategies.

1. **devil-**
2. **wiles**
3. **strongholds**
4. **oppression**
5. **deception**

These five words tell us everything of how the devil operates.

- The devil is not creative – he replicates the same thing over and over again.
- The ways he has attacked humanity for 6,000 yrs.; it has been the same thing over and over.
- How adultery takes place, marriages are ruined, financial collapse in people’s lives, fits into these five steps.

1. **devil** – comes from Grk. Word **dia-balos**.

- Actually not a name, but a title of his job description.
- His name is satan = “to slander or to accuse.”
- devil describes his procedure and how he operates.
- **Balos** = “to throw something like a ball or a rock at an object.

- **Dia** = “to penetrate something, piercing it from one side until it goes all the way through to the other side.”
- So compounded together – **satan** acts diabolos = “as **satan**, he comes with accusations, that’s his attack, the accuser.
As **diabolos**, he takes those accusations, lies, slander, and accusations; and like “balos”, he slings them against the mind.
- He works with a repetitive action because he knows he has to come at your mind more than once – so he hits the mind & he hits the mind & he hits the mind... until finally “dia” = he begins to weaken the mind and penetrates it from one side to the other.

We have voices speaking to us all the time:

- The voice of God – through His Word.
- Our own voice
- The voice of the enemy – either directly or by bringing in reinforcements using other people in our lives who have influence.
- **The enemy understands that whoever controls your mind will control you!
Because whoever controls your mind – controls your emotions.
Whoever controls your emotions – dictates how you project yourself to others.**
- The enemy understands that if he can take the mind and control it fully; then he can dictate the destiny of your life.

The Lord understands the same thing and this is why scripture tells us to renew our minds with the Word of God.

Rom. 12:2 “Be not conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is good and acceptable and the perfect will of God.”

These voices are coming to us all the time and we have to make a choice and decision as to which voice we are going to listen to?

- If we listen to the enemy, we will probably be penetrated by his thought and way.
- If we listen to the voice of the Lord, we will be penetrated by HIS Word, which will lead us into life.
- God can build a Godly stronghold in our minds.

There are different kinds of strongholds:

- You can build a Godly stronghold in your mind.
2. **Wiles** - Grk. Word *methodas* = methods. Compound of the words meta & odos
- **Odos** = odometer in your vehicle that registers miles.

- Odos = “A road” **Meta** = “with”
- Compounded together – Methodas = “**To operate with a road, or a single lane or avenue.**”
- The devil does not have many different tricks, schemes; he operates with one avenue of attack.
- Important because roads go somewhere.
- If the enemy is operating on a road in your life, where is he going with that road?
- The enemy’s objective is controlling the mind; so his road is into your mind to get your emotions – striking and striking over and over again until he makes penetration and penetrates all the way through to the other side.

Once the enemy penetrates the mind, he begins to build a:

3. **Stronghold-** 2Cor. 10:4 “The weapons we use are not human ones. Our weapons have power from God and can destroy the **enemy’s strongholds [places]**. We destroy people’s arguments, and we tear down every proud idea that raises itself against the knowledge of God. We also capture every thought and make it give up and obey Christ.”

- This word carries two ideas, and both are correct:

1. **Prison** used to keep people captive behind bars inside looking out.

- You can see out into freedom, but you aren’t free!
- When a person has a stronghold in their mind, the enemy has penetrated and now has set up **lies, accusations**, etc.
- Ex: “Your talents are not as good as so and so’s.” “Why don’t they ask you to do this and that?” “Why do they talk to those people, but never come to where I am and speak with me?”
- That lie enslaves them and they sit in their prison watching everyone else enjoy freedom.
- The lies of satan have enslaved many who have gifts of God that are fabulous and would bless many; but they are in a prison.
- It is invisible; but it is a real prison.

2. **Fortress** used to keep people on the outside.

- No matter how hard they bash the walls, they are so thick & defended, they are impregnable.
- When someone has a mental stronghold – someone can speak truth to them, and the truth can even be acknowledged as truth by them; but they won’t hear. “I know you’re telling me the truth, BUT.”
- It’s as if they are behind closed walls that cannot be penetrated with truth.

- They can't hear or receive the truth because there is such a well defended lie that has now been constructed in their minds.
- I've noticed people can have a stronghold in one part of their mind but not in other areas.
Bound in area of finances, but not in marriage or prayer life. Bound in one area but not in another.
- But understand this: **THE devil IS NEVER SATISFIED TO HAVE CONTROL IN ONE AREA. HE IS ALWAYS LOOKING TO TAKE IT ALL UNDER HIS CONTROL.**
- Once he gets a foothold, he is going to extend his tentacles to take more.
- **BOTH GOD AND THE devil ARE TERRITORIAL! THEY BOTH WANT MORE!**

4. **Oppression-** Acts 10:38 “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and **healing all who were oppressed by the devil**, for God was with Him.”

- **Oppression** = *kata* meaning “something that is subjugating or dominating”.
dunamis = “power.”
- Compounded together = describes “**A power that is subjugating or dominating, or oppressive, depressing someone or holding them down.**”
- It's another word for **tyrant** – which is someone who is a **wicked king**.
Which they usually are found living in a fortress or castle.

Once the enemy has a stronghold in the mind, he finds a comfortable place in which he sits and begins to speak oppressive thoughts to us as to:

- What we will think.
- Dictating to us how we will feel.
- What will happen in all the areas of our lives

All in the attempt of subjugating us and holding us down.

5. **Deception-** 2Cor. 2:11 “Lest satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his **devices**.”

- **Devices** – *nous* = “the brain or the mind.”
- In 2Cor. 2:11 [*nousmata*] the use of the word mind or brain is not the normal brain or mind; but **the mind that has become scrambled or confused.**
- A mind that has been penetrated and attacked from many voices and angles that it is now **deceived**.

- This person's mind no longer has the ability to perceive what is right or what is wrong because it has been penetrated.
- It may hear a lie and believe it is true; but also may hear truth but think it is a lie.
- The mind is deceived and this is the end result and this person is taken captive.

This is how he works:

- The devil lambasts your mind with thoughts.
- Paving a road with those thoughts in your brain.
- Building a stronghold from which he can dominate and rule telling you what you can think and what you cannot do.
- This stronghold becomes an oppressive force which holds you down from being who and what God has ordained your life to be. It never really gets expressed.
- Finally, you've heard the lie for so many years that you believe – “well, it was just a dream; it was never destined for me to be.”
- Your brains got scrambled and you believed the lie [s].

Probably 95% or better of us listening to this have had this happen to us!
SO WHAT DO WE DO?

1. Recognize that this thing trying to beat a hole in your brain is not right.
2Cor 10:5 “Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”
 - God tells you His thoughts about you; but there are other thoughts coming in that are contrary to the thoughts God is giving to you.
 - Guess what? The contrary one is not right!
 - Every thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God:
 - **God says: “You are healed.”** But that thought says: “You will never be healed.”
 - **God's thoughts are: “You should be thankful for the good marriage and spouse and family you have.”** Other thought tell you: “There is someone better for you out there – at work or the club, internet or somewhere.”
 - **God's thoughts say: “You are going to make it, God gives you hope.”** Other thoughts say: “There is no hope for you, give up, this is all it will ever be for you.”

These thoughts are exalting themselves above the knowledge of God – YOU have to bring them into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

How do you do that?

“Bring them [the thoughts] into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

- The Roman sword is extremely sharp. Able to pierce through a man with a small thrust of effort.
- The phrase: “Bringing the thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” Is the thought of the sword being placed at the back of a captive.
- At the slightest push of the sword, that person is going to move in the direction told to move in.
- This is the word used here: **“To take captive at the tip of a sword.”**

We cannot just sit around and hope: “I wish I could take this captive!”

We are going to have to have some fight – fervency about us that refuses to allow the thoughts to take control of our minds.

We have to get the sword out – The Word of God – The Bible.

- I’m moving that thought. I’m not allowing that thought to stay or get planted in my mind.
- If you’re not serious about it – just flirting with the thoughts – it won’t move.
- Both God and the devil know if you’re serious.

Taking every thought captive and bringing it into obedience to Christ.

This is a time in your life when you have to do something about your situation before the enemy really gains a foothold and begins to take over and build a stronghold.

Some of you are already at the place where strongholds are set up – it’s not too late. Get in the Word of God.

If you’re not putting the right things into your mind – somebody else will!

Jer. 29:11

“I say this because I know the plans that I have for you. This message is from the Lord – I have good plans for you. I don’t plan to hurt you. I plan to give you hope and a good future.”