

Spiritual Warfare: Three Things We Must Never Underestimate

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Three Things We Must Never Underestimate:

1. The Deception of our Enemy
2. The Depravity of our Heart
3. The Death-Defying Power of our Risen Savior !

Session 1: The Deception of our Enemy

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, (serious minded) be vigilant; (alert, watchful) because your adversary (enemy) the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

Lucifer (Satan, Devil) is a created being, filled with beauty and granted a high position of ministry and honor. Ezekiel and Isaiah provide insight to his desire and demise.

- Bible scholars agree that Ezekiel's description cannot refer to any human king.
- Many believe Satan had charge of the worship of the angels and all that it involved.

Ezekiel 28:11-19 *Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ¹²“Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “You were the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. ¹³You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. ¹⁴“You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. ¹⁵ You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. ¹⁶“By the abundance of your trading (merchandise, commerce) You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones. ¹⁷“Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom*

for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you. ¹⁸“You defiled your sanctuaries By the multitude of your iniquities, By the iniquity of your trading; Therefore I brought fire from your midst; It devoured you, And I turned you to ashes upon the earth In the sight of all who saw you. ¹⁹ All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; You have become a horror, And shall be no more forever.” ’ ’ ’

- Why would a perfect creature (Lucifer) become dissatisfied in a perfect world? The best answer is, there is no answer for human minds to discern. (re **Romans 11:33-36**)
- For the finite and fallen mind, we must be content to see life through a glass dimly. (re: **1Corinthians 13:12**)

Isaiah 14:12-14 *“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”*

- Lucifer's prideful desire to be "like" God would make him much as unlike God as possible.
 - Lucifer would recruit other angels to join him.
 - When God created man in His own image, Adam and Eve became Lucifer's next target for rebellion.
 - Sin always sets into motion the law of undesired consequences.
- For further study: *God's Devil – The Incredible Story of How Satan's Rebellion Serves God's Purposes*. Erwin W. Lutzer

Genesis 3:1-5 *Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

- Satan chose a serpent as his vehicle to tempt Adam and Eve.
 - More than likely this serpent was a beautiful creature, unlike what we picture today. Eve was attracted to it.
 - The deceptive power of doubt and of mixing lies with truth is Satan's method.
- Satan focused on what Adam and Eve could not have; he did not want them reminded of the abundant blessings from God.
 - Satan had them question God's goodness.
 - Satan convinced them that God was keeping something from them, and if they had it, they would be happy.

2 Corinthians 11:3 *But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, (cunning ESV) so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

- Eve was deceived and Adam rebelled.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.*

- What lies about God am I entertaining or yielding to?

2 Corinthians 11:14 *And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

Ephesians 6:10-20 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles (methods) of the devil. ¹²For 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. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and*

supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Satan Tempts Jesus

Matthew 4:1-11 *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. ³ Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” ⁴ But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” ⁵ Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you, and, “In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” ⁷ Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’”*

Psalm 91:11 *For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.*

⁸ *Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” ¹¹ Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.*

- Satan has intelligence beyond human comparison and yet has forfeited his wisdom.

“Master and Champion, Jesus Christ, provoked our enemy to battle; Satan, thou gloriest of thy power and victories over mankind, that there is none able to withstand thy assaults, nor escape thy darts, but at one time or other thou givest him a wound, lo I am a man like to my brethren, having flesh and blood and all the properties of man’s nature; tempt, try and assault me, I offer you here a place most convenient the wilderness.” John Knox – Scottish Reformer 1505-1572

“Why does God allow Satan to have such freedom? Satan is a lion, but he is on a leash held by God himself. Satan is more powerful and intelligent than any human,

he has had 6000 years of practice in deceiving mankind, and he knows all of our weaknesses. However, he is still a created being and under the control of an omnipotent God. This means whenever demons are doing horrible things, God is not stopping them from doing it. In not commanding them to stop, God has a reason for allowing them to do what they are doing.” John Piper

Session 2: The Depravity of our Hearts

“**Heart** in Scripture is used in various ways. Sometimes it means our reason or understanding, sometimes it means our affections and emotions, and sometimes it means our will. Generally, it denotes the whole soul of man and all of its faculties, not individually, but as they work together in doing good or evil. The mind as it reasons, discerns, and judges; the emotions as they like or dislike; the conscience as it determines and warns, and the will as it chooses or refuses – **are all called the heart.**” Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*

Proverbs 28:16 *He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.*

Jeremiah 17:9-10 *“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? ¹⁰I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.*

Proverbs 4:23 *Keep (guard) your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.*

➤ What rules your heart rules your life.

Proverbs 23:7 *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. “Eat and drink!” he says to you, but his heart is not with you.*

Romans 7:18-25 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. ¹⁹ For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. ²⁰ Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ²¹ I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²² For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin*

which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin

“In our members (flesh) there is a slumbering inclination toward desire, which is both *sudden* and *fierce*. With irresistible power, desire seizes mastery of the flesh. All at once a secret, smoldering fire is kindled. The flesh burns and is in flames. It makes no difference whether it is a sexual desire, ambition, or vanity, or desire for revenge, or love of fame and power, or greed for money...At this moment God is quite unreal to us. He loses all reality, and only *desire for the creature is real*. The only reality is the devil. Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God...The lust thus aroused envelopes the mind and will in deepest darkness. The powers of clear discrimination and of decision are taken from us. The questions present themselves as, ‘Is what the flesh desires really sin in this case?’ And, ‘Is it really not permitted to me, yes, expected of me now, here in my particular situation to appease desire?’ ...It is here everything within me rises up against the Word of God...Every struggle against lust in one’s own strength is doomed to failure.”
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Temptation*

Hebrews 3:12-13 *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³ but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, ¹⁵ while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”*

“Darkness of mind signifies the lack of light in a person’s thinking. **The more a person gives himself over to the power of sin, the harder he grows toward God.** He may still attend church, sing all of the songs of worship, and even enjoy good preaching, but there is a thick callous around his heart that keeps him from feeling the Holy Spirit nudge him toward repentance. The more a person sins, the thicker that callous grows. Eventually, he will find himself so hardened that he can no longer discern truth for himself. Although he is likely to still have some comprehension of doctrinal truth, the truth has been effectively shut out of his heart.” Steve Gallagher

"If God has redeemed me from sin, and given me his Holy Spirit to sanctify me and give me strength against sin, why do I go on sinning? This question has plagued me

throughout my life of faith. In my lowest moments, it has brought despair; it has even darkened the edges of my brightest times.” Kris Lundgaard

- For further study: *The Enemy Within* by Kris Lundgaard (adapted from Puritan John Owen)

We have the ability within our heart to hurt the most important of relationships. (In Christ we have the grace and mercy to work towards restoring broken relationships.)

Galatians 5:16-17 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish

Lundgaard tells the following story in chapter one. He moved into a house that had the refrigerator door on the wrong side. After a year of postponing this challenge, he attempted to make the switch one Thursday afternoon while his wife was off to work. Halfway through the task, he discovered that the hinges were fastened by two Torx screws and required a Torx socket to remove, which he did not have. At that moment my three boys decided to move their traveling sibling scabbling into the middle of my angst! I lost it. I let them have it, though they did not deserve it. They stared at me as if I were a monster from Alpha Centauri, while I ranted in an unknown tongue. In mid-fit I had an out of body experience. I saw my contorted red face screaming at my boys and knew at once I was doing something evil. **So, I stopped and asked their forgiveness, right? Wrong. Something had control of me – it was as if an alien invaded my body and was forcing me to do his bidding.** It was long after they fled from my wrath before I recovered my sanity and my conscience and humbled myself before them in apology. **I spent the next few days like a whipped puppy. Was I really that wicked? How could I hurt my children like that? Had I done irreparable harm? Would they forgive me? Would God forgive me? Anything like that ever happen to you?**

Session 3: The Death–Defying Power of our Risen Lord!

Ephesians 1:15-21 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your

understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ **and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.**

Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death
What Christ did for us at Salvation!

1. The wrath of God was replaced with the peace of God.

John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:8-11 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ

2. The righteousness of Jesus was imputed (deposited) into us.

Romans 4:7-8 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins

are covered; ⁸Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.”

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (The Greatest Exchange)

- Three Major Imputations Revealed in Scripture
 - The sin of Adam to the human race
 - The sin of the human race to Christ
 - The righteousness of Christ to the believing sinner

- Justification is the divine act whereby the Holy God declares a believing sinner to be righteous and acceptable because of Christ.

3. Our spirit was made alive by the Holy Spirit (new birth).

Ephesians 2:1-7 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

- What we were | **Ephesians 2:1-3**
- What we are | **Ephesians 2:4-6**
- What we will be | **Ephesians 2:7**

Romans 8:9-10, 16-17 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

4. He Became Our Advocate

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We should stand in awe of a God who can use the actions of a rebel like Satan to glorify Himself through Christ, and who can take our sins and failures and use them for our good and his glory.

Luke 22:31-34 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." ³³ But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." ³⁴ Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

- Satan's Plan
- Jesus' Prayer
- Peter's Pride

Romans 8:28-29 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

"Make no mistake about it, **we are in spiritual warfare**, and the problem is I all too often overlook the fact that the battle is for the glory of God. Satan despises seeing God get the glory as a result of our worship, obedience, and service. If this is not difficult enough, throw in our carnal flesh, and you have a 1-2 punch that can knock you to the ground faster than the blink of an eye. I can attest to this by repeated personal experience. Yet, when all seems hopeless, the grace of God and mercy of Christ picks me up every time, yes – every time!" Jerry Pelfrey

"It is ever the Holy Spirit's work to turn our eyes away from self to Jesus; but Satan's work is just the opposite of this, for he is constantly trying to make us regard ourselves instead of Christ. He insinuates, 'Your sins are too great for pardon, you

have no faith, you do not repent enough, you will never be able to continue unto the end, you have not the joy of his children, you have such a wavering hold of Jesus.'

All these are thoughts about self, and we shall never find comfort or assurance by looking within. But the Holy Spirit turns our eyes entirely away from self; he tells us that we are nothing, but that 'Christ is all in all.' Remember, therefore, it is not your hold of Christ that saves you – it is Christ. It is not your joy in Christ that saves you – it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ that saves you, though that be the instrument – it is Christ's blood and merits; therefore look not so much to your hand with which you art grasping Christ, but to Christ; look not to your hope, but to Jesus, the source of your hope; look not to your faith, but to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. We shall never find happiness by looking at our prayers, our doings, or our feelings; it is what Jesus is, not what we are, that gives rest to the soul. If we would at once overcome Satan and have peace with God, it must be by 'looking unto Jesus.' Keep your eye simply on him; let his death, his sufferings, his merits, his glories, his intercession, be fresh upon your mind; when you wake in the morning look to him; when you lie down at night look to him. Do not let your hopes or fears come between you and Jesus; follow hard after him, and he will never fail you!" C.H. Spurgeon 1834-1892

Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

My prayer of praise and commitment: