

LESSON ESSENTIALS

GOD AND THE SPIRITUAL REALM

LESSON 2: STRATEGIES OF SATAN

In this lesson, we will be talking about God's strategies in the spiritual warfare we as Christians engage in and how to overcome the Devil's strategies with the following weapons: God's Word and Prayer. Why is it so important to know God's plan? We are soldiers in God's army and it is imperative for us to know what God's strategies are, if we want to serve Him well. In order to be successful, we must be aware of the strategies of the enemy and stand firmly against them. Read on to find out more.

Whether we know about it or not, every person on this planet is in a war. This war is over the rightful owner of our soul, and we can join God in this fight to defeat Satan.

The key to winning a war is in knowing the strategies of the enemy and most importantly to now and follow the strategies of one's leader.

So as the soldiers in God's army, do you know God's battle plan?

Do you know it is intimately tied into God's love for us and expressed through Jesus sacrifice for us on the cross?

Have you seen the images of war in the media? Did you hear about past wars in school, or have you experienced war first hand? The bloodshed, the fear and insecurity, the loss of life of soldiers and civilians are all the grim realities of the war. The experience of war is one that is not easily forgotten, and affects people for the remainder of their lives.

As Christians, the Bible calls those who love and obey God, children of God, people of God, the chosen ones, royal priesthood, etc. Along with all of these titles is one of the most important titles or roles - soldier of Christ. The key to winning a war is in knowing the strategies of the enemy and most importantly, to know and follow the strategies of one's leader.

As believers we must be aware that the devil uses deception to confuse us and lead us astray. On the other hand God wins people by His love. It is here our prayer and intercession matters the most. We should cling to God's love. Even when the schemes of the Devil lead to cracks in our relationship with God, the word of God and prayer can help us overcome and become victors.

Let us examine the scriptures closely to understand the schemes of the Devil which prevent us from walking closer to God. Last time we read and studied that the word Devil means slanderer or deceiver. In other words, the Devil will use lies to lead us into sin, and away from God; he twists God's word to trick God's person. Genesis 3:3-5 describes how the Devil tricked Eve through lies. Even today, the Devil continually lies to us, to make sure we lose our relationship with God.

What is the basic need of a human being that the Devil uses to thwart our relationship with God? The Devil can use sexual immorality and violence to destroy our relationship with God. As we know, our natural sexual drive is God's gift, and is meant for something beautiful, but the Devil can use this same drive to make people think impure thoughts, or corrupt their decisions causing them to fall into sin.

Paul wrote about this in his letter to the Ephesians, asking them to flee from sexual immorality, because such a sin is a sin against one's own body, and the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The Devil is a master strategist who uses various strategies to sever our relationship with God. Besides using deception and temptation, the Devil being a spiritual being with considerable spiritual power, can send demons to possess or control people's minds and bodies.

Mark. 5:5 describes where a legion of demons possessed a man and drove him to torture and harass himself. Yes, even today, the Devil has the power to possess people in order to torment, torture or even kill them. This possession usually leads to people becoming scared, and in turn, this fear would close the hearts of people to God's call.

Another way of unleashing his spiritual powers is through idolatry, witchcraft and other practices where supernatural powers are given to witchdoctors and sorcerers etc. to harm people. This leads to what the psalmist says in Psalm 106:36-37, where the Devil can make people worship him out of fear.

The Bible says that the devil will use strange appearances and deceiving miracles to make the rulers of the world follow him and worship him (Revelations 16:14). At other times, he controls the governments, influencing the politics of nations in order to have a better hold of the principalities of the world (Daniel 10:13 talks about this).

How can the Devil's control over principalities work against a believer's relationship with God? Through ruling authorities in certain countries, the Devil can curb the spread of God's Word in different parts of the globe, through political oppression and through anti-Christian laws. The word of God also says that the Devil's strategy includes harassing Christians, so that they may give up the faith.

Is there any other way that the Devil can throw a spiritual attack? The Devil can attack at the heart of the Christian walk. In Daniel 10, we see that the Devil was able to thwart Daniel's prayer for 23 days. In the same way, the Devil can cause hindrances in the spreading of the gospel and from receiving answers for your prayers.

How can we avoid being deceived by the Devil? The answer lies in reading the Bible, so that we would know the truth and the truth would set us free. Deepening our fellowship with the Holy Spirit and staying rooted in the word of God can defeat the Devil. But in order to stand firm in the faith and repel such strategy, it is important for followers of Christ not only to be rooted in the Word of God but also to draw strength from the Lord through prayer. Constant and continuous prayer is the key to unlock God's power and strength to withstand the schemes and strategies of the Devil.

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What are some of the areas we can address in our prayers?

Firstly, we need to examine our lives and repent and seek forgiveness for our un-confessed sins. Secondly, ask the Lord to help us walk in the Spirit. Thirdly, put on the full armour of God so that we can be prepared to go into battle with the might and power of our Lord.

Lastly, what should be our response to the victory the Lord will give? We need to thank God for exposing the enemy's defences and raise God's standard of holiness and righteousness. In short, after pulling down the strongholds of the enemy you need to erect the strongholds of God.

You may be wondering that once we have won the battle against the flesh, we are cleansed by the blood of the Lamb and are living lives free from sin- how then can we breakdown the strongholds. The answer lies in the cross. When Christ died for us on the cross He broke all strongholds on our behalf. So we don't need to fight again we only need to claim our victory!

On close examination of our Christian walk, we find that we tend to stumble – there is this constant war between our flesh and our spirit. How can we stop that? We need to rely on God and His word to protect us and He equips us in three ways to withstand such attacks from the Devil.

Firstly through the name of the Lord (Ps. 9:10).

Secondly we can use the Word of God (Heb.4:12).

Thirdly the blood of Christ; in Revelation 1:5 we read the blood of Jesus has freed us from our sins and because of this the Devil has no hold on us.

IN REVIEW

- Satan's main goal is to destroy the relationship between God and man and he uses different strategies to do so.
- The Devil is a slanderer and a deceiver; his lies would trick us into turning away from God.
- God came to earth in the person of Jesus and disarmed the Devil.
- The Devil's strongholds are the powers and principalities of this world.
- To overcome the Devil, we must overcome the flesh, and remove any trace of sinful nature within us.
- God shows us three ways to repel the attacks of the Devil
 - The name of the Lord
 - The Word of God
 - The Blood of the Lamb
- The way to battle any of the strategies of the Devil is unceasing prayer, devotion and submission to God.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- In what ways have you experienced God's love besides salvation?
- What are some ways that Christians are often deceived by the Devil? How have you been deceived in the past? How can you prevent future deception?
- Examine your life and see if there are still any strongholds (places where Satan is having his way in your life instead of God – these could be anything that pulls you away from God). What can you do this week to combat these strongholds? How can you rely on God's help in this task?
- How will you encourage a new Christian to continue to fight the good fight of faith when they stumble in their walk?

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