

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Study Guide

GOD AND THE SPIRITUAL REALM

LESSON 2: THE STRATEGIES OF SATAN

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Disciple Essentials module entitled God and the Spiritual Realm. This series of lessons examines the reality of the spiritual world – one in which there are forces of both good and evil. This module deals with the origin of evil, the end punishment of Satan, the reality of spiritual warfare and strongholds in our everyday lives, the armor that God has provided us with, God’s great battle plan against Satan, God’s ultimate control over all things and the supernatural ways in which God occasionally communicates with his people through dreams, visions and angelic beings.

The Student’s Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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GOD AND THE SPIRITUAL REALM

LESSON 2: THE STRATEGIES OF SATAN

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

One of our enemies as the people of God is Satan – the one who opposes God. The purpose of this lesson is to understand the strategies the enemy is using against God’s people, and also the limitations of the enemy. Whether we know it or not, we are in a battle. We should know the strategy of the opposing side.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

We understand from the Bible that the main goal of Satan is to destroy the relationship between God and mankind. That was his goal in the Garden of Eden and that is his goal today. Satan has a specific strategy and methods of working in the world, which have been identified in the Bible. Moreover, God is waging this war over the souls of people, and we are under God’s command. We must remember we are not alone in this fight. Being aware of the strategy of the enemy will always help us. Read on to learn more about what you need to know, and how to prepare.

GETTING STARTED

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “evil”? What things are evil?

2. Do you believe the world is in a spiritual battle today? What are some of the evidences of it?



STUDY

- ❖ **SATAN'S PLAN:** Satan's consuming desire is to deceive and destroy God's people. He is the enemy of all that is holy and good. God created man in His own image and likeness, to have fellowship with Him. Man was the pinnacle of God's creation and thus the object of Satan's wrath. He wanted to hurt God by tempting man to disobey God, just as he did, knowing full well that it would destroy the close relationship man had with God.
- ❖ **THE WORKS OF SATAN:** What are the works of Satan and his demons? How do they affect the world and our relationship with God? Read the following list. Bible verses are provided if you would like to see how this point is written about in the Bible.
 - Deception in heaven and on earth (Genesis 3:3-5; 2 Samuel 15:3-6).
 - Murder and torture (Mark 5:5, 9:22; Matthew 12:22; Luke 13:11-17; Acts 10:38; Luke 8:27-29).
 - Sexual uncleanness and violence (Hebrews 12:16; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20).
 - Influence in human governments (Revelation 16:14; Daniel 10:12-21; 2 Corinthians 4:4).
 - Hindrances to the work of the Gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:18; Ephesians 6:12).
 - Hindrances to prayer (Daniel 10:12-13; Matthew 26:38-43).
 - Harassment of the people of God (Luke 22:3).
 - Promotion of idol worship, worship of people, witchcraft, and other occult practises (Psalms 106:35-37; Deuteronomy 18:9-12, 32:16-17; 1 Samuel 15:23; Revelation 18:12).
 - Working of strange occurrences and deceiving miracles (2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 16:13-14).
 - Slandering and accusing Christians before God (Revelation 12:10; Romans 8:33,38-39).
- From the above list, what evidence of Satan's work in your life, your community and the wider world can you identify?

- ❖ **SATAN DOES NOT ACT ALONE:** Throughout Scripture, we see mention of Satan as well as demons. Demons are angels who were created by God but have chosen evil – we also refer to them as fallen angels. They serve Satan, and do his bidding in the world.
 - Read the following verses and write down what they tell you about what demons are capable of:



Matthew 8:28-34	
Mark 5:1-4	
Matthew 4:8	

➤ Satan and his demons are powerful. It is important for Christians to be aware of this power. Satan can:

- Deceive, influence, and harass people.
- Grant supernatural powers to people in order to harm them or others.
- Bring illness, disease, or physical misfortune.
- His demons can possess people and animals.
- Rule the kingdoms of the world, and is currently the prince of this world.

➤ How should an awareness of the abilities of demons change how we conduct our lives?

❖ **WHAT SATAN CANNOT DO:** It might be frightening to consider that there are unseen forces in this world who exist to oppose and deceive you. However, there is good news! Satan and his demons have limits to their power – and moreover, God has much greater power which He extends to rescue those who belong to Him. In his time on earth, Jesus released many from the possession of demons, healed the sick, and brought truth to those who were deceived. We should trust that God will do no less today, through the Holy Spirit which is at work in the world.

➤ We should remember what Satan and his followers cannot do:

- He cannot take the redeemed away from God (Hebrews 6:17-20, 8:6, 9:15).
- He cannot make a person sin – we may be tempted by Satan, but the choice to sin is still our own (1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:14-15).
- He cannot overpower our free will (Joshua 24:15).
- His power is limited and confined by God. He is limited in how he assaults people – especially those who belong to God. It sometimes appears that God grants requests from Satan, and He may do so if He sees a greater good that could come from the trial (Job 1:6-12, 2:3-6; Luke 22:31-32).
- He cannot create – God is the author and creator of all things. Satan cannot create demons to follow him (John 1:3; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6).



- He cannot offer eternal rewards to his followers (John 10:9-10, 16:33; Romans 15:13).
- Satan cannot rule over Christians, but over unbelievers only (Colossians 1:13).
- Satan cannot be everywhere, is not all-knowing, or all powerful. He cannot know our every thought, he cannot force our will; he is not always with us.

❖ **GOD'S RESCUE PLAN:** After the Garden of Eden, God knew if He destroyed evil at once, sinful mankind would also be destroyed. Instead, He planned a unique rescue operation that would destroy evil (1 John 3:8), but also preserve mankind until they could receive forgiveness.

- We are soldiers in God's army, receiving orders and carrying out His campaigns against the enemy. God's plan is to rescue people from the snares of Satan, and to establish His kingdom with those who will follow Him.
- God's plan is redeeming individual people, rescuing them from darkness and bringing them into His glorious kingdom. At the end of time, Satan and his demons will be defeated once and for all, and receive punishment for their rebellion.
- How are we able to join God's rescue plan by rescuing individuals from sin? What can we do to fight against the enemies of God?

❖ **OUR PLACE IN THE BATTLE:** We can wage war against the enemies of God through prayer, evangelism and in being aware of anything that gives Satan a foothold, or a place of power in our lives. The world 'stronghold' is used once in the New Testament to refer to a holding place, fortress or camp of Satan. This can be anything we allow into our lives that allows evil to rule us.

- Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-4. What do these verses tell us about the spiritual battle we are engaged in?

We learn from this passage that our fight is not with this world, our weapons are not physical, and our power comes from God alone. God's plan is to destroy all spiritual strongholds of the enemy. It is a good question to ask – what are the strongholds of the enemy in our lives?

- Examples of Demonic Strongholds: Anything that pulls a person away from God can be a stronghold.



- Forms of godliness with no power (false religion) (2 Timothy 3:5).
- Spirit of disobedience (Colossians 3:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:8).
- Systems of the world that reject the truth of God (Romans 1:18-23).
- Idolatry of any kind (which is demon worship) (Psalm 106:33-37; Zechariah 10:2; 1 Corinthians 10:19-20).
- An incorrect perception of who God is, or an incorrect perception of who we are.
- Fear, envy, hatred, jealousy, lust, complaining, anger, etc. are behaviours in our life that allow Satan to ensnare us (1 John 4:18, Proverbs 6:16-19, Romans 16:17-18)

➤ Consider the list above. Are there any of these strong-holds that you allow to exist in your life? Do you rely on religious actions without faith, systems of this world, or idolatry? Do you have a spirit of disobedience or fear you need to repent of?

❖ **GODLY STRONGHOLDS:** Instead of place of power for Satan in our lives, we should establish places of power for God. We should allow God to take control of us. We can turn to God by reminding ourselves of God’s nature, remaining close to Him, and praying from inside these places of power.

➤ Look up the following verses on these strongholds, and write down what the Bible tells us about them:

<p>The Name of the Lord Psalm 9:10, 1 Samuel 17:45, Psalm 20:6-7</p>	
<p>The Word of God Psalm 18:30, Hebrews 4:12</p>	
<p>The Blood of Christ Ephesians 1:7, Revelation 1:5</p>	



IN SUMMARY

- ❖ Satan's Plan is to deceive and destroy God's people.
- ❖ The works of Satan and his demons are to hinder the work of the Gospel, hinder prayer, harass people, promote idolatry, witchcraft and other occultic practices, and slandering and accusing Christians before God
- ❖ Satan does not act alone, but has an army of fallen angels to help him
- ❖ Satan can do many things, but his power is limited – and God's power is far greater
- ❖ God's plan in response to Satan is to rescue individual souls who will serve Him and fight on His side
- ❖ Our battle against Satan is God's battle. We must destroy the strongholds of Satan and stand from a place of power in the strongholds of God.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What was something new you learned in this lesson? Why is it important to have correct Biblical beliefs about what Satan can and cannot do?

2. What can we do on an everyday basis to counteract Satan's attacks? How can we prevent them or avoid being deceived by Satan?