

Beating The Bully (Part 3)

Ephesians 6:12-13

Main focus of this series: This series is a formulation of key teachings and understandings from the book of Ephesians. In an effort to decipher each statement of Paul in Ephesians we believe we will learn how to successfully operate in the three positions of the believer: to **sit (Ephesians 1-3)**, to **walk (Ephesians 4-6:9)** and over the next few weeks we will address the thought... **stand (Ephesians 6:10-24)** .

The importance of this message today: Exposing the works of the devil and being passionate seekers of God should not have conflict. But often over zealousness and unhealthy interest in the supernatural distract us from our real pursuit of God. On the other hand, Satan's tactics are to lure you away from your first love. Unknowingly we can drift away from God by the subtle lies and attacks of Satan which cannot be ignored. The balanced Christian life is to know when to engage in the conflict with the enemy and when to draw near to God and ignore the bids of the enemy. Knowing what the proper stance to take will determine what ground you gain and what ground you will lose. To stand during the time of spiritual warfare is to know which is which. This message is to help you have a better understanding of both.

Though there may seem to be similarities throughout the whole letter, there is a different emphasis in both sections and three subdivisions.

1. **The Believers Position In Christ-** (Ephesians 1:1-3:21) **Before God**
2. **The Believers Life In The World-** (Ephesians 4- 6:9) **Before Man**
3. **The Believers Warfare In The Spirit-** (Ephesians 6:10-24) **Before Satan**

Proclamation of A Submitted Believer

I will allow God to determine how I should live according to the direction He has for me strategically and geographically. I will allow Him to direct my steps and lead me as I live this life for Him in this world.

I will live according to the judgments that He makes within and around me socially, morally and spiritually. I will respond to His voice interjected through the work of the Holy Spirit through His Word Biblically and His Spiritual insight supernaturally. Simply, I will agree with His Word and live accordingly. I will call evil, evil. I will call truth, truth, all in accordance with the Word of God. I will trust, agree, and support His judgment of things in my life personally and of the life around me globally.

I will live according to His season and timing. I will set my heart to mature so that I will respond immediately when He says move, go, give, be silent, speak, stop and listen. I will live restrained, defined, disciplined, determined, dignified and worthy of the calling of God on my life while at the same time live freely, flexible, spontaneous, unreserved and undignified at the request of my God.

I do not have to know where my next step is strategically or geographically for me to step out and respond to His voice or command. My faith is not in

the knowledge of the journey but it is in the one who leads the journey. He knows the way. There is no need for me to compete with the judgments of God through my limited and tainted knowledge. He knows the truth. I should not be afraid of the when, how or why God calls me out of my daily routine. He is my life. But to submit to God, I have to be convinced that when the question comes to me, "WILL YOU RESPOND TO MY COMMAND?" My deepest desire is that my first response will resound within me, "YES I WILL!"

Making It Happen

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

Ephesians 6:12

If you are a believer today and have asked Jesus Christ to come into your heart, you are on a journey. Actually, that's what the body of Christ is, a group of people who have asked Jesus to become their Lord and Savior and they are marching in the same direction. While on this journey, you cannot and should not avoid discussion concerning the spiritual realm that we are all a part of. Jesus often taught about Satan and demonstrated His power against him in the New Testament. Jesus' discussion of Satan was never to exalt him or place fear in your heart concerning him.

We must understand this truth as a guiding part of our understanding:

Exposing the devil is not our priority, Knowing God is!

Paul encourages us, in light of this understanding and awareness of this activity that is going on to...

*"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that **when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.**"*

Ephesians 6:13

Over the next few weeks I will be sharing an in depth picture of what this armor looks like and how we appropriately respond to the events of our day and life. This week I received an e-mail from an individual who does not live here in our city and probably not even our state. But it seemed so appropriate for where we are in our teaching. Here is the incident that he faced:

Hey, you people of the charismatic persuasion have an interest in events which may be supernatural, so I thought I'd ask your opinion on something that happened to me during the night, early last Sunday morning.

While I slept, I heard a voice saying "4:04". It was an unusual voice-- firm, deep, and gravelly. As well as I can remember it, "4:04" was spoken 3 times in rapid succession and it woke me up upon the third time. For some reason, it sounded like a time, so I moved my head to the edge of the bed so I could look at the LED clock on the floor. Sure enough, it was 4:04. I stared at the clock for a bit to make sure I was seeing what I was seeing and soon rolled over and went back to sleep for a little while.

I have not found out about anything significant happening at that time and I haven't had any similar occurrences since then, though I have had rather poor sleep (lots of waking) since then. That is not unusual for me, particularly if I spend too much time indoors and don't get enough exercise. However, I had been having rather peaceful sleep up to that night.

What would you think if it happened to you?

He had a great question at the end, **"What would you think if it happened to you?"** That is the question we want to answer today because this is one the very reasons why God's Spirit dwells with us. Satan's desire to hinder us from our relationship with God or God's plan on this earth must be dealt with. I will not give you all the details of my response to him, but I would like to address some of this with you today.

- "For we are **not unaware** of his **schemes**." (II Corinthians 2:11 NIV)
- "...for we are **not ignorant** of his **devices**." (II Corinthians 2:11 KJV)

Like I said before, **Exposing the devil is not our priority; knowing God is**. But Hosea tells us,

"...my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge."
Hosea 4:6

Our Church, A Frontal Attack

In our world today, it is amazing with all the evidence of militia groups and gorilla warfare committed to attacking or forming armies to defend personal freedoms, it seems like the church has forgotten that she is spiritually armed for warfare, but in a supernatural way. We can become disillusioned with Satan's attack and become absorbed with the idea that we should encounter battles 'with flesh and blood' rather than battle with 'the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places' (Ephesians 6:12),

As a believer, Peter tells us, that we we need to be aware that Satan is around.

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."
I Peter 5:8

We need to stay alert of the demonic, the evil darkness that has infected our world to bring utter destruction on it. We need to know, but not focus only on this, because Satan is nothing in comparison to our resurrected Christ who ascended on high and now sits at the right hand of the Father. And that resurrection power now resides in me!

Wayne Barber states,

"SPIRITUAL WARFARE is not a struggle against POWER. It is a struggle to maintain the TRUTH."

"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."
I John 4:4

Barber continues to say, “We get caught up in the fact that it is a POWER against a POWER. That is not the picture. The picture is we are dealing with TRUTH. We are dealing with OUR MINDS. We are dealing with lives that are surrendered so that we don’t get caught off guard by the schemes, by the trickery of the devil.”

We don't need to allow Satan to rob and lure anyone else away from the grace of God while we sit in the back room of the church and cast votes for what color the carpet should be. People are the target of Satan's offense. People are the target of God's strategy. People should be the target and strategy of God's people, and we win them by being consumed with Christ, proclaiming His agenda to bring all men into repentance in the heavenlies and loving on people enough to tell them about Jesus!

I believe that we, as a group of believer's, the church, we have the opportunity to respond, as a unified force, to the attacks of Satan. I pray for the grace of God to be on us as we are found both obedient and valiant in our desire to please God and do His will. And I also desire that after Satan has responded to our attack that when the dust settles we are found far inside the enemy lines having set them afoot. All Satan's territory is not worth the battle, many engagements are only a distraction from where the true victory lies. Satan will always want to fight on his terms, on your turf. We want to fight Satan on God's term, in the heavenly turf!

Two Responses To Our Unified Efforts:

When we decide to join forces and move in faith for our city and families for the Lord, two things are eminent:

- 1. Resistance To Our Efforts:** Resistance will attempt to distort our goodwill, confuse our strategy and dissolve our unity. When we step up to tell those holding the stronghold's of our city and families that are bound by addictions, pride and fear, **“Why don't you go and make trouble somewhere else. Get out of here and leave us alone,”** Satan and his helpers will not play dead or roll over, he will violently oppose you! That's one of the reasons God told Joshua, as he led the children of Israel into the promise land,

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

And God is asking us the same. The resistance will be the same as what Paul experienced, he always saw opposition when he challenged the idols in the community. I don't believe it's our responsibility to point out all the wrong things or idols in the community, some have no bearing at all, they are not where the real victory lies. Just as some churches sit on corners of communities year after year without any affect, I believe some idols can stay in a community and not be a threat. We must hear what God says is the point of attack or we will make a mess of our efforts and complicate the strategy of God.

When we decide to join forces and move in faith for our city and families for the Lord, two things are eminent:

- 1. Resistance To Our Efforts**

2. **God Will Send Amazing Aid and Sometimes Unusual Aid:** I know that God will send His power and strength, but I believe that He will send unusual help to assist in our efforts to win our city.

- **Rahab-** Imagine as Joshua sent in two spies into Jericho to scope things out it was a prostitute named Rahab who became a key player in conquering Jericho! (Joshua 2)
- **David-** Remember David's men? They were in **distress**, in **debt** and were **discontented**. All **four hundred** of them were **maladjusted malcontents** but **became mighty men of valor** and **conquering soldiers**. All we need to say is, "Yes Lord, have your way!"

There is a new generation, a younger one who is standing on the Jordan river today who is saying, "God give us this land!" The old school has died off and there is a fearless generation taking their place and taking their city! The older, established churches are far too busy trying to stay the same. They don't want to move on over Jordan. They don't want this talk about the power of God and spiritual conquest. They don't want to hear about God's heart for people and broken families. They are content looking over into the promise land but they are not desirous of living there.

Being unaware or having no knowledge of this attack on our life can destroy you. We cannot deal with some thing that we are not aware of it. We can often get off, chasing the devil that we lose our real purpose maintaining and understanding our relationship with God. **God is our priority, and Satan is our enemy and if we are unaware of him or comprehend his tactics then he will get an advantage over you. If we do not understand how Satan operates we will never know when he is taking advantage of us. The Bible does not stay silent in this area and neither should we.**

It is a fact that if Jesus Christ has come into your life and you have been purchased by the Blood of Jesus and now confess Him as Lord of your life, then you have the benefits of the finished works of Christ. But you will not find anywhere in scripture that after you come to Christ that you are automatically protected in a holy bubble that eliminates you from demonic attack and influence. In Luke 4 Jesus Himself was dealt with by the devil. He constantly confronted demonic spirits throughout His whole ministry.

Do you realize that demonic influence manipulated Jesus' disciples?

- **Peter** was trying to keep Jesus from going to Jerusalem and eventually to the Cross in Matthew 16, listen to Jesus' response to Peter

"Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."
Matthew 16:23

Now this is the same guy just a five scriptures earlier that Jesus said that He was going to build his church on.

- **Judas** probably thought he was doing everyone a favor when the thoughts of

Satan came into his mind to betray Christ.

"Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus."

Luke 22:3-4

- **James and John** were traveling with Jesus, and as they approached a Samaritan village the community stood in opposition to them and would not allow them to enter in. This angered James and John.

"When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village."

Luke 9:54-55

*"But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, **Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.**"*

Luke 9:55 (KJV)

Now I asked last week, "**How many of you want God to show up?**" There was a resounding yes. And then I explained what happens when God shows up. He exposes things that are hid. He irons out the wrinkles and purges the stains. He causes us to dislike the things that takes our attention away from Him. God's presence exposes us and the tactics and persuasions of Satan.

Eight Components On The Earth

When we break it all down, what is actually going on? I believe we actually deal with a few things we are in conflict with that produces most of the chaos in this world.

1. **Satan**- He has power and purpose. We may say that we deal with the devil, but it's important to understand that he can only be in one place at one time. He moves often and quickly, but he is a spirit. He is only in one place at a time. It is important to understand his attempt on your life, your families lives and those around you and the world. He has no conscience or does he think in terms of boundaries. He takes all he can get, and asks for more. You are a target and your family is a target as well. He is no respecter of person. You don't have to be rich or poor for his attention. He is not concerned if you are popular or unknown. He is angry with you even though you have never personally met him. Why?

Has this ever happened to you, have you met people who warned you about people? You know, they throw out a certain last name and raise their eyebrows as if you should catalog them down as the enemy? On one particular occasion I had ran into two or three people who had the same fixation on a certain family. It was one of those, "look out for them." The amazing thing is that this particular family didn't know that they were being targeted. They never had the knowledge that they were thought ill of or that these certain people were considering themselves opposed and sworn enemies of them. Satan, in the same way has set out to destroy you and discredit any testimony that you would have to cause others to question their own life and asking Christ into their heart.

It's important that we do not take for granted what God has done for us and where He is taking us. We often need a reminder of the goodness of our God. Here's what Paul said about us...

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."

Ephesians 2:1-2

We need to thank God every moment we get a chance, remembering the walk we walked, according to the course of this world. That journey we used to live was orchestrated by one of two processes:

1. The Ways of This World
2. The Ruler of the Kingdom of the Air

Satan, and he is still active today. The reason we aimlessly followed along the path that Satan laid out for us was because we were under the domain, the right and the might of the ruler of this world, the prince of the power of the air, Satan himself.

Satan hates you so because you are totally different than him. You may wonder why he hates you so much and why you are such a target. Why? It's very clear to understand if you look in the right place for the answer, you were made in the image of God, something that he despises and will never have the personal experience of. You do understand don't you that he knows more of what it means to be created in the God's image than you do.

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Genesis 1:26

It's important to see that God gave man two things:

1. The freedom to **rule**
2. The freedom to rule over all the **earth**
3. The freedom to rule over all the **creatures** that move along the **ground**.

Interestingly enough, God gave man the ability to rule over all the earth and even that snake that might offer you a different story is under your authority! Too many teachings have toned down the power of the believer here on this earth and turned Christ's work on the cross into an example of how we too should gracefully suffer in this world and wait for Jesus to come and rescue us from this horrible world. That's the easy way out. The silence of the saints is exactly what Satan would want. He basks in the idea that you are living Christ's example by silently living your life, bothering no one, making no waves or having no opinion. I'm not talking about reversing this to becoming obnoxious and cruel. I'm not saying that we become a "Holy Gang," intimidating others to come to our way of thinking. But we become a forceful group of believer's, taking what is rightfully their own, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done."

2. **Demons**- These are fallen angels who lost their position in heaven. They were created to serve God. They are manipulative and strategically, but loosely organized under the instruction of Satan. They have personal responsibilities to confuse and manipulate your life. They have the ability to reside and dwell in and around communities, homes and people.
3. **Thoughts**- Satan has had thousands of years to observe the weakness of mankind. He knows our tendencies as well as God. Satan targets us in our mind by leaving lies that distort any kind of truth that would lead to a greater knowledge of God or freedom from his control. Satan or demons are not needing to be "on the job" if a lie is set in your mind. This is what we call a **stronghold of the mind**, it embodies a lie and sets up position having influence on additional thoughts and actions that follow.

A simple illustration of this would be for someone to ask you what two plus two is? Your answer would be four....hopefully. But if I told you, "That's not right," you wouldn't care because you know I'm wrong. No matter how much I told you that you were wrong you would look at me like I was crazy. You wouldn't even consider my statements or my argument. But what if you were believing a lie. What if the math that we know today is a form of math but under it's principles and process we will never come to know of a greater math. What if there was a discovery of a new math that opened up a whole new dimension of mathematics that assisted in us understanding the complexities of our universe, would you be interested then? Maybe a few more, but others might want to be left alone, never considering what new information lies ahead, they are just not interested, comfortable, never coming to the full knowledge of the greater truth.

Once Satan camps a thought in our mind and we eventually accept it as truth, there is no need for him to stick around or his assistances. **A lie is a formative thought that, if accepted, becomes a foundational thought that will eventually becomes a lifestyle of behavior. I believe all sin in our life is tied to a lie of Satan. This lie appeals to our flesh in the form of temptation that draws us toward the slavery that once had us bound or wants to bind us and eventually destroy our lives.**

*"When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, **by his own evil desire**, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."*

James 1:13-15

Satan does exist and is on a mission to kill steal and destroy. His imps or demons are here to assist him in that endeavor and thirdly, lies are the primary foundational implementation process for the minds of believers. Satan's greatest tactic is to establish that thought or lie that would redirect and manipulate a person from the truth of God, or at least distort it.

Overcoming Stronghold's In Our Life

Stronghold's are fortresses within our minds personally that embodies a lie. Again I will make this statement, **I believe all sin in our life is tied to a lie of Satan**. This lie appeals to our flesh and draws us toward the slavery that once had us bound or wants to bind us with. We long to be free both emotionally and spiritually, both in our minds

and in the areas of our life among others. Jesus said that freedom comes from knowing the truth and for us to know freedom, then we must know truth. I believe that there is short-term freedom through prayer and dedication, but the real long-term freedom comes from the truth of God's Word and what it says about God, you and Satan. To have freedom, we need the truth found in God's Word and what it says about God, you and Satan.

But there are also strongholds in a city and neighborhood. What is commonly thought of the way to overcome a stronghold is to pray real hard, real loud and real long. In the process of praying against that stronghold, we command whatever spirit there is to break away and leave our city and leave our community and neighborhood.

There are certain spirits that reside and becomes the common presence of that community. **Now people can bring in a spirit of violence, lawlessness, fear, pride, selfishness, death, reveling, (partying), hatred, strife, poverty, ignorance, confusion, divorce, sensuality, deception and many others.** Many people has gathered for years to pray for a breakthrough overcoming the stronghold's of a particular area. And many people have still not seen a change. As a matter of fact, things seem to be getting worse.

A fortress is built, it does not magically appear, but it has been established over time through certain events and learned as patterns that are lived by.

Something that is worth mentioning again that I touched on last week is that for God to truly have freedom to move in our community it will confront the idols that exist in our community. Those idols will have to be dealt with, but they may not be the obvious ones. In other words, we may want to attack the obvious "devil's dens" in our community, but it is not necessarily the stronghold even though it is a host of evil. Let me put it this way, every church sitting on the corners of our city is not a threat to Satan. I wish it were. It has every means to be affective and powerful, but they are all not mighty or affective. The same is true of idols in the city.

4. **Systems-** The systems of this world are based upon the philosophies and concepts of men. All systems, government, economic, educational, occupational systems are an assortment of thoughts and ideas that either function based upon collected data over the years of how they got the best results through *review* or, an assortment of thoughts and ideas collected, shaken together and placed in action as an assumption of how things should work. In other words, *theory*.

What we do deal with is a SYSTEM that he has established in our world that we contend with so much. Now, as an occupation, can you make money with a gun? Not as a soldier or hired gun but can you make money with it? If you rob a bank or two you might make some money, but more than likely you won't live long to talk about it. Can you make money with a job? Yes, somewhat. It depends on the job. Both, the gun and job make money, but one of them has a better life expectancy.

5. **Governmental Systems-** Governmental systems are visible strongholds which govern, monitor and police those systems of gathered systems and thoughts. Now, if the thoughts are righteous, the systems would reflect that and the government will set itself up to protect those thoughts and systems. But if the system and thoughts are

"evil," then the government will eventually be set up to protect that particular system and set of thoughts.

So, if I were to say, "I'm hungry," and I go next door, walking into my next door neighbors house, open their fridge, make a sandwich and pour a big glass of milk and walk back to my house. When stopped I'm asked what I think I am doing, I could say, "I'm eating." But the truth is, I'm **stealing**. But that is not what sentence is going through my head. What it says is, "There's food next door, I'm hungry, let's eat." Now if I have about five guys sitting around watching the football game and we say, "We're hungry." We get up go down to two or three houses, it doesn't matter how many times we respond, "I'm eating," the police report will write down, **looting**. Now when you get a whole city that goes another city, takes all the baby back ribs and pizza from the neighboring towns and brings them home, that's **pillaging**. Now if our nation is going to another nation and taking all their little pigs and cows so we can have a national baby-back rib and hamburger cook-off, that is a hostile takeover and reported to the United Nations, that is an all out **attack!**

Arab Oil- I think a good example of the process of a distorted thought, a lie that manipulates and is circulated in this country is this, I have heard more and more about America basically stealing, looting and pillaging the Arab world for their oil. Listen, they are not resisting the *exchange*. And if there is an exchange, then there is "fair trade." There is no such thing as stealing, looting or pillaging if we are paying for it. Do not get distorted in your thinking to believe we are raping them any more than they are raping us. It's not rape when you pay for it, it's called **prostitution!** And if there could be any wrong, it's on both sides because of the dependence we both have on each other that causes us to both compromise our core beliefs. But a lie is being circulated about our raping the Arab world of their oil. You do not see any of this belief from the Arab world, "America, stop paying us for oil!" You will never see that. But you see it here. Where did that thought come from? What generated it? Why is it so prevalent? How could it exist so strong without ever being confronted? That's what a lie does, it distorts the existing truth and will demand adjustment in the system and eventually expect to be protected by the government.

5. **God-** God is the ultimate ruler. The heaven is His throne and the earth is His footstool.

"Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever..."

Psalm 45:6a

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it..."

Psalm 24:1

It's all His. Every bit of it. Everything in it, the whole globe thing and every person in it. He owns it. This should help with those who have trouble not desiring or having God. What right does He have in telling you how to live, I don't accept that thought. Simply because He owns you! There may be not relationship at all, but you are still owned by Him. How can He make judgment on your life? Because He owns you. He can determine your worth and declare what is wrong or right. You are God's. How you respond to that insight has eternal consequences. That is a truth not matter what you may want to believe.

6. God's Word- Now here is a truth. It is interesting that God refuses us the opportunity to "review" His principles to see if they work. Of course, I have been able to see so many of God's promises come true in my life, but I have changed the dimension for which I am living. I am no longer living only for a life of fruit! I am now living for a heritage of generational fruit. I am not consumed with the results that may occur in my life time. I am focused on living a life that will penetrate the generations long after I am gone. I am thrilled to see God's blessings in my life because of the principles I've applied. But God has not called me to live this life because of the fruit I would be able to see, but that I would live a life for the fruit that may take two or three generations to see.

When Satan attacked Jesus in Luke 4, he did so with the Word of God, and it was the Word of God out of Jesus' mouth that overcame Satan. It was a battle that lasted a few days, but Jesus' response to Satan has lasted over two thousand years! The problem that is going on around our nation today is that Satan has a better grip of the scriptures than the majority of believer's that attend church. You might think, "Well, he has had hundreds of years preparing his skills." That is true to a point, but I want you to remember something that I taught a few weeks ago that is so prevalent in this teaching today,

"You don't have to have great faith, all you need is accurate faith!"

What Satan would have you to believe is that you have to know and understand the whole Bible from cover to cover and become some scholar of some type to deal with him. I want you to know that it would be and is beneficial to know God's Word, but in our dealing with Satan, it is important to know that there are a few key things that is important to know when it comes to dealing with him. Here are just three of them:

1. He is a defeated foe!
2. Satan has to submit to the Blood of Jesus, the Name of Jesus and the Word of God.
3. The Word of God in you is enough, but get the help when and if you need it!

The Need For Churches: I must interject something here that has become quite a revelation to me. Please be patient in reading this to get the full understanding. I used to resist the idea of building a church, or at least one that is beautiful and one discretely creative. I've bought into the idea that the house of God needs to be functional, it's ridiculous to spend so much money on a building when it could be spent on ministry. But one day the Lord was asking me some questions. It started out like this. "Neil, you've seen some incredible things and heard some incredible stories of what I have done." I responded, "Yes Lord." He continued, "Do you remember all the healings and the signs and wonders that took place just in the last hundred years through my servants?" Again I couldn't help but say, "Yes, I do." Then He asked me a very straight question, "Where is the evidence of that?" "What do you mean?" I inquired. "Where is the evidence of my great movements, where would you go to see the display of my hand?" I said, "There is no place that I know of, I can't see any place. Maybe there are people alive that could tell of it, but I don't know where there is evidence of Your hand in our life." But then He responded, "They are all around you and in your city. They are represented by the churches that stand on the corners. They may seem

dead to you, but they represent the faith of people who was inspired by my hand and were diligent toward me." Then He continued, "You may feel like you are free from the bondage of religion because you are no longer tied to a weak, misdirected organized system of churches. But look at what happened through them. Look at the hospitals that they built for people I loved. Look at the nations they have reached because of their united love and compassion for this world. There are symbols all over America of the movement of my hand. Never be afraid to display my mighty hand in your life and the fellowship of those who call Cornerstone Church their home. I don't want you to be a dead church, but I do want you to be one that symbolizes the move of God. If you can't draw people through your doors, cause people to find a place that they will go because your church symbolizes that I am alive and I can do great things through those who will believe! You don't have to be a dead symbol, but be a symbol of my hand."

See, God's Word does not ask us to review the results of our obedience and determine if it works, if the pay off is good enough or if there is any real purpose in following the written plan. No, these are not suggestions for living! Our obedience to God is not based on the determination of a raw data review board, nor is it based upon every bodies theories and opinions of how things should work. There is no freedom of opinion when it comes to the standard of the Word of God. God will not argue with you because He will not argue with it Himself. He will not cross His own words, why should He let you?

I recently read a story about a cemetery in Hanover, Germany. In the cemetery there is a grave with huge slabs of granite and marble cemented together and fastened with heavy steel straps. The grave belongs to a woman who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, but in spite of her unbelief she took precautions just in case such an event might take place. She had it written in her will that her grave be made secure so that if there were a resurrection, God could not get to her. She even had her marker inscribed with the words: "This burial place must never be opened." However, as time passed, a seed from a nearby tree, which had been covered over by the stone slabs, began to grow. Slowly it pushed up through the soil and out from beneath the slabs. As the trunk enlarged, the great slabs were gradually shifted so that the steel straps were torn from their sockets. A tiny seed had pushed aside the stones all by itself, exposing the grave. Just like this tiny seed had the power to open the woman's grave, God is able to raise her at the resurrection, and she will stand before him face to face — as every man will.

"Your earthly opinion will not carry as much weight as your heavenly agreement!"

A recent professional baseball player who set many records and will undoubtedly be placed in the hall of fame retired just a few years ago. Newspapers featured an article about him that revealed that he had impregnated two women while he was getting a divorce from his first wife and getting ready to marry his 2nd wife.

The newspapers reported that these two women were suing him for child support. When this particular individual was interviewed, he commented, "I will live up to my moral responsibilities. I take them seriously because I am a Christian."

For being a Christian, he didn't have a very good understanding of his moral responsibilities. It doesn't matter what you claim, if it does not line up with God's Word then you are out of step with God as the next guy. Have we gone so far that we don't even realize that impregnating women and casting them and these fatherless children aside as useless toys is not a moral responsibility as much as it is a moral atrocity?

Ben Patterson, the dean of the chapel at Hope College, writes about a group of people who were surprised by joy: "Imagine the mystery and delight of not just hearing, but seeing the story of Jesus for the first time, almost as an eyewitness. That's what happened to a primitive tribe in the jungles of East Asia, when missionaries showed them the Jesus film. Not only had these people never heard of Jesus, they had never seen a motion picture. Then, all at once, on one unforgettable evening, they saw it all — the gospel in their own language, visible and real. Imagine again how it felt to see this good man Jesus, who healed the sick and was adored by children, held without trial and beaten by jeering soldiers. As they watched this, the people came unglued. They stood up and began to shout at the cruel men on the screen, demanding that this outrage stop. When nothing happened, they attacked the missionary running the projector. Perhaps he was responsible for this injustice! He was forced to stop the film and explain that the story wasn't over yet, that there was more. So they settled back onto the ground, holding their emotions in tenuous check. Then came the crucifixion. Again, the people could not hold back. They began to weep and wail with such loud grief that once again the film had to be stopped. The missionary again tried to calm them, explaining that the story still wasn't over, that there was more. So they composed themselves and sat down to see what happened next. Then came the resurrection. Pandemonium broke out this time, but for a different reason. The gathering had spontaneously erupted into a party. The noise now was of jubilation, and it was deafening. The people were dancing and slapping each other on the back. Christ is risen indeed! Again the missionary had to shut off the projector. But this time he didn't tell them to calm down and wait for what was next. All that was supposed to happen — in the story and in their lives — was happening."

God's Word delivers an incredible blow to the powers of this dark world. It is an incredible light for those who are without God. The rejoicing is for all who will allow God to be made known through His Word!

Hearing the Word of God. If Satan can keep you from hearing God's Word, there is little more he needs to do because your own imagination will take over from there. **If sound principles from God's Word are not guiding your life then everything else that assists you in determining your decisions is a lie.** Satan doesn't need to be involved in the deception of your mind if you are already acquainted with it and entertain the thoughts that are contrary to His Word. Dean Sherman wrote "Whatever guides us is our god, and we are commanded to have no other gods before Him (Ex. 20:3)." (Dean Sherman, *Spiritual Warfare*, YWAM Publishing, 1990, pp 39) Satan knows that man for the most part is a religious creation. We have to worship something. It is not a surprise that the first two commandments are, (Exodus 20:3-5):

"You shall have no other gods before me."

"You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water

under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me..."

The first line of defense of Satan is God's Word. God's Word produces two powerful resources for the believer and one major response:

We cannot afford to get ahead of God when trying to win our city for Christ. It could be fatal to a church and their people. We want God to prepare us for the war and prepare us for the win. To be unprepared for either could be devastating.

- 7. The Holy Spirit-** He will lead you into all truth...how? By aligning your life with the uncompromising Word and purpose of God. The Holy Spirit does not speak of His own. He always refers on to God through the life, work and Words of Christ. The Holy Spirit does not tell you a truth for the moment, He tells you the truth of the ages. He is not fluctuating with different opinions and consideration. He gently leads you to the truth always pointing toward God through His Word. The Holy Spirit drops thoughts into our minds that disarms the strongholds that reside there. He doesn't just lead us, He re-establishing the mind of Christ within us. He refuses to negotiate. He will step back because He is a dealer in truth which equates into freedom. Refusing Him is to commit to bondage and a fruitless life. Responding to Him is revelatory and son-ship.

My resistance of the Holy Spirit only allows me to be more involved in the process, allowing the systems to establish more fruit from that dark cycle of life. My occupied life, drawn by the temptation of my sin nature, not only puts distance between where I am now and the time that God desires to activate His will and purpose in my life, but during that time plants seeds of it's own that will take root and grow, some I will have to kill later and some will trip, attack and kill others who walk down that path. My seemingly, silent avoidance of responding to the Holy Spirit is still a source of influence in other dimensions.

- 8. You-** You are a key component to overcoming Satan and taking authority in this world. We are able to operate in the authority that God gave us. The Word of God is our provision for the day. It is what our spirit lives on and the spirits around us respond to. The Holy Spirit is our resource for strength, leadership, direction, empowerment and insight. You never want to be without God's provision in your life.

So there are two worlds at war. Both are in conflict with each other. Both have strong, forceful ways about them, and both want you! **It is not a matter of if you are going to serve God or not, it is a matter of who you will serve, Satan or God.** There are no neutral options, where there are no opinion and no comments. Just by your existence you have become a threat and are a target.

You Obedience- Nothing can move the hand of God as much as a person who is connected to the vine, (John 15:5). Apart from Him, you can't do anything. But connected to the voice of God an responding accordingly activates a Spiritual solution to this worlds needs and to God's plan.

Under attack? Another observation from Spurgeon worth taking notice of, "...most likely Satan no more knows who God's elect are than we do, for he can only judge as

we do by outward actions, though he can form a more accurate judgment than we can, through longer experience and being able to see persons in private where we cannot intrude...By their fruits he knows them.” (pp18) He's had right at 6000 years of practice by now, surly he's acquired a great amount of experience by now. Don't be surprised if he knows who you are?

Satan has no concern for believer's who never activate their “faith.” It is obvious that the Word of God can sit in millions of homes all over America and never make a difference in those families, and the Word of God can set on the shelf of your heart and never change the spiritual climate of your life. Knowing is not believing. Believing is acting on God's Word.

When You Are Under Attack

It is important, no matter what the attack, that you understand how to respond. No training for warfare is wasted when you are in the heat of the battle. To be unarmed when under attack is suicide. What is even worse is to be fully equipped with weapons and not know their purpose or use. If you have found yourself in the traps of Satan's attack on your life and you never saw it coming, it is time to listen up.

- **Do Not Panic:** When was the first time you felt an impression that something was going wrong in your spirit, what did you do? Did you respond to it? Did you confront it? Did you ignore it thinking it was indigestion? One of the first things we do when we are beginning to learn how to operate in spiritual warfare is at the first sign of attack we panic. God wants us to confront these attacks with confidence full of power, full of the Word of God. He also doesn't want us to waste our energy on decoys.
- **Do Not Be Fooled:** Here is a truth, **God does not want us to go through something He paid for at the Cross.** Too many people, thinking they are humble for God, ignorantly entertain doubt and unbelief, avoiding confrontation with Satan's strongholds. They never realize that their lack of engagement is a advancement for his kingdom.
- **Do Not Listen To Your Enemy:** The enemy's greatest weapon is lies and intimidation. He would prefer to cause you to run rather than engage with you. He will whisper in your ear that you are unworthy. He will try and pull the **religious card**,
 - You didn't go to church enough,
 - You didn't pray enough,
 - You didn't give enough in the offering or...

He will attack the **character of God**,

- God really doesn't love you
- God only listens to special people
- God wants you humble

Where Does Satan Attack?

He attacks us in three different places.

1. **He attacks our mind**
2. **He attacks our bodies**

3. He attacks our spirit

What Does An Attack of Satan Look Like?

1. **The Lack of Spiritual Hunger**- Most people believe that Satan will attack us in the heat of the battle, but he loves to...as one old country cook put it,

"He loves to mix your taters with three day old mayonnaise."

In other words, you have no appetite at all for God. He would rather have you lack a hunger for God, then all it is not long that all the ambition to win is lost. Many people do not see the lack of hunger for God as an all out attack. They lose their interest in the things of God. They stop going to church, reading the Bible and can't remember that last time they prayed with all their heart. They would never say they didn't love God, they just couldn't say he was high on priority.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

Matthew 5:6

Get up. Pull up at the table. Refuse to go down, fight! It is obvious when a person who had a heart for God is under attack because they no longer have the fire, the confidence or the courage to engage. When you are under attack you must make yourself hungry for the things of God. You must not walk away from people who can build you up and talk about the things of God. Don't walk away from the troupes of God, stay in the fight. It is normal when your life is under attack that you don't feel like fighting and you don't feel like eating, you want to withdraw and be alone. But you are a bigger target when you are alone. But you must stand up, pull yourself to the table and eat your daily bread.

2. **A Confused and Divided Mind**- One of Satan's common attacks is confusion and a divided mind. God cannot us a mind that is not focused. A mind that is not focused is a mind that can come under attack. Faith is a focused mind. Have you ever tried to focus on something really important and not been able to stay focused? Have you ever prayed and had three other things on your mind? Look what James tells us,

"But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."

James 1:6-8

James continues to tell us about the fervent prayers of a righteous man.

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

James 5:16b

Under the attack of Satan, he would have you believe that your prayers, your STANDING will not make a difference. He will often tell you to try this and try that. Do this and do that. Sleep when you should be awake, stay awake when you should be asleep. Some tale-tale signs of a confused and divided mind that is manifested in the flesh is:

1. Loss of routine
2. Loss of appetite

3. Loss of rest
4. Loss of focus

**"You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."
Isaiah 26:3**

Satan wants to keep you from any desire for God. He will attack your mind, your body and your spirit. If you give in to his desire for you, you will not last but you will go under.

3. **A Lack of Fire Power**- You are in the group but you are not in the fight. You lack the punch you used to have. You are not as accurate that you used to be. They have lost their joy. Recognize here, this is not a suggestion, it is a command,

**"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."
Ephesians 6:10**

You cannot fight in your own strength. You cannot fight a spiritual battle in the strength of your own emotion. You have to realize that you need to cry out to God for His help. He has not left you. He has not walked away, you have just forgot to allow Him to be God. You cannot win outside the spirit.

We cannot talk about the clash that takes place in spiritual dimensions between the strong holds of Satan and the saints of God that we do not talk about prayer and the power of God. There is a power available to us as the body of Christ that is in all honesty, untapped. It is a privilege almost wholly neglected by the people it has been given to. This gift of power through the hand of God and through the releasing of God's people through prayer tares down stronghold's and literally breaks the back of Satan. There is an inexhaustible source of unlimited energy and resource through God's power to those who pray.

We must recognize when we are under attack. When the battle is out of our control, when we are not engaged like we should be. We must recognize when the Word of God and the prayer of our lips have lost their power and lost our passion.

What Is Our Warfare?

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

Ephesians 6:12

"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that *when* the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

Ephesians 6:13

How To Respond: Fight Like The Devil

"Spiritual attacks will not go away by themselves."

"...But woe to the earth and the sea, because *the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.*"

Revelation 12:12b

1. I Must Take My Stand

Revelation 12:12 says that, “...***the devil has gone down to you!***” ***He is toe to toe with you!*** Obviously, he is no respecter of persons. It doesn't matter who he drags to hell, he is an equal opportunity operator. He doesn't see the rich or famous, he sees people who have the potential to knock him out of operation.

He is not so attached to Hollywood stars for their display of a disappointed life as much as he is concerned for their hearts to be made known to a living God. He doesn't care how lost you are and he doesn't even care if you believe in him. He wants you distracted from the reality that he has come “down to you.” **He wants to get you distracted from your real purpose here on this earth. Satan never holds back. He is never half-hearted in his efforts. We are assured that Satan will never take all his sick days and vacation time. He is on the prowl and he wants you inactive, lethargic and passive. He wants you to believe that you can't make a difference and that there really is not difference any of us can make.**

But our statement must be, “**Why don't you go and make trouble somewhere else. Get out of here and leave us alone.**”

“As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.”
John 9:4

We have got to live in a way that we understand our time is short and that our passion will determine our fruit and that we can be assured, we can make a difference!

- You should share God's truth with your children because someday they will be without you.
- If you want to influence those around you with the love of God, activate your life today because you never know when you will change jobs or the job will no longer exist. What a shame to spend a whole life's work at a particular place of employment and retire without ever sharing the love of God.
- If you want your family to know the love of God, tell them. Don't hesitate, the “...night is coming, when no one can work.”

Wake up to the reality that Satan often lives more as an example of a Christian than we do. Realize that we must take a stand for the fruit that we will reap if we faint not, allow the passion to rise up in our hearts and our time is short.

If I'm going to Fight like the devil I realize

1. I Must Take My Stand

2. My Passion Must Be Filled With Fire

“...But woe to the earth and the sea, because ***the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”***
Revelation 12:12b

Note that Satan is filled with fury! He is full of anger, wrath and hatred, all the expression of destructive passion. He is passionate in what he is doing. There is no life-giving in him. He has come to kill, steal and destroy, (John 10:10). It is not easy to

become a mature Christian nor is it automatic. It takes diligent, sustained effort...passion and that threatens Satan and spoils his plans.

If I'm going to Fight like the devil I realize

1. **I Must Take My Stand**
2. **My Passion Must Be Filled With Fire**
3. **My Time Is Short- Bucket List**, (What would be on your list?) Now that I have your attention, it is worth placing our attention here because we may not realize that Satan has more desperation in his life than we do. We live often mindlessly and aimlessly, but Satan never does. He knows his time is short but we live like our life will never end. **He is stirred up with passion and he knows his time is short.**

“...But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”

Revelation 12:12b

Satan takes pleasure in pursuing every opportunity to distract his enemy and dishonor the name of their King. Satan knows he's on a short rope, nearing it's end. Of, if we only lived more like the devil. He looked at his future and saw it will end. We know that one day this body will be laid to rest but we live as though we will never die. We need to come to the realization of Psalm 90:12

“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

Psalm 90:12

We have got to come to the reality that our days are short, they are numbered and they will come to an end. But we are not as earnest as dying men ought to be, we are terminal, what would God have you do? What is your spiritual bucket list?

If I'm going to live like the devil I have to realize...

1. **I Must Take My Stand**
2. **My Passion Must Be Filled With Fire**
3. **My Time Is Short**

Fight When It's The Hardest

Don't expect Satan to go down without a fight. Missionaries in any country will often tell you that the battle is hardest when the true root of Satan's strongholds are being attacked. These demonic strongholds fight tooth and nail for their life. They are passionate because they know their time is short and they are committed to making a destructive difference.

Often your commitment to join the attack against Satan's strongholds intimidate you. It makes you feel vulnerable and you fear retaliation. Let me ask you, who is attacking you now? What's to say if you don't join in, does that make Satan back off? He would love to have you believe that. But that's another of his core lies. Any attempt to know God is a counterattack against Satan. Knowing God causes you to shed light in darkness and namely, Satan's schemes and strongholds. But an escalated fight does not mean that you have wakened the giant, it means that you have aroused and alarmed potential defeat for the enemy. They are going to give it all they got. When

evil is at its greatest point, it is at its nearest end. **When evil is at its height, it is nearest its fall!**

- When **Pharaoh** demanded the Israelites make twice the brick, God sent Moses as a deliverer on their behalf. Pride goes before destruction and Satan operates in massive pride! (**Exodus 5**)
- **Goliath** defied the armies of Israel and the God they served, and David only needed one stone to destroy such a great army. Do not fear the size of your enemy, because God is accustomed to bringing down giants. (**I Samuel 17**)
- **Belshazzar** partied with the holy vessels of God, making a mockery of God's holy temple and the things that were in them. And a simple hand wrote words on a wall before him, announcing his end. God will not be mocked.
- **Haman** planned to hang one of the most righteous man, Mordecai, on gallows he had built. And with Mordecai, he had planned to wipe out the memory of the Israelites for ever, but God's intervention caused Haman to be the first to try the gallows out. (**Esther 3-4**) God is faithful. God is powerful!
- When the **young boy** was coming to Jesus the demon threw him to the ground in convulsions in an attempt to distract the victory needed that day because he knew his time was short. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and give him back to his father. (**Luke 9:41-43**) That is the way with our enemy. When he is about to be cast out, he does not take it lightly and expresses himself in a last ditch effort.
- At the end of this earth. **Satan** will rage as if there is no end. He will deceive the very elect the bible says. Nations will respond to his call to come to God and Magog, (**Ezekiel 38**) for the greatest battle of all history. This battle will be the battle that the God almighty will initiate and fight, (Revelation 16:14), a battle at Armageddon. It will seem like Israel will once again be extinguished from this earth. At the world's greatest darkest, God's triumphant light will break over the evil of this world and overthrow darkness. And eventually, after a little more work, Revelation 20:10 says that this Satan, the devil, the beast and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

When opposition to the truth of the gospel reaches it highest point of opposition, you can be assured that God is at His greatest potential of power against that opposition. After the aggressive resistance, there will come a time of unexplainable peace. Satan will not give up easy nor can he resist forever the claim of a believer's willingness to stand and proclaim God's gospel in specific territories. Satan becomes restless and active when he is about to lose one of his own to the grace of God. He will not let go lightly and he will work among all those surrounding the one grace is most pulling toward.

To be honest, there is a time when you are in the battle and you wonder if you are in God's will at all. You wonder if you are even able to hear God and you verge on wondering if you should quit and give up hope. When it comes to prayer or praise it seems like heavens gates are shut. When it comes to reading the Word of God not only do all the words run together but your thoughts are at a four-way stop with no stop sign. You feel like you are beyond dry. Your soul is as exhausted and spent as you

have ever experienced. You are not sure you could take one more violent blow of Satan's attacks. But rest assured, the fire has come up because Satan's time is short! He is in panic mode. His passion is pure hate and he is out to win! Satan knows that he will soon be out of range to throw his fiery darts and he is taking all the shots he can. Don't be overwhelmed by his attack on you, but rejoice realizing that he time is short and he is throwing all he has at you. He fights us so desperately because he knows that he ultimately will be defeated.

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

Ephesians 6:12

*"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that **when** the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand your ground**, and **after you have done everything, to stand.**"*

Ephesians 6:13