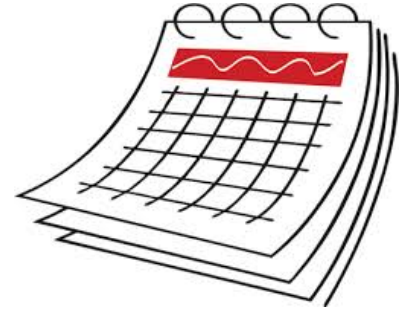


ÍDAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 1

Old Testament



Day 1 – Adam & Eve

Very shortly after Adam and Eve were created, their free will was tested as well. Satan twisted God's words and put doubt of God's goodness in Eve (Genesis 3:1). The battle started in their minds, and continues so today (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). He implied God was withholding something good from them, a lie he continues to use with good success even today.

Adam chose to believe Satan's lie and act on it, and thus sin entered into the human race (Romans 5:12). Humans, too, used their God-given free will choice to opt for sin. Immediately there were consequences: shame (Genesis 3:7) replaces innocence (Genesis 2:25), guilt and separation from God (Genesis 3:8, 22-24), deception and lies (Genesis 3:10), blaming each other (Genesis 3:12) and continuing consequences of sin in daily life (Genesis 3:16-24).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Having gotten her to dialogue with him and having planted doubts about God's goodness in Eve's mind, Satan then denies the truth of God's Word (Genesis 3:4). Eve misquoted God, saying they couldn't even touch the fruit, when all God said was that they could not eat it (Genesis 3:3). Satan took advantage of her lack of correct understanding of the Word of God. From this we learn that knowing and believing God's Word is totally essential for our victorious living today. We must know it completely and totally (Ephesians 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Also, we must believe it, especially the part about God's holiness and hatred of sin. Mistaking patience and grace for approval of sin is very wrong. God will judge sin. Sin does bring death. Satan is a liar and deceiver (John 8:44). Unless a thought lines up with God's Word it is wrong.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Sin, and demonizing, all start in the mind, in our thoughts. Actions result from mental choices we make. The majority of demonizing consists of demons putting thoughts into a person's mind or snatching thoughts out of a person's mind. While they don't have access to our minds and thoughts to the same extent that God does, the Bible makes it clear that there is some access. Jesus said this in the Parable of the Sower and the Seed: "Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown." (Mark 4:15). David's thought to take a census was demonic (I Chronicles 21:1ff; II Samuel 24:1ff). So was Ananias & Sapphira's greed (Acts 5:3) and Saul's jealousy/anger (I Samuel 16:14-23). That's why, when talking about spiritual warfare, Paul says we are to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Not only can Satan's forces put wrong thoughts into our minds, they can snatch right thoughts out of our minds (Mark 4:15) so that we forget them.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Eve was deceived by Satan because she acted according to her feelings and emotions, putting them over the truth of what God had clearly said (Titus 2:13-15; 2 Corinthians 11:3). Feelings and emotions are fine, important and necessary. They are icing on the cake of life, adding color and enjoyment, and indeed God created them for this purpose, but He didn't create them to be the source of our decision-making. Our feelings should depend on our rational thought. When our feelings get ahead of it or away from it then trouble comes. You know in your mind that you are an OK person, yet fear you will be a failure and rejected. When feelings aren't founded on truth they go wrong. The truth is that you are who you are because God created you that way (Psalm 139), but your emotions reject that truth and try to do the 'thinking' themselves. We must let our mind explain reality to our emotions. When we place feelings over fact, we are wrong.

Day 2 – Job

Satan not only attacked God's kingdom on a world-wide scale, but he opposed individuals who were part of that kingdom as well. Job is a prime example of this. He lived around the same time as Abraham, but not much is known about where he fits in historically or geographically. He is a picture of a righteous man, following God, facing his own warfare because he is faithful to God (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7).

One of the ways Satan attacks God's kingdom and people is by bringing accusations of sin against believers (Zechariah 3:1-4; Revelation 12:10). Because God is holy and must judge sin, Satan tries to point out the sins of believers in order to bring God's wrath upon them. However we are safe from condemnation because Jesus paid the price for our sins on the cross (Romans 8:1). Still, Satan is forever tattling on us to God.

We don't know how Satan is allowed in God's presence, but in some way or form this must happen for he accuses Job to God (Job 1:1-6; 2:1-7). God allows Satan to attack Job, but with certain limits which God imposes (Job 1:12; 2:6).

LESSON FOR TODAY: All Satan's attacks against us are 'Father filtered,' allowed by God for His glory and our good (Romans 8:28). This painful suffering of Job's served as an example of faithfulness to all heavenly beings, and to the millions who have read of Job in the Bible.

One other item of interest in this account is the way Satan was able to attack Job and his family. He used evil men (Job 1:13-15), nature (lightning, Job 1:16), hostile men (take animals, kill servants, Job 1:17), natural disaster (wind to destroy a house and kill Job's children, Job 1:18-19), and sickness and pain against Job himself (Job 2:6). While we aren't to fear Satan or give him credit for more power than he has, still he clearly has more ability to use nature, people and sickness than we often recognize. He has many weapons in his warfare against us.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Why does God allow people to suffer and struggle? How can a God of love allow so much evil to continue? God doesn't defend Himself or explain what He allows. He gives us a free will choice as to whose kingdom we will pursue. Sin and the resulting evil are the natural consequences of turning from Him.

The fact of pain in the world is not a reason to see God as less than loving. Still, innocent people suffer. We can't try to evaluate God's person and character by these things for He has proven His character and love by leaving heaven, becoming a man, living on earth, then going to the cross to take on the punishment for every sin we would ever commit. That proves His love for us beyond a shadow of a doubt. If it weren't for that we would all spend eternity in hell. So anything less than hell from now on is because of His grace and mercy. Why He seems to show more love and mercy to some than others is not up to us to judge. God isn't accountable to us. We cannot stand in judgment of Him until we know all the facts as He knows them and see everything as He sees it. Many things seem unfair to little children but they must trust their parents. Getting an injection from a doctor, having a pretty shiny knife taken away, things like these seem to a child that a parent doesn't love them. But a child doesn't have the perspective to truly understand all that is involved and we don't either. We do know that facing things we don't understand gives us an opportunity to trust. Our faith is stretched and we grow. God is glorified as we see Him deliver and as others watch us continually trust Him no matter what happens. Spiritual warfare itself is often very painful. It is just one of many forms of suffering God uses for our good and for His glory. Often deliverance isn't a sudden, complete act. God allows the struggle to go on for it teaches us to fight and to trust Him.



Day 3 – Moses

The whole conflict between Moses and Pharaoh, Israel and Egypt, is one of spiritual warfare. The battle with Satan's magicians, Janees and Jambrees, the victory of God over the gods of Egypt through the plagues and the miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea all show God's great power over Satan and His forces. He led them by the cloud of fire, by His very Shekinah Presence.



LESSON FOR TODAY: God protected and provided, but the Jews had to learn to fight their battles in His strength. God delivered them, but after deliverance (salvation) they had to learn to fight, as must we. God does not prevent the battles we have with Satan, but He does give us victory through them. We are not exempt from warfare and never will be, but we have His promises of ultimate victory when we trust Him and follow Him. Don't waste energy and prayer time asking for the battle to be milder so you can manage, instead ask for greater strength so you can fight and win. Don't try avoiding the battle, face it right on. And most of all, don't compromise or give in. Being taken captive by your enemies will NOT make your life any easier!

In their travel from Egypt to Mount Sinai the Jews had to travel near the land of the Amalekites. The Amalekites followed them, picking off the weak and sickly who weren't part of the main body of Israel (Deuteronomy 25:17-18).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Satan as a roaring lion looks for weak and sick sheep, those who aren't with the main body, and easily picks them off (1 Peter 5:8). We can't fight alone; we must be close to the main army. Be part of a sound Bible-believing church. Be involved in its ministry. Surround yourself with good Christian friends. When you notice one of them drifting do all you can to bring them back to the fellowship. When you are being attacked let others know what they can do to help you. Stragglers and the weak are easy targets for the enemy. Support those who are struggling and ask for help when you need it.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Amalek is a picture of the flesh. The flesh is always here to battle us. Demons don't always attack directly, they use our flesh (sin nature, natural tendency of self-centeredness and sin) as well. In fact, many times they don't have to do anything, they just let our sin nature defeat us. We, like the Jews, must learn to have victory over the flesh by prayer and fighting. Sins of the flesh include such things as lust, greed, laziness, self-indulgence, etc. – anything outside of God's will for us, anything that keeps us from us from being more like Jesus.

God allowed Amalek to continually attack so the Jews would stop and fight. They had to learn to fight. They were armed by God after the Egyptian army drowned (Exodus 14:30) but had to learn to use their weapons.

The Jews experienced victory when Moses prayed and the army fought behind Joshua (Exodus 17:8-15). Both were necessary for victory. Victory over Amalek was only temporary, for there were many future encounters to come.

LESSON FOR TODAY: For us to have victory means we must pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17) for it is part of the weaponry God gives us (Ephesians 6:18). We must also fight using the armor He has provided (Ephesians 6:10-17). Prayer without doing our best in life's battles isn't enough; neither is doing our best but neglecting to pray. It takes both faith and works for victory. Our warfare with the flesh will never end. Like the Jews with the Amalekites, battles will continue as long as we are on this earth. Don't ask God to remove the battle but to give you strength to endure.

What do you need to do today to have victory over Satan and his forces? The battle won't go away, so prepare for it. That's the only way to victory.

Day 4 – “Third & Fourth Generation”

We usually don't associate the Ten Commandments with spiritual warfare, but there is a close connection (Exodus 20:4-5). After the commandment to not make any idols God gives the reason: He is a jealous God “punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me” (Exodus 20:4-5). God does not hold us accountable for the sins of our ancestors (Deuteronomy 24:16) but the consequences of their sins does pass on from generation to generation (Ezekiel 18:2). There is a big difference between ‘sins’ (individual acts of sin) and ‘sin’ (general term for the culmination of all sin together).

One of the main ways sin passes from generation to generation is through demonic control. When a person opens themselves to demonizing, that demon claims them and all they have. When they have children the demon then claims the child as well (Exodus 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 5:8-9). There are many examples of this in Scripture (Nehemiah 1:4-9; Jeremiah 14:20; Daniel 1:1-19). This goes on from generation to generation until broken by prayer in Jesus' name. As believers we have authority to break this in Jesus' name (1 Corinthians 7:14).

LESSON FOR TODAY: When one person opens themselves up to demonic influence, that person's descendants are also at risk of demonizing. When a demon has access to a person, he also claims right to all that person has, including their children. The Bible says these sins pass on down to the third and fourth generation (Exodus 20:4-5; Deuteronomy 5:8-9; Exodus 34:6-7). Ancestral, or generational access is one of the most common reasons people are demonized. This is especially true of first born males, for Satan seeks to claim them just as God does (Exodus 34:20).

This is especially true of first born males, but certainly not limited to them. Satan seeks to claim them because God says they belong to Him (Exodus 34:20). This is by no means limited to firstborn males, or even to males. Any child is open to this. If you notice some of the same problems in your life as in your siblings, parents, aunts, uncles, or grandparents it could very well be ancestral demonizing. The same demons have access to those in the family and do the same work in various members (not all members, that would be too obvious). They claim the blood line or family name and use that as access. If you see some patterns in the symptoms or characteristics of demonizing that were covered previously in others in your family that could show ancestral access. That is why so often a boy who hates his father for beating his mother grows up to beat his own wife, or a child of an alcoholic becomes an alcoholic himself. It is not uncommon to observe generations of abuse, addiction, hatred, superstition and fear, pride, control and manipulation, rejection, sexual sins and perversions etc.

Generational bondage can be broken by personally repenting of and confessing the sins of past generations. Claim the blood of Christ as stronger than your blood line and put that access under the blood of Jesus (Romans 5:15). Claim that you are a "new creation, old things have passed away, all things have become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). State that you are “born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God” (John 1:13). Then ask God to turn that curse into a blessing (Deuteronomy 23:5).

LESSON FOR TODAY: When talking to someone who you feel may be demonized be sure to start by asking questions about similar sins and problems in other members of the family. This is especially true if the person struggled with the issue since they were quite young. Generational bondage can be broken by putting the sins of past generations under the blood of Jesus and forbid any of Satan's forces to make any claim against you through them. Claim the blood of Christ as stronger than your blood line and put any demonic access under the blood of Jesus (Romans 5:15). Ask God to turn curses into blessing (Deuteronomy 23:5).

Day 5 – Saul, Stages of Demonizing 1

Saul was the first king over Israel. He was the choice of the people for he was tall and good looking (1 Samuel 10:23-24) – external traits being all the Jews cared about. He didn't follow God nor did he lead the people to victory in their battles. Pride and insecurity turned him from a shy, humble man to a self-centered tyrant. His insecurity and fear opened him up to demonic oppression.



Stage 1 demonizing The first stage of his demonic oppression was mild. When he was tormented David's music brought relief (1 Samuel 16:14-23). He opened himself to the influence of demons by his sin. When he allowed his fear to manifest itself in anger and rage, demons fed on his hate and injected more fear and anger into him (1 Samuel 18:10-22; 19:9-10; 20:30-33). He only found relief when David played and sang to him.

LESSON FOR TODAY: God assigns angels to protect us, and He does it in an organized way, not haphazardly. So, too, Satan is methodical in assigning demons to attack us as well. Certain ones are assigned

to focus on defeating us, perhaps also to other family members as well. They get to know us and our weaknesses so that they are better able to find chinks in our armor and attack us either head on or in new subtle ways, which often are more successful. They have had thousands of years of experience doing this so we are no match for them. God alone knows us better than they do and only He can help us have victory.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Sin opens the door to demons. Sinful desire is like a prayer, a request which demons are more than willing to fill. Anger especially leads to demonizing (Ephesians 4:26-27; Matthew 18:34; II Corinthians 2:10-11). We voluntarily lose self-control and the anger becomes like a prayer, a seeking for something ungodly to empower us. Confess any anger as sin and take back any access you have given to Satan through it.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Christian music is a good way to have victory over demonic oppression today as well (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Not only does it reset our mind and thoughts with God's truth, but demons hate hearing Jesus praised and avoid places where that is happening. Playing music that lifts up Jesus when you are attacked is a good way to help win the battle. It is also a profitable practice at night for those who have thoughts and dreams that aren't from God. Letting Christian music play quietly in your room can help with that. If a certain part of your home or property seems to be especially under attack leave some music playing there all day and night. Leaving a light on can have the same affect for demons love darkness and hate the light.

Day 6 – Saul, Stages of Demonizing 2

Saul allowed himself to be demonized when he opened himself to the influence of demons by the sin in his life, especially his anger and jealousy of David. That was like a 'prayer' which demons gladly 'answered' by feeding more anger and jealousy into his mind. It didn't end there, though. Their power and influence over him continued to grow.

Stage 2 Demonizing The second stage then followed. Saul became more violent, even trying to kill David while he played music (1 Samuel 18:10-11; 19:7-17; 20:30-33). This shows how demons hate music that praises God and will do anything to silence it if possible. As the demons gather more control over Saul by his continual sin they are able to incite him to seek to kill David. Those in this stage start acting out in their sin area – in violence, greed, lust or whatever area they have opened in their life.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Violence and rage are common effects of demonic presence. That is not to say that Saul, or anyone who has rages, is not responsible for their actions - they are. But at this point it takes more than just "trying harder" to have victory; it takes confessing the sin and rebuking the work of the demons in your life. Then ask God to fill that void. The battle will then begin for they will seek to retake the property in your life they have gained. Using God's word by quoting His promises is the only way to have sustained victory.

Third Stage Demonizing The third and final stage of demonizing is then evident in Saul's life. Deeply destructive and totally ungodly behavior begins as Saul goes to a witch at Endor for advice (1 Samuel 28:8-15). Despite the fact that he knows God forbids this (Deuteronomy 18:9-13) he wants the witch to call up the spirit of Samuel so he can find out information about the future. Assuming a demonic manifestation would appear counterfeiting Samuel, they were both shocked when God allowed Samuel himself to manifest to them. Samuel foretold his future as he wanted, but it was one of death for disobedience.

LESSON FOR TODAY: While God has a plan for our lives that includes life, joy and peace, Satan also has a plan but it includes misery, destruction and death. He can only do what God allows. If he had his own way all Christians would be cruelly killed. He can only do what God allows (Job). Demons seem to bring that which is good for us, but like Satan's deception in Eden it is really for our destruction (John 8:44). Therefore there can be no compromise in our warfare with Satan and his forces. We cannot give one inch of ground but must tirelessly battle for total freedom.



Day 7 - Daniel

For 70 years the Jews were in captivity to other nations who took them from their homeland. Daniel was one of those taken to Babylon as a young boy. He spent his life there in service to God and his new country. Throughout all of his life he was involved in spiritual warfare. We gain valuable insight into the battle in the heavenlies from an event in his life (Daniel 10:2-14). Towards the end of his life he was fasting and praying for wisdom from God. After 24 days without an answer an angel appeared to him and told him that the first day he started praying God sent a messenger to answer Daniel's prayer. However for 3 weeks the demon who was the territorial ruler of Persia fought against this messenger angel to keep him from getting to Daniel. Michael came to join in the battle so the heavenly courier from God was able to defeat the demonic oppression. He was then able to come to Daniel and complete his mission. While this sounds like a strange event, it sheds much light on the spiritual battles we fight. These kinds of things probably happen around us all the time but we aren't aware of them.

LESSON FOR TODAY: *There are several lessons for us in this account. First, we gain insight into the organization of Satan's forces. Satan arranges his demons in the same manner God has angels organized - in a military-like structure. These are similar to soldiers in an army: generals, colonels, majors, lieutenants, sergeants, corporals, privates, etc. (Ephesians 6:12). Usually a "strong man" (or ruler) is assigned to a task, and he has lesser demons under his command to help in the work (Matthew 12:25-29; Daniel 10:2-6, 12-14). The names of these demons usually refer to what they do: "Fear," "Anger," "Lust," "Pride," "Deception," etc.. Satan assigns powerful demons as leaders to oversee the work against various people groups and geographical areas as well. Persia was controlled by demons who were organized under the command of a very powerful demon who took the role as the "prince of Persia". We can be assured that all countries, people groups and major movements among mankind have a structure of demons assigned to defeat and control them. So do churches, Christian ministries, families and of course individuals as well. No one gets overlooked, and those doing the Lord's work receive special attention! Understanding these things is important for us to know what we are fighting against and how to pray for God's power and protection.*



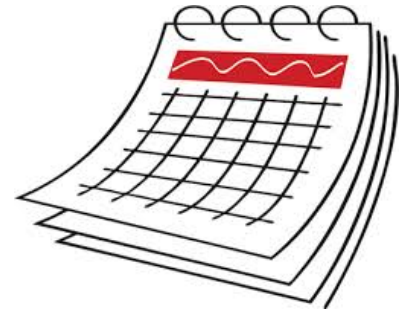
Daniel prayed to God three times a day after he had been told not to worship God.

LESSON FOR TODAY: *We also see the importance of prayer, and that God answers it. Even if it seems to take a while, persevere and await God's answer. It has been correctly said that prayer is not preliminary to the battle, prayer is the battle. So persevere in your prayer and warfare. The warfare we go through here is just a small reflection of what is taking place in the heavenlies. You are not alone in your battles. All God's people are attacked, and angels and demons are constantly in conflict in the unseen world around us. If it seems you are alone, or something must be wrong because you face these things more than others remember that all who seek to serve and advance God's kingdom will be attacked.*

DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 2

Life of Jesus



Day 1 – Jesus Enters the Battle

The coming of Jesus Christ was the invasion of the kingdom of Satan by the kingdom of God in the person of the true King. His incarnation was an infiltration, a landing behind enemy lines. The enemy mustered all the opposition it could to stop Him. He came to rescue mankind which had been held captive in sin since the time of Adam and Eve. He provided the only way man could get out of bondage. Jesus came to end Satan's undisputed rule (Matthew 12:28-29). Darkness fought against the Light, but praise God the light was greater (John 1:5; 3:19; 8:12)!

Jesus' birth was truly an infiltration of enemy-occupied territory, a landing behind the lines of a baby who would change everything. While the accounts of Jesus' birth speak of a quiet, peaceful event, reading between the lines shows there was much conflict involved both in heaven and on earth. The news of Mary's pregnancy before the consummation of her marriage with Joseph clearly led to community rejection. Strong opposition to Jesus' coming is seen in the fact that there was no comfortable place to stay in Bethlehem, the religious leaders failed to come see the baby even though they knew when and where He was born (Matthew 2:1-7), and Herod's attempted to kill Him (Matthew 2:16).

There were others who were very willing to recognize this baby as God Himself come to earth. God affirmed Jesus' deity through the words of Gabriel to Mary, Joseph and the shepherds. Each of them believed. Simeon and Anna in the temple knew who He was, and the Magi from the east were clear confirmations that God had come to earth in the form of a baby (Matthew 1:18-2:12).

However most people, including the religious rulers, rejected Him. Some of those who did follow Him traveled with Him to watch and learn each day. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John record these events. They are not just history lessons; they are practical examples of how we are to win the battles in our lives.

We, too, fight behind enemy lines. Jesus may be gone, but we remain to infiltrate enemy territory. We draw their fire. We face their attacks. That's why God gave us the Bible as our training manual and the life of Jesus as our practical example. The following series of blogs will draw lessons in spiritual warfare from the life of Jesus.

"All the battles of Israel, if they could have seen it, were not their battles, they were the battles of the Lord. They were involved because they were His people. This is God's battle, we are given the privilege of being in it and of fighting as individual soldiers, but God's honor is involved in it all. He cannot allow this to fall because His character, His glory, and His honor are involved at every point. Be strong in the Lord, remember that He is there, and that it is His battle." D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Day 2 – Jesus Frees A Captive 1

While Satan continued to harass Jesus after the wilderness temptations, especially through his demons, no direct overt attack is recorded until Jesus is half way through His ministry, about a year and a half after Jesus' baptism and temptation.

Jesus had proclaimed Himself as the Messiah ('Christ') for two years. Some responded but most turned away, following the lead of the religious rulers who completely rejected Jesus and His claims. He did miracles to authenticate His authority and to show His power. If He can heal a body then He can certainly heal a soul as well.

One day Jesus went to Capernaum (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37), His new home and the home of several of His disciples. While teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath a demonized man cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who You are – the Holy One of God!" (Mark 1:24) Jesus commanded the demon to be quiet and leave the man, which he did after shaking the man and causing a loud shriek to be heard. Naturally, everyone was amazed and word of this soon spread throughout the whole area. With this event the battle between Satan and Jesus moved to a new level.

LESSON FOR TODAY: *The Greek word δαιμονιζομαι ("demonizing") refers to one who is heavily impacted by demons. It is used 15 times in the New Testament. The term "demonizing" does not differentiate between possession (demons within) or influence (demons without). God doesn't make that clarification or distinction, and we shouldn't try to make it, either. We don't need to know the exact extent of demonizing, just that it is taking place. The cause is the same, as are the symptoms and so is the cure. In the spiritual realm there are no clear-cut divisions like we try to make (demons 'within' or 'without', etc.). There are, of course, degrees of demonizing depending on the person, the demons involved, the access, and other factors, but it isn't always possible or necessary to pinpoint what is 'without' and what is 'within'.*

Other words the Bible uses for 'demonizing' are "entered in" (as when Satan entered into Judas - John 13:27) and "filled" (Acts 5:5 about Ananias and Saphira, the same word that is used of believers being filled with the Holy Spirit). The common denominator is that the person being demonized usually doesn't separate his own consciousness from the demonic influence. He assumes that the thoughts and feelings the demon feeds him are his own. A person always has a free will to turn to God for help, but when followed these demonic impulses bring one deeper and deeper into bondage. Perhaps demonizing can be better understood by thinking of it as a kind of spiritual hypnotism from within. Hypnotism of any kind is something for God's people to avoid (Psalm 54:4-5; Joshua 1:8; Philippians 4:8).

LESSON FOR TODAY: *How many demons were involved in this incident? "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who You are – the Holy One of God!" Usually there is more than one demon involved when someone is demonized, there is a structured organization. Satan organizes his demons in the same manner God has angels organized - in a military-like structure. These are similar to generals, colonels, majors, lieutenants, sergeants, corporals, privates, etc. (Ephesians 6:12). Usually a "strong man" (or ruler) is assigned to a task, and he has lesser demons under his command to help in the work (Matthew 12:25-29; Daniel 10:2-6, 12-14). The names of these demons usually refer to their work ("Fear," "Anger," "Lust," "Pride," "Deception," etc.). In this case the ruling demon is the one speaking ("I") for the others who are part of the group working against this man ("us").*



Day 3 – Jesus Frees A Captive 2

Since Jesus is our great example in all we do, especially in spiritual warfare, what lessons can we learn from how He delivered the man in the Capernaum synagogue (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37).

LESSON FOR TODAY: *It is not coincidental that it was Jesus' presence and teaching that caused the demon to react (see also Mark 5:39). When Jesus is lifted up and His Word communicated, demons who are present will be affected for they can't stand to hear these things. Correct teaching of God's Word is essential for a church or individual to grow spiritually. Don't be surprised when it stirs up opposition against a person, family or church. Satan will do what he can to silence it, to keep the light from shining in his kingdom of darkness.*

LESSON FOR TODAY: *The first occasion of an act or event in the Bible often sets the prototype for others to come, and that is true of this first deliverance in the Capernaum synagogue. The exact methods used by Jesus to cast out spirits are mentioned in only five specific cases and in only one generalized case (which appears first on the following list):*

Matt 8:16: "he cast out the spirits with a word."

Matt 15:28: "Then Jesus answered her, 'O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.' And her daughter was healed instantly."

Mark 1:25: "But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!'"

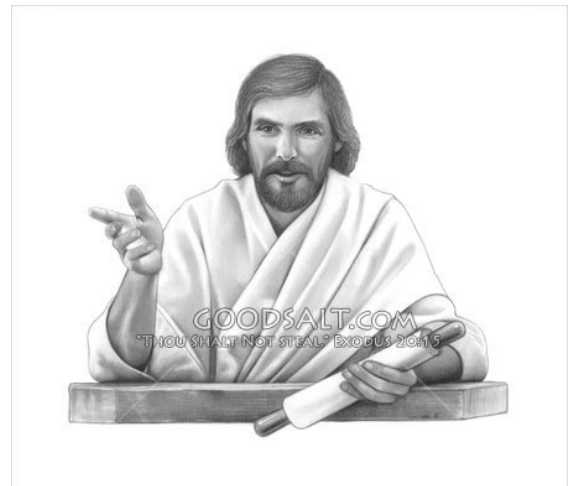
Mark 5:8: "For he had said to him, 'Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!'"

Mark 9:25: "He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, 'You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again.'"

Luke 13:12-13: "He called her and said to her, 'Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.' And he laid his hands upon her"

So generally speaking, it is true to say that Jesus cast out the spirits "with a word." This refers to a short sentence or phrase according to the five examples given above, and not to some singular word. And what was that "phrase?" According to the above examples it was: "Be it done," "Come out (3 times)" and "You are freed." Jesus cast out spirits by a verbal command. In three of these cases, the command was, "Come out" (*exerchomai ek*), which is an adjuration. In the remaining case[s] it was, "Be it done," [and "You are freed,"] which are decrees of accomplishment. In two of these cases, He accompanied the verbal command with a verbal "rebuke." This rebuke was once stated as being, "Be silent." Hence, the commands used by Jesus contained variety, being tailored to fit the occasion or the subject. He used no rigid formula, no incantations, no rituals, no charms, etc. as did Hebrew exorcists. There are no special prayers, no 'magic' words or phrases to use or pray, no set way of "doing deliverance." Each situation is different, but all include the believer using Jesus' power and authority to stop the demons' work and to command them to be gone. Be sensitive to God's Spirit when dealing with such things and proceed as you feel Him leading you. Don't expect Him to lead the same as He does others, nor will He always lead you the same way. It's not our words or actions that bring deliverance, it's always and only His power. Just tap into it!

LESSON FOR TODAY: *Always forbid the demons to return when you cast them out (Mark 9:25). It's good to forbid any others to replace the ones driven out. Also forbid them to enter anyone else but to go where Jesus sends them. All this must be done in Jesus' name and power. Ask God for wisdom and be sensitive as to how He leads.*



Day 4 – Christians Can Be Demonized

Quite often the question comes up concerning believers being demonized. If God is greater and He is in us, how can Satan have any foothold? How wonderful it would be if we were exempt, but while salvation adds a new dimension to us (a new nature) God does not eradicate our old sin nature. Jesus' first recorded encounter with a demonized person was in the Capernaum synagogue (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Demons can impact believers as they do unbelievers. Note that the demonized man was not a pagan who worshipped Satan. He was a faithful Jew who regularly attended synagogue, someone familiar to the people there and whom no one previously had suspected of being demonized. Probably he wasn't aware that the struggles he had in life were caused by demons. This happened at other times as well (Mark 5:39). While we don't know this man's exact spiritual state, this still brings up the question of believers being demonized. While there is general agreement that unbelievers can be demonized, some don't believe that can happen to believers because believers belong to Jesus. That is true, but demonizing doesn't imply ownership, just influence.

As long as we are in this body we still have a sin nature, a capacity to sin just the same as we did before salvation. Salvation creates a new spiritual nature within us. But the old capacity to sin still remains. It is in this area, this sin nature, this capacity to sin, that demons work. Salvation does not remove our capacity to sin (sin nature) but gives us a new nature so we don't have to sin but can live in obedience to God. Believers can still sin after salvation as they did before. It is in this area of our 'flesh' or sin nature that demons work. Our new nature is greater but doesn't take away our free will choice to still function in our sin nature. Paul's struggle as recorded in Romans 7 describes this well.

The Bible makes no distinction between believers and unbelievers as far as demonizing is concerned. In fact, the Bible refers to many believers who were demonized: Paul's thorn in the flesh was a demon (II Corinthians 12:7), King Saul was a believer (I Samuel 11:6) and was obviously demonized (I Samuel 16:14-23), David was motivated by Satan to take a census of the people (I Chronicles 21:1ff; II Samuel 24:1ff), Ananias and Saphira were believers (Acts 4:32-35) but allowed Satan to "fill" them (Acts 5:3), and Peter was Satan's spokesman in tempting Jesus to not go to the cross (Matthew 16:23). Paul warns believers to not give Satan a "foothold" in their life (Ephesians 4:26-27), showing such a thing is possible. Jesus Himself called deliverance "the children's bread" (Matthew 15:22-28), meaning it was for His children. A Christian can receive another spirit (II Corinthians 11:2-4) and there are other examples of believers being demonized (Luke 13:10-16; I Corinthians 5:4-5). Christians are warned to guard against this (I Peter 5:8-9; Ephesians 6:10-18).



A believer belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan cannot own him as he did before salvation (I John 4:4), but he can still influence him, "demonize" him. When the words 'possessed' or 'oppressed' are used, then the question is asked if a believer can be 'possessed.' To answer that then 'possessed' must be defined. The Bible simply does not define it, nor does it even talk about 'possession' – just 'demonizing' which means being influenced by a demon.

A Christian has every right and resource to be free from this demonizing, however. Property which you own can be trespassed on by another person, but you have every right and resource to put him off your property. You just need to learn how to do it. That's what spiritual warfare is all about.

Day 5 – How to Be Free From Demonizing

When Jesus delivered people from demonic influence or control, He always did it verbally. Only once did He ever allow a demon to speak. The only time Jesus ever talked to a demon was before He delivered the demonized men in the graveyard at Gadarenes (Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-37). He asked him his name, which was 'Legion' meaning about 5,000 or 6,000 soldiers, signifying the number of demons influencing this man. Jesus wanted everyone to see how great His power was by how many demons He could defeat at one time. The only other thing they said was a request to go into the pigs. Jesus had commanded them to leave and, while they stalled as long as they could, they knew they couldn't resist His command.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Jesus had to command the demons to come out over and over (Mark 5:8, continual present tense in the Greek, "kept saying over and over").. They were very resistant to leaving, even when Jesus commanded them. This is the only time that happened for every other time they left immediately (Matthew 8:16). Some demons have such a strong hold on their host that it takes persistent warfare to remove them (Mark 9:29).

The end of the story has a happy ending: "When they came to Jesus they saw the man who had been demonized by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind" (Mark 5:15). Today we talk about chemical imbalances, emotional disorders and bipolar tendencies. We prescribe various kinds of medicines. When Jesus faced people with these symptoms, He cast out the demons and immediately they were total freed and completely normal and mentally healthy



LESSON FOR TODAY: When Jesus cast demons out of someone or forgave them He, in some manner or way, told them to not sin any more (John 8:11). It was sin that led to the bondage and demonizing in the first place. The sin must be confessed (admitted to as sin, 1 John 1:9) in order for the demons to no longer be able to claim it and stay.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Here is a prayer you can use if you sense any demonic activity against yourself. You can change the words and use them for others. It is only an example. There is no one right way to pray or say things. Adapt and use this however you would like:

"Dear Jesus, I thank you for the salvation you give me in Jesus. I know You are greater than Satan and His demons. I know You have power and authority over them. I know You have given us that power & authority in Jesus' name. In Jesus name I forbid any demons to work against me or my family or my church. In Jesus name I close the door to any reason they think they can work against me. If I have committed any sin that they use to work against me I put it under the blood of Jesus. In Jesus' name I forbid them to work and command them to be gone. In Jesus' name I break any claim that comes down through my family line. I am a new creation in God's family. I forbid any claim against me through my name or family line. In Jesus' name I dedicate the land where my home and church are to God. In Jesus' name I break any claim demons may make through those places. I ask for Your presence only to fill and use those places. In Jesus' name I break any curses any one has made against me, my family or my church. Jesus has taken all my curse on the cross. His power has broken any power of the enemy against me. So in Jesus' name I forbid any demons to work against me or my family or my church. I commit myself and my family and my church to God only. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Surround me with Your angels. Use me for Your glory. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen"

Day 6 – When Deliverance Fails

Shortly after the event with the Gentile girl there was a situation with a Jewish boy that is also recorded (Matthew 17:14-19; Luke 9:37-45; Mark 9:14-29). A young boy was demonized to the extent he would have a seizure, foam at the mouth, gnash his teeth and then become rigid. This has been happening since childhood. The demons also caused him to try to kill himself by throwing himself into fire or water. Evidently the boy was deaf and mute as well – all work of the demons influencing him. We saw previously how demons bring death and destruction, and this is another example of that (see Mark 5:5; 1 Kings 18:28). Jesus was disappointed that the Jews didn't have enough faith in God to have victory over these demons. Even his own disciples were unable to drive them out. Jesus said it would have been possible for them to have driven the demons out if they believed. Jesus commanded the demons to leave and never return and they obeyed! They had no choice but to obey Him. When the disciples asked why they weren't able to drive the demons out Jesus said "this kind can come out only by prayer" (Mark 9:29).

LESSON FOR TODAY: It takes faith in God, that He is greater and able to deliver, to have successful prayer for deliverance. Satan and his demons use fear as a big weapon to undermine our faith. If we don't firmly believe that God is greater than they and totally able to defeat them we will never see victory through our prayers. Only prayer brings deliverance, no other rituals, public ceremonies, emotional activities or anything else – only prayer in faith. That is because prayer taps into God's power and that is what brings victory. It's not the prayer that does it, but the God to Whom we pray!

LESSON FOR TODAY: Learn from your failures, for you will have them. The disciples had been living and traveling with Jesus all day every day for over a year and had been trained by Him to do this. They had great success in spiritual warfare in the past (Luke 10:1, 17-18) but not now. Jesus uses this to teach them. Don't fear failure – try your best and learn from any mistakes you may make. Trying and failing is not nearly as bad as not trying at all.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Jesus explained their failure to use their authority and power to command the demons to be gone by saying "This kind can come out only by prayer" (Mark 9:29). "This kind" clearly implies there are various kinds of demonic strongholds and some are easier to break than others. The demons who controlled this boy, causing him to be mute and deaf, have seizures and try to kill himself, were strongly entrenched and took 'prayer' to remove them. Jesus didn't elaborate, but evidently the disciples understood. Perhaps they were trying to have victory in their own strength instead of God's strength, trying to command the demons on their own instead of through God's power and authority.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Epilepsy, in fact any kind of seizures, cannot always be proven to be demonic, but that possibility should always be considered when praying for them. When Jesus confronted someone having seizures He always cast out demons and they were healed (Matthew 4:24; 17:15; Luke 9:38; 22:54; Mark 9:18). As we see in this account, demons who work in this way usually have a strong foothold and aren't easily removed, but with God's power and authority we can defeat them in Jesus' name.

LESSON FOR TODAY: What about when deliverance is slow or not at all? Remember sometimes God has a greater purpose than casting out every demon as soon as we pray. Sometimes there is delay. Even Jesus had times when He had to persevere for awhile (Luke 8:31 Greek). Usually deliverance is a process. It's like peeling the layers off an onion. As new sin is revealed and removed, more ground is taken back from Satan's forces. This gradual process allows the person to better fill the ground which has been reclaimed with God's Holy Spirit and gives him time to grow spiritually (Psalm 59:11; 119:50,67,71) before the next 'layer' is removed.

That's why the Jews under Joshua only conquered the Promised Land bit by bit instead of all at once. If they would have driven out all the Canaanites immediately then lions and other wild animals would have increased and done harm to the people. In addition, there is a learning process involved that can be used to help others (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

Other times complete deliverance never comes. Paul's thorn in the flesh is an example (II Corinthians 12:7). Paul testifies God then provides the grace needed to withstand. God wants us to learn to depend on Him (Psalm 119:59,92). Of course if the opening is allowed to continue then the demonizing will continue, too (Psalm 94:12-16; 81:11-14).

Day 7 - Lessons from Jesus

Jesus is our **example** in how to have victory over Satan and his demons. At the start of His ministry He cast out many demons (Matthew 4:23-24; Mark 1:39,34). In the Gadarenes He cast demons out of two men (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-17; Luke 8:20). He cast demons out of the daughter of a Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21 Mark 7:20), and cured a demonized man (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-36). He healed a boy with seizures and demons (Matthew 17:14-20). He cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene as well as out of other women followers (Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9).



LESSON FOR TODAY: Jesus is our example in delivering people from demonizing. Before casting them out He rebuked them (took their power away) (Matthew 17:18; Luke 9:42). Then He "drove" them out (Mark 1:39). He did it verbally (Matthew 8:16), not by a certain ritualistic procedure. He didn't let the demons speak (Mark 1:34; Luke 4:41), except Legion, and that was just to give his name so others would know what was happening (Mark 5:9). He never let them say who He was (Mark 1:25; Luke 4:35; Mark 3:11-12). He told them to "be quiet and come out" (Luke 4:35; Mark 1:25). Other times He told them to "go" (Matthew 8:32). Sometimes He was quite far from the person whom He was delivering (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30). When He cast them out He forbid them to ever return again (Mark 9:25).

During a time of ministry the disciples happened upon someone driving out demons in Jesus' name but not doing it the way they did. Jesus said to not stop them because anyone who is not against them is for them (Mark 9:38-40; Luke 9:49-50).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Deliverance is done many different ways today. We are to seek God's wisdom and will in how we are to approach this ministry, patterning what we do after Jesus and the disciples as revealed in His Word. Yet when confronted with someone who doesn't share our practices we aren't to judge or withdraw fellowship from those whose methods differ from ours. We don't have to agree or support them, but neither are we to criticize or try to oppose them. Make sure they know Jesus as Savior for it is possible to be able to drive out demons in Jesus name without being a believer (Matthew 7:22).

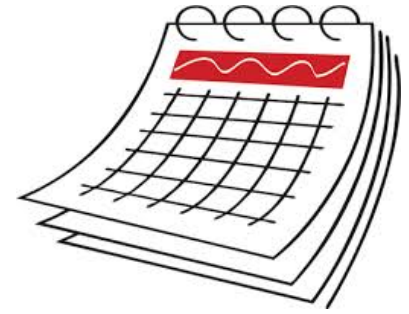
The King of Kings and Lord of Lords invaded the kingdom of Satan, but He did it in the form of a man. His first coming brought out all the opposition the enemy could muster against Him. He came to rescue mankind from the consequences of sin. The darkness opposed Him but He was victorious (John 1:5; 3:19; 8:12).

Satan and his demons are defeated, and Jesus shares that victory with us. However until Jesus comes for the second time and Satan and all demons are removed, the battle continues. Satan can no longer attack Jesus directly, so he takes his fury out on God's people – Jews (because they are God's chosen people) and Christians (because we are children of God). However we can have victory because we fight a defeated foe! But we must learn spiritual warfare to do so.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 3

Gadarenes Demoniac



Day 1 – Symptoms of Demonizing 1

About six months after Jesus' first recorded deliverance, casting demons out of the man in the synagogue (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37), one of His major confrontations with demons occurred. He was about half way through His three year public ministry. Unlike most of the other occasions, when the demonized person came to Jesus, this time He went to them.

Jesus left the crowds He was ministering to in order to take a boat across the Sea of Galilee. He wanted to go help a man who couldn't come to Him. Satan didn't want Him to go free that man so he sent a storm to sink the boat. Jesus spoke to the storm and got safely to the other side.

When Jesus got there He was met by a man with an evil spirit, actually many demons afflicted this man. Matthew 8:28 says there were two demonized men present, but Mark and Luke only refer to the one who was the spokesman. By looking at the lives these men were living we can see some of the symptoms of demonizing.

Symptom 1: Darkness and death. These men lived in a graveyard, probably in caves in the limestone cliffs by the lake. Dead bodies were placed in these caves to decay, so it was a very unnatural way to live (Mark 5:3, 5; Luke 8:29). God is light and life, but Satan and his demons are all about death and darkness. They are attracted to death and darkness, and bring death and darkness wherever they go.

Symptom 2: Anger and violence. Demons fuel violence and anger, and that characterized these men (Mark 5:3-4; Luke 8:29; Matthew 8:28). They attacked whomever came nearby. Demons love pain and destruction, and they enjoy using humans to bring suffering and misery to others. This can be physical, mental or emotional abuse of any form.

Symptom 3: Out of control. These men didn't have control of their actions (Mark 5:5). They would cry out and continually did evil. Demonizing takes control away from a person and motivates them to do what the demons want them to do.

LESSON FOR TODAY: *Demons can never take 100% control of a person's free will, but over time they can build so much influence over a person that the person seems to be unable to resist. No matter what, no matter how strongly a person is controlled by demons, he or she still has a free will to reach out to Jesus. Demons can never take away their free will. That is the key to deliverance, especially for those who are greatly controlled. The demonized person MUST want to be free. If they don't, no one can force deliverance on them against their will. Pray not that they would be delivered, for God won't force their free will, but pray they would see the facts clearly and make a decision for God, however small it may seem. Deliverance is not done by the one ministering to the demonized, but by Jesus responding to the free will of the demonized person. Jesus chooses to use us as His vessel to bring this about, but it all depends on the will of the demonized.*

Day 2 – Symptoms of Demonizing 2

One of the most detailed accounts of a demonized person is in the passage about the 2 men who lived in the graveyard at Gadarenes (Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-37). From the information given about them we can learn symptoms to look for which are signs of demonizing. We already saw that a preoccupation with death and darkness, a lack of control over anger and violence, and not being in control of actions all can be symptoms of demonizing. Here are some other signs.

Symptom 4: Pain and self-destruction. Another characteristic of demonic activity which is also unnatural is inflicting pain on themselves by cutting themselves (Mark 5:5). The only other time this is seen in the Bible is when the prophets of Baal slashed themselves so they bled in order to have Baal hear their cries and send fire to consume their altar (I Kings 18:28). Both cases are clearly demonic.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Demons are behind self-destructive desires. It is unnatural for a person to want to harm themselves. Everything normal in us pushes for self-protection. When a person inflicts pain on themselves by cutting, tattoos (Leviticus 19:28) or taking their life we can be sure something has caused them to go against what is normal and natural, and usually that is demonic influence (Mark 9:20).

Suicidal thoughts should always be assumed to be motivated by demons (Matthew 17:14-19; Luke 9:37-45; Mark 9:14-29). This is also the case with Judas who was indwelt by Satan (Luke 22:3; John 13:27) and then committed suicide (Acts 1:18-19). If you or someone you know has these thoughts, pray against them. The person with the thoughts must confess them and take back any ground they have given to demons. These kinds of thoughts are like 'prayers.' All kinds and types of thoughts are like prayers. The difference in suicidal thoughts is that one dwells deeply in them and that gives them more power. Thoughts of hate, death, fear, lust, etc., also have power. The greater the thought given it the greater the power. The power is in the thought which empowers demons to help bring this about in a person's life. It is always with the person's free will choice never forced on them against their free will.

Symptom 5: Ungodly sensuality and sexual perversion. These men did not wear clothes (Luke 8:27). Their natural inhibitions and modesty were affected by the demons influencing them. Demons are often behind the sexual sins and perversion so common today.

Symptom 6: Thoughts into their mind. These sinful actions start with sinful thoughts. Demons are able to put a thought into a person's mind, then keep bringing it back again and again. It's not always a thought that the person wants, and certainly isn't a thought God would give them. Therefore the only other source must be demonic. The thoughts lead to actions that bring bondage and destruction. They could be thoughts of anger, fear, violence, lust or greed. The thoughts could be sexual, self-destructive, vengeful or blasphemous. They can even be thoughts that cause a person to feel unforgiven or unloved by God, that a person has lost their salvation, or are too evil to ever be in heaven. Thoughts of fear, insecurity, unworthiness, failure, being alone, rejection and revenge are some of the many that demons strive to instill in a person's mind.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Not all evil thoughts are from demons, so how can we tell if our thoughts are from a demon or from our sin nature? When the source is our sin nature we can have victory by confessing the sin and growing spiritually. It may take time, but there will be progress being made as we become more like Jesus. If the source is demonic then trying harder will have no lasting effect. These men in the graveyard were unable to change their own behavior because they had allowed the demons to have a powerful hold over them.

Day 3 – When Demons Leave, Where Do They Go?



Jesus trained His disciples in spiritual warfare. He taught them many lessons that apply to us today as well. One was about what happens when demons are commanded to leave the person they indwell.

"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked

generation" (Matthew 12:43-45).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Where do demons go when cast out of a person? Where should we command them to go? Here Jesus says they go to "arid places" (Matthew 12:43-45; Job 30:3-8). Other times they are said to be "sent away" (Mark 5:12-13), go to "destruction" (Mark 1:24), or go to "torment" (Matthew 8:29). Eventually they will all be sent to the lake of fire for all eternity (Revelation 20:10 – 21:8). Whatever term you use, God will decree where they are to go. You can command them to "go to the place where Jesus sends you." It is important to forbid them to return, forbid them to go into any other family members, and forbid any new demons to come to take their place. Don't just send them out, leaving them free to continue their evil work wherever they choose. Command where they are to go, at least commanding them to go where Jesus would send them.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Jesus' words also show the extreme importance of being filled with God's Spirit when the demons are sent away. If one does not turn to God's Word and live a life of holiness to God, the door that was closed will be immediately open again and more and worse demons will enter to work against the person. When praying to have demons removed also pray for God's Spirit to fill the person and remove all the work of the enemy. Pray for them to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit, mentioning each fruit one by one (Galatians 5:22-25). Ask God to remove all the work and effects of the demons in the person's life and to heal them from it. Ask God to send angels and/or His Spirit through their life to remove every work of the demons and anything any demon might try to leave behind to continue their work. Ask God to fill each and every part of the person with His light and glory, His Spirit and presence. Then dedicate the person to God as a new creation in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17).

LESSON FOR TODAY: The purpose of deliverance from demonizing is so a person can grow spiritually. Often that comes slowly and by stages because all growth comes that way. It is often more of a process than a one-time event. Each lesson we learn and step of progress we make must become part of us as we fill that part of our lives with His presence and bring it under His control. Freedom from demonizing is not a one-time event where God does everything for us, but a series of steps whereby we grow in faith and become more like Jesus. It is very important to stay close to Jesus and grow spiritually when seeking to be delivered from demonizing. This includes prompt repentance from any and all sin (Ephesians 4:26-27; Genesis 4:7), doing all we do out of a motive of love (1 Corinthians 13:5), living a life of disciplined thoughts and actions (Philippians 4:8), and implementing God's principles into daily family life (Ephesians 5:22 – 6:4).

Day 4 – Causes of Demonizing 1

We've been considering the account of Jesus' confrontation with the demons indwelling the men in the Gadarenes (Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-37). This is one of the most detailed accounts of demonizing and deliverance in the Bible and has many important lessons for us. It is natural to wonder how these men ever got to such a state. Why are some people so greatly demonized and others seemingly unaffected? The Bible doesn't tell us what allowed this in these men but does give us information as to the most common causes of demonizing. While any sin can open the door to allow demons in, there are some sins that are particularly effective in allowing this. Some of the more common openings to demonizing include:

Opening 1: Sins that allow another power to control us. *If we turn to another power other than God, if we open our lives to influences that aren't from God, if we indulge in sins that allow us to be vulnerable to spiritual influences from demons, then we are opening the door for demons to enter and impact us. Idolatry, for example, opens the worshipper to demonizing because they allow the demon behind the idol to have access to themselves (1 Corinthians 10:20). Drug or alcohol abuse can do the same thing. Involvement in false religions also opens a door. Sexual sin is also a way demons enter a person's life (1 Corinthians 6:15-16). Pride, anger and fear also make us vulnerable, for they become a prayer for these things to grow in our lives, and only Satan's forces would answer such a prayer.*

Opening 2: Sin in our family line. *The sin that opened the door for demons to enter doesn't have to have been committed by us. It could have been committed by an ancestor of ours. When a demon has access to a person, he also claims right to all that person has, including their children. The Bible says God "punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation" (Exodus 20:4-5; Deuteronomy 5:8-9; Exodus 34:6-7). The Bible says that children are affected by their parents sins (Ezekiel 18:2) and this is one of the ways. Children are not accountable for them, but are impacted by their consequences. The same is true of positive, godly influences from our parents which also are passed on. This is often called "generational openings" or "ancestral openings" and is one of the most common reasons people are demonized. (For more information see under Old Testament, Moses (Exodus – Deuteronomy).)*



Day 5 – Causes of Demonizing 2

The demonized men in the graveyard at Gadarenes were greatly controlled (Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-37). What allows this to happen to a person? We've looked at two possible openings for demonizing: sin that allows another power to control us and sin in our family line. Another is the location where we live:

Opening 3: *Where we live.* Some event may have happened on the land or in the home or room where you live. It could be a violent act, an occult activity, a curse, a dedicating of the property to the powers of darkness or similar acts. Sometimes when we go into a certain neighborhood or home there is a 'sense' of evil, a discomfort in our spirit. In a store that sells New Age materials you may 'feel' different in your spirit, a discomfort. This is the explanation for supernatural apparitions that happen in 'haunted' homes – demonic activity may be present. Some countries and even continents are in extra deep darkness and bondage. Often this can be sensed by mature, sensitive believers. The message we get is from God's Holy Spirit Who is warning us against the evil around us. Pray against it. Rebuke it. Leave unless you have a reason God wants you there.

If it is your home or church property then cleanse it. Pray, taking back any access the enemy may claim to the property and asserting your right as a child of God to claim and use it. Put any other claims under the blood of Jesus and dedicate it to Him for His honor and glory. A sign, picture or cross on the wall can be a good visual reminder to all of the ownership of the property by the Lord Jesus Christ.

If God wants you to do so, you can anoint the house and property while praying. Walk around your' boundaries praying out loud, claiming your property for God and forbidding any demons to have any access to it. Dedicate it to God and invite His presence throughout all of it. Take back any access any demons may claim to the property and put the access under the blood of Jesus. Break it in Jesus' name. Ask God to put an angelic hedge of protection around it. Do the same in all the rooms of the house, especially the basement (if you have one). Anoint each room with oil by dipping your finger in oil. Any kind will do, it is not the oil but the symbolism of God's Spirit being present that matters. With your finger then draw a cross on the door, walls, whatever seems appropriate. Pray as you would when you're walking around the property.



There is no power in the ritual or symbol, but in your heart attitude as you make a statement about whose side you are on. You are showing them you are ready to battle in God's strength. The cross announces to the spirit world whose side you are standing on and that you will battle rather than give in. The cross shows you are challenging their claim to that area.

If there is one particular part of the house that seems worse put a night light there so there is always light in to the room. You could do that to all the rooms. Demons turn from light because it shows truth and reality, which they don't want to see. They live in the realm of lies and deceptions. Demons hate light, and they hate hearing Jesus praised, so you can play praise music in various places 24 hours a day. It can be real soft – they will hear it! It's a constant reminder of Who is your Lord and Savior. It reminds them of the truth which counters their lies. Playing recordings of the Bible being read is even more powerful.

Day 6 – Causes of Demonizing 3

The men in the graveyard at Gadarenes were indwelt by thousands of demons (Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-37). What causes this? How can demons gain entry into a person? We've seen that it could be sin that allows another power to control us or sin in our family line. It can also be because we live on ground they claim. Curses is a fourth reason.

*Opening 4: **Curses.** It may be someone has put a curse on you or your family by asking that something bad happen to you. That is really a prayer that Satan loves to answer! That desire empowers demons to try to carry out the person's desire. Parents can curse their children by saying they wish they hadn't had them, they hate them, don't want them, they are no good and will never amount to anything, and so forth. Finally, we can curse ourselves (Proverbs 6:2) by saying we hope we die, that we aren't good enough, that we'll never be happy, we'll fail in what we try or any of many such things about ourselves(Proverbs 6:2).*

The area of curses is a less common but still a strong opening to demonic access. To curse someone is to ask for evil to happen to them. Those requests (really prayers) are heard by Satan and his forces and 'answered' when possible. Cursing thoughts are like prayers. The more a person thinks of them and focus on them, the more power will go to the curse, or the blessing, whichever the case. This includes everything from occult and witchcraft curses to one individual 'wishing' harm on another. Balaam was paid to curse Israel, but God wouldn't allow it (Deuteronomy 23:4; Numbers 22 - 24). Curses can also be passed on from generation to generation. The Bible says that speaking evil of someone is the same as cursing them (Romans 12:14). Curses can be thinking or saying things like: "I hope you die..." "Since he/she won't love me I wish they'd" "You're no good, you'll never amount to anything..." "I hope she gets some of her own medicine..." "I hope your children" You can even curse yourself by what you say (Proverbs 6:2). Our words are powerful and important. They aren't something to be taken lightly. Using profanity ("curse" words) also falls into this category. When someone "damns" someone to "hell" that is an awful, awful thing to say! Demons love to hear it. They use the power of the hate in the speaker and will latch onto any authority or justification to do their evil!

It's not the verbal sounds that make the difference but our thoughts and feelings inside as we express them verbally. Rote chanting of words does nothing, but heartfelt desires communicated to God mean a lot. God reads our mind and thoughts even when we pray silently, but demons do not have access to our thoughts so praying or expressing ourselves out loud makes them aware of how we feel and where we stand. If it is inappropriate to pray out loud then do so in thoughts and let God take care of the rest, but when it is possible to express yourself out loud it is best to do so. It's important to realize that our thoughts are breathing and living and so are our feelings and, therefore, so is prayer.

The Bible says we can curse others (Ps 109:17). Demons use this as an excuse to work against the person, as a 'prayer' to gain access. Old Testament men (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. Gen 27:23, 38) would bless or curse their children (Genesis 48:20). Sometimes they even put a curse on them, as Abraham did with Ishmael and when Isaac cursed Esau. The Levites were used to pronounce blessings (Deuteronomy 10:8; 21:5). When Naomi came back to Israel she said she was to be called 'mara' because things had turned 'bitter' for her. A father is to bless his children by his words and send them into life with his and God's blessing. What you have done is the opposite.

If you feel this may have happened to you remember to "Bless them that curse you" (Matthew 5:44). Treat the person with love and kindness, for when you return good for evil the "undeserved curse does not come to rest" (Proverbs 6:2). Break that curse against you in Jesus' name, claiming Galatians 3:10,13 which says "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for

us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'" Ask God to turn the curse to a blessing (Deuteronomy 23:5).

Good is stronger than bad, so when you speak good into a situation where previously bad was spoken then the good is stronger and purer and it stops the curse. You can throw it back at the person who threw it at you, but turn it into a blessing – bless those who curse you (Luke 6:28). Love the person who hates you and God will use that stronger love to overcome the hate (Luke 6:27).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Curses can and must be broken in Jesus' name for the truth is that they can't prosper against God's people (Isaiah 54:17). 1) Break any and all of them in Jesus' name (Galatians 3:13) and 2) ask God to surround you and protect you with His presence and angels instead (Job 1:5).

Day 7 – Where Demons Live

When Jesus cast the demons out of the men in the Gadarenes graveyard, the demons made an unusual request – to indwell the pigs which were nearby since they could no longer indwell the men (Mark 5:1-20; Matthew 8:28-34; Luke 8:26-37). Jesus allowed this, again probably to show those watching the power and destruction of the demons He had so easily defeated.

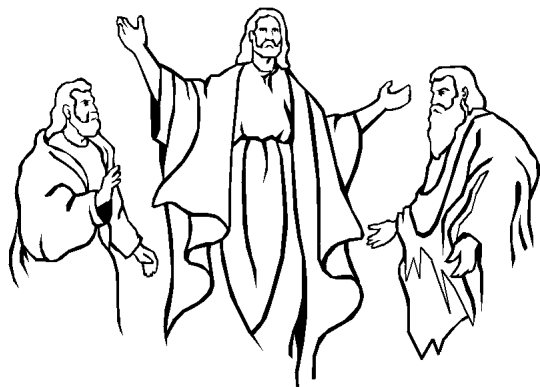
Where do demons really live? Where did, and didn't, they want Jesus to send them?

LESSON FOR TODAY: Demons want to indwell something, if they lose their host they will immediately seek another. Often they share several hosts at one time, moving from one person to another. That's why demonic oppression often seems to go in cycles.

If demons can't indwell people they will indwell animals. Perhaps this is why sometimes whales, the animals with the greatest intelligence and the closest to humans in many ways, beach themselves. I've often wondered if what happened to these pigs doesn't still happen sometimes today. That could be an explanation of why these great sea creatures some times beach and kill themselves. This shows that demons seek to bring death and destruction, and self-destructive tendencies come from demonic influence. Why else would pigs suddenly commit suicide?

LESSON FOR TODAY: The demons didn't want to be sent "out of the area" (Mark 5:10). This was the territory they were assigned to and they didn't want to leave it. It was their 'home' area. Demons are assigned to different geographical locations, families, groups, world movements, religious or secular groups, etc. They stay with them for generations and want to continue working in those areas. They become very good at what they do.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Neither did they want to be sent "into the abyss" (Luke 8:31). The Greek word, 'tartarus,' is used as a place of confinement for demons who are awaiting their expulsion into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:1-3). They didn't want to go there because they would then be inactive and not able to cause harm to God's kingdom.

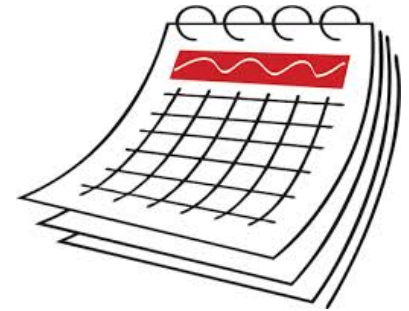


LESSON FOR TODAY: The demons knew they would one day be tormented, but it was not time for that yet (Matthew 8:29). They fear the coming judgment. We can have courage and confidence that they fear us when we are ministering in Jesus' power.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 4

Acts & Early Church



Day 1 – Spiritual Warfare in Acts

Jesus' first coming was God's invasion of enemy occupied territory. He landed behind enemy lines to begin the work of setting the captives free (Isaiah 42:7; 49:9; Luke 4:18-21). He provided freedom from bondage by His work on the cross (Luke 13:12; Romans 6:18, 22). He showed the way to have victory through the light that overcame the darkness (John 1:5; 3:19; 8:12). When His mission was completed He ascended to heaven.

However, the fact that He left didn't mean the war ended. Although defeated and awaiting his ultimate doom, Satan is still free to attack God through His people. Because he knows his end is near he works all the harder to wreak havoc on God's people and work. God allows Satan freedom to attack because that is part of allowing mankind a free will. Also, God uses Satan's evil to show mankind their need of Him and for His people to grow in faith as we trust Him and learn to fight.

Now it is Christians who are the ones in enemy-occupied territory. Jesus has called us to be the light of the world. It is up to us to spread His message of deliverance. But the darkness tries to put out our light so none will be attracted to it (John 1:5; 3:19; 8:12). Satan and his demons try to get us back into bondage and misery. It is their entire focus, day and night, and all their skill and energy are focused on bringing this about. We know that God is greater (1 John 4:4) and His kingdom will prevail (Revelation 19-22), but still the battle rages.

So the Christian life is a life of warfare. As the book of Acts shows, that has always been the case. We are at war: war with our sin nature and war with Satan and his forces. That was true for the Christians who were left when Jesus returned to heaven as well. As the early church grew we see the battles continuing. We live in a Satan-controlled world (1 John 5:19). We must fight. God has given us the equipment we need (2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 6:10-20). We can learn how to have victory in our battles by studying the victories, and failures, of those who have gone before. The book of Acts shows examples of those who have already fought their spiritual battles. The writings of Luke, Paul, Peter, John and others help us learn how to apply Jesus' victory to our own life.

The book of Acts records the growth of the early church. This comes about through evangelism. The Christians are young believers with much to learn, including spiritual warfare. Satan continued to do all he could to stop and destroy the young church before it grew large and strong. There are about 150 references to the spirit world in the Gospels (many of these are from parallel accounts found in more than one gospel) but about 178 additional such references in the rest of the New Testament, so spiritual warfare by no means ended with the ascension. If there is any change in Satan's tactics between the Gospels and Acts it would be that he attacked Jesus directly and overtly when He was on earth.

However, in Acts we see more deceptive, subtle ways of working to bring about their destruction. That doesn't make him any less dangerous for us, but actually more dangerous. He works harder to cover his trail and make what he does appear like it is something else (emotional disorder, chemical imbalance, etc.). He attacks more from within instead of just from without. He still uses persecution, but has become adept at dividing families, churches and even nations from within.

The battle continues, it just changes a bit. If anything, it is more difficult to fight a subtle, hidden foe than one who is obvious and easily seen.

Spiritual warfare has not decreased. Rather it has increased through the centuries. God tells us it will continue to get worse and worse until Jesus returns. The book of Revelation has the most references to Satan and evil spirits – about 86 references. We know that the nearer to the end times we come, the more active Satan and his forces will be. God has given us His Word to teach us how to live for Him in these days of increased warfare. There is much instruction for us in Acts and the Epistles.

Day 2 – Our Turn to Fight

The book of Acts opens with **Jesus returning to heaven** after His victory over sin and Satan while on earth (Acts 1:1-11). Then after choosing Matthias to replace Judas (Acts 1:12-26) the believers waited for Jesus' promised gift, the Holy Spirit. When He came they had God's power and presence to help them in their life and ministry (Acts 2:1-13). The difference the Spirit makes is immediately seen in Peter's change from a coward who denied Jesus (Mark 14:66-72) to courageous spokesman (Acts 2:14-40). Three thousand responded by putting their faith in Jesus (Acts 2:41).



LESSON FOR TODAY: God's Spirit is essential for us to have victory in our battle against sin and Satan. Without His wisdom, guidance, power, peace and protection we wouldn't be able to stand against all that comes against us. It is essential to learn to listen to Him, be sensitive to His guidance, follow His leading and know how to tap into His power.

Satan had failed to stop Jesus from sealing his doom by His crucifixion and resurrection. Satan was not able to stop Jesus from defeating him at the cross and the empty tomb. But if he could keep the gospel message from spreading, he could still rule the vast majority of humanity. His goal at this point became to limit the power of the brand new Christian church, intending to keep it weak, keep it from growing. So he put all his energy into defeating the early Christians, hoping to extinguish the spark before it grew and spread, and keep mankind in darkness and bondage. However, as we follow the growth of the early church, we will see how his attempts worked against him!

His first approach was to bring **physical opposition**. The early Christians experienced rejection, suffering, persecution, and imprisonment (Acts 4:1-4). However, this opposition actually worked against Satan! The disciples responded to their trials with increased faithfulness and commitment (Acts 4:5-22). God used even the efforts of the enemy to make them stronger as they trusted in Him and saw His provision (Romans 8:28).

LESSON FOR TODAY: While Satan still attacks the church today, God often uses persecution to make the church stronger and increases their witness. He uses Satan's attacks for His purpose. All things may not be good in themselves, but God does use them for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28). It has been said that the church can stand anything but success. Where the church has not faced opposition but has been popularly accepted, there has often been a compromising that leads to weakness among God's people. While we never like to experience pain of any kind, God still uses it for His glory and our growth. This is a key way that we can defeat Satan's efforts in our lives. We must respond to trials with increased faithfulness and commitment, as the early disciples did. In that way, we can actually turn Satan's efforts against himself and take ground for God's kingdom.

Day 3 – Causalities in the War With Satan 1

When external persecution didn't stop the church's growth (Acts 4:4) Satan tried **attacking from within**. He wanted to contaminate the spiritual life of the church members, as seen in the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). God revealed to Peter that Satan had filled their heart so that they lied to the Holy Spirit by not being honest about the amount of money for which they sold their land (Acts 5:3).



The sin was not in keeping some of the money for themselves, that would have been fine. The sin was lying and saying they gave all the money to the church in order to impress their fellow believers. They did this despite the Holy Spirit convicting them that such a statement was wrong. To set an example of the importance of holiness, God took the lives of these two carnal believers (Acts 5:3-11). They still went to heaven, but lost opportunity to serve and grow in this life. Again, God took the work of Satan and used it instead for His own glory. The Christians were taught vividly of the importance of holiness, and as a consequence, unbelievers were attracted to Jesus (Acts 5:42 – 6:1).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Our pride often keeps us from sharing with others the areas in life where we are struggling. As a result they stay hidden in the dark and we don't have encouragement and support. If Ananias or Sapphira would have shared their struggle with greed with someone it would have brought the work of the enemy against them into the light and weakened it. Prayer support and accountability would also have occurred. We play into the enemies' hands when we allow our pride to keep us from sharing our struggles with others.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Satan still uses this strategy today. He causes more damage to the church from within than he does through attacks from without. Christians hurting other Christians, churches hurting Christians, Christians hurting churches - this is a very common and successful approach of Satan even today. It can be more dangerous because when we are attacked from without we recognize the hand of the enemy and pull together in unity. When it is from within, though, we often fail to recognize it for the attack that it is. Instead of joining together against it we allow divisions to come among God's people. And again it is our pride that feeds this, wanting to be first and be right. It is our pride that keeps us from humbling ourselves and confessing our sins to God and others (when the sins have hurt others). Keeping our sin in the darkness allows it to grow, bringing it into the light exposes it and weakens it.

LESSON FOR TODAY: "Satan filled your heart" (Acts 5:3) is Peter's appraisal of what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. "Fill" (Greek 'pieroo') means "to fill to the full" and is the same word used for the filling of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5:18. There is no way of knowing to what extent they were demonized or exactly what Satan did. Surely he helped them go in the direction they themselves chose and gave them opportunity to believe his lies so as to deceive themselves as to what they were really doing. He may have fed their greed or even encouraged fearful thoughts of not having enough money. He did this to counter the conviction of sin in them by the Holy Spirit. We do know they always had a free will to resist and are totally responsible for their thoughts and actions. We don't know today, either, where human responsibility ends and demonic influence takes over, but we know both are often present. Whatever the balance, the cause, symptoms, results and cure are the same. Don't waste time trying to figure out details about what demons do and how they do it. Focus on the solution, not the problem! And the solution starts with the person who is demonized admitting and confessing the sin in his life that has allowed the demons to work. They don't cause a sin, they enhance a sin that is already there, so it must be removed and stopped so the demons stop as well. As it has been said, if you want to keep the rats away, get rid of the garbage!

Day 4 – Causalities in the War With Satan 2

We have been looking at the account of Ananias and Sapphira and the example God made of them for others in the early church (Acts 5:1-10). Satan “filled” their heart and they lied about how much they were giving, saying they gave all they received for the sale of their property when in fact they only gave part of it. The sin wasn’t in the amount they gave but in the lie and deception about it.



LESSON FOR TODAY: Peter states that Satan enticed them to lie to the Holy Spirit. Whether this was literally Satan or one of his demons we don’t know. Often we say that ‘Satan did _____’ when we know it wasn’t personally him, but done by his forces. Perhaps it was Satan himself since this was a direct, frontal attack on the young church. If the flame could be distinguished before it took root and spread, then the church could be severely crippled. If it was a demon assigned to destroy them, saying ‘Satan’ did it is still applicable for they are all his forces working with him for the same effect. It would be most unlikely that Satan would personally attack any of us today. He has far greater places to exert his influence and has plenty of demons to work against us. It doesn’t take Satan to help us sin, the weakest demon, along with our sin nature, can bring about plenty of sin in us because we freely go along with it.

LESSON FOR TODAY: The specific sins that Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of were greed, pride, lies and deception to cover the lies. They were also guilty of jealousy (of Barnabas Acts 4:32-37), and that is greed and pride combined. Their attitude to material things was idolatry, for they put something before God. Idolatry is really spiritual adultery (Jeremiah 3:8-10; Ezekiel 16:23-43; 23:24-30; Revelation 17:1-5). It is clearly forbidden by God (Exodus 20:3,4,23; 23:224). Pride is also seen in wanting to impress everyone with their generosity and have the affirmation which Barnabas had just received (Acts 4:32-37).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Fear of not having enough money for themselves in the future probably entered in as well. Seldom is there a sin that doesn’t have fear as part of it somewhere! As do all sins, it starts in the mind (Judges 2:10-13; Ezekiel 14:7) and then becomes an action. When anything is more important to us than God there are demons who receive that adoration and ‘worship’ that we bestow on the object (Zechariah 10:2; 1 Corinthians 10:19-21).

LESSONS FOR TODAY: When a demon has access to one person that demon can also claim anyone that person becomes attached to, emotionally or physically (1 Corinthians 6:16). Emotional soul ties or physical sexual activity open a person to the demonizing of another.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Peter was made aware of what was happening so he could deal with the sin. As the leader he was responsible for those under him. God gives insights into the workings of demons so their work can be defeated to those with a need to know. When dealing with something demonic always pray for supernatural insight, wisdom and protection so you will be able to defeat the plans of the enemy. Some have the gift of distinguishing between spirits as part of their spiritual gift mix (1 Corinthians 12:10; Acts 13:6-12). If so, it must be used wisely and with maturity, always in total dependence on God so the person isn’t misled or deceived.

LESSON FOR TODAY: God is a holy God and does not allow sin. He uses this first clear rebellion as an example to show how He feels about sin, but in His mercy He doesn’t deal with every sin among His believers in this way. God did the same when He first formed the Jewish nation (Exodus 32:1-35). In each case, starting the Jewish nation or the church, He showed His holiness by bringing strict judgment at the first sin. He doesn’t enforce the same penalty of death on subsequent sinners, not because He shouldn’t but because He chooses to show mercy. His failure to judge our every sin today is not weakness, but mercy, certainly not something we should take advantage of. Every sin of lying, greed, jealousy, fear, etc., like Ananias and Sapphira also deserves death.

Day 5 – Delivered by a Shadow

To validate the **authenticity of the message** the disciples were bringing, God did the same kinds of miracles through them that He did through Jesus. “As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed” (Acts 5:15-16).

LESSON FOR TODAY: These special manifestations of spiritual power through healing and deliverance have not been seen since the first days of the early church, nor should they have been (1 Corinthians 13:8). At the start of the church, with Satan’s attacks, God made sure the spark took hold and grew. He validated and authenticated His servants when it was needed, where the church had not been established before, but as it took root these manifestations faded. Do not think these should regularly occur everywhere today or something is wrong with the church. These are necessary to open a new area of darkness to God’s truth, but not what a growing Christian builds his faith on. God is always able, and will do these kinds of miracles again in the Tribulation (Revelation 11:1-6). These signs had, and still have their place. But that place is not as part of everyday life in areas where the church has been established. So, when we see signs like this, we should be careful how we interpret them. Satan can and does counterfeit these things as well (Matthew 7:22-23; 24:44; Mark 13:20-22; Revelation 16:24). We live by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Satan continues to stir up problems within the church today as he did then. Tension, jealousy and competition took root not just in Ananias and Sapphira but in others as well. What was given by those who sold their land was intended to help the poor among them, yet some felt they weren’t getting their fair **share of food and clothing** (Acts 6:1). The church responded by ordaining deacons to make a fair distribution of the resources to those in need (Acts 6:1-7).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Satan’s strategy is still to bring division. Jesus says our distinguishing mark as Christians is to be love (John 18:35). Satan has many subtle but effective ways of dividing friends, couples, families and churches. Many times these things happen and he or his demons aren’t even involved for our sin nature brings these about without his influence. Even so, his demons are always there to provide whatever ‘help’ they can to bring division among believers. Pray regularly against that. Encourage others to do the same. Be alert to small things that can easily grow into big problems. Pray, give counsel, encourage and show love to all.

As the early church grew Satan continued to attack from within and without. He continued to stir up the political and religious leaders to bring more persecution by having **James killed** (Acts 12:1-2) and **Peter arrested** awaiting death (Acts 12:3-4).

How did the disciples counter this strategy? Or rather we should ask how God’s Spirit led them to counter Satan’s persecution without and division within. They did exactly as they saw Jesus do when attacked. They faithfully persevered in their mission. They weren’t discouraged or swayed into changing their focus. They went out by twos and spread His Word wherever they went. Large numbers turned to Jesus for salvation. That, of course, brought up much demonic opposition but it also brought many people freedom from demonizing (Acts 8:5-13). Everything they accomplished was done in Jesus’ name (Acts 4:7).



Day 6 – Sorcerers and Magicians

As word of the Christians' power in the name of Jesus spread, a man named Simon who practiced 'sorcery' heard of it (Acts 8:9). He had been using local traditions and pagan religions to remove demonic influence but with limited success. The powers he contacted to overcome the demons were demonic themselves, and therefore all of this was forbidden by God (Leviticus 19:26; Deuteronomy 18:10; 2 Kings 16:5; 17:17).



The word translated 'sorcerer' in the Bible is the Greek word 'magos.' Our word 'magic' comes from this but the real meaning does not refer to sleight of hand tricks which we associate with magicians today. It refers to those with supernatural abilities. It can be translated magician, sorcerer, wizard, enchanter, astrologer or even wise men ('Magi' in Matthew 2). Actually, the word started with the 'wise men' of the east, especially Babylon. These were men with learning and education that far exceeded anyone in their culture. This superior knowledge caused others to look up to them as something 'supernatural'. Daniel was one of these learned men who had great wisdom and insight (Daniel 2:12-48; 4:6, 18; 5:7-8, 15). As Greek culture spread into this area they picked up this word and applied it to anyone who did special acts or had special powers.

Simon used his demonic connections to impress the people around him (Acts 8:10) but when Philip came with his greater powers many came to Jesus and were baptized, including Simon himself who followed Philip everywhere because this new power was greater than anything he had seen (Acts 8:13). Simon, acting from his sin nature, tried to buy the power Philip had (Acts 8:18-19). Peter, who had come up from Jerusalem to help with the great working of God's Spirit that had broken out in Samaria, sternly rebuked Simon who immediately repented (Acts 8:20-24). God was teaching His followers that He bestows His powers freely and not to the highest bidder.

LESSON FOR TODAY: *Unfortunately there are still many like Simon in the church today, those who want to use God and His power for their own benefit. Many are overly impressed with works of power, sign gifts and the like. They want the most and the best for themselves. They focus on the supernatural instead of the God behind the supernatural. Pride lures them in dangerous directions like it did Simon. God's message is the same as it was then – repent and stop trying to use God for your own glory!*

Today it is easy to find those who are impressed with the power behind spiritual warfare and bringing deliverance to those who are demonized. They are in awe of demonic powers and spend way too much time and energy focusing on them. Instead our focus must go to God and His glory. Don't let demons, or those who are gifted to fight them, impress you or distract you from giving your attention and glory to Jesus alone. Don't make a god of spiritual warfare. It is a means to an end, not an end in itself!

Day 7 – Look Them Right In The Eye

The next clear incident of spiritual warfare recorded in Acts happened about a dozen years after the incident with Simon, about fifteen years after Jesus' resurrection. Paul had come to salvation and started his training (Acts 9), and Peter had begun taking the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10-11). Persecution continued as James was killed, and Peter was imprisoned and awaiting death (Acts 12:1-4) until God supernaturally intervened and released Peter (Acts 12:5-19). Then Paul and Barnabas left on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3). When they reached Cyprus they met strong Satanic opposition (Acts 13:4-12). Since Jesus Himself had found Himself in numerous power encounters with Satan and demons, it is no surprise that His followers would experience the same opposition as they continued His mission and ministry.

Bar-Jesus, a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet who had a lot of influence with the local official, opposed Paul and Barnabas when they tried to present the gospel to him (Acts 13:4-12). Bar-Jesus is also called Elymas, meaning "sorcerer". The same word, 'magos,' is used of him as was used of Simon Magus (Acts 8). That man was a Gentile but Bar-Jesus was a Jew and was demonized (Acts 13:10). He was Satan's



pawn against God and His work in the continuing battle of Satan to defeat God's Kingdom (Genesis 3:15). The results of who won this power encounter between Satan (through Bar-Jesus) and God (through Paul) would determine who would have the most influence on the leaders and people of Cyprus. The kingdom of darkness was again challenging the kingdom of light (John 1:5; 3:19; 8:12).

Paul was not intimidated but gave Bar-Jesus direct eye contact (Acts 13:9) and gave him the strongest recorded rebuke he ever gave anyone: "Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, 'You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun.' Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand." (Acts 13:9-11).

How did Paul know this man was a pawn of Satan and seeking to undermine God's ministry there? God's Spirit must have shown Him, as He did Peter about Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5; 1 Corinthians 12:10).

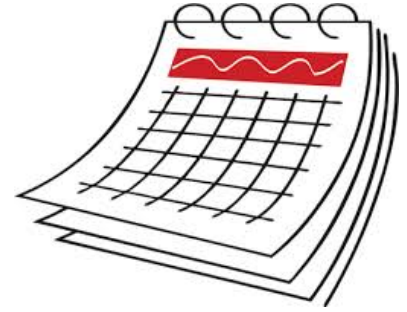
LESSON FOR TODAY: *When encountering a demon in someone who is demonized do not let them intimidate you or cause any fear. God is greater (1 John 4:4) and we have nothing to fear (2 Timothy 1:7). Looking them in the eye is important, for this contact establishes your authority in Jesus over them and puts them under Jesus' authority. Our eyes show truth, along with who we are and the words we speak. This truth is greater than anything that lives in lies and deception. Be sensitive to God's Spirit as He shows you what you need to know to have victory against these demonic forces.*

God's judgment on Bar-Jesus was very appropriate – physical blindness to illustrate the spiritual blindness he already had (Acts 13:11-12). Everyone present saw God's power defeat Satan's power and that opened the way for the gospel to spread in that area. Hopefully his time in darkness brought Bar-Jesus to a realization of the truth and he found the true light in Jesus.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 5

Epistles



Day 1 – Putting on the Armor

Paul included his most complete account of how to win spiritual battles in his letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:10-18). In light of all the warfare going on in Ephesus this is very appropriate. Writing from prison in Rome, chained to a Roman soldier who was guarding him, Paul must have looked for a way to convey what he wanted to say about spiritual warfare in terms the people would understand. While looking at his guard, he applied the pieces of equipment that Roman soldiers used to those that Christian soldiers use.

Paul knew that Roman soldiers didn't supply their own equipment, it was provided by their commander. Thus he starts by telling his audience that it is God's power and strength that gives us victory (Ephesians 6:10; Philippians 4:13; 1 John 4:4). We have the same power that raised Jesus from the grave (Ephesians 1:18-23; Hebrews 2:14-15). Our victory comes from God – He provides the equipment necessary to achieve it.

However just because equipment is provided doesn't mean Christian soldiers use theirs appropriately, or even use it at all. It is Satan's schemes (Ephesians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 2:11) that deceive and trap us, like a hunter seeking to trap an animal. Therefore it is up to us to use the power and equipment God provides – all of it ("full armor").

LESSON FOR TODAY: What makes this an even more difficult battle is that our enemy is not a physical soldier whom we can see and fight in our power, rather it is a spiritual enemy, a demonic power (Ephesians 6:12). "Rulers ... authorities ... powers ... spiritual forces" refer to various groups of demons in Satan's organization. Demons are organized according to their power like an army: generals, majors, captains, lieutenants, sergeants and privates. The generals and majors oversee large geographical areas or philosophical ideologies. Down it goes to the privates, demons with names like Lust, Greed, Pride, Fear or Self-Destruction. These are the ones we usually deal with in a personal way when we are involved in our spiritual warfare.

LESSON FOR TODAY: When a person is demonized there is a ruler (lieutenant or sergeant) who has a group of other demons (privates) under him. They set up their stronghold and each demon present is chosen for the particular focus of the work he does. Under the guidance of the ruler, they work together to accomplish the mission of the group which is always the destruction of the person they are attacking. The ultimate goal is the death of the person, but since they can't take a life they seek to make life so miserable that only death seems to hold hope of escape. Their goal is to cause the person to take their own life. Until they can get a person to that point they seek to make his witness for Jesus ineffective and his life as painful and empty as possible.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Paul says we are in a 'struggle' (Ephesians 6:12). This word refers to a fight to the death. Satan assigns demons to destroy each believer, their family and their church. We are in a life and death struggle, we don't realize how serious our enemy is about our destruction.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Not all problems and struggles are from Satan. While we want to know what he does so we can defeat him, we don't want to give him and his demons more credit than is due them. When he is bound man's sin nature will still lead him into sin without Satan's help (Revelation 20:1-3). That can assist u in knowing what is from demons and what is from our sin

nature. If the source is our sin nature without demonic influence, than confession, submission to God, prayer, Bible reading and memory and good Christian fellowship will bring immediate or progressive victory. If that does not happen then it is good to consider there might be something demonic involved as well.

Before listing the pieces of equipment available to us Paul wants to emphasize the importance of Christian soldiers standing firm against any attack the enemy launches at them. Three times he commands them to “stand” (Ephesians 13-14a).

LESSON FOR TODAY: We are to be alert and ready, not sitting or lying down sleeping. We shouldn't be caught off guard but must be alert. Nor should we retreat in fear or defeat. Yet the truth is that the stronger we stand the hotter the battle will get for the harder the demons will attack. The battle will never end until our Commander comes and takes us home. Our fight here will be over when we are promoted to heaven at death, or when Jesus returns, but not before.

Day 2 – The Helmet of Salvation

The helmet Roman soldiers wore was made of metal. An enemy would lift his heavy four foot long sword over his head with two hands and bring it straight down on the Roman soldier's head. The helmet was to protect his head from these attacks. Without proper protecting the damage done could be devastating!

LESSON FOR TODAY: Satan attacks our mind and thoughts whenever possible, for the damage done there can be tremendous. Demons seek to put thoughts of doubt, fear, confusion, lust, greed, pride or any other sin in our mind. We must know God's truth to have protection and victory. Our spiritual battles are won or lost in our minds first of all.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Often the thoughts that defeat us have been with us for many years, even since early childhood. Quite often they are thoughts others in our family struggle with as well – generational sins passed down through our ancestors (Exodus 20:4-5; 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 5:8-9). (For more information see under Old Testament, Moses (Exodus – Deuteronomy.)

LESSON FOR TODAY: The solution to victory over demonic thoughts placed into our minds is to 1) close the door that let them in by confessing as sin any thoughts you entertained that were not godly (1 John 1:9). Know in your mind that they can't defeat you. Don't let them put fear or confusion into your mind. God has given us the power and authority to command them to be gone in His name (Luke 9:1; 10:1, 17-19). Then 2) pray and take back any claim they make against you through your family line (2 Corinthians 5:17; John 1:12-13). Finally 3) whenever they knock on the door and try to return, quote Scripture to keep the truth of God's Word in your mind (Psalm 119:9-11) and to defeat them. Knowing and using God's Word, the sword of the Spirit, is key for victory (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 77:12; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Matthew 22:37-38; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 4:8). That's how Jesus defeated Satan (Matthew 4:1-11). Satan tries to plant doubts about God's word in man's mind. This is how he got Eve to sin. She misquoted God's Word to Satan and when he added to what God said (making God seem like He was keeping something good from her) she didn't recognize the error. Satan was undermining God's Word, and he won! We must be skillful in the use of our sword to win.

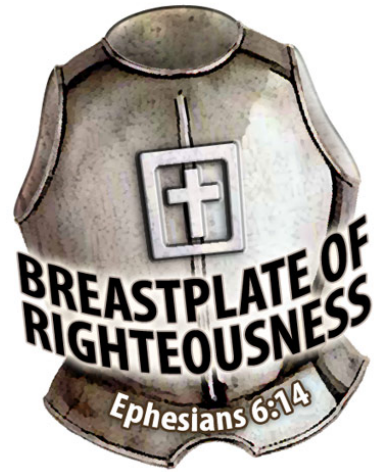
When Jesus was tempted He quoted Scripture to have victory over Satan's temptations. Paul says our only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Psalm 119:9,11 tell us that it's through God's Word that we have victory. When you have these thoughts and attacks use Scripture to have victory. Ask God to give you some verses that will help against these things, write them down and memorize them. Say them over and over when these thoughts attack you. That is the only way to victory, and God guarantees it will work!



Day 3 – The Breastplate of Righteousness

The breastplate was made of small pieces of metal or leather fastened together so they would move and bend but so no arrow, spear or sword could go through them. It was important for it covered the heart and other vital organs. If an enemy soldier could inflict a serious wound to the upper body he would be victorious. In hand to hand combat the enemy would grab the Roman soldier's arm to pull him close and with his sword in try to stab him in the chest or stomach.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Suppose a soldier didn't bother putting on his breastplate some morning? Maybe it was too hot or too heavy, or maybe he was in a hurry or just lazy. What would happen? That's what happens to us when we don't put on our breastplate. Paul calls it the "breastplate of righteousness" because it refers to our holiness. We are holy because Jesus paid for our sins on the cross, but then we must strive to live a life free from personal sin as well. If we allow sin in our life our breastplate will have openings through which our enemy can attack and destroy us.



Demonizing happens because there is a sin that opens the door for demons to enter. The most common avenue to demonic entrance is through a family line. One person opens themselves to demonic influence and the demons claim them and all they have, including children. Then the same traits and influences pass on to the children and their children (for more information see Old Testament, 3. Moses (Exodus – Deuteronomy). Occult and Satanic involvement in demonic activities, drugs, acid rock music, Ouija boards, etc. is another opening. Cult involvement will also open the door for them. Involvement of a family member in a 'secret society' such as the Masons is an open invitation to demonizing. The Bible says that when two people have sex the two become one flesh and that allows demons to claim the other person. Abuse of any kind or any form of trauma, especially when young, open one to the demonic. Strong soul ties with someone who is demonized can cause an opening. Being unwanted when in the womb or young is a definite opening. These are some of the main avenues demons use to gain entrance and attack people.

LESSON FOR TODAY: If you have any of these openings in your life pray to have them removed. It's like opening a door and allowing someone to enter a room, then realize you shouldn't have done that. You need to close the door so no one else enters, but you also need to command those who already have entered to leave. Confessing the sin and taking back the access closes the door. Rebuking and commanding them to be gone cleans the room. The solution for sin openings is to 1) ask God to show you any sin in your life (Psalm 139:23-24), then 2) confess the sin and close the door that let the demon(s) in (1 John 1:9). You must also 3) command any demons working against you or your family to be gone, using the authority we have in Jesus' name and power ((John 14:12; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 9:1; 10:1, 17-19; Acts 1:8).

Then when you notice any kind of spiritual attack you defeat it by quoting scripture. When Jesus was tempted He quoted Scripture to have victory over Satan's temptations. Paul says our only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Psalm 119:9,11 tell us that it's through God's Word that we have victory. When you have these thoughts and attacks, use Scripture to have victory. Ask God to give you some verses that will help against these thing. Write them down and memorize them. Say them over and over when these thoughts attack you. That is the only way to victory, and God guarantees it will work!

Day 4 – The Belt of Truth

The belt a Roman soldier wore was an important piece of equipment for it held the weapons and equipment which he carried with him. It also held his clothing out of the way so he wouldn't stumble and fall when moving or fighting. In cool weather a heavy cloak was worn and it was easy to get tangled up in it if there wasn't a belt to hold it out of the way.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Paul equates this with knowing God's truth which keeps us from stumbling and falling spiritually. Satan would do anything he can to trip us up with his lies and deceptions (John 8:44). His demons put thoughts in our mind that we'll never have victory but will always be defeated, that God doesn't care about us because our sin is so great, that what we are going through is our own fault and we deserve to suffer, that Jesus isn't God, that we are inferior to others and a failure, or any lie that can trip us up. Whenever we get a thought that doesn't line up with God's truth as revealed in His Word, a thought that Jesus wouldn't have entertained, make sure you reject it as well.

LESSON FOR TODAY: The way to have victory over Satan's lies and deceptions is by knowing God's truth. 1) Ask God to show you any lies you believe, then 2) confess them as sin and replace them with the truth of God's Word. Find Scripture passages and write them down to carry with you and use them when attacked. Make sure 3) you take back any access any demons have claimed through these lies. Also 4) spend time each day reading and learning God's Word, including marking and memorizing passages which speak to you.

LESSON FOR TODAY: God's truth is the basis for all we are and have. We are God's people under His care and protection. Nothing can harm us. Not even curses that are knowingly or unknowingly placed against us.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Did the Ephesians use their armor and have victory in their spiritual warfare? Yes and no. Yes, for they didn't fall back into the sins that opened them to demonizing in the past. But also no, for Satan changed his tactics and attacked from within the church instead and this was much more successful. Deceptions and lies from false teachers brought confusion and often disunity among the believers. Satan still attacks from without and within today. It is the subtle attacks within we must be aware of for they often take us by surprise. That makes them more dangerous and deadly. We must know God's Word thoroughly and apply it to all things in life to avoid being deceived.



Day 5 – The Sandals of Peace

The Romans needed sturdy sandals on their feet for marching and fighting. They would walk in sand, on sharp rocks, and through streams of slippery stones. They could be attacked at any moment so they needed something that would help them stand firm no matter where they found themselves. Their enemy would pick a location to fight that was advantageous for them but not for the Romans. They would do anything to gain an unfair advantage!



LESSON FOR TODAY: *Our enemy still does the same thing to us today. He does anything he can to gain even the slightest advantage over the Christian. He tries to choose the footing that will give him victory and take away our peace. When he gets us on his ground he presses the attack. We can be on his ground when something that happened at that place in the past opened the door to demonic control.*

Some event may have happened on the land or in the home or room where you live. It could be a violent act, an occult activity, a curse, a dedicating of the property to the powers of darkness or similar acts. Sometimes when we go into a certain neighborhood or home there is a 'sense' of evil, a discomfort in our spirit. In a store that sells New Age materials you may 'feel' different in your spirit, a discomfort. This is the explanation for supernatural apparitions that happen in 'haunted' homes – demonic activity may be present. Some countries and even continents are in extra darkness and bondage and it can be sensed by believers. The message we get is from God's Holy Spirit Who is warning us against the evil around us.

LESSON FOR TODAY: *Our solution is 1) to pray, taking back any access the enemy may claim to the property and asserting our right as children of God to claim and use it. Put any other claims under the blood of Jesus and dedicate it to Him for His honor and glory. Then 2) claim the place for Jesus and dedicate it to Him alone. A sign, picture or cross on the wall can be a good visual reminder to all of the ownership of the property by the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Pray, even anoint your house and property, inside and out. Walk around your boundaries praying out loud, claiming your property for God and forbidding any demons to have any access to it. Dedicate it to God and invite His presence through all of it. Take back any access any demons may claim to the property and put that access under the blood of Jesus. Break it in Jesus' name. Ask God to put an angelic hedge of protection around it. Do the same in all the rooms of the house, especially the basement (if you have one). Anoint each room with oil by dipping your finger in the oil and putting a cross on the door, walls, etc. Pray as you did when you walked around the property. If there is one particular part of the house that seems to have demonic presence in a specially strong way, put a night light there so there is always light in to room. You could do that to all the rooms. Demons hate light, and they hate hearing Jesus praised, so you can play praise music in various places 24 hours a day. It can be real soft – they will hear it!

LESSON FOR TODAY: *Another way we can find ourselves having poor footing and a harder time standing against Satan, is when we have something in our possession that gives demons access to the place where we are. When the Jews took possession of Canaan under Joshua they were told to not keep any of the objects they captured. Even animals and children were to be destroyed. They had been dedicated to Satan and were claimed by him. Those who used these things would be opening themselves up to the demonic powers to whom they had been dedicated. That's why Paul had the people in Ephesus burn all their occult books (Acts 19:17-20). Today we must watch for things like literature from other cults and religions, Ouija boards and other occult paraphernalia, pagan objects from primitive cultures, objects from Masonic or other secret societies,*

some Native American artifacts or the like. Pornography, drug or alcoholic supplies, music with a black or evil dimension and similar items can also be used as points of entry by demons.

LESSON FOR TODAY: *The solution is 1) to remove and destroy such objects as God convicts you as being openings for demonic access. Ask for forgiveness for having them, cleanse the room from their presence, 2) take back any access the enemy may claim and dedicate the space as well as yourself to Jesus. Ask Him to reveal to you anything else that may need to be dealt with.*

When a room or object is under the control of an evil spirit for whatever reason they claim, painting crosses by dipping a finger in oil and making them on a wall claims the place for Jesus. Playing Christian music and leaving a small light on also are offensive to the forces of darkness. Of course praying and quoting scripture while making the crosses is important, too. I know I, as a Christian, have great power in blessing people, especially my own family and other Christians. 'God bless you' is more than a slang or shallow comment. There's real power in it when one means it that way. It's a privilege I use and repeat often to people. Distance doesn't seem to affect it at all. Of course there is something even more special about touching a person when I pray or ask God to bless them, but when far away from them God still answers the prayer. The power is in God who is everywhere (omnipresent). Satan and demons are limited to one place at a time so they are at a distinct disadvantage in this, too.

Day 6 – The Shield of Faith



The equipment mentioned so far (helmet, breastplate, belt, sandals) form an inner wall of defense. There is an outer wall of defense as well – a large shield every Roman soldier carried. He would hold this in front of him for outer protection. Other soldiers would stand or walk alongside him as they all held up their shields forming a wall in front of them, sometimes above them as well. When enemies would throw balls of burning tar at the Romans this outer wall of defense would provide much-needed protection for they would be severely wounded or killed if the hot tar hit them. At least they would be out of the battle for quite some time.

LESSON FOR TODAY: *Paul says this is like our faith – our outer wall of protection. Having faith in God's sovereign control no matter what is happening is key to our spiritual health. The greater your faith the larger your shield, the smaller your faith the smaller your shield. People with little faith get hit by whatever Satan throws at them: fear, guilt, greed, pride, anger, lust.*

LESSON FOR TODAY: *Satan attacks us through his demons even if don't open the door through sin. He attacks everyone in God's army, especially leaders like pastors and missionaries. They don't have to have done anything to open a door – just standing with Jesus will draw attacks because Satan is committed to opposing God's kingdom in any and every way he can. Satan can't attack Jesus directly so he takes his hate and anger out on God's children. That's why the Jews have experienced such persecution through the years. While we were in Satan's army, or even when we were neutral and ineffective for God, demons didn't need to waste time and effort on us. But when we become committed to serving Jesus and building His Kingdom we find we have spiritual enemies sworn to do anything they can to destroy us. Sometimes these attacks are direct, other times they take a more indirect approach. Our marriage, finances, children or health may be attacked to discourage us and cause us to cease to actively participate in the cause of Christ. This is what happened to Job. These attacks can also take the form of opposition from other people. There may be a person who does what he can to make life difficult for you. Satan attacked Job because he was effective in his faith and Satan wanted to stop that. That seems to be the cause of Paul's demonic 'thorn in the flesh' attack as well (2 Corinthians 12).*

LESSON FOR TODAY: How can we tell what is a normal problem of the flesh or life in a fallen world from what is an attack of the enemy? If it brings a long, ongoing battle, and especially if you are having trouble having victory over it, you should seek for deeper causes. Or if it is a very new, very sudden attack that threatens to overwhelm and defeat you that can be a sign of demonic attack. If it is something large that comes from nowhere, like a gigantic wave that threatens to wash you away, then suspect spiritual causes as well.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Pray for a hedge of protection around yourself, your property and your family, as Job did (Job 1:45, 10-11). Turn to God's Word for guidance: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you" James 4:6-8. "All things work together for the good of those who love God" Romans 8:28. "There is no testing taken you but such as is common to man. God will not allow you to be tested beyond what you can bear, but with the testing will make a way of escape so you can bear it" I Corinthians 10:13).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Our defense against these attacks of Satan when sin isn't involved is for us to 1) keep our faith strong, keep our eyes on Jesus only (Matthew 14:28-31). Also, 2) pray for His protection for you, your family and your church (Job 1:4-5).

Day 7 – The Sword of the Spirit



So far all the equipment Paul has mentioned has been defensive. Its purpose is to protect the soldier from enemy attack. However none of it will bring victory, none will defeat an enemy. There is no defensive equipment to protect their backs so retreat was not possible. They could only move forward. They needed an offensive weapon to do that. For the Romans that was their short sword. It is with skillful use of it that the Romans conquered their world.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Paul saw this piece of equipment as so important that he makes sure we know what it stands for – he clearly identifies it as the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). God's Word is our only way to defeat Satan. Jesus quoted the Bible when attacked (Matthew 4:1-11). The Word is God's sword for us: "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12-13) Make sure you know the Bible and memorize verses so you can quote them when you need them. Quoting Scripture resets our mind to the truth, lets our mind explain reality to our emotions and is God's authority to Satan and demons for it is much more powerful than our words! It is the truth that brings freedom (John 8:32).

PROMISES SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO SPIRITUAL WARFARE:

Our Adversaries Will Be Defeated: Deuteronomy 32:43; Philipians 1:28; Deuteronomy 33:27

Victory is Promised: I Corinthians 15:57; I Chronicles 29:11; Proverbs 21:31; I John 5:4, 18; Rev. 12:11; 15:2; Romans 8:37; II Corinthians 2:14; John 16:33

God Promises To Fight For Us: I Samuel 14:47; Jeremiah 1:8

No Weapon Formed Against The Believer Can Prosper: Isaiah 54:17

Jesus Is Constantly Praying & Interceding On Our Behalf: I John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25

God Is Always With Us: Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 18:20; John 14:16, 21; Revelation 3:20

Confession Means Cleansing & Forgiveness: I John 1:8-9; Thessalonians 5:23-24; I Timothy 4:5; Luke 11:13; II Timothy 2:21; Jude 1; Romans 8:33-39; Titus 3:4-5

God Hears & Answers Prayer: Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9; Jeremiah 33:3

We will never Be Separated From God: Romans 8:35-39; John 10:27-29; 3:36; 5:24

God Will Meet All Your Needs: Philippians 4:19; Psalm 84:11; Romans 8:32; I Samuel 12:24

There Is No Need To Worry: Matthew 6:25,34; I Peter 5:7; Isaiah 40:11; Mat 5:38-39; Psalm 37:1-9; Jude 24

God Promises His Care & Protection: Deuteronomy 33:27; Genesis 17:1; Jeremiah 23:24; 32:7

Everything Will Work Out Right In the End: Romans 8:28

You Won't Ever Face Anything You Can't Handle With God's Help: I Corinthians 10:13

Peace Is Available No Matter What: John 14:27; Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:20; Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:6-7; Matthew 11:28-30; II Timothy 1:7

Trials Are Allowed To Bring Spiritual Growth: Psalm 119:67,71,75; 94:12; Isa. 48:10; Rom. 5:3

The Believer Has Nothing To Fear: Proverbs 3:25; Isaiah 14:3; Psalm 34:4; Joshua 1:9; 10:8; 23:9-11; Leviticus 26:8; Exodus 14:13; I Samuel 17:45-47; II Samuel 22:33-35,40-41

We Are Assured Of Eventual Triumph Over Our Adversaries: Acts 2:39

Victory Is Guaranteed Us: I Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:37; I Chronicles 29:11; I John 5:4, 18; II Chronicles 32:8; Revelation 3:5; 21:7

God Will Help Us Carry Our Burdens: Nehemiah 4:10; Matthew 11:30; Psalm 55:22

God Promises Comfort: Psalm 23:4; Lamentations 3:22-23; Matthew 5:4; 11:28-30; John 14:16, 18; John 14:16, 18; Romans 15:4; II Corinthians 1:3-4; II Thessalonians 2:16-17

God Will Give Us Courage: Proverbs 38:1; I Corinthians 16:13; II Timothy 1:7

Guidance Is Promised: Psalm 32:8; Isaiah 30:21; 58:11; Luke 1:79; John 15:13

God Will Help In Your Sorrow: Proverbs 10:22; Isaiah 53:4; John 16:22; II Corinthians 6:10; I Thessalonians 4:13; Revelation 21:4

Wisdom Is Promised Those Who Ask: James 1:5; 3:15-17; Luke 16:8; 21:15; I Cor. 2:5; 3:19

Rejecting Wrong Thoughts: II Corinthians 10:5; Psalm 139:23-24; 141:3-4; Isaiah 26:3-4; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:18-21

Power of the Word of God: Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Isaiah 55:11; 59:21; Psalm 119:81, 105, 11-112; Proverbs 30:5; Lamentations 2:17; 3:37; Matthew 24:35; John 5:24; 8:51; 15:7; Rom. 10:17

God's Promise of Angelic Intervention: II Kings 6:17; Psalm 34:6-7; 91:11; Daniel 6:22; 10:5-14; Acts 12:15

Day 8 - Prayer

After having described the equipment God provides for His people, Paul talks about prayer. Any soldier must be in direct communication with those he serves in order to be of use to them. Paul connects the section about our armor with the section on prayer by the use of "and" showing they go together (Ephesians 6:18).

LESSON FOR TODAY: The importance of a good, solid prayer life cannot be overemphasized (Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9; Jeremiah 33:3). Fasting can be an important part of prayer as well when God directs it.

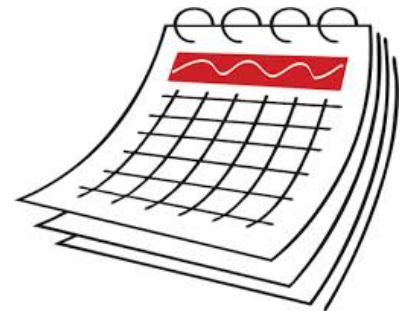
LESSON FOR TODAY: God does promise ultimate victory for His people, not always immediately in this life but enough for now and the rest in the future (1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 1 John 5:5).



DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 6

Supernatural Today



Day 1 – Deliverance & Healing 1

One of the first facts that becomes clear when one reads the accounts of Jesus casting out demons and healing is that very often they were both closely related. It is important to understand this more fully.

LESSON FOR TODAY: There is often a strong relationship between spiritual deliverance and physical healing. Often physical problems are also gone when the demons leave. That is because it was the demons who were causing the physical problems. Examples of these in the Bible include: crippled limbs (Luke 13:11), Paul's thorn in the flesh (eye disease? - II Corinthians 12:7), muteness (sometimes dumbness, too - Matthew 9:32-33; 12:22; Mark 9:17-18,24-25), blindness (Matthew 12:22), seizures (Mark 1:26; 9:17-18,20,22,25; Matthew 17:15,18; Luke 9:39), deafness (Mark 9:17-18,20,25), sores (skin cancer?) (Job 2:7), boils and other painful afflictions (Psalm 78:49 - the plagues in Egypt were demon-caused), and physical torments of all kinds (Revelation 9:5,10). The Bible states that Satan can cause illness (Job 2:7-8), even death (Job 1:19).

Physical healing can be a result of deliverance. If any of the demons who were removed were causing physical problems those problems will be resolved when the demons are removed. Generational spirits can cause the same ailments from generation to generation. Physical problems are usually not God's main concern, rather He is more concerned for the spiritual condition of the heart. We often pray for the symptom (physical problem) to be removed while God wants us to seek Him and what He is trying to teach us through it. Paul's thorn in the flesh is a clear example. It wasn't God's will for that demon to be removed, but for Paul to be spiritually strengthened through the experience.

If a physical problem is present it is helpful to find out when it first started and what else was going on at that time. Instead of focusing on removing the physical symptom, look for the root cause, be it demonic, spiritual or whatever else it may be.

Jesus often cast out demons and cured illness at the same time. Jesus said he would do this (Luke 13:32). He did this at the start of His ministry (Matthew 4:23-24; 8:16; Mark 1:34; Luke 4:41), around Tyre and Sidon (Mark 3:10-12; Luke 6:18-19), and in the middle of His ministry (Luke 7:21). Many female followers of Jesus were cured of both (Luke 8:2).

Even more precise are the accounts of when Jesus both cast out demons and healed illness in a person at the same time (Mark 6:13; Acts 5:16). Philip did this in Samaria (Acts 8:7) and Paul did it in Ephesus (Acts 19:12).

It must be noted that not all illness is demonic in origin. Jesus healed physical ills that weren't demonic (Matthew 4:23-24; 8:16-17 fulfilled Isaiah 53:4; Mark 1:34; Acts 10:34; etc.). The Bible clearly talks about illnesses that are not demonic: severe pain (Matthew 4:24), seizures (Matthew 4:24), paralysis (Matthew 4:24; Acts 8:7), leprosy (Matthew 10:8), blindness (Luke 7:21), crippled limbs (Acts 8:7) and many other various diseases (Matthew 4:24). The fact that some physical ailments are on both lists (like seizures) shows that many ailments may have demonic or natural causes. They could be from one source or the other.

Day 2 – Deliverance & Healing 2

We have been looking at the close connection between spiritual warfare and healing. Let's continue what we have been noticing.

It is obvious that some, but not all illness is demonic. There are no certain illness that are exclusively demonic, nor others that aren't. Any physical ill can be demonic, but it doesn't seem that any one physical illness is always demonic. In our day and age we err by seeing too few illnesses as being demonic. Thus we often miss the cure. How can we tell if an illness or physical problem is demonic or not? Some clues to look for are: medical doctors aren't able to bring relief or cure; there is a pattern of it running in the family; it seems strange or doesn't follow the regular pattern of symptoms (comes and goes for no particular reason, etc.); or you feel in your spirit that it should be prayed about and looked into as possibly being demonic.

Again, our pattern for bringing about this removal of physical ills by deliverance should follow Jesus' example. He rebuked a fever and it left immediately and strength instantly returned (Luke 4:39). On at least one occasion power came from within Jesus to heal (Luke 6:19). He often laid hands on a person to bring both deliverance and healing (Luke 4:40; 13:13; 4:29; Matthew 8:15; Luke 13:1-13).

Epilepsy, in fact any kind of seizures, cannot always be proven to be demonic, but that possibility should always be considered when praying for them. When Jesus confronted someone having seizures He always cast out demons and they were healed (Matthew 4:24; 17:15; Luke 9:38; 22:54; Mark 9:18). As we see in this account, demons who work in this way usually have a strong foothold and aren't easily removed, but with God's power and authority we can defeat them in Jesus' name.

As to us doing this today, again it must be done in God's strength and power. If He chooses to bring healing through deliverance that is His will. We must never demand it or make it dependent on having enough faith. No one today has a gift to heal anyone and everyone. It is right for us to pray for healing when doing deliverance and leave the results to God. It is also necessary to deal with any demons who may be causing the illness (physical or mental). Often demons affect our health in indirect ways, such as working in us so we eat or do things that are unhealthy for us in the long run and undermine our health. All of these, too, must be dealt with in Jesus' name (Matthew 10:1). Sometimes God may lead you to anoint with oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit who does the healing (Mark 6:13). Do NOT put any faith in the oil or any ritual in using it, it is simply an audio-visual. For more on healing see under 13. LAYING ON OF HANDS (Luke 13:10-17).

In conclusion, be aware that illness is often demonic, especially when doctors are unable to bring a cure. Even diseases they can cure can still be demonic, especially if there are other signs of demonizing active in the person's life. Keep this in mind when praying and seeking wisdom. Don't accept any illness as "incurable." Always make sure it isn't demonic (by asking God for wisdom and commanding any demons involved in that ailment to be gone in Jesus' name). Remember, when dealing with emotional and spiritual ills in your warfare praying, don't let out physical ills! Never fear, demons can only cause illness with God's approval (Job 1:6-12).

One word of warning: since demons can cause illness, they can also bring counterfeit 'healings' by stopping the physical ills they themselves cause (Matthew 12:24; 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 16:14). This explains miraculous healings that aren't done in accordance with God's will and Word.

Day 3 – Should all be healed? 1

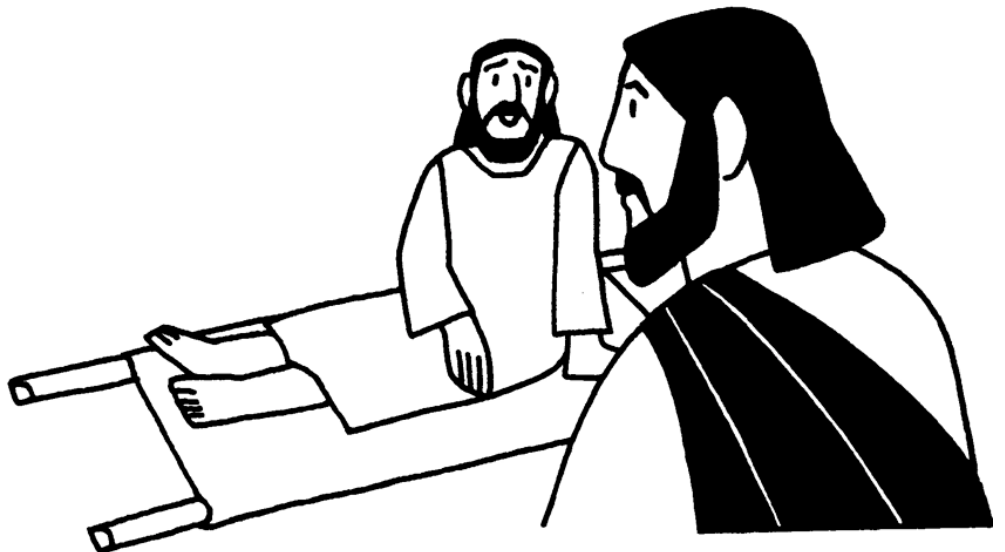
There are those today who believe that Jesus not only paid for sin on the cross, but that He also paid for our sickness. They say that each is received by faith, if you have enough faith to receive it. Loss of faith, then, causes the loss of these benefits of faith. They claim some are especially gifted in healing and can heal those who come to them. They say God did miracles in the Bible and he is still a miracle-working God today.

What about this? Is this true? This is not just one peripheral issue, but stands very central in our salvation and Christian life. Is God's sovereignty or man's free will the final and ultimate deciding factor? It must be God's sovereignty. The motive for living for Jesus should not be fear of losing our salvation. The goal of living for Jesus should not be a problem free life. Pain and suffering isn't to be faced by whipping up enough 'faith' so that God removes it (or living with the feelings of failure and guilt if it isn't removed and we believe that is our fault by not having enough faith). What about these claims of 'faith healers'? What does the Bible say?

Is the gift of healing for today? While it's true that Jesus and the Apostles healed, it was done as a sign to authenticate that they were from God (Matthew 12:39). This was God's way of having people listen to them instead of all the counterfeits around. When they were fully authenticated, there was no longer any reason for the sign. In AD 35 all were healed but by AD 60 some were not (Epaphroditus, Paul's thorn in the flesh). Then by AD 67 very few were being healed (Trophimus was left at Miletus sick, Timothy's stomach was unhealed, etc.). Jerusalem, the scene of many early miracles, had not one miracle done in it after Stephen was stoned. The people had the evidence but rejected it. James, the oldest book in the Bible, says that if someone is sick we are to pray for them (James 5:14).

Should we see miracles today like in bible times? Actually if you list all the miracles in the Bible you will find almost all of them fit three time periods. They aren't evenly spread out throughout history but cluster in the times of Moses/Joshua, Elijah/Elisha and Jesus/apostles. In each of these times a new mess had developed so God sent a new message through a new messenger whom He authenticated by miracles ("signs"). One more time of miracles is coming, called the Tribulation.

Is faith a prerequisite for healing? Jesus didn't make faith a requirement for healing. Many that He healed didn't have faith. The impotent man at the pool didn't even know who He was. The man with the withered hand and the man with dropsy were healed as a sign to religious leaders who were present, they didn't ask to be healed. The cripple that Peter and Paul healed outside the temple didn't exercise any faith. Of course the demoniacs who were delivered and those brought back from the dead didn't exercise faith. Then there are others who had strong faith but weren't healed: Stephen, Paul, Timothy, Job, David, Elisha, etc.



Day 4 – Should all be healed? 2



We have been looking at the issue of healing as it applies to us today. Let's conclude our discussion on this subject.

Is 'healing' today the same as in bible times? Today's 'healers' must meet the same characteristics of Jesus and the apostles to claim they are doing what was done then. Jesus and the apostles healed with a word or touch wherever and whenever. There was no special place or time, no chants or music, no gimmicks, nothing. Do today's faith healers walk down the hall in a hospital and empty every room? That's how Jesus and Peter did it. Also, Bible miracles were done instantly, not gradually or slowly. There was no healing to 'claim' or lose. Healing was then done totally, not partially, and it was never lost. Everyone was healed. There was no screening done. 100% of every one, no matter the need, was healed. Organic diseases were healed: limbs grew back instantly, strong enough to walk on, eyes were open, leprosy instantly gone and healthy flesh grown. Then, too, the dead were raised. Today's faith healing

doesn't nearly meet these characteristics.

Does God not heal? Yes, a sovereign God can always heal. He is always able to heal, but He is not always willing. Healing isn't guaranteed. Healing isn't based on our having enough faith. Miracles by Jesus and the apostles were done as a sign to authenticate the One who could heal an unseen soul. God can and does heal, but He doesn't gift others to do it, nor does He say that is the recommended norm for His people.

What are we to do when sick? When we are sick it's good to first make sure it isn't for sin or disobedience. If there is sin that God is using the sickness to point out, confess it and God will forgive and then use that illness for good (Romans 8:28). It's fine to pray, asking God to heal if that is His will. We are to submit to His will, not demand He do what we want. Ask Him to use the pain and suffering for His glory (that we and others can see His greatness through His provision and peace) and our growth (make us trust Him more and become more like Jesus). Use the best available resources: diet, rest, exercise and medical help. Realize that all healing does ultimately come from God. Leave the results to His will, though.

Granted, this whole subject of faith and healing can be a confusing and guilt-producing area. Specific verses can be found to seemingly support most any view. However an overview of the Bible and its teaching about these things definitely seems to substantiate the above view of healing. Always remember, our faith must be in Jesus. HE is the object of our faith, never a human person or group. Put faith in Jesus, not faith in your faith! HE is the one we are to look to and glorify. Always keep your eyes on Him. Trust and serve Him no matter what.

Day 5 – Speaking in Tongues 1

Before salvation the Corinthian believers spoke in ecstatic utterances, prophecies, revelations, spells and curses through the ‘power’ of Artemis (Acts 19). This was a regular part of their pagan worship, and was still happening in their church services. They were unable to distinguish demonic utterances from their pagan past to the ‘languages’ the Holy Spirit gave them as believers (1 Corinthians 12:1-3). Without knowing it, some were saying things that were blasphemous to God, so of course that didn’t come from the Holy Spirit. Paul writes 3 chapters (1 Corinthians 12-14) showing the place, purpose and limits of speaking in ‘tongues.’



LESSON FOR TODAY: Does God want us to speak in tongues today? Are they from the Holy Spirit or from demons (or both)? A correct understanding of ‘tongues’ is important for those involved in spiritual warfare.

The Bible teaches that each believer is **filled with the Holy Spirit** at the moment of salvation (I Corinthians 10:1ff; 12:3; 6:19; Eph. 4:5; Rom. 5:5). One cannot be saved without the Holy Spirit indwelling them (John 7:37-39; 14:16-17; I Corinthians 6:19-20). From there on it is not a matter of getting more of the Holy Spirit but of the Holy Spirit getting more of us! As we totally submit and live a holy life He fills and works through us.

Then what about Acts 2, 8, 10 and 19, when the Holy Spirit came on those who were already believers? **Acts 2** is a one-time, non-repeatable experience (not even repeated in Acts 8, 10 or 19). Just like the Second Person of the Trinity made a unique, one-time entrance into the world through a virgin in a stable, so the Third Person made His entrance in a unique, one-time way. When Jesus came back to earth after the resurrection to the apostles, Paul or John on Patmos, He never repeated the virgin-in-a-stable entrance. Acts 2, also, is non-repeatable.

Acts 2 is a transition, from Old Testament law when the Holy Spirit only indwelt some believers some times, to New Testament grace, when the Holy Spirit indwells all believers for their whole life. The apostles had already accepted Jesus’ claims and were saved in the old dispensation, then when the new dispensation started and the Spirit came they naturally would be the first to receive Him in that way. That is non-repeatable, too. In **Acts 8** we see this same truth applied to half Jews and half Gentiles, in **Acts 10** to Gentiles in Palestine, and in **Acts 19** to Gentiles outside of Palestine. They were similar to Acts 2 to show that Jews and Gentiles were now equal in the same Body, that the same thing happened to each. Each one showed the changeover from Old Testament law to New Testament grace. There had to be a definite time of change, showing the transfer had been made and those believers accepted. Still, what happened was different enough to show that it wasn’t Acts 2 repeated again. Those were the only times anything even resembling Acts 2 happened in Acts, and it only happened once for each new group as the gospel spread from Jerusalem. All others received the Holy Spirit immediately at salvation.

Tongues is not proof of Spirit baptism. Many received the Holy Spirit but not tongues: 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-41), early church believers (Acts 4:31), Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17), Paul (Acts 9:17-18), John the Baptist (Luke 1:15-16), Jesus (Luke 3:21-22; 4:1,14,18,21) and many others (Acts 4:8,31; 6:5; 7:55; 11:24; 13:9,52). Speaking in tongues is never mentioned in the leadership qualities in Titus or I Timothy. The Bible makes it clear that obedience is the proof of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling, not tongues (Ephesians 5:18f).

Tongues in Acts and Corinth were the same. The same Greek word (‘glossa’ meaning ‘tongue, to speak, language’) is always used of known foreign languages and is used in both Acts (2:6-11, etc.) and Corinth (I Co 14:21; 12:10). In Acts is it obvious that the listeners heard known languages spoken by those who had no previous knowledge of the language. There is no indication that what Corinth experienced was different. It is only the church at Corinth that is mentioned as using tongues, and then many corrections were needed in this carnal church (I Cor 3:1-3).

Day 6 – Speaking in Tongues 2

The purpose of tongues was to show Jews that God's judgment was on them. They were to spread God's message to Gentiles but failed. God would show He was judging them for that by bringing His word to them by Gentiles in Gentile languages. This was prophesied in Isa. 28:9-12; 33:19f; Deuteronomy 28:49; and Jeremiah 5:15. Paul said tongues fulfilled those prophecies (I Corinthians 14:21-22). When the Jews didn't heed this sign and repent, God's judgment came upon them in 70 AD when Jerusalem was destroyed. After 70 AD there is no instance of tongues being used in the early church. Signs are placed before what they are to mark, not after! Paul said (I Corinthians. 13:8-12) that tongues "will be stilled." The Greek word, 'pauo,' is in the middle voice; they will stop by themselves and not start again. History records only a very few, very isolated, very minor outbreak of tongues from Acts to the present. These groups were often heretical in some or all of their other beliefs. Obviously tongues did stop. There is nothing to indicate that they would ever begin again, for their purpose has been fulfilled. When Joel 2 talks about the Holy Spirit coming back after the Tribulation, there is no mention of tongues!

Then what about those with the gift of interpretation? First, the Greek word for this refers to someone who interprets known languages, like from Spanish to German. The use of foreign languages was to show God's judgment to the Jews present. The content of the message was God's good news, which the Jews should have been spreading. Since speaking in an unknown language would mean nothing to Gentiles present, Paul said there had to be an interpreter present when the gift was used (I Corinthians 14:26-28). This was necessary for the weak and immature Corinthian believers (14:20-22) who were ignorant of God's truth (12:13). It was to be kept to a minimum (14:6-12) because it was an inferior gift (I Corinthians. 14:4). Paul himself only used his ability to speak in unknown languages in Jewish synagogues, not Jewish services (14:39).

Applying these criteria to tongues today (known foreign language, showing God's judgment on the Jews, used only with Jews present, see as a lesser/minor gift whose use was to be kept to a minimum, etc.) shows that what is happening today is different from what happened back then.

Tongues are not a heavenly language. The Greek word makes it clear they are a KNOWN language (Acts 2:6-11; I Corinthians 14:21; 12:10). This is different than the 'groanings' of Romans 8:26 for those are clearly said to be unutterable (not able to be spoken). The "tongues of angels" (I Corinthians. 13:1) is a hyperbole (overemphasis to make a point) like "faith to move mountains." Besides, when angels spoke in the Bible, it was always in the known language of those to whom they were speaking.

Tongues are not a private prayer language. All spiritual gifts are given for the sake of others, not the one having the gift (I Corinthians 12:7, 12f; 14:19,27), that's why an interpreter had to always be present in Corinth (I Corinthians 14:26-28). Every time the gift of tongues was given in the Bible it was given to a group, not an individual. It was always used in a group, too, with no instance of private use recorded. The tongue is to be controlled by the speaker, not beyond his control (I Corinthians. 14:28-33). Plus, tongues were to be a sign to unbelievers, not believers (I Corinthians 14:22). Jesus Himself warned about praying words we don't understand (Mt 6:7). Paul said he always understood what he said when he prayed, even in tongues (I Corinthians 14:15). When asked how to pray Jesus gave the Lord's Prayer, not tongues.

Dangers of speaking in tongues today. Paul warns about Satan's ability to counterfeit this (I Corinthians 12:2-3) as he has in other religions and cults today. Tongues is said to be an inferior gift because it is self-centered (I Corinthians 14:4) and leads to emphasis being put on emotions which can lead people astray (II Corinthians 6:11-12; Rom 16:17-18). We are told to pray with understanding (I Corinthians 14:13-17) and control our spiritual gift (I Corinthians 14:28-40). God arbitrarily chooses which gifts to give to whom (I Corinthians 12:7,11,18,28). We are told to not seek

any particular gift (I Corinthians 12:31; 14:1-4). Tongues speaking can become a substitute for spirituality (I Corinthians 14:26-28). Worst of all, it can produce a false security by those who put faith in it as proof that God loves and accepts them. Most who practice tongues-speaking do not believe in eternal security of salvation, so their speaking in tongues becomes their proof of acceptance by God. Our faith must be in Jesus' work on the cross, not in our ability to speak in 'tongues.' Those without the gift can feel pressured to fit in with the rest of the group.

Another danger of tongues, despite Paul saying it is the least of all gifts (1 Corinthians 14:1-25), is that it is often elevated to equal importance to what God says in the Bible. This happens with 'interpretations of tongues' and those with the 'gift of prophecy' as well. These people can be looked up to and their 'word' taken on the same par as, or even above Scripture. That is a deception from the enemy for NOTHING is to be seen as authoritative as Scripture (Revelation 22:18-19).

I have been told by those who are more experienced in dealing with tongues spirits than I am that these demons are often 'gatekeepers' and keep other demons in. They also call others in and keep them from exiting.

Day 7 – Never Communicate With Demons

There are some things Jesus didn't do with demons when He faced them, and neither should we. We can see this from the story of the demonized man in the Capernaum synagogue (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37).

LESSON FOR TODAY: While the demon(s) in this man try to bait Jesus into communicating with them, He refuses to do so. Do not converse with demons, either by having them give messages to a person's mind or to speak verbally through a person's vocal cords. The object in deliverance is not to get in contact with demons but to remove them. It is not to get them to speak but to cause them to be silent! Communication with them makes you a medium and God's words forbids that (Deuteronomy 18:9-13).

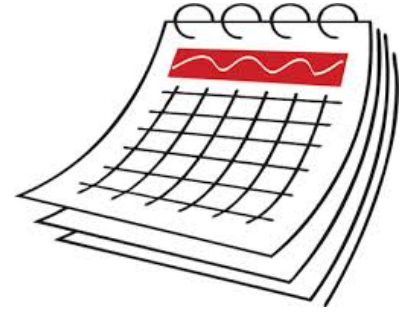
There are good reasons God forbids communication with them. Neither Jesus (Mark 1:25) nor Paul would (Acts 16:17) encouraged them to speak. They are liars and deceivers (John 8:44) and you can't believe what they say. God wants you to be in touch with Him only (Deuteronomy 4:24). Through the Holy Spirit we have access to all truth and power (John 8:31-32; I Corinthians 12:7-11). By communicating with demons you give them recognition, allow them to stall and deceive, give them the focus and attention they crave, make things much harder on all people involved, and open yourself up to pride. Communicating with demons can be a temptation to pride and we can find ourselves drawn into working by the power of our own flesh. We don't need any information they might give us, we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). The only time Jesus ever talked to a demon was for the purpose of showing those who were watching how many demons were involved and therefore how great His power was (Mark 5:9). Eve got into a dialogue with Satan and was deceived by him (Genesis 3:1-16 – for more about this see THE BATTLE BEGINS Genesis 3:8-15). If there is something you need to know, God will show it. Don't ever expect a demon to give information that will lead to his own defeat!

LESSON FOR TODAY: When the demons left this man they shook him and caused him to scream loudly. Sometimes demons will try to manifest in ways that are intended to bring fear to a person, but Jesus never allowed demonic manifestations to get out of hand and neither should we. In Jesus' name bind them, take away their power to resist, and command them to obey immediately and quietly when commanded in Jesus' name. We do not have to put up with their antics for they are only done to distract and to cause fear in us and recognition of their power. We know God is greater than they are (I John 4:4).

DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 7

Joshua



Day 1 – Fighting Spiritual Battles

The book of Joshua is one of the most detailed books on spiritual warfare in the Bible. 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 tells us that the things that happened to the Jews who left Egypt and eventually settled the Promised Land happened as examples for us. Physical events in the Old Testament teach spiritual truths in the New Testament. That is especially true of Joshua.

In Genesis we see the need of salvation – man is sinful. The book starts in Eden in God's presence and ends with the Jews in captivity in Egypt. Exodus brings deliverance by innocent blood being shed (Passover) and by power (Red Sea open, close). Then in Leviticus instruction is given as to how to live for God now that they are delivered. In Numbers they start learning to apply what God has taught them about winning battles they face in life. Deuteronomy reviews lessons from the past about obeying God. God's people must learn from the past so they can move ahead in the future. Then comes Joshua, entering the Promised Land (God's perfect will for them) and conquering through warfare. That's where we are in our Christian life: God has redeemed us and taught us in His Word and from past experiences. Now we pursue His perfect will for our lives but find we must fight to achieve what He has for us.

LESSON FOR TODAY: The same happens today – God freely gives us salvation and has peace, rest and victory available as we live in His perfect will, but there is a battle involved for us to experience and enjoy those blessings. We fight our sinful nature and we fight Satan's demons who try to do all they can to keep us from experiencing all God has for us. It's available, it's ours, but we must battle to reach it. Some Christians believe that if they trust God enough then He will remove all obstacles and bless them with a simple, easy life. Others think that God owes them health, wealth and whatever they want. The truth is that we are in a lifelong battle if we want to remain faithful to God's kingdom. If we give in or compromise, then the battle stops until we start living in faithfulness and obedience again. We are living in enemy-occupied territory seeking to overthrow the prince of this world and release as many of his prisoners as possible. Of course he will oppose all we do!

The generation of Jews who left Egypt died in unbelief, not attaining all the blessings God had for them in this life. They lacked faith and obedience. Their children took over – each generation must pick up where the last generation stopped or failed. They needed faith to face the giants their parents feared. They couldn't do this in their own strength, only in God's.

LESSON FOR US: The physical warfare of the Jews over their enemies in the Old Testament pictures our spiritual warfare against our enemies (the flesh and Satan) in the New Testament. We can learn many spiritual lessons from their physical battles. Numbers 32:18-22 gives the key for our victory in spiritual warfare. First of all, we must be totally committed to having victory (Numbers 32:18) and willing to pay whatever price is necessary (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23). How badly do you want to experience all God has for you? How willing are you to fight for it no matter the cost?

Day 2 – Fighting for Victory

There once was a young man who thought it would be great to be a soldier. Everyone would respect him. He would be paid for traveling and seeing the world. What could be better? It wasn't long, though, before he found he was in a battle for his life. He had enemies who were trying to destroy him. He had to learn how to fight for his life. Many people become Christians thinking this will be the end of all their problems, God will take care of everything and now life will be smooth and perfect. Then they, too, find out they are in a battle with an enemy committed to destroying them. As Christians we, too, must learn to fight for the victory that is ours. Its always been that way for God's people.

Genesis begins with man in God's presence in Eden, but sin soon changes that and the book ends with the Jews in slavery in Egypt (a picture of the world). In Exodus we see God's redemption by the innocent blood of the lamb and His deliverance by power through the Red Sea. Leviticus contains God's directions for His newly-redeemed people. In Numbers we see redeemed mans first attempts (and failures) to walk by faith. Deuteronomy is a reminder of how God has always been faithful to His people. Then in Joshua the battles begin! Where as God provided salvation and did their first fighting for them, now His people are required to learn to fight for themselves.

Crossing the Jordan and entering the land of Promise didn't mark the end of the battle but the beginning! While we don't fight Canaanites and Philistines, we do have enemies trying to destroy us: the world, Satan and his forces and our sin nature. He has freely provided salvation and fought our first battles for us. But now He expects us to fight to gain the victory He has provided. Of course He helps us, as any parent would help their children learn to grow and mature. But also like a good parent, He doesn't do for us what He expects us to do for ourselves. So we shouldn't be surprised at the battles we face, but we do need to learn to fight as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The book of Joshua is God's warfare manual for His warriors today. You have enemies trying to destroy you., so don't be surprised if life seems like one battle after another.



Do you ever feel like God is expecting the impossible of you? What is happening just doesn't make sense – God seems to be going about things all wrong. What are we to do? Well, what did Joshua do? He believed God's promises that He would be with Joshua (Joshua 1:1-9). God promised that He would give them the land (Joshua 1:2-6) but they would have to fight for it. Joshua was to lead the people in battle and God would give them the ultimate victory. Victory is assured, but the battle must be fought. God gave Joshua personal promises as well. He told Joshua that He would never leave or forsake him (Joshua 1:5). This promise is repeated for us in Hebrews 13:5. Three times God told Joshua to be strong and courageous and to not be afraid. Obviously Joshua struggled with this, as we do today. We, too, have God's promises to carry us through our times of fear. Acquaint yourself with the following verses, write them down, memorize them, and whenever you are attacked with fear fight back using your Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). Psalm 118:6; 23:4; Genesis 26:24; 15:1; Exodus 14:13; Joshua 1:9; Isaiah 41:10; Deuteronomy 31:6; Matthew 14:27; 2 Chronicles 32:7-8.



Day 3 – Each Battle is Different

The first battle was at Jericho (Joshua 5:13 – 6:27). It is important to note that no two battles, then or now, are exactly alike. At the Red Sea the Jews were to stand still and see God deliver (Exodus 14:3), but against Amalek the men were to take up weapons and fight (Exodus 17:9). Now at Jericho they were told to march around the walls in faith and God would take care of the walls (Joshua 6:1-3). The Jews followed the Ark of the Covenant which symbolized the seat of God's presence.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Each battle we fight will be different than the battles others fight, and even different than past battles we were involved in. We must follow God's lead each time. There is no one way or 'best' way – be sensitive and follow God. Don't look for a magic formula – obedience to God brings victory, disobedience brings defeat.

Despite victory over great Jericho, the Jews were soundly defeated in their next battle against a small outpost called Ai because there was sin in the camp (Joshua 6:18-19; 7:13). Achan tried to keep that which belonged to God. This sin was confessed and removed from the camp, and then there was victory at Ai. We, too, must make sure there is no sin in our lives or we won't have victory but will live in defeat.

LESSON FOR TODAY: An entirely new strategy was used for victory at Ai – an ambush from behind the town. There is no magic formula, no one human leader, and no ritual that guarantees victory. Sensitivity to God's leading and following His Spirit is the only sure way to win. Don't be judging the way God leads others, and don't limit Him in what He wants to do to bring victory in your situation.

After these victories the Jews paused to regroup and refocus. By this time the tribes in the north and south had started unifying to better stand against the Jews.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Satan's opposition grows stronger in time. The enemy does not give up and surrender. He often gathers more demons and even motivates unbelieving human beings in opposition against God's people. Big victories on our part often bring bigger opposition from Satan and his demons.

Day 4 – The Battles Get Harder and Harder

When the Jews who left Egypt found themselves trapped at the Red Sea, God miraculously parted the waters and let them walk through on dry ground. They were newly redeemed and didn't know how to face their enemies. Now the second generations finds themselves in the same situation, but God doesn't bail them out so quickly, They know more about Him and have grown in the faith, so more is required of their faith. That's how it is with us, too. That's why it seems our tests get harder and harder – because they do! God keeps stretching our faith and expecting more and more of us.

God's directions were for the priests to go first. Priests were the go-betweens representing God to man and man to God. Each believer today is a priest (1 Peter 2:5-9), so these priests picture us. They were expected to carry the Ark of the covenant, which was God's throne and represented His Presence with the people, into the Jordan River. Normally that would be no big deal for the Jordan River is usually about 2 to 3 feet deep and only 20 or so feet wide. But in flood stage, which was when the Jews were to cross, it became ½ mile wide and 12 feet deep. So walking across the bottom was no option for the priests!



In addition the walk into the water was no pleasant stroll where the water quietly lapped around your ankles and slowly got deeper. The water was raging and boiling as it rushed down to the Dead Sea. And the walk into the water was very, very steep. Once the priests started over the top there was no stopping or turning back until they got to the bottom. Carrying the heavy Ark didn't make it any easier! Now if God would have opened the waters while they watched it would have been easy for the priests to enter the water, but God told them the waters wouldn't separate until they put their foot into the Jordan (Joshua 3:13). That meant they had to trust God and commit to obeying Him before they saw His deliverance! Sound familiar to what God expects of you?

But guess what happened? Immediately the waters opened and God even thought to dry the river bed instantly so they had a dry surface to walk on (Joshua 3:14-17). They took the Ark into the middle and stood

there while the people crossed. That symbolized God's Presence holding back the waters for them. The opening was quite wide in order to allow 2 ½ million people to cross. No doubt they remembered what God did for their parents. God was showing them He was the same and He would do the same for them – but He expected them to act in faith.

We, too, are required to live by faith, not sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). The story is told of a woman who was known for her faithful obedience to God no matter what obstacles were in her life. One day a friend asked her what she would do if God told her to run and jump into a wall. She replied that it was her job to run and jump and it was God's job to take care of the wall. Maybe you feel like you are running into a wall. Don't worry about the wall. Just make sure you do the running and let God take care of the wall!

Day 5 – Preparation for Victory

The Jews have just miraculously crossed the Jordan River because God separated the waters and dried up the ground. Jericho awaits nearby. Spies from Jericho have seen what happened to the Jordan and the people are scared to death. The Jews are strong in their faith having just seen what God has done. So now would be the perfect time to follow up their advantage and strike Jericho – right? Wrong! God just doesn't do things the way we would expect. Joshua 5 is no different. What God does weakens and incapacitates all the Jewish men for several days, making them totally vulnerable for a week or more.

Instead of attacking Jericho God has the Jewish men be circumcised. And that is no simple, easy matter for grown men! Why would God do this? Because He demands 100% obedience and commitment from His people in order for them to win their battles. To the Jews circumcision was the outward sign of inner submission and obedience to God. It showed they were God's special, set-apart ('holy') people. Clearly they had ignored this command and now, before they could fight their battles and have victory, this had to be corrected.

If we had to draw a parallel with our lives today we could say that baptism is similar in that it is the way God commands for us to outwardly show our submission and obedience to Him. Still, God clearly demands more than outer obedience but wants inner commitment from our heart. He doesn't want us to perform a ritual – He wants us! Before we can start to have victory in our spiritual battles we must make sure we are totally committed to God and living a life of holy obedience in all areas. If not we fight alone – and that's why we are often defeated.

Most battles are won or lost before they are fought. Those who are alert and prepared to fight will win. Those who aren't will not. Before God led the Jews to enter the land and fight for their rights, He told them to prepare themselves (Joshua 1:10-11). The Jews spent 3 days preparing themselves and their possessions to enter the land and fight. During this time 2 spies were sent into Jericho to gather information about it as well (Joshua 2). It's easy to wonder why they bothered doing this. If God is sovereign and He promised them the land, then why bother sending in spies and getting everything ready? It's because God expected Joshua (and us) to trust Him as if everything depended on Him but to prepare and fight as if everything depended on themselves. We must totally 100% trust in God while totally 100% doing our very best. As parents we will protect and rescue our children, but we expect them to do their part to the very best of their ability. The same is true of our heavenly Father. The Jews also had to renew their commitment to God (Joshua 3:5). It's important for us to make sure our commitment is continually renewed (Romans 12:1-2). The battle is won or lost in our mind before it is actually fought. That's why it's important to have a special time to connect with God by prayer and Bible reading each day.

Most of our battles are lost because of lack of preparation. We aren't ready when attacked. We haven't prepared. We don't know God's Word. We have sin in our life and our armor is faulty. We are spiritually weak. Then we wonder why we are defeated. We aren't prepared. Preparation means knowing when and where to expect attack. Do you know your weak areas, what leads you to sin? What are your plans and preparations to be ready when attacked? Jesus was ready when Satan attacked Him in the wilderness. He knew just what Bible verse to use to counter Satan's lies. Are you aware of what lies Satan uses to get you to sin? What verses do you have ready to battle his deception with truth? God told the Jews to not let His word depart from their mouth, to meditate on it day and night and to do everything written in it (Joshua 1:7-8). When that happens, God assures victory (Joshua 1:8b). Are you ready for the battle? It will come – prepare now for it, don't be surprised! “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith” (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Day 6 – In God’s Strength or Yours?

God clearly and repeatedly promised Joshua that the land of Palestine would be theirs for God was with them and was giving it to them. So then why did Joshua send spies into the land to check it out before they entered (Joshua 2:1)? Does this mean he didn’t trust God’s promises? Or was he just trying to help God out? Why didn’t he just march into the land in faith, trusting God to give it to them? Wouldn’t that have been an act of faith? It certainly would have been, but that isn’t what God wanted in this case. Sometimes He wants us to totally trust Him and move ahead in faith, but most of the time He wants us to use common sense and do our best while trusting Him. Clearly Joshua was not out of God’s will in this. It wasn’t lack of faith on Joshua’s part. His faith was just as strong for he knew that no matter what the spies found, they couldn’t win without God’s help.

Even though we depend on God 100%, we still have human responsibility to do our part, to do our best. Sitting back and letting God do it all usually isn’t an expression of faith but of being irresponsible. When Moses led the Jews to fight the Amalekites, he prayed depending 100% on God, but the people did their best fighting behind their leader Joshua. Nehemiah trusted God for His help in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, but he set a guard and made sure all his workers were armed. We trust God – but we lock our doors, we buy insurance, we leave a light on when we aren’t home – we take common sense precautions all the while knowing God is in sovereign control over everything.

Any army must know its adversary and how they work. Paul tells us to not be ignorant of Satan’s devices. James 1 tells us to ask for wisdom and God will give it. God works in and through us, not instead of us. Jericho was a formidable opponent, and God will give Joshua the battle instructions (march around the city...). Still, God expects Joshua to use wisdom and common sense, to make good judgments and to be responsible to do their best. God works through our wise choices and best efforts, He doesn’t always override our irresponsibility and carelessness.

God didn’t need the spies and their help. Actually without His help they would have been captured and killed, but He led them to Rahab and safety. We expect our children to try their best even if we know they will fall short without our help. We teach them wisdom and common sense, but we know they will need our assistance. The same is true of God. It’s been said we are to work as if it all depended on us but also trust knowing it all depends on God. Faith is no excuse to keep us from doing our best. So trust God – but send out your spies as well!



Day 7 – The Battles Never End

During this time the northern tribes had time to unify and prepare (Joshua 11:1-5). Victory in the north did not come in one quick, short battle as we would often like to see happen, but was a slow and gradual process. The enemy just doesn't quit. Again the greatest problem the Jews faced is fear. The same is true today. God encouraged them in their faith (Joshua 11:6) and brought the victory as they fought (Joshua 11:8). We must fight but it is God who brings victory.

The last great battle to claim and settle the Promised Land, the place of God's blessing, was against the giants (Anakim, Numbers 13:28; Joshua 11:21). It was fear of them that kept the Jews out of the land in Moses' day.

LESSON FOR TODAY: This was a retest. When we are defeated God allows us to face the same enemy time and time again until we learn to have victory. This final series of battles were the hardest, for it was Satan's last great stand and he did all he could to hold on to his territory. Joshua and Caleb were old by this time, but they still battled and God gave victory. As long as we are alive we will face battles, we never grow too old to keep growing and serving.

LESSON FOR TODAY: God equips us with the weapon we will need to win our battles. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is our offensive weapon (Matthew 4:4; Ephesians 6:17). Read, study, memorize and use God's Word. The more proficient you are in God's Word the more powerful you will be in battle.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Another very important lesson to learn about warfare from the book of Joshua is that warfare never ends. God's principle was for the Jews to gradually win over the land, bit by bit (Exodus 22:27-30; Deuteronomy 7:21-22). While the last great battle was with the giants, there were always mop-up operations, pockets of resistance, and rebellion which would break out in various places. Were the Jews to conquer the whole land in Joshua's time they wouldn't have been able to settle and cultivate all of it, so some would return to a wild state. Instead God let them conquer some land and settle, then move ahead to conquer a little more. God's wanted them to conquer and settle the land before moving ahead. We, too, are to learn and grow from each conflict we face. This also was how God taught them to fight: by continual practice. They were to teach their children who would continue the battles, and pass it on to their children.

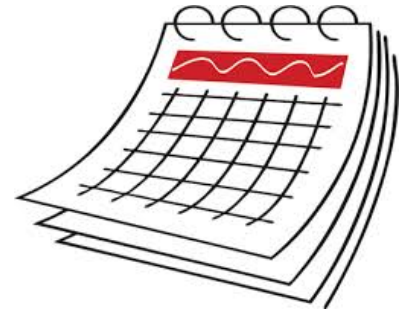
LESSON FOR TODAY: Fortunately, though, the warfare isn't continual. It comes in cycles. The Jews had times of intense warfare, then times of consolidating and applying their gains. There wasn't constant battle every minute of every day. God interspersed times of rest, times to grow and mature and times to solidify what was won in the previous battle before they had to move ahead again. God does that today as well. We have times of great stretching and challenge, then times of peace and rest during which we gather our strength and apply what we have learned. Then another battle comes. Don't expect the battles to ever end, but don't become discouraged thinking the current battle will last forever. Battles come and go in cycles. We grow spiritually in spurts just as plants, animals and even a child's body grows in spurts.



DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 8

Cults & Religions



Day 1 – Satan’s Plan & Purpose

SATAN’S PURPOSE His goal is to rule the whole world instead of God. He was given authority over this world system by Adam when he sinned (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2) and controls our world system (1 John 5:19). He rules over it (Matthew 4:8-9; John 12:31; Luke 4:5-7; John 14:30; 16:11). He is behind its values and world view (James 3:15). Presently he works to deceive the nations (Daniel 10:13,20; Matthew 4:8; Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 20:3,7-8; 16:14; 1 Kings 22:6-7). He leads mankind into idolatry (Psalm 96:5; 106:36-38; Leviticus 17:7; Deuteronomy 32:17). He especially wants to destroy God’s special people: Israel (Revelation 12:13-17; 20:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:9) and the Church.

SATAN’S WORK AGAINST ALL PEOPLE He works against the gospel, hardening hearts to God’s truth (Matthew 13:19-22). He blinds their minds (2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-10; Luke 8:12; Colossians 2:18). When they hear the truth Satan tries to snatch it from their minds (Mark 4:15; Matthew 13:19). He denies the truth (Genesis 3:1; 2 Timothy 4:3-4) and promotes false teaching (1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 2:9). As is true of any good counterfeiter, he tries to make his deceptions as close to the truth as possible so as to deceive more. The authority of the Scriptures, the person and work of Jesus and salvation by grace are areas he especially tries to obscure so make sure anything you believe has these at its heart and core. Satan brings oppression on all he can. He does this through sickness such as dumbness (Mark 9:17-29), blindness (Matthew 12:22), deformity (Luke 13:11-17), epilepsy (Luke 9:37-43) and other ways. He also uses the following to oppress: mental illness (Mark 5:1-20; 9:14-29; Luke 9:39), sin (Genesis 3:13-24; Ephesians 2:2), lawlessness (2 Corinthians 6:15) and death (Revelation 18:2; 9:13-18).

SATAN’S WORK AGAINST BELIEVERS A primary objective of Satan is to oppose God’s work and God’s people. He oppresses and leads the persecution against the Jews (Revelation 12:13-17; 20:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:9). He works especially hard against believers, for we are the light in his darkness, the only threat on this work against his kingdom. Since he can no longer attack Jesus directly he does so indirectly by attacking His children. He accuses us before God (Job 1:6-21; 2 Corinthians 2:11; Revelation 12:9-10; Zechariah 3:1-2) but Jesus is our defense attorney, our Advocate when accused (1 John 2:1). Satan does all he can to oppose and hinder our service to God (2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 2 Corinthians 11:2-7; Zechariah 3:1; Matthew 13:19). He tries to infiltrate the church through false teaching (1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 2:9), false teachers (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 1 John 4:1; 2 Peter 2:1-2) and false ‘Christians’ (Matthew 13:38-40). While not all temptation comes from Satan and demons, he certainly does all he can to entice us into sin (2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Timothy 2:26; 1 Corinthians 7:5) as he did when tempting Jesus. He will use our sin nature (James 1:14-15), the world system (1 John 2:15-16) or attack directly through demons (1 Corinthians 7:5). He can cause and use anger (Ephesians 4:27), pride (1 Timothy 3:6; 1 Chronicles 21:1; 1 Timothy 3:6), immorality (1 Corinthians 7:5), lies (Acts 5:1-3), doubting God’s Word and goodness (Genesis 3:1-5; Luke 4:9-12), ‘miracles’ to deceive (Mark 4:8-9; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3,9-11), hypocrisy (John 8:44; Acts 17:22), self-sufficiency (1 Chronicles 21:2-7), worry and fear (1 Peter 5:7-9; Hebrews 2:14; Psalm 23:4), lack of faith (Luke 22:31-32; 1 Peter 5:6-10), physical affliction (Job 1:6-22; 2:1-7; John 8:44; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 Timothy 1:20) and sin of any kind (1 Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 4:3; 1 Corinthians 10:19-21; 2 Corinthians 11:3,13-15; 1 John 3:8).

DEMON’S WORK AGAINST ALL Demons carry out Satan’s commands and wishes. After enticing Adam and Eve to sin and getting authority over the world from them, Satan and his forces have continued trying to keep worship from God and getting it for themselves. They blind the minds of unbelievers (II Corinthians 4:4) and snatch the Word from their hearts (Luke 8:12). They do all they can to oppose God’s work (Revelation 2:13). Since they can’t attack God, they take their anger out on those who are God’s -- His people (Jews and Christians today). Satan and his forces tempt Christians to lie (Acts 5:3), accuse and slander them before God

(Revelation 12:10), hinder their work (1 Thessalonians 2:18), do anything possible to defeat them (Ephesians 6:11-12), tempt to immorality (1 Corinthians 7:5) and incite persecution against them (Revelation 2:10). They promote human wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 11:4; 1 John 4:5-6). They influence and control the nations (Daniel 10:13,20; Ephesians 6:12) and mislead them so they can destroy them (Isaiah 9:14). It must always be kept in mind, however, that God is in sovereign control. They can do nothing without God's permission (Job 1:6-12).

Physically they can give superhuman strength (Mark 5:4); physically torment (Revelation 9:5,10), emotionally torment (1 Samuel 16:14-23); do miracles (Revelation 16:13-14; 13:12-15), inflict disease (Matthew 9:33; Luke 3:11,16), indwell people (Matthew 8:28-34) and indwell animals (Matthew 8:31-32).

Emotionally they torment (1 Samuel 16:14-23), cause fear (1 Samuel 18:12,15; 2 Corinthians 11:4; 2 Timothy 1:7; Romans 8:15; Job 4:14-15), cause anger (1 Samuel 18:10-11), cause jealousy (1 Samuel 18:10-15) and harden consciences (1 Timothy 4:2).

Sexually they cause immorality (Revelation 9:21-22; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 1 Timothy 4:1-3) and cause all kinds of impurity (Zechariah 13:2).

Mentally they cause bondage (2 Corinthians 11:4), influence the mind (Genesis 3:15; Ephesians 6:10-20; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:13), control the mind (1 Corinthians 10:20; 2 Corinthians 4:4), and deceive, mislead and lie to people (1 Timothy 4:1,6; 1 Kings 22:22-23; 2 Chronicles 18:20-23).

Religiously they promote false doctrine (1 John 4:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:1; 1 Kings 22:22; Revelation 16:13), counterfeit the truth (2 Corinthians 10:20-21), promote hypocrisy (1 Timothy 4:2), promote legalism (1 Timothy 4:3), use false prophets and false teachers (1 John 4:1; 1 Kings 22:22-23; 2 Chronicles 18:20-23), use fortunetelling and occult practices (Acts 16:16-18) and promote idolatry while receiving the worship of idols (Leviticus 17:7; Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalm 106:37; Revelation 9:20; Hosea 4:10-12; 5:4; Acts 16:16; 1 Corinthians 10:20).

DEMON'S WORK AGAINST BELIEVERS They especially work against believers by frustrating and opposing God's perfect will (Acts 16:16-18), putting obstacles in the path of those following God (1 Thessalonians 2:18; Romans 15:22), influencing believers to mislead other believers (Matthew 16:22-23.) and instigating things such as jealousy, pride and disunity (James 3:13-16). They seek to get believers to turn from God and living for Him (1 Timothy 4:1), they can cause physical torment (2 Corinthians 12:7), and they try to get us to operate by our own strength and ability (2 Timothy 3:5). All this work will intensify as the return of Jesus gets closer (1 Timothy 4:1).

Day 2 - Names of Satan

After writing to the Corinthians and Romans, Paul headed back to Jerusalem where he was falsely arrested and kept in prison for several years. Finally he was transferred to Rome for trial. In prison at Rome Paul wrote four very important letters, his prison epistles. They are Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon. Ephesians was written about four years after Romans.

Much spiritual warfare had taken place when Paul was in Ephesus (see Acts 19 above). It's been about seven years since those power encounters, but the warfare is still going strong. So Paul writes to encourage and help them in their spiritual warfare.

Satan's world system. Unbelievers are not only misled by demons, but actually energized and used by them to promote Satan's ungodly world system (Ephesians 2:20). Satan is called "the ruler of the kingdom of the air" and "the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient" (Ephesians 2:2), two of numerous names for Satan.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Looking at the various names of Satan help us understand his character and work better.

Abaddon, Apollyon (Rev 9:11) Abaddon is the Greek form and Apollyon is the Hebrew equivalent. These words mean 'destroyer,' 'destruction.' This title stresses his work of destruction; he works to destroy the glory of God and God's purpose with man. He further works to destroy societies and mankind.

Accuser of the Brethren (Revelation 12:10) The Greek word for "accuser" is *kathgor*, which refers to one who brings condemning accusations against others. In view of Job 1 and 2, this is also an attempt to malign the character of God and His plan. 2).

Beelzebul (Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22) Three possible spellings of this word each have a different meaning: (1) Beelzebul means "lord of the dung," a name of reproach. (2) Beelzebub means "lord of the flies." Either one of these are names of reproach and of uncleanness applied to Satan, the prince of the demons and uncleanness. (3) Beelzeboul, means, "the lord of the dwelling." This would identify Satan as the god of demon possession. This spelling has the best manuscript evidence behind it.

Belial (2 Corinthians 6:15) This name means "worthless" or "hopeless ruin." The personification of worthlessness, hopeless ruin and the source of all idolatry and religion which is also hopeless or futile.

Devil (Matthew 4:1, 5, 9; Ephesians 4:27; Revelation 12:9; 20:2) "Devil" is the Greek word diabollos which means "slanderer, defamer." This accentuates his goal and work to impugn the character of God.

Dragon (Revelation 12:7) The Greek word is drakon (as in draconian) and refers to a "hideous monster, a dragon, or large serpent." This word stresses the cruel, vicious, and blood thirsty character and power of Satan.

Evil One (John 17:15; 1 John 5:9) The Greek poneros means "wicked, evil, bad, base, worthless, vicious, degenerate." It points to Satan's character as active and malignant.

False Angel of Light (2 Corinthians 11:14) One of his purposes is to make men as much like God as he can, but always without God. So, he will copy as much of God and His plan as he can, but he will always either distort, pervert, substitute or leave out those key ingredients of truth that are vital to the plan of salvation and sanctification through Christ.

Father of Lies (John 8:44) Using his network of deception through demonic forces and duped people, he promotes false doctrines in the name of God.

God of This World or Age (2 Corinthians 4:4) The fact Satan is called the god of this world (Greek, aionos, "age, course") may emphasize Satan's rulership over this final period or economy which is so marked by a growing increase in apostasy, deception, and moral decay.

Lucifer (Isa. 14:12) The Hebrew word for Lucifer (KJV translation) is literally "the shining one." This name draws our attention to his pre-fall condition and to the nature of the cause of his fall - pride.

Prince or Ruler (John 12:31) The Greek literally means, "the ruler of this world system." This points to Satan as the head and energy behind the arrangements of things as they are in the world today.

Prince of the Power of the Air (Ephesians 2:2a) This points to Satan as the head of the demonic hosts which includes all the fallen angelic beings who operate night and day in our immediate spiritual atmosphere-an atmosphere of demonic influence controlled by Satan.

Satan (Job 1:6-9; Matthew 4:10) The title "Satan" occurs 53 times in 47 verses in the Bible. The primary idea is 'adversary, one who withstands.'

Serpent (Revelation 12:9) This name for Satan looks back to Genesis 3 and the temptation in the Garden.

Tempter (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5) This title reveals him in another of his primary activities as seen from the very beginning with Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3).

Day 3 – Paul’s Power Encounter 1

Paul ran into strong demonic opposition when he went to Ephesus (Acts 19). The pagan goddess Artemis was worshipped there. The people there were Asiatic and thus animists who were really worshipping demons. She was a widely worshipped deity whose temple in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. She was recognized by her followers as the greatest power in the universe. She was seen as savior, lord and queen and was worshipped by many long festivals. ‘Missionaries’ were sent out to spread her message. This cult was very influential and very rich.

Of course the power behind Artemis was demonic, and those who promoted her worship knew it. They used those powers to help her reputation, and therefore theirs as well, grow and expand. She was recognized as the goddess over the underworld and the one with authority over all demons. In fact, these demons who served her were given Jewish, Egyptian and Greek names. The ‘magic’ she had, the supernatural power over natural forces, was demonic.

Because of Artemis, Ephesus became the main center for pagan demonic worship in all Asia Minor. Because of its key place in Asia Minor, geographically as well as culturally, Paul visited Ephesus at least twice (Acts 18:19-21; 19:1 – 20:1). Eventually the center of early Christianity moved from Jerusalem to Ephesus, then later to Rome itself. John and Mary lived in Ephesus. Because of its importance, Satan and his forces did all they could to oppose this. That is why spiritual warfare came to a head at Ephesus, as can be seen in the book of Acts as well as the epistle to the Ephesians, which was a circular letter read in all the churches in the area.



Luke records several of these power encounters between God and Satan during Paul’s first visit to Ephesus.

A power encounter is a crisis point occurring in the on-going spiritual warfare between God and Satan. Paul was bringing the kingdom of light into Satan’s kingdom of darkness. Satan was doing all he could to keep the area under his control. God gave Paul the ability to show God’s greater power by doing “signs, wonders and miracles” (2 Corinthians 12:12; Romans 15:19). Towards the end of Paul’s time there, God worked in a special way through Paul to show the people the power of Paul’s God and message.

LESSON FOR TODAY: *Again we see that in cultures today which don’t have a Christian heritage or much of a gospel witness God still, many times, uses physical healing and, deliverance from demonic influence and even dreams to show His power and bring others to His truth.*

LESSONS FOR TODAY: *This is not a standard way to evangelize or to do deliverance. In fact, Paul probably wasn’t aware of it when this began. Perhaps helpers or others took these cloths and gave them to needy friends. God honored their faith and used this to verify His power through His servant Paul. Of course it wasn’t Paul who healed, only God. But this validated Paul’s claims to have the best and right power with him. It was a necessary first step to gain a hearing so Paul could spread the good news of Jesus Christ. We must not get involved in objects that seem to have supernatural power for our full faith and attention must only be on God Himself. These things are counterfeit, even superstitions, good luck charms, etc., are to be totally avoided.*

Day 4 - Paul's Power Encounter 2

Word of God's supremacy as shown by Paul spread through Ephesus (Acts 19). As a result there were those who saw Jesus' name as a magic charm they could use to their own advantage. "Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, 'In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.' Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, 'Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?' Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding" (Acts 19:13).

Sceva, a Jew, was a self-proclaimed chief priest. He claimed to do Jewish exorcism but used occult ways to accomplish this. He thought he would try this new 'charm' so he could have better results in driving demons out, and therefore earning high fees for doing so. However using Jesus' name just brought him and his sons misery because they weren't believers. The people learned that Jesus isn't a magic word to use. Only a personal relationship with Him will bring victory.



LESSON FOR TODAY: *Often demons work together in cooperation to make it seem like the human they used had the power to cast out demons. Really they were just working together to make it seem that way. One demon would attack a person, then another would indwell a false deliverer so that when the demon was commanded to be gone it would leave. It was all set up to make it look like the person had power to deliver. This deceived the person himself and those watching. But this time the demons from the demonized man overpowered the demonized deliver and beat him up. Demons don't always work together, though. They are filled with hate and jealousy and often take it out on each other, as happened this time.*

LESSON FOR TODAY: *When we feel confusion in our minds it may be from demonic interference, trying to confuse and mislead us. Other times, though, what we sense as confusion is conflict among the demons themselves as they struggle with each other for authority and influence, especially the leader is gone working elsewhere. The distraction and/or confusion the demonized person senses could be conflict among the demons themselves, for their self-centeredness, pride and ego isn't just manifested against us but against each other also. They cooperate out of fear and being overpowered, not for any other reason.*

LESSON FOR TODAY: *Our power and authority are in Jesus and His name, but we are not to use His name as a magic charm. We must always make sure there is no sin in our life, that we are right with God, and, of course, that we are His child through faith in Jesus.*

Day 5 – Paul’s Power Encounter 3

As it became more and more obvious that God’s power shown through Paul was much greater than that the Ephesian followers of Artemis claimed, many came to God for salvation (Acts 19). “When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (Acts 19:17-20).

LESSONS FOR TODAY: *“Sorcery scrolls” refers to magic texts, adjurations, formulas, protection rituals, curses, incantations and similar things. Such things exist today as well and have an amount of power behind them – demonic power. Keep away from such things. If someone you minister to has them they must be destroyed – anything that can be used by demons to gain access to their lives or family must be destroyed.*

When the Jews took possession of Canaan under Joshua they were told to not keep any of the objects they captured. Even animals and children were to be destroyed. They had been dedicated to Satan and were claimed by him. Those who used these things would be opening themselves up to the demonic powers to whom they had been dedicated. Today we must watch for things like literature and objects from other cults and religions, Ouija boards and other occult paraphernalia, pagan objects from primitive cultures, objects from Masonic or other secret societies, some Native American artifacts and the like. Pornography, drug or alcoholic supplies, music with a black or evil dimension, even certain movies or articles of clothing dedicated to darkness can allow access.

The solution is to remove and destroy such objects as being openings for demonic access. Ask for forgiveness for having them, cleanse the room from their presence, take back any access the enemy may claim and dedicate the space as well as yourself to Jesus. Ask Him to reveal to you anything else that may need to be dealt with.

When a room or object is under the control of an evil spirit for whatever reason they claim, dedicating it to God by painting crosses by dipping a finger in oil and making them on a wall is a good practice. Playing Christian music and leaving a small light on also are offensive to the forces of darkness. Of course praying and quoting scripture while making the crosses is important, too. We as a Christian have great power in blessing people, especially our own families. ‘God bless you’ is more than a slang or shallow comment. There’s real power in it when one means it that way. It’s a privilege to use and repeat it often to people. Distance doesn’t seem to affect it at all. Of course there is something even more special about touching a person when we pray or ask God to bless them, but when at a distance it carries just as well. The power is in God Who is everywhere (omnipresent). Satan and demons are limited to one place at a time so they are at a distinct disadvantage in this, too.



Day 6 – Lessons from Paul’s Power Encounters

Paul faced some of his stiffest spiritual opposition in Ephesus (Acts 19). Through a series of power encounters he showed God’s strength is greater than Satan’s might. Many left their false idols and turned to Jesus. We have already seen several lessons and principles from his time there, but there are two more important applications we should make.

Those who merchandized Artemis in Ephesus made a good profit by selling amulets and charms that claimed to have power to heal. Many of the illnesses were demonic, as were the ‘cures.’ Demons would be the cause of illnesses, then stop when the ‘cures’ were used making it seem like they worked, thus deceiving people into thinking the amulets and charms had power to heal.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Satan can cause illness: *crippled limbs (Luke 13:11), Paul’s thorn in the flesh (eye disease? - II Corinthians 12:7), muteness (sometimes dumbness, too - Matthew 9:32-33; 12:22; Mark 9:17-18,24-25), blindness (Matthew 12:22), seizures (Mark 1:26; 9:17-18,20,22,25; Matthew 17:15,18; Luke 9:39), deafness (Mark 9:17-18,20,25), sores (skin cancer?) (Job 2:7), boils and other painful afflictions (Psalm 78:49 - the plagues in Egypt were demon-caused), physical torments of all kinds (Revelation 9:5,10), painful illness (Job 2:7-8), and even death (Job 1:19). Since he can cause these things he can seem to ‘heal’ them by stopping what he did/does to cause them in the first place. Only God can heal, but Satan can counterfeit that by making it seem like he heals.*



If the God Paul preached was greater than Satan and the demons who worked through Artemis, then everyone assumed He would be able to do what they did and heal people. “God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them” (Acts 19:11-12). These free articles of Paul’s worked much, much better than Satan’s counterfeits.

A final lesson concerns what happened when Paul left Ephesus. This extended time there turned out to be Paul’s last freedom of movement for some time. From Ephesus he went to Jerusalem (Acts 21) where he was falsely charged and arrested (Acts 22). He spent the next several years in prison, finally being transferred to Rome (Acts 23-28) where the book of Acts ends. Paul was eventually released to travel some more, but his health had been broken and the brunt of the load of ministry which he had carried was now spread to many new evangelists and missionaries. Paul was again arrested and this time put to death in Rome. But during his travels and imprisonment he wrote letters to churches to stay in touch. We can learn much about spiritual warfare from these letters.

LESSON FOR TODAY: *It must have been very frustrating for Paul to have to write letters to people and places he wanted to see in person. No doubt he wondered what purpose God would ever have in that. However that is what God used to form the majority of the New Testament and its teaching. Were Paul free to visit these places in person, millions of Christians for two thousand years would not have had these priceless letters and their teachings. God always has a purpose in what He does. When things don’t seem to make sense to you trust that God knows what He is doing (Romans 8:28).*

Day 7 – Overcoming Fear

Not long after writing to the Corinthians Paul wrote to the Romans. He had been wanting to minister in this great center of civilization for many years but God always has kept him from doing so. Eventually he arrived as a prisoner after a shipwreck, but for now he wants to let them know he won't be coming and why. Instead of speaking to them in person, again he is limited to sending a letter. But what a letter it has been for mankind! The book of Romans is a very key part of God's Word to us through the centuries. Paul's loss is our gain. As would be expected, Paul refers to demons and spiritual warfare in this great epistle several times.

Fear. Paul reminds his readers that God does not give us fear (Romans 8:15). Any fear we entertain comes from the flesh, our sin nature, the part of us that tends to sin. We had this before salvation and still have it after salvation.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Fear is one of Satan's biggest weapons. Demons are often behind it and use fear (Romans 8:15). If it takes the form of insecurity, anxiety, worry, preoccupation with problems, or whatever, it is still fear. Demons put fear of David into Saul (I Samuel 18:10-15) and put fear and terror into Eliaphaz by gliding by his face (Job 4:15). Anything not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). God does not give us fear (II Timothy 1:7; Romans 8:15), so if you experience fear realize it is not from God but from Satan. This doesn't mean it is always through demonizing, for you can be attacked with fear without being demonized.

Fear takes root when we choose to focus on circumstances instead of God. Peter walking on water is a good example. When his eyes were on Jesus his faith was strong, but when he looked at the waves they grew (in his mind) to be greater than Jesus' power. Thus he started sinking. He then did the right thing, though, and put his eyes back on Jesus.

Dream with me for a minute. Suppose as a young child you had a father who loved you more than anything and constantly showed it. He was always there for you, always showing his love, enjoying you and laughing with you. Whatever you needed he was there to help and supply. How would that make you feel? How can such a relationship benefit a child as they grow up? There is something down deep inside all of us that would love to have someone we could trust, someone to take care of us, someone to always be there no matter what. Then we wouldn't need to try to be in control of things we fear. Control is a poor substitute for love and trust. It may have seemed necessary in your past but isn't necessary anymore!

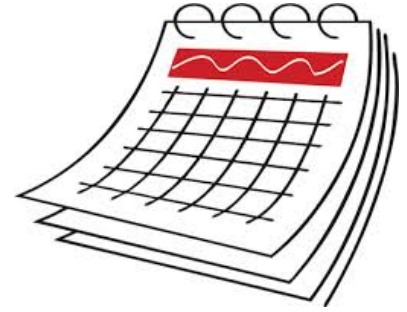
Trust is the antidote to fear. How can we understand trust, what it means and how it works? I think understanding how a family should work is the best answer. God established a family relationship to answer all those questions. He is the Father, we are the children. Do your children trust you? What do they have to do to earn your love? What do you expect of them? It's exactly the same with us and God. Jesus says we are to be like little children in order to learn faith and trust. Let your children teach you. Put yourself in their position - with a Perfect Father.



DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 9

Satan's Ways



Day 1 – Temptation: Jesus & Us 1

Immediately following His baptism Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit, the 'dove' who had just descended on Him, into the desert (Matthew 4:1). He needed time to focus on what was about to come, to strengthen His spirit and commitment. He needed time alone with His Father, something that would happen time after time during His earthly life. After 40 days of fasting and praying Jesus was tempted by Satan. Whether He waited because God restrained him or because he wanted to hit Jesus when He was weakest is unknown. Satan, who had been opposing God's plan of redemption from the beginning (Genesis 3:14-15), now focuses his attacks on Jesus.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Note that Jesus was in the perfect center of God's will when He was tempted, for God Himself led Him to the desert (Matthew 4:1). Being tempted to sin does not mean we are out of God's will or not following closely to Him. Often the opposite is true, like with Jesus. It is because we are following God closely that we are attacked the hardest. Be aware so you aren't take by surprise. Don't think it is a bad sign that you are tempted. Being attacked is actually a good sign for Satan only attacks those who are doing damage to his kingdom. When you aren't being attacked is the time to make sure you haven't drifted from the conflict (Luke 6:26).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Note that Satan attacks immediately, as soon as Jesus commits to doing God's will by being baptized. For us, too, the attacks come when we move in the direction of following God. When we are not as close to God, Satan and his forces leave us alone, but when our devotion increases so do the enemy's attacks. We soon discover that when we fade a bit in our walk with the Lord then the pressure decreases, tempting us to follow God, but not quite so closely!

LESSON FOR TODAY: Notice, too, that this battle with Satan was God's perfect will for Jesus. "Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil" (Matthew 4:1). God does not prevent our battles, no matter how hard we pray for that to happen, but He does help us through them. So it is better to focus on fighting them in His strength than looking for ways to avoid them. They are part of God's will for us because they strength us and show us that His grace is sufficient, as was true of the Jews fighting for the Promised Land behind Joshua's leadership.

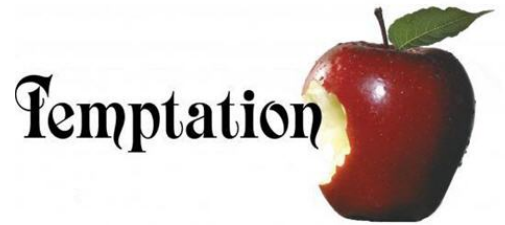
LESSON FOR TODAY: The place where Jesus was sent by God to fast, pray and battle Satan was the "desert," considered the abode of demons (Matthew 12:43). Sometimes God leads us into strongholds of Satan's so we can do battle for Him, knowing we can experience have victory through His power (I John 4:4). We aren't to run from such encounters but face them with His strength.

When Satan was unable to defeat Jesus after three tries he left, and the angels came to minister to Jesus (Matthew 4:11). Satan wasn't done, though. Luke 4:13 says he left but would return at an "opportune time." He is never done, he never stops working against Jesus.

LESSON FOR TODAY: There will be lulls in demonic oppression against us. Often it seems oppression comes in cycles or waves. Some times things are very difficult, then it seems the attacks get milder or even disapear for awhile. But they always return. We will never have ultimate, total victory in this life. If you are going through a difficult time remember that it will one day lessen. If you are not going through a time of challenges and attacks, be prepared for when it returns.

Day 2 – Temptation: Jesus & Us 2

After being baptized by John Jesus immediately went to the wilderness to pray and prepare Himself for what was to come. At the end of that time Satan used his best three temptations to defeat Jesus. He uses them against us as well!



The **first temptation** was for physical needs – Jesus was hungry after 40 days of not eating. Jesus could turn the stones to bread, but that was not God's will. This was a legitimate need but not God's way of meeting it.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Sin is using an illegitimate way to meet a legitimate need. Hunger is a legitimate need, but Jesus must meet it in God's way, not in his own or Satan's way. When tempted look for the legitimate need behind it (peace, comfort, companionship, joy, etc.) and seek to have that need met God's way instead of taking a 'shortcut' that is sinful.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Building on what was just said, the fact that we have a legitimate need doesn't mean it has to be immediately met. The very common "entitlement mentality" today seems to say we should have everything we want as soon as we want it, and that parents, God, the government, or life itself owes it to us! That is a very unbiblical attitude and quite dangerous. In fact, it's the very lie Satan used with Eve in Eden – "You are entitled to this fruit!"

The **second temptation** Satan used was an appeal to Jesus' pride. He was due recognition from all so Satan suggested an easy way to get it - by throwing Himself down from the highest part of the temple and letting angels come rescue Him in the sight of the watching crowds. If Satan wanted to defeat Jesus, why would he offer to help Him have everyone come worship Him? While this might have seemed like something that would benefit Jesus, it really was a subtle way to give him recognition without having to go to the cross. This would have been a short-cut to His Kingship – giving Him the throne of Israel without having to go through the agony of crucifixion. But if He had taken this route, then there would be no salvation for us – and that was exactly why Satan tempted Him in this way. He was willing for Jesus to have His temporary throne on earth as long as He didn't pay for our sins in the process.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Pride is what motivated Satan to sin and rebel against God (Isaiah 14:13-14). It is still one of his best tools against us today (1 Timothy 3:6). There is no short-cut to maturity or spirituality, no easy way to grow. The way up is down. God exalts those who humble themselves (James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6). He humbles those who exalt themselves (Luke 18:14). Pride is self-centeredness, a focus on one's self. It is pride if we think we are better than others or if we think we are worse than others. Either extreme is pride, an inordinate attention to self. Either extreme is wrong. Satan doesn't care which direction he gets us to fall as long as we fall!

Satan's **third temptation** was a final desperate measure. He put it all on the line, something he didn't have to do with Adam and probably didn't want to do with Jesus. But everything was at stake so he offered Jesus ruler ship of the whole world if Jesus would bow down to Satan. Ruler ship of the world was what Jesus had come to win back, and Satan was offering to give it to Jesus for free. But there was one condition – Jesus would have to recognize Satan as His authority instead of God the Father. Again we see that the end does not justify the means.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Satan seems to offer people today everything they want if they turn to this world system. He received ownership from Adam of the world system of values and motives as it operates today (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). He tries to get us to think that we, too, can have everything we want. Adam and Eve believed this lie, and many today believe it as well. But it is a lie. It is Satan's bait to trap people into bondage.

Day 3 – Temptation: Jesus & Us 3

Satan attacked Jesus in the wilderness after was baptized by John. Three times Jesus resisted and was victorious. What can we learn from how He was able to have victory?

LESSON FOR TODAY: Jesus faced these human temptations as a man just like us. He did not rely on His deity to make it through. He was attacked just as Adam had been, but unlike Adam He did not sin and therefore He won back what Adam lost (Romans 5:12-21). We, too, can have victory through God's power, just as Jesus did. The same resource is available to us!

LESSON FOR TODAY: Fasting can be a useful tool in spiritual warfare, not because our suffering earns God's pity so He is more apt to answer our prayers, but because it is a way of denying our flesh and putting spiritual things before personal needs. It clears our mind and helps us focus on the battle at hand. Hunger reminds us of our weakness, our need of His strength and it reminds us to pray. It frees up more time to spend in prayer as well. We must be sure God wants us to fast before we do so, and we must use wisdom in what kind of a fast it is and how long it lasts, but it is a weapon we should make us of. Jesus used it often.

Jesus had victory over Satan's temptations by quoting God's Word each time He was tempted. That is the only way to have victory. Jesus knew the Bible well enough to quote the book of Deuteronomy three times.



LESSON FOR TODAY: Quoting Scripture is our best weapon against Satan's attacks against us as well. Paul says our only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). Psalm 119:9-11 tell us that it's through God's Word that we have victory. When thoughts or temptations you don't want come into your mind, use Scripture to have victory. There is power in God's Word that is lacking in our own words (Hebrews 4:12). Reminding demons of God's truth shows them they must submit to it, and helps us put our faith in Him and not give in to the lie behind the temptation. It allows our mind to explain reality to our emotions. Always have some verses that speak to your situation memorized or written down where you can reference them at any time. Use them as soon as you sense opposition coming against your thoughts.

Day 4 – Satan Blinds Unbelievers

Satan blinds unbelievers so they don't see the truth of the Gospel. "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). Satan does all he can to keep men from leaving his kingdom/army and joining God's kingdom/army.

LESSON FOR TODAY: All unbelievers are children of Satan (Matthew 13:37-39; John 8:44; 1 John 3:3-10) and are in Satan's kingdom (Colossians 1:12-14). All are bound by Satan (Acts 26:18) and blinded by him (2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 3:14-15) and are under Satan's power (1 John 5:19). They belong to him (Matthew 12:22-29) and are enslaved in a world system controlled by Satan (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 John 5:19). Believers are a small minority, living in enemy-occupied territory, seeking to free some of those bound in darkness so they can find freedom in Christ. Meanwhile those who oppose us do all they can to dim our light and render us ineffective in our battle against them. That is where we find ourselves. That is our battle. We do not live in a neutral world nor are people nonaligned until they decide who they will follow. Everyone who has not committed their lives to Jesus is under the power of darkness and under judgment (John 3:16-21). Every one of them needs rescuing by us!

LESSON FOR TODAY: Since all unbelievers are in Satan's possession, does that mean that all of them are demonized? Not all have had their lives invaded to the greatest extent, but without Jesus' protection and God's power they are potentially open to demonizing to one degree or another. They still have the image of God in them which we all have, and they have a free will to use to make wise choices, and that can limit the amount of influence demons can have over them. But we must always be aware of the demonic when we witness to or counsel someone who is not a believer. That is why Paul's strong works about being 'unequally yoked' carry so much weight today (2 Corinthians 6:14-16). "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God." This isn't just about marriage, but about business partnerships, close friendships, and the like. As believers we cannot be closely bound to those who are closely bound to demons.

LESSON FOR TODAY: If you are a believer then you have left Satan's kingdom of darkness (Ephesians 2:1-10) and deserted his army, choosing instead to join the forces of his arch rival. If you think he will take that lightly and leave you alone, that he will do nothing to retaliate and render you ineffective for God, then you are greatly mistaken (Daniel 10:10-21; Acts 13:6-12; 16:16-24; 19:11-18). He is totally committed to your destruction (Ephesians 6:10-18). That is why it is imperative to learn to fight. In addition, we still fight our old sin nature (Romans 7:14-25), so in reality we are fighting a battle on two fronts. Often they combine and make things that much harder on us!

LESSON FOR TODAY: When a blind person does not see the sun shining, that is no reflection on the brightness of the sun but rather on the inability of the person to see it. The same is true of spiritual things. Satan is the ruler of the kingdom of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4) and in authority over it (Luke 4:6). Naturally he wants to keep his subjects in darkness, which he does. In addition, our sin nature keeps us from coming to God for salvation. It is only as His Spirit works in us to draw us to Him that we come (John 6:37-46; 15:16, 19; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11; Romans 9:23; Acts 16:13-15). Still, man has a free will to choose or reject salvation (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Acts 2:21; John 3:14-16; Exodus 8:15, 32). Somehow, even though our brains are not great enough to understand how it can be, both are true (John 6:37, 44, 47; Romans 9:1-23). It should not bother us that there are some things about God and His working that we are unable to understand for He is God (Daniel 4:35; Isaiah 55:8; Romans 11:34; 9:14-16; Isaiah 40:13, 2 Corinthians 2:16). Both are true, and when we get to heaven we will see how that can be (1 Corinthians 13:12). Our purpose is not to reconcile the two, for they are mutually exclusive, two truths which cannot be put together, but each must be believed by faith. What concerns us in this study is that at least part of the reason why it is necessary for God to work in someone for salvation is that Satan does all he can to blind them to the truth.

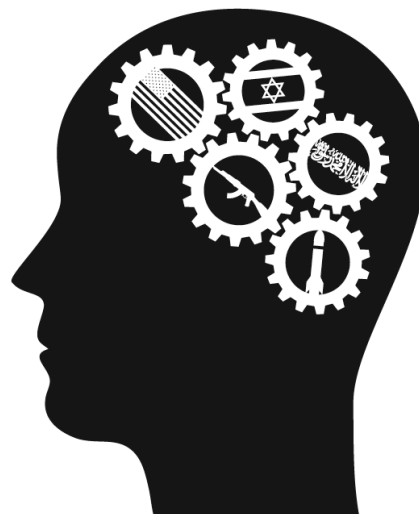
Therefore it is imperative that we pray for those who are blinded. How should we pray? Pray that God would roll back the blindness for a time so they can clearly see the claims of the Gospel and make a free will choice to accept or reject Jesus. We can't pray for God to make them believe, for God will not violate a

person's free will choice, but we can pray they can unmistakably see the issues so they can make their own choice. Now having said that, we must acknowledge that sovereign God will make sure every person who ever lived understands the issues and makes his or her own choice. No one will stand before Him in judgment and say they didn't know or didn't have a chance. Everyone will acknowledge God is just in condemning them for they had a chance to turn to Him but, of their own free will choice, turned it down. This whole issue takes great wisdom and none of us can really understand all of it. What we do understand is that God is fair and just, He doesn't want anyone to go to hell, and the proof of that is that He paid for our sins voluntarily when He wouldn't have had to. His love and justice have been proven and we cannot question that. Just because we cannot understand all He understands is no reason to doubt His goodness (see note on Genesis 3:1-

Day 5 - Demons Mess With Your Mind

Paul clearly states that Christians battle an unseen enemy, Satan and his demons "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete" (2 Corinthians 10:3-6). There are powers that set themselves up against God. They use thoughts which lead to sinful actions. Actions start with thoughts, so the key is to have victory over the thoughts before they develop into actions.

LESSON FOR TODAY: Satan can and will use thoughts inserted into our minds to control us. He will use worldly philosophies and views to get access to and control of us. The majority of demonizing consists of demons putting thoughts into a person's mind or snatching thoughts out of a person's mind. While they don't have access to our minds and thoughts to the same extent that God does, the Bible makes it clear there is some access. Jesus said this in the sower and the seed: "Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown." (Mark 4:15). David's thought to take a census was demonic (I Chronicles 21:1ff; II Samuel 24:1ff). So was Ananias & Saphira's greed (Acts 5:3) and Saul's jealousy/anger (I Samuel 16:14-23). That's why, when talking about spiritual warfare, Paul says we are to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." (II Corinthians 10:4-5). Not only can Satan's forces put wrong thoughts into our minds, they can snatch right thoughts out of our minds (Mark 4:15) so we forget them.



LESSON FOR TODAY: Feelings and emotions are fine, important and necessary. They are icing on the cake of life. They add color and enjoyment to life. God created them for this purpose. But He didn't create them to be the source of our decision-making. Our feelings should be dependent on our rational thought. When our feelings get ahead of it or away from it then trouble comes. You know in your mind that you are an OK person, yet in your emotions you fear you will be rejected. When feelings aren't founded on the truth they can easily mislead. The truth is that you are a fine person, but your emotions reject that truth and try to do the 'thinking' themselves. We need to let our mind explain reality to our emotions. We must be very, very careful not to follow our emotions when they differ from our rational thoughts. One of the greatest needs of our emotions/feelings is security. This is closely related to love so we could say the core of our heart is love/security. Love must bring security but doesn't always do so. Other factors can tribute to our security as well.

Day 6 – Anger & Unforgiveness

Anger as a foothold. Many verses warn about the danger of unconfessed unrighteous anger and how demons can use it to gain access to the angry person (2 Corinthians 2:10-11). "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold" (Ephesians 4:26-27).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Anger comes from mishandling hurt and pain. Instead of feeling the hurt we turn it into anger for revenge or control. This allows demons to use it as an opening. There is a lack of control that opens the door. Also, it is almost like a prayer for power to hate someone, and demons seek to answer that prayer. They made Saul angry at David, so much so that he tried to kill David (I Samuel 18:10-11; 19:9-10). Paul says there is a very close connection between anger and demonizing (Ephesians 4:27).

Pain must be handled as pain, not turned into anger. You can't bury something alive and think you are getting rid of it. The hurt must be dead - faced, admitted, healed, removed, forgiven. When a person buries hurt alive it keeps poisoning everything until it is dug out and destroyed.

While there is a legitimate use for anger ('righteous indignation') most of what we face is not right. Anger is a secondary emotion, unlike fear which is a basic emotion. Wrong anger is always the result of mishandling another, deeper emotion like fear or pain. Let's take pain, first of all. When a person hits their finger with a hammer what do they do? Usually they get angry. What they feel is pain, but it comes out as anger because anger is a much easier emotion to handle than pain. When someone says something critical or threatening it hurts, but the natural response in many is to get angry. That way they don't have to face the pain – but it stays and causes more and more anger. That's where fear comes in. It's not just pain that causes anger, but fear of pain. Fear is at the root of anger in other ways as well. To seek to manage our fears we try to control our lives and circumstances (thus the control emphasis part grows). We feel that is necessary to prevent pain and other things we fear. We use anger as a control tool. The adrenalin rush makes us feel in charge instead of a victim. We learn that people can be manipulated and controlled by our anger (or the threat of it) and we use that to control as well. This is another reason why it's important to deal with and get victory over the fears down inside. When they go the anger and control issues will become much more manageable. A person can't stop their anger as long as what causes it is still inside pushing it out. They must get the root cause out, and that is where dealing with the fear comes in.

Soon after writing 1 Corinthians Paul wrote another letter to the Corinthians, called 2 Corinthians in the New Testament. In it he warned the believers to **be aware of Satan's schemes** so they aren't tricked and defeated (2 Corinthians 2:11). The brother who was living with his father's wife and was disciplined by exclusion from church fellowship (1 Corinthians 5:1-5) evidently repented and was restored to fellowship (2 Corinthians 2:5-6). Now Paul encourages them to forgive the man and treat him with love and acceptance (2 Corinthians 2:7-10). If they don't forgive him, Paul says Satan will use that to work against them (2 Corinthians 2:11).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Paul is warning them that Satan will use their unforgiveness as an opening to attack them. One of the leading causes of demonizing is unconfessed anger. Anger includes any form of unforgiveness, bitterness, hate, jealousy, gossip, criticism, etc. Paul says these can "give the devil a foothold" (Ephesians 4:26-27). He tells the Corinthians that if they don't forgive each other Satan will use that to "outwit" them (II Corinthians 2:10-11). Jesus Himself said that those who don't forgive others will be turned over to tormenting demons to bring them to repentance (Matthew 6:14-15; 18:34). This anger includes anger toward others, parents, self, or God. There can be no removing demons who claim this access until all anger is truly confessed and put under the blood of Jesus. This is one of the first things that usually comes up when we counsel people and pray for their deliverance. Do NOT take this lightly!

Day 7 – Lessons from James

Another writer, besides Peter and Paul, was James, the half-brother of Jesus (same mother, different father). Chronologically, his was the first inspired book written in the New Testament and was addressed to Jewish Christians. James taught them about living for God, and spiritual warfare was/is an important part of that life.

James' words are quite interesting because they are the first written words about spiritual warfare in the New Testament. He starts talking about sin which comes from within man (James 4:1-3) then the influence of the world from without (James 4:4). He affirms God's great grace to those who are humble (James 4:5-6). Following this he gives three strong commands and two great promises. Command one is to submit to God (James 4:7), total and complete surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1-2). There can be no victory in the Christian life without this first requirement. This means that all sin must be confessed (1 John 1:9; James 5:13-16).

Following this comes the second command: resist the devil (James 4:7). "Resist" means to not give in, compromise or yield but to stand fast. It has the idea of a difficult struggle but remaining firm. How do we resist him? The same way Jesus did – we quote Scripture (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) and we use God's armor (Ephesians 6:10-18).

LESSON FOR TODAY: When we resist the enemy, God promises he will flee (James 4:7). That is God's first promise to us in this passage. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). James says he "will" flee – he has to because God makes him. Sometimes God drives him away instantaneously, other times it is more gradual as the person learns and grows in their faith. That is why continued counseling after spiritual warfare deliverance is so important. Demons may fight, stall and do what they can to resist, but ultimately they must obey when God sends them away. The only exception is if God allows them to stay because He wants to use them for our growth and His glory, like with Paul's "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). When God doesn't remove the source of the demonizing He promises to give special grace so we can hold up under it. It becomes His chosen tool to make us more like Jesus.

Peter concludes this passage with another command and promise. "Draw near to God" (James 4:8) means to keep Him and His greatness in the center of our focus. When we do this His promise is "He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). Don't sit back and expect Him to come wait on you, move in His direction and He will move in yours!

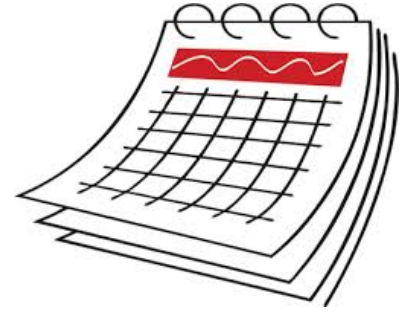
LESSON FOR TODAY: Don't focus on Satan or demons, nor let them keep your main emphasis from being on God and Jesus (Philippians 4:8-9). Too many live in fear of what demons are doing or may do. That gives them the power, attention and worship on which they thrive. We can't ignore them to the extent we let them do anything they want, but we must make sure God is always foremost in our thoughts and motives. When we move towards God He moves more than half way to move towards us.



DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 10

“In Christ”



Day 1 – We Fight a Defeated Foe 1

After entering Jerusalem on a donkey and proclaiming Himself Messiah, the Jews continued rejection of Jesus became final. Jesus, knowing crucifixion was certain, told His followers what would happen so they wouldn't be surprised or discouraged. "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out" (John 12:31). The coming judgment on Satan and this evil world system is so certain Jesus speaks of it as if it is currently happening. "Driven out" is the same Greek word (edballoe) that is used of casting demons out of people.

A few days later, after the Last Supper and while walking to Gethsemane, Jesus affirmed the same truth. "The prince of this world now stands condemned" (John 16:11). Satan was given authority over this world system from Adam when he sinned and followed Satan's advice. Now Jesus is winning it back (Romans 5:12-21). Satan will be condemned by Jesus' victory over sin on the cross. Again, using the present tense shows Jesus' assurance that it is as good as done!

LESSON FOR TODAY: We must always remember that Satan is a defeated foe. He was cast out of his original position in heaven because of pride (Ezekiel 28:16; Luke 10:18; Isaiah 14:12). His judgment was pronounced in Eden (Genesis 3:14-15). He was defeated by the cross (John 12:31). He will be cast to the earth in the tribulation (Revelation 9:1; 12:7-12), bound during the Millennium (Revelation 20:1-3) and then cast into the lake of burning sulfur forever (Revelation 20:7-10; Isaiah 27:1; 40:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

The culmination of the battle between God and Satan which started in Eden ended as God predicted, with Satan painfully wounding Jesus but with Him defeating Satan (Genesis 3:15). But it was a terrible battle, the worst ever. Jesus, as a man, faced all the hate, violence and evil Satan and all his demons could throw at Him. They literally drug Him through hell for those hours, totally separated from God and facing it as a man. Yet He stayed faithful and endured, paying the price for every sin we would ever commit (Hebrews 2:14-15; Colossians 2:15).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Satan and his forces are defeated foes, having given their all to destroy Jesus on the cross, but being beaten by Him instead (Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Peter 3:18-22). Now they are free to continue their work because God still honors man's free will and allows each one to decide whom they want to serve. They have been condemned and sentenced, now they are awaiting that sentence to begin. Knowing their time is short they strive to do all the evil they can against God and His people. When Jesus returns Satan and his demons will be cast into the lake of fire forever (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:1-15).

Jesus defeated death on the cross. He paid for every sin, then said "It is finished (John 19:30)." Only then did He voluntarily leave His body for there was no more any need to suffer in humiliation (John 19:30). Every sin had been paid for, Satan and his forces had been defeated. Technically Jesus didn't die for our sins, He suffered for them and died because His work was done. Sin did not kill Jesus, nor did Satan. It wasn't a matter of waiting to see if He'd come back to life. He voluntarily died and so He also voluntarily came back to life. Jesus' resurrection and ascension showed His victory over Satan on the cross. He freed us from sin and gave us eternal life (Ephesians 4:8).



Day 2 - We Fight a Defeated Foe 2

God shows demons His greatness through us. “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 3:10). “Rulers and authorities” refer to the breakdown of Satan’s organization of demonic forces (see below under Ephesians 6:10).

LESSON FOR TODAY: ALL powers are under God’s authority (Ephesians 1:22), but not yet brought under His final control (Ephesians 6:12). God allows them freedom as He respects mankind’s free will. He allows man the choice to follow Satan or not. We are living and building God’s Kingdom of light in the middle of Satan’s kingdom of darkness. Therefore they can clearly see what we are doing – they carefully watch so they can destroy our work. But by our lives, our faithfulness and Christlikeness, we proclaim God’s power and greatness. Our victory over their work reminds them of their ultimate final defeat and demise. Many, however, are ignorant of this fact, so by our

small victories over them now we show them of God’s sovereign control and final defeat of them. Satan, the great deceiver, has deceived many of his own demons about their final defeat. Thus by our lives, and our words, we proclaim God’s victory over them.

Satan defeated by God’s people. Paul reminds the struggling believers that, although it may seem like Satan is winning at the moment, it won’t always be that way. “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” (Romans 16:20).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Satan has already been defeated at the cross (Hebrews 2:14-15; Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 4:8). In the future he will be crushed and removed forever (Revelation 20:1-3, 10). Now, in the present, we have authority and power over him in Jesus’ name (John 14:12; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 9:1; 10:1, 17-19; Acts 1:8). God uses us to gain victory over Satan even today. His future fall and removal is sure. It’s just a matter of time.

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Day 3 - Authority



There must have been much discussion between Jesus and His disciples as they walked the dusty roads, sat and ate in the evenings, and ministered to others who were demonized. Jesus took every opportunity to teach the disciples what they would need to know to continue the battle when He was gone. Only a very small part of all that happened is recorded in the Gospels for us. As John so aptly states, “If everything Jesus did was written down there wouldn’t be enough room in the whole world for all the books!” (John 21:25)

Because of this, what is recorded about spiritual warfare is all the more important. There must be good reasons for choosing that which is recorded for us. It must be information we need. God Himself kept it accurate for us (2 Timothy 3:16). That being said, Jesus’ comments about the power and authority believers have over Satan and demons are all the more significant (Luke 9:1; 10:1, 17-19). These comments were recorded because they are something we must know.

“When Jesus had called the Twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases” (Luke 9:1). “After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He was about to go. ... The seventy-two returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’ He replied, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you’” (Luke 10:1, 17-19).

“I HAVE given you” Jesus says indicating it happened in the past, it is already done. It’s not something for them to wait for in the future. The Greek tense indicates the action is completed and the results continue on. Jesus had given to them, and therefore to us as well, two things: “power” and “authority.”

Authority, ‘exousia’ in the Greek, is used 108 times in the New Testament and refers to the right to use power. He gave the disciples the authority to enforce His spiritual commands and laws. Policemen have authority, a badge, which allows them to enforce the laws of the government. It’s not their own authority but that which comes from their government. It is delegated authority, like a husband has over a wife and a parent over a child. Everything Jesus did was because God had given Him authority to do it (John 5:19). He had laid aside His own divine authority (Philippians 2:6-8) to live life as any other human being. All He did was by God’s own authority given to Him, as it is to us as well.

LESSON FOR TODAY: *Jesus has given us that same authority to use today (John 14:12; Matthew 28:18-20). Satan deceives us into thinking we are powerless victims but that is a lie. As God’s children we have access to the same resources Jesus did when He lived on earth. God has given us His full blessing because we are His children. He planned salvation and chose us to receive it before creating the world (Ephesians 1:4; Jeremiah 1:5). He created us in His own likeness (Genesis 1:26). He paid for our sins before we were ever born (Romans 5:8). He formed and cared for us while we were still in our mother’s womb (Psalm 139:13-15). He chose us and He calls us His friends (John 15:15-16). We are born into His family, He is our Father (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6) and we are His children (John 1:12; 1 John 3:2). He rescued us from slavery (Galatians 4:4-7) and put His Holy Spirit inside us (John 14:17). He gives us an equal inheritance with His Son, Jesus (Romans 8:14-17). When He looks at us He sees us as holy because of what Jesus did for us (Romans 1:7; 2 Corinthians 5:17). We can come into His presence in prayer any time we want, we have eternal life guaranteed, we are free from any condemnation and He has delivered us from the power of Satan. All these things and more He gives us.*

Day 4 - Power

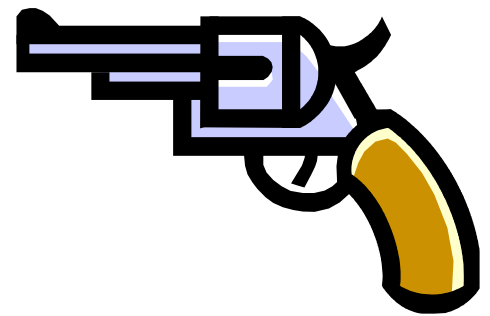
Jesus taught His disciples what they needed to know about spiritual warfare. He did this by His example and by teaching them basic principles. One of the most important truths is that we have His power and His authority (Luke 9:1; 10:1, 17-19). We already talked about the authority we have, now let's look at the power.

Not only did Jesus give His disciples authority, He also gave them **power**. A policeman needs authority, a badge, but sometimes he needs power to enforce that authority – a club or gun. 'Power' is used 118 times in the New Testament and refers to power, might, strength and force. Our word 'dynamite' comes from it. God has also given us His power as well as His authority (Acts 1:8; Luke 10:17).

LESSON FOR TODAY: We also have this power available to us (Acts 1:8; John 14:12). It is His power that transforms us into a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) as He makes us a new man (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10). His power delivers us from temptations and trials when we rely on Him (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 2:14). He has power to put His divine nature in us (2 Peter 1:4) and give us abundant life now and eternal life in heaven (John 3:16; 10:10).

Jesus gave His followers power and authority to drive out ALL demons (Luke 9:1) – none are greater than His power. He did not enable His followers to cure all diseases, though. Some He will remove in response to our prayers, but only with demonizing are we assured that ALL must obey and yield. When Jesus returns all disease will be gone, but we don't have authority to remove all of it now (for more information on healing see under 13. LAYING ON OF HANDS, Luke 13:10-17).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Always remember the power and authority you have in Jesus. You can pray and preach in His name and power. Use it to encourage people when they need it, give counsel with the wisdom of God's Spirit, rebuke demons in Jesus' name, ask God to heal if it is His will, claim protection for your family and yourself, teach His word with authority, witness to others with power, forgive those who hurt you and show unconditional love to all. We don't have to live in defeat nor do we ever have to fear Satan or his forces. We have everything we need for victory in Jesus, but we must use the power and authority He gives us because on our own we can do nothing (John 15:5).



Day 5 – Deliverance by Paul

Paul and Barnabas continued their mission trip for about a year and a half (Acts 13:13 – 14:28). Wherever they went the gospel spread and people, Jews and Gentiles, came to Jesus for salvation. In fact, so many Gentiles were coming that the leaders of the Jewish Christian church met in Jerusalem to consider if Gentiles would have to become Jews also in order to be Christians (Acts 15). The clear answer was no. Paul then went back to the churches he had started on his first missionary journey, taking Silas and later Timothy with him (Acts 16:1-1-5). God led them through Asia Minor and across the sea to Philippi which was in Europe (Acts 16:6-12). They established a small church there in the home of Lydia (Acts 16:13-15). This sets the background for the next power encounter between Satan's forces and God's people, about two years after the previous encounter with Bar-Jesus.

When going to the place of prayer in Philippi, Paul and those with him were met by a young slave girl who "had a spirit by which she predicted the future" (Acts 16:16). The Greek word translated "spirit by which she predicted the future" is "python." Thus she was a "pythoiness," a name used to refer to those indwelt by a spirit from the Greek god Apollo who gave oracles. This is the name of the dragon/snake, Apollo, killed at Delphi who guarded the priestess there and gave her oracles. Apollo was worshipped as the python god at the shrine of Delphia in central Greece. This Apollo spirit was the spirit by which the 'god' spoke to the person he indwelt, enabling them to pronounce oracles. The people thought Apollo was speaking through this young slave girl, especially since it was probably a male voice they heard coming out of her. While there are many explanations to what some today call 'speaking in tongues' (see with 1 Corinthians 11-13), there are those who feel that at least some of what was happening in Corinth, and even today, is done by these types of demons. Paul knew the true source of the slave girl's oracles was a demon. The girl was just their medium.

A medium is someone through whom a demon speaks (Isaiah 8:19; Leviticus 19:31; 20:27; Deuteronomy 18:9-13; Acts 16:16-18). For many days she followed them shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved" (Acts 16:17). This shows us that the demons immediately recognized Jesus as God and couldn't deny who He was and is. Perhaps some of this has to do with the girl herself knowing who He is through the demons and wanting to be free from them.

Whatever the cause of her continual comments, Paul became very troubled. It wasn't what she was saying, but knowing that she was demonized that bothered him. The Greek word for 'troubled', *dispono*, has the idea of grief, pain and anger all together. It describes how the Jewish leaders felt when they heard John and Peter were still preaching (Acts 4:2). Paul was upset because the young girl was being victimized by the demons as well as her owner. Therefore he turned and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her (Acts 16:18).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Paul didn't go out of his way to track down demonic activity, but when it was there he dealt with it. When demons interfered with his ministry or the lives of those he was ministering to, he expelled them. We can and must do the same thing. We don't have to go searching for demons to attack, we are to go about our daily lives and ministry. But when demons interfere with us or those we are ministering to, then we are to remove them.

Day 6 – The Battles Continue ...

After 70 years in foreign captivity some of the Jews were allowed to return to their home land and rebuilt Jerusalem. Several small groups made the journey home, but most stayed in Babylon where there was better financial prosperity. Those who returned, like Nehemiah and Ezra, were attacked from without and within. Externally they faced ridicule, criticism, mockery and threats of violence from neighboring nations who didn't want the Jews returning to their land. Internally they faced discouragement, gossip and criticism from fellow Jews. It was a battle with two fronts.

LESSON FOR TODAY: We, too, face a two-pronged attack from our enemy. He hits us head on with external problems and painful circumstances, criticism and rejection from others and obstacles in our way. Internally we fight against fear, anger, greed, lust, pride, self-centeredness, laziness and many more. It's hard enough to battle on one front, but to fight both battles well at the same time is truly difficult. In fact, it's impossible without God's help. Without learning to depend on Him, remember His promises, and keep our eyes on His person, we won't be able to have victory.

For five hundred more years the Jews lived in Palestine, their home land. They rebuilt their civilization but never attained their freedom or the prosperity they once had. Greece took over from Babylon and Persia, but their religion was similar to Babylon's, for they got much of it from the Babylonians. Greece adopted many Babylonian beliefs and practices and included them in their own religious system. They used concoctions, incantations, invocations (spoken or written on paper and hung around the neck), amulets, recipes (mixing oils, burning roots, sprinkling water, etc.) and blowing upon the person to remove demons. Many of these practices eventually became part of the Jews rituals at that time. To most Jews of the period, as indeed to most men of that time, the world was full of supernatural agencies. As there were angels to accomplish every good act, so there were demons or evil spirits to perpetuate every evil deed or to prompt every sinful impulse. These were an important part of their world view. Trying to live at peace with them, or manipulate these forces for their own benefit, was an important part of daily life and religion.



Warfare – no one wants it. But we will experience much of it if we will follow God. The only ones who aren't in a battle are those who are in Satan's army or captured by him. Any and all who follow God will have to fight. But God will bring victory. D Martin Lloyd-Jones in "God's Battle, Not Ours" writes: "All the battles of Israel, if they could have seen it, were not their battles, they were the battles of the Lord. They were involved because they were His people. This is God's battle, we are given the privilege of being in it and of fighting as individual soldiers, but God's honor is involved in it all. He cannot allow this to fall because His character, His glory, and His honor are involved at every point. Be strong in the Lord; remember that He is there, and that it is His battle."

Day 7 – Ultimate Victory!

The final book in the Bible, Revelation, written by John 6 years after 1 John, has much to say about spiritual warfare as might be expected. In it the battle between God and Satan, which started before the world was created and which included the human race when Adam sinned (Genesis 3:15), comes to a fitting conclusion.

John uses many terms for Satan. He calls him the “devil” (6 times), “evil one” (6 times), “liar and the father of lies” (3 times), “murderer” (1 time), “thief” (1 time), “wolf” (1 time), “deceiver” (1 time), “ruler of this world” (3 times), and “he who is in the world” (1 time).



In addition, John talks about territorial spirits, high ranking demons who oversee control of certain countries or geographical areas. In Revelation they are referred to as a “synagogue of Satan” (Revelation 2:9; 3:9) and “dwelling place of unclean spirits” (Revelation 18:2). They will be the power behind the rise of the nation called Babylon (Revelation 17-18).

LESSONS FOR TODAY: Demons influence and control the nations (Daniel 10:13,20; Eph 6:12) and mislead them so they can be destroyed (Isa 9:14). It must always be kept in mind, however, that God is in sovereign control. They do nothing without God's permission (Job 1:6-12).

Because they cannot get at God or Jesus directly, Satan and demons attack those closest to God today – His children. He focuses his power and leads those he influences to hate and harm believers (Revelation 2:10; 13:7, 14-15; Daniel 12:7).

LESSON FOR TODAY: Satan does all he can to attack God's people. Sometimes the enemy is permitted to exercise authority over the physical possessions of the child of God (as in Job's first trial), sometimes over his physical body (as in Job's second trial and in Paul's case), and sometimes this authority extends as far as the physical life of the individual is concerned. But usually it is the hand of God which is at work behind the scenes, working to accomplish His own ends, using whatever means He chooses.

Because Revelation records the final, ultimate defeat of Satan and his forces in their battle against God, it is only natural that the first skirmish in that long-standing battle be remembered and everyone reminded of the results. “Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world - he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him” (Revelation 12:7-9; see also Daniel 12:1).

This passage clearly details Satan's defeat in heaven, sometime in the very beginning, probably before man was created. He was defeated in heaven and this earth became his domain (Ephesians 6:12; John 14:30; 16:11; 12:31). Now in Revelation his defeat on earth is chronicled. It is accomplished by Satan being defeated under the feet of the church (Romans 16:20) and by God's holy angels (Revelation 20:1-3, 10).

This final defeat will be total and complete. Satan and his forces will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone and will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10). Their defeat will be swift and final. They won't even be granted the dignity of standing before the throne of God to undergo a personal judgment. His judgment was made complete on the cross. He only awaits the carrying out of that sentence.

With that God's great promise at the start of this battle in Genesis 3:15 to “crush Satan's head” will be complete. He will be the victor, and us with Him!