

Spiritual Warfare 101

Source: "Spiritual Warfare: A Biblical and Balanced Perspective" by Brian Borgman & Rob Ventura (Reformation Heritage Books: Grand Rapids, 2014)

Pre-Discussion Scripture to Study: Ephesians 1:15-23, 6:10-20; 1 Peter 5:8-9

Know the enemy: (1) The devil; (2) The world; (3) The flesh

1. The devil

a. Background

- i. Because of his pride & sin, this angel fell from heaven. (Ezekiel 28:12-19, Luke 10:18)

- ii. The devil went from heaven to the earth and sea. As a result, he was filled with fury because he knew his time was short. (Revelation 12:11)

- iii. Note: since he is a fallen angel, he is not everywhere like God.

b. Names

- i. The devil (*lower case*) (Revelation 12:9) – more than 30 times in New Testament
 1. Means "slanderer" or "accuser" – according to Borgman & Ventura (see above)

- ii. Satan (*upper case*) (Revelation 12:9)

- iii. "the tempter" (Jesus tested in the wilderness – Matthew 4:3)

- iv. "the evil one" (the Lord's Prayer – Matthew 6:13)

- v. Jesus' description of the devil:
 1. "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:44)

- vi. Identified as the dragon in Revelation (12:7-9)

vii. Ancient serpent (Revelation 12:9)

viii. *“the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer).” (Revelation 9:11)*

ix. “the god of this age” who blinds minds (2 Corinthians 4:4)

x. “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Ephesians 2:2)

xi. “the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient” (Ephesians 2:2)

c. Attributes

i. Pride in beauty (Ezekiel 28:12-14, 17)

ii. Wicked, formerly blameless (Ezekiel 28:12-19)

iii. Sin (Ezekiel 28:12-19)

iv. Corrupted wisdom (Ezekiel 28:12, 17)

v. Dishonest trade (Ezekiel 28:18)

vi. Violence (Ezekiel 28:16)

vii. Michael and his angels are stronger than the devil and his angels (Revelation 12:9)

d. Role

i. Former guardian angel (Ezekiel 28:16)

ii. Deceiver of the Whole World –

1. “who leads the whole world astray” (**Revelation 12:9**)

2. Craftily schemes or plots to deceive humans. (Ephesians 6:11 + Greek word study of word “methodia”)

iii. “the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night” (Revelation 12:10)

1. Disputed with the archangel Michael over body of Moses, using slander to do so (Jude 9)

iv. Adversary who is seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

v. Goal is to destroy our faith or keep us from believing. (Luke 22:31-32; 1 Thessalonians 3:5)

vi. Relationship to sanctuaries of some sort? (Ezekiel 28:18)

vii. Has angels who also fell from heaven = demons (Revelation 12:8)

e. Methods

i. Deception!

1. Disguises himself as an “angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:4)

ii. Temptations (1 Thessalonians 3:5)

iii. Human sin and desires of the flesh (Ephesians 2:1-3)

iv. Asks God for people to afflict

1. the disciples on the night of Jesus’ betrayal (Luke 22:31-32)

2. the righteous man Job (Job 1:6-11)

v. Tries to get humans to doubt God’s goodness, as he did with Eve in the garden (Genesis 3; Romans 8:28)

vi. Snatches away the seed of God’s word from those who don’t understand it (Matthew 13:18).

vii. False teaching (1 Timothy 4:1-5) Twists the meaning of the word so that it isn’t appropriately applied (Matthew 4; 2 Corinthians 11:2-4)

viii. Gets in our way – like he did when Paul wanted to visit the church of the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 2:18)

ix. Persecutes us (Revelation 2:10)

f. God's Condemnation

i. Thrown to the earth – expelled from heaven (Ezekiel 28:17)

1. Fell from heaven like lightning (Luke 10:18)

2. Hurlled from heaven to earth with his angels (Revelation 12:9)

ii. Fire come out from the devil – while consuming the devil – reducing to ashes (Ezekiel 28:18)

iii. The nations who knew the devil will be appalled with the devil (Ezekiel 28:19)

iv. Will come to a horrible end, and be no more (Ezekiel 28:19)

v. See next section “Jesus Christ power / strength demonstrated.”

g. Other fallen angels

i. Angels who abandoned their proper dwelling are kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment. (Jude 6)

2. The world

3. The flesh

Know the source of our Strength:

(1) Humility; (2) Jesus Christ; (3) The Armor of God; 4) Truth; 5) Courageous Hope

1. Humility (Ephesians 4:2)

a. Recognize your weakness

b. Recognize your need for a refuge and for strength coming from outside of yourself. (Psalm 46:1)

c. "Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6-7)

d. "Self-sufficiency is a killer in this battle." – Brian Borgman and Rob Ventura, "Spiritual Warfare: A Biblical & Balanced Perspective."

i. In other words – rely on God!

2. Jesus Christ power / strength demonstrated:

a. In his resurrection – conquering of death (Ephesians 1:20)

b. In his current reign – above every power that exists throughout all generations (Ephesians 1:20-21)

c. In his future reign -

d. In his role as head over all things related to the church (Ephesians 1:22)

e. Towards those who believe (Ephesians 1:19)

i. We are to rely on God as the source of our strength (Ephesians 6:10)

ii. God is our help during times of trouble and times of temptation. (Psalm 46:1, Hebrews 4:15-16)

iii. When Paul was tormented by Satan, Christ responded by saying, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)

3. The Armor of God

a. We are to clothe ourselves with the all of God's armor. (Ephesians 6:11)

i. Spiritual Armor

1. When we are baptized into Christ we are then clothed with Christ!
(Galatians 3:27)

a. We put off our old former life, which was corrupted by deceitful desires (Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3)

b. We "put on" a new life, created to be like God in true righteousness, holiness, and a new attitude of mind (Ephesians 4:23-24 & Colossians 3:9)

2. Continual Instruction – "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 14:14)

3. Our armor's source is God! Christ wears this same armor! (Isaiah 11:1-5, 59:15b-17)

ii. Ethical Armor

1. Clothing includes: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love. (Colossians 3:12-14)

2. Armor of Light – behavior which we are not afraid to do in the light (Romans 13:12-13)

3. WHOLE armor – don't want to leave any aspect of your life vulnerable!

a. "Every single part and portion of this armor is absolutely essential; and the first thing you have to learn is that you are not in a position to pick and choose [which pieces you wear]." – D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "The Christian Soldier" (Grand Rapids: Baker 1977), 179.

4. Armor consists of Belt of Truth, Breastplate of Righteousness, Foot covering of the Gospel of Peace, Shield of Faith, Helmet of Salvation, & Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:14-17)

iii. The result of wearing this godly armor = we'll be able to actively stand firm – holding our position in Christ! (Ephesians 6:13-14)

1. "It is to stand like an oak against the winds of Satan's lies that would sway us, against the floods of his temptations that would sweep us away, and against the leeches of his accusations that would deprive us of grace. It is to stand rooted and built up in Christ, strengthened in the faith." – Stanley D. Gale, "What is Spiritual Warfare?" "Basics of the Reformed Faith" (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R, 2008), p. 20).

4. Truth! (John 8:42-47)

a. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life." (John 14:6)

b. Truth is light to Satan's deceptive darkness.

5. Courageous Hope

a. In God's command to Joshua to lead Israel into the promised land, three times God tells Joshua, "Be strong and very courageous" (Joshua 1:1-9)

b. Paul speaks of how God's strength enables him to get along in any and every circumstance. In other words, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:11-13)

c. 1 John 4:4 – "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."

d. After a time of suffering, God will restore us and make us strong, firm and steadfast. (1 Peter 5:8-11)

The Battle

1. Form of Battle

a.The battle is described as “wrestling” – this is close, intimate face-to-face contact. (Ephesians 6:12)

i.Guard our minds, heart, faith, and bodies.

b.“Flesh and blood” or fellow humans are not our enemies.

c.The principalities, powers, rulers of darkness of this age, and spiritual hosts of wickedness are our enemies. (Ephesians 4:14, 6:12-13)

2.Rebuke the devil

a.Archangel Michael’s example

i.Didn’t condemn Satan for slander as he could have (Jude 9)

ii.“The Lord rebuke you!” (Jude 9)

b.Brothers and Sisters in the Kingdom of God – Triumph by:

i.The blood of the Lamb (Revelation 12:11)

1.Jesus sent Paul to “open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in [Jesus].” (Acts 26:18)

ii.The word of their testimony (Revelation 12:11)

iii.Not loving their lives so much as to shrink back from death. (Revelation 12:11)

iv.Resisting him with faith regardless of the suffering experienced (1 Peter 5:8-11)

v.Working cooperatively (“you will stand”) (Ephesians 6)

c.Do not let the devil gain a foothold in your life. (Ephesians 4:27)

- i. Put off falsehood / do not lie, instead speak truth to your neighbors. (Ephesians 4:25, Colossians 3:9)
- ii. In your anger do not sin and do not go to bed angry. (Ephesians 4:26)
- iii. Don't hold on to Unforgiveness (2 Corinthians 2:10-11)
- iv. Being a young Christian taking on responsibilities you aren't yet ready for (1 Timothy 3:6)
- v. Lengthy sexual abstinence by choice in marriage (1 Corinthians 7:5)
- vi. Stop stealing. (Ephesians 4:28)
- vii. Work, do something useful with your hands so you can share with those in need. (Ephesians 4:28)
- viii. Avoid unwholesome talk. (Ephesians 4:29)
- ix. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 4:30)

d. Resist the devil – and he will flee from you. (1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7)

e. Know the source of your strength – your identity in Jesus Christ!

f. Prayer –

- i. Stand firm through prayer. (Ephesians 6:14, 18)
- ii. In “every instance” or “always” pray (Ephesians 6:18)

iii. Depend upon the Spirit to guide our prayer (Jude 20; Romans 8:26-27)

iv. Use God's Words as printed in the Bible to pray. Pray God's promises and truth. (Luke 23:46; Psalm 31:5)

v. Persevere and do not give up hope – just like the widow who went before the judge in Luke asking for justice and never giving up. (Luke 18:1-8)

vi. We are to pray “watchfully” or with alertness to our surroundings. (Luke 21:36; Mark 13:33)

vii. Instead of being anxious we are to pray. (Philippians 4:16)

viii. We are to pray with thanksgiving in every circumstance (Philippians 4:16; Colossians 4:2).

ix. Prayer is more than just requests or intercession. Biblically, prayer is modeled as including praise, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, worship, silence, singing, intercession, request making.

x. Pray for others during their times of trial – for their faith that it not fail (Luke 22:31-32; Ephesians 6:18)

xi. Pray for our leaders, the spread of the gospel, and boldness. (Ephesians 6:19-20)

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