

RESIST THE DEVIL WITH GOD'S WORD

- A. Introduction: For some time I've been encouraging you to become a regular reader of the Bible, especially the New Testament. As part of this series, we're considering what regular Bible reading will do for you.
1. One of the most important things that reading the Bible does is change your perspective or the way you view life which in turn affects how you deal with life—as well as how life affects you.
 - a. God's Word helps us see that there is more to life than just this life and that the greater and better part of our existence is ahead of us. The Bible reveals that the life to come offers reunion, restoration, and recompense and that in comparison to what is ahead, life's many troubles are miniscule. This perspective lightens the load of life and gives us hope in the mist of hardship. II Cor 4:17-18
 - b. The Bible also assures us that right now, as we walk through life in a sin damaged world, God is with us and for us—and that He will get us through until He gets us out. Ps 46:1; Ps 23:4; etc.
 2. Last week we added another element to our discussion. The Bible informs us that we have an enemy who seeks to undermine our faith and confidence in God—the devil. We must understand how he works and how to combat Him. We have more to say tonight.
- B. Remember the big picture. Jesus came to earth the first time to pay for sin at the Cross so that all who put faith in Him can become sons and daughters of God. He will soon come again to cleanse the earth and restore it to a fit forever home for God and His family. Eph 1:4-5; Isa 45:18; Acts 3:21; Rev 21:1-4; etc.
1. When Jesus was on earth two thousand years ago He told His followers that, in the period between His first and second coming, His kingdom will advance in an unseen form—the kingdom or reign of God in the hearts of men. Luke 17:20-21
 - a. When people believe on Jesus as Savior and Lord, God by His Spirit and life, indwells them and transforms them from sinners into sons and daughters. This new birth is the beginning of a process of transformation that will ultimately restore every part of our being to what God intends us to be (many lessons for another day). John 3:3-5; John 1:12-13; Phil 1:6; I John 3:2; etc.
 - b. Jesus told His original followers (the apostles) that in this period the spread of the kingdom will be accomplished through the proclamation of God's Word. Jesus compared the preaching of God's Word to a sower who sows seed. Matt 13:18-21; Mark 4:14-17
 1. In that context Jesus revealed that the wicked one comes to steal the Word of God from people and that he takes advantage of them when they are weakened by life's hardships.
 2. The wicked one's ultimate goal is to undermine people's confidence in God so that they give up their faith. If that doesn't happen he works to make them as ineffective as possible.
 - c. Jesus told other parables in connection with the sower who sows seed which make it clear that the wicked one is the devil, Satan (Mark 4:15) and that he is an enemy (Matt 13:39) who tries to stop the spread of the kingdom.
 2. Let's begin with this question: Who is the devil and where did he come from? We could teach an entire series on this topic, but for now consider these thoughts.
 - a. The devil is a created being, an angel originally called Lucifer. He is a cherub. Cherubs are angels who flank the throne of God and originally guarded the Garden of Eden. Gen 3:24
 1. There are different types of angels, as well as different ranks among them. At some point in the past, Lucifer rebelled against God and enticed a host of angels to join him in rebellion (many lessons for another day). Ezek 28:13-15; Isa 14:12-17
 2. The term devil is not found in the Old Testament. Instead, Lucifer is known as Satan. The Hebrew word for Satan means adversary, the arch enemy of God. The name Satan is used 19 times in the Old Testament, mostly in the Book of Job.

- b. In the New Testament the Greek word that is translated Satan is *satanas*. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Satan (a transliteration). The New Testament also uses the term devil (*diabolos*) which means a false accuser. This name captures a main trait of Satan—he is a liar. John 8:44
 - 1. In addition, the New Testament uses the term devils (*daimon*) which means a demon or supernatural spirit of a bad nature, a fallen angel (an angel that joined Lucifer in rebellion). There is one devil and many demons.
 - 2. The New Testament also refers to Satan (the devil) as the tempter. This term comes from a Greek word that means to test. He tests or tempts men to see if they will give up their faith in God.
- 3. Gen 3:1-6—In his first appearance in the Bible the devil is referred to as the serpent. The serpent in the Garden account was a symbol of the person of Satan, as opposed to a walking talking snake. Rev 12:9 and Rev 20:2 refer to the devil as the ancient serpent and the dragon who is called the devil or Satan.
 - a. Paul the apostle further confirms that it was the devil who enticed Eve to sin when he wrote to a group of Christians in the city of Corinth.
 - 1. II Cor 11:3—But [now] I am fearful lest that even as the serpent beguiled Eve by his cunning, so your minds should be corrupted and seduced from whole hearted and sincere and pure devotion to Christ (Amp).
 - 2. In II Cor 11:13-14 Paul identified the false teachers as devil inspired who like the devil, through deception, seem to be something they are not.
 - b. When we examine what Satan did to Eve we find that he did not overpower her with supernatural ability. He enticed (beguiled) Eve to disobey God by presenting her (tempting her) with lies.
 - 1. Gen 2:9—There were two trees in the midst of the Garden—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These trees were symbolic of a choice for or against God (lessons for another day).
 - 2. The Lord told Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree in the midst of the garden (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) or they would die. Gen 2:17
 - A. The devil told them that they would not die, but be as gods. His words were an accusation against God and a lie about them and their circumstances: God lies and is withholding from you. You two lack you lack and are being denied something good.
 - B. Eve took the bait and considered what she could see and hear and then reasoned from what she saw and heard, rather than keeping her attention on and believing what God said.
- 4. Matt 4:1-11—When we come to the New Testament, the first mention of the devil is found when Jesus was tempted by the devil. Note, all three terms are used for him—devil (v1), tempter (v3), Satan (v10).
 - a. Remember, Jesus is God become man without ceasing to be God. While on earth He did not live as God. He lived as a man in dependence on God. That is how He could be tempted to sin. James 1:13; Heb 4:15
 - b. The devil came to Jesus at the end of a forty day fast in the rugged Judean wilderness when the man Jesus (in His humanity) was hungry and no doubt fatigued. The devil hits us when we are weak.
 - 1. Just as with Eve, the devil didn't over power Jesus with might. He attempted to influence Jesus through his words and entice Him into disbelieving God's Word: If you are the Son of God, prove it. Matt 3:16-17
 - 2. The full meaning of each temptation is a topic for another day. The point for us is that unlike Eve, Jesus answered the devil with the Word of God—it is written.
 - c. Notice that the devil's temptations (lies) to Jesus were different than those to Eve. Although the devil's goal is the same (to steal the word) and his method is the same (he presents us with lies), his tactics change if necessary. He used several approaches with Jesus and Eve, tailored to their particular situation. The devil can't make you do anything—he must talk you into it.

5. We pointed out in the last lesson that the devil's tactics are primarily mental. The Bible never tells us to beware of the devil's power. Rather it instructs us to beware of his mental strategies. Eph 6:11
 - a. The devil (*diabolos*) presents us with lies about God, ourselves, and our circumstances. *Diabolos* is made up of two words, *dia* (through) and *balos* (I throw). Together these words mean to throw repeatedly until there is penetration—one of the lies sticks and we accept, believe, and act on it.
 - b. The devil's lies come to us in various ways—through the culture, through the words of others. But they also come in the form of thoughts to our mind. All of us experience thoughts that we didn't consciously initiate.
 1. I'm not saying that we hear voices. I'm saying that thoughts come into our head, seemingly from out of nowhere. No one can fully explain the dynamics of how unseen beings are able to influence us, but it is clear from the Bible that they can and do.
 2. We know from what happened to Eve and Jesus that the devil attempts to influence people through words or thoughts presented to them.
 - c. Matt 16:21-23—When Peter tried to talk Jesus out of going to Jerusalem Jesus recognized the actual actual source of the thought—Satan influenced Peter to attempt to influence Jesus.
 1. Few of us meet the devil or Satan himself. We deal with lesser, fallen angels (devils): principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, wicked spirits in the unseen realm. Eph 6:12
 2. The devil and his demons (devils) can't read minds. They aren't all knowing. But all these spirits are much smarter and stronger than we are and have been around humans since the Garden. They're very familiar with us and how to manipulate us (what buttons to push).
- C. The apostle Paul is the man who penned the verse in Eph 6:11 about the devil's mental tactics. Paul learned from Jesus how to deal with the devil because it was the resurrected Lord Jesus who personally taught him the message that he preached and wrote. Gal 1:11-12; Acts 26:16
1. Paul ended his epistle to the Ephesians with a reminder about how to deal with the devil. Ephesians is very systematic. In chapters 1-3 Paul writes about what Jesus did for us through the Cross and what we now are through faith in Jesus. In chapters 4-6 Paul writes about how to live it out.
 - a. In the first half of his epistles Paul lays the foundation for the fact that because of the Cross and the changes in us through the new birth, we face the devil as a defeated foe in the strength of the Lord. (Remember, the Bible never tells us to beware of the devil's strength and power, but to be on guard to his mental strategies.)
 1. Eph 1:19-23—(Through resurrection) he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ, and he gave him this authority for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is filled by Christ who fills everything everywhere with his presence (NLT).
 2. Eph 2:10—For we are God's masterpiece (NLT). He has created us through our union with Christ Jesus for doing the good deeds which He beforehand planned for us to do (Williams).
 3. Eph 3:20—Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope (NLT).
 - b. This is the context in which Paul tells Christians how to deal with the devil: In conclusion, be strong in the Lord—be empowered through your union with him; draw your strength from Him—that strength which His [boundless] might provides (Eph 6:10, Amp).
 2. Eph 6:11-12—With the awareness that you face the devil as a defeated enemy, in the strength of the Lord, put on God's armor so that you can stand against his mental strategies as he seeks to sway you from your faith in Christ (completely or enough to make you ineffective and unfruitful).
 - a. Put literally means to put on clothes. It is the same Greek word that is translated be endued with the power of the Holy Ghost in Luke 24:49. God's Word is His armor (Ps 91:4). To stand means to

stand fast; continue, endure, persist.

- b. Eph 6:13—Therefore put on God’s complete armor, that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day [of danger], and having done all [the crisis demands], to stand [firmly in your place] (Amp).
 1. Eph 6:14-17—Paul then made reference to putting on a complete set of Roman armor, not so that we can pretend to put it on, but to make a point. Roman soldiers were a common sight in that region at that time. A fully dressed soldier was unbeatable.
 2. Each piece of armor represents a category of information from the Word of God that covers every vulnerable part of our being and helps us identify, resist, and counter the lies of the devil.
 - c. If you aren’t familiar with the Truth (the Word of God) then you won’t be able to recognize the devil’s lies. And, you don’t know what it says if you don’t read it. That’s why I’ve spent these months encouraging you to read the New Testament and instructing you on a simple way to read it.
 3. We aren’t going to do an in depth study of each piece of armor (category of information) but consider these few points.
 - a. Eph 6:17—Paul referred to the helmet of salvation. Your mind is the battleground. It’s not what you see, it’s how you see what you see. That’s why the Bible has so much to say about your mind.
 1. Not only do you need to renew your mind (change the way you see things by regular Bible reading), you must become aware of what goes on in your mind and get control.
 2. So much of our thought time is spent going over what we see and feel without giving a thought to God’s help and provision. We speculate about people’s motives and potential outcomes in our situation—things we don’t actually know for a fact and can do nothing about, other than worry and obsess. (We’ll discuss this more fully in a later lesson.)
 - b. How do you get control of your mind (in addition to regular Bible reading)? Note, Paul talks about taking the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. It is an offensive weapon. Eph 6:17
 1. The Holy Spirit inspired the words of Scripture and is the primary instrument through which He works in our lives (lessons for another day).
 2. Roman soldiers used five different types of swords in their combat with the enemy. Paul chose the word *machaira* for his example. It was 19 inches long and razor sharp on both sides—so it was deadly.
 - A. The New Testament refers to God’s Word as a two edged sword (Rev 1:16; Rev 2:12; Heb 4:12). The Greek word literally means two mouthed—*distomos*, *di* (two) and *stomos* (mouth). It is a two mouthed sword.
 - B. God has already spoken His Word (one mouth). Now you must speak God’s Word for it to be effective. That’s what Jesus did in His battle (wrestling) with the devil—not as a technique but as a view of reality. Jesus saw everything in His life in terms of what God says.
 3. James 3:4—Remember, a rudder has the power to turn around a big ship. Your mouth is your rudder. It can turn your ship around. You must learn to say what God says in and about your circumstances. Regular reading helps you know what God says.
- D. Conclusion: We have much more to say next week. Consider one thought as we close. Peter and James (both of whom were eyewitnesses of Jesus) wrote about resisting the devil (same word that Paul used in Eph 6:13) when they talked about how to deal with the devil.
1. James wrote: Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7). Peter wrote: Resist (the devil) steadfast in the faith (I Pet 5:9).
 2. We resist the devil with the Word of God in the name of Jesus—in His power and authority—and the devil will flee from us. We will win the battle for our mind.