



**STRATEGIC
DISCIPLESHIP**



**STRATEGIC
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TRAINING RESOURCES

PHASE 3

TEACHER MANUAL

by Robert Laidlaw

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SESSION 1: THE SPIRITUAL REALM

*Teacher's note: We recommend purchasing now *The Steps to Freedom in Christ* for use in Week 5. The booklet is available at:*

<http://www.freedominchrist.com/>

<http://www.ficm.ca>

THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE

Daniel 10:4-14 (ESV)

⁴ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) ⁵ I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶ His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.

⁷ And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. ⁹ Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.

¹⁰ And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

¹² Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.

¹³ The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, ¹⁴ and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."

Daniel 10:20-21 (ESV)

²⁰ Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. ²¹ But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

What do you think of the above passage? How would you explain what is going on in this story?

Have the group members try to explain what they believe is happening. The goal is not to answer any questions here; instead, to raise questions. We will come back to this passage at the end of this study.

This passage must raise many questions for you. To help bring clarity, let's first explore the nature of angels in general and then progress to a better understanding of the spiritual conflict as expressed in the story.

ANGELS

What are angels?

Greek word: aggelos (pronounced ang' el os) = *Messenger, sent one*

Hebrews 1:14 (ESV)

Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

This is a rhetorical question. The answer is yes! The role of angels is to assist us as we fulfill God's purposes on this earth.

Where did angels come from; did they always exist?

Discuss as a group before reading passages.

Colossians 1:16 (ESV)

For by him [Jesus] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

Job 38:4-7 (ESV)

⁴ *"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.*

⁵ *Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶ On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*

It appears that angels may have been created somewhere between Genesis 1:1 and the creation of the world.

Are there different types of angels? Can angels have different appearances?

Discuss as a group.



Read the following passages in your Bible and describe the type of angels seen there.

Jude 1:9

Archangel

There is a hierarchy of angels in heaven similar to what we see in our military. The archangel would be the chief angel with others under his authority.

Isaiah 6:2

Seraphim

The name Seraphim means “burning ones.” They are situated before the throne of God and declare his praises.

Ezekiel 10:12-14

Cherubim

Cherubim appear to guard access to the throne and glory of God.

Hebrews 13:2

Human form

(Genesis 18-19)

Angels typically live and work in the spiritual realm and are not therefore visible to the human eye. But, on occasion, God sends them into the physical realm where they sometimes appear indistinguishable from humans.

Other angelic descriptions:

(Teacher: this is for reference; you don't need to look each one up)

Invisible 2 Kings 6:15-17

Fiery 2 Kings 6:15-17

Dazzling Luke 24:4

Angels are not people who have died and gone to heaven.

Often people will refer to children who have died as guardian angels who watch over their families. There is no biblical basis for this; in fact, it would change the child's position from that of an heir to a servant.

One caution with regard to angels:

Colossians 2:18 (ESV)

Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind...

What are some ways we might be tempted to worship angels or give them undue attention?

Sometimes people become very obsessive with regard to angels. Some people see angels as their security and comfort in the place of Jesus Christ. The attention we are inclined to give angels is attention that should be devoted solely to Jesus.

This could be expressed blatantly in ways such as praying to angels but possibly also in lesser ways through the use of angel pendants, figurines, tattoos, etc., anything that focuses on angels as our help instead of Jesus.

The apostle John was even tempted to give an angel undue attention.

Revelation 22:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, ⁹ but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

How does the angel refocus John in the right direction?

Worship God!

EVIL SPIRITS

What are the other creatures that opposed the messenger angel in Daniel 10?

Discuss as a group.

Mark 1:32-34 (ESV)

³² That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. ³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴ And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

What are demons, and where did they come from?

Discuss as a group.

Revelation 12:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹ 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.

Jude 1:6 (ESV)

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—

2 Peter 2:4 (ESV)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell [Tartarus] and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment...

Demons are angels who rebelled against God's rule, were defeated, and expelled from heaven. They are still angelic beings but rebellious ones cast out of heaven.

Their rebellion obviously occurred sometime between Day 7 of Creation (when God declared everything good) and Adam and Eve's Fall. Keep in mind; we do not know how long Adam and Eve reigned on earth before their fall into sin.

In Mark 1, when the demons encountered Jesus, they knew who he was, and it terrified them. There was some previous knowledge of his identity that evoked fear in them. The demons wanted to expose Jesus' identity before the appropriate time, but Jesus kept them silenced.

Where are evil spirits now?

Discuss as a group.

Job 1:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

1) Roaming freely through Earth and the Heavens

Though the rebellious angels were defeated and cast out of heaven, they still belong to the "heavenly realm." In other words, they are spiritual beings existing in the spiritual plane of reality. And, in some capacity, they still have access to the courtroom and throne of God. We will discuss that more next week.

Since angels were created to live forever, the same rebellious angels (demons) that opposed Christ in biblical days are still roaming the earth today.

Revelation 9:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, ¹⁴ saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."

2) Bound on Earth

This passage is referring to the future time of tribulation the earth will experience for seven years. It is apparent that God has kept certain rebellious angels bound until that time only to release them as an act of judgment on the earth.

Luke 8:30-31 (NIV)

³⁰ Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹ And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

2 Peter 2:4 (NIV)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to Tartarus, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment;

Jude 1:6 (NIV)

And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

3) Bound in the Abyss

The Abyss/Tartarus is a holding place for certain unrighteous angels. Why some are sent there from the beginning, and others left to roam freely is of some debate. It is a place of judgment and punishment, and the fallen angels were terrified of being sent there. Though some angels were locked in the Abyss at the time of their rebellion, it is apparent that some may be sent there at any time God chooses. This is not the Lake of Fire but a waiting place for the Day of Judgment.

Scripture tells us that Satan will be bound in the Abyss for one thousand years during the reign of Christ. He will then be released at the end of that time and will deceive the nations into rebelling against Christ. Then final judgment will come, and all unrighteous beings (angelic and human) will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20).

Back to Daniel 10**How are we to understand the prince/king of Persia in this story?**

The kingdoms of this world are influenced and supported by the spiritual realm. When a nation embraces sinful values, it becomes susceptible to being controlled by evil spirits. In the case of Israel (because it was a nation in covenant relationship with God), it was guarded by Michael ("your prince"), a holy angel.

The prince of Persia then is an evil spirit who had a spiritual grip on the Persian Empire and influenced it for malicious purposes. When the angel tells us that the prince of Greece will soon come, he gives a prophetic statement about the uprising Greek empire that would soon defeat the



Persian Empire and take control of Babylon, where Daniel was presently living. The implication is that evil spirits today are still structured in such a way that they have a geographical territory they are responsible for.

As there are various angelic roles in heaven, there is also a hierarchy in the demonic realm. Look at how Paul names these various positions in descending order.

Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but
against the rulers, against the **authorities**,
against the **cosmic powers** over this present darkness,
against the **spiritual forces** of evil in the heavenly places.*

If the rebellious angels were defeated, why are they still able to resist God's righteous angels?

God permits fallen angels to have a certain degree of presence and influence for his purposes. When we chose to rebel, God did not immediately bring judgment on all of us and send us to Hell. We still have a role to play, even if we carry it out in a sinful manner. We will be held accountable for our actions, and so will these fallen angels.

Despite the resistance put up by fallen angels, God's sovereign plans cannot be defeated. God knew in advance what every fallen spirit and sinful person would do, and he has everything under his control. Ultimately, he can even take their evil actions and use them for his glory. The greatest example of this is Christ on the cross.

God allows his creation to make their own decisions and experience the consequences of those actions.

In light of the reality that evil spirits are present around us, what implication does that have for us this week?

DEVOTIONAL READING

DAY 1 Genesis 3:1-6

Questions to consider:

- In what ways was the serpent crafty?
- How has Satan been crafty in your life? What ways has he used to entice you to sin?
- What does Satan cause Eve to question?
- Have there been times when Satan has tried to get you to question what God has clearly spoken in scripture?
- Have you ever embraced temptation because it seemed to promise you something God would not provide?
- Sin is always attractive. What sinful things are you attracted to right now?
- Your sins are already forgiven in Christ. You are now guilt-free with regard to them. The consequence has been paid. You don't need to be trapped in shame any longer. The question is, "Are you allowing Satan to deceive you right now in an area of your life?" Is there any sin in your life you need to turn from right now so as not to be deceived by Satan all over again?
- In what ways did Satan strike a victory over mankind in this encounter?
- Spend some time thanking God for his forgiveness, and also ask him to reveal areas where you may still be holding on to Satan's lies.

DAY 2 Genesis 19:1-26

Questions to consider:

- Have you ever wondered what angels must think about the human race as they come down from heaven and experience our sinfulness?
- If angels were to give a report of what they have seen with regard to your life, your priorities, your actions, and your love of God, what would they say?
- It's sad to think that Lot had slipped so far into the cultural perspective without realizing it. How might that be true of you as well?

2 Peter 2:7 (ESV)

...and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked...

- Lot believed in God but continuously made choices to adapt to his culture instead of changing the culture. Fortunately, God sent angels to his rescue. Have you allowed yourself to get into circumstances that distort your thinking?
- Have you embraced relationships that are pulling you further from God?
- When God tells you to do something, do you hesitate?

DAY 3 1 Samuel 16:14-16, 23

Questions to consider:

- Why do you think music soothed Saul's soul when the evil spirit tormented him?
- David's songs were ones of praise to God. Have you ever tried listening to praise music when you were feeling troubled? What effect does it have on you?
- Praise is powerful because it puts God in proper perspective and creates an environment distasteful to evil spirits.
- Would you characterize your life as a life of worship and praise to God that is an inhospitable environment to evil spirits?
- Are there areas of your life that evil spirits would find quite acceptable?

DAY 4 2 Kings 6:8-23

Questions to consider:

- Have you ever felt the odds were stacked up against you? Has your situation ever seemed hopeless?
- What do these times of anxiety indicate about our trust in God?
- Have you ever seen God come through and provide in ways you never anticipated?
- Wouldn't it be great if, similar to Elisha's servant, we could see what is happening around us on the spiritual plane? If you knew angels were fighting on your behalf, would it give you a bit more confidence as you go through your day?
- If the servant had not seen the angels, would that have changed the spiritual reality?
- Could the servant have been at peace without having seen the angels?
- Just because we don't see what God is doing doesn't mean he is not active. How can you start to exercise a greater trust in God this week?
- Why did Elisha not destroy the army that came to destroy him?
- What do you learn about grace through this story?

DAY 5 Luke 4:1-13

Questions to consider:

- Why would God allow Jesus to be tested in this way?
- Why does God allow you to be tested?
- What is Satan's goal whenever he brings a temptation your way?
- In what ways have you been tested as Jesus was?
- What was the key to Jesus' success at resisting temptation?
- What scriptural truths do you fall back on when you undergo temptation?
- Have you memorized any verses that will help you in your specific areas of struggle?
- Did you notice how even Satan knows the Bible? How does he distort it?
- Do you know the Bible well enough to counter such attacks? How can you know it better?
- What was Satan's reaction to Jesus' defense?
- How can you better prepare yourself for future attacks?

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

SESSION 2: SATAN'S IDENTITY

Who is Satan?

Discuss as a group.

Revelation 12:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹ 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.

Satan is the Leader of the angelic revolt

Revelation 12:12 (ESV)

Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

Though Satan was defeated and cast out of Heaven, he continues his revolt here on earth until the Day of Judgment. God, in his sovereignty, sees that Satan can still fulfill a role in God's eternal purposes.

John 8:44 (ESV)

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Satan is the Originator of sin – the father of all who sin

Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees who, despite all they've seen and heard from Jesus, still set their hearts on destroying him. In calling Satan a murderer, it is appropriate to remember that through his tempting of Eve, he essentially murdered the entire human race. His temptation brought death to all mankind. The first expression of mankind's fall in the Bible was the murder of Abel by his brother Cain.

Satan accomplished all this through the power of a lie. He deceived Eve and continues to deceive the world. He truly is the Father of all lies. When we choose to sin (even telling small lies) we align ourselves with the Father of Lies.

What is the extent of Satan's power? What are his limits?

Discuss as a group.

Job 1:6-12 (ESV)

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." ⁸ And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" ⁹ Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? ¹⁰ Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." ¹² And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

What do we learn about Satan and his authority?**Satan is on a leash**

Satan is limited in the amount of destruction he is allowed to exert in this world. Whatever he does is always within God's parameters.

What does everyone think about this?

Is it disconcerting to think God specifically allows Satan to work evil in this world?

Does this affect your view of God?

Even Satan, in all his rebellion, is still used by God for his holy purposes. Satan can only accomplish what fits into God's perfect plan.

Job 1:13-15, 17 (ESV)

¹³ Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁴ and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

¹⁷ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

Satan has the ability to influence ungodly people for evil (Sabeans & Chaldeans)



Job 1:16, 18-19 (ESV)

¹⁶ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

¹⁸ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

Satan has the ability to control nature

Job 2:7 (ESV)

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Satan has the ability to cause physical illness

What is Satan's overall objective?

Discuss as a group.

Matthew 4:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

Satan wants to be God

Satan wants to be worshipped and followed. He wants to take the place of God in our lives. He has established his own kingdom, but it is a kingdom of darkness, set up in direct rebellion against the kingdom of Heaven.

1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Satan wants to destroy mankind

Satan has already been defeated by God and cast out of Heaven. The only thing he can do to attack God is to attack that which God loves – us! We are God's children, his heirs, and heart's passion. Satan now exerts all his energy to keep us from God and turn us against God and his purposes. In so doing, he makes certain we will experience his same fate – the lake of fire.

Does talking about Satan raise tension in you? Does it make you uncomfortable? Why or why not?

Do believers need to fear Satan? Why or why not?

1 John 4:4 (ESV)

Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1 John 5:18 (ESV)

We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

We don't need to be afraid of Satan, because the one who is in us (Jesus) is greater than the one in the world (Satan). Jesus is in control of all things; he keeps Satan on a leash, he limits what Satan can do and he is our ultimate protector.

Jude 1:8-9 (NIV)

⁸In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. ⁹But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

What does the above passage indicate should be our attitude toward the angelic realm?

We may not need to fear Satan, but we are still to respect his position and the entire angelic realm. Though evil spirits were cast out of Heaven, they are still God's creation; they are powerful, given a certain degree of freedom, and are to be respected. They come under God's authority, and we need to be careful how we deal with them and speak about them.

How might understanding the content of this study affect how we live this week?

For the resolution to the story of Job, read Job chapters 38-42.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION FOR PERSONAL INTEREST

Possible prophetic allusion to Satan's downfall

These passages refer directly to earthly kings, but some scholars believe they may have a dual function of symbolizing Satan's downfall.

Isaiah 14:12-15 Ezekiel 28:12-15

If not specifically about Satan, they still express the heart attitude of pride and rebellion that Satan exhibits.

Some Descriptors of Satan

Abbadon (Destroyer)	Revelation 9:11
Accuser	Revelation 12:10
Angel of light	2 Corinthians 11:14
Antichrist	1 John 4:3
Beelzebub	Matthew 12:24
Belial	2 Corinthians 6:15
Devil	1 John 3:8
Dragon	Revelation 12:9
Enemy	Matthew 13:39
Father of lies	John 8:44
God of this age	2 Corinthians 4:4
Leviathan	Isaiah 27:1
Murderer	John 8:44
Prince of demons	Matthew 12:24
Prince of this world	John 12:31-32
Roaring lion	1 Peter 5:8
Ruler of the kingdom of the air	Ephesians 2:1-2
Satan	Mark 1:13
Serpent	Revelation 12:9
Tempter	Matthew 4:3
Thief	John 10:10
Wicked one	Ephesians 6:16

Satan's Counterfeit Kingdom

Own Trinity	Revelation 16:13
Own Theology	1 Timothy 4:1
Own Synagogue	Revelation 2:9
Own Preachers	2 Corinthians 11:4-5
Own Sacrificial System	1 Corinthians 10:20
Own Gospel	Galatians 1:6-7
Own Kingship	Revelation 13:2
Own Worshipers	Revelation 13:4
Own Miracles	2 Thessalonians 2:9
Own Indwelling Spirits	Mark 1:32-34

False Christs	Matthew 24:4-5
False Teachers	2 Peter 2:1
False Prophets	Matthew 24:11
False Brethren	Galatians 2:4
False Apostles	2 Corinthians 11:13

DEVOTIONAL READING

DAY 1 1 Corinthians 15:26

Questions to consider:

- Why is death the last enemy to be defeated?
- As you go through your day, consider how death still needs to be defeated in your life? What aspects of your life still reveal death is at work?
- How will Jesus ultimately defeat death in you?

DAY 2 Ephesians 2:1-3 Colossians 1:13-14

Questions to consider:

- How has Satan's rule been exercised in your own life?
- Are there still ways in which you are allowing him to have authority?
- In what ways is it evident Jesus has rescued you?
- How is living under Jesus' rule different for you than living under Satan's rule?
- If you are truly part of the kingdom of the Son, how might that affect how you live this week?

DAY 3 Romans 6:1-10

Questions to consider:

- What aspects of your life have died since you gave your life to Christ?
- Have there been some sinful behaviors that you have been set free from?
- Do you sometimes feel you still "have" to sin?
- Is your life being lived to the glory of God?
- How will that be reflected throughout your day?

DAY 4 Romans 6:11-23**Questions to consider:**

- Are there any areas of your life you still need to put to death?
- Is your body used solely for righteousness?
- Do you sometimes try to justify your sin? How?
- We have been set free from sin's grasp. We don't have to sin anymore. It's purely a choice. Is there a specific, real choice you need to make today?

DAY 5 Romans 8:1-17**Questions to consider:**

- Do you ever feel like you still deserve to be condemned for past failures? Does Satan ever whisper these thoughts to your mind?
- What should be your response be whenever you feel like beating yourself up for past sins?
- Which of your thoughts glorify God, which represents your old nature?
- What evidence is there to show the Spirit of God is in your life?
- Are you free from fear, or do you still question God's love for you as his child?
- What does it mean, practically, for you to be a co-heir with Jesus?

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

SESSION 3: JESUS' VICTORY

SATAN'S STRATEGY

Satan has already been defeated and expelled from heaven. In his rage, he now desires to destroy that which God loves – his people.

How exactly did Satan gain victory over the human race?

Genesis 3:1-6 (ESV)

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"
² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"
⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Satan enticed Eve and Adam to sin against God, knowing that the consequence was Death

Romans 6:23 (ESV)
For the wages of sin is death...

Why was death such a key element of Satan's strategy?

Death separates us from God

Death traps us in our sin
 If we die in our sin, we have no opportunity left to receive new life.

Death brings eternal judgment upon us
Once we die, there is no way to escape judgment for our sin.

1 Corinthians 15:26 (ESV)
The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Why is death considered the final enemy that must be defeated?

Satan was defeated when he was cast out of heaven, but because he deceived us into sinning, we are now trapped in our sin and must pay the death consequence. Death now reigns over us, and for us to be united with God, the hold of death must be broken.

When mankind sided with Satan in his rebellion, this enabled Satan to establish an earthly kingdom in opposition to the kingdom of God.

Luke 4:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶ and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.

What does Satan mean when he says the authority over kingdoms of the world was "given" to him?

Jesus never challenges Satan's claim. In fact, if Satan didn't have this authority, there would have been no temptation for Jesus. The fact that Satan had this authority made the offer very enticing.

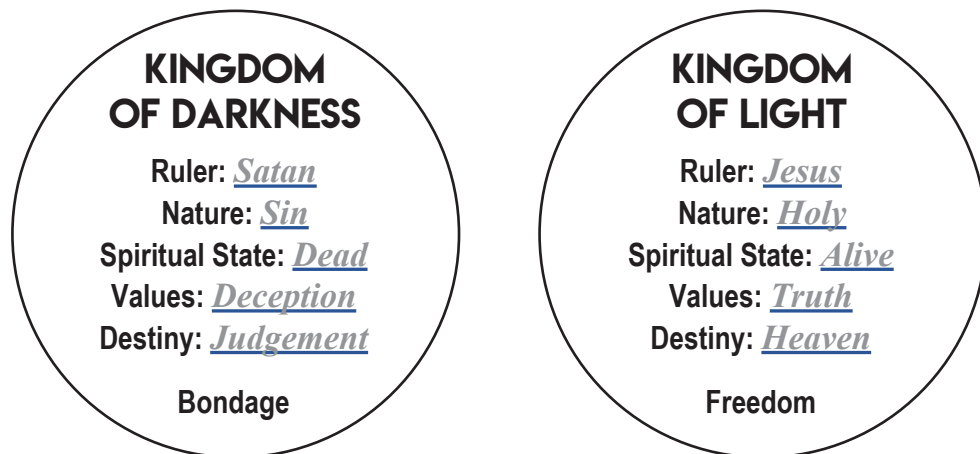
Possibly, Satan was given authority over all the kingdoms either:

- 1) Before his rebellion, as an appointed caregiver over the people of earth or,*
- 2) At the time of the fall, when mankind chose to submit to his rule instead of the rule of God.*

The Bible is not completely clear as to why Satan is given the "rule" that he presently has. However, the rule seems to have been given to him by God, rather than simply mankind's choice to follow him.

What are some ways you can think of to describe the difference between the Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God?

Discuss as a group.



JESUS' VICTORY

This session may come across as a review for most of you. However, it is an extremely important review that you must thoroughly understand when dealing with spiritual warfare. These truths must be firmly embedded in your understanding if you are to have ongoing spiritual victory in your life.

How did Jesus' death defeat Satan's kingdom?

Discuss as a group.

In what way does each of the following verses show how Jesus set us free from Satan's grasp?

Teacher's Note: Though these truths are review from previous lessons, they are extremely important. Everyone needs to have them embedded in their thinking when dealing with spiritual warfare issues. These are front-line truths that must be relied upon when under spiritual attack. They are also the points Satan wants us to forget because they change everything.

Colossians 1:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,
¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1) Jesus provided forgiveness for our sins

Satan is the ruler of all who rebel against God. We automatically fall under Satan's authority by embracing sin in our lives. As long as Satan can accuse us of sin, we stand condemned along with him and show our bondage to him. But forgiveness means there is no longer any accusation left against us. Satan has no basis for condemnation.

Psalms 103:12 (ESV)

...as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

What are some practical implications for us when we start feeling convicted about past sins?

Satan will often try to condemn us for things we have done wrong in the past. Our response needs to be to declare that we are forgiven, and our sins have been removed far from us. Satan has no right to accuse you. You have no right to accuse yourself.

Colossians 1:21-22 (ESV)

²¹ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him...

Romans 5:6 (ESV)

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

2) Jesus paid the death price on our behalf

Satan is very legalistic. He demands that people get the same punishment he is going to receive. He asserts that the death price must be paid, and God agrees! But God did something Satan could never have anticipated – God became man and died in our place.

Romans 8:1 (ESV)

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

How does Satan try to convince us otherwise?

Satan would have us believe that we are still guilty and must pay some sort of price.

- *We feel inclined to punish ourselves for ways we messed up in the past.*
- *We feel we don't deserve a certain blessing.*
- *We feel we don't deserve love.*
- *We inflict on ourselves the punishment we think we should deserve.*
- *We feel we must compensate for our sin by doing good deeds.*

We don't have to fear standing before God because our crimes have already been paid for. There should be no fear in our life because there is nothing for which we will be punished. We need to take our thoughts captive and not beat ourselves up for past failings.

What are some theological problems with the concept of punishing yourself?

a) *The only appropriate consequence for whatever we do wrong (sin) is death. Any consequence we would give ourselves **does not reflect the severity of our sin.***

b) *Jesus already died to pay for those sins – they are dealt with, forgotten, and left behind. To punish ourselves is to negate what Christ accomplished on the cross. In the same way, trying to do good to earn our salvation also negates the work of Christ.*

Romans 6:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin.

3) Jesus put to death our sin nature

As long as I am alive, I am under the authority of those who rule over me. But if I die, then their authority ceases. When my old self was put to death, Satan could no longer



tell me what to do; sin's authority over me was broken. I am set free from his control as I can't sin when I'm dead. As far as he is concerned, I am dead! Gone! Buried! Out of his reach.

Romans 6:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

Romans 6:4 (ESV)

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

4) Jesus gives us New Life

Dying to our old self has definite benefits, but one main problem. If we die, we're still dead. By defeating death and rising to new life, Jesus can now make new life available to us. However, Satan will try to convince us to still live out the old life and make us forget we have a new life.

1 Corinthians 15:54-55 (ESV)

⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...

What are some of the practical implications of this truth for our lives?

We don't need to fear dying, because we already have new life, which is eternal.

We have a new purpose and a new set of priorities. Instead of advancing Satan's purposes, we can advance the purposes of God as his representatives.

WHEN WE DIE...

Where do people go when they die?

Some confusion comes into play when we read the word “Hell” in the Bible. It’s really not the best translation as they actually use when talking about three very distinct locations in the Bible.

Location 1: Sheol/Hades

Matthew 16:18 (ESV)

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell [Hades] shall not prevail against it.

This is the place of the dead. It is a place for those who have died as they await judgment.

Location 2: Abyss/Tartarus

2 Peter 2:4 (ESV)

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell [Tartarus] and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment...

This is where some of the fallen angels were sent to await judgment.

Location 3: Gehenna/Lake of Fire

Matthew 23:33 (ESV)

You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell [Gehenna]?

Gehenna was a garbage dump outside Jerusalem that was perpetually on fire. It was the place Israelites used to sacrifice their children to the god Molech.

This is what people typically think of when they refer to hell. It is the place of final judgment where Satan and all those who have sided with him will spend eternity.

Before his death and resurrection, Jesus told the following story:

Luke 16:19-31 (ESV)

¹⁹ *“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day.*

²⁰ *And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ And he*

called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.'²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.'²⁷ And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house—²⁸ for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'²⁹ But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'³⁰ And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'³¹ He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

What do we learn about where the unrighteous go?

- *It is a place of torment.*
- *They are trapped in that location and cannot leave.*
- *No one can go to them to assist them.*
- *They cannot send messages back or communicate with the living.*
- *It is a place of great regret.*
- *They will be held here until the time of judgment.*

What do we learn about the waiting place of the righteous?

- *It is a place of comfort and rest.*
- *All the saints of God throughout all the ages are there.*
- *They cannot assist those on the other side.*

At the time of Christ's death and resurrection:

Ephesians 4:8 (ESV)

Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

Who are the captives that Christ is leading?

There are two Possibilities

- 1) The captives are all the saints who were held in bondage by death (the holding area described above) but have now been set free by Christ's victory over death.*
- 2) The captives are those enemies Christ defeated: sin, death, evil powers, and he is now making a public spectacle of them. (Colossians 2:15)*

Either way, the outcome is the same for the righteous dead; they are no longer held captive by death. They have been set free by Jesus Christ and may now dwell in the presence of God. Any believer, who dies now, goes directly to be with Christ.

By dying on the cross and rising to new life, Jesus defeated Satan's hold on mankind. No one has to submit to his rule or control. There is a doorway made available for anyone who would want to leave Satan's kingdom and find life in Jesus. Satan's power is broken!

How does it make you feel as you reflect on all that Christ has done to free you from Satan and Sin's grasp?

Verses that emphasize Jesus' victory:

Hebrews 2:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Colossians 2:13-15 (ESV)

¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

1 John 3:8 (ESV)

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.



DEVOTIONAL READING

DAY 1

Personal Quiz

Every spiritual battle we face is a tension between truth and error. See if you can find verses from the past lesson or lessons that will counter the lies Satan tries to throw at us.

What are some verses you could rely on when:

Satan tries to make you feel guilty about past sins? _____

Satan encourages you to punish yourself for things you have done wrong? _____

You feel like you need to punish others for their sins? _____

You feel like you don't deserve God's forgiveness? _____

You fear that God may want to punish you? _____

You think you can't break free from a sinful pattern in your life? _____

An evil spirit tries to convince you that you can never break free of its grasp? _____

You are afraid of dying? _____

You feel like you don't have any purpose in life? _____

It feels like Satan is winning the war? _____

You are tempted to focus on the "rules" instead of the relationship? _____

DAY 2 Ephesians 1:3-14

Questions to consider:

- Identify every spiritual blessing you've received in Jesus Christ according to this passage.
- Which one means the most to you?
- Do you find it hard to believe that you've actually received any of these blessings?
- How does it make you feel to hear that God has desired to lavish all this love on you?
- How does it make you feel to know that God has a purpose for your life?
- If you truly believe you've received these blessings, how would that change your life this week?

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

DAY 3 Ephesians 1:15-23**Questions to consider:**

- What does Paul give thanks for?
- What does Paul pray for in each paragraph?
- How is this power available to us?
- Why is Jesus given responsibility for everything?
- What does this passage imply about us?

DAY 4 Colossians 1:9-14**Questions to consider:**

- What does Paul pray for the Colossian believers?
- Is your life being lived in a manner that is worthy of the Lord? If not, what areas need to change right away?
- Has your knowledge of God deepened over the past few months? Keep in mind, knowledge refers more to intimate relationship than it does information.
- Are you bearing spiritual fruit in your life and the lives of others? Why or why not?
- What might need to change in your life to increase the amount of fruit you are bearing?
- Have you recently thanked God for the day in which he has rescued you?

DAY 5 John 14:11-14**Questions to consider:**

- What does Jesus mean when he says we will do what he has been doing?
- What does he mean when he says we will do even greater things?
- What is Jesus saying about our authority on earth?
- What are the implications of asking for something in Jesus' name?
- Jesus declares that his people will do these things. What is keeping us from seeing this fulfilled in our own lives?
- How might we start exercising this type of authority given to us?



SESSION 4: THE BELIEVER'S AUTHORITY

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

What happened to Jesus after he left earth to return to heaven?

Discuss as a group.

What do the following scriptures reveal about Jesus' post-resurrection life?

Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV)

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1) He is exalted

Luke 22:69 (ESV)

But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.

2) He is seated at the right hand of the Father

1 Peter 3:22 (ESV)

[Jesus,] who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

3) He is given authority over all angels, authorities, and powers

Matthew 28:18 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

4) He is given all authority over heaven and earth

What are the implications of the above verses for Satan and his rule in this world?

Satan's rule is defeated and is about to be short-lived. The very reign Satan promised Jesus if he would worship him is now taken from Satan and given to Jesus. Jesus reigns with authority and will judge the nations. Satan's rule has just been broken.

John 12:31 (ESV)

Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

Satan's fate is sealed. It is only a matter of time until he is permanently driven out and judged. Jesus has ultimate authority, and his reign will be complete.

THE NAME OF JESUS**Matthew 7:22-23 (ESV)**

²² On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

What is the spiritual state of these individuals?

Though these people knew about Jesus and performed great feats in his name, they did not have a saving relationship with Jesus.

How were they able to perform these feats if they did not have a relationship with Jesus?

It shows the authority of the name of Jesus. These feats really had nothing to do with the spirituality of the people. They were simply evidence, in both the spiritual realm and creation itself, of the authority of the name of Jesus.

Anyone can evoke the name of Jesus, but the results are not always guaranteed for non-believers. See below.

Acts 19:13-17 (ESV)

¹³ Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." ¹⁴ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. ¹⁵ But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" ¹⁶ And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.

What principles can you learn from this passage?

- *The name of Jesus is well known and respected in the spiritual realm.*
- *"Knowing" Jesus is more important than "serving" in Jesus' name.*
- *Non-believers can use the name of Jesus, but they do not carry the authority of Jesus.*
- *Spiritual confrontation can be extremely dangerous unless you are indwelt by the Spirit of Christ.*

THE AUTHORITY OF BELIEVERS

After his ascension, Jesus was seated on his throne, at the right hand of the Father, and given all authority over heaven and earth.

What do the following verses say happened to us at the time Jesus sat on his throne?

Ephesians 2:6 (ESV)

...and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

Colossians 2:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

We are also seated with Christ on his throne and share in his authority over heaven and earth. That same authority available to Christ Jesus is available to us since we are united with him. Everything Christ accomplished while on earth, he can continue to accomplish through us, his church.

Luke 9:1-2 (ESV)

¹ And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.

What is the three-fold ministry Jesus called his disciples to carry out?

- 1) *Drive out demons*
- 2) *Heal people*
- 3) *Preach the kingdom of God*

Luke 10:17-20 (ESV)

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" ¹⁸ And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰ Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

After the disciples returned and shared their experience, why did Jesus respond that he saw Satan fall from heaven?

The very fact that mankind is exerting authority over Satan confirms his ultimate defeat. By redeeming and restoring mankind back to "image," Christ is overturning what Satan accomplished in the garden. Satan's authority is now broken, and mankind, through Christ, can suppress him.

What does Jesus mean in verse 19?

In this above passage, snakes and scorpions are an allusion to the evil forces in the spiritual realm. He is saying that his followers do not need to fear the enemy's power because, in Christ, they cannot be harmed. Instead, it implies that we can now exert our authority and power over them. He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world.

Remember the prophecy in the Garden of Eden?***Genesis 3:15 (NIV)***

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Jesus ultimately fulfilled this on the cross with Satan, but we also are able to continue that same trampling effect on evil spirits as we come across them.

Why are the disciples not to rejoice in the fact that they have authority over evil spirits?

They were once in the same spiritual state as these very spirits – sinful and awaiting eternal judgment. They should rejoice in the fact they have been rescued from that fate, not by their own efforts, but by the grace of God. There is no room for smugness or arrogance, merely deeply-felt gratification for God's salvation.

Mark 9:14-29 (ESV)

¹⁴ And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. ¹⁵ And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him.

¹⁶ And he asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" ¹⁷ And someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. ¹⁸ And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able."

¹⁹ And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." ²⁰ And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. ²¹ And Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. ²² And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." ²³ And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes."

²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" ²⁵ And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." ²⁶ And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

²⁸ And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

²⁹ And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer."

Why were the disciples unable to make the evil spirit leave the boy?

They were ineffective in casting out the evil spirit due to their unbelief and lack of prayer. It is through prayer that we develop an intimacy with God and gain access to his authority.

What does this teach us about our authority?

It teaches us that it is not “our” authority. It is the authority of Jesus Christ that brings freedom. That authority is delegated to us as we spend time in our relationship with God and allow him to direct us according to his purposes.

The fact that this “type” required prayer says that there are certain powerful spirits that must be dealt with, not just by invoking the name of Jesus, but through direct dialogue with God and a confidence in his authority.

Apart from the Spirit’s leading and empowering, it will be fruitless and frustrating for us to try to exercise spiritual authority. We often want to see authority unleashed but do not bother to take the time to build the relationship where the authority rests. Jesus is more interested in us “knowing” him and being led by him than he is in us “serving” him. “Serving” must always flow out of “knowing.”

What is encouraging in this passage is that even though the disciples lacked faith, Jesus still stepped in and removed the spirit.

If preaching, healing, and deliverance were the thrust of Jesus’ ministry, the twelve’s ministry, the seventy-two’s ministry, and the early church’s ministry, what is the implication for us today? Should these also be a part of our ministry in the local church and as we walk through our community?

Why do we see so little of this in North American churches?

Discuss as a group.

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

What is the significance of Jesus’ authority in this passage?

1) If Jesus tells us to make disciples, that should be our primary focus

Jesus' final declaration to his disciples before ascending to heaven is very significant. It shows that this mission he has passed on to us needs to be obeyed, taken seriously and effectively accomplished through our lives. Everything else must pale in comparison to this task given to us; we need to center our lives on accomplishing it.

2) To make disciples is going to require spiritual authority

In the process of bringing people into the kingdom and training them in righteousness, we are going to face a severe spiritual battle that will attempt to undermine everything we do. We need to exercise the authority of Christ that is placed in us in order to set people free from the spiritual bondage they are under.

3) This spiritual authority resides within us because Jesus is always with us

It is his authority working through us that will accomplish the task, not our own abilities and strength. If we suppress the filling of the Holy Spirit in our lives through sin or distraction, we lose the effectiveness of his authority to accomplish his purposes.

Romans 16:20 (ESV)

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

When will Satan be crushed under our feet?

Discuss as a group.

1 Corinthians 6:3 (ESV)

Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

Satan will ultimately be crushed under our feet when Christ returns. He will be thrown into the Abyss and then finally into the lake of fire. We will then no longer have to battle sin, temptation, or the evil forces of the spiritual realm. We will reign with Christ and play a role in judging the fallen angels. Christ's victory will be fully experienced on that day. The end is coming – keep persevering until that day.

How can you start to express the authority of Christ in and through your life this coming week?



DEVOTIONAL READING

DAY 1 James 5:14-20

Questions to consider:

- Why is it important to deal with any sin issues before praying for healing?
- How does confessing our sins to one another help clear a path for healing prayer?
- Elijah was a man who followed God's leading very devotedly. As a result, his prayer life was very effective. What hinders the effectiveness of our prayer lives?
- How can we start representing God's love and power through our lives?
- Is it reasonable to think that we could also see healing occur through our ministry?

DAY 2 Acts 16:16-18

Questions to consider:

- What was Paul trying to do when the evil spirit kept interfering?
- Why did the girl's behavior bother him so much? Didn't she seem to be promoting Paul's ministry?
- Paul didn't need to spend time praying about this incident; he simply acted. What role do you think prayer played in Paul's life on an ongoing basis?
- Though Paul spoke the words, where did he understand the authority came from to drive out the spirit?
- How did Paul speak to the evil spirit?
- Did he "request" it leave?
- Did he ask God to make it go away?
- What was the immediate response to his words?
- If we have the same Spirit of Christ in us, do we have the same authority over evil spirits?

DAY 3 Acts 3:1-10

Questions to consider:

- Do you think Peter and John went around healing everyone they saw? Why or why not?
- How much time did Peter and John need to spend in prayer before they healed the man?
- What role do you think prayer played in their life on an ongoing basis?
- By what authority did Peter and John heal the lame man?
- Notice that between today's and yesterday's story, the name of Jesus is always declared. Why do you think this is?
- What do you learn about the authority delegated to the believers in this story?
- Is such authority also delegated to you?
- Why don't we see more of this happening in our churches and community? Were such actions limited solely to the early church?
- What role do you think the Holy Spirit played in directing Peter, John, and Paul?
- Do you invite the Spirit to direct you throughout your day?

DAY 4 Mark 9:14-29**Questions to consider:**

- Have you ever felt like you were in a hopeless situation and no one could help you?
- Why were the disciples unable to cast out the spirit?
- What does the fact that they were arguing show about how they were relying on the Holy Spirit?
- Is it comforting to know that despite our lack of faith, Jesus will still sometimes step in and take control?
- What is meaningful about the father's response to Jesus?
- Why did Jesus want to deal with the spirit before the crowds came?
- How do you think Jesus' rebuke to the disciples might have influenced their life?
- Some spirits are stronger than others. What is needed to deal with very powerful spirits?
- How much time are you spending with God in prayer?

DAY 5 Mark 5:24-34**Questions to consider:**

- How is it that the woman was healed even though Jesus never intentionally healed her?
- What role did the Holy Spirit play in all the workings of Jesus?
- How did Jesus know that a healing had occurred? How many others probably bumped into Jesus that day?
- What was it about this woman that evoked the Holy Spirit to respond to her need?
- What is Jesus' desire for each of us?
- Does Jesus still want to see people healed today, or was his compassion limited to his earthly ministry?



SESSION 5: EXERCISING AUTHORITY

We are told to exercise authority over evil spirits as part of our mission. How exactly are we to do that?

Discuss as a group.

Acts 16:16-18 (ESV)

¹⁶ As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." ¹⁸ And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

Why did Paul cast out the evil spirit?

The spirit was disrupting Paul in the process of trying to get his message across to the people. The spirit was saying that Paul did not desire verification of his ministry coming from an evil spirit. By affirming Paul and his message, it would have given credibility to the slave girl, as if she were on the same side and empowered by God. Paul would not want any connection to be seen between his ministry and the girl's fortune-telling ability.

What insights can you gain from Paul's response to the evil spirit?

- *Paul commanded the evil spirit to leave the girl. He didn't ask, he didn't suggest, he commanded.*
- *Paul didn't need to pray about it; he simply spoke with authority. However, Paul's life was a life of prayer and that would have prepared him for this encounter.*
- *Paul understood the authority he exercised was based on the name of Jesus Christ. By claiming the name of Jesus Christ, he was saying that what he was doing was in keeping with the mission and purposes of Jesus and that he was merely acting on behalf of Jesus.*
- *Paul expected an immediate response from the spirit.*

This type of interaction is what we call a "Power Encounter." It is a straightforward presentation of authority that commands the spirit to leave, and the spirit must obey. This is needed in certain circumstances, but there are other dynamics we will now explore that may also come into play when trying to help a person long term.

Luke 11:24-26 (ESV)

²⁴ “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ ²⁵ And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. ²⁶ Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first.”

Spirits are comfortable with that which they are familiar (just like us). Once they find “rest” in a person, they establish their hierarchy, their realm of influence and control, their networks, their deception, and embed their destructive patterns in the person’s life. When a spirit leaves a person, it is at unrest and longs to return to what it had before.

In the meanwhile, with the spirit’s absence, the person put their life back in order. The spirit returns only to find the “dwelling place” cleaned up and empty. He then invites other spirits to join him in bringing destructive control back into the person’s life.

What would be needed to prevent the evil spirit from being able to return to the person’s life?

A new, stronger inhabitant (who would not allow them access) is needed. Without the spirit of Christ in a person’s life, there is no guaranteed protection from the presence of evil spirits. That person dwells under Satan’s kingdom rule and has no defense available to him.

What are the implications for the slave girl if she does not acknowledge Jesus as her lord?

Suppose the slave girl walks away demonically free, but does not allow the Holy Spirit to indwell her. In that case, she leaves herself open to future demonic control, perhaps even greater bondage than she had before.

Simply casting a spirit out of a person is not the person’s final solution. They need to have their dwelling place (their lives) filled by the presence of Spirit of Christ.

Is it possible for a Christ-follower to be controlled by an evil spirit?

Discuss as a group.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

What truths can we gain from the above passage?

Christians cannot be owned or possessed by a spirit because Jesus Christ has already purchased us.

However, just because Christ has purchased our lives with his blood doesn't guarantee we fully surrender to his control. This is why Paul includes the exhortation to honor God with your body. We must still decide to surrender control of our lives to the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18 (ESV)

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit...

If a person has areas in their life not fully surrendered to God, what are the implications for evil spiritual influence in this area of their life?

Discuss as a group.

Every area in our lives not controlled by the Holy Spirit is potentially open to being influenced by an evil spirit. These are sins/fears/lies that we have not yet let go of due to either ignorance or defiance.

Ephesians 4:26-27 (ESV)

²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

Greek word for opportunity: topos = A dwelling place, position/ An opportunity to exert power

When we embrace sin, we give Satan an opportunity to exert influence in our lives. We potentially become a "dwelling place" for him for as long as we give him that point of access to our lives.

What are some indicators that a person may be accompanied by an evil spirit?

Discuss as a group.

Some red flags to watch for:

Past experiences of seeking information (even if just for "fun")

Ouija board, tarot cards, palm readings, etc.

Whenever we pursue these activities, we are seeking information about our lives, or other's lives, that we know God does not typically give us in our normal walk with him. In turning to another source of knowledge, we distrust God and embrace the part of the spiritual realm that is opposed to God and his purposes. When we turn to Satan for insight and knowledge, we choose to come under the realm of his influence and direction, opening up a place in our lives to his control.

Premonitions

Premonitions are, again, knowledge that comes from evil spirits. They give us a feeling that we are special, have a unique ability, and are significant. This need for value and significance drives us to rely more deeply on these spirits for ongoing knowledge and insight. Many people will struggle with the idea that this special ability is not truly a unique part of who they are until the spirit behind the ability is exposed.

Voices and visions

Just because a person hears voices in their head doesn't mean they are crazy. If evil spirits are present, they may speak words and thoughts into your mind. Strong, compelling thoughts of suicide, harm, sin, vengeance, etc., can all be voices of spirits trying to build destructive patterns into your life. These voices will often try to interfere whenever God's truth is being presented.

God speaks and gives visions, but they will always be consistent with his Word and bring glory and honor to Jesus Christ.

Spirit guides

Some people see beings in their minds that come to them as friends, spirit guides, or angels who want to walk with them through life to "encourage" them. However, when confronted, these beings become anything but friendly. They will use threats and fear to maintain their control and place in the person's life.

Sustained Fears

Fear never has anything to do with God. In fact, scripture tells us that God's perfect love will cast out fear. Fear and God are incompatible. If a person struggles with ongoing fear, that may be an indicator that a spirit has used that distrust of God as a foothold in the person's life.

Other possible indicators:

- Ongoing nightmares
- Inability to sing praises
- Blank scripture pages
- Drowsiness during spiritual discussions/bible studies
- Mental interference during discussions about God and truth
- Intense sinful feelings
- Ongoing Despair
- Sin patterns that can't seem to be broken, etc.

For more insight into potential foothold areas refer to *The Steps to Freedom in Christ* by Neil Anderson.

If a Christian comes under the influence of an evil spirit, how can they become free?

The following process is what we would identify as a “Truth Encounter.” It differs from a power encounter, as the goal is to identify a lie, replace it with truth, and in so doing break the hold an evil spirit has on the person’s life. The benefit of this approach is that it removes the foothold or point of permission in the person’s life so that the spirit has no grounds for returning.

Use the following scriptures to give insight into the freedom process.

Ephesians 4:23-24 (ESV)

²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

John 16:8 (ESV)

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment...

1) Confess your sin

If there is an evil spirit who has a foothold in your life, it is because there is an area of sin in your life that has not been confessed and surrendered to the Holy Spirit. This area may be deeply buried in your life and may take times of prayer and assistance of others to discover. However, if we are willing, God will always reveal any area in our life that is not completely surrendered to his control.

John 8:31-32 (ESV)

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Ephesians 6:17 (ESV)

...and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...

2) Affirm God’s Truth

If it is a lie (that we buy into) that traps us in sin, then it is the truth that will set us free. However, it is one thing to “know” the truth; it is another thing to believe and live out the truth. If I say that I believe the truth but live as though I don’t – my actions speak louder than my words.

When I “choose” to believe God’s truth, it means that I will make all my decisions based on the truth and not on the lie. It does not necessarily mean I will “feel” it is true immediately. Feelings will always follow what you believe but will sometimes lag a bit behind. To affirm the truth means to act on the truth.

God's truth will always be presented in scripture. Find a scripture passage that destroys the lie you have believed, memorize it, and embed it in your life.

James 4:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

3) **Resist** any evil spirit that has been attached to you due to that lie

Just because you now believe the truth doesn't mean that the spirit will simply choose to walk away, though sometimes that may happen. Most times, you will still need to rebuke the spirit and tell it that it is no longer welcome and that you command it to leave.

If you have truly removed the sin foothold in your life, the spirit no longer has any legal right to exert control over you. The permission you originally gave it, due to your sin, is removed.

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

4) **Transform your thinking**

Find as many scripture verses as you can to strengthen that perspective in your life. If the lie was deeply embedded in your life for many years, it is easy to slip back into old patterns of thinking. Renewing your mind is a process and not a one-time event. You may have to keep coming back and dealing with that same lie for some time. The more scripture you research on that specific issue, the stronger you will stand in defeating the lie in the future.

**You do not have to be a victim.
You are seated on the throne beside Jesus.
You have authority over evil spirits.**

Do not let Satan fool you into believing otherwise.

TEACHER NOTE: *Distribute **The Steps to Freedom in Christ** workbook for homework.*



DEVOTIONAL READING

DAYS 1-4

Read through “The Steps to Freedom in Christ” booklet by Neil Anderson very slowly and carefully. The goal at this point is not so much to pray the prayers but to understand the content.

Make sure you reflect on all the points raised and note any specific areas that relate to you.

DAY 5

Set aside a couple of hours to go back to the beginning and pray through all the prayers in The Steps to Freedom in Christ. It is best to do this all at once as opposed to broken over several days, but this is not a rule.

Share with your group at the next meeting as to how the process went for you.

- Was anything revealed?
- Was any freedom gained in any specific area?
- Was it a meaningful exercise?

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

SESSION 6: MAINTAINING FREEDOM

Share with your group your experience working through The Steps to Freedom in Christ.

- Was anything revealed?
- Was any freedom gained in any specific area?
- Was it a meaningful exercise?

MAINTAINING FREEDOM

Spiritual attack is simply a part of our present spiritual reality. Jesus couldn't avoid it, the early church couldn't avoid it, and we can't avoid it.

1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

What are some ways we can maintain our spiritual freedom and effectiveness in light of the ongoing assault on our lives?

Discuss as a group.

Ephesians 6:10-18 (ESV)

¹⁰ *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.*

¹¹ *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

¹³ *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*

¹⁴ *Stand therefore,*

*having fastened on the **belt of truth**,
and having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**,*

¹⁵ *and, as **shoes for your feet**, having put on the readiness given by the **gospel of peace**.*

¹⁶ *In all circumstances take up the **shield of faith**,
with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;*

¹⁷ *and take the **helmet of salvation**,
and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God,*

¹⁸ *praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...*

In what ways does the armor of God help us stand our ground?

Discuss as a group.

UNDERSTANDING THE ARMOR

Discuss why each piece of armor is essential for standing firm against Satan's attacks.

Helmet of Salvation

Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

How is salvation a critical piece of our armor?

Salvation means we've already won the battle, we cannot be defeated, and our eternal future is secure. This is all guaranteed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in our life.

Though I still have to battle with Satan until the day Christ returns, I have been given the authority to fight spiritual battles in the name of Jesus Christ. I have already been given the power to defeat the works of the enemy. Because I have salvation protecting me, I can enter the battle with confidence.

Satan will often sow seeds of doubt regarding our salvation and try to cause us to question our faith. If we give in to these thoughts, we become rendered ineffective in our spiritual life.

Romans 8:37-39 (ESV)

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

How does it feel to know that you cannot be defeated, if you simply abide with Christ?



Breastplate of Righteousness

Colossians 1:22-23 (ESV)

²² he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³ if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

How is righteousness a critical piece of our defense?

Righteousness is necessary because we would not be able to stand before God at the Day of Judgment without it. Because we are sinful beings, we are not able to be righteous in and of ourselves – no matter how “good” we are. Satan tries to accuse us of all those things we have done wrong, and he is right: we ARE guilty and deserving of death. Fortunately for us, Jesus forgave us all our sins and placed on us his own righteousness (1 John 2:1). As a result, we are declared holy and blameless before the Father. Therefore, when Satan tries to accuse us, we can remember that we have been forgiven and are now declared righteous by God. We can approach our relationship with God with confidence based on the righteousness of Christ.

Satan will try to tempt us not to live righteously. In so doing, he renders us less effective and robs us of confidence, joy, and peace.

How can we resist in light of Satan’s continuous attack?

Discuss as a group.

Matthew 26:41 (ESV)

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

1) Watch

Discern if Satan is offering a temptation to defeat you in your spiritual walk. Satan will be very deceptive in how he encourages you to sin. He attacks at the most opportune times and in moments of our spiritual weakness. If you are not discerning in your decisions, you will give way to temptation and be open to attack.

2) Pray

In and of yourselves, you will find some temptation too difficult to resist. God always provides a way out from temptation (1 Cor 10:13), but it is dependent on the help of his wisdom, his strength, and his leading. Resisting temptation ultimately has to be rooted in a deep relationship with God and a reliance on the Holy Spirit strengthening us through the Word.

Ephesians 4:21-24 (ESV)

²¹ ...assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

What are some “old self” things we need to put aside to be spiritually effective?

Belt of Truth**John 8:31-32 (ESV)**

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

What are some of the lies you’ve bought into in the past? What bondage did they create?

Sharing time.

How might Satan try to hinder us in this area of our defense?

Satan’s only ability to control us exists through deception. This is how he started in the Garden of Eden and continues to do today.

Satan will always try to deceive us in two primary ways:

1) Our view of God/Jesus

2) Our view of the Bible

Every deception we struggle with will ultimately be rooted in a distortion of one of these two anchors of faith.

Any cult or false religion will differ on one of these two main points. Further, at any time Satan starts to influence a person’s life, you will notice they will start to struggle with these same issues. In order to continue in a sinful direction, they need to justify it by either denouncing God or rejecting his Word.

How will we be more vulnerable in everyday life if we drop this piece of armor?

If we stop using truth to determine our beliefs and actions, we become open to all forms of influence. Ultimately we will either trust in our feelings or in our limited perspective to guide us. The Bible tells us that both of these life approaches will lead us to ruin.



Neither our feelings nor our limited knowledge are sufficient to lead us in truth.

Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

In what way are we more prepared and ready for spiritual battle if we have the good news of the peace of God?

We will have boldness and confidence in our lives that will give us a firm footing wherever we go. The idea of feet “fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace” is spiritual stability.

How will we be more vulnerable in everyday life if we drop this piece of armor?

- *The opposite of peace is anxiety or fear. It is rooted in a distrust of God’s provision and protection. In these moments of stress, we have precarious footing as we do not confidently rely on God to lead us to victory.*
 - *Without confidence and boldness, we will cower away from any spiritual attack and not push forward with the good news of peace.*
 - *If we do not have peace, what good news do we have to share with others?*
 - *If we are not at peace ourselves, we cannot lead others to peace with God.*

How can we develop a deeper assurance and peace in our relationship with God?

1) Surrender everything to Jesus Christ

Let anxiety and fear fade away as the problem is now in his hands. Make a decision to let Jesus do whatever he wants with “his” life. You’ve given it to him; now it is up to him to determine how best to use your life for his purposes.

2) Take steps of faith

Discover how sure-footed you can be as you rely on God to meet your every need in areas where you feel you have little control.

As you step into new territory for Jesus Christ, you will discover that God sustains you and your confidence will continue to grow. Fear and insecurity will diminish and be replaced by a sense of boldness to accomplish more for the kingdom of God.

Shield of Faith**Ephesians 6:16 (ESV)**

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one...

What fiery dart does faith extinguish? *Doubt*

What areas do we tend to doubt God the most?

Love, Word, Purposes, Power, Provision, our Value, our Significance, his Authority

Which are you inclined to question the most? Why?

1 Peter 1:3-5 (ESV)

³ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

What is the relationship between faith and hope?

Discuss as a group.

Discuss and try to explain these next two statements:

Faith creates Hope

Our faith in Jesus Christ and what he accomplished in his death and resurrection give us hope of eternal life. Our future is guaranteed, and it is wonderful. We are now anxiously waiting for the outcome of our faith to be fulfilled in the return of Christ.

Hope increases Faith

Because we have such a wonderful hope, it gives us the courage and strength to continue on in the battle. When our faith starts to waver, the hope of Christ builds up our faith so that we will stand firm. Colossians 1:5 talks about our faith and love that spring from the hope we have. Hope gives life to both the way we love and how we live by faith.



Colossians 1:5 (NIV)

the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven.

No Faith – No Hope! No Hope – No Faith!

The Sword of the Spirit: The Word of God

John 17:15-17 (ESV)

¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

The Bible: our greatest defense and our greatest weapon.

In what way is scripture our greatest defense?

God's truth protects us from Satan's deceptions by making us aware of his schemes, renewing our minds, and leading us in paths of righteousness. God's truth applied to our lives sets us apart (sanctified) and makes us pure. We know right and wrong based on God's truth, not Satan's lies.

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Jeremiah 23:29 (ESV)

Is not my word like fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?

In what way is scripture our greatest weapon?

Scripture gives us every truth we need to break down Satan's strongholds. We move forward by the power of God's word, both in our own lives and in the process of setting others free. It makes us effective in our spiritual battle against Satan's rule in this world.

What are the implications for our life if we do not know how to use the Bible effectively?

ARMOR

SALVATION
RIGHTEOUSNESS
TRUTH
PEACE
FAITH
WORD OF GOD

PROVIDES

Guarantee of Victory
Freedom from Accusation
Freedom from Bondage
Stability and Confidence
Hope and encouragement to move forward
Effectiveness

Which piece of armor do you find you tend to drop the most?

What steps might you take this week to ensure you have securely fastened that piece to your life?

DEVOTIONAL READING

DAY 1 Ephesians 6:18-20

Questions to consider:

- On top of the armor, Paul also says we should pray for all the saints. Why does he encourage this?
- Do you ever pray for the spiritual strength and protection of other believers?
- Do you ever pray that people in your church would fearlessly proclaim Jesus Christ?
- Why not spend time today simply praying for the spiritual protection and spiritual effectiveness of people in your church and around the world.
- Pray this also for yourself!

DAY 2 2 Timothy 2:22 and James 4:7-8

Questions to consider:

- If we have such incredible armor, why should we need to flee?
- In the first verse, we are not just to flee one thing but to pursue the opposite. What are you pursuing?
- When we flee one thing and pursue another, why does that make Satan flee?
- What areas do you need to flee from this week?
- What do you need to pursue this week?

DAY 3 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Questions to consider:

- How does sexual immorality affect a person on a deeper level than other sins?
- In our culture, we have become very immune to sexual immorality. It is so commonplace that we believe it is almost normal. In what ways have you perhaps crossed the line of what God defines as appropriate in your perspective?
- Do you have a right to do whatever you want with your body? Why or why not?
- If your life/body belongs to Jesus Christ, are you truly using your life and body in a way that glorifies God?
- Are there some things you're doing right now that do not bring joy to Jesus?
- How can you flee from these things this week?

DAY 4 1 Timothy 6:6-11**Questions to consider:**

- If God promises to meet all our needs, why do we always feel we need more money?
- Why are we so discontent with what we have?
- If the stuff we have hasn't brought us joy and fulfillment, why do we keep thinking more stuff will?
- How can the pursuit of money lead one away from God?
- Why does this result in grief?
- Instead of pursuing more money, what does Paul recommend you pursue?
- How might that actually bring more joy and fulfillment into your life?
- What does your cheque-book show about what you believe will bring you joy and fulfillment?
- Why not take some time to look at your budget to see what you value as the highest priority in your life?
- How can you become free from the love of money and what you believe it offers you?

DAY 5 1 Corinthians 10:12-14**Questions to consider:**

- Why does Paul caution those who think they are standing firm?
- Why do we always think our temptation is stronger than what others face?
- Why do we sometimes feel the temptation is too strong for us to resist?
- When tempted, have you ever looked for the open door – the way out?
- Is it comforting to know you can actually resist temptation?
- What is the connection between idolatry and giving into temptation?
- In areas where you are frequently tempted, find some scripture passage you can declare and stand on the next time you are challenged.