

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

BLOGS IV

Blogs about Spiritual Warfare and the Names of God and Jesus, prayer Principles for Spiritual Warfare, Samson, Spiritual Growth, SW in Church History & Steps to Deliverance

BLOG 397-511



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BLOG 397: THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT!

“The Devil made me do it!” Flip Wilson made this phrase popular in the early 1970s. But it’s been a common excuse for people to use since Eve first used it in Eden (Genesis 3:13). We know Satan can’t “make” us do anything, but how much is he (or his demons) involved in our everyday temptations and struggles? We tend to make two mistakes: attributing everything evil to him, or attributing nothing to him. We either see a demon behind every bush, or we believe he isn’t a factor to consider today. Both extremes are wrong and must be avoided. However, finding the middle line and sticking to it can be extremely difficult (2 Corinthians 2:5-11). I readily admit I can’t pin it down for you. I don’t think we’ll know for sure until we get to heaven.

However, I can tell you this: our biggest enemy in life is not Satan but self (Galatians 5:17). It is our flesh, our sin nature, the aspect in man that makes him rebellious against God. The NIV translates the Greek word for “flesh” as “sin nature,” showing that it isn’t our physical flesh but a natural tendency in our soul to be self-centered and to sin. In “Pilgrims Progress” the battle of “Christian” with “Apollyon” lasted three hours, but the battle of Christian with himself lasted all the way from the Wicket Gate to the river Jordan.

In 1972 there was a Pogo cartoon that said, “We have met the enemy and he is us!” That’s right. We are our greatest enemy. As long as we focus on our self and try to meet our own needs by any methods, Satan and his demons don’t need to do much to defeat us. We do it to ourselves no matter how hard we try. Paul says in Romans 7 that he does what he doesn’t want to do and doesn’t do what he wants. That’s him battling himself and losing. Demons don’t have to do anything. Don’t give Satan credit for what you do in your own flesh. Put the blame where it deserves to be.

It is only when we seek to live by the new nature, the power of Jesus Christ within us, that we bring his attacks. Then the battle becomes greater the more committed we are to becoming like Jesus. Our flesh still has a hand in it, but it has a lot of help from Satan’s forces. That’s when we need spiritual warfare. It’s a tool we use against Satan, not against the flesh. Spiritual warfare doesn’t work when we are choosing to sin from our own free will. Only by yielding to God’s Spirit and allowing Him to fill us and empower us can we have victory. Paul gives the solution to his struggle in Romans 7 by writing Romans 8. Read it slowly and carefully and you’ll have the formula to victory over the flesh.

Romans 8:1-4 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Are you able to discern when there is demonic attack in your life or when you are battling your own sin nature? Ask God for wisdom so you know how to correctly battle back.

BLOG: 398 SEXUAL BONDAGE (by Don Rogers)

(Thirty plus years ago God put Don Rogers in my life. He trained and mentored me in spiritual ministry. When he was no longer able to minister, I had the privilege taking over his “Spiritual Warfare Ministries”. He had written many articles about spiritual warfare. I have edited and added to his work for this blog.)

Satan and his host work hard to draw men and women into sexual sins and perversions because it is a direct attack on the only institution God established before the fall. I’m talking about

marriage. God created mankind in his own image (Genesis 1:27). After he had created Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden, *"The Lord said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'"* (Genesis 2:18). *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh"* (Genesis 2:24)

Today, there are those who are trying to redefine marriage by marrying man to man and woman to woman. Others see no harm in having extra-marital relationships. They justify their actions by saying that it helps the marriage.

Marriage, as God has ordained, is the foundation of a family and families are the foundation of society. When marriages are destroyed, families are hurt severely and society eventually is affected in an adverse way. This is all part of Satan's plan to divide and conquer.

God spoke very clearly through Moses as he warned the Israelites concerning sexual sins. In Leviticus chapter 18 Moses provided the people with a set of laws addressing their sexual practices.

18:6 "No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations."

18:7 "Do not dishonor your father by having sexual sins with your mother."

18:8 "Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife." (Stepmother)

18:9,11 "Do not have sexual relations with your sister." (Including stepsister)

18:10 "Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter or daughter's daughter."

18:12,13 "Do not have sexual relations with your father's or mother's sister."

18:14 "Do not have sexual relations with your father's brother's wife."

18:15 "Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law."

18:16,18 "Do not have sexual relations with your sister-in-law."

18:17 "Do not have sexual relations with a woman and her daughter."

18:19 "Do not have sexual relations with a woman having her monthly period."

18:20 "Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife."

18:22 "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable."

18:23 "Do not have sexual relations with an animal. That is a perversion."

"Everyone who does any of these detestable things, such persons must be cut off from their people. Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came [from Egypt] and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the Lord your God." (18:29-30) Now the above list is not all-inclusive, but it laid a foundation for understanding what constituted sexual sins.

We notice in Deuteronomy 27:20-23 that sexual sins are included in the list of sins that release curses upon those who practice sin. The impact of curses often lets us bear the full consequences of our actions. Those consequences diminish the quality of life for the person. That is what bondages are all about.

"Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen." (Romans 1:24-25)

Even today, people continue to exchange the truth for a lie. They say the scriptures have been misinterpreted and that Christians are being mean spirited and intolerant on this issue. There are some that deny that any sexual activity is a sin, but a natural process.

"The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?" (1 Corinthians 6:13b-15a)

Those who have become one with Christ should be horrified to take such a glorious relationship and expose it to that which is detestable to God. The Lord dealt with such a person in

Corinth through his servant, the apostle Paul. A believer in the church had been involved sexually with his father's wife or stepmother. The sin was compounded by the fact that it was known, but the leaders did not discipline the man by putting him out of their fellowship. So Paul instructed the church to assemble and *"hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord."*

Many scholars tell us that this action was only excommunication. I happen to believe there is more happening here than putting the man out of the fellowship of believers. I believe he was removed from the protective power of the Lord and placed into the power of Satan for a period of time. It was done for his soul's sake. It wouldn't be the first time God's people had been placed under the power of their enemy until they experienced repentance for their sins.

"It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit." (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)

"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people." (Ephesians 5:3)

Have you been influenced by the world to accept sexual sin which God's Word condemns? Are you caught in sexual sin? Confess it and take whatever steps are necessary to move away from it. If you know anyone who is involved in sexual sin encourage them and pray regularly for them.

BLOG 399: THE "ONE FLESH" BOND (by Don Rogers)

"Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.' " 1 Corinthians 6:16

Imagine becoming one flesh with someone through sin and that person is already in bondage. Because you are now "one flesh" you are vulnerable to sharing in the bondage of that person. We see the result of this continually. God permits it to happen. When a believer continues in sexual sin, this is a definite act of rebellion in order to gratify self sexually and emotionally.

Proverbs 5:22 - *"The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast."*

That "one flesh" bond is like a cord holding the person fast in a bondage that was formed through sin. This is why there is so much difficulty breaking free from these relationships. The cords of sin hold them in place. There is bondage. Only true repentance will enable a person to get free.

Unfortunately, there are "one flesh" bonds put into place through rape, incest and molestation.

No wonder the effects of these terrible experiences do not ever seem to let go. There is more than psychological damage affecting the person. There is also a spiritual hold that compounds the psychological problems. There is a bondage in place.

All this does not seem fair and it isn't. Warfare is seldom fair. There are a lot of victims. But our God is a deliverer, who can break such bondages, heal us and restore us and turn the bad to good.

"Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body." (1 Corinthians 6:18)

The Apostle Paul gave us hope concerning besetting sins like the sexual sins we have been discussing. He gives us principles in Romans 6 that can help us achieve victory if we apply them to our lives.

1. The Fact - (Romans 6:6) Christ has made it possible for us not to be slaves to sin. He gave His life that we might have victory.
2. The Faith Principle (Romans 6:11) We have to decide we are going to die to the sin and begin counting ourselves dead to it from this moment on no matter what temptation comes along. It can be done in faith.
3. The Obedience Principle (Romans 6:13) Stop offering the parts of your body to the sin, as instruments of wickedness!! Get rid of the pornography, don't visit porno sites, stop looking at people's bodies and look at their faces and see them as people whom God loves.
4. The Promise - (Romans 6:14) If you will follow the above principles, sin shall not be your master. This is a promise from God's word which is there to be claimed.
5. The Warning - (Romans 6:16) Your choices determine whom you are going to serve. Go and sin no more. The Lord will give you the grace and strength to claim victory. He is not going to twist your arm. You have to begin taking responsibility for your life and the lives you are affecting because of your sin.

I know these principles work because we have seen them work for those with whom we work.

Pray for your heart to be truly repentant of your sexual sins and confess your sexual sins to the Lord and then renounce them once and for all. Covenant with the Lord, in faith, to walk in the new life He has given you and die to the old life.

BLOG 400: CURSES

When we think of curses today we often picture a witch doctor doing some voodoo magic over someone, or perhaps a person sticking needles in a doll while reciting jinxes and spells. But curses go way beyond that. Anyone who wants something bad to happen to someone else, and states so, can be putting a curse on that person. If demons are involved in the person's life they can hear what is said and take it as a prayer to themselves. That empowers them to then seek to carry out what the person wanted to happen. It can be done by someone who doesn't like us, hates Jesus or feels they have been hurt by us. It is serious and happens more than we think. That in itself makes it extra dangerous.

Parents can curse their children by saying they wish they hadn't had them, they hate them, don't want them they are no good and will never amount to anything, and so forth. We can curse ourselves (Proverbs 6:2) by saying we hope we die, that we aren't good enough, that we'll never be happy or any of many such things about ourselves.

The area of curses is a less common but still a strong opening to demonic access. To curse someone is to ask for evil to happen to them. Those requests (really prayers) are heard by Satan and his forces and 'answered' when possible. This includes everything from occult and witchcraft curses to one individual 'wishing' harm on another. Balaam was paid to curse Israel, but God wouldn't allow it (Numbers 22 - 24). These curses, when in effect, can also be passed on from generation to generation. The Bible says that speaking evil of someone is the same as cursing them (Romans 12:14). Things like: "I hope you die..." "Since he/she won't love me I wish they'd" "You're no good, you'll never amount to anything..." "I hope she gets some of her own medicine..." "I

hope your children do to you when you grow up." You can even curse yourself by what you say (Proverbs 6:2). Our words are powerful and important. They aren't something to be taken lightly. Using profanity ("curse" words) also falls into this category. When someone "damns" someone to "hell" that is an awful, awful thing to say! Demons love to hear it, they use the power of the hate in the speaker and will latch onto any authority or justification to do their evil!

Balaam tried to curse the Jews (Dt 23:4). The Bible says we can curse others (Ps 109:17). Demons use this as an excuse to work against the person, as a 'prayer' to gain access. Old Testament men (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. Gen 27:23, 38) would bless or curse their children (Genesis 48:20). Sometimes they even put a curse on them, as Abraham did with Ishmael and Isaac cursed Esau. The Levites were used to pronounce blessings (Dt 10:8; 21:5). When Naomi came back to Israel she said she was to be called 'mara' because things had turned 'bitter' for her. A father is to bless his children by his words and send them into life with his and God's blessing. What you have done is the opposite.

If you feel this may have happened to you remember to "Bless them that curse you" (Matthew 5:44). Treat the person with love and kindness, for when you return good for evil the "undeserved curse does not come to rest" (Proverbs 6:2). Break that curse against you in Jesus' name, claiming Galatians 3:10,13 which says "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'" Ask God to turn the curse to a blessing (Deuteronomy 23:5).

BLOG 401: WHAT IS SPIRITUAL WARFARE? (by Don Rogers)

This is an important question, because "spiritual warfare" means different things to different people. The term itself is not found in the scriptures, but the concept is taught. Two of the most commonly associated passages were written by the Apostle Paul.

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms." Eph. 6:10-12

The purpose of spiritual warfare is to bring about a proper balance in Christian lives. So many Christians have become passive and fearful. Some are satisfied just to believe the right things and attend church services and activities each week. This type of lifestyle is quite different from that to which Jesus had called believers. The apostles (Lk 9:1-2) and the seventy (Lk 10) were told by Jesus to go out and preach and teach about the kingdom of God.

Spiritual warfare is a pro-active approach to our faith. We actively resist the devil when his hosts harass us. We actively pursue spiritual disciplines that will make us stronger and better prepared. We actively engage the enemy when people are in spiritual bondage.

We utilize prayer as a weapon to penetrate strongholds that cannot be reached in any other way. Spiritual warfare is the putting aside of passive attitudes towards faith which keep us from commitment and cause us to pursue only those things that will benefit us. Instead of seeking our own agenda, we submit our will to God and accept the sacrifices He calls us to make.

There is not one area of Christian ministry that has not become a battleground, but often there is not discernment that some form of spiritual resistance is in place. It has become common to attribute a natural or human explanation to most problems and leave it at that. The one who has a spiritual warfare perspective will be inclined to test the situation to ascertain whether or not there is something more than natural influences involved.

A spiritual warrior has an alertness to the activity of the enemy. This alertness is by no means fear or paranoia. He does not go around crediting Satan and his hosts for everything wrong under the sun. The Apostle Paul was a good example of a spiritual warrior. He didn't go out of his way to look for demonic activity, but when he encountered it, he quickly recognized it and then he confronted it with spiritual authority victoriously.

A spiritual warrior knows he must bring discipline to his thought life and to his actions. If he allows these areas to be compromised, he will not be affective in resisting the enemy. He takes sin very seriously, because he knows that sin always gives the adversary an advantage. He must always be on guard against comparing himself with others and being entrapped by the subtlety of religious pride. The true warrior knows that he can do nothing that is affective in his own strength. His strength, authority, wisdom and discernment are dependent upon his close walk with his Lord. He should always remain focused and guard himself against distraction caused by problems and troubles that appear. These are designed to get his eyes off the Lord and lure him into working in the flesh.

Understanding spiritual warfare provides a new perspective on parenthood. Parents are entrusted with children from the Lord to nurture, cherish and protect. In the parent, the child needs to see a reflection of God's attributes of unconditional love, faithfulness and holiness. The parent should become a steward of God's grace in the home and be on guard against the enemy's assaults on any member of the family. A godly parent can exercise great authority in the name of Christ to resist the enemy and fight on behalf of the children. Like Job, a parent is also the priest of the home, bringing the sins of the children to God so that the enemy cannot establish strongholds in their lives.

Spiritual warfare awareness can also be very effective in witnessing and evangelism. You learn to recognize the barriers and strongholds in advance and prepare the way through prayer, spiritual authority, divine appointments and ministry.

A spiritual warrior knows his inheritance in Christ. He knows God's promises and is not easy prey to the lies and deceptions of the enemy, who tries to call these promises and inheritance into question. He understands the lie is the enemy's language and his most effective weapon. Therefore, the warrior seeks constantly to fortify himself in an understanding of God's truth which he wears like armor for protection.

BLOG 402: IS SPIRITUAL WARFARE BIBLICAL? (by Don Rogers)

Is Spiritual Warfare a valid Biblical concept?

ANSWER:

The apostle Paul believed that our struggle is against spiritual forces of wickedness. He wrote to the Ephesians (Eph 6:12) "For our struggle is not against enemies of flesh and blood, but against rulers, against authorities, against cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

"For we wanted to come to you- certainly I, Paul, did, again and again – but Satan stopped us." (1 Thess. 2:18)

Paul's perspective concerning this spiritual battle was remarkable.

- He knew where the real battle had to be fought. On the spiritual level
- But he never became paranoid about our spiritual enemy whose very nature keeps us from seeing him directly.
- Paul recognized the enemy's presence through spiritual discernment given to him by the Holy Spirit. He was able to detect the enemy's activity in the circumstances he encountered.
- Paul was also able to draw upon his source of strength and protection from a close relationship and walk with his Lord. No circumstance or enemy intimidated him.

Was Paul the only one who recognized Satan as a threat to the believer? No! there were others who believed that Satan posed a serious threat to believers.

- Jesus believed it! - (Mt. 6:13) – And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. (John 17:15) My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.
- James believed it! – (James 4:7) Submit yourselves then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- Peter believed it! – (Acts 5:3) – Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?”
- (1 Peter 5:8-9) – be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.
- John believed it! – (Rev. 13:7) – he was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

If the Word of God is true, then we must take this spiritual warfare seriously

BLOG 403: BENEFITS OF LEARNING SPIRITUAL WARFARE (by Don Rogers)

Learning about spiritual warfare takes work. Of course demons themselves oppose us because they don't want us learning about how to have victory over them. They want to keep us ignorant, as many Christians are. Our flesh always wants to take the easy way in what we do, and studying, humbling ourselves, confessing sin, overcoming fear and other things is not easy. Yet it is the only path to victory. Jesus talked about Satan more than anyone in the Bible. If it was a part of His life it is a part of ours as well. The benefits far outweigh the difficulties, though. A commitment to spiritual warfare means:

1. A New Attitude - You begin to think like an overcomer with a victorious attitude. You walk according to your inheritance of grace in Christ. You no longer have an attitude of playing it safe or seeking not to rock the boat. You realize you want to be on the front lines for God, not trying to live the comfortable life with as few problems as possible.

2. A Greater Focus - You carefully guard against the attempts to distract you or to push your buttons. You recognize that the enemy likes to entangle God's people in the cares of this world or provoke us to react in the flesh. You understand the importance of keeping your eyes on the Lord and standing in faith upon God's character, not in your abilities.

3. A Necessary Discipline - You have begun to discipline yourself on all levels. You are setting more time aside for study and prayer. You are spending more time being alert and obedient to the leading of the Spirit.

4. A More Balanced Biblical World View - You take very seriously the Biblical warnings to God's people about an enemy that is real.

Every soldier needs to know his enemy. He needs to become very familiar with the weapons and tools given him to overcome the enemy. It takes work, time and practice to learn to use those weapons, but victory depends on the ability to overcome. We have a skillful, powerful, deceitful enemy who is committed to destroying us so it's important we learn how to defend ourselves and our loved ones.

BLOG 404: CAN CHRISTIANS HAVE DEMONIC PROBLEMS? (by Don Rogers)

1. Can Christians have demonic problems?

ANSWER:

I know that there are a lot of Christians that believe this is impossible. They believe if this were possible it would undermine the work of Christ at the cross. Another argument is also posed. "How can the light dwell with darkness?"

First of all, if God is permitting the Christian to experience demonic problems, there is a reason: there is probably sin that needs to be addressed. God often used Israel's enemies to chastise them. Paul was speaking to Christians in Eph. 4:26-27 when he said, "Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold" (NIV)

The Greek word for foothold means a place of influence in one's life. Sin provides the enemy with an opportunity, even with Christians, if they persist in sin.

The argument of the light not being able to dwell with darkness is based on logic, not God's Word. God is present everywhere and cannot be limited by the darkness of this world. If that were the case, the Holy Spirit would not be able to dwell and work in a world full of sin and evil forces.

On the other hand, the apostle Paul indicates that Christians can open themselves up to evil spirits if they do not adhere to God's word and obey it. He said to believers in 2 Corinthians 11:3-5: "But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough."

What Paul is saying here is that believers can receive into their lives another spirit in the same way they received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit entered when they believed the truth about Jesus Christ. An evil spirit can enter when you believe the lies of the enemy in the form of another gospel. In fact, when any sin is practiced by a believer, there is a potential that God may permit an evil spirit to enter in as an agent of chastisement.

And Christians put up with the oppressions because they are blinded by the sin and lack discernment. Paul could not have made it much clearer for us.

2. I believe it is possible for Christians to be harassed by demons, but how is it possible for demons to invade a believer's body?

ANSWER:

This is somewhat related to the first question. I think the best way to understand what is happening is to look at Romans 8:22-23. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

The reason we can be physically vulnerable to demonic activity is because our physical bodies will await redemption. That is why disease can enter our bodies and even bring death to us. If we understand that the sovereign God can do whatever He pleases, even to using the enemy's activities for his purposes, then we will not have such difficulty with this issue.

And remember that God has given a couple of great promises to stand on.

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." 1 Cor. 10:13

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

BLOG 405: THE BATTLE OF THE MIND – THE PROBLEM (by Don Rogers)

Satan's most frequent and consistent attack is directed against our minds. He sends his hosts out with an arsenal of weapons: lies, deceptions, threats and intimidation, questions, accusations, lust and other enticements. The attack often starts very early in life. If a child is abused at home, lies from the enemy appear in the thoughts saying the child deserves it or is not worth anything to anyone. Accusations surface in the thoughts that it is the child's fault anyway.

As many children are developing, questions from the enemy often appear in their thoughts regarding their sexual identity. Over and over these thoughts emerge causing confusion, shame and fear. Once a child begins to receive any lie as truth, more lies will appear to reinforce the central lie. After a while, the child will begin to focus on his own shortcomings and perceive the rejection of others. Sometimes people are directed, by the enemy, into their lives to prey on them to add more reinforcement to the lies.

If parents do not reflect the character of God to their children, the children will project all their shortcomings onto God. For instance, if one or more parents are cold, lacking in emotion, rigid and constantly preoccupied with other things, the child will see God as lacking compassion, unloving and not there for them. The enemy will encourage these perceptions.

Many children bring a lot of bad baggage along with them into adulthood from their childhood. Some grow up in homes where there has been considerable control, manipulation and emotional or physical abuse. As grown women, they are often "led" to find a man of similar qualities to continue the destructive negative reinforcements in their lives. We cannot underestimate the enemy's influence in these situations.

In many cases, the enemy already has claims upon parents and even grandparents. Now the enemy focuses on the children, because he knows that the consequences of family sins can make the children vulnerable to similar attacks.

We minister to many adults who have been believing the enemy's lies about themselves for years. Often there are strongholds of low self-esteem and self hatred. Needless to say, it is very difficult for them, as believers, to live by faith. The enemy continues to pummel them with lies and accusations, causing much doubt and hopelessness.

We see many adults who are full of anger, bitterness and unforgiveness. Sometime in their life, often in childhood, they have been hurt deeply by someone. The enemy will constantly give them "flashback memories" of that situation in the past. The memories are so painful, that they constantly stir up the anger, bitterness and resentment, so strongly that it is very difficult for that person to forgive, even though they know the need to.

We could continue indefinitely with these scenarios, but it is my hope you have gotten the point concerning the enemy's activity directed toward your thoughts. Be more alert to the random thoughts and mental attitudes you have throughout the day. Ask God to convict you by His Spirit. In the next blog I will talk about what to do if your mind and thoughts have been under assault.

BLOG 406: THE BATTLE OF THE MIND – THE SOLUTION (by Don Rogers)

What is a person to do when their mind has been under assault for such a long time? My answer to that is not simple, nor is it easy. But you have to start somewhere.

1. It is extremely important to correct the wrong perceptions of God. Any study that presents a balanced study of the character of God will be extremely beneficial. I can't emphasize enough how important it is for you to correct your perception of God and have it line up with the Scriptures.

2. It is equally important to discover what God has to say about you. You need to know your true identity according to the Word of God. The enemy has been distorting and lying about you, so that you have a false perception of yourself.

3. The apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 10:5 to ***"take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."*** The first two steps, "Knowing God" and "The Believer's Identity in Christ," are the beginning of that process. It is imperative that you fill your mind with TRUTH to counteract the lies you have believed. You also have to confess specifically that you have believed the lies of the enemy and ask God to forgive you and cleanse you.

Part of taking your thoughts captive is to start disciplining yourself concerning the things you watch in the movies, TV and the internet, as well as the things you read in books and magazines. You need to clean up what you are allowing to influence your mind and emotions.

The apostle Paul tells us in Philippians 4:8, ***"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."***

It won't be easy at first, but with God's help and a desire to please Him, you can overcome and claim victory.

4. God has given each of us direct access to Himself through prayer. He has said that we can come boldly into His presence and present our requests to Him. Most people do not take advantage of this great privilege. Many see it only as an obligation rather than a way to experience fellowship with the Lord. Parents want their children to come to them with their concerns. How much more does our God want us to come to Him? Jesus spent much time with his Father when he was on this earth.

Without a consistent prayer life and fellowship with the Lord, you will not experience the victory that you desire. God has given us the Holy Spirit to teach us how to pray. God has given us promises to claim. He has given us tremendous provisions to utilize in our daily lives.

In closing, I want to remind you of another statement by the Apostle Paul. ***"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*** Philippians 4:6-7

May God bless you with the determination to conquer the enemy's deceptions. It is the Lord's will for you to be free.

BLOG 407: THE DECEITFULNESS OF DEMONS (by Don Rogers)

1. THEY IMPERSONATE GOD IN OUR THOUGHTS

"And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve." – 2 Corinthians 11: 14-15

Religious spirits manifest themselves to people as an "inner voice" from God. They come as "angels of light" saying to some, "You are special to Me." "You are different from others. I am giving you special knowledge - a special assignment." They flatter people with these words enticing them to spiritual pride. This is often how cults are born.

Spirits also impersonate the Holy Spirit and try to inflict a lot of guilt. Rather than bringing loving conviction, they pound with accusations of how bad we are and how worthless we have become. They torment with thoughts of turning from God and losing our salvation.

II. THEY IMPERSONATE OUR OWN THOUGHTS - Using our expressions

Extremely negative thoughts - "I am a failure" - "I am ugly" - "I am worthless" - "I will never succeed" - "God does not love me" - "I am a misfit. No one cares about me."

Prideful thoughts - "I am better than others" - "I am smarter than she is" - "I am more spiritual than they are" - "I don't need anyone else"

Rebellious thoughts - "I have a right to do what I want with my life" - "Nobody is going to tell me what to do"

Hatred - "I don't like them because . . ." - "I will never forgive them because . . ." - "I want them to suffer the way they made me suffer."

Suicide - "I am better off dead" - "Nobody cares if I die anyway" - "They'll be sorry when I die" - "Why not drive my car head on into the oncoming traffic?"

(Are these self-thoughts always demonic? No. But many of them do have their source in the demonic.)

III. THEY IMPERSONATE SATAN'S PRESENCE

Many times spirits take one of the names of Satan and confront the victim as Satan himself. They are attempting to intimidate the person by instilling fear that they are being confronted with the "prince of this world." They say, "I am too strong for you" - "I will torment you until you give in - submit to me and I will stop." "You have no chance because I am so powerful. Hoping to paralyze the victim into inactivity, they will often say - "Your God cannot help you – I will destroy you."

IV. THEY BATTLE FOR THE MIND AND WILL

Satan knows that if he can convince or intimidate us through one of these forms of attack, he will have a definite advantage. He seeks to bring our mind and will into subjection through lies and deception. When we are aware of these tactics, we will be more discerning when these attacks come to us. These attacks are much more deceptive than they appear. The fact that they have manifested in our thoughts makes them very personal. We are used to letting our thoughts lead us. What we must do is learn to test the thoughts that we receive with the Word of God. Whether the thoughts

have their source in our flesh or demonically, testing them by the Word is always an effective defense.

BLOG 408: HOW TO PRAY FOR THOSE IN SIN (by Don Rogers)

Simply defined, intercessory repentance [IR] is the practice of interceding for those who are bound by sin by repenting on their behalf through confessing their sins to God until they are brought to repentance. It consists of a heartfelt sorrow concerning other's sins against God and the desire for them to turn away from their sin and submit themselves to God. We do not in any way seek to undermine the responsibility of the individual to be accountable for their sins. They must ultimately seek forgiveness from God. But through intercessory prayer we can ask God for mercy to block any openings these sins give to the enemy to blind the person and keep them in bondage. Our goal is to allow the person to freely see the issues and be able to make a choice to turn to Jesus for salvation and victory.

Often we are not able to talk with those who are involved in sin because they are very defensive, hostile or self-righteous about their behavior. Praying for their sins to be broken provides a powerful way of ministering to those who cannot be reached in any other way. It avoids confrontation on a human level, but is a very powerful way to confront the enemy on a spiritual level.

There are ample scriptural precedents to support this principle. Let us examine various elements of this principle in God's Word.

I. The Believer's Priesthood

God directed that Aaron be consecrated as the first high priest of Israel. God established him as the model of priesthood. Priests were to be guardians and servants of the relationship God wanted with His people. The priests represented Israel before God and they also represented God to Israel. In Leviticus 16, we are provided with detailed insight concerning the high priest's duties. On the Day of Atonement he prepared himself through physical cleansing and then offered a sin offering to make atonement for himself and his family. Following this, he interceded on behalf of the people and once again entered into the presence of God. Aaron received from the people two male goats. One goat was sacrificed as a sin offering and the other was made a scapegoat upon which the peoples' sins were placed and then sent out into the wilderness.

The point is that the priest first dealt with his own sin and then he came before God with the sins of the people. We have been taught that our priesthood primarily involves direct access to God; that we can come boldly and directly to Him through prayer. That is true. But our priesthood also involves bringing the sins of others to God, confessing sin on their behalf and asking for God's grace to be extended to them so they may repent. As priests we come to our high priest, Jesus Christ and draw upon the grace provided by the shedding of His blood. As He makes intercession for us, so we make intercession for others, confessing their sins to God. In so doing, we bless them and frustrate the enemy by undermining his sin claim.

II. Forgiveness and Love

Intercessory prayer for others is not possible unless there is true forgiveness in our own hearts. We have to let go of judgment towards others no matter what they have done to us or to others we love, because the Lord loves them and that is His will. It may be difficult at first, but the Lord will help you do this. Strange as it may seem, we will also benefit if we are obedient in this manner. Through this act of forgiving grace, we will begin to see the person in a new light and will be released from the inner turmoil that has influenced us. It can bring much healing to the body of Christ.

III. Burden Bearing

Gal 6:1-2 *"My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."*

I cannot think of a better way to restore people than to repent for their sins which are grieving God, so that His grace may bring conviction in the area of the sin and hopefully repentance will follow. We can help fan the fires of conviction as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, because God will honor our priestly work. After a time a change of attitude in the individual is often detected and an opening may be provided in which someone is able to speak to the person in a loving and gentle way concerning sin issues. We encourage parents to minister to rebellious children by confessing their sins daily.

IV. Discernment and Warfare

Eph 6:18 *"Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints."* As we intercede for those bound by sin, the Spirit will give insight as to the nature of the sin and also the activity of Satan concerning it. It is very difficult to bind up the power of any spirit that is working in someone's life unless the sin claim, that gives him power to operate, has been addressed through intercession.

V. The Corporate Element

It is difficult for Americans to understand our corporate accountability before God, because we are culturally very independent and individualistic people. In the scriptures we witness the sin of an individual affecting future generations in a family (2 Ki 5:26-27) and also affecting a nation (Jos 22:20). In many respects, we are our brother's keeper. (Gen 4:9) God considers us accountable for how we feel about others, and how we treat and relate to them. Our sins affect others and their sins affect us.

Ask God whom He would want you to intercede for this week. Ask Him to help you learn how to cover the person's sins with the blood of Jesus. In the next blog we'll look at some Bible examples of interceding for others in sin.

BLOG 409: EXAMPLES OF PRAYING FOR OTHERS IN SIN (by Don Rogers)

In the previous blog we talked about the importance of intercessory prayer for those in sin. We ask God to forgive their sin and confess it as sin so that its power will be broken in their lives and so that demons cannot use it to work against them. In this blog we'll look at Bible examples of this in operation.

Nehemiah understood that Israel had been taken into captivity because of their sins. He prayed to God and said, *"I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, **please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.**" (Nehemiah 1:5-7)*

As a result of this intercession, Nehemiah received favor with the king and was sent back to rebuild Jerusalem as governor. After Jerusalem's walls were repaired and gates built, Nehemiah and Ezra, who had also been confessing Israel's sins (Ezra 9:5-15), both witnessed God's Spirit bringing

conviction and repentance to the people following the public reading of God's word in chapters 8 and 9. God honored their obedience with a spiritual revival!

Stephen was a man full of God's grace and power. He did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. He was brought before the Sanhedrin because of false accusations and he spoke eloquently but was condemned to death by stoning.

Acts 7:59-8:1 **"While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was there, giving approval to his death."**

Shortly after Stephen's prayer and death, Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus and was converted. God had honored Stephen's prayer. On the Cross, just before His death, Jesus said, **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."** The book of Acts is a record of many that came to believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Savior. They became the basis of the Church that God called into being to become the body of Christ continuing His work here on earth. Both Jesus and the Holy Spirit continue to make intercession for us. This is part of God's wondrous plan of grace.

Summary of the principles for praying for others in sin:

1. Adopt a Christ-like attitude toward the person for whom you are interceding. Realize God's desire to see people repent and be free. Ask God to show you any wrong attitudes or motives which remain in you. Pray for God's love to overcome your prejudice and judgmental attitudes.
2. Ask God to show you the sin areas in a person's life that need to be addressed. Make a list of these sins so that you may intercede daily concerning them. Bringing them to God daily is necessary because people renew their sins daily.
3. Address every act of sin that occurs around you immediately. This can be done by quickly praying silently or going into another room for privacy.
4. Use your believer's authority in Christ to address demonic activity and bind the authority of the demon that is working at the time. Command that the demon's power be broken and order him to leave and go to where Jesus sends him. Mental commands can be effective in circumstances where you cannot speak aloud. Spirits communicate on a mental level anyway and the Holy Spirit anoints our commands with the authority and the power of God. **Always learn to act on the basis of faith, because you will not always see a reaction in the natural.** If Christians only realized what often happens when they pray or exercise spiritual authority, they would truly be amazed.
5. Test the spirits (1 Jn 4:1). Do not always assume that your problems are always natural ones, or always the enemy. Pray for spiritual discernment. It is possible to test situations by confessing any sin connection and then exercising spiritual authority against any demonic activity associated with the problem. You will be surprised in the number of times your situation will change as a result. This principle of intercession can be summed up by the words God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel concerning Jerusalem's sins. *"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none"* (Ezekiel 22:30).

If you are willing to step out in faith and explore this biblical principle of "intercessory repentance" you will soon realize it is possible through God's grace and power to pull down strongholds that the enemy has built. But you will have to learn to be patient, persevering and stand in faith on God's promises.

BLOG 410: A SAMPLE SPIRITUAL WARFARE PRAYER (by Don Rogers)

This is a prayer Don Rogers wrote. You can use your own words, there is nothing magical about using these words. However, this prayer can give you a good idea about how to pray.

“Gracious God, I acknowledge that You are worthy of all honor, glory and praise. I am thankful for the victorious work of Your Son, Jesus Christ at Calvary for me. I appropriate His victory for myself now as I willingly surrender area of my life to Your will.

“Thank you for the forgiveness and righteousness that has been given to me as Your adopted child. I trust in Your protection and provision daily, I know that your love for me never ceases.

“I rejoice in Your victory, my Lord, over all the principalities and powers in the heavenlies. In faith I stand in Your victory and commit myself to live obediently for You my King.

“I desire that my fellowship with You become greater. Reveal to me those things that grieve You and enables the enemy to secure an advantage in my life: bringing conviction of sin, repentance of heart, strengthening my faith and increasing perseverance in resisting temptation. Help me to die to self and walk in the victory of the new creation You have provided for me. Let the fruits of the Spirit flow out of my life so that You will be glorified through my life.

“I know that it is Your will that I should stand firm and resist all of the enemy’s work against me. Help me to discern the attacks upon my thoughts and emotions. Enable me to stand upon Your Word and resist all the accusations, distortions and condemnations that are hurled against me.

“It is my desire to be transformed through the renewing of my mind, so that I will not compromise with the ways of the world, or yield to the enemy’s attacks, but be obedient to Your will.

“I draw upon those spiritual resources that You have provided me and I attack the strongholds and plans of the enemy that have been put in place against me. I command in the name of Jesus Christ that the enemy must release my mind, will, emotions and body completely. They have been yielded to the Lord and I belong to Him.

“Lord, enable me to become the person You created me to be. Help me as I pray to be strong in faith. Show me how to apply Your Word in my life each day. I know that I wear the full armor of God when I am committed to and stand firmly upon Your Word. I want You to have the supreme place in my life.

“I surrender myself completely to you, Lord. You are always faithful to You extend Your grace to me constantly, even when I do not realize it. I claim Your promise of forgiveness, cleansing and healing in its fullness. In faith, I receive the victory today that you have already put in place for me. I do this in the name of Jesus Christ, my Savior with a grateful heart. AMEN”

BLOG 411: EVIDENCES OF DEMONIC ACTIVITY (by Don Rogers)

Below is a list of evidences of demonic activity. Check which ones apply to you more than you think is 'normal' or than most other people experience. (compiled by Don Rogers)

I. COMPULSIVE THOUGHTS

Extremely low self image (feel unworthy, unclean, no good, etc) Lk. 8:2

Constant confusion in thinking (especially about spiritual things)

Inability to believe spiritual truths which you hear or read

Mocking or blasphemous thoughts (esp. when hearing spiritual truths)

Perceptual distortions (thinking others are angry at you when they are not)

Repetitious dreams or nightmares (sexual, horror-filled, fearful, etc)

Continuous violent thoughts (of suicide, rape, murder, self-abuse, etc.)

II. COMPULSIVE FEELINGS

Hatred and bitterness toward others for no justifiable reason

Tremendous hostility, fear, restlessness when challenged about demonizing

Deep depression and despondence (frequent and long)

Irrational fears, panic, and phobias (Rom. 8:15 Lk. 9:39)

Irrational anger or rage (Mt. 8:28)

Irrational guilt and extreme self-condemnation, unforgiveness of self

III. COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR

Desire to do right but inability to carry it out

Sudden personality & attitude changes (like, then suddenly hate someone)

Strong aversion to Scripture reading & prayer

Lying compulsively, then often wondering why (Acts 5:3)

Stealing compulsively, if you need the thing or not

Drinking compulsively, if really desire to or not

Using drugs (prescription or non-prescription) compulsively

Eating compulsively (or reverse, bulimia or anorexia nervosa) severely over or under weight

Sexual sins that are compulsive (especially perversions) Mt. 15:5 Lk. 8:27

Irrational, inappropriate laughter

Irrational violence (compulsion to hurt self or someone else) Mt. 17:15; Mk. 5:5; Lk. 9:39

Sudden speaking of a language not previously known or speaking 'gibberish'

Reactions to the name and blood of Jesus (uncomfortable, stop listening) Acts 13:10)

Extreme restlessness

Uncontrollable cutting and mocking tongue and language

Vulgar language and actions (Lk. 4:33-34)

Uncontrollable greed, which drives you on (Acts 5:3)

IV. CONSCIOUSNESS PROBLEMS

Loss of time (little or a lot, not knowing how you got someplace or remembering what you did)

Extreme sleepiness around spiritual things (Bible study, prayer, etc.)

Demonstration of extraordinary abilities (ESP, telekinesis, etc. Mk. 5:7)

Voices heard in the mind (mock, intimidate, accuse, threaten, bargain Mt. 28:29, Lk. 4:33-34)

A voice speaking from you refers to you in the third person ("he" "she")

Supernatural experiences (haunting, movement or disappearance of objects, etc.)

V. ABNORMAL MEDICAL PROBLEMS

Seizures (Mk. 1:26 Mk. 7:24-30 Mk. 17:15) (I won't say every seizure is demonic, but every time Jesus was present at one He cast out a demon and the seizures stopped.)

Pain without justifiable explanation, especially in the head or stomach (ANY medical problems which doctors can't understand or cure, Lk. 9:39)

Blackouts (Mt. 17:15, Mk. 1:26; 7:24-30, Lk. 4:35)

Physical ailments alleviated by a spiritual command (epileptic seizure, asthma attack, headache, nausea, etc., which stops when commanded in Jesus' name to be gone)

Sudden interference with bodily functions (buzzing in ears, irritability to speak or hear, increased hypersensitivity in hearing or touch, sudden chills or overheating of body, dryness in mouth, numbness in arms or legs, sleepiness, coma, etc.)

These are not 'normal' characteristics of healthy, growing Christians. If some of these apply to you there is no reason to fear or panic. If there are some areas of your life that still aren't free, you can pray and bring deliverance to those areas. If you need specific help see "Steps to Deliverance"

in my Spiritual Warfare Handbook. If you need additional counsel or assistance please write to me jerry@schmoyer.net.

BLOG 412: OPENINGS WHICH ALLOW DEMONIZING

Why are some people more attacked demonically than others? What allows a demon to have greater influence over one person than another? There are several factors which open the door and allow demons to work.

Sin In Life: If a person turns to another power other than God, a demon will use that desire to enter the person's life and counterfeit the power he is looking for. If someone worships idols the Bible says there are demons behind the idols that receive the worship and gain control of the person.

Sin In The Family Line: When a person opens themselves to a demon, the demon claims everything in the person's life, including children they may have. When those children have children they claim them as well. Thus the same demon does the same work from generation to generation in a family. That's why many children struggle with the same sins and weaknesses that their mother or father struggled with.

Land Where We Live Or Worship: When a piece of land is dedicated to powers other than God then demons claim that land as theirs and attack anyone on that land who isn't serving them. All of India has been dedicated to evil and darkness, so Satan and his demons claim it in a special way. If you live on land or if your church is located on land dedicated to powers other than God then those demons will attack you for being there. They will try to cause sickness, poverty, disagreements, confusion, anger or any form of sin possible.

Curses: If someone does not like you or your church because you are Christians and wishes something evil to happen, demons will take that curse as a prayer and it will empower them to work against you.

The good news is that God can and will break every one of those openings and free us from demonic powers which seek to control us. We have victory in Jesus. We just need to pray and take back any access any demons think they have to us. Then in Jesus' name we command them to be gone. Finally, we ask God to fill us with His Holy Spirit and use us for His glory.

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

(The next blog will talk about how to have victory over any demons doing these things in life.)

BLOG 413: CASTING OUT DEMONS

JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE IN CASTING OUT DEMONS. Jesus cast out many demons (Matthew 4:23-24; Mark 1:39, 34). In the Gadarenes He cast demons out of two men (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-17; Luke 8:20). He cast demons out of the daughter of a Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21 Mark 7:20), and cured a demonized man (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-36). He healed a boy with seizures and demons (Matthew 17:14-20). He cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene as well as out of other women followers (Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9).

HOW DID JESUS CAST DEMONS OUT? Before casting them out He rebuked them (took their power away) (Matthew 17:18; Luke 9:42). Then He "drove" them out (Mark 1:39). He did it verbally (Matthew 8:16), not by a certain ritualistic procedure. He didn't let the demons speak (Mark 1:34; Luke 4:41), except Legion and that was just to give his name so others would know that even a great number of demons could not defeat Jesus (Mark 5:9). He never let them say who He was

(Mark 1:25; Luke 4:35; Mark 3:11-12). He told them to "be quiet and come out" (Luke 4:35; Mark 1:25). Other times He told them to "go" (Matthew 8; 32). Sometimes He was quite far from the person whom He was delivering (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30). When He cast them out He forbid them to ever return again (Mark 9:25).

WE HAVE MANY EXAMPLES OF THE DISCIPLES CASTING OUT DEMONS, TOO. Jesus gave them power and commanded them to use it (Matthew 10:1; Luke 10:17; Mark 6:7; 16:17). They cast out demons as a regular part of their ministry (Mark 9:38; Luke 10:17). Paul cast out demons (Acts 16:16-18; 19:12) and so did Philip (Acts 8:7). When trying to do it in their own strength (without dependence on God) they failed (Mark 9:18, 28-29).

HOW DID THE APOSTLES CAST DEMONS OUT? Paul brought deliverance by commanding them to be gone in Jesus' name. He said, "In the name of Jesus I command you to come out" (Acts 16:16-18). When God was proving that Paul was His spokesman there was a time when just touching a cloth that Paul had used brought deliverance (Acts 19:12). That was a special event, not a pattern to follow! When directed by God, Paul defeated the demons in Elymas (an unbeliever) by making him blind so he'd stop interfering with God's word (Acts 13:6-12).

AS WE ARE TO DO IT TODAY When one is surrounded the best thing to do is to attack. That is what God wants us to do, too, when seemingly surrounded by Satan's forces. We are to follow the example of the apostles. They followed Jesus' example and ministered in His power (Matthew 10:1, 8; Mark 3:15; 6:7; Luke 9:1). We, too, are given power over the enemy (Luke 10:19; Matthew 10:1; Zechariah 3:15). We have the authority and power to bind demons and loose oppressed believers (Matthew 16:18-19). This must all be done in the power of Jesus' name (Matthew 8:22; Luke 9:49) for that is the only thing demons will obey. We must be a clean vessel for Him to fill and use for deliverance (Revelation 12:10-11).

PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE: If you sense there may be some demonic activity against you or your family you can pray the following prayer. It isn't the words that bring deliverance but your faith in Jesus and trust in His power. This is a good sample of how to pray for yourself, your family or others. You can say these things in your own words; it is the thought that counts.

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

BLOG 414: WHY ARE SOME CHILDREN OPPRESSED? (by Don Rogers)

Why are some children oppressed?

ANSWER:

First, let us look at two examples in God's Word where children had evil spirits: Luke 9:38-40 – "A man in the crowd called out, 'Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not'" Mt. 15:22 – "A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him crying out, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering from demon possession.'" (Also recorded in Mk. 7:24-30)

Our first reaction might be to ask, "How can this be? What could the child have possibly done to allow a demonic spirit such power in his/her life?" My initial response comes from many years of experience dealing with any children's cases and always seeking to evaluate what I was witnessing according to the Word of God.

1. Abuse – can be a way that Satan's hosts can make a claim upon a child. Often in the practice of witchcraft, Satanism and idolatrous practices, children are involved in rituals by their parents, families or acquaintances.

Even when the child is an unwilling victim, the spirits in the abuser make their claims on the basis of the ritual, especially if bargains and oaths have been made over the child to obtain some desired results. For those who see the terrible injustice in this, I can only say that it grieves God greatly as well. Although God is sovereign in power, He does not continually intervene in every atrocity committed by man but allows free will to be exercised. Where God works powerfully is when people turn to Him for deliverance and healing. He can reclaim what the locust have eaten!

2. Generational Bondage – is caused by sins in the family lines in past generations.

When generational bondage is strong in a family, children can have a bondage upon them right from the womb. They are born with claims already upon them. Many a child has grown into adulthood and has struggled year after year. But when the sins of the family lines have been confessed and spiritual authority is then directed against the generational bondages, the curses are broken and the person experiences great freedom.

What is interesting is that generational bondage often stays in place even when a person receives Christ. That is because it is a corporate bondage, not a personal one. When I say "corporate" I mean bondage put in place by the sins of a number of people. After the believer deals with the corporate bondage, then there is often freedom to live as a child of God should be able to live.

Recently I have compiled my almost 400 **SPIRITUAL WARFARE BLOGS INTO 3 BOOKS** (PDF) and put them on the spiritual warfare web site (<https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/our-ministries/spiritual-warfare/learning-more/>) You can find them on www.christiantrainingonline.org/ Go to the Spiritual Warfare web site ten click on Learning More (Books) and you'll find them. The best part is that I've thoroughly indexed them so you can look for any subject or topic you are interested in. There is an index in each book, but also a separate book that is just an index for all the topics covered in all the blogs. Hopefully you can easier find the information you are looking for that way. Pass these books on to others who might enjoy them. Read a blog a day and you'll learn about Spiritual Warfare a little bit at a time. God bless!

BLOG 415: FOCUS ON THE LORD FOR VICTORY (by Don Rogers)

When we are in the midst of chaotic circumstances, problems and obstacles start igniting like bonfires across the landscape. The human reaction is to try to put out each fire, but the more we try, new ones are formed. When the realization sets in that we are not even keeping up with the growing problems, panic sets in. Which fires should you fight? How will you fight them? What if you cannot put

them out? Frustration, discouragement, and despair begin to affect our lives and it seems like we have begun a downward spiral.

Satan is not the source of all our problems, but he can sure capitalize on them at times. In fact, leaning on our own understanding and working in our own strength contribute to a large percentage of our problems. Once we begin to experience the consequences of fleshly decisions we have made, our enemy comes along and suggests to our thoughts that it is God's fault for letting it happen, it is someone else's fault or we are losers and misfits that do not deserve to have any victories in life. The enemy will urge us to move fast to rectify the situation before things become worse and then before we realize it we end up digging ourselves a deeper hole than before. The enemy may even reveal himself to some during this period in order to paralyze them with fear because he is involved and trying to destroy them.

When we look objectively at the whole scenario, we see many of the problems originated because of a lack of focus on the Lord in the first place, (seeking His guidance) and then the problems accelerated even greater because focus on the Lord was not established during the crisis. The enemy will go out of his way to keep a person's attention on the problems, the circumstances or the enemy, so that people will not turn to their real source of strength, the Lord.

Focusing on the Lord after a number of problems have developed is not always easy. Thoughts are racing through the mind, there is a great deal of anxiety, there is much confusion and distraction and frankly, you do not feel very spiritual at that moment in time. But this is when it is crucial to stop everything, step back to get a more objective view of the circumstance and then begin to follow the principles that God has revealed in His word. Paul's advice to the Philippians in chapter four can be of great help at this time.

1. **"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice."** (Philippians 4:4) In other words, begin to celebrate the Lord, for He is greater than any problem that we can face. Even though you may not feel like it, you must direct your faith to the character and attributes of our God. He is loving and compassionate (He cares), He is all-knowing and all-powerful. He is full of grace (unmerited favor) and mercy. Begin to "rejoice in Him."

2. **"The Lord is near."** (Philippians 4:5) He is near because His Spirit is in those who have received Jesus as Savior. He is near because He has promised to hear and answer those who trust Him and obey His commands. (Jn 15:7) He is near because He will not leave us to fend for ourselves. (Heb. 13:5)

3. **"Do not worry about anything. . . "** (Philippians 4:6) First of all, what will worrying accomplish? Secondly, worry shows that we are not trusting the Lord to help us. Choose to trust Him no matter what happens. Is not our faith in Him more important than possessions? How long will our possessions last us anyway? They are insignificant in comparison to eternity.

4. **". . . with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."** (Philippians 4:6) Thank God for who He is, for Jesus' sacrifice, for the victory we have in Jesus, for the Holy Spirit that has been given to us, for the promises that God has given us, for God's faithfulness to us in the past and for the future we have with Him forever.. (Spend time praising God - it may be difficult in the circumstances, but if you will persevere, the freedom to praise will come.) Praise will empower your prayer. It will increase your faith. It can renew your strength and help you see God's perspective. And praise can put Satan on the run!

After you have praised and thanked God, make your requests known to God. Present your case to Him. Let Him know what you want, why you want it and how it will bring glory to Him.

5. **"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."** (Philippians 4:7) Now wait for God's peace to come. He has promised that

He would guard your hearts and minds with it. Most people finish their time with the Lord before His peace comes. If you have to wait fifteen minutes, a half-hour or more than an hour, wait until it comes. It will be worth it!!! Many have missed this blessing because they were anxious to see something happen or to do something. But if His transforming peace does not come, you will not fully be prepared for what God wants to do with you from that point on.

It is this biblical process that our enemy wants to keep us from. He will press us to do something now so that we do not get a chance to "rest in the Lord."

". . . let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb 12:1-2)

BLOG 416: PRAYER TO HAVE VICTORY OVER FEAR

We've talked often about the danger of fear in any form (anxiety, worry, nervousness, dread, panic, concern, etc. If you struggle with fear, or know of someone else who does, use this prayer. It doesn't have to be these exact words, but this gives you an idea about how to pray.

"Dear Heavenly Father, I place myself under your loving and protective care. I know that you are the only one I should fear, and that is in awe and respect. I confess that I have been fearful and anxious because of my lack of trust, my unbelief and believing the lies of the enemy. I have not always trusted You. Too often I have lived in fear and relied on my own strength and resources. I confess that as sin and thank You for Your forgiveness.

"I know that you have not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). Therefore, I turn from any fear in my life. I ask You to reveal to me all the areas where the sin of fear as affected me. Show me the lies I have believed and help me to believe Your truth instead. I desire to live in faith by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Fill me with Your presence and Your Spirit so I can follow You by faith. In Jesus' name. Amen."

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

Deuteronomy 31:6 6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.

Proverbs 3:25 Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked,

Psalms 23:4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalms 34:4 sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

Psalms 56:3-4 When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?

Psalms 118:6 The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Joshua 10:8 The Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you."

Exodus 14:13 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today.

1 Samuel 17:45-47 David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Matthew 10: 28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:13 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

2 Timothy 1:7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

BLOG 417: SATAN HATES MARRIAGE

(1 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

Satan hates marriage. He hates Christian marriages in particular because they have the potential to show the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:22-33). By hurting Christian marriages, Satan hinders their witness to the world. He knows that whoever owns the family owns the future. He didn't bother Adam until he got married, then he went after them both!

Satan is the "god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4). As such he blinds and deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9). He is the head of a vast, powerful organization that opposes God and all he stands for. Jesus decisively defeated Satan and his domain by the cross and His resurrection (Ephesians 1:19-20; Colossians 2:15). However, he is still free to oppose God and His people. To withstand these attacks we must understand God's design for marriage and the family, Satan's strategy against it, and how to stand firm to have victory. That's what this series of blogs will be about.

Unfortunately, books about marriage seldom include spiritual warfare. Andreas Kostenberger said, "Regularly the focus (in marriage books) is on fulfilling one's partner's needs in marriage, improving one's communication skills, or resolving marital conflict. From reading any of these books,

one would never know that spiritual warfare is a vital issue in marriage and the family. Yet, in fact, spiritual warfare is an all-encompassing reality.” Spiritual warfare is often completely ignored by most marriage counselors and popular treatments on marriage. Yet it has been a part of male-female relationships since Satan attacked Adam and Eve.

Remember, though, that not all marriage problems are spiritual warfare problems. Spiritual warfare is one tool God gives us in our collection of tools for victory in life. It is a great tool when needed, but no one tool does everything. If you were making a table you’d need a hammer, saw, sandpaper, paint brush, etc. No one tool alone would do all that is needed. Each is needed. If you tried to use a hammer for cutting wood, or a saw to hammer nails, you would fail. Spiritual warfare is one tool in our marriage tool belt. It is an essential tool, but not the only one. Other tools include communication, showing unconditional love, conflict resolution, forgiveness, sacrificing for others and showing respect. Spiritual warfare isn’t the only tool we need to have a great marriage, but when it is needed no other tool will do. These blogs will be about learning how to use the tool of spiritual warfare to have a better marriage and family.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

How competent are you with the tool of spiritual warfare? Do you know when to use it, and how to use it? Ask God for wisdom and insight as you apply His truths to your marriage.

BLOG 418: SATAN ATTACKS MARRIAGES

(2 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

Satan has been attacking marriage since the beginning. God planned for marriage to be a permanent union of one man and one woman for their whole lives. Satan attacks every part of God’s plan. He sows doubt that God’s way is best (Genesis 3:1). He used one mate to get another to sin (Genesis 3:6). As a result they blamed each other (Genesis 3:12-13). Remember, the enemy of your marriage is NOT your spouse, regardless of whatever they may be doing wrong. The enemy of your marriage is God’s enemy, Satan and his kingdom.

Satan attacked God’s plan of one man and one woman with multiple wives (Lamech, Genesis 4:19; Abraham, Genesis 16:3; David, 1 Chronicles 3:1-9). He attacked one man one women with homosexuality (Genesis 18:16-19:28) and the permanency of marriage (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). Marriages of believers and unbelievers brought idolatry into the nation. Sex outside marriage became common (Samson, David, etc.).

He continues to attack marriage today. He will exaggerate your mate’s failures and inadequacies, put suspicion in your mind, focus on your self-pity and self-centeredness and provide you with thoughts that someone else would be a better mate. How can you know when your marriage is attacked? Here are some signs of problems in your marriage. They could be caused by the flesh, the enemy or both.

1. Lack of fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Instead of love, joy, peace, patience, etc., there is conflict, impatience, anger and hurt.
2. Self-centeredness. One or both people focus on themselves and what they can get out of marriage. It’s all about meeting their needs and what the other does wrong. The relationship is neglected.

3. Unforgiveness. Resentment and bitterness grow and are shown. Anger and conflict are common
4. Weak spiritual life. Reading the Bible and praying, separately or together, is uncommon. When it is practiced it is weak and ineffective.
5. Picking at little things. Either or both get irritated at little things the other does or doesn't do. Minor faults are pointed out and remembered.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Do you see any of the symptoms of marriage problems in your relationship? Which ones?

Is the problem caused by the flesh (sin nature in each of you) or the enemy (Satan) – or both?

What must you do about it right away to correct it?

BLOG 419: THE ROOT OF MARRIAGE PROBLEMS

(3 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

At their root, virtually all marriage problems are individual problems which affect the marriage. Leaving the current mate and marrying someone else does not keep the problem from reoccurring. When Biblical counsel, trying harder, and doing all the right things to help a marriage do not work, then it could be something demonic is affecting one or both partners and therefore the whole marriage.

If your parents, siblings or other relatives are struggling with the same issues (personal or marriage) and you can see a pattern in your family of origin, it certainly could be something demonic that is passed down family lines. If so, that needs to be confessed and broken in Jesus' name.

Is there unconfessed sexual sin in your life now or in your past? Sex forms oneness between those involved, even if there isn't emotional attachment (1 Corinthians 6:16). Emotional bonding without sex can also form an emotional/spiritual oneness between people. If one of the people involved is open to any demonic activity then those demons can and often will claim access to the other person as well. This oneness, physical or emotional, needs to be confessed and broken. Any access any demons claim from it must be removed and put under the blood of Jesus. Those demons must be commanded to be gone forever in Jesus' name.

Individual sin can also open the door to demons affecting not just the individual but the marriage and family. This includes things like anger, fear, lust, pornography, romantic fantasies, greed, etc. These may also have roots in your family line and that must be taken broken in Jesus' name as well. Even when the sin comes down through the family line, when you commit it you are personally guilty and that must be confessed and renounced (1 John 1:9). Then the demons must be commanded to be gone in Jesus' name.

Unforgiveness, bitterness, revenge, criticism and the like all open the door to demonic attack (Ephesians 4:26-27; Matthew 15:19-20; etc.). The person needs to be forgiven and the opening closed by Jesus. Demons with access must be commanded to be gone in Jesus' name.

To have victory we must repent of sin and confess it (1 John 1:9), putting it under the blood of Jesus. If it is ancestral, we must break that in Jesus name as well, claiming our oneness with Jesus as of first priority (2 Corinthians 5:17). If it is from an unbiblical bonding that, too, must be broken.

These things close the door that lets the demons in to work. But the demons already with access will still be there so the second step is to make sure they are commanded to be gone in Jesus' name. Close the door and then empty the room. Then the room must be filled with God's present – that will be what the next blog is about.

John 10:9-10 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

If God is showing you any of these are active in your life or your marriage, pray for wisdom and courage, then attack them as described in the blog. Pray with your mate if at all possible.

BLOG 420: OCCUPY THE CONQUERED TERRITORY

(4 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

When an army moves against an enemy, they first drive them out and conquer their territory. Then they occupy the newly conquered territory so it stays under their control. The same must be done in our spiritual warfare. We have talked previously about driving out the enemy and regaining territory we have lost. We do that through spiritual warfare prayer and using God's Word. We close the door and then empty the room. Then we must occupy and fill the new territory so it doesn't fall back into enemy hands. If we don't fill ourselves after deliverance, Jesus says the end result will be 8 times as many demons as there were to begin with (Matthew 12:43-46; Luke 12:24-26).

We fill ourselves with God's presence. This means a personal relationship with Jesus – salvation. But it doesn't stop there. We must be committed to following Him as disciples, living for Him and serving Him in all we do. As we let His Holy Spirit direct and control our lives we are filled with His presence and do not leave any openings for demons to return. For husbands this results in showing unconditional, sacrificial love to their wives. A man can't do that unless he is submitted to Jesus and accepting His unconditional, sacrificial love for him. Only as we experience this from Jesus can we show it to our wives. For a wife it means totally trusting Jesus and yielding to Him so she can fully trust and yield to her husband. Together it means understanding and implementing the principles of a godly marriage as contained in God's Word.

As you work against what the enemy is doing in your marriage (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9), you must replace it with Jesus' presence in every area of your life and God's truth about what marriage is to be. (You can find many articles about this on the Marriage and Family portion of the CTO web site (<https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/our-ministries/family/>)).

Never underestimate the enemy and his tactics. God has brought you together but Satan wants to pull you apart (1 Peter 5:8). Use all the tools in your marriage tool belt to get victory, and that includes spiritual warfare. It also means using the tools of open communication, conflict resolution, serving each other, praying together and forgiveness (more in the next blog about this). Focus on changing yourself. There is no one else you can change! Ask God to show you where YOU need to grow and be open to what He shows you. Don't focus on your mate's issues. Get rid of the plank in your own eye before going after the speck in his or hers (Matthew 7:3-5).

Matthew 12:43-46; Luke 12:24-26 “When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live

there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.”

Are you totally yielded to Jesus and doing all you can to live for Him alone? If not, you are leaving room for the enemy to work. Allowing sin or disobedience in your life leaves an opening for demons to fill. We don't follow Jesus out of fear of demons working against us, but it is a sobering reality to keep in mind.

BLOG 421: FORGIVENESS AND DEMONIZING

(5 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

Jesus had some very strong, sober words to say about those who do not forgive others (Matthew 18:32-35). He commands us to forgive 77 times (Matthew 18:21-22). There are many reasons for this. One is that unforgiveness is one of the most direct ways of opening one's self to demons (Ephesians 4:26; 2 Corinthians 2:10-11). This is especially true in marriage.

Forgiveness is not easy to do. Often we think it means saying that what was done to us is OK, or that we aren't going to think about it anymore. We may feel like we are letting them off the hook for what they have done. They don't deserve forgiveness. No one deserves forgiveness from Jesus, yet He gives it freely. Understanding what forgiveness means is important for us to be free.

Anger is a secondary emotion, used to cover pain. When we hit our thumb with a hammer we feel pain but we react in anger because that's an easier emotion to express. In order to forgive, though, we must admit and confront the pain we feel when others wound us. Our pride wants revenge, to hurt them back – but then we are trapped in unforgiveness and bitterness. Forgiveness is a mental choice, not an emotional feeling.

Forgiving means giving up your right to hurt the other person back because they hurt you. Forgiveness has a price – you give up your right to revenge, to see them hurt for hurting you. That's what Jesus does when He forgives us!

Instead of covering pain with anger, turn your hurt over to God in prayer. You need to do it over and over, each time you remember the pain. If not it will turn into anger and unforgiveness. Rely on God's power to help you handle the pain in a healthy way. Experience the hurt so you can move beyond it. Often times making a list of past hurts, from your mate or others, is the first step to forgiveness. Make sure you have forgiven those in your past: parents, those in past relationships, friends and enemies.

Forgiveness is not a quick emotional switch in your heart, it takes time to heal and move on. It is a process that must be repeated each time the painful memory comes back. Gradually the pain will lessen and be gone. When it tries to come back you cannot allow it to stay.

Remember how God has forgiven you. Think about what Christ did for you on the cross and recall His mercy to you in so many ways. Ask Him to help you forgive through the power of His love. We can forgive the unforgiveable in others because God has forgiven the inexcusable in us.

When someone sins against you, forgive them immediately, even while they are still committing the offense. Even if they are doing it unintentionally, forgive immediately. Don't wait for them to apologize or admit their wrong. Forgive as quickly as you expect God to forgive you. If not your prayers will be hindered and evil can gain access to your life.

When this happens in marriage reach out to your mate immediately. Withholding love is a form of revenge and shows forgiveness has not been given. Forgiving means treating them as if the

offense never occurred – the same as God forgives you. By forgiving others for having hurt us we can let go of the painful past and create a healthier relationship. That's important in marriage as well as in all relationships in life. Learn to forgive. Forgiveness is a very important tool we all need to learn to use and use regularly.

Ephesians 4:26 “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

When you think of forgiving those who have hurt you, does God bring anyone to mind? If so, make sure you have forgiven them, and continue to do so each time the hurt returns. Make sure there isn't anything you haven't forgiven your mate for. If you need their forgiveness please ask them right away.

BLOG 422: SATAN HATES CHILDREN

(6 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

Not only does Satan hate marriage, he hates children as well. He wants to devour them (1 Peter 5:8). He knows they are a bright reflection of God's glory and enjoy an intimacy with God that he lost. He fears them because they have the potential to trust God and defeat him. They represent the future of the church. Jesus loves the little children, but Satan hates them!

He attacked the baby boys in Moses' day and in Bethlehem when Jesus was born. He incited the Jews to offer their children as sacrifices to Baal (Jeremiah 19:5). Today 60 million babies have been aborted in the USA. Worldwide 50 million are killed each year – 125,000 a day. When a baby or child is destroyed, a picture of Jesus Himself is destroyed for children are made in the image of Jesus (Matthew 25:40, 45).

If Satan can't kill children, he will do all he can to bring anxiety, frustration and fear into the home. Through an unhealthy home life, children grow up wounded and often rebellious. When a marriage is weakened, so are the children and thus the church and nation.

In Jesus' day demons afflicted children with physical illness (Matthew 17:15; Mark 9:18, 25). They prevent children from being able to control their own emotions (Mark 9:17, 22). They physically tried to harm children (Mark 9:20-22, 26-27). Satan instills hatred between siblings: Cain and Able, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, Isaac and Ishmael, etc.

Dedicate your children to God – publicly and in your own hearts. Ask Him to be their guide and protector. Teach them about spiritual warfare. Show them how to live for Jesus, by your own life and actions as well as your words. Help them learn to see and overcome their weaknesses as well as develop their strengths. Assure them they are not alone. Share your own battles with them. Encourage them to have godly friends and love Jesus. Satan hates children, but God loves them and has a wonderful plan for them, and for you as well!

Proverbs 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Pray for the protection of the children in your family and church. Pray one by one, by name, for each child you know. Be sensitive to the ones God puts on your heart for more regular prayer. Write their names down and pray for them. If God points them out it is for a good reason!

BLOG 423: DEMONIC ACCESS TO CHILDREN

(7 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

While children are considered innocent by God until they are old enough to be accountable for their sin, Satan offers no period of grace. He attacks as soon as possible, even while still in the womb. Here are some of the reasons children are open to demonizing.

1. **ANCESTRAL SIN OPENINGS**, especially if the child is a male, firstborn, or named after someone who is demonized.

2. **ILLEGITIMACY** means a child is not conceived or born under a marriage covenant between a committed, loving man and woman. The parents are out of God's will because of sex outside marriage. Any negative thoughts or feelings they have about the unwanted pregnancy become a curse against the baby. Any kind of rejection of the baby opens the baby up to demons stepping in to fill that void in its life.

3. **REJECTION** in any form of a baby or child will also open them to demons filling that void. An unwanted baby coming to a married couple can have the same result. A difficult labor, painful delivery, physical or mental defects or the baby being the 'wrong' sex all can bring feelings of rejection. Problems raising the child or problems from health issues with the child, health or work load of the parents or marriage problems can cause feelings of rejection toward the growing child.

Adopted babies can be very susceptible to this. Ancestral sins from birth parents' families pass on to them. Often these children come from unbelieving parents and/or countries where demonizing is rampant. The baby can be claimed by demons in the family line as well as demons from the country of origin. In addition, there is rejection by one or both parents when the baby is put up for adoption. Even if it is done for a good reason, the baby has no covering or protection from the birth parents and is open to demonizing.

If this is true of you, first forgive the person who rejected you. In Jesus name break any curses they made against you, even if they weren't aware they were doing it. Command any demons that have come in through rejection or ancestral openings to be gone in Jesus' name. Ask God to fill you with His Spirit and presence.

4. **ABUSE** opens the door to demonizing as well. Incest or physical or emotional abuse cause trauma which breaks down the person's natural defense mechanisms and leaves them open and vulnerable. Abuse also overlaps with rejection as well.

5. **OTHER TRAUMA** can also break down normal reasoning and open the child to demonizing. Extremely fearful situations, being lost, car or other of accidents, scary TV show/movie or viewing physical abuse or violence can all cause this.

6. **WORLDLY INFLUENCES GROWING UP** such as games, toys, cartoons, TV programs, movies or comics that have occult or demonic activity can be an open door. Such things as Harry Potter open the door to an acceptance of anti-god supernaturalism. School activities, meditation, Ouija Boards, even yoga may open a door in a child's life. Such things as occult or cult interest, alcohol, drugs, pornography and sexual experimentation also invite demonic influence.

7. **REBELLION** against authority, parents or school, is a sign of bitterness and unforgiveness. God says rebellion is similar to occult involvement (1 Samuel 15:23).

God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, but Satan hates you and has a terrible plan for your life – and it starts even before birth. David sinned with Bathsheba and greatly affected himself, his family and the whole Jewish nation. Satan had started sowing the seeds for that sin in

David's life when he was very young. He learned to lie and deceive to cover up sin. He then developed a desire for multiple women. Satan tries to get a foothold in our lives as soon as he can today as well. Don't let him!

Psalm 127:3-5 Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.

If any of these are true of your past stop now and pray about it as I described above. If this is true of others you know who are still children, or are now adults, intercede for them in the same way.

BLOG 424: DELIVERING CHILDREN FROM DEMONIZING

(8 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

Some parents see their children as a burden, a bother and imposition. That leads to rejection. Other parents live for their children and focus everything around them. They use their children to meet their needs for self-worth, accomplishment and meaning in life. These parents make their children into idols. Both extremes are wrong. The truth is our children are gifts from God (Psalm 126:3) and must be seen as such. They belong to Him and are only on temporary loan to us. They are His, not ours. We are stewards entrusted with raising them. We aren't to either reject them nor idolize them, but to love them and raise them for His glory. Our greatest contribution to God's kingdom may not be what we do but someone we raise.

Raising them for Jesus means, in part, developing a warrior mindset in them. Too many children grow up indulged, spoiled and feeling entitled to whatever they want. Christian children must grow up with a biblical world view which includes understanding spiritual warfare. They must see themselves as living behind enemy lines and being pursued by an enemy who will do anything to destroy them. They must be trained to fight constant spiritual guerilla warfare. They need to know how to protect themselves from attacks, how to counter attack the enemy to have victory, and how to rescue those taken captive by Satan's forces. Satan is serious about destroying our children. He fires real bullets!

We train our children to have life skills, educational skills and whatever skill is needed for success in daily life. Too often we neglect spiritual training. Parents leave it up to the church. How can 1 or 2 hours a week counter all they are hit with the other 166 hours a week!

Teach them God's Word. Of course that means you must first know it yourself! Make sure they don't just know the facts in their head but that they are motivated to apply it to their lives. They must be challenged to believe because THEY believe, not because you do or because it was what they were always taught. Ask them often: "Do YOU believe this for yourself, not just because you've been taught it?" "If you really believe this is true, what changes will this make in your life?"

Memorized Scripture is one of our best weapons in spiritual warfare. When Jesus was tempted He quoted Scripture to have victory over Satan's (Matthew 4:1-11). Paul says our only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). Psalm 119:9,11 tells us that it's through God's Word that we have victory. Quote Scripture to overcome demonic attacks and temptations. Ask God to show you verses that will help against these things. Write them down and memorize them. Say them over and over when these thoughts attack you. That is the only way to victory, and God guarantees it will work!

Instill in your children a love for Jesus. They need to see that in you first of all. If they act like Christians because they fear God or want to impress you, it won't last. We should start raising them to be like Jesus from the moment of birth. After all, they are His and belong to Him. They are on loan to us temporarily to raise for Him.

Psalm 127:1,3 Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.

Do your children understand spiritual warfare? Can they recognize Satan's attacks against them? Do they have a good understanding of God's Word and how to use it to have victory? Do they know how to pray for themselves and others? Do they spend time alone with God each day? Can they survive in Satan-occupied territory when they leave your home?

BLOG 425: HOW TO PRAY FOR YOUR CHILDREN

(9 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

One of the main responsibilities a father, or even a mother, has is to pray for the protection of their family. No matter how old your children are, no matter their spiritual condition, pray for them. Job prayed for his children, even when they were grown and living on their own (Job 1:4-5).

Job was righteous (Job 1:8). He prayed regularly for his children's protection (Job 1:4-5). This is a man's responsibility, but mothers and grandparents can do it as well, especially when the father is not doing his job. He must also pray for his wife's protection. He should know her needs and weaknesses and cover them in prayer each morning. He needs to pray for his own protection, too, because Satan will do anything he can to spiritually defeat him so he doesn't pray (Job 1:7; 1 Peter 5:8).

Job prayed for a hedge of protection around his children (Job 1:10). A hedge is a wall, a large fence, something to shelter what is inside. It is like the log walls of a wooden stockade which was erected for protection in the early days of the American west.

If there is sin in our lives when we pray the hedge is broken down. Job lived a holy life (Job 1:1, 8) so his spiritual hedge around his children was solid and Satan couldn't penetrate it (Job 1:10-11). If we allow sin in our life our hedge won't be effective.

If you know the story of Job, you know that, despite Job's prayers, God allowed Satan to break down the hedge and attack and kill Job's children. So what good did it do for him to be holy and pray for a hedge? When Satan killed his children, he knew that what happened was God's perfect will for his family and not because of a failure on his part. When we pray, we always leave the results in God's hands for His will to be done. Sometimes that will is painful to us, like it was to Job. God allowed this to happen to use Job as a witness and testimony to angels and demons, as well as millions of people since (including us today). It stretched Job's faith as well so he grew. Are you willing to allow God whatever He thinks is best for His glory and your growth? Job certainly did (Job 1:21; 13:15).

If God removes the hedge for His glory, that is His right. He promises He will be with us and not give us more than we can handle with His help. But if the hedge is faulty because of sin in our life, or isn't there because we don't pray for it, then the results are on us! Facing trials from God to mature us and bring glory to Him are one thing, but to face them because of our sin and failure is something else entirely.

Every father, no matter how old his children, needs to pray for them every day. As the head of the family, fathers have a special authority to represent the children before God. Pray for problems and difficulties in their lives. Look for weak spots. Be alert to where the enemy is attacking. This is also true when you pray for your wife and yourself. Any sin must be put under the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:9).

Parents, especially fathers (and even grandparents) must stand in the forefront of the battle for their families. We go before them, as an officer leads his troops into battle. We do this by prayer. Prayer is not preliminary to the battle, prayer IS the battle. The battle for your children and family is won or lost during your prayer time. Are you fighting for them as you should? Men, don't let the responsibility fall on your wife. It is your God-given duty as a father. Get out there and fight for your family!

Job 1:1,-2 4-5 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. 2 He had seven sons and three daughters, ... His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

Men, women, grandparents (whoever you are) spend time now praying for a hedge of protection around your children and grandchildren. Pray for each one by name. Make sure you cover each weakness and sin area in their lives as well. Do this daily, or as many times a week as possible. Prayer DOES make a difference!

BLOG 426: DRESS FOR BATTLE (Armor of God 1)

(10 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

When I was 19 years old I was drafted into the United States Army. Others said it would be great to be a soldier, a special privilege. But I found it very, very hard. I had to learn how to defend myself against those who wanted to destroy me. I had to learn how to fight an enemy army. When I was in the army I committed my life to God, to live for Him. Others said it would be great to be a Christian, a special privilege. But I found it very, very hard. I had to learn how to defend myself against another enemy who wanted to destroy me. I had to learn how to fight an unseen enemy.

I am no longer in the United States Army so I no longer fight the enemies of America. But I am still in God's Army – and I still must fight God's enemies. If you are in God's Army you will understand what I mean. You, too, face many battles as you live for Him.

We are at war (1 John 5:19). We are living in enemy-occupied territory (2 Corinthians 4:4) surrounded by those who would destroy us (1 Peter 5:8). In an army, the commander provides the equipment and the soldiers learn how to use it. God, our Commander, provides what we need to defend ourselves and to have victory (2 Corinthians 10:4) but we must learn how to use the equipment. Paul describes what these are in Ephesians 6:10-18.

Paul wrote these words in prison, chained to a Roman soldier. As he came to the end of the book of Ephesians, he looked for a way to describe our battle and how to have victory. Looking at the Roman soldier with him, Paul used his equipment as a picture of what God provides for us.

Paul begins by commanding us to be strong, but not in our strength, only in God's strength (Ephesians 6:10). The same power that defeated Satan at the cross (Hebrews 2:14-15) and that

raised Christ from the dead (Ephesians 1:18-23) is available to us. God's power is greater than Satan's power (1 John 4:4). Satan is more powerful than us, but not than God.

Paul describes this power as pieces of armor we are to put on and use (Ephesians 6:11). We are commanded to put it on. Its use is not optional but mandatory for soldiers of God. And we are commanded to put on ALL of it, not just some.

The reason we need it is because Satan has "schemes" to deceive and trap us (Ephesians 6:11). This word is used of a hunter trapping an animal. Paul calls our conflict a "struggle" (Ephesians 6:12). This word refers to a fight to the death. Satan will do anything he can to destroy you, your family and your church!

So what are we to do? How are to have victory against these schemes and struggles? Here's where the armor comes in. (Continued in next blog)

Ephesians 6:10-13 A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

Do you have a warrior mentality when it comes to living your Christian life? Are you alert to the attacks, traps and schemes against you? Do you know where the enemy tries to get you to sin? Are you able to defeat his efforts? Pray and ask God for wisdom and insight into your battle so you can better withstand.

BLOG 427THE BATTLE FOR THE MIND (Armor of God 2)

(11 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

When a soldier faces his enemy, he needs to use the armor provided by his commander to be victorious. The same is true in our Christian life. The first piece of equipment we are commanded to wear is the helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:17).

The Roman soldier chained to Paul in prison wore a helmet made out of metal. Enemies would attack with a large, heavy sword which they would try to bring down on the Roman soldiers head. Thus the helmet had to be strong to protect their head. The same is true for us. Satan attacks our mind and thoughts first. He puts doubt, fear, confusion, lust, greed and whatever defeats us in our mind. Our spiritual battles are won or lost in our mind (thoughts) first of all. That's why we need the mind of Christ to have victory (1 Corinthians 2:16).

We must know who we are in Christ so we don't give in to discouragement, fear or anger. We must be aware of all we have so we don't turn to sin to meet needs God has already met. We are a new creation and must know what that means and how it applies (2 Corinthians 5:17). Knowing God's truth is the only way to protect our minds against Satan's lies.

God has given us over two hundred benefits that come at the moment of salvation. For one thing, He promises that past, present and future sins are gone forever (Romans 8:1). He deals with us in grace, not works.

We are in God's family by birth (John 3:3) and by adoption (Ephesians 1:5). Thus we are children of God (John 1:12). Ours is a family relationship with God, not king and servant or master and slave. God is our Father, Jesus our Elder Brother (Hebrews 2:11-13). We are family, with all its

security, benefits and privileges. Those are ours now, not something we have to wait to have. Not only are we in His family, but we are also friends with God (John 15:15). Can you imagine God calling you a friend? Great privileges are ours! As such she shares His plans and blessings with us.

We must know beyond a doubt that we are unconditionally loved by God, now and forever (Romans 8:38-39). It has nothing to do with what we deserve or don't deserve, and there's no way we can lose it. There is nothing we can do to make Him love us more. There is nothing we can do to make Him love us less. He can't love us more and He won't love us less.

When we are hit with doubt about His provision we must remember He has promised to meet all our needs (Philippians 4:19). When we doubt His love we must remember we can never lose our salvation (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). When we get weary we must remember we will be in heaven with Him forever (Philippians 3:20). When we struggle with sin we must remember He gives us victory over sin (Galatians 2:20). When we struggle in our warfare with Satan's forces we must remember that He has promised victory over them (Colossians 1:13; Luke 10:18-19).

When both husband and wife are committed believers and wear the helmet of salvation they will be likeminded in their values, priorities, motives and goals in life. They know only Jesus can meet all their needs, not their mate, and turn to Him to have them met. Children, too, must understand all they have in Jesus as Christians. This is key to preventing Satan's attacks to our mind and thoughts.

Colossians 1:13 For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Who is winning the battle for your mind? Do your thoughts line up with Jesus' thoughts? Are you able to control your thoughts and make them obedient to Christ? If not, write down what you must do and ask God for His help doing it.

BLOG 428: CRACKS IN OUR ARMOR (Armor 3)

(12 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

Sin in life can provide an opening for demons to work against us (Ephesians 4:26-27; Mark 7:21-23; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-8). Even one sin that is allowed to remain can give an opening for demonizing. That's why God provides a spiritual breastplate for us to wear (Ephesians 6:14).

The Roman soldier chained to Paul wore a breastplate to protect his heart and vital organs. It wasn't always easy or comfortable to wear, but if he didn't put it on he was vulnerable. Even if he wore it but it allowed holes or weak spots in it, the enemy would attack those spots and defeat him. The same is true spiritually.

Paul says this represents our righteousness (Ephesians 6:14). It reminds us of the importance of being covered with Jesus' righteousness. We receive it with salvation when our sins are forgiven (Matthew 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:23). Breaks and weak areas are covered when we confess our sin (1 John 1:9).

In marriage a husband and wife are to encourage and help each other to overcome sin. They are to set a good example for each other. Too many times one will do or say that which leads the

other to sin, like Eve did to Adam. When each one lives like Jesus, serving and forgiving each other, the couple together wears the breastplate of righteousness. It is of the utmost importance for each mate to overcome sin in their lives and to help their mate do the same. When they have children they are included in this as well so the whole family is an example of holiness.

While the breastplate protects all from above the waist, the belt of truth (Ephesians 6:14) covers the waist and below. The belt helped the soldier keep his garments and weapons secured so he didn't stumble. God's truth keeps us from stumbling and falling spiritually. Satan wants to trip us up with his lies and deception. Whenever we get a thought that doesn't line up with God's truth in the Bible we must reject it. That means we must know God's Word well.

In marriage, too, we must guard against the lies the world and the flesh give us about marriage. Self-centered values, unbiblical expectations, unforgiving attitudes and me-first selfishness abound in the world and it's easy for Christians to be influenced by them as well. Children, too, must know God's truth or they, also, will fall for the lies the enemy and their flesh tell them. We must know God's truth, for only it sets us free (John 8:32).

John 8:32 "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

1 Peter 1:16 It is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Is there a sin in your life that has control over you? Get counseling, ask others to pray and do everything possible to have victory over it.

Make sure you know and live in God's truth. Lies like, "You'll never have victory over that sin" abound. What lies do you struggle with? What gives you victory over them?

BLOG 429: PEACE + FAITH = VICTORY (Armor of God = 4)

(13 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

Peace. Everyone talks about it but few have it. The world abounds with substitutes or that which seeks to mask the pain of emptiness. Yet God's peace is necessary to have victory in our lives. Paul, looking at the Roman soldier with him, says we need peace like the soldier needs solid, dependable footwear (Ephesians 6:15). The enemy would pick a place to attack that was advantageous to them and difficult for the Romans. Water, loose sand, sharp rocks or uneven terrain all gave the enemy an advantage. Therefore, the Romans needed sturdy, strong footwear to keep their footing. If they slipped or stumbled, they were defeated.

Satan attacks us when and where he thinks he has the best opportunity of winning. We need to be at peace with God so we are secure in Him and can stand no matter what happens in life. God never said He would remove our conflicts but that He would help us through them (John 17:15). He doesn't promise us absence of difficulties, but He does promise peace despite them (Philippians 4:6-7; Isaiah 26:3; John 14:27; 2 Thessalonians 3:16).

If a husband or wife do not have God's peace but instead have turmoil, anxiety, stress or confusion that will negatively affect their marriage. Each needs to have peace with God first, then based on that they can be at peace with each other. This will give them a firm footing no matter what the enemy throws at them. Without God's peace in your heart and relationship your marriage will be characterized by conflict. That not only harms you but your children, and their impression of marriage. Children, too, need the peace of Jesus so they can mature to be like Him and fight their own spiritual battles.

The next piece of armor listed by Paul is the shield of faith. So far all the armor was part of the soldier's inner defense. The shield is the outer wall of defense (Ephesians 6:16). Roman soldiers carried large shields which they held in front of them for protection from the burning tar the enemy would fling at them (Ephesians 6:16). Without a shield they would have to dodge the fiery missiles and not be able to do any other fighting. Paul said this shield did for the soldier what our faith does for us.

Faith in God's love and sovereignty is our outer wall of defense. If we truly believe that no matter what happens God is in control and only allows what is for His glory and our good (Romans 8:28), then we won't be defeated by life's problems and pains. The greater our faith is, the stronger our protection is. It's like having a large shield compared to a very small one.

Marriage, too, must be built on faith – in God and each other. Love must be unconditional, commitment must be unshakable and forgiveness must be continual. When hard times hit a marriage, faith in God keeps both partners focused on God and not the problem or each other's failings. Don't battle your mate. Trust God and together battle your common enemy. Have faith that God knows and does what is best for you, and that your mate is His perfect choice for you for the rest of your life.

Teach your children to walk by faith and obedience. Start by teaching them to trust and obey you when young. Show you are worthy of trust. Help them transfer this to God as they get older. They must have a faith of their own. They can't hide behind your shield but must 'own' their faith and develop their individual faith in God. Start building their faith right now.

John 17:15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

Romans 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

On a scale of 1 (very weak) to 10 (very strong) where would you rate your peace? What takes away your peace quicker than anything else? What should you do about it?

On a scale of 1 (very weak) to 10 (very strong) where would you rate your faith? Where/when is your faith the strongest? Where/when is it the weakest? What should you do to increase your faith?

BLOG 430: GOING ON THE OFFENSE (Armor of God – 5)

(14 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

All the pieces of equipment we've seen in Ephesians 6 so far have been defensive. We can protect ourselves but we can't have victory. We need an offensive weapon to go on the attack and defeat our enemy. That is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). With their short, double-edged sword the Romans conquered the known world. There was no protection for their back so they couldn't turn and run, they had to move ahead against their enemies, and that is what we must do as well.

This sword of the Spirit refers to the Word of God – it is so important we get this right that Paul says so (Ephesians 6:17). Jesus quoted the Bible when tempted (Matthew 4:1-11). Read Scripture. Memorize Scripture. Quote Scripture. Pray Scripture. Think Scripture. It is the only way we can drive away temptation, lies and attacks of the enemy.

To have a healthy, growing, godly marriage, a husband and wife need to know God's Word. They need to study it individually and together. They must know how to apply it when in spiritual

warfare. They must be comfortable praying Bible verses. They must teach their children the Bible as well. Too many children of Christian parents turn from the faith when they leave home because it never became part of them. They need to know God's Word, memorize portions of it, and believe it for themselves. If our children follow Jesus they WILL be attacked, so they must now know how to use their only offensive weapon, God's Word.

Paul is done listing the armor, but not done telling us how to have victory. He next mentions prayer (Ephesians 6:18-20). We can equate prayer to communication between the commander and his soldiers. Without good communication, the soldier will not know where to go or what to do. He will be left on his own. We need time talking to God and listening to Him to know His plan for us.

Praying together is very important for Christian couples. Deep, open, heartfelt prayer will bring a couple closer and help them have victory. A prayerless marriage is a powerless marriage. If your marriage is only as strong as your prayer life as a couple, how strong would it be? Maybe that's why it is so open to attack! Children, too, need to develop their own prayer life with God. They need to learn to talk to Him as well as recognize His voice when He talks to them. Communication by prayer is essential to victory.

Jesus has given us His authority to pray in His name and to command demons to be gone in His name (Matthew 28:18-19; Luke 9:1; 10:18-19). He also gives us His power to have victory in our spiritual warfare (Acts 1:8). We have power from His divine nature in us (2 Peter 1:4). We have power to live the abundant life He gives us (John 10:10). Through His Word and prayer we have all we need to have victory. What great blessings we have!

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

How well do you know the Bible? How skilled are you at using this weapon to attain victory when attacked? How strong is your prayer life? What do you need to do to have better communication with God? Spend some time now reading your Bible and praying.

BLOG 431: WARFARE PROMISES (Armor of God – 6)

(15 of 15 blogs about spiritual warfare and marriage/family, taken from material I presented at a marriage retreat, Winning the Battle For Your Family, in 2019)

Listed below are promises related to spiritual warfare. God's promises are true (Joshua 21:45; 23:14). He keeps them no matter what. They are only good for this life; we won't need them in heaven. Carefully look over the ones listed below and mark the ones that you need right now.

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

Victory is Promised: 1 Corinthians 15:57; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Proverbs 21:31; 1 John 5:4, 18; Rev. 12:11; 15:2; Romans 8:37; 2 Corinthians 2:14; John 16:33

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

God Will Meet All Your Needs: Philippians 4:19; Psalm 84:11; Romans 8:32; 1 Samuel 12:24

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

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

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

You Won't Ever Face Anything You Can't Handle With God's Help: 1 Corinthians 10:13

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

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

The Believer Has Nothing To Fear: Proverbs 3:25; Isaiah 14:3; Psalm 34:4; Joshua 1:9; 10:8; 23:9-11; Leviticus 26:8; Exodus 14:13; 1 Samuel 17:45-47; 2 Samuel 22:33-35,40-41

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

Victory Is Guaranteed Us: 1 Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:37; 1 Chronicles 29:11; 1 John 5:4, 18; 1 Chronicles 32:8; Revelation 3:5; 21:7

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

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

God Will Give Us Courage: Proverbs 38:1; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Timothy 1:7

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

God Will Help In Your Sorrow: Proverbs 10:22; Isaiah 53:4; John 16:22; 2 Corinthians 6:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; Revelation 21:4

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

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

Power of the Word of God: Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Isaiah 55:11; 59:21; Psalm 119:81, 105, 111-112; Proverbs 30:5; Lamentations 2:17; 3:37; Matt 24:35; John 5:24; 8:51; 15:7; Romans 10:17

God's Promise of Angelic Intervention: 2 Kings 6:17; Psalm 34:6-7; 91:11; Daniel 6:22; 10:5-14; Acts 12:15

Joshua 21:45 Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

Look up the promises you need from the list above. Write them on a piece of paper, word for word, and keep it with you. Read it many times during the day until you commit it to memory. Then you will have His Word in your heart for any time you need it – and you WILL need it!

BLOG 432: BREAKING FAMILY STRONGHOLDS AND GENERATIONAL CURSES (Don Rogers)

Exodus 34:6-7 - "And He [the Lord] passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished; He punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.' "

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 - "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse - the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known."

Generational curses are judgments that are passed on to individuals because of sins perpetuated in a family in a number of generations. Moses addressed this issue when the Israelites were preparing to enter the Promised Land. He told the new generation that was preparing to enter in that they would not enter unless they dealt with their own personal sins and also the sins of their fathers. The account can be found in Leviticus 26:39-42

Curses take away the quality of life. They can bring failure, shame, sickness and even physical death. They are temporal in nature, causing much grief. They are allowed to get our attention and encourage us to turn back to God. Those who are humbled by them repent and find restoration and renewed freedom from the Lord. Those who become angry, self-righteous and rebel against what God has permitted, and thus remain unrepentant, go deeper into bondage and darkness.

The Scriptures reveal a two prong approach for dealing with generational bondage. We have to address (1) Personal sins and also (2) Generational sins (in the family).

At this point, I know that many Christians will reason, "I thought that all the past is under the blood when I received Jesus as my Savior!" As far as your salvation and eternal destiny is concerned, that is true. But our enemy loves to cause us grief when there are sins connected to our lives (personal or generational) that has not been addressed through repentance and confession. Do you remember that time when you received Jesus into your life? You acknowledged your sin in a general way and asked Him to be your Savior and forgive you and cleanse you. The Lord was very gracious with your general confession, but later on the Holy Spirit began to convict you of sins in your past. You were led to repent of them and confess them specifically to the Lord. Why did the Spirit do that? He wanted you to be free of any legal claims of the enemy upon your life. It had nothing to do with your salvation, but the quality and freedom of your new life in Christ.

Why does God permit the enemy to do be such a hindrance? Because the Lord, in His sovereignty, can use even the enemy's activities to accomplish something good in our lives. Some of the effects include chastisement, testing of faith, a guard against complacency, humility and the motivation to pursue a sanctified life.

How do we begin to address the problem of generational curses and bondages? First, you must develop two sin lists - one personal and one for your family (including parents and the members of each of their families). You must be specific and thorough. Take your time. Go before the Lord and ask Him to help you prepare those lists.

The following is a list of sin categories to help you prepare your lists. Check the following:

IDOLATRY: _Eastern Religions (list) _Meditation _Chanting/mantras _Cults (list them) _Secret Orders/Lodges _Material things _Money _People

OCCULT: _Astrology _Fortune telling (various types) _Ouija Board _Séances _Dungeons & Dragons (or similar games - board or computer) _Hypnosis/Self-hypnosis _ESP _Crystals _Psychic healing _Occult literature _Occult beliefs _OOBE (Out of body experiences attempted/experienced) _Spiritism _Parapsychology _Psychic beliefs and practices _channeling _mind control

WITCHCRAFT & SATANISM: _Incantations _Spells _Dedications _Rituals _Ritual abuse _Blasphemy/Mockery _Literature _Beliefs _Sacrifices _Perversions _Magic _Santeria _Voodoo _Wicca _Powwow healing witchcraft (Pennsylvania Dutch) _Maloike (Italian witchcraft) _Druidism (Celtic witchcraft)

SEXUAL SINS: _Fornication _Adultery _Pornography _Rape _Incest _Lust _Masturbation _Homosexuality _Abortion _Bestiality _Pedophilia _Exhibitionism _Abuse _Fantasy _Other perversions

DRUGS/ADDICTIONS: Illegal (list) Alcohol abuse Smoking (abuse of body) Prescription drug dependency Food dependency

BELIEVING SATAN'S LIES: Regarding self-image Regarding God Regarding religious beliefs Regarding people Regarding behavior Regarding world standards and philosophies

FEAR: Fear of failure Fear of success Fear of Rejection Miscellaneous fears (list) Anxiety Worry Despair Hopelessness

UNBELIEF: Lack of trust Double-mindedness Doubts Skepticism

DECEIT/DISHONESTY: Lying Stealing Exaggeration

PRIDE: Self-righteousness Self-focused Vanity Arrogance

REBELLION: Disobedience Disrespect Self-will Desire to be in Control Stubbornness

ANGER: Hatred Bitterness Resentment unforgiveness Rage Revenge Slander/Gossip Critical/Judgmental Blame -shifting Prejudice/Bigotry Malice

WISHING DEATH: For self For others

VIOLENT ACTS: Attempted suicide Abuse Murder

VULGAR & ABUSIVE LANGUAGE: Cursing (Lord's name in vain) Sarcasm Condemning Off color stories and jokes

MUSIC: (Regarding content of message or performers' lifestyles) Occult Satanic Sexual Rebellion Drug oriented Focus on Death

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE: (with roots in false religious beliefs or with psychic/occult influences) Reiki Therapeutic Touch meditation techniques (emptying the mind) Transcendental Meditation acupuncture acupressure sonopuncture iridology chromotherapy sound therapy kinesiology radionics astrologic medicine orgonomy bioenergetics biofeedback hypnotic regression reflexology polarity therapy Rolfing Do'in Shiatsu yoga Kirilian photography autogenics iridology Ayurvedic Medicine Tai Chi Qigong Traditional Chinese medicine visualization techniques psychic diagnosis psychic healing

UNSCRIPTURAL SEEKING OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS OR SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE: Striving to receive tongues Accepting any personal experience without testing it by the Word of God

This is only a guide to aid you in preparing your sin lists. It is not comprehensive. Not every sin is listed. Add whatever is applicable to your situation.

Make sure that you are truly repentant as you confess these sins. Otherwise the confession means very little. It is important to be repentant on behalf of your family. If you continue to be angry and bitter towards your family, your prayers will not be effective. Ask God to give you a spirit of forgiveness. Confessing the sins of your family doesn't have anything to do with living or dead ancestors and their accountability to God. What it does do is make the sin ineffective for demons to use to work against you or your children now.

After you have confessed all sins on each list, renounce any claims of Satan upon your life in the name of Jesus Christ. Declare that you have placed all his claims against you under the blood of Jesus Christ, your Savior. Then spend a time of worship and praise to the Lord. Thank Him in advance for the deliverance and healing that He is going to bring into your life.

Don't expect everything to come at once. The Lord will unfold to you new freedoms in the days that follow. Don't compare yourself with anyone else. His work in your life will be different than in other lives. He knows what you need and when you need it. Keep close accounts with the Lord. Stay

in His Word and in prayer. Stand against the enemy. When you have new freedoms, remember that the enemy will visit you trying to steal them away from you. Keep your eyes on the Lord. The Lord loves you and He is faithful.

NOTE: If family members continue to sin in the present, their sins should be confessed each day, on their behalf, until they repent of their sins. Doing this will continue to bring grace into their lives and it will also hinder the efforts of the enemy.

BLOG 433: CHRISTIAN PASSIVITY (by Don Rogers)

I have noticed throughout nearly forty years of ministry a passive approach to the Christian walk that many Christians adopt without realizing it. When I speak of “passivity” I mean the lack of engaging the scriptural truths that God has provided in His Word and working them out in everyday experiences.

Too often, Christians are satisfied to fill up on knowledge and do very little with it. Many seem to believe that acquiring the knowledge is sufficient concerning their obedience to God. But in reality, it is only the beginning of the process that God has called us to partake. We are told to study the Word (2 Tim. 2:15 - “*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*”), meditate on the Word (Psa. 119:97 “*O how I love Thy law! It is my all the day.*”), and work out the Word daily in our lives. (Phil. 2:12-13 “*... work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*”)

There used to be a saying, “let go and let God.” My, how that expression has been misused. It became a spiritual excuse to not be actively engaged in the Christian struggle; just wait on the Lord to intervene. If He doesn’t, it must be His will.

Christian passivity is extremely detrimental to personal accountability in our living for God. So many Christians today lack personal commitment and a submissive attitude. It is quite apparent on the local church level.

Fewer Christians are making the time to daily study their Bible and then spend time meditating on what they have read. If this is not done, it is like gulping food down without chewing it. This does not help the digestion process.

It is not enough to do your duty and read a bit of scripture each day. Have you noticed how little of it you retain? God wants us to desire His Word like food, and chew on it and digest it with the enlightenment that the Holy Spirit provides. When we hunger and thirst for the riches of the Word, it will be opened up to us. A superficial reading of the Word will not cut it as far as spiritual growth is concerned. It is also very disrespectful of the wonderful revelation that God has provided us.

There are other reasons why passivity has crept into the lives of Christians. One has to do with “wrong priorities.” We live in a fast-paced society where there are many demands upon ourselves and our family members. There will be little time for our spiritual lives unless they are given a place high on the list of our priorities. If we just hope to find time after we have taken care of other responsibilities, we will never have a consistent time with God, His Word, His people or for His service. Trying to squeeze everything in to a given day does not work either.

We have to take inventory of our lives and start pruning away the non-essentials. God has to be first, the marriage second, the family third, work and then other things last. Setting right priorities is often painful at first, but in the end, it is liberating. The enemy will provide you with many reasons why you should continue to hang on to some things in your life.

Another symptom of passivity is evident when it comes to the biblical teaching of spiritual warfare. The apostle Paul is very clear in Ephesians 6 that Christians are in a struggle with spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. There are many Christians who choose to let God fight the battle rather than get involved. It is clear that they feel ill-equipped to deal with such a battle and they are not eager to find out. But all through scripture we are commanded to resist our enemy (Ephesians 6:13; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8 -9).

Spiritual Warfare is about having a biblical world view which includes the reality of an ongoing battle with the forces of evil for the souls of mankind. To join this battle, one must have faith in the sovereign power of our God, assurance of our identity in Christ and faith in the promises of God.

God uses the struggle to strengthen His people in their faith and teaches them to not depend on their own strength or understanding. We learn to be led by the Holy Spirit who indwells us. Passivity can be all encompassing. It affects people mentally, emotionally and their wills. Mentally, we do not challenge the thoughts that come to us that are inconsistent to the Word of God. Many of our thoughts have their source in the enemy. We are told to "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." 2 Cor. 10:5

Emotionally, we let our feelings have undue influence in our lives, even at times having more weight than the Word of God. The enemy is very effective in stirring up our emotions with his intimidating suggestions.

The will is powerless to take any action or stand firm against what is being experienced. The enemy likes to suggest the hopelessness of our situation and that God will not be there when we need Him. As a result, people get into a fatalistic acceptance of the inevitable. These are some of the dangerous outcomes when passivity is allowed to become a way of life for the Christian. God has called each of His children to an active relationship with Himself and with others. The enemy wants to isolate us into passivity, but we must resist this. Our faith is about an intimate relationship with our Savior and a daily resisting of the temptations of the world and our enemy.

Passivity in and of itself can provide an opportunity for the enemy. First, we are living in disobedience and lacking in faith. Second, we are not prepared to stand against temptations and persevere during trials. We are not trusting in the omnipotent power of God to enable us and to protect us. We have allowed the enemy to become as big as God in our lives by blaming everything that happens in our lives on demonic activity. That is exactly what Satan wants you to believe. We allow ourselves to become easy prey to fear and stop trusting in the promises of God, the victorious finished work of our Savior, Jesus Christ, on the cross and His triumphant victory over the enemy through the resurrection (2 Corinthians 13:5).

BLOG 434: DOES A BELIEVER NEED TO FEAR CURSES? (by Don Rogers)

First of all, the believer needs to realize that we live in a cursed world. There are people who are cursed all around us. Many of these people curse others. But God's provision for his people is great! We should be focusing on our God who is our source of strength, provisions and protection and not fear the enemy's might as Israel did in the wilderness.

Believers should be in agreement with the apostle Paul who said,

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Romans 8:31.32)

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through

him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:35-39)

Fearing Satan, his hosts or curses only gives the enemy more power in your life. Fear is not trusting God. It is yielding to the lies and intimidations of the enemy. If the truth will set people free (Jn. 8:32), then believing the enemy's lies keeps people in bondage. God's children must live by the truth.

Secondly, God is able to protect his people from curses.

When Balak, the king of Moab called upon Balaam to curse the Israelites, God stopped Balaam from do it. *"But God said to Balaam, 'Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed.' "* (Numbers 22:12)

"However, the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you." (Deuteronomy 23:5)

Thirdly, God has promised protection to the righteous from curses resting on them.

"Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest." (Proverbs 26:2)

Learn to stand on truth and the armor of God will be firmly in place upon your life. (Eph. 6:10-18)

BLOG 435: GOD IS SEEKING DISCIPLES (by Don Rogers)

It seems to me that much of the Church has missed the point that Jesus was trying to make when He gave His disciples the Great Commission and sent them out to the world. *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* Matthew 28:19-20

The commission was to go out and make "disciples," not converts alone. In all too many instances we have been satisfied to win converts and hope that they would become disciples of our Lord through osmosis. The Lord did not rely upon the absorption of truth for his followers to create disciples. He mentored them, challenging them to responsibility and disciplined them. They sat at his feet learning; then they were sent out to put in practice what they had learned. He expected them to put him first, even before their families. *"...and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."* (Matthew 10:38-39) He taught them to prepare to sacrifice if they were to be his disciples.

I am convinced that the reason so many Christians have been defeated by the enemy and even given ground to him in their lives is because they were never disciplined.

1. They were not taught that Christ must be the top priority in our lives, influencing every decision.
2. They have not learned the disciplines of sitting at the feet of Jesus and being taught through his word and communing with him through prayer. As Jesus did not act without first seeking the Father's will, so his disciples must seek his will before they act.
3. We do not see believers pursuing the sanctified life as they did in the past. God is seeking those who will desire to be holy as He is holy. Too often, there is too much of the world touching the believers' lives.

4. The hardship the disciples faced built character. Christians today see hardship as a spiritual failure, not something positive. Prosperity, anointing and blessing are much more popular than trials, tribulations and obstacles to be overcome. Instead, physical comforts and the acceptance of the world is sought. There are fewer people seeking the simplicity that is in Christ. Many seek to fill their lives with as many activities and experiences as possible. A number have become addicted to spiritual highs obtained by flitting around to one church or special meeting after another.

Finally, notice two other things that the Lord said to the disciples.

1. They were to go and teach others to obey everything that He had commanded them. (They were taught to go out and teach, preach, deliver and bring healing to those they ministered.)
2. He promised to be with his disciples always, to the very end of the age. (God does not call his faithful to such an enormous task without equipping them and being there for them.)

It is time for God's people to do some soul searching. We have given enough ground to the enemy. He has been having more impact on God's people than we have had upon the world. As converts, trying to be functional Christians, many have remained babes, able to take into their lives only the milk of the word. Because they have not grown in Him, they are unable to partake of the meat that is there to nourish them and give them the strength to become all that the Lord wants them to be.

We all need to be praying for a powerful renewal within the body of Christ that focuses on establishing and preparing disciples to carry out the commission that the Lord has called us to do. God's kingdom will not be extended by carnal Christians, but by those who are committed and faithful, willing to sacrifice all for His honor and glory.

BLOG 436: WHAT IS GENERATIONAL BONDAGE? (by Don Rogers)

What is generational bondage?

ANSWER:

Generational bondage is spiritual bondage that is passed on from parents to children to grandchildren. Such bondage is possible because God has said that it is possible. Exodus 34:6-7 "And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation'"

There are many similar verses to be found in the scriptures. No one who rebels against God's word and deliberately continues in sin is exempt from the possibility of the curse of generational bondage. Like the curse of original sin, God has provided a way of escape through true repentance by the individual. God uses generational bondage to draw people away from their lives of self-indulgence to the sanctified life that He desires for them.

Generational bondage is often discerned by the sin patterns that repeat from generation to generation. It is not uncommon to observe generations of abuse, addiction, hatred, superstition and fear, pride, control and manipulation, rejection, sexual sins and perversions, aberrant religious beliefs, witchcraft and rebellion, etc.

BLOG 437: WHY SPIRITUAL WARFARE?

(This blog is taken, word for word, from the script I used for the LifeWay recordings for pastors. It is applicable to all so I am sharing it with you.)

God commands us to be involved in spiritual warfare against Satan and his demons (1 Timothy 6:12). **Ephesians 6** says "**Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers.**" Paul describes in great detail the armor provided for us to fight this battle. He says every Christian is in a battle and needs to be prepared.

Paul tells the Corinthians in **2 Corinthians 2:11**: "**We are not ignorant of Satan's devices.**" If Satan uses his power against us, then surely we are to oppose him. But some may wonder, if God is sovereign, why do we need to fight Satan? If God is sovereign, why do we need to witness, pray, believe, work for our money, drive carefully, go to a doctor, or any of those things? *If we trust in God, why lock doors at night?* There are some common-sense things God expects us to do for ourselves, even though He is in control of everything. We take care of our health, lock our doors, drive carefully and keep from sin. By doing these things we learn to trust Him more.

Here are some reasons we know we are to use spiritual warfare. First, the **Jews were given the land of Canaan but had to fight** to live in it. When we fight we see His provision, might and deliverance. When we learn about spiritual warfare we are better able to pray for and give guidance to others. Also, we see the awfulness of sin and its consequences so we can better turn from it. We see His glory as He uses us to bring victory to others.

A second reason we know about spiritual warfare is because **Jesus used it**. Jesus talked about Satan & demons more than anyone in the Bible. He cast out demons and He commanded His disciples to cast them out, too. He taught His disciples to fight Satan and overcome evil (Matthew 10:8; Luke 10:1, 17-20). He was disappointed when they were unable to deliver a demonized boy (Mark 9:14-29).

We see **examples of others in the Bible** involved in spiritual warfare as well. Daniel prayed spiritual warfare prayer for three weeks while a demon prevented God's angel from coming with the answer to Daniel's prayers (Daniel 10:2-6,12-14). Paul was twice involved in casting out demons, in Acts 13 and 16 (Acts 13:6-12; 16:16-18). Paul wrote a lot about spiritual warfare in Ephesians 4 and 6 and Galatians 2 (Ephesians 4:26-27; 6:10-13; Galatians 2:10, 13; etc.) His thorn in the flesh was a demon, an angel of Satan (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). Moses was challenged by Satanic forces in Jannes and Jambres (Exodus 7:1-11, etc.).

Many examples in history and today show the involvement of **God's people in spiritual warfare**. We know in the last days spiritual oppression will increase. The book of Revelation makes this clear.

Satan has opposed God from the beginning. Satan attacked God through His creation. First Adam and Eve, then Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God's people ended up in Egyptian slavery for 400 years until God delivered them. God did it all: provided the innocent blood and the power to protect them from the angel of death as well as deliver them unharmed through the Red Sea. They did nothing but accept His salvation. Then the battles started for them: the Amalekites attacked, then the Canaanites, and on it went. The Jews had to learn to fight. When they learned to fight behind their leader Joshua, who is a picture of Jesus, they conquered and settled the land God had for them. When we learn to fight behind our Commander, Jesus, we have victory in life.

BLOG 438: AN ACT OF GOD – A TRUE STORY

The following true account was written by Ralph Speas, president of Meridian University of Biblical Training. I have gotten to know and appreciate him and his ministry in India. God is using him in special ways. Read the story below and give glory to God!

“A very troubled demon-possessed girl, Torodi, about 20 years of age, was so bound by demons, she was incapable of talking. Her mother spent a lot of money trying to cure her. Torodi was so disruptive in her village that the chief decided to have her burned. He said her soul was dead but her body was still alive and needed to die, too. A leader in the village heard about an amazing God at L-tig-da and many were going there to be healed by this God, believed to be greater than all gods. They made the difficult trip to L-tig-da where one of our Meridian Master Trainers pastored a church. The church family surrounded the girl with love, fasting and praying for three days.

“The remarkable happened! She was wonderfully delivered and began to speak. Seeing she was restored; they took her home and back to her idol-infested village in the mountains. When the villagers saw the shocking change in Torodi, they were greatly astounded and wanted to know about the God who cured her. Of course, the Gospel was shared using the stories of the Bible. It was reported that everyone in the village believed in this true God and professed faith in Jesus Christ!! A young man, also demon-possessed was wonderfully delivered by the power of God. This happened in January of 2018.

“In April, four months later, Elliott Freeman and I had the privilege of visiting that village, seeing Torodi, visiting the Chief, and mingling with the villagers. There was so much warmth and kindness there. They once worshipped the idols to fend off the evil spirits but now the idols were entirely ignored. Once an idol worshiper, the village Chief also became a believer. There are few words to adequately express the significance of this display of God’s power that brought an entire idol-worshipping village to faith in Jesus Christ. “To God be the glory, great things He has done.”

Mark 5:1-14 “When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. ³ This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. ⁴ For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.” After Jesus cast the demons out “they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind.”

Thank God for His deliverance for this woman, and in your life. Think of all the things that could have happened to you but didn’t!!!

BLOG 439: SATAN ON A LEASH

I don’t like having enemies or people that don’t like me. It makes me very uncomfortable. I do everything in my power to make sure I get along with everyone. However there is one enemy I can’t make peace with and that is Satan. Unless I serve him, he’ll hate me and do all he can to destroy me. He is forever running to God pointing out my sins and failures (Revelation 12:9-10). He hates you as well, if you are following Jesus.

He is our adversary and is trying to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8). He rules this world (John 12:31) and is the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4). Most people blindly follow him, if they know they are doing so or not (Ephesians 2:2). It is only Christians who resist him and battle back (1 Timothy 1:18). This is a daily fight (1 Peter 5:9; James 4:7).

It helps greatly to know that Satan doesn’t have a free hand. He is on a leash and must have God’s permission to attack us (Job 2:6; Luke 22:31). Why would God give permission? It can only be because God has a good reason for allowing it. There must be some purpose for it. To stretch our faith? To learn how to have victory through Him? To be able to help others who go through similar experiences? To get our attention so we come closer to Him? I’m sure you can add some more.

God calls our battle with Satan and his forces a “good” fight (1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12). It can’t be good because of the pain involved. It’s good because it refines and strengthens our faith (1 Peter 1:7). A muscle needs to be used to stay strong. It needs to be pushed to the limit to grow stronger. The same is true of our faith muscles.

So here is my challenge: instead of dreading the battles you face each day, see them as opportunities to trust the Lord and see Him work. View them as something God is allowing for an ultimately good reason in your life (Romans 8:28). Don’t complain, blame, quit or feel sorry for yourself. Face them as something God knows is “good” for you.

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith.

1 Timothy 1:18 Fight the battle well.

Remember, the battle only lasts as long as you live on this earth. Satan will be removed forever (Revelation 20:10), but growing in our faith now will be with us for all eternity.

Please let me know if there are topics you would like to see addressed in a blog. I really welcome your suggestions! jerry@schmoyer.net

BLOG 440: LIAR, LIAR, PANTS ON FIRE

Perhaps I’m dating myself, but I clearly remember school mates saying “Liar, liar, pants on fire” if they thought someone was deceitful. It was ranked right up there with “Sticks and stones...”. I haven’t said that to anyone in a long time, but perhaps it’s time to start. Satan is a liar and the originator of all lies (John 8:44). The first time he is mentioned in the Bible he is lying to Eve (Genesis 3). He has nothing to do with the truth for there is no truth in him. In fact, the only time he uses the truth is when it helps him promote a greater lie.

His control of the world system is through lies and deception (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4). He distorts and misleads peoples’ thoughts by promoting values and priorities that seem appealing but end up empty (materialism, sexuality, power and control, popularity, pleasure, etc.).

For example, in the last generation he has promoted sexual values in this country that are entirely different than they were in previous generations. These new values may seem to bring “freedom,” but the ultimate result is that individuals and society are destroyed and a holy God is challenged to bring judgment. The lie is that this is “good” for us, and a large number of Christians fall for these lies.

Behind every one of your sins is a lie of Satan. He promises a quicker, easier, better way to meet your needs than patiently trusting God and persevering in faith. Think of some of the sins you struggle with most. You’ll probably see a legitimate need behind it, but find yourself using an illegitimate means to meet that need. We feel hurt but instead of taking the pain to Jesus we respond in anger. We are concerned about a health situation but instead of trusting God we worry. We feel lonely or afraid, but instead of going to Jesus we turn to our favorite addiction. You fill in how it applies to you. We buy Satan’s lie that anger, worry or our favorite addiction will make us feel better and remove the pain, concern, loneliness or fear. But of course it doesn’t.

Spend a few moments applying this to your struggles. Write down the situation (the legitimate need) and your wrong solution. Then in back write some promises from God – the truth of His Word. Be alert to the lies when they come and remember God’s truth instead. Then you can say to Satan, “Liar, liar, pants on fire!” and go on with your day.

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

Please let me know if there are topics you would like to see addressed in a blog. I really welcome your suggestions! jerry@schmoyer.net

BLOG 441: BLIND BUT DON'T KNOW IT

I've often thought that if I had to lose any of my senses, my sight would be the last one I would want to lose. To not see, to live in darkness, must be something hard to adjust to. If one is born blind and doesn't know what they are missing that would be different. The same is true spiritually.

We saw in my last blog that Satan is a liar. He also is a blinder – he blinds people to the truth of God's Word (2 Corinthians 4:4). He not only speaks what is false, he hides what is true. Having done that, he can accuse Christians of being "haters" because of their stand on the absolutes of God's Word. He can label us as politically incorrect and intolerant because others are blinded to the truth of the Bible which we proclaim.

Satan opens their eyes to any and all religions and false beliefs. It is only Christianity that is forbidden and criticized. He wants everyone to be open and accepting of everything. But they won't be open to or accepting of those who believe in God's Word. This results in Christians being criticized and persecuted. Some compromise their beliefs to avoid the discomfort of being rejected. They allow Satan to blind them to the truth so they can support and approve unbiblical moral, sexual and ethical trends.

Satan clothes evil with false appearances (Isaiah 5:20) so that black seems white. He make greed seem like frugality, lukewarmness appear to be moderation and compromise be labeled as open-mindedness or tolerance. He reminds unbelievers that even Jesus said to not judge others! Of course, that is totally misquoting what Jesus really meant, but they allow themselves to be blinded to that as well.

Satan keeps unbeliever in bondage to their sin so that they are blinded to the better life God could provide for them if they follow Him (Galatians 4:8). That's why it can be so hard to share Biblical truth with others. It can be like trying to explain purple to a blind person. Only as God opens their spiritual eyes will they see. Pray for those you are talking to about spiritual things to be able to understand what you are sharing.

The most dangerous form of blindness is that which is not recognized. Even Christians can allow themselves to be blinded to truth. Many are blinded because they want to be. What God says may seem too hard, unfair or not right to them so they reject truth. That's when the enemy shows up to blind them to the truth and feed lies in its place.

Are there any truths in God's word that you struggle with and wonder about? Do you differ from any traditional evangelical beliefs about the Bible and its teachings? Do you find yourself defending sexual values that you would have rejected several years ago? Do you justify the practices of someone because they are a loved one or influential in your life? Spend some time praying for God to show you any blind spots you may have. Confess them and ask Him to remove them.

Luke 18:40-43 *Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied. Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.*

Please let me know if there are topics you would like to see addressed in a blog. I really welcome your suggestions! jerry@schmoyer.net

BLOG 442: WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Battling an enemy who wants to destroy you can be difficult. But battling an unseen enemy, someone who seems to be your friend and, on your side, can be harder yet. Satan lies and blinds, as we have seen in the last 2 blogs. He also infiltrates. His emissaries appear to be Christians, or at least moral people who share our values and beliefs. Satan is an "angel of light" and his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

These people seem to share our values, support what we support and oppose what we oppose. They join our churches, applaud our causes and share most of what we believe. But not all of it. From the inside they spread lies of the enemy, doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1). Jesus says they are like wolves in sheep clothing (Matthew 7:15). Even though they may seem sincere in their faith, their end is to lead people to destruction (Acts 20:30).

Everything, and that means EVERYthing we believe, must be supported by God's Word. Don't be fooled by those who have credentials as pastors or evangelists, authors or well-known speakers. If they teach anything at all that is contrary to what you have been taught or to what the Bible says, rejects them and their teaching. They may seem godly, have a winning personality, be kind and complementary and have done any number of things to win your trust. But if they deviate from God's Word don't believe what they say.

A true believer who may have some wrong beliefs will be open to correction by God's Word. But if they are not then don't believe it. God's Spirit will sound an alarm inside you if something doesn't seem or sound just 'right.' Go with that warning of the Spirit! Don't ignore it or you, too, can be deceived, blinded and believe a lie.

Actually, these people are more dangerous than atheists who vocally oppose the church because they are harder to spot. A good counterfeit needs to look as much like the real deal as possible, and so do those Satan places among us. Just because they say many true things doesn't mean their errors aren't dangerous. Even if someone only put a little bit of rat poison in your favorite soup, would you drink it? Ask God to give you wisdom and discernment (Philippians 1:9) for yourself. Ask Him help you speak truth to those you know who have been taken in by a wolf in sheep's clothing. Know God's Word and stick to it and it alone!

Philippians 1:9-10 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,

BLOG 443: DANGERS OF SENSATIONALISM

When training pastors in India I use a large number of Christian 'magic' tricks to illustrate and emphasize important points I am making. I have to make sure they know the things I do are just tricks and I don't have supernatural powers. There are many in India who do have power from Satan to do all kinds of things that bring fear or awe to those watching. Jannes and Jambres in Egypt had this power from Satan (Exodus 7:11, 22). Jesus said that in the last days there will be those who can do great signs and wonders to mislead people (Matthew 24:24). Paul warns this will be happening more and more as the appearance of the Antichrist comes closer (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

We know Satan can cause sickness (Luke 13:16) and use his false prophets to “heal” the person by removing the demons who cause the illness. Of course, they are working together to make the “healer” seem he or she has supernatural powers. Not all illness is caused by demons (John 9:3), and God is able to heal whenever He chooses, but Satan counterfeits this and deceives many.

Often people are impressed with these supernatural happenings and follow those doing them. The focus falls on the person and not Jesus. His words become more important than God’s Word. New revelations by these men appeal to man’s pride, especially when they are already blinded to the truth.

So be very careful, even skeptical, whenever a ministry focuses on a person more than God and His Word. Don’t be misled by anything. Stick to the truth. Satan will do anything to mislead and confuse. Don’t let it happen to you!

Galatians 1:8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God’s curse!

BLOG 444: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

We know how important the Holy Spirit is in our Christian life, but we sometimes forget the crucial role He has in our spiritual warfare. For one thing, He wages war against our sinful nature so we can have victory over sin and live a holy life (Galatians 5:17). Isn’t it great we don’t have to fight sin alone? We are in a battle with our sinful nature, as Paul describes in Romans 7:15-25. The power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to help us have victory over temptation and sin.

Don’t be surprised or discouraged because you have to battle so much and so often. We WILL have battles as long as we live in this body. We’ll never be so ‘spiritual’ we won’t struggle. That will only happen in heaven.

The Spirit also is active in teaching us the truth of God’s Word (Ephesians 6:14) and warning us against false teachings. He will sound an alarm in your spirit when something or someone doesn’t seem ‘right.’ Learn to recognize and trust that prodding for it is God’s Spirit warning you. He will warn of sin as well.

He will help you remember what you have studied in the Bible when you need it (John 14:26). First you need to spend time studying and learning the Bible. Memorize verses that stand out in your mind so you can use them when attacked or when speaking to others. That’s how Jesus resisted Satan (Matthew 4).

We aren’t to pray to or worship the Spirit, but we must always be aware of Him, for He is God Himself living inside of us to help us in any way we let Him. Turn to Him, allow Him to give you the wisdom, insight, courage and perseverance you need. Don’t fight alone! What could be better than having God live inside you!

BLOG 445: MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDER (by Don Rogers)

We believe that MPD is God’s provision to deal with extreme trauma. It involves the fracturing off of parts of the original personality at different stages of development. These parts or fragments are referred to as “alters” and the main part of the personality is sometimes called the “core person.”

Where some have the capacity to repress their victimization horrors, others fracture and the unwanted memory is left with the alter, so that the core person will not have to deal with it. To

complicate matters, there are often demonic imposters posing as alters. They entered in from the abuser(s) that they possess. These imposters torment the core person and confuse the therapists.

The popular approach is to work with the core person and each individual alter to bring understanding and acceptance so that healing can eventually take place through the willingness of all parts to integrate. Some Christian therapists even try to lead each individual alter to Christ in order to make the person a complete Christian. Personally, I cannot see any Biblical basis for this and I believe that there is an opportunity for a lot of deception in this approach. The reason I say this is because many of the alters are demonic imposters which love to confuse therapists in order to keep the victim under their power.

In cases of Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA), the programming experienced by the victims is done on a demonic level, rather than a human level. What the victim remembers cannot always be depended on to be true, because even memories can be influenced demonically.

I take a different approach. With the Apostle Paul I say in agreement: "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." I Cor. 2:4-5 (KJV)

I believe that God knows exactly the condition of the individual. Rather than try to figure out the complicated structure of the case, (1) I deal primarily with the core person on issues of personal responsibility, (2) I take authority over the demonic imposters and break their power and work and (3) I pray healing of all the fractures so that the personality can be whole again.

What may seem to the professionals as an over-simplification of the problems, I see as a ministry of faith, trusting in our Sovereign God to take care of the details. He has blessed us with a great deal of success with these types of cases

BLOG 446: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH TERRITORIAL SPIRITS – 1 (by Don Rogers)

In the past few years increasing awareness of spirit activity on a territorial level has developed. John Dawson's book, "Taking Our Cities For God" and "Engaging The Enemy" edited and compiled by C. Peter Wagner made a major contribution in helping Christians become aware of territorial spirits. Over the years, I have encountered this kind of activity and have been able to learn from it.

Understanding the dynamics of the spirit world is not for the curious or those who are fascinated by such things. This kind of understanding brings great responsibility. We become accountable to use what God reveals to us in helping others. There is often a price to be paid. The path is often difficult and only those who know how to persevere in faith are successful.

A number of years ago, the bulk of my ministry was itinerant in nature. I would travel over great distances to minister to those in need. I began to realize that there were geographical areas where I could sense a unique type of bondage pervading the countryside. At other times, I did not discern the territorial bondage, but would later be confronted by it as I attempted to minister.

I remember ministering in a region of Pennsylvania once a week for about six months. The area must have covered about 400-500 square miles. Each week I was usually in a different town. After I entered the home of the person who was to receive ministry, I would discover each person beginning to suffer from the same symptoms. They were experiencing fear, an upset stomach and buzzing in their ears. The buzzing made them feel dizzy and confused.

After three cases in a row, I directed my attention to the spirit causing this phenomenon and found that I was dealing with a territorial spirit that ruled over the whole area. He did not like what I was doing. My ministry was a threat to his rule over the people of that region. He cursed me in their

minds and sometimes spoke out of their mouths. Knowing what I was dealing with, I broke this spirit's power over each individual and commanded him to leave. Immediately, their physical and emotional symptoms disappeared and I was able to continue to minister and witness them set free from the powers of darkness oppressing them.

Generations of witchcraft were practiced throughout the area. It was practiced in the form of psychic healing that had religious packaging. This ruling spirit was very powerful and made claims upon a number of generations. To this very day, Satanic groups are flourishing in this area. God is letting the consequences of "the sin of the fathers: be visited upon the children" (Exodus 20:5; Numbers 14:17-18). Like the children of Israel, who rebelled against the Lord's commands, God provides a way of escape if the people will repent and seek Him.

I had been ministering in a particular area off and on for a few months. Each case that I had seemed to be exceedingly difficult. There were barriers confronting me in each case that I was working. One day, as I was ministering to a former Satanist, the territorial ruler manifested himself in the countenance of the individual. The face contorted and a raspy, sneering voice shouted out, " I have been resisting you as you ministered to Mary __, Edward __, Jason __ and Sheila __ and many others. You have invaded my territory and I will fight you so they will not be set free of my power over them. If you do not stop, I will attack your wife and your children and I will destroy you. Your God will not be able to protect you from my powers!"

It was surprising to hear a powerful spirit speak out and begin naming people to whom I was ministering. The person he was speaking through did not even know any of them. I had become used to the fear tactics of the enemy. He tries to intimidate with threats in an attempt to force God's servants to back off. In reality, the spirits are afraid they are going to lose their power base and their ability to rule over people. They recognize and fear the authority of Christ that you represent. Long ago, I learned to trust the Lord for both myself and my family. He has never failed me. (Continued in next blog)

COMMENT BY JERRY: Do you see any pattern in the attacks and bondages in your church or community? Ask God to show you if there is anything territorial spirits are doing and commit to pray faithfully against them.

BLOG 447: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH TERRITORIAL SPIRITS – 2 (by Don Rogers)

In Mark 5, Jesus met a man who had demons and lived among the tombs. These spirits in him were called "Legion," for they were many. "The spirits begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area." (5:10) They had a lot of power that particular area, because many raised pigs, contrary to the commands of the Lord. They tried to bargain with Jesus to send them into a herd of pigs, so that they might remain in the area. We must not think that Jesus complied with their wishes. He used this incident to show us that demons are real entities, not someone's overactive imagination or cultural superstition. Only real entities could affect a herd of two thousand pigs enough to drive them into a frenzy down a steep bank on the run into a lake and drown. Ironically, the spirits ended up without a place to dwell and probably had to go where the Lord sent them.

Another scriptural example of territorial spirits is provided in Daniel 10. The angel messenger told Daniel that the answer he had been bringing in answer to his prayer had been delayed for three weeks because a demonic prince over Persia had detained him. The messenger said the angel Michael had come to his aid (10:13). The angel also said that he would have to fight against the demonic princes of Persia and Greece on his return and that he would have only Michael to help him (10:20-21).

I remember on one occasion that I had been called in to minister to a man who had been involved in healing witchcraft. It had been a practice in his family for generations. His friends knew that it would be a battle, so there were a number of prayer partners there encircling the room for support. Shortly after I had bound the territorial spirit and the other spirits that were in this man, a presence manifested itself in the room. He identified himself as a prince from the East that had been summoned to resist us. I commanded in the name of Jesus Christ for him to be bound and to release the man. My command had no affect whatsoever. I continued to command him, but nothing was happening. The spirit had enormous power derived from the large number of people he had in bondage in the East. Suddenly, the Lord showed me that we must all begin to pray. So we prayed at great length for the Lord's intervention and for His will to be done. As quickly as he had appeared the spirit was gone, and we continued our ministry.

Some high ranking spirits actually thrive on the battle and often we are led to switch course and pray against them. There are some territorial spirits that are extremely powerful, that require a lot of prayer support to contend with them. It is foolhardy for anyone to think they have carte blanche power and authority to come against these spirits any time they please. We are always dependent on the Lord. These types of encounters remind us of that. (Continued in next blog)

COMMENT BY JERRY: Remember Satan uses fear as one of his best weapons, so don't let these things put fear into you. Instead, pray faithfully and actively as God leads you. Pray for your location and the churches there, that they would be free from anything the enemy is doing.

BLOG 448: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH TERRITORIAL SPIRITS – 3 (by Don Rogers)

In Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, we notice that Lucifer is the power behind both the king of Babylon and the king of Tyre. Their domains were really his domains. It brings to mind the offer that the devil made to Jesus when he tempted him in the desert (Lk 4). "The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, 'I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.' " (Luke 4:5-7) Jesus did not challenge that statement, because it was true. Jesus even called him the "prince of this world" in John 12:31. He rules over the kingdoms and countries working through the rulers and governments.

Remember when I said there is great responsibility when you have knowledge concerning such powerful activity? We become accountable to do something about what the Lord is showing us. God revealed to our church four territorial spirits that were attacking churches in the northeastern part of the United States. We began to pray against their activity in order to frustrate and bring down their work. We witnessed some very encouraging changes occur. But after a period of time, we began to slack off in our warfare against this enemy. Maybe we were getting weary of the same old routine. Americans are spoiled - we like variety and change. After slacking off a while, things began to go wrong in our church. Problem after problem began to develop. Before we knew it, we were putting out one fire after another. We were so busy putting out fires that we did not realize that we had stopped our campaign against these territorial rulers altogether. We had given them a chance to reorganize and retaliate against us and wreak havoc. They kept us so busy and off balance, that we forgot all about our mission. We had not persevered in that which the Lord had called us to do.

This is often the way that it happens. We do not persevere in the mission which God commissions us. The Israelites did not persevere when they entered the Promised Land. They should have driven out all the inhabitants so that the Hebrews would not be corrupted by their presence. Instead, they failed to obey God completely and paid the price as a nation after that.

Territorially, Satan is the "prince of this world." (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) He has organized his kingdom on many levels with his princes serving him to keep the world in bondage. We cannot allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problem.

We must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and be obedient to the calling He gives to each of us. The Kingdom of God is increasing its presence in the world and one day, the Son of God will usher in the Kingdom in its completeness. The battle is the Lord's and we are his warriors who await His command.

COMMENT BY JERRY: Is there anything God is showing you to pray for? Are you faithfully bringing it before Him in prayer until He releases you from the burden? Is there anything in the past you stopped praying for without His approval? Pray for it again.

Please let me know if there are topics you would like to see addressed in a blog. I really welcome your suggestions! jerry@schmoyer.net

BLOG 449: TELLING GOD'S VOICE FROM SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT - 1

Impersonators make good money entertaining and impressing audiences with their ability to look and/or sound like someone famous. They can make good money cashing in on someone else's fame and good name. Satan does the same thing. He pretends to be God speaking to man – but not just for entertainment and amusement. The results are deadly if we listen to the wrong voice.

In World War II the Japanese found ways to broadcast on American airwaves to soldiers, giving commands and orders to deceive and defeat our troops. Soldiers had to make sure they were taking orders from the right source. As God's soldiers in a deadly war with Satan, we must make sure that we are hearing from Him and not our enemy. Sometimes that isn't so easy. How can we know if it is really God who is speaking to us or another voice which is counterfeiting and confusing us?

There are actually three counterfeit 'voices' that can confuse or mislead us. The first is the voice of the flesh. As Paul says in Romans 8:5-8, the flesh is, in essence, the part of us that tends to sin. It is in opposition to the Spirit in us and leads us to disobedience of God (James 1:13-14). The desires of the flesh can be strong, especially if they have been given free reign in the past.

By knowing what God's Word says and by listening to the convicting voice of the Spirit within, we can learn to recognize this voice for the self-centered temptation it is.

A second 'voice' is the voice of the world. The world system, with its values and goals, can have a strong appeal to our sin nature (flesh). John warns us not to the system around us that is not based on love of God and His Word (I John 2:15-17). Its 'voice' comes to us through what we see, hear and read in our daily lives. It can come through others, the media, or our own envy of those who seem better off than we are. Inputs from the world around us can be very persuasive, effecting how we think and therefore behave. They can sound very appealing, so we need to carefully study God's will as revealed in the Bible and be sensitive to the Spirit's promptings and warnings. When the voice of the world lines up with the voice of the flesh, the temptation can be very strong.

The most dangerous voice, however, because it is most subtle, is the voice of Satan. Ananias obviously listened to Satan's voice instead of God's when saying he was donating all he received for the sale of his land when it was, in fact, only part of the amount (Acts 5:3).

Satan does communicate with man. He did so with Jesus when He was tempted after forty days in the wilderness (Matthew 4). Paul says Satan sows deception in the hearts of people (2 Corinthians 11:3).

Jesus says that everything Satan says is a lie, for that is his nature. "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies" John 8:44.

The Bible doesn't give details about just how Satan does this, but we do know he can put thoughts into a person's mind. "But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's" Mark 8:33.

In addition, Satan can take thoughts out of a mind. "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road" Matthew 13:19.

As with Adam and Eve, Satan's communication with man is always deceitful and destructive. He can make suggestions about how we may meet a legitimate need on our own without waiting for God's provision. He can put thoughts of guilt and failure into our minds. He can provide excuses to justify a sinful course we are taking. He can undermine God's goodness and the Bible's authority.

Satan is willing to speak as much as a man is willing to listen. He uses various forms of the occult to communicate with man, such as tarot cards, Ouija boards, séances, and other means. He can and will speak directly to a person much as the Holy Spirit does. "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Because Satan is the most dangerous of the counterfeit voices we hear, we will focus on him for this message.

Satan is a counterfeiter. He tries to counterfeit all God does for His people. Judas heard Satan's voice and betrayed Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16). Peter heard Satan's voice and did not believe the voice of Jesus (Mark 8:31-33). A leper was healed by Jesus and told not to tell anyone who did it but he heard Satan's voice and disobeyed (Mark 1:40-45).

While we know Satan is limited to one place at a time, we must recognize that he does his work through demons. It is highly unlikely that Satan will ever speak to us directly, but by assigning certain demons to harass and impact us the result is the same. Thus when we say that 'Satan speaks to us' we are really recognizing that all demonic forces work together for Satan.

David's thought to take a census of the people was demon-inspired (1 Chronicles 21:1ff; 2 Samuel 24:1ff). Saul's jealousy and anger at David was as well (1 Samuel 16:14-23). Ananias and Sapphira's greed was demon stimulated as well (Acts 5:3). When God didn't speak to Saul, he went to a medium to connect with a supernatural power (1 Samuel 28:4-7). For this reason John warns, "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

Therefore it is essential to make sure you can tell Satan's voice from God's voice. We'll look at

BLOG 450: TELLING GOD'S VOICE FROM SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT - 2

The first way we can tell the difference between God's voice and Satan's voice is that God convicts while Satan condemns. When God speaks to us about sin we feel guilty and sinful but still loved. When it is Satan condemning us we don't feel loved but rejected and hopeless.

Jesus forgives and restores, as with the woman taken in adultery. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:10-11).

By contrast Satan accuses and focuses on our guilt. That's why he's called the 'accuser of our brothers' (Revelation 12:10).

God will expose the sin and focus on it, but only for the purpose of us confessing and removing it. He offers hope of restoration. He doesn't emphasize our guilt, failure and unworthiness in that area and as a person in general, but Satan does.

When Jesus convicts we know specifically what He is talking about and what to do about it. When it comes from Satan we just have a nagging sense of unspecified guilt and failure to discourage and defeat us. Or Satan will point to past sins which have been confessed and forgiven and try to get us to feel miserable about them, ignoring the fact that God has forgotten them.

So God convicts but Satan condemns.

A second way of telling the difference is to remember that God clarifies but Satan confuses. When God speaks to us it is to clearly show us sin in its true, deadly light. The 'pleasure' and deception is removed and the awful deadliness is revealed. Satan, however, tries to perplex us with worldly logic and explanations. He feeds us excuses, justifications, thoughts of how it is another's fault and general confusion over it (James 3:15). When God speaks there is a sense that everything is under control (1 Corinthians 14:32). Satan's purpose is to ensnare and take captive (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

God's voice brings peace (Philippians 4:7) but Satan's voice brings uncertainty for what he tells us conflicts with what the Spirit is also telling us. Thus we feel perplexed.

If the voice you are hearing brings a nagging, gnawing feeling of frustration in your spirit, it's not from God. God brings a deep calmness in your spirit.

Thus God convicts while Satan condemns. God clarifies while Satan confuses. There's another way to tell the difference: God confirms while Satan contradicts. When it's God's voice speaking to us we know it lines up with the Bible and advice Godly believers would give us. It passes Paul's test of making sure everything is true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable (Philippians 4:8-9). However when Satan speaks his words don't agree with the Bible or advice of mature Christians. When we desire it so much we ignore the warnings in our spirit we are headed to sin.

So God convicts while Satan condemns, God clarifies while Satan confuses, and God confirms while Satan contradicts. Think about these. We'll look at two more ways to tell the difference blog.

BLOG 451: TELLING GOD'S VOICE FROM SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT - 3

Further, God chooses while Satan captures. God's voice brings us freedom, there are no strings attached. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." Following Satan's voice brings bondage, we are trapped and taken prisoner (2 Timothy 2:26).

Satan says, "Do your own thing, do what you want to do." God says, "Consider the effects of your behavior on others. Live a selfless, self-giving life." Satan says, "Live for the moment." God says, "Live with an eye on eternity." Satan says "Don't concern yourself with what others say." God says, "Receive godly counsel." Satan says, "You're as mature as you ever need to be. You're grown up." God says, "Continue to grow and mature and to become more and more like Jesus." In all these Satan's advice, while appealing to our flesh, leads to bondage and defeat. God's will, instead, brings freedom and life.

God convicts while Satan condemns, God clarifies while Satan confuses, and God confirms while Satan contradicts. God chooses while Satan captures.

In addition, God constrains but Satan constricts. God draws us by His love and gives us a desire to want to live for Him. "For Christ's love compels us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). Moving from sin to following God is like taking a shower when we are really dirty because we know how good we'll feel afterwards. Satan's communication does not bring that. It constricts, limits, makes us feel dirtier and ineffective. We feel discouraged and hopeless.

Satan is like the salesman trying to force us to make a decision we aren't quite sure of, telling us if we don't buy now it'll be too late. God respects our free will and doesn't force us. He gives us time to think the alternatives through. When we feel forced, pushed or in a hurry we can know Satan is speaking, not God. God is never in a hurry!

So in summary we see that God convicts while Satan condemns, God clarifies while Satan confuses, and God confirms while Satan contradicts. God chooses while Satan captures. God constrains but Satan constricts.

The way to tell Satan's voice from God's voice is to run what you hear through the following test:

1 - **Is it consistent with the word of God?** Does this solution fit the principles that are in the Bible? Does it violate anything in the Bible? Would Jesus do it?

2 - **Is it a wise decision?** In your own heart and mind is it the type of solution that Jesus Christ himself would agree with? Would Jesus implement this solution himself?

3 - **Are you confident in asking God to enable you to achieve this solution?** Can you look upon this solution as one that God would send into your life?

4 - **Do you feel that it is a God given solution?** Deep within your heart do you feel or sense that this solution is the will of God?

5 - **Does this solution fit a child of God?** From all that you know about God, does this solution or this answer fit a person that truly loves, believes, and trusts God?

6 - **Does the solution fit God's overall plan for your life?** Does this solution fit in with God's guidance and direction of your life?

7 - **Does this solution honor God?** Does it bring glory and praise to Almighty God?

Have you been able to recognize any of these traits of Satan's voice in communication you have been hearing? Make sure you don't follow anything that doesn't come from God!

Are you now better able to discern God's voice from Satan's voice? If you really want to hear from God only and not be deceived, He'll make sure you have the discernment you need. Just ask Him.

BLOG 452: WHY GOD PERMITS DEMONIC ACTIVITY (by Don Rogers)

1. To be an agent of TESTING (Job 1 & 2; Luke 22:31-32)

Satan was permitted to destroy Job's family, wealth and afflict him physically.

Satan was permitted to sift Peter when Jesus was captured.

2. To be an agent of CHASTISEMENT (Isaiah 5 – The Parable of the Vineyard)

When the vineyard did not produce good fruit, its protection from the enemy was taken away so it could be trampled on. The rain was taken away to stifle its growth.

When Christians do not produce fruit, we will be more vulnerable to the enemy and the blessings will decrease.

3. To be an agent of JUDGMENT (Judges 9 and 1 Kings 22)

God used an evil spirit to bring judgment on Abimelech and the men of Shechem.

God used a lying spirit to lead king Ahab to his death.

4. To be a HUMBLING agent (2 Cor. 12:7-10) Paul's testimony

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassing great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me."

5. To demonstrate GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY – (Daniel 10; 2 Kings 6)

An angel sent to Daniel to bring an answer to his prayer had to fight a demonic prince over Persia. He got the assistance of Michael, the archangel, to get through.

When the army of the King of Aram surrounded Dothan in order to capture Elisha, the prophet, the Lord provided a heavenly army to protect Elisha. When the enemy army came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the Lord, "Strike these people with blindness." They were made blind and Elisha told them they were in the wrong place and led them to Samaria.

6. To train God's people to use His AUTHORITY and POWER (1 Peter 5:8-9)

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."

"I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy, nothing will harm you."

BLOG 453: WHAT CAUSES CURSES? (by Don Rogers)

"If you will not listen, if you will not lay it to heart to give glory to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the CURSE on you and I will CURSE your blessings; indeed I have already CURSED them, because you did not lay it to heart." (Malachi 2:2)

SIN PUTS CURSES INTO EFFECT!! - Just as with Adam and Eve

"You rebuke the arrogant, who are CURSED and who stray from your commands." (Psalm 119:21)

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' 'In tithes and offerings. You are under a CURSE - the whole nation of you - because you are robbing me.' " (Malachi 3:8-9)

"This is what the Lord says: 'CURSED is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. but blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.' " (Jeremiah 17:5,7)

"With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed - an ACCURSED brood!" (2 Peter 2:14)

The practice of sin can expose even the believer to curses. So many believers are experiencing their own lives and their families falling apart. They do not recognize the sin in their lives being related to their deteriorating circumstances. God allows curses to take affect and hopefully get their attention so they will recognize their sin, deal with it and recommit themselves to Him.

"But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete. --(Luke 6:49)

Some Christians would be appalled to know that they have pronounced curses by wishing themselves dead or others dead. When a person says "damn you" or "damn that ..." they are pronouncing curses.

"With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be." (James 3:9-10)

Those who live godly lives do not have to worry about curses coming to rest upon them. God protects the righteous.

"Like the fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest." (Proverbs 26:2)

Have you ever cursed yourself or others? Pray and suit quietly, waiting for God to remind you of things you have said in anger or without thinking. Confess each one, putting it under the blood of Jesus. Ask God to forgive you and take back any access you have given to the enemy through what you said or thought.

BLOG 454: DRESS FOR BATTLE

When I was 19 years old I was drafted into the United States Army. Others said it would be great to be a soldier, a special privilege. But I found it very, very hard. I had to learn how to defend myself against those who wanted to destroy me. I had to learn how to fight an enemy army. When I was in the army I committed my life to God, to live for Him. Others said it would be great to be a Christian, a special privilege. But I found it very, very hard. I had to learn how to defend myself against another enemy who wanted to destroy me. I had to learn how to fight an unseen enemy.

I am no longer in the United States Army so I no longer fight the enemies of America. But I am still in God's Army – and I still must fight God's enemies. If you are in God's Army you will understand what I mean. You, too, face many battles as you live for Him.

We are at war (1 John 5:19). We are living in enemy-occupied territory (2 Corinthians 4:4) surrounded by those who would destroy us (1 Peter 5:8). In an army, the commander provides the equipment and the soldiers learn how to use it. God, our Commander, provides what we need to defend ourselves and to have victory (2 Corinthians 10:4) but we must learn how to use the equipment. Paul describes what these are in Ephesians 6:10-18.

Paul wrote these words in prison, chained to a Roman soldier. As he came to the end of the book of Ephesians he looked for a way to describe our battle and how to have victory. Looking at the Roman soldier with him, Paul used his equipment as a picture of what God provides for us.

Paul begins by commanding us to be strong, but not in our strength, only in God's strength (Ephesians 6:10). The same power that defeated Satan at the cross (Hebrews 2:14-15) and that raised Christ from the dead (Ephesians 1:18-23) is available to us. God's power is greater than Satan's power (1 John 4:4). Satan is more powerful than us, but not than God.

Paul describes this power as pieces of armor we are to put on and use (Ephesians 6:11). We are commanded to put it on. Its use is not optional but mandatory for soldiers of God. And we are commanded to put on ALL of it, not just some.

The reason we need it is because Satan has “schemes” to deceive and trap us (Ephesians 6:11). This word is used of a hunter trapping an animal. Paul calls our conflict a “struggle” (Ephesians 6:12). This word refers to a fight to the death. Satan will do anything he can to destroy you, your family and your church!

So what are we to do? How are to have victory against these schemes and struggles? Here’s where the armor comes in.

Ephesians 6:10-13 A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

Do you have a warrior mentality when it comes to living your Christian life? Are you alert to the attacks, traps and schemes against you? Do you know where the enemy tries to get you to sin? Are you able to defeat his efforts? Pray and ask God for wisdom and insight into your battle so you can better withstand.

BLOG 455: THE BATTLE FOR THE MIND

When a soldier faces his enemy, he needs to use the armor provided by his commander to be victorious. The same is true in our Christian life. The first piece of equipment we are commanded to wear is the helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:17).

The Roman soldier chained to Paul in prison wore a helmet made out of metal. Enemies would attack with a large, heavy sword which they would try to bring down on the Roman soldiers head. Thus the helmet had to be strong to protect their head. The same is true for us. Satan attacks our mind and thoughts first. He puts doubt, fear, confusion, lust, greed and whatever defeats us in our mind. Our spiritual battles are won or lost in our mind (thoughts) first of all. That’s why we need the mind of Christ to have victory (1 Corinthians 2:16).

We must know who we are in Christ so we don’t give in to discouragement, fear or anger. We must be aware of all we have so we don’t turn to sin to meet needs God has already met. We are a new creation and must know what that means and how it applies (2 Corinthians 5:17). Knowing God’s truth is the only way to protect our minds against Satan’s lies.

God has given us over two hundred benefits that come at the moment of salvation. For one thing, He promises that past, present and future sins are gone forever (Romans 8:1). He deals with us in grace, not works.

We are in God’s family by birth (John 3:3) and by adoption (Ephesians 1:5). Thus we are children of God (John 1:12). Ours is a family relationship with God, not king and servant or master and slave. God is our Father, Jesus our Elder Brother (Hebrews 2:11-13). We are family, with all its security, benefits and privileges. Those are ours now, not something we have to wait to have. Not only are we in His family, but we are also friends with God (John 15:15). Can you imagine God calling you a friend? Great privileges are ours! As such she shares His plans and blessings with us.

We must know beyond a doubt that we are unconditionally loved by God, now and forever (Romans 8:38-39). It has nothing to do with what we deserve or don’t deserve, and there’s no way we can lose it. There is nothing we can do to make Him love us more. There is nothing we can do to make Him love us less. He can’t love us more and He won’t love us less.

When we are hit with doubt about His provision we must remember He has promised to meet all our needs (Philippians 4:19). When we doubt His love we must remember we can never lose our salvation (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). When we get weary we must remember we will be in heaven with Him forever (Philippians 3:20). When we struggle with sin we must remember He gives us victory over sin (Galatians 2:20). When we struggle in our warfare with Satan's forces we must remember that He has promised victory over them (Colossians 1:13; Luke 10:18-19).

When both husband and wife are committed believers and wear the helmet of salvation they will be likeminded in their values, priorities, motives and goals in life. They know only Jesus can meet all their needs, not their mate, and turn to Him to have them met. Children, too, must understand all they have in Jesus as Christians. This is key to preventing Satan's attacks to our mind and thoughts.

Colossians 1:13 For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Who is winning the battle for your mind? Do your thoughts line up with Jesus' thoughts? Are you able to control your thoughts and make them obedient to Christ? If not, write down what you must do and ask God for His help doing it.

BLOG 456: CRACKS IN OUR ARMOR

Sin in life can provide an opening for demons to work against us (Ephesians 4:26-27; Mark 7:21-23; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-8). Even one sin that is allowed to remain can give an opening for demonizing. That's why God provides a spiritual breastplate for us to wear (Ephesians 6:14).

The Roman soldier chained to Paul wore a breastplate to protect his heart and vital organs. It wasn't always easy or comfortable to wear, but if he didn't put it on he was vulnerable. Even if he wore it but it allowed holes or weak spots in it, the enemy would attack those spots and defeat him. The same is true spiritually.

Paul says this represents our righteousness (Ephesians 6:14). It reminds us of the importance of being covered with Jesus' righteousness. We receive it with salvation when our sins are forgiven (Matthew 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:23). Breaks and weak areas are covered when we confess our sin (1 John 1:9).

In marriage a husband and wife are to encourage and help each other to overcome sin. They are to set a good example for each other. Too many times one will do or say that which leads the other to sin, like Eve did to Adam. When each one lives like Jesus, serving and forgiving each other, the couple together wears the breastplate of righteousness. It is of the utmost importance for each mate to overcome sin in their lives and to help their mate do the same. When they have children they are included in this as well so the whole family is an example of holiness.

While the breastplate protects all from above the waist, the belt of truth (Ephesians 6:14) covers the waist and below. The belt helped the soldier keep his garments and weapons secured so he didn't stumble. God's truth keeps us from stumbling and falling spiritually. Satan wants to trip us up with his lies and deception. Whenever we get a thought that doesn't line up with God's truth in the Bible we must reject it. That means we must know God's Word well.

In marriage, too, we must guard against the lies the world and the flesh give us about marriage. Self-centered values, unbiblical expectations, unforgiving attitudes and me-first selfishness abound in the world and its easy for Christians to be influenced by them as well. Children, too, must know God's truth or they, also, will fall for the lies the enemy and their flesh tell them. We must know God's truth, for only it sets us free (John 8:32).

John 8:32 *"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

1 Peter 1:16 *It is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

Is there a sin in your life that has control over you? Get counseling, ask others to pray and do everything possible to have victory over it.

Make sure you know and live in God's truth. Lies like, "You'll never have victory over that sin" abound. What lies do you struggle with? What gives you victory over them?

BLOG 457: PEACE + FAITH = VICTORY

Peace. Everyone talks about it but few have it. The world abounds with substitutes or that which seeks to mask the pain of emptiness. Yet God's peace is necessary to have victory in our lives. Paul, looking at the Roman soldier with him, says we need peace like the soldier needs solid, dependable footwear (Ephesians 6:15). The enemy would pick a place to attack that was advantageous to them and difficult for the Romans. Water, loose sand, sharp rocks or uneven terrain all gave the enemy an advantage. Therefore the Romans needed sturdy, strong footwear to keep their footing. If they slipped or stumbled they were defeated.

Satan attacks us when and where he thinks he has the best opportunity of winning. We need to be at peace with God so we are secure in Him and can stand no matter what happens in life. God never said He would remove our conflicts but that He would help us through them (John 17:15). He doesn't promise us absence of difficulties, but He does promise peace despite them (Philippians 4:6-7; Isaiah 26:3; John 14:27; 2 Thessalonians 3:16).

If a husband or wife do not have God's peace but instead have turmoil, anxiety, stress or confusion that will negatively affect their marriage. Each needs to have peace with God first, then based on that they can be at peace with each other. This will give them a firm footing no matter what the enemy throws at them. Without God's peace in your heart and relationship your marriage will be characterized by conflict. That not only harms you but your children, and their impression of marriage. Children, too, need the peace of Jesus so they can mature to be like Him and fight their own spiritual battles.

The next piece of armor listed by Paul is the shield of faith. So far all the armor was part of the soldier's inner defense. The shield is the outer wall of defense (Ephesians 6:16). Roman soldiers carried large shields which they held in front of them for protection from the burning tar the enemy would fling at them (Ephesians 6:16). Without a shield they would have to dodge the fiery missiles and not be able to do any other fighting. Paul said this shield did for the soldier what our faith does for us.

Faith in God's love and sovereignty is our outer wall of defense. If we truly believe that no matter what happens God is in control and only allows what is for His glory and our good (Romans 8:28), then we won't be defeated by life's problems and pains. The greater our faith is, the stronger our protection is. It's like having a large shield compared to a very small one.

Marriage, too, must be built on faith – in God and each other. Love must be unconditional, commitment must be unshakable and forgiveness must be continual. When hard times hit a

marriage, faith in God keeps both partners focused on God and not the problem or each other's failings. Don't battle your mate. Trust God and together battle your common enemy. Have faith that God knows and does what is best for you, and that your mate is His perfect choice for you for the rest of your life.

Teach your children to walk by faith and obedience. Start by teaching them to trust and obey you when young. Show you are worthy of trust. Help them transfer this to God as they get older. They must have a faith of their own. They can't hide behind your shield but must 'own' their faith and develop their individual faith in God. Start building their faith right now.

John 17:15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

Romans 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

On a scale of 1 (very weak) to 10 (very strong) where would you rate your peace? What takes away your peace quicker than anything else? What should you do about it?

On a scale of 1 (very weak) to 10 (very strong) where would you rate your faith? Where/when is your faith the strongest? Where/when is it the weakest? What should you do to increase your faith?

BLOG 458: GOING ON THE OFFENSE

All the pieces of equipment we've seen in Ephesians 6 so far have been defensive. We can protect ourselves but we can't have victory. We need an offensive weapon to go on the attack and defeat our enemy. That is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). With their short, double-edged sword the Romans conquered the known world. There was no protection for their back so they couldn't turn and run, they had to move ahead against their enemies, and that is what we must do as well.

This sword of the Spirit refers to the Word of God – it is so important we get this right that Paul says so (Ephesians 6:17). Jesus quoted the Bible when tempted (Matthew 4:1-11). Read Scripture. Memorize Scripture. Quote Scripture. Pray Scripture. Think Scripture. It is the only way we can drive away temptation, lies and attacks of the enemy.

To have a healthy, growing, godly marriage, a husband and wife need to know God's Word. They need to study it individually and together. They must know how to apply it when in spiritual warfare. They must be comfortable praying Bible verses. They must teach their children the Bible as well. Too many children of Christian parents turn from the faith when they leave home because it never became part of them. They need to know God's Word, memorize portions of it, and believe it for themselves. If our children follow Jesus they WILL be attacked, so they must now know how to use their only offensive weapon, God's Word.

Paul is done listing the armor, but not done telling us how to have victory. He next mentions prayer (Ephesians 6:18-20). We can equate prayer to communication between the commander and his soldiers. Without good communication, the soldier will not know where to go or what to do. He will be left on his own. We need time talking to God and listening to Him to know His plan for us.

Praying together is very important for Christian couples. Deep, open, heartfelt prayer will bring a couple closer and help them have victory. A prayerless marriage is a powerless marriage. If your marriage is only as strong as your prayer life as a couple, how strong would it be? Maybe that's why it is so open to attack! Children, too, need to develop their own prayer life with God. They need to

learn to talk to Him as well as recognize His voice when He talks to them. Communication by prayer is essential to victory.

Jesus has given us His authority to pray in His name and to command demons to be gone in His name (Matthew 28:18-19; Luke 9:1; 10:18-19). He also gives us His power to have victory in our spiritual warfare (Acts 1:8). We have power from His divine nature in us (2 Peter 1:4). We have power to live the abundant life He gives us (John 10:10). Through His Word and prayer we have all we need to have victory. What great blessings we have!

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

How well do you know the Bible? How skilled are you at using this weapon to attain victory when attacked? How strong is your prayer life? What do you need to do to have better communication with God? Spend some time now reading your Bible and praying.

BLOG 459: USE THE WORD OF GOD

Knowing and using God's Word, the sword of the Spirit, is key for victory (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 77:12; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Matthew 22:37-38; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 4:8). That's how Jesus defeated Satan (Matthew 4:1-11). Satan tries to plant doubts about God's word in man's mind. This is how he got to Eve. She misquoted God's Word to Satan and when he added to God's Word (making God seem like He was keeping something good from her) she didn't pick it up. Satan was undermining God's Word, and he won! We must be skillful in the use of our sword to win. Below are some verses to memorize and use.

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

BIBLE MEMORY VERSES

GOD'S LOVE & ACCEPTANCE The LORD is compassionate and gracious; slow to anger, abounding in love. Psalm 103:8

THE BIBLE, GOD'S WORD The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

GOD'S TRUTH FREES "If you hold to my teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:32

LIVE IN HOLINESS Therefore, I urge you, brothers in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- this is your spiritual act of worship. Romans 12:1

SUBMIT TO GOD, RESIST SATAN God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you. James 4:6-8

GOD IS GREATER THAN SATAN The One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 1 John 4:4

GOD WILL MEET ALL OUR NEEDS My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

RENEW YOUR MIND WITH CHRIST Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- His good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2

PRAYER The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16

AUTHORITY OVER DEMONS Jesus replied: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you." Luke 10:18-19

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

SIN AS OPENINGS TO DEMONIZING Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24

CURSES Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." Galatians 3:13

ANCESTRAL & CHILDHOOD OPENINGS Therefore if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17

OCCULT OPENINGS Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God. Leviticus 19:31

NEW AGE OPENINGS Such men (who preach a Jesus other than the Jesus I preached) are false prophets, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

DELIVERANCE FROM DEMONIZING Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God ... This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. 1 John 4:1-2

DELAYED DELIVERANCE The Lord said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." ... For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

CONTINUING VICTORY Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith. 1 Peter 5:8-9

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BLOG 460: HOW DOES SATAN TAKE ADVANTAGES OF CURSES? (by Don Rogers)

The Bible gives us examples of how Satan takes advantages of curses. Here are two.

I. THE DOWNFALL & DESTRUCTION OF ABIMELECH - Judges 9

In Abimelech's rebellion the slave woman's son incited the lords of Shechem. He murdered 69 brothers.

His acts of murder - 69 brothers were killed

The curse of Jothan - Judges 9:19-20 - A pronouncement of judgment

"If, I say, you have acted in good faith and honor with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; but if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the lords of Shechem, and Beth-millo; and let fire come out from the lords Shechem, and Bethmillo, and devour Abimelech."

An evil spirit was permitted to work between Abimelech and the lords of Shechem

The resulting hostility led to their deaths

The curse was fulfilled - Judges 9:57

"And God also made all the wickedness of the people of Shechem fall back on their heads, and on them came the curse of Jotham, son of Jerubbaal."

II. THE DOWNFALL & DESTRUCTION OF AHAB - 1 Kings 16-22

Ahab took Jezebel as his wife and served Baal (16:13)

Ahab was extremely wicked (16:33)

Israel was judged because of his sins (18:1-18)

Elijah's prophetic curse - A pronouncement of judgment

". . . Thus says the Lord: In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, dogs will also lick up your blood." (21:19)

". . . Because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, I will bring disaster on you; I will consume you, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel." (21:20-21)

". . . The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the bounds of Jezreel." (21:23)

The prophetic curse was fulfilled

Three years of war between the King of Aram & Israel

Ahab gathered 400 prophets to seek their counsel

The prophets prophesied victory (22:6)

Micaiah the prophet was summoned - he prophesied defeat (22:17) - the king was angry

Micaiah revealed a vision (22:19-22)

He saw God on his throne asking the question, "who will entice Ahab?"

Different responses were given - then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord saying, "I will entice him." "How?" the Lord asked him. "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.

The Lord responded - "You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do it."

Micaiah's closing comment

"So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you." (22:23)

King Ahab commanded that Micaiah be put into prison

The king went to battle in spite of Micaiah's warning - He disguised himself, but was mortally wounded by an arrow that pierced him between his armor. The king apparently bled to death in his chariot. When his chariot was washed by the pool of Samaria, the dogs licked up his blood.

These two accounts show us that a curse is a means of some type of judgment and often evil spirits are the agents of God in spite of their evil agenda. God often used Israel's wicked enemies to bring judgment against His people.

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BLOG 461: HOW CAN CURSES BE BROKEN? (by Don Rogers)

If curses are put into place through sin, then, true repentance must be the starting point if they are to be broken. Only then can spiritual authority be exercised effectively to remove the effects of curses.

"Those of you who are left will waste away in the lands of their enemies because of their sins: also because of their fathers' sins they will waste away. But if they will confess their sins and their hostility toward me, which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the lands of their enemies – then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land." (Leviticus 26:39-42)

"O Lord, we acknowledge our wickedness and the guilt of our fathers; we have sinned against you . . . Remember your covenant with us and do not break it." (Jeremiah 14:10,21)

"I confess the sins we Israelites including myself and my father's house have committed against you." (Nehemiah 1:6,7)

"O Lord, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you." (Daniel 9:8)

"Both we and our ancestors have sinned; we have committed iniquity, have done wickedly. Our ancestors, when they were in Egypt, did not consider your wonderful works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled against the Most High at the Red Sea. But they soon forgot his works; they did not wait for his counsel. But they had a wanton craving in the wilderness, and put God to the test in the desert; he gave them what they asked, but sent a wasting disease among them." (Psalm 106:6,7, 13-15)

It must be noted that confession of sin does not always guarantee that there is true heart felt repentance. Only when there is true repentance is confession of sin effective. Many are quick to confess their sins in order to remove the pain they are experiencing.

"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done." (2 Corinthians 7:10-11)

Often, a demonic presence that is working in a person's life will try to build a case in the mind to rationalize and justify past feelings and actions so that the person will not see his or her sin in the matter. Thus, repentance is not obtained. The bondage stays in place and the person is left with an empty self-justification.

BLOG 462: POSSIBLE EVIDENCES OF SPIRITUAL OPPRESSION (by Don Rogers) **COMPULSIVE THOUGHTS**

Extremely low self-image (unworthy, a failure, no good - a constant undermining of the self-identity.)

Constant confusion in thinking (sometimes great difficulty in remembering things)

Inability to believe (even when the person wants to)

Mocking and blasphemous thoughts against preaching/teaching of the Word of God

Perceptual distortions - perceiving anger, hostility, in others when it doesn't really exist – seeing only judgment in the scriptures

Horrible nightmares causing fear (often having demonic images)

Violent thoughts (suicidal, homicidal, encouraging self-abuse, etc.)

COMPULSIVE FEELINGS

Hatred and bitterness toward others for no justifiable reason

Tremendous hostility or fear when encountering someone involved in deliverance work

Deep depression and despondency (frequently and timely)

Irrational fears - panic attacks - phobias

Irrational anger - rage

Irrational guilt - self-condemnation to the extreme

COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR

Desire to do what is right (inability to carry it out)

Sudden personality and attitude changes (severe contrasts - appears schizophrenic)

A strong aversion toward scripture reading and prayer (especially one on one)

A dark countenance (steely or hollow look in eyes - contraction of the pupils - sometimes facial features contort or change - often an inability to look at you directly)

Lying, exaggerating, or stealing compulsively (often wondering why)

Drug abuse (especially when there is demonic hallucinations)

Eating obsessions - bulimia, anorexia nervosa

Compulsive sexual sins (especially perversions)

Irrational laughter or crying

Irrational violence - compulsion to hurt self and/or someone else

Sudden speaking of a language not previously known (often an ethnic language of ancestors)

Reactions to the name and blood of Jesus Christ (verbally or through body language)

Extreme restlessness (especially in a spiritual environment)

Uncontrollable cutting and mocking tongue

Vulgar language and actions

CONSCIOUSNESS PROBLEMS

Loss of time (from minutes to hours - ending up someplace, not knowing how you got there - regularly doing things of which there is no memory)

Extreme sleepiness around spiritual things

Demonstration of extraordinary abilities (either ESP or Telekinesis)

Voices are heard in the mind (they mock, intimidate, accuse, threaten or bargain)

Voice speaking from subject - refers to him/her in the third person

Supernatural experiences - hauntings, movement or disappearance of objects, and other strange manifestations

ABNORMAL MEDICAL PROBLEMS

Seizures (too long and/or too regular)

Pain (without justifiable explanation - especially in head and/or stomach)

Blackouts

Physical ailments can often be alleviated immediately by a command of spiritual authority (i.e. epileptic seizure, asthma attacks, various pains)

Sudden interference with bodily functions (temporary) - buzzing in ears, inability to speak or hear, sudden severe headache, hypersensitivity in hearing or touch, sudden chills or overwhelming heat in body, numbness in arms or legs, temporary paralysis

NOTE: If a person has only a few of the above symptoms which have no apparent demonic connections, then there is probably nothing much to worry about. But if a large number of these symptoms can be checked, there is a likelihood that there is a measure of spiritual oppression that is in place. This should be checked out. After all there is really nothing to lose by doing so, except one's pride.

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BLOG 463: SPIRITUAL FIRST AID – STOP THE BLEEDING

What is the first thing you should do for yourself or for someone else when you are attacked spiritually? Where can you begin immediately? If you come upon an accident scene the first thing to do for someone hurt is to stop the bleeding. That's true spiritually as well. Stop the bleeding.

GET RIGHT WITH GOD. That means stop any sin in your life for that is an opening demons use to attack and do their work. Remember that sin is anything you say, do or think wrong. It is also anything right you don't do as well as good things you do for selfish reasons. Confess any sin you are aware of (1 John 1:9) and ask God to bring to mind anything else you may need to confess (Psalm 139:22-23). Confessing your sin means taking responsibility for it, admitting it is sin, recognizing that you are guilty of it. It does not mean making excuses or blaming others, but taking the blame yourself. Confessing means you want to give it up entirely, not just that you want to avoid any consequences for it. The child who gets caught with their hand in the cookie jar is quick to say they will never do it again, but that is motivated more by fear of consequences than anything else. Compare yourself and your action with a holy God. Think of what He thinks of the sin, and of what it cost Jesus on the cross to pay the eternal penalty for it.

To keep the bleeding from starting again a person must commit themselves to live for God every moment of every day. They must give their life, their home, their history, their relationships, their possessions – everything they are and have, to God. It's been said that if you get rid of the garbage the rats will go away. It may not be quite that simple in spiritual warfare, but that definitely is a very important first step. Changes must be made so the garbage doesn't return! Long term victory

means regular times with God each day, being involved in a sound, evangelical church, living a disciplined life, growing in His Word, etc. But we are just talking about first aid in this article.

GET RIGHT WITH YOURSELF. When you confess your sin you must allow God to forgive you. You must forgive yourself, not punish yourself (Romans 8:1). Accepting God's forgiveness and cleansing can be very difficult. However if we don't we leave the door open to Satan's attacks – the bleeding will continue.

GET RIGHT WITH OTHERS. Along with getting right with God and yourself you must get right with others. Be willing to apologize to anyone you may have hurt or offended in any way (Matthew 5:23-24; 23:18-19). It also means being willing to make restitution where necessary. Then these things must be done as soon as possible.

It's very important to forgive anyone who has wronged or hurt you as well (Matthew 5:7, 39-41, 43-48; 6:12-15; 18:21-35). Forgiving means giving up any right to see them hurt for what they have done to hurt you. It means leaving revenge up to God (Romans 12:19).

GET WRONG WITH SATAN. While it's important to get right with God, yourself and others to stop the bleeding and take back access demons may claim to work against you, it's also important to get wrong with them and with Satan. In prayer claim back any access you may have given them, any opening you've allowed them to have or any which they have claimed through your sin, your past relationships or family line (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9). Ask others to pray for you as well. If I can be of any help please feel free to write me at Jerry@ChristianTrainingOnline.org.

First aid is crucial. Stopping the bleeding is the first and most important step. But there must be follow-up care, perhaps operations, healing and rehab to be restored to full health. The same is true spiritually. Many of those who recognize demonic attacks in their lives take initial steps to stop it but as soon as the bleeding is even slowed a bit they stop and go back to the way they were living. Of course the attacks continue and get worse (Matthew 12:43-45). PLEASE get continuing help. Read the articles on this web site, especially the Spiritual Warfare Handbook (<http://sw.christiantrainingonline.org/basics/spiritual-warfare-handbook/> or <http://sw.christiantrainingonline.org/downloads/>). Feel free to email me and we can counsel through email. I would be very glad helping you grow in your freedom and faith. You can contact me at Jerry@ChristianTrainingOnline.org

BLOG 464: PREPARATION TO BE A CHANNEL OF GOD'S GRACE by Don Rogers

There are two foundational pillars that should be in every Christian life in order to live victoriously. These two pillars are essential when we are called to administer God's grace through deliverance and healing.

1. KNOWING GOD'S CHARACTER It may surprise you to know that many Christians have a flawed image of God's character, because they have projected on God the human shortcomings of their parents, especially the fathers. If there was not much love demonstrated, not much communication, and there was a critical atmosphere, God will be viewed as One who is far off, very stern and ready to bring judgment if we do not please Him.

So if we are to minister in faith to others, it is extremely important that we have resolved the above issues and we have no doubts concerning (1) God's love toward everyone, (2) His grace that is extended to us in spite of our failures, (3) His mercy that He will show us when we are in trouble, (4) His forgiveness whenever we fall, (5) His faithfulness to always be there for us even though we may not always be aware of His presence, (6) His provision for our personal needs, and (7) His equipping so that we may serve Him effectively.

2. KNOWING WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST Knowing how God sees us will give us great freedom to approach Him and make requests. It also gives us tremendous confidence to represent Him and minister to others.

These two pillars are firmly built on the foundation of constant study of God's word and praying without ceasing. The scriptures are God's self-revelation of truth concerning Himself and His great plan for mankind. Their author is the Holy Spirit who inspired certain men to put in writing these precious truths. This marvelous revelation of God enables us to know and understand our God and also discover our relationship to Him through Jesus Christ.

A relationship has to be nurtured. The more we learn about someone, the more comfortable and confident we become around them. With a good friend, we want to be around them as much as possible. This is where prayer comes in. Through prayer we are able to come into God's presence constantly and develop an intimacy with Him.

I have found that the greatest battles I have is to find the time to study the Word and to pray. The enemy will try to distract, keep us busy by reminding us of all the things that have to be done. There will be times we will feel too tired either physically or emotionally. Circumstances constantly arise to command our attention. We have to make up our minds that we cannot afford to allow these two essentials to cease to be top priorities in our everyday lives.

With the two pillars firmly in place, we will discover the freedom we have to be effective for our God each day.

BLOG 465: THE PROBLEM WITH SIN by Don Rogers

People have often questioned why there is evil in the world. Why would God permit evil to enter his creation? Why did God make Satan if he knew he would rebel? Why does God create those he knows are not going to be saved? In many respects these types of questions tend to call into question the wisdom, holiness and love of God.

The Scripture reveals that **God is perfect** in all his attributes.

- He is **omniscient**. (all knowing) Ps 147:5 "...His knowledge is beyond comprehension."
- He is **omnipresent**. (all present) Ps 139:7 "...I can never get away from your presence."
- He is **omnipotent**. (all powerful) Ps 115:3 "...he does whatever pleases him."
- He is **holy** Ps 5:4 "You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell."
- He is **just**. Ps 119:75 "You rebuke those cursed proud ones who wander from your commands."
- He is **truth**. Nu 23:19 "God is not a man, that he should lie. He is not a human, that he should change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act?"
- He is **love**. 1 Jn 4:9 "God showed how much he loved us by sending his only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him."

If God is the **perfect author** of all things, everything he makes has to be perfect. God declared them good when he completed his creation! One of the perfect things God created was free creatures; they possess **freedom of will**. In order to exercise this freedom, man must have a choice; to obey or disobey, to choose good or choose evil. Even love is a choice.

God made his will known to his creatures. They can obey God out of love and respect; but they also have the freedom to yield to self-will and disobey. In **Ezekiel 28:15**, Lucifer is alluded to: "*You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.*" He was perfect until he chose self over God's will.

The Scripture rejects the notion that God is responsible for evil, but it strongly shows that the Lord is involved in supervising the consequences that result after evil is chosen. Only through

freedom of choice can God's creatures be tested. Only through choices can love be demonstrated and developed. God risked perfection for the sake of faith, love and a relationship with his creatures.

When man fell through disobeying God, there was a ripple effect throughout creation as a result of sin. The curse touched man, the animals, the land and even the enemy himself. But God already had provided in **His plan** for a means of redemption for mankind through His Son. Those, who through their own will chose Jesus Christ as their Savior would be saved and live eternally. Those, who through their own free will rejected him, would be eternally condemned.

God in his grace, even placed the Holy Spirit into the lives of each true believer, to enable them to be strong and persevere in their faith and empower them to spread the good news of God's great plan of salvation. Even then, man has a choice as to how much he will yield to the Holy Spirit. In this life we are put through the fire of adversity to show that our faith is genuine. Even the enemy and unbelievers, who are responsible for much of the adversity in this world, have a purpose in God's plan. Mankind chooses good or evil; life or death; blessing or curse. God even beckons the unbelievers to soften their hearts and turn to Him.

Evil will eventually be destroyed. This is the hope of every follower of Christ. There is a new world coming where there will be no more tears or pain because all things will be made new (Rev. 21:5).

BLOG 466: REPENTANCE by Don Rogers

It is apparent to those of us who do battle against the kingdom of darkness on a regular basis that there are a lot of strongholds that need to be pulled down. Ideally, this should be a combined effort of the body of Christ. Unfortunately, a large portion of God's people are not ready to join such an effort even if they wanted to. Their own spiritual lives would hinder them in doing so. A campaign to bring down demonic strongholds will not be accomplished with slogans, clever programs or even good spiritual techniques. Time and again Christians have had good intentions, yet they have made little impact on our society to change it. In fact, this nation is becoming more and more ungodly. When it comes to the major issues of the day, the Christian voice is being ignored and even ridiculed. Christians are accused of being intolerant and unloving because we are advocating biblical values. There is an increasing anti-Christian sentiment that is trying to convey the message that Christians are the enemy. We are portrayed as extremists. God has called us to go out into the world and bring about change. We are supposed to be change makers; salt and light in a world of darkness. How have the majority of Christians responded? They have gone about business as usual. Satan has been very successful in diverting us from the path that God has laid out before us. God's people have become self-centered and self-indulgent in their lifestyles. Christ has called us to take up our cross daily, but his voice has been drowned out by the multitude of enticements that surround us. Many are satisfied to carry the name of Christ and live like the rest of the world. They are content with the world as it is and for others the task of changing the world is overwhelming. I'm glad the disciples did not think like that.

Frankly, we will not make an impact for Christ in this world unless we change! This is foundational. God's people need to take an objective inventory of their lives and start repenting. Yes, we repented when we gave our hearts to God. But that was only the beginning of what should have become a life lived in an attitude of repentance. All of us need to open our eyes and recognize what we have become. We need to see how we have been grieving the Holy Spirit by the way we are living. We cannot think about change in our lives and hope our good intentions will be acceptable. There must be change that is radical if we are to be in God's will.

The Holy Spirit desires to work in our lives to bring about change and he needs the submission of our wills. We must be willing to yield to whatever change God desires to bring about. God has made it very clear what it will take to bring healing to our land. ***"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*** 2 Chronicles 7:14

If we want to see God move in our lives and in the lives of others, there must be repentance that starts with us. God's words to Israel through Ezekiel could just as well be addressed to the Church today. ***"Therefore I will judge you. O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin."*** Ezekiel 18:30

Jesus' revelation to John includes some very sobering words to God's people. As he addressed the church in Ephesus and acknowledged some fruit to be good, a word of rebuke was also given accompanied by a warning. ***"But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then from what you have fallen; REPENT, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent."*** Revelation 2:4-5

God is already beginning to shake and sift and even bring temporal judgment upon the body of Christ (1 Peter 4:17). He will fulfill his eternal plan no matter what it takes. He will prepare a people to be the bride of Christ.

What is true repentance? It is being sorry for grieving God by the way you live. It is a desire to turn from your sins without any regrets and take a new path that pleases God. (2 Cor. 7:9-10) We cannot be praying as many married people pray, "Lord, change my spouse so that our marriage will be better." No, we must be praying, "Lord, start with me and change me." **Change will rarely take place unless we are willing for it to begin with ourselves.**

Satan will always seek to convince us that everything is fine in our lives. There is no need to be overly concerned about our condition because there are a lot of people who are in much worse spiritual shape than us. This is how many rationalize away the need for repentance in their own lives. They permit pride and self-righteousness to take root. Lack of repentance has been the major reason why so many Christians have gone into bondage in one form or the other.

BLOG 467: RENEWAL by Don Rogers

If we are to impact our world for God we cannot be satisfied with only repentance (see previous blog). Repentance must be followed with renewal. There must be renewal in the way we think, what we desire and how we exercise our wills. **Renewal is not something we wait for God alone to accomplish. It is a change we are personally accountable to pursue.**

What I have been describing may be a little confusing to some Christians, because they only think of repentance in the context of salvation (Titus 3:5) and renewal in the context of the Holy Spirit's work on our behalf. But the scriptures also emphasize repentance and renewal in relation to godliness. God not only wants us to be saved but to be holy as well.

"You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."
Ephesians 4:22-24

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do

not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect." Romans 12:1-2

The renewal of the mind involves a repentant heart, the determination to pull down every stronghold that has been established in the thoughts and desires and the taking captive of all our thoughts and making them obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5) The mind is the battlefield where we are confronted by the fiery darts of temptation. Prideful thoughts and self-righteousness or negative thoughts and self-accusation often have their source from our adversary. God wants us to be alert to the enemy's wiles and resist them. He gives us the grace to accomplish that to which he has called us. We work out our salvation cooperatively with him as he has sovereignly ordained (Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 3:10). He continually calls us to personal responsibility to join his program of perfecting us.

Renewal is bringing our nature under the discipline of God's truth. It is not easy, but can be accomplished by relying upon the Holy Spirit. He guides us and enables us and transforms us as we cooperate with him. Repentance and renewal in relationship to godly living is where many Christians are failing miserably in their obedience to God. The reason Satan is having such a field day in Christian lives is because there is an overwhelming lack of repentance and renewal among believers. Many have not been taught that God's word commands us to pursue holiness.

"But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.' " (1 Peter 1:15-16)

If we do not obey this command, we will permit Satan to make legal claims upon areas of our lives because of our disobedience. Much of our prayer counseling deals with these elements of repentance and renewal. These are basic spiritual principles from which we must never move.

BLOG 468: REVIVAL by Don Rogers

When a community of people have a spirit of repentance and begin to participate in the renewal that God desires for their lives, they become open for revival (see previous blogs about Repentance and Renewal). God looks favorably upon those who hunger and thirst after righteousness not only for themselves, but for others. Sadly, we must admit that we have been selfish in our desires for revival. We have been more concerned with what revival can mean for us than for others.

Christians today are basically very self-centered. Their basic interests are to get their needs met. Many move from one local church to another in pursuit of some particular fulfillment. Many do not want to commit to a local authority in the local church. They prefer to have the freedom to do what they want without anyone exercising any spiritual oversight over them. These people are quick to see the faults in others, but not themselves. They use the faults of others as an excuse for what they do. This kind of attitude is not conducive to the unity in the body of Christ or to revival. This is why issues of repentance and renewal are so vital. It almost seems as if repentance is a bad word to all but the humble. We should not think of revival as a magic wand or cure-all for all that is wrong with our lives and circumstances. Many Christians are waiting on God to change their lives when he has called them to take responsibility for dealing with sin and relying upon his help. Although revival does make us conscious of our own sinfulness, its main purpose is to reach out and provide large numbers of people with a powerful manifestation of God's love and grace through the moving of God's Spirit upon the lives of unbelievers so they may be able to recognize their sinful state, respond to the gospel and be brought into the kingdom of God.

More and more Christians sense in their spirits that revival is imminent. I believe that God is now preparing the army that he wants in place when his Spirit moves. He is calling each of us to accountability regarding our spiritual condition. He wants holy vessels to pour out his Spirit and fill. He wants disciplined and prepared people to respond to the leading of his Spirit in any moment and do whatever he reveals. He wants His people to be sensitive to his voice and not reason away the thoughts and desires he is laying upon our hearts and minds.

This is the question we must ask. Are we ready for God's Spirit to work freely in our lives and do whatever needs to be done in order that God may be glorified and his will be accomplished? Do not say yes to this question until you have counted the cost.

The bottom line is that we will not be able to effectively attack Satan's kingdom and pull down spiritual strongholds unless we change. There has to be the desire to change and then there must be the step of faith to appropriate the change with God's help. Waiting for some mystical experience that will eradicate all the obstacles is a fantasy and not biblically sound. God calls each of us to responsibility to affect that change and to depend upon Him to complete that change.

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BLOG 469: OUR ADVERSARY AND HIS HOSTS by Don Rogers

1. Our Adversary - is a created being and a fallen creature.

He seeks to be like God and even tries to impersonate Him. (Isa. 14:13-14)

He is known by many names: Satan, Lucifer, Beelzebub, the devil, ancient serpent, dragon, the evil one etc. (Rev. 12:9)

He is a murderer and a liar - the father of lies. (John 8:44)

He is a thief who tries to steal, kill and destroy. (John 10:10)

Satan cannot separate the true believer from the love of God (Rom 8:38-39)

He cannot keep God's grace from being extended to the believer. (2 Cor. 9:8)

God's people are able to overcome the activity of Satan. (Rev 12:11)

2. Satan's Influence - is restricted.

. . . to the parameters God has set for him (Psa. 74:17)

. . . to the sin claims he is able to make (Eph. 4:26-27)

3. Satan's Hosts - have the capability to affect us in a number of ways. When they attack, it is because our sovereign God has permitted them to test us or to chastise us.

They can influence our thoughts with temptations. (Acts 5:3)

They can touch our dream state - nightmares. (Job 4:12-16)

They are able to cause emotional, mental or physical trauma (fear, confusion & pain). (2 Tim 1:7; 1 Sam. 16:14)

They erect spiritual barriers or walls in our lives and relationships.

They sometimes affect our health. (Job 2:7; Lk. 13:16)

They can influence the function of equipment.

They can engineer accidents. (Mt. 17:15)

They often direct people into our lives to hinder us. (Mt. 16:23)

They control the will and imitate the personality of some. (Mk. 5:6-7; Acts 16:16-18)

They are able to manifest themselves to certain people. (Job 4:15-16)

They keep Satan informed so that he can plan his strategy.

They vary greatly in their personalities, various forms and strength. (Rev. 9:3-11)

They have very little loyalty to one another, struggling for power.

They have a wide range of assignments and intelligence. (Daniel 10:20; Mk. 5:9-13)

They can hinder a person. (1 Thess. 2:18)

Their greatest effectiveness is when they keep hidden and people think their problems are natural ones.

Because of their pride and arrogance, demons often over-play their advantage and expose their presence and work.

Note: The Christian who lives in faith and obedience does not have anything to fear concerning enemy activity. Demons may harass and attack, but all this can be overcome if one's focus remains upon God. The enemy would love to distract us and cause us to become paranoid about what he may do. That becomes a bondage to fear which the enemy will build upon.

BLOG 470: TRUE PRIESTHOOD 1 by Don Rogers

For a number of years, I have been concerned about the Church's simplistic definition of the priesthood of the believer. Most of us were taught that our priesthood involved direct access to God; meaning we do not have to approach Him through another human being. We were also taught that we can come boldly into His presence. All of this is true and can be strongly supported from the scriptures. But there is much more involved in our priesthood than that which has been stated.

The Christian's spiritual heritage as a priest can be traced back to the Old Testament where God has provided a very clear model for us. There is a wonderful continuity of revelation in the scriptures. **1 Peter 2:5, 9** "*you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*" "*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*"

If God does not supersede an OT principle in the New Testament, then the original principle remains valid.

THE PRIESTHOOD MODEL God directed that **Aaron** be consecrated as the first high priest of Israel. God established him as the model for priesthood. Priests were to be guardians of the relationship that God wanted His people to honor. The high priest represented Israel before God and they also represented God to Israel.

In Leviticus 16, we are provided with detailed insight concerning the high priest's duties. On the Day of Atonement he prepared himself through physical cleansing and then offered a sin offering to make atonement for himself and his family. Following this, he interceded on behalf of the people as he once again entered into the presence of God. Aaron received from the people two male goats. One goat was sacrificed as a sin offering and the other was made a scapegoat upon which the sins of the people were placed and then sent out into the wilderness to die.

The point that I am making is that the priest first dealt with his own sin and then he came before God with the sins of the people. Not only does our priesthood involve bold, direct access to God, but it also involves bringing their specific sins to God. We stand on their behalf as the priest did and confess their sins and ask for God's grace to be extended to them so they may recognize their sins and repent. As priests we come to our high priest, Jesus Christ, who is God, and we draw upon His grace which is released powerfully because of the shedding of His precious blood.

Jesus, as our great high priest, sits at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. We follow his model and make intercession for others, confessing their sins to God. In so doing, we actually bless them. We have a term for this practice in our ministry. We call it "**intercessory repentance.**"

Even **Job**, who lived during the period of the patriarchs, before there was a priesthood, performed priesthood ministry on behalf of his family. The biblical records states, ***The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earthlike him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."* (Job 2:3)**

We are told that Job's sons would have feasts in their homes and invite their sisters to eat and drink with them. Job would send and have them purified. ***Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.***

Job was interceding to God on behalf of his family in case they had sinned against God. This is "**intercessory repentance**" being practiced by the head of the family. All through scripture, we see God honoring the priestly headship He has ordained. (Continued in next blog.)

BLOG 471: TRUE PRIESTHOOD 2 by Don Rogers

This is blog 2 in a series on True Priesthood through Intercessory Repentance. The first blog set the priesthood model. This is about the model of forgiveness and love.

THE MODEL OF FORGIVENESS AND LOVE

Intercessory repentance is not possible unless there is true forgiveness in our own hearts. We cannot go through the motions of intercessory repentance and be able to minister effectively. We who have received the abundance of God's grace have to let go of judgment towards those who have hurt us no matter what they have done to us or to others, because that is what the Lord would have us do.

Instead, we have to adopt the Lord's way of separating the person from their sin and show them love, because God loves them. It is often difficult at first, because it does not seem fair. Why should we, who have experienced the injustice, intercede on behalf of those who hurt us and show love to them? Why should they get off so easy? Because, it is what Jesus would do. This is what grace is all about. Strange as it may seem, we will also benefit if we are obedient in this manner. Through this act of forgiving grace, we will begin to see the person in a new light and we will also be released from the inner turmoil that has controlled us so powerfully. I am convinced that God provided this approach to bring much healing to His people. The committed practice of intercessory repentance within the body of Christ alone will bring down many barriers and bring about considerable healing and unity that could not be achieved through dialog alone.

In our ministry, we are constantly dealing with various forms of abuse in the lives of the people with whom we are working. The lingering anger, bitterness and unforgiveness connected to tormenting memories of past abuse have been like a yoke hanging around their necks, weighing them down. Each needs deliverance, emotional healing and often physical healing. If led by God's Spirit, we have these people confess the sins of their abusers. These are sins that have been committed

against God as well as themselves. As you can imagine, most are not overly excited about blessing their "enemies" in this way. They want justice! We explain to them about the grace of God which has already been extended to them. Christ provided forgiveness of their sins when they trusted Him. God wants His children to walk in love and show His grace to others who also do not deserve it. When we follow God's principles, we are put on the path that leads to freedom and healing both for ourselves and for others. For those who are willing to accept God's way of love, we have witnessed many breakthroughs, many great deliverances and healings. For those who continue to hold on to anger and unforgiveness do not find the complete freedom and healing they seek.

When we confess the sins of others we realize that lasting forgiveness only comes when they confess their sins. We are not able to have them forgiven without their free will acknowledgement of the sin. But what we can do is ask God for mercy to not allow Satan's forces to use the sin(s) to so control the person that he or she isn't able to fully understand their need of Jesus. Our prayers temporarily remove the sin as an access point for demonizing so that the person can have an opportunity to make a free will choice as to if they will turn to Jesus for salvation and victory or not. (Continued in next blog.)

BLOG 472: TRUE PRIESTHOOD 3 by Don Rogers

This is blog 3 in a series on True Priesthood through Intercessory Repentance. The previous blog was about the model of forgiveness and love. This is about the model of burden bearing.

THE MODEL OF BURDEN BEARING

In Paul's epistle to the Galatians, he says, ***"My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness."*** (Gal 6:1 NRSV) He goes on to say in the next verse, ***"Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."*** (6:2 NRSV)

I cannot think of a better way to restore people and bear the burden of those who are sinning than to repent for their sins which are grieving God, so that His grace, through the Holy Spirit, may bring conviction in the area of the sin and hopefully repentance will follow. Often people have blind spots concerning their own sin. Sometimes they do not want to acknowledge them. Through **intercessory repentance** we help fan the fires of conviction as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, because God will honor our priestly work. After a time, a softening and a change of attitude is often detected; an opening is provided in which we will be able to speak to the person in a loving and gentle way concerning the sin.

We have encouraged many parents with rebellious children to undertake a **campaign of intercessory repentance** for them. They begin confessing daily the sins that manifested in the home and then take authority over any spirit that was working on their children in -their home. Often a spirit can be identified by the sin that is constantly manifesting. Remember, if the parents are Christians and their home is dedicated to God, they have great authority before God to nurture their children in this spiritual way and resist an enemy that is trying to gain power in their lives.

Children are often extremely vulnerable. They usually act based upon how they feel. It is relatively easy for a spirit to influence a child to feel miserable so they will act miserably. They are often exploited in order to bring divisiveness and chaos into the family. Christian parents need to be discerning; careful not to over-react. Using these spiritual countermeasures will often bring surprising results.

To be a **burden bearer** requires an ability to empathize with a person, to put yourself in their place. To do this, you must first be willing to love them and then you will begin seeing people as God

sees them. If you seek God sincerely on this issue, you truly will begin seeing people in a new light and be able to understand them better. Be aware that the other side of burden bearing is experiencing the pain that others are going through. Do not let this deter you, for God will supply the grace to minister to those who are hurting. (Continued in next blog.)

BLOG 473: TRUE PRIESTHOOD 4 by Don Rogers

This is blog 4 in a series on True Priesthood through Intercessory Repentance. The previous blog was about the model of burden bearing. This blog is about our responsibilities to each other as priests.

THE MODEL OF DISCERNMENT AND WARFARE

Paul said to the Ephesians, "***Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.***" (Eph. 6:18)

As we intercede for those who are bound by sin, the Spirit will give insight as to the nature of the sin and also the activity of Satan related to it. Binding the power of a demonic spirit's activity in a person's life is difficult unless the sin claim is addressed through intercession, especially through intercessory repentance. Sins are what give a spirit power and freedom to operate. **It is my practice to confess the sin that has entrapped the individual and then bring God's power and authority against the spirit without the individual even being aware of what is happening.** This is a much more effective approach because intercessory repentance attacks the evil spirit's claim, which is his source of power. It troubles me to see people going around binding the powers of darkness and not dealing with or attacking the sin issues. The results will not be as effective or long lasting.

THE CORPORATE MODEL

It is difficult for Americans to understand **our corporate accountability before God**, because we are culturally very independent and individualistic people. In the scriptures we witness the sin of an individual affecting future generations in a family (**2 Kings 5:26-27**) and also affecting a nation (**Joshua 22:20**). In many respects, we are our brother's keeper (**Genesis 4:9**). God considers us accountable for how we feel about others, and how we treat and relate to others. Corporately our sins affect others and their sins affect us. **Nehemiah** understood the corporate implications of God's covenant with Israel. He served as cupbearer at the court of Artaxerxes of Persia. Israel had been taken into captivity because of their sins. When he heard about the dire conditions of Jerusalem he went into mourning and fasted. Then he prayed to God.

And I said: "I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses." (Nehemiah 1:5-7)

Following this corporate confession, Nehemiah went on to pray, "***O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.***" [For he was the king's cupbearer.] (Nehemiah 1:11)

As a result of this corporate intercession, Nehemiah received favor with the king and was sent back to rebuild Jerusalem as governor. After Jerusalem's walls were repaired and gates rebuilt, **Nehemiah and Ezra**, who had also been confessing Israel's sins (**Ezra 9:5-15**), witnessed God's Spirit bring conviction and repentance to the people following the public reading of God's word (**Ezra 8 & 9**). God honored Nehemiah's and Ezra's obedience and faithfulness with a spiritual revival!

Like Nehemiah, we should remember that God has established a covenant with all who are truly His people. In our covenant relationship with Him and as the corporate body that He has ordained, we have a family responsibility to love one another. We demonstrate our love through intercession, burden bearing and caring for each other's needs in various practical ways. We need to personally identify with the present condition of the body of Christ and come before God in repentance so that He may sanctify us and bless us with healing.

Stephen was a man full of God's grace and power. He did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. He was brought before the Sanhedrin where he spoke eloquently but was condemned to death. **Acts 7:59-8:1** - ***While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was there, giving approval to his death.*** Shortly after Stephen's intercessory prayer and death, Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus and was converted. God had honored Stephen's prayer.

On the Cross, just before His death, **Jesus** said, ***"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."*** The book of Acts is a record of the many that came to believe in Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Savior. They became the basis of the Church that God called into being to become the body of Christ continuing His work here on earth.

Both **Jesus and the Holy Spirit** continue to make intercession for us. (**Romans 8:26, 34**) This is part of God's wondrous plan of grace. (Continued in next blog.)

BLOG 474: TRUE PRIESTHOOD 5 by Don Rogers

This is blog 5 in a series on True Priesthood through Intercessory Repentance. The previous blog was our responsibilities to each other as priests. This blog concludes and summarizes what has been covered.

Summary of the principles of intercession:

- 1. Adopt a Christ-like attitude toward the person for who you are interceding.** Realize God's desire to see people free. Ask God to show you any wrong attitudes or motives which remain in you. Pray for God's love to overcome your prejudices and judgmental attitudes.
- 2. Ask God to show you the sin areas in a person's life that need to be addressed.** Make a list of these areas so that you can intercede daily concerning them.
- 3. Address every act of sin that occurs around you immediately.** Do not allow the enemy any freedom to work. This can be done by going immediately into another room for privacy or through silent prayer.
- 4. Use your believer's authority in Christ** to attack demonic activity and bind up the spirit that is working at that time. Command that the spirit's power be broken and order the spirit to release the person to whom you are ministering. Mental commands can be effective in circumstances where you cannot speak aloud. Spirits communicate on a mental level anyway and the Holy Spirit anoints our commands with the authority and power of God. Always learn to act on the basis of faith, because

you will not always see an immediate reaction in the natural. If Christians only realized what really happens when they pray or exercise spiritual authority, they would truly be amazed!

5. Test the spirits (1 John 4:1). Do not assume that your problems are always natural ones. Pray for spiritual discernment. It is possible to test situations by confessing any sin connection and then exercising spiritual authority against any demonic activity associated with the problem. You will be surprised by the number of times your situation will change as a result.

In closing, I just want to reiterate each individual's accountability to deal with the sins in their lives. Intercessory repentance does not relieve anyone of the accountability. Rather, it is an act of love and grace that God honors through extending His grace to the sinner in such a way that they are temporarily freed up and brought to awareness of their sinful ways and given the choice to either repent or continue to live in rebellion. **This principle of intercession** could be summed up by the words that God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel concerning Jerusalem's sins. ***"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none"*** (Ezekiel 22:30 NIV) Imagine what one person can do if he is willing to come before God on behalf of others. ***"So he [God] declared he would destroy them. But Moses, his chosen one, stepped between the LORD and the people. He begged him to turn from his anger and not destroy them."*** (Psalm 106:23 NLT)

BLOG 475: KNOWING GOD by Don Rogers

As a child, she lived in a family where she was never allowed to express her emotions, because it would disrupt the peace of the home. Neither parent was very expressive emotionally, except when they were displeased. She was expected to conform to her parents' standards, but was seldom praised or encouraged. Entering into adulthood she was fearful and insecure, because there had never been any positive process of affirmation concerning her identity. She also had a difficult time when she received Christ into her life. There were nagging thoughts that she was not pleasing God and wasn't worthy to receive His love and forgiveness. As a result, life was filled with feelings of self-accusation and guilt. She had little joy because of frequent depression.

During the many years I have been involved in counseling, I have been continually struck by the fact that many problems Christians experience in their lives are related to their understanding of God. In the majority of cases, the average Christian's knowledge of God is deficient and distorted because of past negative influences, especially from family. By deficient, I mean that they have not moved beyond a creedal understanding of God so that they are able to make real life applications of what He means to their lives. By distorted, I mean that wrong conclusions are often made when a person does not properly understand God's nature and His relationship to us.

The Church has to take responsibility for not doing a good job of discipleship after people are saved. In too many cases, the emphasis has been upon knowledge through teaching and very little time spent in one on one mentoring to apply this knowledge. In many cases, people have been provided with teaching and then left to flounder, struggling to apply what they had learned. Embarrassed with their failure, many do not feel free to share their failure with others.

If believers are not grounded in a proper and practical understanding of God's nature and work, their faith will be adversely affected. Often, the limited characteristics of humanity are projected into their understanding concerning God. They make God in their own human image or their parents' image. Their human frame of reference and past experiences become a main point of reference as they seek to understand their relationship to God. In other words, their understanding of God and His dealings are greatly influenced by past relationships and their interpretation of those experiences. This often leads to disastrous conclusions and results. Satan is willing and able to fuel the fire and impugn God when we rely too heavily on experience. For example, the concept of God as a heavenly

Father is very difficult for those who had a distant or abusive earthly father. There is the tendency to see the Heavenly Father through the filter of these experiences as One who is distant and ready to judge.

Our knowledge of God must begin with God's revelation of Himself. As we learn the truth concerning God and His will concerning us, the proper foundation will be laid for our relationship with Him. We will understand who He is and what He is doing.

When I see people consistently questioning God's actions and becoming angry with Him, I realize that they are deficient in their knowledge of God's character and purposes. As I observe their problems of low self-esteem and self-worth, I know their struggle is related in part to a poor understanding of themselves as God's creation. They cannot relate to God's unconditional love being extended to them continually.

It is not my intent to provide a heavy, exhaustive theological study concerning God, but one that has practical implications for everyday life. (Continued in next blog.)

BLOG 476: THE ESSENCE OF GOD by Don Rogers

In order for us to correctly relate to God, we must understand Him as He is. Too often bad experiences with authority figures in our lives give us a wrong picture of God. This blog is to help us understand Who and what God really is.

When I talk about "essence" I'm speaking of substance or elemental nature; that which underlies the outward manifestation.

A. God is spiritual in nature. He does not have material substance, except for the body of Jesus Christ, which has been transfigured. God is an Infinite Spirit, which means that He has no limitations. He is inexhaustible in every aspect of His nature. He has given to each of us a spiritual part to our nature for the purpose of uniting with Him and having a personal relationship with Him.

B. God is personal. A force does not have personality. God has self-consciousness, self-determination and character. He has intellect, emotions and will on a level of perfection which dwarfs our finite abilities. In fact, we cannot make any significant comparison that is meaningful.

Unbelievably, God desires an ongoing personal relationship with each of us. Even though He is our creator, He also wants to fulfill our lives by being many other things to us as well. He is a Father, Redeemer and Provider. He desires to be a Teacher, Counselor, Comforter, Protector and Friend if we will allow Him.

C. God is self-existent. He is completely sufficient in Himself. The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are the perfect community, yet They are One. God has chosen to move beyond the sufficiency He has and share Himself with His creation. As humans, we are not able to find sufficiency and meaning within ourselves, independent of other sources. We only find meaning, sufficiency and completeness outside of ourselves in God. Through Jesus Christ's work and the Holy Spirit's presence, we are able to commune (come into community) with God.

D. God is infinite. He has no limitations in any area or circumstance. In fact, all that exists depends upon Him. He is beyond space and time, yet He is in the midst of it. All that exists are products of His creative will. All of creation is held in place by His power. Nothing can withstand or resist His will. God is the One who always is. He revealed Himself as "I AM." He was, He is and He always will be. (Ps 90:1-2)

We should be greatly encouraged by the magnitude of God's essential nature, because He has the infinite ability to back up His revelation and promises to His people. But let us build upon this understanding by looking at His attributes. (Continued in next blog.)

BLOG 477: THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD 1 by Don Rogers

In order for us to correctly relate to God, we must understand Him as He is. Too often bad experiences with authority figures in our lives give us a wrong picture of God. This blog is to help us understand Who and what God really is.

God's Non-Moral Attributes-

A. God is Omnipresent - [Acts 17:27-28; Jeremiah 23:23-25] God rules transcendent in the heavenlies and also dwells immanently in our lives. The thought of His presence can be both intimidating and encouraging. No matter what we do, we cannot escape from Him. On the other hand, He is ever present to help when people turn to Him.

B. God is Omniscient - [Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 4:13] God knows everything. He not only sees every action, but He is aware of every motive and desire of our hearts. God also knows the future, because He is not restricted by time. Every desire and action of the enemy is known to God as well.

God's knowledge and wisdom have no limits. His plan for all creation that was conceived and instituted in His own heavenly counsels are perfect in every aspect. To think that we can ever conceive a better answer to resolve our personal problems or question His actions is the height of human pride, arrogance and ignorance.

C. God is Omnipotent - [Genesis 17:1; Job 42:2; Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37] God is able to do whatever He wills; but His will is always in concert with His perfect nature. Everything He does is in harmony with His perfections. This may seem to be a limitation, but true infinite power can only exist in complete harmony with God's perfections. God's sovereignty is so perfect and complete, that even Satan and his hosts can be used by God, in spite of their rebellious nature, to accomplish His purposes. God's omnipotence was exhibited in creation, the plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea and Jordan River, the defeat of Israel's enemies, the people raised from the dead, the people freed from demonic oppression, those who have been divinely healed and those transformed by the saving power of Christ.

When Jesus was raised from the dead, the Father seated Him far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in this present age, but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way. (Eph 1:19b-23) God also raised us up (positionally & practically) with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms *in Christ Jesus*. (Eph 2:6) We, who have received Christ as our Lord and Savior, have been placed securely within God's omnipotent power and are able to draw upon it as we serve Him.

D. God is Immutable - [Malachi 3:6; James 1:17] God is unchangeable in regard to His essence, attributes, consciousness and will. All change is either for the better or worse. Since God is perfect, He can neither change for the better or worse. This is very encouraging, because man cannot influence or manipulate God for their own purposes. God is immune to pressure or deception, but will respond to faith and perseverance of His people who seek His will. God's favor is available to all, but is not received by all. We can always be assured that God's love for us will never change. For those who walk in righteousness, these attributes of God are extremely encouraging and comforting. They are a source of constant hope. For those who practice sin, His very presence is a source of guilt and

dread. But God is always willing to forgive those who turn to Him in repentance. (Continued in next blog.)

BLOG 478: THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD 2 by Don Rogers

In order for us to correctly relate to God, we must understand Him as He is. Too often bad experiences with authority figures in our lives give us a wrong picture of God. This blog is to help us understand Who and what God really is.

God's Moral Attributes-

A. God is Holy - [Leviticus 11:44-45; 1 Samuel 6:20; Psalm 22:3; Isaiah 40:23; Ezekiel 39:7] God is separate from all moral evil that we call sin. God's throne is established on the basis of His holiness, so His holiness is the regulative principle of His love, His power and His will. (Psalm 47:8; 89:14; 97:2) Even though God loves each of His creatures dearly, He cannot compromise and make exceptions regarding the issues of sin, because it would be inconsistent with His holy nature. That is why Jesus had to make the supreme sacrifice and die for our sins. Only He could pay the price for sin by becoming the once and for all, perfect, unblemished sacrifice.

B. God is Righteous and Just - [2 Chronicles 12:6; Ezra 9:15; Nehemiah 9:33; Isaiah 45:21; Daniel 9:14] The righteousness and justice of God issue out of His holiness and are demonstrated in His treatment of His creatures. Regarding His righteousness, He instituted a moral government in the world, provided just laws for His creatures and attached sanctions accordingly. Regarding His justice, He executes and enforces His laws bestowing rewards and punishments. God's

righteousness makes known the parameters he expects his creatures to live within. God's justice brings us to accountability and directs us toward those parameters He has set.

C. God's Goodness - Mark 10:18

1. The Love of God - moves God to share Himself. Love is an expression of His nature. His love is always unconditional to all. Through His love God communicates His goodness to His creatures. (1 John 4:8,16) Through His love, God seeks to draw us closer to Himself. When God gave His Son to die for our sins, we became the recipients of the ultimate expression of God's love.

2. The Grace of God - is His disposition to show favor to His creatures that is suited to each person's needs and capacities. It is God's unmerited goodness extended to those who do not deserve it. (Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:7-9; Titus 2:11; 3:4-7) Every person experiences God's grace constantly, whether they realize it or not. God's grace provides opportunities to seek Him and receive from Him.

3. The Mercy of God - considers the individual who is bearing the consequences of sin, is in a pitiable condition and in need of divine help. It is God's goodness shown to those in misery and distress, even though they do not deserve it. God's mercy is bountiful to all of us. (Deuteronomy 5:10; Psalm 57:10; 86:5) God's mercy cannot override His justice though. His mercy is constantly being exercised unconditionally.

4. The Long-suffering of God - is that aspect of His virtue that bears with the wicked in spite of their continued disobedience. In essence it postpones, for a time, the merited judgment in order that the sinner may have the opportunity to repent and be saved.

5. The Truth of God - is the foundation of all knowledge. He is the source of all true understanding. God is truth in that He is perfectly genuine. We see that genuineness in the scriptures as He discloses the bad with the good. God's revelations of Himself are true and can be depended on.

What He has revealed is neither exaggerated or idealistic. What God promises can be appropriated through faith and obedience. Because He is truth, He will do what He says. Because He

is truth, He is accurate and faithful. Only truth can set us free and keep us free as we respond to it in faith and obedience.

We are constantly being confronted with thoughts and ideas that impugn God's character. Like Adam and Eve, we are faced with a crafty enemy who wants to distort our view of God and undermine and destroy any kind of a quality relationship with Him. As long as the enemy is able to plant questions in our minds and we consider them, he will be able to instigate anger and foster doubt in our lives. As long as these thoughts influence us, our relationship with God will be greatly affected.

6. The Freedom God Allows - God has given man freedom to exercise his will. Because of this freedom, each has permitted sin in his life. As a result of sin, suffering has touched mankind on many levels. But God in His wisdom knew that if freedom was not a reality for each of us, love would not be manifested. Love is a choice that each of us has to make, to give and to receive. God could have programmed us to be perfect, but we would never be able to love Him or anyone else. Without freedom, we are not truly unique individuals. So God sacrificed a lot to make our uniqueness possible so that we might have the opportunity to respond to His great love.

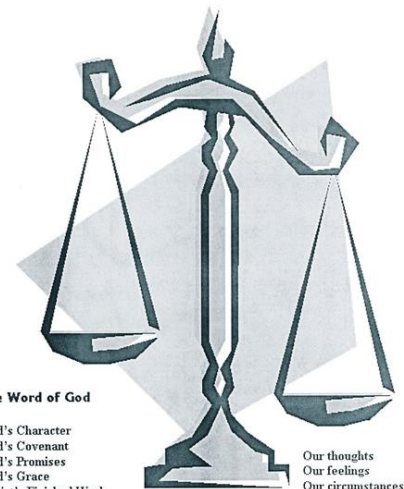
In conclusion, a proper understanding of God's nature helps each of us to relate to Him in a more personal way. The most personal way of relating to God is as a Father. Hopefully, from our study each may be able to conclude that:

1. We have a secure and unchanging Father - He has no limitations, so He never becomes defensive in His relationship with us. He is always truthful and does what He says He will do.
2. We have a concerned Father - Every issue is important to Him and He is ALWAYS there for us even though it may appear otherwise.
3. We have a loving Father - He loves us on the basis of who we are, not on the basis of how we perform. He desires the very best for each of our lives, according to His will and wisdom. He wants to provide us with those things that will help build us up spiritually and strengthen our relationship with Him.
4. We have a protective Father - He watches over us and will not let us be tempted beyond our ability to bear it. He has provided a Comforter to help us get through the difficult times in life. Praise God for who He is! How blessed we are to have such a caring and loving Father! Thank you, Jesus, for taking my place on the cross and giving me Your example of how I should live! Thank you, Holy Spirit, for enabling me to experience the presence and the power of God in my life!

BLOG 479: PRAYER FOR FILLING WITH GOD, NOT DEMONIC

Here is a prayer you can use when you pray for God to fill and use you. There is nothing special about these exact words, you can pray these things any way you want. This will give you an idea how to pray.

“Dear Jesus, I thank you for the free gift of salvation you have provided in Jesus. I thank you that all my sins have been paid for by Jesus on the cross. You say that if we confess our sins you will forgive them. I confess my sins of _____(name each sin)_____ and put them under the blood of Jesus. In Jesus’ name I take back any access my sin has given to any demons to work against me, my wife or my children. I forbid that in Jesus’ name. Please forgive me, cleanse me and give me victory over those sins.



Most Christians let what they are experiencing have more weight and influence than the Word of God in their lives. It robs them of victory.

“In Jesus’ name I take back any access any of Satan’s forces claim against me through any sins or openings any of my ancestors have given them. I am a new creation in Christ. I am born into God’s family and am His child. In Jesus’ name I forbid any demons to make any claim against me or my family because of my name or blood line to my ancestors. I break any claim against me or my family through my parents or ancestors sins. I put that under the blood of Jesus and forbid any of that work against me. Dear Jesus, please set me free from all evil influences coming from my parents and ancestors in the name of Jesus. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified and raised with Christ and who sits with him in heavenly places, I reject any and every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me.

“I now ask You, heavenly Father, to fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I submit my body as an instrument of righteousness, a living sacrifice, that I may glorify You in my body. Fill me with your Presence and only Your presence. Fill me with the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

“Forgive me for my failure as a husband and father. Help me to become more like Jesus in all areas of my life. Heal me and heal my marriage and family. Please heal others from the hurts I have caused them. I confess that as sin and don’t want to ever do it again, but I need Your power and help to have victory over this. Help me to take whatever steps necessary to have victory over this.

“I dedicate myself and my family 100% to you and you only. I dedicate my marriage, my ministry, my home and all I have to You only. Fill me with your presence now and always. Do whatever is necessary in my life to help me have victory over this and to become more like Jesus. I know you won’t give me temptation too great for me but will provide a way out (1 Cor 10:13). Help me to find that way out in you, to come to you when the temptation comes. Have mercy on me and heal me and my family. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen”

BLOG 480: PROTECTION FROM SATAN & DEMONS

Paul says “we are not ignorant of Satan’s devices” (2 Corinthians 2:5-11) but I was very ignorant about how to protect my church and family from Satan and demons when I first started pastoring. Since that time I have learned how to minister to those in need of spiritual warfare counseling. God has been teaching me and helping me learn how to help those who are attacked by Satan and his forces.

WORK OF SATAN AND DEMONS: Satan and his demons especially oppose Christians because we bring light into the darkness (John 1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35, 46). Since he can no longer attack Jesus directly he does so indirectly by attacking His children. He accuses us before God (Job 1:6-21; 2 Corinthians 2:11; Revelation 12:9-10; Zechariah 3:1-2) but Jesus is our defense attorney, our Advocate when accused (1 John 2:1)

Satan does all he can to oppose and hinder our service to God (2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 2 Corinthians 11:2-7; Zechariah 3:1; Matthew 13:19). He tries to infiltrate the church through false teaching (1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 2:9), false teachers (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 1 John 4:1; 2 Peter 2:1-2) and false ‘Christians’ (Matthew 13:38-40).

While not all temptation comes from Satan and demons, he certainly does all he can to entice us into sin (2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Timothy 2:26) as he did when tempting Jesus. He will use our sin nature (James 1:14-15), the world system (1 John 2:15-16) or attack directly through demons (1 Corinthians 7:5). He can cause and use anger (Ephesians 4:27), pride (1 Timothy 3:6; 1 Chronicles 21:1; 1 Timothy 3:6), immorality (1 Corinthians 7:5), lies (Acts 5:1-3), doubting God’s Word and God’s goodness (Genesis 3:1-5; Luke 4:9-12), ‘miracles’ to deceive (Mark 4:8-9; 2 Corinthians

11:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3,9-11), hypocrisy (John 8:44; Acts 17:22), self-sufficiency (1 Chronicles 212:1-7), worry and fear (1 Peter 5:7-9; Hebrews 2:14; Psalm 23:4), lack of faith (Luke 22:31-32; 1 Peter 5:6-10), physical affliction (Job 1:6-22; 2:1-7; John 8:44; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 Timothy 1:20) and sin of any kind (1 Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 4:3; 1 Corinthians 10:19-21, 2 Corinthians 11:3,13-15; 1 John 3:8).

Demons work against believers by frustrating and opposing God's perfect will (Acts 16:16-18), putting obstacles in the path of following God (1 Thessalonians 2:18; Romans 15:22), influencing believers to mislead other believers (Matthew 16:22-23.) and instigating things such as jealousy, pride and disunity (James 3:13-16). They seek to get believers to turn from God and not live for Him (1 Timothy 4:1). They can cause physical torment (2 Corinthians 12:7), and they try to get us to operate by our own strength and ability (2 Timothy 3:5). All this work will intensify as the return of Jesus gets closer (1 Timothy 4:1).

GOD IS GREATER: God is greater than Satan and his forces (I John 4:4), so we need not fear them (Luke 10:17-19). We must humbly depend on God's strength, not our own (James 4:6-7; 5:16). Be aware of sins and temptations that Satan uses in your life (Psalm 32:5; 139:23-24), and confess any sin (I John 1:9). Accept God's forgiveness and, with His help, turn from the sin (Amos 3:3; Ezekiel 20:43). In prayer claim back any openings Satan is using in your life (Acts 19:18-19; Matthew 3:7-8). Cover yourself with the armor of God each morning (Ephesians 6:10-18). Read and study the Scriptures (Psalm 1:1-3). The Word is a mirror (James 1:22-25) a lamp (Psalm 119:105) a cleanser (Ephesians 5:25-26) a sword (Hebrews 4:12) and food (I Peter 2:2; Matthew 4:4). Use it for all these. Develop a life of continuous praise & prayer (I Thessalonians 5:17). Stay in close fellowship with other believers (Hebrews 13:5). Commit yourself to totally follow God (Ephesians 6:16).

God's plan is to bring light and life to His people, Satan instead brings death and darkness. Demons can put thoughts into a person's mind and feelings into their heart. The person usually thinks these are their own and so acts on them. These are thoughts and feelings of darkness, fear, anger, violence, revenge, lust and destruction. They lead a person to harm others and harm, even kill themselves as well. They love pain and want to cause all the suffering and misery they can. They also put negative thoughts about God into a person so they blasphemy Jesus, doubt His deity and question if they have His love and salvation.

BLOG 481: BIBLE VERSES TO COUNTER LIES

Lies are one of Satan's most effective weapons against us. Satan lied to eve in Eden and has been do so ever since. The only solution is to know and use God's Word. Below are some verses you can pray and say when you are tempted to believe these lies.

1. There is no hope

Proverb 23:18: There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.

2. God loves to give me false hope

2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Deuteronomy 7:9: Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

Numbers 23:19: God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

Isaiah 55:11: so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

3. God wants me to suffer

Jeremiah 29:11: For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

4. God wanted bad things to happen to me

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Romans 8:28: And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

5. God is evil

Psalms 100:5: For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations

Psalms 136:1: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever.

Mark 10:18: And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

6. I am going to live a long life, suffered, and alone

Deuteronomy 31:8: It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

Matthew 28:20b: I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Isaiah 41:10: Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

7. I cannot overcome this

Exodus 14:14: The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.

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

Jeremiah 17:7: But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord whose confidence is in him

BLOG 482: PROMISES FOR PEOPLE

God's promises are the foundation of our faith. When tempted to fear, doubt, get discouraged or give in to sin we must turn to His promises. Write down some of these to carry with you and read throughout the day. Memorize them so you always have them with you.

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." Deuteronomy 31:6

For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, Psalm 37:28

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:9

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. Psalm 126:5

As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem. Isaiah 66:13

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

You know the testing of your faith develops perseverance. James 1:3

"Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble I will deliver him & honor him. With long life will I satisfy him & show him my salvation. Psalm 91:14-16

The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? Psalm 118:6

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. Psalm 32:8

I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them. Isaiah 42:16

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:38-39

My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest. Exodus 33:14

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7

Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:9

He gives power to the tired and worn out, and strength to the weak. Isaiah 40:29

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

BLOG 483: OUR ADVERSARY AND HIS HOSTS by Don Rogers

1. **Our Adversary** - is a created being and a fallen creature.

He seeks to be like God and even tries to impersonate Him. (Isa. 14:13-14)

He is known by many names: Satan, Lucifer, Beelzebub, the devil, ancient serpent, dragon, the evil one etc. (Rev. 12:9)

He is a murderer and a liar - the father of lies. (John 8:44)

He is a thief who tries to steal, kill and destroy. (John 10:10)

Satan cannot separate the true believer from the love of God (Rom 8:38-39)

He cannot keep God's grace from being extended to the believer. (2 Cor. 9:8)

God's people are able to overcome the activity of Satan. (Rev 12:11)

2. Satan's Influence - is restricted.

. . . to the parameters God has set for him (Psa. 74:17)

. . . to the sin claims he is able to make (Eph. 4:26-27)

3. Satan's Hosts - have the capability to affect us in a number of ways. When they attack, it is because our sovereign God has permitted them to test us or to chastise us.

They can influence our thoughts with temptations. (Acts 5:3)

They can touch our dream state - nightmares. (Job 4:12-16)

They are able to cause emotional, mental or physical trauma (fear, confusion & pain). (2 Tim 1:7; 1 Sam. 16:14)

They erect spiritual barriers or walls in our lives and relationships.

They sometimes affect our health. (Job 2:7; Lk. 13:16)

They can influence the function of equipment.

They can engineer accidents. (Mt. 17:15)

They often direct people into our lives to hinder us. (Mt. 16:23)

They control the will and imitate the personality of some. (Mk. 5:6-7; Acts 16:16-18)

They are able to manifest themselves to certain people. (Job 4:15-16)

They keep Satan informed so that he can plan his strategy.

They vary greatly in their personalities, various forms and strength. (Rev. 9:3-11)

They have very little loyalty to one another, struggling for power.

They have a wide range of assignments and intelligence. (Daniel 10:20; Mk. 5:9-13)

They can hinder a person. (1 Thess. 2:18)

Their greatest effectiveness is when they keep hidden and people think their problems are natural ones.

Because of their pride and arrogance, demons often over-play their advantage and expose their presence and work.

Note: The Christian who lives in faith and obedience does not have anything to fear concerning enemy activity. Demons may harass and attack, but all this can be overcome if one's focus remains upon God. The enemy would love to distract us and cause us to become paranoid about what he may do. That becomes a bondage to fear which the enemy will build upon.

BLOG 484: WHEN DELIVERANCE DOESN'T COME...

One of the hardest lessons to learn in spiritual warfare is patient perseverance. As in everything in life, we want instant results. God's forgiveness is immediate, but victory in spiritual warfare isn't. It's warfare and means battles, often many of them. Our descent into bondage is often gradual over a long period of time. Fighting to take land back can also be slow and gradual. God allows it to be that way so we can learn to fight and win battles. God said the Jews wouldn't conquer the Promised Land right away because He wanted them to develop their fighting skills (Exodus 23:29-30).

Yet more often than not those who come to me for deliverance want someone who can say some prayers over them and then they walk away free forever. If it doesn't happen, they keep looking for someone who can quickly and easily deliver them. That's not how battles are won, nor is it how we grow spiritually.

Jesus Himself said the goal is not to remove demons, but to be filled with God's Spirit and grow spiritually. If not, more and worse demons return (Luke 11:25; Matthew 12:44). A person must find out what opened the doors to the demons in the first place and make the necessary changes in their lives to close those doors and keep them closed. This takes time and work. God's purpose is not to give us a pleasant, easy life free from troubles or battles. It is to make us like Jesus (Romans 8:28-29) – and that often takes pain and struggle.

Spiritual victory is like peeling the layers off an onion – one at a time. It can be a slow, even tearful process. But God promises victory if we follow Him, and He will use the process to help us grow in faith (Philippians 1:6). So patiently persevere by spending time reading the Bible, praying and worshipping God. Don't focus on the oppression – demons love that, it gives them 'worship' and that is what they crave. Focus on Jesus alone.

Even when you do this, there may be some times when deliverance doesn't come. It could be God wants to teach you His grace is sufficient, as with Paul. Paul prayed 3 times to have the demon attacking him removed but God said no, He wanted Paul to learn to lean on God's grace and realize it was sufficient. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. So, rely on God's grace even if you don't see progress.

The other reason deliverance is delayed is He wants you to seek Him more deeply to find what is allowing these demons to continue working. There must be something they are holding on to as an opening. If there is something in your life, your thoughts, your focus, your attitude to this, etc., it needs to change. If not, God will allow them to remain in order for you to seek Him and get free from sin in your life. Humble yourself before Him. Let Him search your life, actions, thoughts, etc., and show you whatever is sin (Psalm 139:23-24). Pray often about this, sit quietly listening to Him speak. Fasting is good as well.

Whatever the case, patient perseverance is the key to full, lasting victory. There are no shortcuts.

James 1:12 *Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.*

Hebrews 10:36 *For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.*

Romans 5:3-4 *More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,*

Is there a difficulty in your life which takes patience perseverance? Are you able to persist, trusting God's timing and faithfully living for Him during your difficulties?

BLOG 485: IS THIS ILLNESS DEMONIC?

Too often our prayers are no more than a “to do” list of things we expect God to accomplish for us. Who are we to tell the creator of the universe what to do about various situations? Prayer is a powerful, wonderful tool – but we need to learn how to use it. Telling God what He should do to make our life easier and smoother is not the purpose of prayer. Yet often that is how we pray for ourselves and others.

Take illness for an example. Before praying for a sick person, ourselves or someone else, we should first pray and ask God to show us how to pray. Is there some sin God is trying to point out in the person’s life? Is God using it to mature their faith? Are they being used as a testimony of faith so someone watching them can come to Jesus? Does God want them to learn by experience how to help others who suffer? Just telling God to remove it may be what Satan wants, not what God wants. So, ask how to pray before praying. You should pray for wisdom from God as to how He wants you to pray. Should it be for healing, for deliverance, for grace to endure, for wisdom or for peace and greater trust in Him?

But what if the illness is demonic? If so, we should certainly pray against it. But how do we know if it is or isn’t? First of all, the Bible clearly says Satan can cause illness: crippled limbs (Luke 13:11), Paul’s thorn in the flesh (eye disease? - 2 Corinthians 12:7), muteness (sometimes dumbness, too (Matthew 9:32-33; 12:22; Mark 9:17-18,24-25), blindness (Matthew 12:22), seizures (Mark 1:26; 9:17-18,20,22,25; Matthew 17:15,18; Luke 9:39), deafness (Mark 9:17-18,20,25), sores (skin cancer?) (Job 2:7), boils and other painful afflictions (Psalm 78:49 - the plagues in Egypt were demon-caused), physical torments of all kinds (Revelation 9:5,10), painful illness (Job2:7-8), and even death (Job 1:19).

There are many times healing came when demons were cast out. Jesus did this at the start of His ministry (Matthew 4:23-24; 8:16; Mark 1:34; Luke 4:41), around Tyre and Sidon (Mark 3:10-12; Luke 6:18-19), and in the middle of His ministry (Luke 7:21). Many female followers of Jesus were cured of both (Luke 8:2). See also Mark 6:13; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12.

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

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

If you feel the illness may be demonic, then the root cause should be exposed and removed. Sin in their life (or yours) should be confessed and removed, curses against them broken, and especially anything in their family line that would be an open door to ancestral openings be closed. Property should be dedicated to God, and any possessions that could give demons an opening prayed about. If God shows you to destroy it, do so quickly.

God allows these things for a purpose - our growth and His glory. Submit it to Him, trust Him, pray against anything demonic as well as pray for Him to heal if that is His will, but also pray for His grace to endure through it if healing isn't His will. Submit it to Him for His glory.

Psalm 107:19-21 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind.

Psalm 103:2-4 Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

Are you suffering from an illness? Do you know someone who is? Take some time to ask God how He wants you to pray. Our prayers will never be answered if we pray outside His will.

BLOG 486: SATAN: OUR ADVERSARY

(This is blog 1 in the series "Names of Satan.")

Names in the Bible tell a lot about the person. The names of God describe various attributes of His. Jesus' names help us better understand His person and work. The same is true with the names of Satan. When one is in a battle, the better they understand their enemy and his plans, the better chance they have of victory. In our battle with Satan and his forces, the better we realize how he works, the greater our ability to defeat his plans for us.

"Satan" is his most commonly known name. It occurs 53 times in the Bible. In Job 1:6-7 we read, "One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" See also 1 Chronicles 21:1; John 13:27; Acts 5:3; 26:18; Romans 16:20.

The name "Satan" is from the Greek ("Santanas") and Hebrew ("Satan"). It can literally be translated "adversary," "opponent." It is used that way in 1 Kings 11:14, 23; 1 Samuel 29:4; Numbers 22:22). Satan's hatred is directed at God, Who kicked him out of heaven when he sinned (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28). Since he cannot attack God directly, he attacks those closest to Him, the children God loves. That is why he is our adversary.

He attacks God's people the Jews with anti-Semitism (Revelation 12:13-17; 20:10). The New York Times says attacks against Jews have increased 12% in the last year and are at the highest level since statistics have been kept. There has been an alarming rise in anti-Semitism in Europe as well. The same is true of Satan's rise in persecution against Christians (Revelation 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:9). Studies show more than 250 million Christians worldwide suffer high levels of persecution. Thousands are martyred each year. Clearly, we are in a battle to the death with Satan and his forces.

A similar name is "**Enemy**" found in Matthew 13:39: "The enemy who sows them is the devil." Likewise, "**Adversary**" also refers Satan as our opponent. 1 Peter 5:8: "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."

Satan does all he can to oppose and hinder our service to God (2 Corinthians 4:4; 1Thessalonians 2:18; 2 Corinthians 12:7; Zechariah 3:1; Matthew 13:19). Satan himself can only be one place at a time, so it is not likely he himself attacks us, but he does assign his demons to do his work for him. His demons work against believers by frustrating and opposing God's perfect will (Acts

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

When we became Christians, we left Satan's army and joined God's army (Colossians 1:13). Since we deserted Satan's cause he attacks us viciously to defeat and destroy us. Those who remain under his control don't face his wrath like those who left him to join his arch enemy, Jesus. Victory comes when we use God's provided armor (Ephesians 6:10-18) and resist Satan's attacks against us (James 4:7). We'll talk more about that in the next blog.

Are you aware of way Satan attacks you? What are some of the subtle tactics he uses to discourage you or get your focus off Jesus? What can you do to have victory against this?

BLOG 487: "NEVER GIVE UP!"

(This is blog 2 in the series "Names of Satan.")

In the last blog we saw the name "Satan" means "adversary" and is exactly who he is. He is our enemy (Matthew 13:39). God has given us His Spirit to have victory. He provides spiritual armor for us (Ephesians 6:10-18). Battles are not easy, nor do they end quickly. God says we must RESIST Satan and he will flee (James 4:7). It isn't always easy to resist. We get weary of the battle. Sometimes it seems like we will never win. But we can only defeat our adversary by persistently fighting against him.

There are **2 keys to attaining and keeping spiritual victory**: 1. You have to want it so bad you are willing to pay any price to get it. You must be 100% committed to sticking it out no matter what. 2. The other key is, as soon as you fail, you get right back up and start again. Don't lay there in defeat but start over. It's taken a lifetime to get into this; it'll take a while to get out. Gradually you will log more and more time 'sober' and less and less 'under the influence.' That's how it works.

Persevere no matter what. God can and will set you free from this. Deliverance is a process He uses to teach us things about Himself and ourselves. He wants us to persevere in faithfulness to Him no matter what for it helps us learn to depend on Him and trust Him. It's also part of the way He works to make us more like Jesus.

God is greater and will give the victory. The victory comes gradually, as we learn to fight and take back ground which was given to the enemy. When the Jews entered the Promised Land under Joshua, God gave them victory, but one battle at a time, then one generation at a time. He didn't give it all to them at once. He wanted them to learn to fight, to need to keep trusting Him, to develop patience and perseverance. What was true of them physically is true of us spiritually. So, don't give up. Persevere. It may be hard to see progress but remember - there is improvement. Look back at your life and you'll see improvement from the past to the present. You certainly wouldn't want to go back! Progress is slow but steady, like the story of the tortoise and the hare. Also be encouraged because it's obvious the enemy is now throwing everything he can at you. That means this is as bad as it gets, this is all he can do. If he could do more he would. While this is bad, knowing it is as bad as it gets and it will gradually but certainly get better helps. It takes time. God is interested in the process you are going through as you grow, not just the final product. You do the same thing with your children.

We are told over and over again in the Bible to resist Satan (in Jesus' strength), to stand firm and not give in. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7-8) is a promise to claim. The conditions for the promise to work, though, are we are to submit to God (total commitment to God after salvation), draw near to God (quality and quantity time in prayer and meditation) and be pure (live a holy life, confessing all known sin). The key is keeping our eyes on Jesus.

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith" (1 Peter 5:8-9). Alert means literally to "be sleepless," it implies a purposeful and active state of awareness. It implies being active and watching out for anything that would tone down our alertness (like being seduced by the world's pleasures). "Resist" is a strong word meaning "to oppose". We aren't to hide in fear, hoping he'll leave us alone. Each must wage his own fight; you cannot expect a parent, mate, pastor or friend to resist for you. "Stand firm" means to stand solid, hard, unbending in the faith. Jesus prayed Peter would stand when attacked by Satan (Luke 22:32).

Satan is like a bully. When he or his forces find someone who will give in they push them around. Taking a stand may mean a fight for a while, but then the promise comes that he will flee. We are to be courageous and not fearful, taking our stand in the Lord (Joshua 1:9; 10:8; 23:9-11; Leviticus 26:8; Exodus 14:13; 1 Samuel 17:45-47; 2 Samuel 22:33-35, 40-41).

What spiritual battles are you fighting today? On a scale of 1 to 10, how are you doing? Where are you lacking? What do you need to do TODAY to persevere? Will you do it? Then do it now!

BLOG 488: THE DEVIL: OUR ACCUSER

(This is blog 3 in the series "Names of Satan.")

In the first blog in our new series on the names of Satan we looked at Satan ("Adversary") and saw he does all he can to hinder our spiritual growth and service to God. The last blog showed the importance of resisting Satan (James 4:7) by perseverance in our warfare against him.

"**Devil**" (Greek "diabolos" from which we get our word "diabolical") has nearly the same meaning and is often used interchangeably with Satan. Mark 1:13 says "Satan" tempted Jesus but Matthew 4:1 says he was tempted by the "Devil." This name means "to slander," "to accuse." It focuses on his goal and work to impugn the character of God to man or of man to God.

The Devil **slanders us to God**, accusing us of sin. We see this in Job 1:8-11; 2:3-5 where Satan said Job was only serving God because God was blessing him. Satan also accuses us to God, night and day, pointing out our sin and hypocrisy (Revelation 12:10). Zechariah 3:1: "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him."

Satan points out our sin to God as well as bringing false charges against us. He tattles on everything wrong we do, the good we don't do and the good we do for selfish motives. However, when we are accused, Jesus is our Advocate (Greek "paraclete"), one who pleads the cause of another. Jesus is our Advocate (1 John 2:1) as is the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7). What a blessing He is! 1 John 2:1 "But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."

In addition to slandering us to God, Satan also **slanders God to us**. He is a liar (John 8:44) as seen in Eden when he accused God of withholding something good from Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:2-5). We'll see more about this when we see Satan's names "Liar," "Deceiver," "Thief" and "Serpent." Satan does his best to paint a picture of God as unfair and unloving, or weak and

uninvolved. He does all he can to convince us God isn't fair, isn't concerned, isn't powerful or doesn't really love us. Those are some of his favorite and most successful lies.

The Devil slanders us to God and God to us. He also **slanders us to ourselves** – pointing out our sins and failures so we no longer like the person God has created. Guilt is a great weapon of Satan's. Many people, even Christians, suffer needlessly from guilt. We know Jesus forgives all our sins (1 John 1:9; Psalm 103) and guilt. We need to believe and not give into the false guilt Satan throws at us. God loves us and accepts us just as He created us.

While there is often too much focus on self today under the guise of "developing a good self-image," it is true we are to accept ourselves as God made us (Psalm 139). We are to accept ourselves as we accept others (Luke 10:27) - accepting both strengths and weaknesses without over-emphasizing one or the other. Overemphasizing our strengths is pride, and is the sin which caused Satan's downfall. He tries to use it today as much as possible. The other extreme (under-emphasizing our strengths) is to dislike or not accept ourselves as God made us. Self-love and self-hate are both from pride. Both focus on self and are preoccupation with self. In one we see ourselves as better than others in the other we see ourself as worse. Both are definite cracks to demonizing, sins which must be confessed.

King Saul is a fine example of someone with a poor self-image, someone who was insecure and thought he was inferior to others (1 Samuel 10:22). This self-centeredness (pride) was a crack that opened him to demonizing (1 Samuel 16:14, 23). It's as important to forgive yourself as it is to forgive others! Satan tries to bring up past sins to have us feel defeated, unworthy, etc. Don't let this tactic work! The next time the devil reminds you of your past, remind him of his future. (We'll talk more about how to have victory over Satan's slander of God to us and us to God in the next blog.)

Ask God to help you recognize lies Satan tells you about God. Thank Jesus for defending you when Satan accuses you before God's throne. What lies about yourself do you believe, lies which make you feel like a failure or inferior to others? What is God's truth that counters those lies?

BLOG 489: DEFEATING THE DEVIL

(This is blog 4 in the series "Names of Satan.")

In the last blog we talked about how Satan slanders us to God and God to us. He even tells us lies about ourselves to discourage and defeat us. What can we do to have victory over these? When Satan slanders us to God we depend on Jesus. Jesus is our Advocate (Greek "paraclete"), one who pleads the cause of another. Jesus is our Advocate (1 John 2:1) as is the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7). What a blessing He is! Imagine having Jesus in heaven now defending you before God by pointing out your sins have been paid for by the blood of Jesus (Isaiah 43:25).

Not only does Satan slander us to God, he also slanders God to us. Like with Eve (Genesis 3:2-5), he feeds us lies about God's love, power, justice or goodness. Often, we have an inaccurate picture of Who and what God really is. That's why it is important to read and study the Bible, especially the life of Jesus, to fully comprehend and appreciate His love and care for us. Time spent in worship also helps us remember what a great and merciful God we have. Reading the Gospel of John is a good place to start.

Doing those can help have victory, but there will still be a battle. So, what do we do? Whenever a sports team is struggling, they go back to the basics. When a business is foundering, they need to make sure they are following the basic economic and business principles. It is true of a

marriage. Where we need to start in spiritual warfare is with the basics as well. That will stabilize your foundation and you will grow through the other things. These are the basics:

1. Spend time with Jesus every day, preferably in the morning when you first wake up. Read your Bible. Start in Luke 1:1 and read from there, keeping on going to the end of the book. Then read John. Ask God to teach you about Himself as you read. Then spend some time in prayer. Confess any sin you are aware of in your life which you haven't confessed before. Confession means agreeing with God it is sin. Spend some time praising Him for who and what He is and thanking Him for what He has done for you. Then pray for the needs of others and finally for your own needs. If you can, do this in the morning and evening.

2. Make sure there is no sin in your life. We all sin and continue to sin, that's why we confess it. But if there are any sins that are ongoing and you aren't stopping, they must be removed. Sin breaks our fellowship with God and opens us to attack by the enemy. Ask God to give you the strength to overcome these things. They may be hard at first for they are long-time habits and the enemy doesn't want you to stop them, but they are important to stop. Commit to stopping. If you do fail confess it and don't do it again.

3. Make sure you regularly attend a church that preaches the Bible. It is important to worship and fellowship with other Christians. Make sure you do this as often as you can. If you work Sunday mornings try to change your schedule or go other times during the week when you can. This is a great way of growing and sharing strength from others.

Start working on these 3 each day and you'll build a solid foundation with God. It took you a long time to get into this place you are in and it will take some time to grow out of it as well. If God just quickly removed everything and made your life perfect you would soon be tempted to get back into some of those things, or something else. That's why it's important to grow spiritually and get stronger so as these things fade you stay close to Him.

Where are you strong in doing the things mentioned above? Keep doing them.

Where are you weak? What can you do to strengthen them? What can you do today to bring? Do it right now!

BLOG 490: LUCIFER: THE BRIGHT SHINING ONE

(This is blog 5 in the series "Names of Satan.")

Lucifer was Satan's name while he was an angel, before he fell. It is used in Isaiah 14:12: "How you have fallen from heaven, O Morning Star, Son of the Dawn." The Hebrew word translated "Morning Star" is "helel" which in Latin is "Lucifer." It is variously translated "Bright One," "Shining One," "Morning Star," "Light Bringer" or "Day Star." Isaiah is referring to the king of Babylon in his pride and fall, but the passage goes beyond him and refers to Satan who is the present power of all the world-systems. This passage looks at him as an angel before his fall (Job 38:7; Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19). Jesus refers to this event as well in Luke 10:18 "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning..."

While Lucifer no longer retains his angelic glory, it seems he is still able to counterfeit himself as light. 2 Corinthians 11:13-14 says: "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an **angel of light**." Satan tries to become as much like God as he can so he can counterfeit God and deceive us. He always falls short so he distorts, perverts, substitutes or leaves out key ingredients of truth in order to pass off his lies as truth.

Ezekiel 28:11-19 also refers to Lucifer's creation and fall. Verse 12 describes him in his perfect condition: "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." Three features are listed about him: perfection, wisdom and beauty. He was "perfect," not some evil, flawed monster from the start. He had God's perfection, but also a free will which he used to rebel against God. He had great "wisdom," something he now uses to trick and deceive us. He's had thousands of years practice so is very accomplished at it. Also, he was "beautiful." He was the perfection of beauty.

Satan isn't an ugly, monstrous Halloween-type apparition. He tries to come across as beauty and light. We'd run from a horrid, scary creature. After all, he wants people to be attracted to him, not appalled by him. He's much more successful, even with Christians, that way.

His purpose is to **deceive**, for he is the one "who deceives the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). He does this by replacing the truth with lies. "He is a **liar** and the **father of lies**" (John 8:44). Lies originated with him as we see in his lying to Eve in Eden (Genesis 3:1-5). He only speaks the truth when it will bring about his desired outcome – deception and control of others.

Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). Demons do this work for him (1 Kings 22:22-23; 2 Chronicles 18:20-23). He is characterized by any kind of falsehood and deceit (1 John 4:16) and is not above mixing in some truth to make the lies more quickly accepted. Like any good counterfeiter, he knows the importance of making his false product appear as much like God's original as possible. He is very good at lying and deception (Revelation 12:9) and even tries to make it seem like he is bringing light instead of darkness (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

In fact, Satan also deceives the demons who follow him. He has convinced many of them he is greater than God and will be victorious in the end. It has been my experience several times, when praying against demons who claimed access to someone, to have to educate them by reading Bible verses proclaiming their ultimate defeat. What agony they express when they realize they have been lied to and will spend eternity in hell! It just shows how good Satan is at deceit and lying.

He denies the truth (Genesis 3:1; 2 Timothy 4:3-4) and promotes false teaching (1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 2:9). As is true of any good counterfeiter, he tries to make his deceptions as close to the truth as possible so as to deceive more. The authority of the Scriptures, the person and work of Jesus and salvation by grace are areas he especially tries to obscure so make sure anything you believe has these at its heart and core.

In the next blog we'll see how Satan presents his truth as "light" in liberal Christianity, the LGBTQ movement AND New Age thought.

Are there any truths about God or His Word that you are struggling with? Could it be Satan, through his demons, is planting lies in your mind about God's goodness and love for you? If so, confess anything you are believing that doesn't line up with Scripture and ask God to reveal His truth to you.

BLOG 491: LUCIFER'S COUNTERFEIT TRUTH - 1

(This is blog 6 in the series "Names of Satan.")

We have been looking at the names of Satan. "Lucifer" means "bright, shining one" (Isaiah 14:12). Ezekiel 28:11-19 say he is exceedingly beautiful. He is the "Deceiver" (Revelation 12:9) and the Father of Lies (John 8:44). He tries to make his false truth look good and appealing. Those without God's Spirit and who don't know the Word of God can be easily fooled, and many are. Here are examples of how he works.

It should be no surprise when we see Satan and his forces presenting their **immorality** and lies as truth today. They make it seem beautiful, full of light and progressiveness, opening everything to everyone and removing any thing that seemingly holds people back. This human wisdom does not line up with Scripture (1 Corinthians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 11:4; 1 John 4:5-6). This is clearly seen in the **LGBTQ** community where lie upon lie has been believed, thinking real freedom can be found in following various alternative lifestyles. Unfortunately, though, the result is often pain and death. The suicide rate in this group is very high and growing higher.

This is also seen in many churches who turn from the truth of God's Word and instead follow the world's 'enlightenment' into sin. **Liberalism in churches**, which denies the inspiration of the Bible, is a wonderful tool for Satan. It seems to promote "light and beauty" – love for everyone and acceptance of all beliefs and lifestyles. However, it is based on man's assumptions without the Bible. The absolutes of the Bible are rejected and man's opinion is made the final authority. When man's opinion is based on Satan's lies then we know it is wrong. Man's presuppositions are that there is no such thing as sin and guilt, no need of a Savior and no right or wrong. Put that under the guise of 'religion' and it is one of Satan's most deceptive tools.

Satan doesn't try to contradict all God says, instead he substitutes false doctrine (1 John 4:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:1; 1 Kings 22:22; Revelation 16:13), counterfeits the truth (2 Corinthians 10:20-21), promotes hypocrisy (1 Timothy 4:2), promotes legalism (1 Timothy 4:3), uses false prophets and false teachers (1 John 4:1; 1 Kings 22:22-23; 2 Chronicles 18:20-23), uses fortunetelling and occult practices (Acts 16:16-18) and promotes idolatry while receiving the worship of idols (Leviticus 17:7; Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalm 106:37; Revelation 9:20; Hosea 4:10-12; 5:4; Acts 16:16; 1 Corinthians 10:20). He tries to infiltrate the church through false teaching (1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 2:9), false teachers (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 1 John 4:1; 2 Peter 2:1-2) and false 'Christians' (Matthew 13:38-40). More damage is done in this way than we realize.

If a person isn't 'religious,' Satan feeds them the same lies in different packaging. **New Age** is one of the most popular ways this happens. The New Age Movement is a loosely knit group of individuals and organizations that fundamentally believe people will all evolve into 'God' and achieve a global unity that will transcend religious, racial, cultural and political ideologies.

New age beliefs are subtly interwoven into all aspects of society today without being recognized as such. The beliefs that mankind and creation are all one and that 'god' is the force also known as 'Mother Nature' are part of New Age teachings. Humanism, where man is elevated to god-like status, is part of this error. This movement looks forward to a time when this higher elevation of man becomes accepted everywhere so all the problems of the human race will be left behind.

Another part of New Age thought is there are powers in the universe we can contact and can connect with us. These 'more highly evolved beings' can show us the way out of our current situation. This includes such things as OBE (out of body experiences), ASC (altered state of consciousness) which is a trance or trance-like state of mind, normally induced by specific techniques, rituals, or other sorts of efforts. It is 'relaxed passivity.' Others talk about 'channeling' such things as 'spirit guides' which is a blending, merging, touching between humans and disincarnate spirits. Familiar spirits, they say, are counselors or inner friends who communicate invisibly with the person during an altered state of consciousness. Clearly these are demonic entities masquerading as angels of life, like Satan (2 Corinthians 11:13-14).

Recognize that just because they use nice-sounding words, deep conviction, and even displays of power, doesn't mean a thing is from God. "False Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance" (Matthew 24:24-25).

In the next blog we will see how Satan presents his truth as “light” in the occult, martial arts and secret societies.

Who do you know who are believing some of these lies? Pray for them now. What else can you do to help them see truth instead of lies? Ask God to help lead you to show them His truth.

BLOG 492: LUCIFER’S COUNTERFEIT TRUTH - 2

(This is blog 7 in the series “Names of Satan.”)

On the banks of the Amazon River live a species of large, colorful spiders. When they spread themselves out, they look exactly like the blossoms of a brilliant flower. When bees and insects land on one to find pollen, they find instead a spider that poisons and kills them. Satan does the same thing with the occult and similar movements today. We’ve seen that about him as we’ve looked at some of his names.

The names of Satan tell us a lot about him. “Lucifer” means “bright, shining one” (Isaiah 14:12). Ezekiel 28:11-19 say he is exceedingly beautiful. He is the “Deceiver” (Revelation 12:9) and the Father of Lies (John 8:44). He tries to make his false truth look good and appealing. Those without God’s Spirit and who don’t know the Word of God can be easily fooled, and many are. Here are some ways he works.

One counterfeit Satan offers to deceive many is the **occult**. It promises to have power to improve life, to give answers and direction, but it is false light which leads only to more darkness. Many, many Bible verses clearly forbid God’s people to get involved in any this. The power behind the occult is always demonic (Acts 8:9-24; 16:16-18). While sins of the flesh give opening to Satan’s forces, involvement in the occult gives MUCH more access. It is direct involvement with demons, and voluntarily asking them to work in your life. Deuteronomy 18:9-13 gives a list of some of the main occult activities which are forbidden. “Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, practices divination, or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

While many Christians participate in **marital arts**, I personally feel they are to be avoided by believers, especially by those who are open to demonic attacks. It is very hard to separate the physical aspect from the meditation techniques. These are not just physical gym exercises but actually are seemingly innocuous doorways into non-Christian religions.

Some Christians practice the martial arts for exercise, or even as a way of evangelizing, but don’t really know what they are getting into. If it works, they don’t ask questions about what it means. Eastern religious techniques often are portrayed as neutral so anyone from any religion can use them, but this is very deceptive. We can try to ignore the spiritual dimensions, but spirituality is their ultimate purpose historically. The Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs considers the martial arts as “forms of spiritual education that function as means toward self-realization or self-enlightenment.” It can be difficult emotionally for a person to give up the martial arts, because they may be very involved with them. Rather than considering they may be dangerous they vigorously defend their right to practice them. That may lead to serious consequences later in life.

While often quite popular today, even in Christian circles, **secret societies** have definite occult connections. These are not so obvious from a distance, but are there. In Scottsdale, Arizona, hotels and motels paint their grass green to lure tourists. You can’t tell the difference until you get up close.

It's the same with these societies. Secret societies include groups like the **Masons, Shriners, Elks, Moose, Odd Fellows** and **Klu Klux Klan**. They are counterfeit religions for they talk about God and being good, have chaplains, pray, quote Scripture and often meet in "temples." They appeal to the pride in many people who don't thoroughly understand what they really stand for.

As the name implies, there are 'secrets' those without (and often the majority within, too) don't know. An oath is taken to join, with a curse that comes if the secrecy oath is broken. These secrecy oaths are commitments which may open a person to demonizing. Jesus and the Bible are against this secrecy (Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12; Exodus 20:7; John 18:20; Ephesians 5:11-12). In these societies, believers are unequally yoked to unbelievers. Their view of God is wrong (they have a secret name for Him, which some say is Lucifer, and often equate God with Allah and all other gods). Jesus is dethroned and made equal to Buddha, Mohammed, etc. Prayer is not "in Jesus' name." Salvation is promised through doing the good works of the group, and that is wrong (Ephesians 2:8-9). These groups usually see themselves as superior to the church and Christian fellowship. Titles for their leaders like "Worshipful Master" are pure blasphemy.

The power and appeal behind these is demonic. They receive worship and instill the pride (1 Corinthians 10:19-21; Zechariah 10:2). Joining one of these groups can give a clear opening to demonizing. Once in a family these usually pass down ancestrally, even if the next generation doesn't join a secret society. If you have family members or ancestors who have been in one of these groups and you are struggling against demonic influence in your life, this could be the reason.

Confess any and all involvement in these things as sin (1 John 1:9) and put any access you may have given Satan's forces through your involvement under the blood of Jesus. Take back any openings you may have given demons to work in your life. If anyone in your family has been involved in any of these occult activities (occult, Satanism, secret societies or New Age) put that under the blood of Jesus, too, and take back any access any demons may have tried to claim against you through it.

PRAYER FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN NEW AGE OR OCCULT ACTIVITIES

"Dear heavenly Father, I ask You to reveal to _____ all the occultic practices, false religions, secret societies and false teachers with which I have knowingly or unknowingly been involved. I confess that I have participated in (name specifically those things you have been involved in) _____. I ask Your forgiveness. I take back any access I may have given to Satan's demons through this. Please forgive me, cleanse me, and fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Use me for Your glory. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen"

If you have any of these in your life or family, prayer the above prayer now. You can use your own words; this just gives you an idea how to pray. If you know anyone involved in these things, intercede for them now.

Blog 493: OVERCOMING LUCIFER'S LIES

(This is blog 8 in the series "Names of Satan.")

Do you remember the children's story about the emperor's new clothes? Some dishonest men convinced him they were making fine garments which only the enlightened could see so he pretended to see them. Everyone else pretended to see them also. Then in a parade a little boy spoke the truth and everyone realized they had been believing a lie and deceiving themselves. Satan deceives us into believing lies.

His names tell us he is a liar and deceiver. "Lucifer" means "bright, shining one" (Isaiah 14:12). Ezekiel 28:11-19 say he is exceedingly beautiful. He is the "Deceiver" (Revelation 12:9) and the Father of Lies (John 8:44).

In order to overcome his lies, we must be aware of **how we can be deceived**.

1. We can be demonized. Like a drunk is influenced by alcohol so we can be by demons.
2. We can prefer to be deceived because we don't want to face the truth or don't like the truth, so we convince ourselves that a lie is true. We start to really believe it because we want to.
3. We let our emotions run the show instead of our mind. When we let our feelings explain reality to our emotions (reacting out of fear for example) we replace the truth with deception.
4. Our mind can be deceived, too, when we use it as the final determining factor and think absolute truth comes from it. Without the anchor of God's Word to form our mind and correct our errors we can truly believe something based on the facts as we interpret them. But we may not be interpreting them correctly. However only God has all the facts and perfect insight, seeing the future as clearly as the past, so when we reject His truth, we are open to any kind of deception.
5. Satan and demons tempt us to deception. Of course, they don't 'sell' their product as a black lie, but make it look as appealing and good as possible. We sometimes fall for the bait.
6. Even aside from the enemy, our natural tendency to sin (sin nature) causes us to prefer sin for we are often more interested in what is easiest and most enjoyable now instead of what is best in the long run. Our 'flesh' desires instant gratification and we can 'want' something so much that we leave all reason and balance behind.

If that is how we can be deceived, **how can we know the truth**? How do you know when your mate is telling the truth? It's not something you can explain or put into words. It's not something others who don't know your mate can tell, either. But you know them well enough to be able to read the subtleties and know what they are communicating. That takes time as a relationship grows. The more time one spends listening to God the better he knows what God is saying. The more you listen to and follow the truth, the better your heart will recognize it. Really it is His Holy Spirit in us that speaks to our thoughts (and emotions as well). He promises to reveal His truth to us (John 16:13-15). In the same way, He alerts us to lies and deception if we are sensitive to His voice.

Knowing and using God's Word, the sword of the Spirit, is key for victory (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 77:12; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Matthew 22:37-38; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 4:8). That's how Jesus defeated Satan (Matthew 4:1-11). Satan tries to plant doubts about God's word in man's mind. This is how he got to Eve. She misquoted God's Word to Satan and when he added to God's Word (making God seem like He was keeping something good from her) she didn't recognize the error. Satan was undermining God's Word, and he won! We must be skillful in the use of our sword to win. Below are some verses to memorize and use.

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

Where are you most easily confused and distracted from God's truth? What lies does the enemy know work against you? Which Scriptures should you use to explain truth to yourself? Write down the verses and keep them with you to read whenever needed. We'll see more about lies in the next blog.

Blog 494: TRUTHS THAT SET US FREE

(This is blog 9 in the series "Names of Satan.")

Every area of bondage in our lives can be traced back to a lie we believe. When we exchange God's truth for a lie, we find ourselves in slavery to it (Romans 1:21-25). The lie becomes our master (2 Peter 2:19) and we serve it. We only have freedom when we ask God to reveal to us the lies we believe (Psalm 139:23) and replace them with His truth (John 8:31-32). Only as we know His truth will we be truly free. There are hundreds of lies we could talk about, but it is better to learn His truth. Counterfeiters are trained by studying real money for when they know it in detail, they can tell anything that varies from it. When we know God's truth we can discern lies and deceptions of the enemy. Listed below are basic truths about God. I have adapted them from "Lies Women Believe and the Truth that Sets Them Free" by Nancy DeMoss. (November 19, 2018 Doylestown, PA)

THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD:

God is good in all He does (Psalm 136:1)

God loves us and wants the best for us (Romans 8:32-39)

God is enough to provide for all our needs (Psalm 23:1)

God can be trusted to keep His promises (Romans 8:1; 1 John 1:9; 2:25; Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 13:5)

God doesn't make any mistakes, ever (Isaiah 46:10)

God's grace is sufficient no matter what (2 Corinthians 12:9)

THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS

Jesus totally accepts and fully completes us, unconditionally (Ephesians 1:4-6)

Jesus' blood is sufficient to cover all sin (1 John 1:7; Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19; Isaiah 44:22; Jeremiah 31:34)

Jesus' work on the cross conquers all sin (Romans 6:6-7)

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit enables us to do anything God commands us to do (Philippians 2:13) including loving those who hurt us, rejoicing in difficulties, etc

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE BIBLE

God's Word is sufficient to lead, teach and heal anyone (Psalm 119:105)

THE TRUTH ABOUT MYSELF

There is no higher, holier career calling than being married or a parent. (Titus 2:4-5)

Personal holiness is more important than temporal happiness (1 Peter 1:16)

I am personally responsible for my behavior, responses and choices (James 4:17)

I will reap what I sow (Galatians 6:7-8)

I find true joy when I relinquish control to God or the authority He has placed over me (Matthew 16:25; Ephesians 5:21)

I don't have to feel guilt about my past when I confess my sin (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

God is more concerned about changing me and glorifying Himself than about solving my problems (Romans 8:29)

I can't grow in Christ-likeness without suffering (1 Peter 5:10)

My suffering will only be in this life (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

It's not about me, it's all about Him (Colossians 1:16-18)

John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Think of some areas where you struggle. Which of these truths apply to them? What lies are you believing that allow these to be problem areas?

Blog 495: GOING ON THE OFFENSE

(This is blog10 in the series "Names of Satan.")

We've been talking about having victory over the lies of the enemy. They say the best defense is a good offense. That is certainly true in our battle with Satan. The armor of God in Ephesians 6 shows this.

All the pieces of equipment in Ephesians 6 are defensive, except one. We can protect ourselves with them, but we can't have victory. We need an offensive weapon to go on the attack and defeat our enemy. That is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). With their short, double-edged sword the Romans conquered the known world. There was no protection for their back so they couldn't turn and run, they had to move ahead against their enemies, and that is what we must do as well.

This sword of the Spirit refers to the Word of God – it is so important we get this right that Paul says so (Ephesians 6:17). Jesus quoted the Bible when tempted (Matthew 4:1-11). Read Scripture. Memorize Scripture. Quote Scripture. Pray Scripture. Think Scripture. It is the only way we can drive away temptation, lies and attacks of the enemy.

Hebrews 4:12-13 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

How well do you know the Bible? How skilled are you at using this weapon to attain victory when attacked? How strong is your prayer life? What do you need to do to have better communication with God? Spend some time now reading your Bible and praying.

BIBLE MEMORY VERSES

GOD'S LOVE & ACCEPTANCE The LORD is compassionate and gracious; slow to anger, abounding in love. Psalm 103:8

THE BIBLE, GOD'S WORD The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

GOD'S TRUTH FREES "If you hold to my teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:32

LIVE IN HOLINESS Therefore, I urge you, brothers in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- this is your spiritual act of worship. Romans 12:1

SUBMIT TO GOD, RESIST SATAN God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you. James 4:6

GOD IS GREATER THAN SATAN The One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 1 John 4:4

GOD WILL MEET ALL OUR NEEDS My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

RENEW YOUR MIND WITH CHRIST Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- His good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2

PRAYER The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16

AUTHORITY OVER DEMONS Jesus replied: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you." Luke 10:18-19

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

SIN AS OPENINGS TO DEMONIZING Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24

CURSES Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." Galatians 3:13

ANCESTRAL & CHILDHOOD OPENINGS Therefore if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17

OCCULT OPENINGS Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God. Leviticus 19:31

NEW AGE OPENINGS Such men (who preach a Jesus other than the Jesus I preached) are false prophets, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

DELIVERANCE FROM DEMONIZING Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God ... This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. 1 John 4:1-2

DELAYED DELIVERANCE The Lord said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." ... For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

CONTINUING VICTORY Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith. 1 Peter 5:8-9

Blog 496: BATTLING THE GOD OF THIS WORLD

(This is blog 11 in the series "Names of Satan.")

We have been looking at the names of Satan and what they show us about his person and character. He is our adversary and enemy ("Satan"), he accuses us of sin and slanders us before God ("Devil") and he deceives and lies by appearing to be light and beauty ("Lucifer"). He wants to control the world. There is a group of names of Satan which describe his control of our present world system.

He is "**The God of This Age/World**" (2 Corinthians 4:4): "Whose minds the god of this age had blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." He works against the gospel, hardening hearts to God's truth (Matthew 13:19-22). He blinds their minds (2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-10; Luke 8:12; Colossians

2:18). When they hear the truth, Satan tries to snatch it from their minds (Mark 4:15; Matthew 13:19). He can cause bondage (2 Corinthians 11:4), influence the mind (Genesis 3:15; Ephesians 6:10-20; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:13), control the mind (1 Corinthians 10:20; 2 Corinthians 4:4) and deceive, mislead and lie to people (1 Timothy 4:1, 6; 1 Kings 22:22-23; 2 Chronicles 18:20-23).

Demons carry out Satan's commands and wishes. After enticing Adam and Eve to sin and getting authority over the world from them, Satan and his forces have continued trying to keep worship from God and getting it for themselves. They blind the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor 4:4) and snatch the Word from their hearts (Luke 8:12).

A name similar in meaning is "**Ruler of this World System**" (John 12:31): "Now the ruler of this world system will be cast out." Jesus said this shortly before His crucifixion and resurrections. Jesus also said Satan is the Ruler of this World in John 14:30. He is the major influencer over our world. The whole world system is in his power (1 John 5:19).

Satan received this authority when Adam and Eve sinned, turning everything over to Satan. Now he and his demons do all they can to oppose God's work (Revelation 2:13). Since they can't attack God, they take their anger out on those who are God's -- His people (Jews and Christians today). They hinder our work (1 Thessalonians 2:18), do anything possible to defeat us (Ephesians 6:11-12),

Also, he is titled "**The prince of the Power of the Air**" (Ephesians 2:1-2): "You were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."

One more name is the "**Power of Darkness**" (Colossians 1:13-14): "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us in the kingdom of the Son of His love." This is also expressed in Ephesians 6:12: "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Satan and his demons influence and control the nations (Daniel 10:13, 20; Ephesians 6:12) and mislead them so they can destroy them (Isaiah 9:14). It must always be kept in mind, however, that God is in sovereign control. They can do nothing without God's permission (Job 1:6-12).

It doesn't take long to realize this world system is not ruled by God but by Satan. I'm not talking about nature, but about the values and priorities, the motives and goals which drive people. It is all self-centered and me-first. No wonder God's people, both Jews and Christians, are marginalized and attacked. We bring light into his kingdom of darkness so the darkness tries to put out the light. But even nature shows us that darkness cannot overcome light. A small amount of light can remove darkness, but no amount of darkness can remove light. God's light is stronger (John 1:5). Still Christians are attacked in all parts of the world because we are not part of Satan's world system and he knows it.

We see increasing attacks against Christians and our values even in the USA. If we don't agree with LGBTQ values, we are full of 'hate.' If we believe in moral values, integrity and honesty we are mocked and ridiculed. Meanwhile our country moves further and further from the Biblical values it once followed. Our history is being rewritten to line up with what a minority today determine is true. The media spreads that which agrees with its political agenda and twists anything opposing it. Police and other authorities are vilified and anarchy begins to take over. This is the new world, the perfect world order Satan is trying to establish where he is god he alone is followed and worshipped. The Bible tells us how this will all play out, but in the meantime, we are certainly strangers and pilgrims as we live in this world (1 Peter 2:11).

We shouldn't be surprised at the direction the world is going. We should do all we can to change that direction, but ultimately realize it is Satan's world and he is taking it his direction. We shouldn't wonder what is happening when Christian values are mocked and attacked, when the church is not respected and when the Bible is condemned and even destroyed. God is still in control and will ultimately prevail. We read the back of the book and we know who wins! But until then, the battle rages on....

The only cure for this world, or sin in our life, is the blood of Jesus. Any sin you recognize in your life must be confessed (admit it is sin - 1 John 1:9). There is no other way of deliverance from demonizing caused by sin. Demons are like rats that feed on garbage. Remove the garbage and the rats will be gone!

Is there any garbage in your life? Anything you know Jesus doesn't approve of? Anything you couldn't share with Him were He visiting in your home? If so, remove the garbage now (literally and figuratively) and replace it with Him in your life.

Blog 497: ATTACKED BY THE DRAGON AND LION

(This is blog12 in the series "Names of Satan.")

While sometimes Satan comes across as an angel of light in order to deceive (2 Corinthians 11:13-14), other times he uses power and ferocity to intimidate and overwhelm. In the USA and Europe, for examples, he deceives with worldly wisdom that draws unbelievers in but ultimately destroys them. In India and third World countries he uses fear to manipulate and control. In the 'civilized' world, most people don't believe in the idea of Satan. But in underdeveloped nations he is well known and greatly feared. In the first case, he sweet-talks his way in and deceives the pridefully ignorant. In the other he uses terror to subdue any resistance to his control. We've already seen Satan as Lucifer, the Bright One. Now we'll look at the other side of the coin, Satan the destroyer.

Revelation 12:9 is a key verse in understanding Satan because it uses five names of Satan showing all these refer to the same person. "So, the **great dragon** was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:9). The Greek word for 'Dragon' is 'drakon' (as in draconian) and refers to a "hideous monster, a dragon, a large serpent." This word stresses the cruel, violent and blood thirsty character of Satan.

Similarly, Satan is like a **roaring lion** going after its prey. 1 Peter 5:8: "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." He seeks out any weakness and moves in for the kill.

Satan pretends to bring light and to want to help, but his goal is always destruction. Revelation 9:11: "They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek he is called Apollyon." Both these names mean "**destroyer**," "**destruction**."

"**Demon**" also means "**destroyer**." Satan can only be one place at a time, so he works through his demons to spread his control and power. Demons are also called evil or unclean spirits, referring to the fact they don't have a physical body. They spread their sin and uncleanness any way they can. They are spiritual terrorists, trying to destroy the work of God's kingdom. As with human terrorists, no one is safe from them, they are deadly serious and have no softness or mercy. They serve Satan, who is their commander, and carry out his orders. They receive the worship given to idols or anything other than God (1 Corinthians 10:20).

Destruction and death are their main objectives. Satan is a **murderer**. John 8:44 “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning.” From Cain and Able on, Satan has been dealing in misery and death. He and his demons love it and feed off of it.

Horror movies, violence and destruction, rape, physical and emotional abuse, putting people in sexual slavery, or slavery of any kind – these all bring pleasure to Satan. Mankind is responsible as well, but Satan and demons incite and motivate people to go deeper and deeper into these things.

Abortion, too, is something Satan loves to promote. The millions of deaths of innocent babies, created in the image of God is one of his most successful campaigns. Suicide, which is on the rise today and is one of the leading causes of death for some segments of society.

Like a **thief**, Satan comes to destroy. John 10:10: “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.”

Satan and his forces torment (1 Samuel 16:14-23), cause fear (1 Samuel 18:12, 15; 2 Corinthians 11:4; 2 Timothy 1:7; Romans 8:15; Job 4:14-15), cause anger (1 Samuel 18:10-11), cause jealousy (1 Samuel 18:10-15) and harden consciences (1 Timothy 4:2). They incite persecution against us (Revelation 2:10).

Satan brings oppression on all he can, as a group or individually. He does this through sickness such as dumbness (Mark 9:17-29), blindness (Matthew 12:22), deformity (Luke 13:11-17), epilepsy (Luke 9:37-43) and other ways. He also uses the following to oppress: mental illness (Mark 5:1-20; 9:14-29; Luke 9:39), sin (Genesis 3:13-24; Ephesians 2:2), lawlessness (2 Corinthians 6:15) and death (Revelation 18:2; 9:13-18).

Does Satan have more success deceiving you as an angel of light, or scaring you with his violent power? Which do you think is most dangerous? Why? What is the key to victory for each one?

Blog 498: CUTTING, TATTOOS, SUICIDE & SATAN

(This is blog 13 in the series “Names of Satan.”)

Satan loves to destroy. He is the Great Dragon (Revelation 12:9), Roaring Lion (1 Peter 5:8), the Murderer (John 8:44) and the thief come to kill and destroy (John 10:10).

In actuality all Satan's forces operate in the realm of **darkness** (fear, deception, blindness, confusion, hopelessness, depression, self-pity, anger, revenge, suicide, death, etc.) He blinds men to spiritual things (2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 2:11). He hardens minds and hearts to spiritual things (2 Corinthians 3:14; Ephesians 4:18; Romans 1:21). He does this to individuals as well as nations (i.e.: Israel Romans 11:7-10). His purpose is to keep men from God's light and salvation (2 Corinthians 4:4). God's light is greater than Satan's darkness (Genesis 1:14-19; John 1:5-9; 3:19-20; 8:12; 9:5; Matthew 17:2; Ephesians 5:8; I John 1:5-7; Revelation 21:11,23-24; 22:5; Isaiah 60:1). Believers are in the light, not darkness (Acts 26:18; I Thessalonians 5:4-5; Colossians 1:12-13; John 8:12).

The epitome of darkness is death. Satan's plan for man is **death**, just as God's plan for man is life. Satan is a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). His name, Abaddon or Apollyon means "Destroyer." He tries to destroy physical (John 8:44; Mark 9:20-22; I John 3:12) or spiritual (2 Corinthians 4:4) life. Satan has power to bring death (Job 1:19; Luke 11:21-22; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 9:14-16), but because the power of death was destroyed at the cross (Hebrews 2:14-15) he cannot use that power without God's permission (Job 2:6; Revelation 9:4). Satan cannot separate us from God, even by death (Romans 8:38).

Satan is behind **self-mutilation** today. Many do it on their own, but whenever possible Satan and his demons encourage and motivate people to go further and further. Some today explain **cutting** and other self-mutilation activities as purely psychological. They say it is a way of refocusing pain, of using physical pain to alleviate emotional pain. While that may be true, I believe there is a deeper cause to these things. From my experience and Bible study I am convinced that self-mutilation usually has a demonic involvement with it. Harming ourselves is contrary to our natural desire to 'love' ourselves and the natural drive to protect self and survive at every cost.

The prophets of Baal regularly used cutting as a means of appeasing their demonic gods, as seen in their encounter with Elijah on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:28). Mark 5 tells about a demonized man who was continually cutting himself (Mark 5:5). Then there is the demonized boy who keeps throwing himself in the fire to burn or water to drown (Matthew 17:15). Satan loves pain and death. They are his tools of trade. He would have all of us dead if God would not forbid it. The best he can do it to try and get us to harm ourselves.

The ultimate of this is **suicide**. Accounts of suicide in the Bible also show close association with demonization. Saul killed himself after his encounter with the witch of Endor. Judas' suicide came after being indwelt by Satan and betraying Jesus. Satan can't kill a person, but he can work in the persons life so hopelessness, failure, guilt, pain, loneliness, etc. become so bad that death seems preferable to life.

He works indirectly to bring death as well. Drug or alcohol addiction lead to self-destruction and sometimes death. Overeating and gluttony undermine a person's health and shorten their life. Sexual promiscuity can bring disease. AIDS is only one life an be changed or shortened by sinful behavior (not that all AIDS is from sinful behavior).

I would add that many times getting **tattoos** is in this same category. Several times I have counseled and prayed with demonized people who have felt driven to get tattoos because "something inside them" craved the pain. In a strange way, they only had peace when they were enduring the extreme pain of tattoos. Certainly, that is not the reason everyone gets tattoos, but it could be more often than we realize. The only verse in the Bible that refers to tattoos is Leviticus 19:28: 'Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the Lord.' The cultural context of this prohibition is different than of those who receive one or two small tattoos today, so we cannot use this as strict condemnation of everyone who has a tattoo, but it is important to remember our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and not to be abused or disfigured (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). If in doubt, pray and listen to what God's Spirit tells you.

If you are convicted of any of these, use the prayer below. It doesn't have to be in these words. This is just to give you a general idea of how to pray.

PRAYER FOR THOSE WITH SELF DESTRUCTIVE OR SUICIDAL TENDENCIES

Dear heavenly Father, I know You created me in Your image. I am sorry for anything I have done to harm my body, for I know it is the temple of Your Spirit. In Jesus' name I renounce all suicidal thoughts and any attempts I've made to take my own life or in any way injure myself. I confess _____ (name each sin of self-destruction that comes to mind) and put it under the blood of Jesus. I renounce the lie that life is hopeless and that I can find peace and freedom by taking my own life. Satan is a thief and comes to steal, kill and destroy. I put under the blood of Jesus any access any demons claim to my life or to my family. In Jesus' name I cover it all with the blood of Jesus. I choose life in Christ Who came to give me life and give it abundantly. Thank You for Your forgiveness. Help me to forgive myself. I choose to believe that there is always hope in Christ. In Jesus name I pray. Amen

Are you a good steward of your body, or do you abuse it in any way? Are you caring for it as the temple of the Holy Spirit? You may not be cutting or mutilating in some other way, but are you caring for your body the best you can?

Blog 499: OVERCOMING THE DRAGON

(This is blog14 in the series "Names of Satan.")

Satan's whole purpose can be summarized in one word: destruction. He wants to be worshipped and uses fear to control people. He is the Great Dragon (Revelation 12:9), Roaring Lion (1 Peter 5:8), the Murderer (John 8:44) and the thief come to kill and destroy (John 10:10). He would have us think he is the greatest power in the universe. He may be greater than us, but he is not greater than God (1 John 4:4). So how do we have victory?

Since **God is greater** than Satan and his forces (1 John 4:4), we need not fear them (Luke 10:17-19). We must humbly depend on God's strength, not our own (James 4:6-7; 5:16). Admit sin and open spots that Satan uses in your life (Psalm 32:5; 139:23-24), and confess any sin (1 John 1:9). Accept God's forgiveness and, with His help, turn from the sin (Amos 3:3; Ezekiel 20:43). In prayer claim back any openings Satan is using in your life (Acts 19:18-19; Matt 3:7-8). Cover yourself with the armor of God each day (Ephesians 6:10-18). Stay in the Scriptures (Psalm 1:1-3). The Word is a mirror (James 1:22-25) a lamp (Psalm 119:105) a cleanser (Ephesians 5:25-26) a sword (Hebrews 4:12) and food (1 Peter 2:2; Matthew 4:4). Use it for all these. Develop a life of continuous praise & prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Stay in close fellowship with other believers (Hebrews 13:5). Commit yourself to totally follow God (Ephesians 6:16).

After Paul is done listing the armor, he next mentions **prayer** (Ephesians 6:18-20). We can equate prayer to communication between the commander and his soldiers. Without good communication, the soldier will not know where to go or what to do. He will be left on his own. We need time talking to God and listening to Him to know His plan for us.

We need the fellowship, support and encouragement of other Christians in order to live in victory (Hebrews 10:25). Every one needs a solid, Bible-teaching church to attend regularly. In addition, we need to have a group of believers with whom we share our lives and battles. We should pray for them and share our prayer needs with them. You need to have a group of faithful praying Christians who are daily lifting up you and your needs before God. You need to be praying for them as well.

Jesus has given us His authority to pray in His name and to command demons to be gone in His name (Matthew 28:18-19; Luke 9:1; 10:18-19). He also gives us His power to have victory in our spiritual warfare (Acts 1:8). We have power from His divine nature in us (2 Peter 1:4). We have power to live the abundant life He gives us (John 10:10). Through His Word and prayer, we have all we need to have victory. What great blessings we have!

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS FOR SIN AND DELIVERANCE

"Dear heavenly Father, You have told us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts (Romans 13:14). I acknowledge that I have given in to sinful acts and thoughts. I have also sinned by not doing things I should have done and by doing good things for selfish motives. I know that in Christ my sins are forgiven, but I have transgressed Your holy law and given the enemy an opportunity to work against me (Ephesians 4:27; James 4:1; 1 Peter 5:8). I come before Your presence to acknowledge these sins and to seek Your cleansing (1 John 1:9) that I may be freed from the bondage of sin (Galatians 5:1). I ask You to reveal to my mind the ways that I sinned and grieved the Holy Spirit. (Confess each sin that comes to mind one by one.) In Jesus'

name I take back any ground that evil spirits have gained through my sin. Please fill me instead with your Spirit and use me for Your glory. I ask this in the wonderful name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen."

Are you growing in your prayer life? Do you have more wisdom about how to use prayer in spiritual warfare? Are there those you regularly pray for who are having serious battles in life? Who do you go to for prayer when spiritually attacked? Prayer is a powerful weapon and we miss out on victory when we don't pray.

BLOG 500: DON'T FEAR THE DRAGON

(This is blog 15 in the series "Names of Satan.")

Fear is one of Satan's biggest weapons. Demons are often behind and use fear (Romans 8:15). If it takes the form of insecurity, anxiety, worry, preoccupation with problems, or whatever, it is still fear. Demons put fear of David into Saul (1 Samuel 18:10-15) and put fear and terror into Eliaphaz by gliding by his face (Job 4:15). Anything not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). God does not give us fear (2 Timothy 1:7; Romans 8:15), so if you experience fear realize it is not from God but from Satan. This doesn't mean it is always through demonizing, for you can be attacked with fear without being demonized.

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

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

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

PRAYER TO HAVE VICTORY OVER FEAR

Dear Heavenly Father, I place myself under your loving and protective care. I know that you are the only one I should fear, and that is in awe and respect. I confess that I have been fearful and anxious because of my lack of trust, my unbelief and believing the lies of the enemy. I have not always trusted You. Too often I have lived in fear and relied on my own strength and resources. I confess that as sin and thank You for Your forgiveness.

I know that you have not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). Therefore I turn from any fear in my life. I ask You to reveal to me all the areas where the sin of fear as affected me. Show me the lies I have believed and help me to believe Your truth

instead. I desire to live in faith by the power of Your Holy Spirit. Fill me with Your presence and Your Spirit so I can follow You by faith. In Jesus' name. Amen.

When you notice fear attacking you defeat it by quoting scripture. When Jesus was tempted, He quoted Scripture to have victory over Satan's temptations (Matthew 4:1-11). Paul says our only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Psalm 119:9,11 tell us that it's through God's Word that we have victory. When you have these thoughts and attacks use Scripture to have victory. Ask God to give you some verses that will help against these things, write them down and memorize them. Say them over and over when these thoughts attack you. That is the only way to victory, and God guarantees it will work!

Here are some verses that can help you have victory over fear:

Deuteronomy 31:6 6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Proverbs 3:25 Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked,

Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 34:4 sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

Psalm 56:3-4 When I am afraid, I will trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?

Psalm 118:6 The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Joshua 10:8 The Lord said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them; I have given them into your hand. Not one of them will be able to withstand you.”

Exodus 14:13 Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today.

1 Samuel 17:45-47 David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”

Isaiah 41:10 10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Matthew 10: 28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:13 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

2 Timothy 1:7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

I John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

When are you most apt to be attacked by fear? What is your best defense against fear? What are you worried or stressed about in life right now? Which of the above verses can you use today to have victory over that fear?

BLOG 501: SATAN: EVIL PERSONIFIED

(This is blog 16 in the series "Names of Satan.")

We've seen many names of Satan that show how awful he is: Dragon, Lion, Deceiver, Murderer, Accuser, Destroyer and others. It doesn't seem it can get any worse but it does! This group of names shows how bad Satan really is – not just in what he does but in his basic nature through and through.

One of Jesus' favorite names for Satan was "**Evil One**." Jesus prayed to God, "Keep them from the evil one" (John 17:5). He warns His followers to be aware of Satan taking God's truth from the minds of people: "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart" (Matthew 13:19). The Greek word here, "poneros," means "wicked, evil, bad, base, worthless, vicious, degenerate." This refers to the very character of Satan.

Paul uses a similar title, "**Wicked One**" (Ephesians 6:16). He also calls Satan the "**Lawless One**" (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10) and the "**Man of Sin**" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). "Man of Sin" refers to the Antichrist, but he is indwelt and used by Satan so they are technically one and the same (Revelation 13:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10).

To the Pharisees Satan was known as "**Beelzebub**" (Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22). This could mean "lord of the dung," "lord of the flies (gather at garbage)" or "lord of the demons" (Matthew 10:25; 12:24, 27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15-28). All carry the same idea of mockery of this 'god' Satan claims to be!

Despite his love for evil, many are attracted to Satan. In fact, **Satanism** is one of the fastest growing religions today. The dark nature of it has a strong appeal to those already demonized, and of course any involvement in it opens a person to deep demonizing. Children and teens are more and more drawn into this through drugs, sex, rock music, movies and other avenues. Satanists believe Satan represents indulgence (instead of abstinence), vengeance (instead of turning the other cheek), and meeting your sensual desires (instead of spiritual pipe dreams). Man is just another animal free to indulge any desire he wants. Satan represents power and immediate gratification instead of Jesus' seeming weakness and living for the future. Satan seems near and concerned, willing to quickly do whatever a person wants. Involvement in Satanism is usually the end result of a path that starts very subtly by allowing other openings to demonizing. Of course, God is greater and it can be broken, but even dabbling with it in curiosity is very serious business.

There are many good Christian books in Christian bookstores that can give much more detailed information about this subject than we can here. If necessary, please avail yourself of them

Where do you see Satan working in your life or the lives of your friends? Stop and pray against each and every work of his. Ask for God's power and protection.

BLOG 502: UNDERSTANDING AND CONTROLLING ANGER

(This is blog 17 in the series "Names of Satan.")

Satan is called Evil One (John 17:5), Wicked One (Ephesians 6:16), Lawless One (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10) and Man of Sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). He is just plain nasty. Sometimes he hides it outwardly to get what he wants, but he is rotten to the core. Perhaps you know someone like this. They are full of anger and bitterness. They hide it, but you know it is there and can come out at any time. Perhaps you struggle with anger yourself. Let's look at having victory over anger.

Anger comes from mishandling hurt and pain. Instead of feeling it as hurt we turn it into anger. Demons are behind and use anger, too. They made Saul angry at David, so much so that he tried to kill David (1 Samuel 18:10-11; 19:9-10). Paul says there is a very close connection between anger and demonizing (Ephesians 4:27).

As I said before, anger comes from pain and hurt that is buried inside. You can't bury something alive and think you are getting rid of it. The hurt must be dead - faced, admitted, healed, removed, forgiven. When a person buries hurt alive it keeps poisoning everything until it is dug out and destroyed.

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

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

PRAYER TO FORGIVE OTHERS

Thank You, Jesus, for dying that I might be forgiven. I thank you for forgiving me. It is my free will choice to forgive those who have hurt me. (Name the people) Forgive me for anything I may have thought or done to hurt them pack. I turn that pain over to You for you to heal. In Jesus' name I take back any right I might feel I have to see them suffer for the pain they caused me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

Do you struggle with anger? Would those who live with you say you have an anger problem sometimes? What are you doing about it? If you aren't being very successful, use the prayer above whenever you feel yourself getting angry. You can say it in your own words, this is just to help you have an idea of what to pray.

BLOG 503: SATAN PICKS ON ADOPTED CHILDREN

(This is blog 18 in the series "Names of Satan.")

One of the worst things someone can do is to pick on and bully someone weaker than they are. It is especially bad when a child is picked on because they can't protect or defend themselves. They are helpless victims. That's exactly what happens when Satan attacks children. One of his favorite targets are children who are adopted.

Adopted children are quite often attacked because of openings in their past: rejection, illegitimacy, rape (mother or them), abuse or many other things. There are often many generational demons at work. Deliverance should be sought early for adopted children who show signs of difficulties adjusting and adapting to their new family. Any child who has experienced a traumatic experience when young can have demonic openings from it. A car or other kind of accident or any situation that causes terror can be the reason. So can abuse, rape, molestation or any form of rejection.

In order to bring deliverance to adopted children first of all the bond with the natural mother must be broken. It's like cutting an invisible spiritual umbilical cord. Pray to break any claim by spirits of abandonment, resentment, anger, lust, low self-esteem, self-centeredness, jealousy, rejection, self-rejection, etc., and pray for them to be free from any generational spirits who would be claiming them. Pray against any family curses, spirits of occultism or anything that had access to the family through the ancestors. For more information about children and deliverance see pages 57-58, 60.

REJECTION If, before birth, one or both of the parents reject the pregnancy and the baby is unwanted, demons can step in and claim the baby. Also, if there is a difficult birth or the parents are disappointed because of the sex or a physical feature (or handicap) of the baby then demons can claim it. Sometimes even extreme sibling rejection can cause this. Rejection can come later too, especially if a baby cries a lot or causes problems for the parents, or if it interferes in their life or career.

If you felt rejection in your childhood, what can you now do about it? First, make a free will decision to forgive the person/parent. In Jesus' name break anything they said/felt against you (as with curses above). Freely accept God's love to fill and heal you. In Jesus name forbid any demons of rejection to do any work against you. From then on take every thought captive (2 Corinthians 10:4-5) and don't let negative thoughts about your past rejection dominate (Philippians 4:8). Claim your new relationship to God (2 Corinthians 5:17).

ABUSE This includes any form of incest or physical abuse (physical or emotional). As seen before, sexual union gives demons access (1 Corinthians 6:16). The trauma of abuse creates openings that demons often use in the child's life from then on.

REBELLION Rebellion is often seen as "natural," but can be as much an invitation for demonizing as direct occult involvement (I Samuel 15:23 says so!). There is a difference between normal "trying to find one's self" and real rebellion. In Israel older children who rebelled were stoned to death. How can we tell normal rebellion from abnormal?

It is normal for a child to want his curfew extended to that of his friends but abnormal to ignore their curfew and sometimes stay out all night. It is normal for a child to exhibit mood swings (without

violence of destruction) but abnormal when they become more and more irrational and violent. Showing less interest in family activities as they grow older is normal for children, but becoming so withdrawn they only use the home for a bed and breakfast is abnormal. Showing some impatience with rules and restrictions is normal, but purposefully disobeying and speaking disrespectfully are not. A gradual change in interests and friends as a child grows in normal, but suddenly dropping all former interests and activities is not. It is normal that a child will not confide in a parent as much as they used to as they mature, but abnormal for them to be sneaky and secretive, even dishonest and manipulative. Children may want to stretch the dress code you lay down, but it is abnormal to purposely dress in a way that will shock and offend you. The Bible says this abnormal rebellion will grow in the last days (2 Timothy 3:1-5) and it certainly has been.

If you sense this in your child please pray specifically and regularly for them. Confront them in love. Reestablish the relationship so grounds of communication can be opened. Counseling can be helpful, too. Try to distinguish between their attitude and their action. Sometimes one must be addressed first, other times the other. Ask God for wisdom (James 1).

If you have been adopted this applies to you. Pray for God to remove any access any demons may claim to you. If you know someone who has been adopted pray for them. If they are struggling, pray for them daily. Commit them to God and pray He would surround and protect them.

BLOG 504: THE DANGER OF SPIRITUAL CURSES

(This is blog 19 in the series "Names of Satan.")

Satan and his demons will use any excuse they can to cause spew their evil and wickedness at someone. Satan is called Evil One (John 17:5), Wicked One (Ephesians 6:16), Lawless One (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10 and Man of Sin (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). He loves to pick on the vulnerable or those who are open to his attacks. One way is through curses put on a person. We tend to not believe they are true, but the Bible warns against them. We need to learn more about them.

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

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

Balaam tried to curse the Jews (Deuteronomy 23:4). The Bible says we can curse others (Psalm 109:17). Demons use this as an excuse to work against the person, as a 'prayer' to gain

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

If you feel this may have happened to you remember to "Bless them that curse you" (Matthew 5:44). Treat the person with love and kindness, for when you return good for evil the "undeserved curse does not come to rest" (Proverbs 6:2). Break that curse against you in Jesus' name, claiming Galatians 3:10, 13 which says "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'" Ask God to turn the curse to a blessing (Deuteronomy 23:5).

If you suspect that curses have been sent to you by another person, you can pray to break the curses using the authority of Jesus Christ. Before doing so, however, be sure to examine your own heart and deal with any sin (i.e. confess & repent) that you might have committed related to the originator. You can use the following as an example of how to pray:

"In Jesus' name I come against any curses, spells or ungodly thoughts or prayers that have been said or thought against me. In Jesus' name I put them under the blood of Jesus. The Bible says Jesus has become a curse for us and taken all our curses away (Galatians 3:13). I take back every access they claim and break every work they try to do against me or my family. Father, I ask you to fill me with Your Holy Spirit, surround me with Your angels and use me for your glory. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."

If you think this may apply to you, use the prayer above. If someone else comes to mind who you think may have been cursed pray this for them. Pray is several times. Talk to them about this as well.

BLOG 505: DEFEATING THE TEMPTER

(This is blog 20 in the series "Names of Satan.")

It seems appropriate that we have kept the first name of Satan to look at last. We first encounter him as a serpent in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). Revelation 12:9 clearly says that this "**Old Serpent**" was also called "the devil" and "Satan." No doubt about his identity, is there? God said there would be enmity between Satan and women and her descendants (Genesis 3:15), and that has even carried over to an especially great hatred most women have for snakes today.

Snakes are usually always portrayed as evil, conniving and dangerous. The serpent is a figure for hypocrites (Matthew 23:33) and those who are prudent (Matthew 10:16). The malice of the wicked is compared to the "venom of a serpent" (Psalms 58:4; cf. 140:3); the poisonous bite of the serpent is a figure of the harmful influence of wine (Proverbs 23:31-32); unexpected evil is like the bite of a serpent lurking in a wall (Ecclesiastes 10:8), and there is no profit for the charmer of an uncharmed serpent that bites (Ecclesiastes 10:11); enemies who harass and destroy are compared to serpents (Isaiah 14:29; Jeremiah 8:17), whereas the voice of discomfited Egypt is likened to serpents roused from their lair by the woodcutter (Jeremiah 46:22).

Another common name for Satan also comes from Eden: "**The Tempter**" came to Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:3). He comes to tempt us in the same way (1 Thessalonians 3:5; Acts 5:3).

While not all temptation comes from Satan and demons, he certainly does all he can to entice us into sin (2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Timothy 2:26) as he did when tempting Jesus. He will use our sin nature (James 1:14-15), the world system (1 John 2:15-16) or attack directly through demons (1 Corinthians 7:5). He can cause and use anger (Ephesians 4:27), pride (1 Timothy 3:6; 1 Chronicles 21:1; 1 Timothy 3:6), immorality (1 Corinthians 7:5), lies (Acts 5:1-3), doubting God's Word and goodness (Genesis 3:1-5; Luke 4:9-12), 'miracles' to deceive (Mark 4:8-9; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3,9-11), hypocrisy (John 8:44; Acts 17:22), self-sufficiency (1 Chronicles 212:1-7), worry and fear (1 Peter 5:7-9; Hebrews 2:14; Psalm 23:4), lack of faith (Luke 22:31-32; 1 Peter 5:6-10), physical affliction (Job 1:6-22; 2:1-7; John 8:44; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 Timothy 1:20) and sin of any kind (1 Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 4:3; 1 Corinthians 10:19-21, 2 Corinthians 11:3,13-15; 1 John 3:8).

Satan works to bring us into sin in different ways. Sometimes he **charges like a lion** (1 Peter 5:8-9). He uses his vicious power to cause fear in us. Like a lion, he stalks the weak, he picks off those not with the group or in poor health or he overpowers in a sudden charge.

Other times he **traps like a spider** (2 Timothy 2:26). He builds an innocent-looking web in the path of his victim and uses something attractive for bait, then he waits patiently. When someone lands in the net he quickly paralyzes it and then destroys it.

A third way he overcomes is to **deceive like a serpent** (2 Corinthians 11:3). He hides his real identity. He counterfeits the real but substituting something that seems harmless. And, like a snake, he moves fast and deadly when he strikes. He quickly devours his victims while they are still alive.

What we must do is avoid Satan as a lion, dread him as a serpent and fear him as an angel of light.

In which of these are you more open to attack? Which of his attacks are most successful against you? What must you starting right now to have victory over those attacks?

BLOG 506: UNDERSTANDING TEMPTATION

(This is blog 21 in the series "Names of Satan.")

It's been said that sin is meeting a legitimate need in an illegitimate way. We have many real, authentic needs: for significance, meaning, purpose, companionship, peace, etc. God doesn't always instantly meet these, though. He wants to teach us to trust Him to meet them in His way and time, but many times we don't want to wait so we grab for the first substitute that seems like it will help. Satan is a master at putting these in our way. That's how he tempts us. It is imperative we learn how he works to tempt us so we can have victory over them (2 Corinthians 2:11).

The Bible says our temptations come from one of 3 sources: the flesh, the world or Satan. The flesh refers to our sin nature (Romans 7:14-15) which works from within. It can lead us to sin without any influence from Satan or demons. Satan, on the other hand, works from without and incites people to follow their sin nature. We are tempted by the world to conform, achieve, partake of its sinful pleasures and focus on ourselves only (pride).

1 John 2:15-17 says temptations from these can take one of 3 forms: "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world." Adam and Eve were tempted in these 3 ways (Genesis 3:6) and Jesus (Matthew 4:11) were tempted in these same ways.

REFERENCE	BODY	SOUL	SPIRIT
1 John 2:15-17	Lust of the Flesh	Lust of the Eyes	Pride of Life
Genesis 3:6	Good for food	Pleasant to see	Pride of life
Matthew 4:11	Stones to bread	Saw all the kingdoms	Cast self down
Focus	Sensual man	Lusting man	Religious man
Summary	DESIRES	THINGS	PRIDE
Examples	Eating too much or wrong food or drink, sex outside marriage, etc	Greed, materialism, always want more, never have enough	Run own life, pride & self-centeredness, think about self first
Sin	Try to meet legitimate physical need by acting independent of God	Desire what world has to offer above our relationship with God	Not trust God to be god in our life. Control own life

Study the chart above to look for clues as to your own weakness to temptation. If everyone is hit in one or more of these areas, where are you most susceptible? What do you need to do to protect yourself? Spend some time praying and asking God to reveal insights that can help you live a more victorious Christian life.

Monkey trappers in North Africa have a clever method of catching their prey. A number of gourds are filled with nuts and firmly fastened to a branch of a tree. Each has a hole just large enough for the unwary monkey to stick his forepaw into it. When the hungry animal discovers this, he quickly grasps a handful of nuts, but the hole is too small for him to withdraw his clenched fist. And he doesn't have enough sense to open up his hand and let go in order to escape, so he is easily taken captive. This is a picture of many Christians. The devil with his crafty devices tried to ensnare them. He appeals to the appetites of the flesh which can lead to their spiritual downfall. As long as they hold on to worldly bait, they cannot escape from Satan's trap. But he keeps on urging, "Don't let go! Enjoy the pleasure of your sin just a little bit longer!"

BLOG 507: OVERCOMING SEXUAL TEMPTATION

(This is blog 22 in the series "Names of Satan.")

We have been looking at Satan as the tempter (Matthew 4:3; Revelation 12:9). We have seen he traps like a spider (2 Timothy 2:26), deceives like a serpent (2 Corinthians 11:3) and charges like a lion (1 Peter 5:8-9). He tempts through the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). One of his most successful areas of temptation is sexual immorality. Through the ages its been a tool Satan has used with much success. Not all sexual temptation comes from him, for our sin nature will also desire that which is wrong. Still, he and his demons promote immorality and put ungodly thoughts into minds to tempt us to sin.

God clearly states that sexual union means two become one flesh, even if it is sex with a prostitute (1 Corinthians 6:16). Therefore, sexual activity with anyone before or outside marriage can be a direct opening to demonization. Any demons that have access to the person you are involved with will have immediate and instant access to you as well. It is like a spiritual AIDS infection, but there is no prevention, no 'safe sex' application. Those sexual involvements of the past must be

confessed and put under the blood of Jesus. Any access given to any demons through them must be broken in Jesus name. Ask to be filled with His Presence instead, and thank Him for His mercy!

God created sex to show the great oneness of believers and Christ (Ephesians 5). Because of this, Satan tries hard to pervert and destroy this model. Any sex outside marriage is sinful (Ephesians 5:3, 5-6). This includes thoughts (Matthew 5:27-30).

Sexual sin has an element that other sins don't have. When you unite yourself with another person that also opens you to being demonized by any demons that are demonizing the person you are united to. This is true even if it is simply sexual lust with a prostitute (1 Corinthians 6:16). Sex creates a special union, a spiritual oneness, an opening of total sharing between two people. Often demons will claim this as access from one person to another. It is like a spiritual AIDS disease, but much more contagious and with far worse consequences.

It is important for each believer to confess all their past immorality and put it under the blood of Jesus, as well as taking back any access given to Satan's forces by that act. Ask God to heal and cleanse you spiritually. Of course, a good spiritual life (connecting with God in devotions each morning, reading your Bible, etc.) is a must.

When a person first gets tempted, when the first thought pops into their mind, they must get victory over the thought and not allow it to stay and grow. Victory only happens by quoting scripture. Jesus had victory over Satan by quoting scripture and that is our sword of the Spirit. Here are some passages you can use. Start quoting or reading them when tempted and don't stop until well beyond the temptation" 2 Corinthians 5:17; Psalm 51:10-12; Romans 12:1; James 4:6-8; 1 John 4:4; Philippians 4:19; Matthew 16:23; Psalm 139:23-24; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Job 31:1; Matthew 5:27-28. These verses can be your sword for victory. Make sure you have an accountability partner who will check on you and be there for you as well!

PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS FROM SEXUAL SINS

Father, I confess that I have disobeyed You and committed sexual sins. Please forgive me for _____ (specifically confess each and every sin). I take back any access I have given to any demons through these sins and I put it under the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name I forbid these demons to make any claim against me or any of my family because of it. Please cleanse me from these memories and help me to never repeat these sins again. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and use me for your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen

Next blog will look specifically at the problem of pornography.

In which areas of sexuality do demons find most success in tempting you? What ungodly thoughts are open to allowing in? If you have any that need to be confessed, do so now. Pray for others you know who are struggling in these areas as well.

BLOG 508: OVERCOMING PORNOGRAPHY

(This is blog 23 in the series "Names of Satan.")

Satan and his demons cause immorality (Revelation 9:21-22; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 1 Timothy 4:1-3) and all kinds of impurity (Zechariah 13:2). Last blog talked about Satan's temptations to immorality and how to have victory over them. This blog we want to focus on one area of that: pornography. Pornography is rampant today. The statistics of those using it, even among evangelical Christians and pastors, is unbelievable. How can we have victory over this terribly destructive temptation?

Many men and women who struggle with pornography often have relatives or ancestors who also struggled. Demons who put these thoughts into parents or grandparents now put the same thoughts into their children and grandchildren. The source of this demonizing comes from ancestors who were open to pornography. This is called generational sin. When a demon claims access to one person he then claims their descendants as well. Generational bondage can be broken by personally repenting of and confessing the sins of past generations. Claim the blood of Christ as stronger than your blood line and put that access under the blood of Jesus (Romans 5:15). Claim that you are a "new creation, old things have passed away, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Ask God to turn curses into blessing (Deuteronomy 23:5).

Because we have a sin nature, we are open to temptation to pornography even without any demonic influence. God will help us have victory over it if we turn to Him. When you first get tempted, when the first thought pops into your mind, you must get victory over it. That only happens by quoting scripture. Jesus had victory over Satan by quoting scripture and that is our sword of the Spirit. Here are some passages you can use. Start quoting or reading them when tempted and don't stop until well beyond the temptation.

Matthew 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Job 31:1 "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl."

LIVE IN HOLINESS Therefore, I urge you, brothers in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- this is your spiritual act of worship. Romans 12:1

SUBMIT TO GOD, RESIST SATAN God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you. James 4:6-8

GOD IS GREATER THAN SATAN The One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. I John 4:4

GOD WILL MEET ALL OUR NEEDS My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

ANCESTRAL & CHILDHOOD OPENINGS Therefore if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! II Corinthians 5:17

CONTINUING VICTORY Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith. I Peter 5:8-9

One more thing to have victory. You have to do all you can to not be in a position to be tempted. Often times online porn is what tempts you for its so easily available. An EXCELLENT resource that our family has used for many years is Covenant Eyes. If you aren't familiar with this great tool you can learn more at www.covenanteyes.com

If you are struggling with this, use this prayer below. You can use your own words – its your heart that matters, not the words.

Father, I confess that at times in my life I have been powerless against the attacks of the enemy on my sexuality. I have chosen to sin in various ways and ask You to forgive me for _____ (specifically confess each sin you can remember). I agree these actions are sin against a holy God. In Jesus' name I take back any access I have given the enemy through these sins. Please cleanse my memories, heal the hurts and forgive me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

BLOG 509: CAN SATAN READ MY MIND?

(This is blog 24 in the series "Names of Satan.")

In past blogs we have been talking about temptation and how Satan, through his demons, put tempting thoughts and desires into our minds. Last blog we saw how this can contribute to a desire to get involved in pornography. This brings up a larger question, just how much access does Satan have to our minds? Where does God draw the limit?

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

Satan's primary strategy is deception. He will introduce his thoughts and ideas into your mind and deceive you into believing that they are yours. It happened to King David. Satan "moved David to number Israel" (1 Chronicles 21:1), an act God had forbidden, and David acted on Satan's idea. Did Satan walk up to David one day and say, "I want you to number Israel"? I doubt it. David was a godly man and he wouldn't have obeyed Satan. But what if Satan slipped the idea into David's mind in first-person singular? What if the thought came to David as "I need to know how large my army is; I think I'll count the troops"?

If Satan can place a thought in your mind--and he can--it isn't much more of a trick for him to make you think it's your idea. If you knew it was Satan, you'd reject the thought, wouldn't you? But when he disguises his suggestion as your idea, you are more likely to accept it. That is his primary deception. If you knew where the thought came from, you wouldn't be deceived.

I don't think Judas realized that it was Satan's idea to betray Jesus (John 13:2). It probably came to him as a way to prompt Jesus to deliver Israel from the Romans.

Ananias and Sapphira might have thought that it was their idea to withhold some of their offering while getting the strokes and attention from others who believed they had given everything. If they knew that it was Satan's idea, they probably wouldn't have done it (Acts 5:1-3). If Satan can get you to believe a lie, he can control your life. That's why it is truth that sets you free (John 8:32).

The key to victory is your mind and thoughts. No matter the extent of demonic influence, we still have a free will and can turn from Satan. There is no excuse. God never allows more to come against us than we can overcome with His help (1 Corinthians 10:13). Turn to Him for help – He promises to provide a way out.

Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual * act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Do you fill your mind with Scripture and praise music, or allow ungodly thoughts and ideas to play in your thoughts? Renew your mind by focusing on the Word and on Jesus. Spend some time reading

and meditating on God's Word now. Ask God to help you take every thought that isn't from Him captive.

BLOG 510: OUR ULTIMATE VICTORY OVER SATAN

(This is blog 25 in the series "Names of Satan.")

One day a young man was out for a walk. As he went along the street, he saw a sign that invited him to sign up to see the world for free. Food, lodging, everything would be provided. In fact, he would be paid a salary, too. It sounded fine, too fine to pass up. So, he went in and signed his name. To his surprise he was handed a rifle and military equipment. He soon found out there was a whole army of soldiers who now were his enemy and whose sworn purpose was to destroy him. It wasn't what he expected.

There are many Christians today who, when they accepted Jesus as Savior, were surprised to find they, too had an enemy. Perhaps they expected life to be perfect and fine, all settled with no more problems. Salvation, though, doesn't end the battle. In many ways it is just the start of it!

You see, when you accept Jesus as your Savior you also accept Satan as your enemy! You deserted Satan's army to join his enemy's army, God's army. He opposes God, but can only get at God by attacking His people -- you and me!

Victory comes by knowing the enemy and his plans and tricks. The Bible tells us a lot about Satan. Much of the information comes from his names. "**Satan**" means "**Adversary**" (Job 1:6-7), similar to "**Enemy**" (Matthew 13:39; 1 Peter 5:8). The "**Devil**" has nearly the same meaning and is often used interchangeably with Satan (Mark 1:13; Matthew 4:1). Literally "Devil" means "**Slanderer**" because he slanders us to God, God to us, and even us to ourselves.

"**Lucifer**" is his original name from before his fall (Isaiah 14:12). It means "**Bright, Shining One**" and refers to Satan as an "**Angel of Light**" (2 Corinthians 11:13-14). In his original creation he was ultimate "**beauty**," "**perfection**," and "**wisdom**" (Ezekiel 28:12). He appears to be good, like God, in order to deceive. He is the ultimate "**Deceiver**" (Revelation 12:9). He is a "**Liar**" and the "**Father of Lies**" (John 8:44).

His control over the present world system is seen in his names "**The god of this Age/World**" (2 Corinthians 4:4), "**The Ruler of This World System**" (John 12:31), "**The Prince of the Power of the Air**" (Ephesians 2:1-2) and "**The Power of Darkness**" (Colossians 1:13-14). He sets the tone for this age: the values and priorities, motives and goals and all that comprises the present world view of principles and standards. He deceives those who aren't believers into thinking his way is right and best, when it just leads to destruction.

It's no wonder, then, that he is even called "**Destroyer**," **Abaddon** and **Apollyon** in Hebrew and Greek (Revelation 9:11). Similarly, he is the "**Great Dragon**" (Revelation 12:9) and the "**Roaring Lion**" (1 Peter 5:8). He is a "**Murderer**" from the beginning (John 8:44), and a **thief**" who comes to kill and destroy (John 10:10). "**Demon**," those who do his work, means "**Destroyer**."

As if we don't have enough information to tell what kind of an evil person he is, he also is called the "**Evil One**" (John 17:5), "**Wicked One**" (Ephesians 6:16), "**Lawless One**" (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10) and "**Man of Sin**" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). Even "**Beelzebub**" reinforces his rottenness for it refers him as lord over all that is repulsive and utterly detestable.

Satan's goal is to bring each person into the same evil that personifies him. He is the "**Old Serpent**" (Revelation 12:9) and the "**Tempter**" (Matthew 4:3). In short, he is everything God is not.

Everything God is, he is the opposite. He is in a death struggle with God for mankind and the Kingdom of the world. He will stop at nothing. No one can resist Him. Only those who live and fight in God's power have any chance of victory. That is, you and me. Read the following verses about this wonderful victory that is ours in Jesus. Keep them nearby so you can refer to them whenever discouraged.

Hebrews 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil— 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

Luke 9:1-2 *When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.*

Luke 10:17-20 *The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*

Rev 12:7-11 *And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.*

Revelation 20:7-15 *When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth — Gog and Magog — to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

Matthew 25:41 *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

BLOG 511: IS THIS ILLNESS DEMONIC?

Too often our prayers are no more than a “to do” list of things we expect God to accomplish for us. Who are we to tell the creator of the universe what to do about various situations? Prayer is a powerful, wonderful tool – but we need to learn how to use it. Telling God what He should do to make our life easier and smoother is not the purpose of prayer. Yet often that is how we pray for ourselves and others.

Take illness for an example. Before praying for a sick person, ourselves or someone else, we should first pray and ask God to show us how to pray. Is there some sin God is trying to point out in the person’s life? Is God using it to mature their faith? Are they being used as a testimony of faith so someone watching them can come to Jesus? Does God want them to learn by experience how to help others who suffer? Just telling God to remove it may be what Satan wants, not what God wants. So, ask how to pray before praying. You should pray for wisdom from God as to how He wants you to pray. Should it be for healing, for deliverance, for grace to endure, for wisdom or for peace and greater trust in Him?

But what if the illness is demonic? If so, we should certainly pray against it. But how do we know if it is or isn’t? First of all, the Bible clearly says Satan can cause illness: crippled limbs (Luke 13:11), Paul’s thorn in the flesh (eye disease? - 2 Corinthians 12:7), muteness (sometimes dumbness, too (Matthew 9:32-33; 12:22; Mark 9:17-18,24-25), blindness (Matthew 12:22), seizures (Mark 1:26; 9:17-18,20,22,25; Matthew 17:15,18; Luke 9:39), deafness (Mark 9:17-18,20,25), sores (skin cancer?) (Job 2:7), boils and other painful afflictions (Psalm 78:49 - the plagues in Egypt were demon-caused), physical torments of all kinds (Revelation 9:5,10), painful illness (Job2:7-8), and even death (Job 1:19).

There are many times healing came when demons were cast out. Jesus did this at the start of His ministry (Matthew 4:23-24; 8:16; Mark 1:34; Luke 4:41), around Tyre and Sidon (Mark 3:10-12; Luke 6:18-19), and in the middle of His ministry (Luke 7:21). Many female followers of Jesus were cured of both (Luke 8:2). See also Mark 6:13; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 19:12.

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

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

If you feel the illness may be demonic, then the root cause should be exposed and removed. Sin in their life (or yours) should be confessed and removed, curses against them broken, and especially anything in their family line that would be an open door to ancestral openings be closed. Property should be dedicated to God, and any possessions that could give demons an opening prayed about. If God shows you to destroy it, do so quickly.

God allows these things for a purpose - our growth and His glory. Submit it to Him, trust Him, pray against anything demonic as well as pray for Him to heal if that is His will, but also pray for His

grace to endure through it if healing isn't His will. Submit it to Him for His glory. (August 17, 2020 Doylestown, PA)

Psalm 107:19-21 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind.

Psalm 103:2-4 Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

Are you suffering from an illness? Do you know someone who is? Take some time to ask God how He wants you to pray. Our prayers will never be answered if we pray outside His will.

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