

## *Spiritual Warfare -- Under Attack*

Once we have cleaned up our lives from all past involvement in sinful practices we are home free for a life of joy and peace and blessing, right? Wrong! That's the very time the devil will do everything in his power to draw us away from what we are now experiencing with God. When we are growing closer to God the devil hates it. When we take back the ground of our heart or help someone else do the same the devil will do anything he can to stop us. As God is preparing us for a deeper relationship or a greater experience of His blessing and influence, the devil will naturally be afraid of that and try to block it. We have to be on guard.

***So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and in his good time he will honor you ... Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour. Take a firm stand against him, and be strong in your faith.*** (1 Peter 5:6-9)

**Temptation and Deception:** In the Garden of Eden the devil made the apple very appealing to Eve and then had her question what God had really said when he spoke to her. He twisted what God said about spiritual death and applied it to physical death. Similarly, when Jesus was tempted, the devil quoted scripture to Jesus to do it in a twisted way that tried to get Jesus to go against God's plan. The devil will do his best to tempt us with something appealing to us and then give us reasons why it's not so bad or why we deserve it or even remind us that God will forgive us so why not just go ahead. If God has said it's wrong, there's no reason that can make it right. The ultimate deception is to believe that we're safe from deception. We're prone to being deceived every day of our lives and must stay on guard.

***Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from what we believe; they will follow lying spirits and teachings that come from demons .... The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?*** (1 Timothy 4:1, Jeremiah 17:9 NLT)

**Accusation and Condemnation:** One of the devil's favorite tactics is to get us to sin and then immediately tell us how stupid we are, how much a failure we are, how bad a Christian we are, and how we just aren't getting this Christian life at all. He will try to get us to believe it's too hard, we're too messed up or it hurts too much. ***For the Accuser has been thrown down to earth—the one who accused our brothers and sisters before our God day and night.*** (Revelation 12:10 NLT) Make no mistake about it, the devil is looking for a way today to accuse you for something. Remind the devil that it's no surprise to God that a person fails. ***If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth*** (1

John 1:8 NLT) If you have done something wrong, reassure yourself of God's love: ***While we were still sinners, Christ died for us ...*** (Romans 5:8). Ask for and receive God's healing and cleansing ***But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.*** (1 John 1:9 NLT)

**Isolation and Rationalization:** Sometimes we isolate because we feel guilty and ashamed for having thought or done something wrong. At other times, we isolate because we don't like the truth and we're avoiding circumstances where we will be challenged. Often in isolation we are ripe for rationalizing. We either tell ourselves that something wrong isn't so bad or we tell ourselves only half the truth - the pleasure but not the pain. We isolate when our priorities are out of line and we think work or money or something else is what we need now rather than prioritizing God's word, church and Bible study and fellowship with other believers. One of the devil's favourite tactics is to divide Christians from each other because we are easier to defeat on our own. However he can do it, the devil will try to get you off on your own.

**Obsessions and Desires:** As addicts we have practiced the art of obsession and have it down to a fine science. God can use that ability to help us focus on new priorities but the devil is also very active in us to lure our thoughts away to obsess on anything that will take us away from God. For some it will be the drug or sex or the thrill of winning the pot in gambling. For others it will be guilt, shame, or fear. At other times the obsession will be on work, a game, a problem, a worry, a hidden sin. The devil doesn't care what keeps our mind separated from God's thoughts so long as we're busy in our own little mental world. The Bible is very clear that we need to uproot anything in our mind that takes our focus away from God and His goodness in our life. ***Fix your thoughts on what is true and honorable and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*** (Philippians 4:8 NLT)

**Confusion and Doubt:** When all else fails the devil just gets us asking questions and wondering about this and that. The "committee in our head" won't just be talking, they'll all be talking at once. Confusion is not from God. Peace is. ***You will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*** (Philippians 4:7 NLT) Don't settle for anything less.

### Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. Where am I vulnerable to Satan's attacks?
2. What am I doing to be prepared to face and defeat these strategies