
Spiritual Warfare Part II

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Satan the Roaring Lion

1 Peter 5:5-9

When I was in college studying psychology, my studies included how silly it was that at one time people blamed demons for mental illness and how that now, we are much better educated and know better. I was much more liberal then and did not understand the spiritual realm very much. The fact is, demons are responsible for a lot, but not for everything. If you take the Bible seriously, you also must take into account the veracity and reality of demons! They are not figurines of a bygone belief system, which is what they want you to think. They are real, and are after you! The comfort we have is that He (Jesus) that is in us is greater than he (Satan) that is in the world; so, they cannot do anything to us that is not allowed by God. At the same time, we are called to stand firm against them. I once made the mistake of ridiculing and ignoring Satan and his ability to influence and hassle; do not make that same mistake (2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:10-18; Colossians 2:15; 1 John 4:4).

We cannot ignore Satan and spiritual warfare, nor can we turn a blind eye to his characteristics and schemes. Yes, he cannot get those who are in Christ, but he surely can hassle us. He cannot possess those who are in Christ, but he can trick and mislead us and try to distract our eyes and faith from Christ. We cannot afford not to utilize the weapons and gifts Christ gives us to defend ourselves. We have to stand firm. We need to be on guard against our own immoral behavior and disobedience of God's precepts, as well as our anger, pride, arrogance, rebellion, critical attitude, and unforgiving nature. We need to guard ourselves from spiritual fatigue while giving attention to our physical and emotional health. We must not allow ourselves to fall into disunity and bicker with one another, unless we are following biblical principles with sound doctrine and moral behavior. If we are not grounded in God's Word and in prayer, we will fall to pride and arrogance and find ourselves outside the will of God and in the care of Satan!

Know 1 Peter 5:8 which reads: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Satan is not a wimp as some people teach, nor is he to be ignored; thus, we need to be prepared! Satan is not a cowardly lion like in the Wizard of Oz. A coward is someone who does not attract, and such a one invokes no fear; thus, no defense is needed. The term *roaring lion* comes from 1 Peter 5: 5-9, describing the most feared animal at that time. Such lions would strike absolute fear into the people who had no real defense against

them (Psalm 7:2; 10:9-10; 22:13). This referred to Satan's power and destructiveness, as he is *someone who is out to get you and an enemy of God*. He is *your enemy, the devil/Satan*, as his name means "the slanderer" and "our adversary." This refers to the accuser or the prosecutor (Job 1:6-12; 2:12; Zech. 3:1-2; Rev. 12: 9-10). Peter says Satan is seeking to accuse us of wrong so he can blind us to God's love and grace. He twists our mindsets to be ashamed, seek apostasy (because we think God does not care), or into not taking our faith seriously.

Satan seeks us out as the lion who seeks the weak prey. His prey is Christians, specifically those who are not mature and not always faithful. Christian maturity requires us to submit and to be humble. The result is respect, cooperation, unity, community, and the power of His Fruit at work. This is our armor and defense against Spiritual Warfare. But, if we do not submit, have no regard for unity, or have no respect for authority, our sinful nature will win out. The result will be Satan's influence causing us to succumb to quarrels (because of pride), discord, and shame.

We have to see that God wants us to submit; this is best for us, both individually and collectively as a church. Keep in mind that when God talks about Spiritual Warfare in the Bible, it is in the context of who we are and how we are to be in Him! Humility, Fruit, and Character in the Word builds not only our precious relationship with Christ, but our defense in Him as well. *He knows that his time is short*. Satan knows that his authority and dominion are still under God's sovereignty; he can do only what God allows for His purpose. Satan has lost and fights like a cornered animal as well as using all the weapons at his disposal to oppose God's people and goodness. In the last days, he will become more intensely hostile toward the people of God (1 Peter 5:5-9).

Satan also seeks to destroy those who are doing a good work, those who are faithful and being used in service to Him for His glory. He hates those who live their lives for Christ, thus may wage war upon you. So, it is very important to remain in Him and stick to His precepts. Being a Christian and a church is about relying on Christ, not ourselves; it is about His mighty power at work in us—not our feeble ways! It is not allowing our frustrations, disappointments, and failures take hold of us and cause us to concentrate on them and not on Christ. His favor and power will be poured out on us when we are faithful, obedient, and meek (strength under control). Nevertheless, be warned; pride is the complete opposite of these. Pride is what Satan is all about; it will destroy relationships and churches fast and furiously. That is why God hates it so much! Thus, to be confident in Jesus and be used by Him, we need Him to empower us. With this mindset and empowering, we do not need to worry or fret because our mind is not on our status, situation, possessions, or experiences, but on Christ! We can then know

the devil's lies and ways. This comes about when we realize that Jesus does indeed care, and loves us ever so deeply!

We also can be comforted that God is totally sovereign and Satan can do nothing to us other than what God allows. However, he still has power and has not been tamed yet. Consider that your will is the door through which he comes prowling and attacking; why give him an open door? Satan is still our adversary; he not only wants to take you away from God's love and precepts, he wants to utterly destroy you! Peter's point in 1 Peter 5? Be on your guard and resist him; do not let Satan have that open door—as Peter personally experienced (Luke 22:31-34; Eph. 6:10-20)!

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be sober and vigilant? Can we ignore Satan; after all, we have Christ?
2. How have you seen people give Satan that open door? How do our frustrations, disappointments, and failures give him that opportunity?
3. He wants our Fruit to be rotten and our Character to be absent, how have you seen this at work?
4. The devil seeks weak prey, how have you been weak and what can you do to be strong?
5. How does our Christian maturity submission and humbleness help us in spiritual warfare?
6. How can you take hold of God's precepts on spiritual warfare so you can concentrate on Christ more? How would that help you in your daily life?
7. Satan's names include "the slanderer" and "our adversary," and "accuser" What does this show you about his character and attributes?
8. Why do you suppose that Satan is seeking to accuse us of wrong? How does our pride play into what Satan is all about?
9. How can Satan destroy your relationships and church fast and furiously? What can you do about it?
10. How have you seen people blinded to God's love and grace? What can you do to show people that Satan our mindsets to be ashamed, seek apostasy (because we think God does not care), or into not taking our faith seriously?

11. How are you comforted that God is totally sovereign and Satan can do nothing to us other than what God allows?

12. What can you do to make sure that Satan never has that open door?

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