

# Learning How To Fight a Spiritual Enemy

## *Satan's Methods*

### Part 3

**Intro:** For all those who like to watch team sports – whether its football – soccer – hockey – basketball – One thing they all do preparing for the game is watch hours of film of their opponent. To prepare, they want to know how their opponent plays the game – they want to identify their game plan. They want to be able to prepare for what the other team is going to do.

- Spiritually, we need to have the same mentality. We have a spiritual opponent and we need to prepare for the methods he uses against us. Far too many believers are unaware and unprepared for this conflict. Today, we are going to watch some spiritual game film and reveal some of Satan's tactics.

*2 Cor. 2:11 "so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes."* (NLT) The problem is we are not familiar. Today we change this!

- As we look at Satan's methods today, let's keep in mind this refers to all his fallen angels as well. These methods apply to Satan and demons actively working strategically against humanity.

#### 1. Satan's Purpose

- Satan's desire is to be like the Most High.

His purpose is exalt self and oppose God.

*Is. 14:14 "I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High."* (NLT)

- Satan's purpose is not to get people to worship him. He wants people to act like him living independently from God. Therefore, Satan is actively promoting the lie of Rom. 1:25.

*Rom. 1:25 "because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator..."* (ESV) This is the foundational lie of all lies! Just serve yourself. Just do your own thing. Just don't be submissive to God.

- Whiteboard Illustration:

- Satan opposes the people of God

WHY?

- We carry out the purposes of God

*Matt. 28:18-19 "And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..."* (ESV)

- Foothills has a very clear purpose – It's on the wall in the Living Room for all to see. It's also the focus of the next Strong Foundations class – Strong in Purpose" – Explain
- Satan actively opposes the purpose of this church!

- We bear the image of God

*Gen. 1:26 "Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us."* (NLT)

- Angels were not created in the image of God. Only human beings are image bearers. We represent the one Satan hates.
- Why do you think there is such an effort to distort gender, sexuality, and the foundation of identity itself? He wants to distort the image of God!

- We proclaim the truth of God

*John 8:32 “And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (NLT)*

- We get to proclaim freedom to the captives in this world by showing people the power of truth. Satan is all about keeping people as captives so they can be controlled to do what he wants.
- Why do you think there is such an attack on absolute truth?

- We possess supernatural power from God

*Eph. 3:20 “Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.” (NLT)*

- We have the power of God IN US! Satan knows this and constantly tries to keep the followers of Jesus from accessing this power. Satan has no authority over this power.
- Why do you think he works so hard to keep you from praying? Why does he try to keep churches from praying? Prayer is one way we tap into this power. (Prayer night next week)

## **2. Satan’s Methods in this World**

Satan’s primary method is one of deception. Jesus calls him the “father of lies” He knows that only truth can set people free so he works to keep people from the truth of God’s word. HOW?

- Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers

*2 Cor. 4:4 “Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don’t understand this message about the glory of Christ...” (NLT)*

- We touched on this last week. Satan blinds people’s hearts and minds so they are unable to see. This is not about intellect. It is completely spiritual. The Gospel message seems like complete foolishness to them. This is why when we pray for people, we ask God to remove the blindness.

- Satan deceives people with partial truth

Take a look at the temptation of Jesus in Luke 4. Satan loves to quote scripture!  
*Luke 4:9-11 “Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off!”<sup>10</sup> For the Scriptures say, ‘He will order his angels to protect and guard you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’” (NLT)*

- He was trying to get Jesus to operate outside of what God wanted him to do and he used scripture to justify it. This might surprise some of you but Satan knows the bible better than you do and he will use it against you!
- Partial truths are a favorite tactic. He can lull people into a false sense of security with partial truth. Let's just take God's love as an example. He can get people to so overemphasize God's love for people that we neglect the need for the Gospel – repentance – life change – truth.
- Satan distracts people with counterfeit religions
  - Satan is called an angel of light. (2 Cor. 11:14) Therefore, he wants to distract and deceive people into believing what is false. He takes advantage of our design as worshipping creatures. He provides an alternative to worshipping God.
  - The number of world religions - 4-10,000! Over 75% global population
- Satan fascinates people with the supernatural
  - It could be seemingly harmless things like palm reading – Tarot cards – communicating with the dead – psychics –
  - Even in Guatemala, we see Mayan Spiritism merged together with Catholicism. - Explain

What about believers in Jesus? What are Satan's methods against us?

### 3. Satan's Methods Against Believers

The battlefield for the follower of Jesus is the mind. Satan and demons do not know our thoughts but they can introduce thoughts to us. How we choose to think is essential in our battle against this influence.

*Rom. 8:5-8 "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God." ESV)*

This is why we had the series on the Holy Spirit. Every follower of Jesus needs to know the difference between the flesh and the spirit. Satan wants you to think and operate out of your flesh. He doesn't want you submissive to God. He actually wants to make you hostile to God and His way.

Here are 9 ways he is actively working in believer's lives.

- Satan deceives us of our identity
  - See handout - Who I Am in Christ

- Satan deceives us of our purpose

*Eph. 2:10 "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." (NLT)*

- So many believers struggle believing this truth. God has a purpose for your life He designed for you in eternity past. You are literally designed for it! If the church could ever embrace this truth we would change the world!
- Our Strong Foundations classes are designed to move you out of the chair and into your purpose! Strong in faith – purpose – action.

- Satan deceives us of our freedom

*Gal. 5:1 "So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free..." (NLT)*

- The freedom we have in Jesus must be maintained. We can give our freedom away to the flesh. We can start thinking like the flesh and then behaving in our flesh. When we do this we give away our freedom. We are being controlled by our fleshly desires more often than the Spirit of God. Now we are convinced freedom is not possible.
- Living this way gives our enemy footholds - strongholds into our lives. When we repeatedly live in our flesh Satan develops habitual patterns of behavior that seem next to impossible to stop.

- Satan deceives us of our unity

*1 Cor. 1:10 "I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose." (NLT)*

- Far too many Christians believe their opinions and feelings are more important than the unity of the church. Satan is having a heyday with this one. Unity is not an option for the church. It is essential for our mission. It is essential for the blessing of God. It is essential for taking ground back from our spiritual enemy.
- A divided church is a defeated church. A divided church loses its witness to the world it is trying to reach.

- Satan deceives us of our power in Christ

*2 Tim. 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline." (NLT)*

- Satan wants believers to think and feel powerless, weak, timid, afraid and overwhelmed. WHY? So he can control them. So they stay paralyzed by this fear and do nothing for the kingdom of God.
- When we start believing in the power of God, the church starts moving, mountains start moving, obstacles are overcome, nothing is impossible.
- Satan knows he has no answer for a church that walks in the power of Almighty God!

- Satan deceives us trusting the word of God

*James 1:22 “But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.” (NLT)*

- There is far too much “fooling” going on in churches. Satan doesn’t mind if you know biblical truth, just as long as you don’t do anything with it. Just keep telling yourself how spiritually mature you are because of how much you know.
- This is why we are an application oriented church. This is why we say – Obedience = Blessing!
- He also wants us to doubt the word of God. The promises – the hard truths – maybe we should rewrite it? Let’s make the Gospel all about God’s love. Let’s make it so it doesn’t offend. God would never allow anyone to go to hell. Is God’s way really the best way to experience life to the full?
- If Satan can erode your trust in the word of God you will look for an alternate to trust and he is more than willing to give you one.

- He deceives us about our loyalties

*Matt. 6:24 “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.” (NLT)*

- This is the belief that I can serve Jesus and.... It may not be money, it could be anything else that divides our loyalties. It could be your career – a relationship – your feelings– even a hobby. Satan simply wants to get you to make something else the number one thing in your life besides God. He doesn’t care what it is.
- If Satan can divide your loyalty, he can distract and lead you almost anywhere.

- He deceives us regarding reality

*2 Cor. 4:18 “So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.” (NLT)*

- Satan wants to get believers to live merely an earthly existence. Ignore the spiritual realities. Ignore the awareness and anticipation of eternity. Just live for the here and now. Embrace an earthly perspective rather than an eternal perspective.
- We are called to live with eternity in view. Lose this and our flesh can take over. Living with eternity in view helps us embrace delayed gratification – difficulty - hardships. Some rewards simply come later. We belong to another Kingdom!

- He deceives us with religion

*2 Tim. 3:5 “They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!” (NLT)*

- This is believing that we can embrace the offer of forgiveness and eternal life without any commitment to follow Jesus and let our lives be transformed.
- Satan loves to deceive people with religion. Satan loves religion. Religion is Satan’s substitute to what Jesus came to do. Jesus came to give us a relationship with our Creator. Satan wants to give people something that feels spiritual but has nothing to do with Jesus or relationship. He gives mankind religious rules. Religion is bondage. Jesus is freedom!

How do you see Satan’s tactics in your own life? We just saw some game film. What did you learn today? Do you see how he is trying to deceive you – control you – steal your freedom in Christ? Are you going to learn fight back?

Prayer: