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# Invisible Barriers 4

## The Demonic Realm

DR. TERRY L. TUINDER

# Jesus Believed in Demons

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The next invisible barrier we want to discuss is the demonic realm. There seems to be two extremes in this area. There are those who give too much credit and influence to demons. Then there are those who discount the demonic realm completely.

## Demonic Realm



If you are older, like me, you may remember a comedian named Flip Wilson. He had a character named Geraldine. One of the constant lines that came out of Geraldine's mouth on a regular basis was, "The Devil made me do it."

She would describe walking by a store window and seeing a purse. She would tell herself, "No I don't need that purse." Then she would describe

being drawn into the store and coming out with purse, because "The Devil made me do it."

There are some believers that blame every problem in their lives on the Devil. They like to point the finger at the devil because it relieves them of any personal responsibility. I want to say this as clearly as possible, the devil cannot make you do anything against your will.

When it comes down to it you will never be able to stand before the Lord and say, "The Devil made me do it." No one MAKES you do anything. Now I am not talking about a situation where someone points a gun at you head and tells you to do something you would not normally do. I am talking about you making a choice to respond in daily life.

Then there are those who are either totally unaware of the demonic realm or reject it as superstitious mumbo jumbo of less enlightened times. There is always a rational, scientific reason for what is going on in a person's life.

If there is something going on in someone's life, it must have a psychological reason behind it. There is no way that an unseen spirit could influence person in the Twenty-First Century.

The problem with both of these views is they do not line up with the Bible. If you want to live life as God intends you to live, you must allow the word of God to shape your thoughts. So let's look at what the Bible has to say about this important topic.

## Jesus Believed in Demons



One important thing to consider is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, believed in demons. Much of His ministry to people centered around commanding demons to get out of the lives of people. Jesus said to those who were opposed to Him, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28).

Luke tells the story of a woman who had a sickness that was caused by a spirit. She was doubled over by this spirit for eighteen years. Jesus told the woman she was freed from this sickness. He laid His hands on her and she was healed.

When the synagogue leader accused Jesus of healing her on the Sabbath. Jesus responded by saying, "And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she

is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not be released from this bond on the Sabbath day?

There is no doubt that Jesus acknowledged and actively resisted demonic beings. Matthew summarizes the ministry of Jesus like this. He said, "When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill" (Matthew 8:16).

## Paul Explains the Demonic Battle

The Apostle Paul gives us great insight into the demonic realm. He wanted the people in Ephesus to understand that they were fighting a battle against demonic forces. He describes the enemy forces, his plans, and God's solution to the battle. He wrote:

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggles are not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, Against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything stand firm. (Ephesians 6:11-13)

## Satan has an army

There are several points to consider from the passage above. The first is that Paul recognized an invisible demonic army that we are fighting against. Whether we know it or not. Whether we believe it or not. There are levels of demonic forces that are at work in our world.

The battle is not against people, but the demonic forces behind the people. These forces seek to influence us at a variety of levels: as individuals,

families, cities, states, and nations. They seek to work through governments, ideologies, philosophies, false religions, and outright occult activities.

## Satan has a plan



The devil's forces are opposed to everything that God desires a believer to experience. In the verses above Paul tells us to stand against the schemes (wiles, tactics, strategies) of the enemy. In 1 Corinthians 2:11, Paul tells his readers that they are not ignorant of the devil's devices.

These verses inform us that Satan has a plan to bring about your downfall. There is an invisible army directed by Satan that is seeking your destruction. They are organized. They have strategies to use. They have tactics to employ.



The great thing about it is that we know the plans and strategies of the enemy. Paul says we are not ignorant. We know the ways and the tactics that the enemy uses to bring about the downfall of believers.

That is why it is so important to know the New Testament. These letters were written to help you understand the ways of God and the ways the enemy uses to influence your life.

I am saying this to help you see that the enemy has plans for you, and they are not plans for your welfare. The Apostle Peter warns, "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

We know that the enemy has a plan to destroy your life. The question is, do you have a plan to stand firm against all of his tactics?

The wonderful thing is that God has made available to us everything that we need to stand up against the ploys of the devil. We are not helpless and at the mercy of the devil.

God has supplied us the full armor of God so that we can effectively resist the devil. Next week we will start a five-week series looking at the strategies the enemy uses to defeat us and the armor that God gives us to overcome each tactic of the devil.

Thank God. He has given us the victory. Through Him we are more than conquerors.

# Satan's Tactics and God's Answer - Part 1

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## Satan's Tactics and God's Answer

The devil and his demons are looking for opportunities to enter into our lives and take advantage of us. Paul warns the Ephesians to "give no opportunity to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27). Below are a few of the ways that he attempts to gain influence:



### Lies and deception

The devil is a liar. Jesus called him the father of lies. He directly opposes God and calls Him a liar.



In the garden of Eden the devil told Eve that if she ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil that she would not die. He told her that God was keeping this from her because He knew that she would become like God once she ate of the fruit.

The devil always opposes the truth of God's word. He speaks things with great confidence and boldness so that it sounds good and right. The only problem is that you cannot walk in the truth if you're believing a lie.

Eve ate of the tree and it did cause her death. The devil was wrong and he knew it. The devil lied.

One of the devil's tactics against you is to lie. Start monitoring your thoughts today. See what you are thinking. Do any of the thoughts you have contradict what God says about you or your situation? Then it is a lie.

The devil wants to deceive you. He knows that if he can get you to believe a lie you will never experience the truth. The terrible thing about deception is that you believe the lie is true.

Many times you are deceived because you want something more than you want the truth. The enemy will work on your desire for the thing you want and seek to convince you that God really didn't mean for you to not have whatever it is you want.

## God's Answer is Truth

God provides only one answer for this problem, the truth. God communicates His truth to us through the Bible and through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32). It is abiding in Jesus' words that allows us to experience His victory. Only by walking according to the truth can we walk in freedom.

Jesus knew that you would need help walking out His truth, so He sent the Holy Spirit. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit our Helper and the Spirit of Truth (John

15:26). He informs us that "When the Holy Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth . . ." (John 16:13).



## Inciting Rebellion

The devil's goal for Eve was to have her rebel against the command of God. He wanted her to think that the ways of God were wrong. He knew that if He could deceive Eve, he would ultimately have power over her.

Once the enemy put doubt in Eve's mind as to the truth of God's word, she began to look at the fruit a different way than before. Genesis 3:6 gives us insight into her thoughts:

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise,

she took from its fruit and ate; and she also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

The enemy accomplished his goal. He got Eve's eyes off of the command of God designed to protect her and onto the personal benefits of disobeying God.

She reasoned that the tree was good for food. A person needs to eat, right? What's wrong with eating this specific fruit? I am kind of hungry. God wouldn't want me to be hungry, would He?

She also saw that the fruit was appealing. It looked so good hanging on the branch. I wonder what it tastes like? Is it sweet or sour? Just looking at it makes my mouth water.

The fruit will also make me wise. I won't have to bother God and ask Him all sorts of questions. After all, He is pretty busy. If I eat the fruit I will know good and evil and can make decisions on my own.

So Eve made her decision. She would reject God's way for the devil's. She rebelled against the command of God and ate from the tree. Not only did she eat the fruit, she gave the fruit to her husband to eat.

Adam and Eve gave into their desire [lust] to be like God. The enemy always seeks to use perfectly valid desires to incite us to reject God's commands. It's not evil to eat. It doesn't look evil. It's not bad to want to be wise.

The devil still uses these tactics today. The Apostle Paul warned us about this in 1 John 2:16. He speaks of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life."

The Bible has many lists full of the possible sins against God. Just a few are idolatry, adultery, gossip, slander, stealing, etc. The enemy will seek to help you find some way to justify doing what God said is wrong. The main way is through stirring up your desires.

## God's Answer is Righteousness

God's answer for rebellion is the breastplate of righteousness. You are protected by trusting in Christ's righteousness.

The enemy wants you to trust in your own righteousness. He will seek to convince you that if you do enough good works God will have to let you into heaven.

If only you do more good than bad, then God would be satisfied. Just keep doing good things. Convince yourself that you are not a bad person. Trust in what you do.

This ploy of the enemy wants us to trust in something else than the righteousness of Christ. In Philippians Paul rejects every righteous deed that he could attribute to himself. He said that he counted all of these things as dung. He would only trust in a righteousness that came from Christ.



## Condemnation

The devil is the accuser of the brethren. He wants to accuse you and cause you to feel condemned. His goal is to make you ineffective for the Kingdom of God by pointing out how terrible you are.

His tactic is to remind you how unworthy you are through accusations. He will say things like, "You call yourself a Christian? Look what you did last night." He wants to heap condemnation on you so that you will feel worthless and run and hide from God.

Have you ever sinned and repented, but still felt guilty and unworthy? The enemy continually brings up the past to show us how sinful we are. The only thing is that once we ask for forgiveness we are instantly forgiven by God and cleansed from all unrighteousness.

The next time the enemy brings up a sin you have repented of remind him of the blood of Jesus. Begin to thank the Lord for His cleansing. When the devil seeks to condemn you, turn it into a praise session for Jesus.

The reason that the enemy wants you to feel condemned is that you will run and hide from God. Guilt, shame, and condemnation keep us from approaching God with confidence. The devil wants you to run and hide from God just like Adam and Eve did. He knows that if you run to God you will be cleansed and forgiven.

## God's Answer is Peace

God's answer for this is the readiness given by the gospel of peace. Jesus Christ died to give us peace with God. We were once estranged and enemies of God, but Jesus has brought us near to God through His blood.

We used to be separated from God, but now are reconciled through His sacrifice. Romans 8:1 clearly tells us, "There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." When we come to Christ,

we are forgiven. There is no list of sins to condemn us because they are nailed to the cross of Jesus.

The next time the devil comes to remind you how sinful and separated you are from God, read Romans 8:31-35 out loud:

**31** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? **32** He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? **33** Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; **34** who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. **35** Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Never allow condemnation to keep you separated from God. Speak the truth of God's word to yourself and to the enemy. Run to God. He has prepared you to stand strong because of His message of peace. Stand in His peace.



# Satan's Tactics and God's Answer - Part 2

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## Satan's Tactics and God's Answer

The devil and his demons are looking for opportunities to enter into our lives and take advantage of us. Paul warns the Ephesians to "give no opportunity to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27). Below are a couple of the ways that he attempts to gain influence.

### **Part 2 of 5**



### Fear and Intimidation

Satan is a master of using fear and intimidation to shut down and silence believers. He knows the true authority that believers have to resist him in the Lord, but he also knows that many believers do not understand that authority.

As mentioned earlier he comes in like a roaring lion seeking whom he can devour. I think there are three truths we can learn from the wording of this verse.



Satan is seeking to intimidate you

First, the devil comes in like a roaring lion. He wants to paralyze you with fear. He wants to see if he can intimidate you and stop you from moving forward in the call of God in your life.

Many times the devil operates behind the scenes and tries to trip you up with subtlety. Other times he comes at you full force and out in the open to see if you will back down out of fear,

The problem with fear is that there seems to be a million different kinds of fear the devil can use against you. It is like a major smorgasbord. He has so many choices before him. Here is a small list of fears that the enemy uses to manipulate us:

- Fear of failure

- Fear of rejection
- Fear of being wrong
- Fear of poverty
- Fear of leadership
- Fear of intimacy
- Fear of being alone
- Fear of abandonment
- Fear of sickness
- Fear of people (men/women)
- Fear of death

There are many more that he could use, but you get the point.

Just take a moment and think about how fear has impacted your life. What things are you not doing because of fear?

Satan is searching for a weakness in you

Second, the devil is seeking. That means that he going around looking for those who will give into fear. The devil cannot read your mind, but he can see your responses.

So often people believe that the devil is the opposite of God. God knows everything and so His enemy the devil must know our thoughts and be able to read our minds. No way!

The devil is a created being and in no way compares to God. He is an angelic being who has rebelled against God. The bible says he is seeking. He does not know your thoughts, therefore he comes seeking those he can rule by fear.

He uses fear to see how we will respond to it. Haven't you've seen a fearful person? You can't read their mind, but you can tell they are afraid. You can see it in their face and reactions. That is the same with the devil. If he sees that fear works in an area of your life he will continue to press into that fear until it becomes a stronghold in you life.

## Satan wants to devour your life

Third, the devil is seeking whom he may devour. The idea behind that word is the complete and sudden destruction of a person. Jesus wants to give you abundant life. The devil wants to destroy your life and he will do it anyway he can.

His ultimate goal is to rob you of everything God promises you. He uses fear to rip you off and rob you of the blessing and calling of the Lord. That is why Jesus talks about the thief coming to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).



## God's Answer is Faith

When the devil attempts to intimidate us with fear, God wants us to resist him with faith. He wants us to stand in the authority he has given us and resist the devil. James tells us, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).



It is your faith in God and who He says you are that gives gives you the ability to stand up against the devil, resist him, and win. James says that if we stand up against the devil, he will flee.

We have to be aware of this tactic of the devil and use God's answer for fear and intimidation: the Shield of Faith. Peter tells us how to do that in 1 Peter 5:9. "But resist him [the devil], firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren in the world."

To see how Jesus encourages His people against the fear of suffering and death, we can look to the book of Revelation. The church in Smyrna is facing severe persecution that may even lead death.

The devil wants believers in Smyrna to back down and turn away from the faith. Jesus wants them to stand firm: He says:

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold the devil is about to cast some of you into prison that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Jesus tells them that even if they face death, they will receive a crown of life. Jesus has an answer for every fear the enemy seeks to use against us. His solution is faith. Faith in what God has spoken. We only have to stand firm in our faith and resist the devil in God's strength.

# Satan's Tactics and God's Answer - Part 3

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## Satan's Tactics and God's Answer

The devil and his demons are looking for opportunities to enter into our lives and take advantage of us. Paul warns the Ephesians to "give no opportunity to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27). Below are a couple of the ways that he attempts to gain influence:



### Doubt and Unbelief

Another major tool the enemy uses is doubt and unbelief. He wants you to doubt every promise of God and respond to God in unbelief. He wants to call into question your salvation.

The devil wants to convince you that you are not saved. He wants you to be on an emotional rollercoaster always wondering if you are saved. There are



good days when you feel like you are saved, then there are bad days when it feels like you will never be saved.

I want you to notice that I used the words “emotional” and “feel” in the last paragraph. That is because doubts have to do with feelings. To doubt means to have feelings of uncertainty. You are not sure deep down in your heart that what God says is true.



The enemy loves to exploit these feelings. He wants you to feel like you are standing on unstable ground in your relationship with God. He wants you to focus on yourself and expend your energy with worry and concern over your salvation. If he can get you to doubt, you will never be able to have confidence in what God has said.

The enemy will say things things like, “How can you call yourself a Christian when you act the way you do?” “You’re just a hypocrite. You really don’t believe.” “God can’t love you after all you have done to Him.”

The goal of each of these statements is to get you eyes off what Jesus has done for you and on what you have done. Your salvation is not dependent on your righteousness, but the righteousness of Jesus. Your salvation comes through accepting by faith the death Jesus died for you.

The enemy speaks to your mind to affect your emotions. He wants you to focus more on your feelings than on faith. He wants your focus on your emotions rather than on God's truth. He wants you to believe that your feelings are truth.

The devil knows if he can get you to doubt, you will be in inner turmoil. James explains what takes place when we come to God with doubt. He says, "... for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind" and that that person is "unstable in all their ways" (James 1: 6, 8).

## God's Answer is the Helmet of Salvation



God's answer to doubt and unbelief is the helmet of salvation. Did you notice that this helmet sits on your head? God does not want us to doubt our salvation in Christ. He wants to bring stability and protection to our minds and emotions.

There is no way that you can save yourself. The Bible is clear that there is not one person on earth who is righteous, not even one (Romans 3:11). All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

God's answer to this dilemma is "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe" (Romans 3:22). We stop trusting in what we can do to get saved and start trusting in what Jesus has done for us.

The apostle Paul is a perfect example for us to understand how this works. He had two different sides of his life. One he was proud of. One he deeply regretted.

In Philippians chapter three Paul provides a list of attributes and accomplishments in which he could count on if he wanted to trust in his own self-righteousness. There were years of faithful service striving to follow the Law of God in the strictest sect of Judaism.

In other passages he talks about how he persecuted the church and was the least of the apostles. He persecuted the church and caused the imprisonment and death of many believers. I am sure the enemy constantly sought to use this against Paul.

Paul wisely chose to no longer trust in the good or bad things that he did. He treated everything as if it was trash. He would not depend on the good things that he had done to save him. Nor did he allow the bad things he had done to stop him from receiving God's gift of salvation.

Paul rejected both his good deeds and his evil deeds to accept the salvation that comes through Jesus. He said:

But whatever things were gain to me [good things], those things I have counted a loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things [including the bad] to be loss in view of the surpassing knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things [good and bad], and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:7-11).

If you are struggling with your confidence in God's salvation, it is probably due to the sinful things you have done in the past or your current struggle

with sin. I want to encourage you to be like Paul and treat these things like trash. Throw them away and trust in Christ alone.

Don't trust in your goodness or your feelings of sinfulness. Trust in Christ. Put your faith in what Jesus did for you on the cross. Faith in Christ is what makes you righteous.

Go ahead. Accept God's righteousness through faith in Christ. Throw away anything that gets in the way of receiving God's salvation, including all feelings of doubt and unbelief.

# Satan's Tactics and God's Answer - Part 4

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## Satan's Tactics and God's Answer

The devil and his demons are looking for opportunities to enter into our lives and take advantage of us. Paul warns the Ephesians to "give no opportunity to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27). Below are a few of the ways that he attempts to gain influence:



### False Teachings, Philosophies, and Religions

One of the tactics that the enemy has used from the beginning is to directly contradict the word of God. He used this tactic to deceive Eve to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.



God said that if they ate of the tree they would die. The devil said they would not. The serpent pointed out that if they ate the fruit, they would be like God, knowing good and evil.

Today Satan is operating the same way by spreading false teachings, philosophies, and religions. One mantra of our time is “You have your truth. I have my truth. If it works for you that’s great.”



Relativism is the idea that whatever a person believes to be true is true, even if it directly opposes someone else’s truth. Take for example the idea of God. Hindus believe that there are 30 million gods and Christians believe there is one. Muslims believe that Allah is one god and has no son. Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Both cannot be right.

Another mantra of our time is “tolerance.” We must be tolerant of other people’s beliefs. We cannot say that something is wrong or we will be labeled as intolerant, narrow-minded bigots filled with hate speech.

The enemy is seeking to silence the truth of the word of God and elevate his message. He is doing so by increasing societal pressure against anything that contradicts his message.

These false teachings and resistance should come as no surprise. Jesus warned us about them over two thousand years ago. He said, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

These false prophets are speaking in the name of God, but are saying things that contradict the word of God. Jesus said, “And many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many” (Matthew 24:11).

Satan’s goal is to spread his lies and contradict the truth of God’s word. Just as Jesus called and sent the apostles to preach the Gospel, Satan calls and sends his apostles to spread his lies. Paul speaks about these false apostles. He says:

“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness . . .” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

The devil also works outside of the church through various philosophies and religions. The Apostle Paul warns the Colossians:

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ (Colossians 2:8).

Paul talks about the traditions of men that oppose the teachings of God, but it goes beyond this. He lets Timothy know that behind many of these things philosophies and religions are demonic spirits. 1 Timothy 4:1 says, “But the

Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.”

Our world is filled with so many voices crying out for our attention. Each one claiming their view is the truth. But with so many views how can we know the truth?

## God's Answer is His Word



God has an answer for us. He has given us the word of God to lead us into all truth. He has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to show us the truth. Jesus told Pilate, “For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice” (John 18:37).

Jesus not only came to bear witness to the truth; He is the truth. He said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but

through Me” (John 14:6). This statement flies in the face of relativism. Jesus is saying there is only one way to God and that is through Him.

His statement forces you to make a choice. Will you believe Him? Will you reject all other ways to God and accept only Him? The crux of the issue is whether or not you will believe the word of God or someone else’s word.

The Psalmist wrote, “Thy word is lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). God has revealed Himself and His truth through the word of God. The Bible is the way that God chose to reveal Himself, His will, and His purpose to you.

Jesus said, “If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32). God’s word is your anchor of truth in a relativistic world. You can go to His word to find truth and direction.

The Apostle John says, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God; because many false prophets have gone into the world” (1 John 4:1). Refuse to trust everything you hear. Do what John suggests and test the words to see if they are true.

I like how Paul describes what we are to do. He says, “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Paul’s tests the words that are spoken by how they line up with the person of Christ. Does whatever a person say line up with the word of God? Are the thoughts you are thinking in line with the Bible? Do they agree with who Jesus is and what Jesus says? If not, they must be taken captive and destroyed.

Your thinking must be aligned with what God says in His word. Test everything that comes your way. Does it line up with God’s word? Start

monitoring your thoughts. Do they agree with what God says? If not reject them and stand strong in the word of God.

# Satan's Tactics and God's Answer - Part 5

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## Satan's Tactics and God's Answer

The devil and his demons are looking for opportunities to enter into our lives and take advantage of us. Paul warns the Ephesians to "give no opportunity to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27). Below is one of the ways that he attempts to gain influence:



### Prayerlessness

The final tactic we will look at is that of prayerlessness. The enemy attacks prayer because he knows that it is a powerful weapon in the hands of believers. Prayer moves the hand of God.

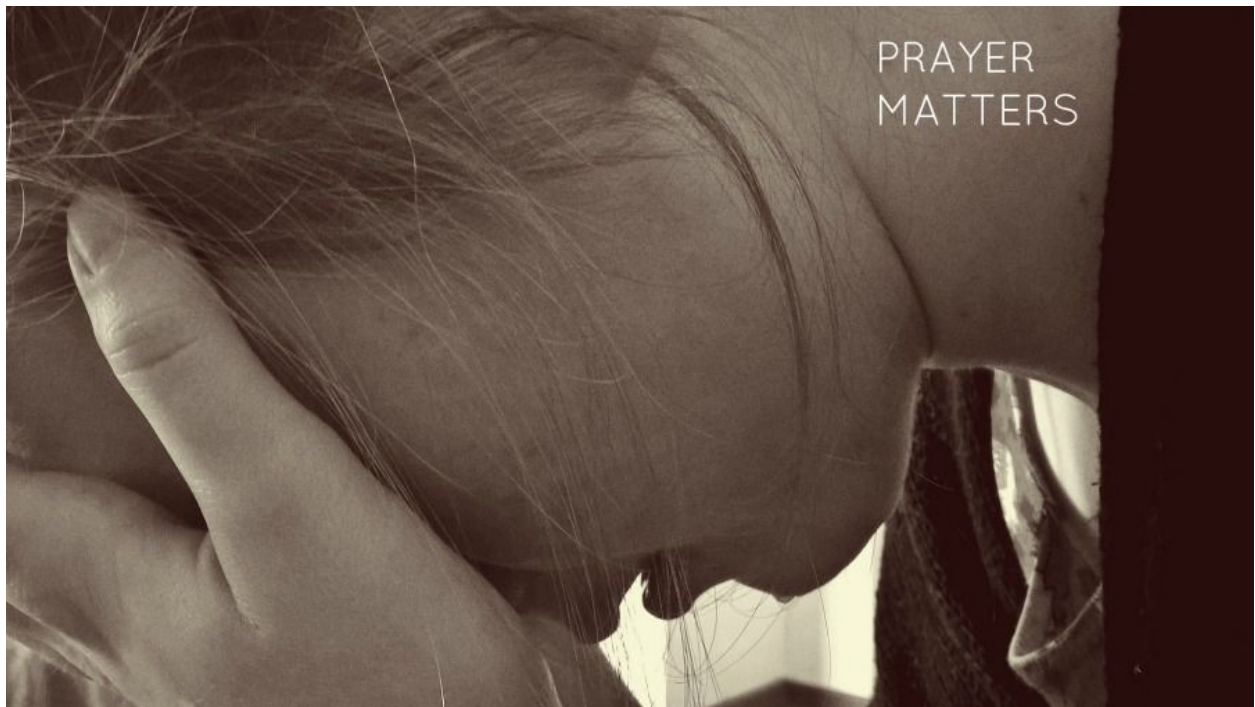


## Prayer matters

It's not that God cannot move unless we pray, like He is somehow sitting helpless in heaven unless we pray. It is because God has decided to partner with man in the rule of this world.

God gave authority to Adam to rule over this world under His direction. Adam rebelled and sin entered the world. Satan usurped Adam's place and is called the ruler of this world (John 12:30), the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), and the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Ephesians chapter six clearly shows us that we are in a battle with Satan and his demonic forces. One of the ways that we fight and stand against him is prayer.



Jack Hayford wrote a wonderful book called *Prayer is Invading the Impossible*. In the book he wrote a chapter called "If We Don't, He Won't." In it he tells of how God is good and created everything good, the devil came and brought destruction, and that prayer is the thing that makes a difference.

Here are some quotes from the book to help us see the power of prayer:

- ... [Y]ou and I can help decide which of these two things--blessing or cursing--happens on earth. We will determine whether God's goodness is released toward specific situations or whether the power of sin and Satan is permitted to prevail.

Prayer is the determining factor.

- God hasn't given man charge of the universe, but He did give man charge of this planet. And the current disorder of things is man's problem.
- We would rather blame God than trust Him; rather complain about Him than call upon Him. How many would rather indict the Almighty for neglect when hell comes against us, then invite His almightiness to eject the hell-worker?
- John Wesley said, "God will do nothing on earth except in answer to believing prayer."

The words that Jesus taught His disciples to pray give further evidence of the place that prayer is to have in the life of a believer. He told them/us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. On earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

He was teaching them to look at what was going on around them and pray for God's kingdom and will to be done on the earth. We are to invite God rule and reign into the hellish situations that are on this earth.

Some folks get upset when I talk like this because they think that I am in some way commanding God to do something. Remember, that it is Jesus who is telling us to pray this way.

When we pray Thy kingdom come or Thy will be done, we are not commanding. We are asking, seeking, and knocking. We are praying for God's will and purpose to be accomplished in the realm He has given us authority to rule.

Do you see how powerful prayer is? Do you see how the devil would want to attack the only thing that is standing in his way in people's lives?

### The Devil's strategies



There are a couple of strategies the enemy uses to silence the power of prayer. The first one is for us to pray religiously. By that I mean to simply read or say a prayer out of religious duty. Many churches pray the Lord's prayer as a part of every service.. The prayer is prayed for the beauty of the prayer without any specific results in mind.

I don't believe that Jesus meant for the disciples or us to say this prayer verbatim over and over. I believe He was giving it us as an example of the things that we should prayer for.

He wasn't just teaching us to say "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. On earth as it is in heaven." He was giving us insight that as we look out into the world and see a work of the enemy, that we pray for His kingdom and will to come into that situation. Where there is war, we ask for peace. Where there is division, we ask for unity.

A second way the enemy works is to constantly attack us with doubt concerning prayer. As we pray he will say things like:

- “What’s the use of praying, God did not answer your last prayer.”
- “What’s the use of praying? You’re just talking into the air.”
- “God’s not listening to you. Remember what you did ten years ago?”
- “This prayer stuff doesn’t work. You’re just trying to make yourself feel like you can do something.”
- “Praying in the Spirit is just gibberish. You are not really praying.”

His goal is to make you feel helpless and hopeless. If he can make you hopeless, you will quit praying. A hopeless person is a prayerless person.

## God’s Answer is Prayer



God’s answer for prayerlessness is praying. In every circumstance you find yourself, pray. We are to pray, petition, and pray in the Spirit. If you want to

know how much God wants you to pray look at the word “all” in Ephesians 6:18. We are to pray with:

- All prayer and petition and in the Spirit
- At all times
- With all perseverance
- For all the saints

God wants you to use every prayer available to you. He wants you to pray over every situation you see needs prayer. He wants you to persevere and not give up to prayerlessness, He wants you to pray for all believers. This is in the context of the battle to stand against the wiles and plans of the enemy.

He tells us to pray in the Spirit. God has given us the ability to pray that hits the mark every time. In 1 Corinthians Chapter 14 Paul describes praying in the Spirit as speaking to God (v 2) and our spirit speaking mysteries (v 2). Paul says that when he prays in a tongue that his spirit prays (v 14). Paul says he prays with the spirit and with his mind (v 15).

God’s answer for affecting the world is prayer.

## Put on the Armor

The only thing that can help you face the schemes and plans of the enemy is the armor of God. The armor of God is not actual pieces of armor, Paul just used the word picture armor as a memorization tool to remember the truths the armor represents.

You can never do it in your own wisdom or strength. The battle you are facing is spiritual and only the powerful armor of God is able to save you from every scheme and plan the enemy seeks to use against you.

So in order to overcome the evil one you must walk in:

- Truth
- Righteousness
- Peace with God

- Faith
- Confidence in your salvation
- The word of God
- Prayer of every kind

Thank God for His provision for every area of your life. He only gives you the best. Trust in Him and stand firm against every scheme of the devil.