

Life on Life 201 – Counseling Spiritual Warfare
Class 11 – March 21, 2021

I. Spiritual Warfare – Overview

A. Where do we see Spiritual Warfare in the Bible? A few key examples.

[**HIGHLIGHTED passages are only ones we will read in class now.**]

1. **Genesis 3:1-6** – Denying God’s words and tempting Eve to eat the fruit
2. Job 1-2 – Attacking Job to get him to no longer follow the Lord because of suffering
3. **Daniel 10:10-14** – Trying to block a mighty angel from bringing good news to Daniel
4. **Zechariah 3:1-5** – Accusing high priest of sin before the Angel of the Lord (Christ)
5. John 8:44 – Jesus says Satan is a murderer and liar
6. John 10:10 – Jesus says Satan is a thief who steals, kills and destroys
7. **2 Cor. 10:3-5** – Speculations have been raised to block you from knowing God
8. **2 Cor. 11:3** – Satan may lead you astray from simple, pure devotion to Christ
9. 2 Cor. 11:14 – Satan disguises himself as an angel of light
10. Eph. 6:10-18 – Arm yourselves in the Lord against Satan’s schemes (see v. 12)
11. **2 Timothy 2:22-26** – Believers can be held captive by Satan to do his will
12. **Hebrews 2:14** – Satan had the power of death and some are subject to fear
13. **James 4:7** – Resist Satan and he will flee from you
14. 1 Peter 5:8-9 – Satan prowls to see whom he may devour
15. **Revelation 12:10** – Accuser of the brethren

B. What is Spiritual Warfare?

Broadly, Spiritual Warfare is the *conflict in unseen territories* between God’s angels and Satan’s demons, as well as between Satan and his demons against people. In a vain effort to overthrow the kingdom of God, and a not-so-vain attempt to minimize the potential impact of the church in a world caught in his power, Satan’s goals are:

1. To block unbelieving people from believing the gospel;
2. To oppose believers so that they do not grow to know, love and obey God;

We are looking at that aspect of the battle – against believers. It often manifests itself in the emotional realm, such as when we feel unloved, hopeless, fearful, stuck, powerless, alone and confused. It will always operate in opposition to God’s word.

C. What are common shortcomings to be aware of in this area?

1. Inappropriate Fear
 - a. Some become preoccupied as if there is a demon under every bush.
 - b. Some think of this battle having an uncertain outcome, as if Christ had not already won or as if Satan is a near-match for God. Such people think that this is *the* real battle of the spiritual life. It is not. It is one that needs to be taken on as it shows itself, but most of the time, it is not the most important battle we fight.
2. Some minimize this issue through ignorance or dismissal. *Ignorance* applies to those who have not studied how prevalent the spiritual war is and how God directs us to understand and respond. *Dismissal* is by people who have studied the Word, but either react to the #1 overemphasis by some, or believe that “the real problem is the flesh” or believe that “the real problem is a lack of knowledge of the truth.” Both “the flesh” and “truth” are key issues in the spiritual life. But since the scriptures do instruct us in the spiritual battle, we should incorporate that teaching.

II. Nature of the Battle

- A. To steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10)
- B. Rob God of glory due His name (Isaiah 14:13-14)
- C. For unbelievers to not believe the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4)
- D. For believers to not know God (2 Cor. 10:3-5) because in knowing God, they experience eternal life (Jn. 17:3) and are filled with grace, peace, life and godliness (2 Peter 1:2-3)
- E. To cripple people through the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15)

III. Weapons and Signs of the Enemy

- A. Deceit (John 8:44, 1Chron 21:1, 2 Cor 11:3)
- B. Denial of God's Word (Gen. 2:1-5)
- C. Trials and attacks (Job 1-2; Rev. 12:10)
- D. Accusation of the brethren (Zech. 3:1-5; Rom. 8:33; Rev. 12:10)
- E. Temptations (Luke 22:31; Acts 5:3; 1 Thess. 3:5)
- F. Speculations and lofty things raised against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10:3-5)
- G. "Footholds" because of unforgiveness (Eph. 4:27)
- H. Snare into captivity (2 Tim. 2:26)
- I. Fear of death (Hebrews 12:10)

IV. Our Weapons

- A. Believing our true identity and position (Romans 6:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Colossians 3:1)
- B. Holding all thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5)
- C. Armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18)
 - 1. Be strong in God and in the strength of His might
 - 2. Gird your loins with truth
 - 3. Put on the breastplate of righteousness
 - 4. Shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace
 - 5. Shield of faith
 - 6. Helmet of salvation
 - 7. Sword of the Spirit
- D. Submitting to God (James 4:7)
- E. Resisting Satan (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9)
- F. Drawing near God (James 4:8)
- G. Repentance (James 4:6-8, 2 Cor 2:10-11)
- H. Sobriety (of mind) (1 Peter 5:8)
- I. Firm in faith (1 Peter 5:9)

V. God's Promises

- A. We are dead to sin and do not have to give in to sin (Romans 6:11-14; 1 Cor. 10:13)
- B. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ (Romans 8:1)
- C. The Son and Spirit intercede for us when we're attacked (Zech. 3:1-5; Rom. 8:26, 33-34)
- D. Christ has already destroyed him who had the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14)
- E. Resist the devil and he will flee (James 4:7)
- F. Hold all thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ and the battle is won (2 Cor. 10:3-5)

VI. Discussion

- A. Summarize your understanding of what spiritual warfare is all about.
- B. Have you experienced spiritual warfare that you recognized as such? When?
- C. How have you responded in your life to spiritual warfare?
- D. How battle-ready or battle-hardened are you?
- E. What is there from today's class that seems like an "ah-hah" that you might use for yourselves or for those you help?
- F. Agree / Disagree / additional options? Someone said the believer when facing deception has 3 options:
 - 1) believe the lie
 - 2) Fight – lets Satan set the agenda (like "hammering corks in a lake")
 - 3) Focus on Jesus & keep walking

VII. Homework

- A. Read the following case studies this week. **Choose one of them** and prescribe a homework assignment for them which you will share with your table at the beginning of class in two weeks. Write the homework out using the attached homework sheet (page 6). Make copies for those at your table. If your email is on the class roster, I also will send you an electronic version of the blank homework sheet so you can work with it on your computer or adjust it as you see fit. You may work either alone or with your spouse (but I want you both to work it.)
- B. Mandy Nerringham is 38, the mom of two girls age 12 and 15. She is a believer, is in your community group and has brought things up for prayer in the past. But over the past few months, you have shared in the group some of what you have been learning in your counseling classes. Last week, she approached you and said, *"I could really use some help with something. We don't have the money to do professional counseling, plus I really want it to be more biblical than secular. Do you think you could meet with me and see if God might use you to help me?"* You said you'd do it, but wanted to make sure the two of you were on the same page, so that the effort could be beneficial. You explained that if you met with her, you'd want her to know that you would work hard to help, but that it would involve commitment of time and effort, including homework. She said she understood. You also told her that your main interest would be trying to help her find what God said in the Bible about her situation, because you believe that he is the One who really knows how to direct her. She said, *"that is exactly what I need."* The two of you are at the end of your first session. You are about to give her homework for the week (on the homework sheet that is attached) and set up the next appointment time and day. What will the homework be? Here is what you learned in the session:
 - 1. **She struggles with depression.** When you asked her to tell you what that means to her (since you didn't want to assume you knew), she describes fairly classic depression symptoms (sleeps a lot, low energy, has little hope about the future, doesn't get much joy from things she used to, has lost weight even though she didn't need to, withdraws from relationships). You ask how long it has gone on.

She tells you that it has probably been acute for most of the past year, but in lighter ways, probably for 4-5 years. You ask her how often she feels this way, and she says most days. So you ask her if she can attach her depression to anything in her life.

2. She has been disappointed that her husband has so much less energy for her than she had expected. He is content to work, to watch some TV, to spend some times with the girls, to have sex once a week or so, and maybe to go on a date once every 8-10 weeks. When they dated, you learn, he was far more attentive and interested.
 3. You ask what else might contribute to her depression. She said, *“My mom is always telling me how well my older sister is doing and wonders why my husband is not doing as well, and why I don’t have the girls in dance or gymnastics. She always seems to just find what she says I am doing wrong.”* Her husband’s counsel has been, *“Well, quit calling her.”*
 4. Mandy adds that she doesn’t feel that connected to other women in the church. She and her husband are in a Community Group, of course, but it just seems like other women have jobs, friends, ministries or something, and there is no room for her.
- C. Josh and Becky Addiston have been referred to you and your spouse by the FBC counseling ministry for marriage counseling. They argue a lot and can’t seem to ever resolve things. They are a little new to the church, but seem motivated to improve their relationship. In the two meetings you have had with them, you have noticed that they like each other, but she cuts him off when he is talking and he minimizes the significance of her input, observations and perspectives. You have also noticed that although their relationship with the Lord seems legitimate and genuine, it is pretty obvious that a) they have little spiritual input in their lives and b) that they are more interested in their own opinions being valued than they are in blessing the other person or sacrificing for them.
1. In your first session, after hearing them each talk about their frustration with the other and the many areas over which they conflicted (money, kids, who does what chores, whether to go to a Sunday School class, her time with friends, his obsession with motorcycles, vacations, etc.), you asked them to explain their definition of marriage. They were confused by the question and asked what you meant. You said, *“You guys are trying to build a good marriage, right? That is why you asked for counseling help.”* They nodded. You said, *“to build something, you kind of have to know what it is you are building. So, what is a marriage, this thing you are building?”* They both stumbled, and couldn’t come up with much other than, *“Two people who decide to be together and try to make each other happy as best as they can.”* As part of homework from that first session, you gave them an article to read and come back and discuss in the next meeting. It was an article about, *“What is marriage, and how is it meant to work?”* The article explained God’s Genesis 1-2 purpose for marriage, and the roles that men and women were designed to play.
 2. In the second meeting you have just finished, they came back and quoted the verse you gave them to memorize, 2 Corinthians 5:9. They discussed with you the passage on marriage that you gave them to read four times, Ephesians 5:22-33. He said, *“I do already love her, but I don’t feel like she ever submits to me.”* She said, *“When it talked about the man cherishing his wife, I don’t feel that. I know he loves me, but not like that. I agree I don’t submit. That is a scary thought.”* They also discussed with you for 20 minutes the article you gave them.

They both liked it because they thought it was clear and practical. They could see how it made sense out of marriage. They admitted that they still would not know how to do what it said – how Josh could lead without dominating, and how Becky would be a helper and would submit to him without fear of not being listened to or respected.

3. So now it is time to give them homework. What will you give them on the attached homework sheet and why? Be prepared to share with your group.



Biblical Counseling Assignment

Name(s): _____ Date: _____ Session: _____

1. Pray *specifically* for the counseling process *at least three times* this week.

- Pray for yourself:** That God opens your eyes to see what He wants you to see about yourself and that you would see where you need to repent, change and grow.
- Pray for your counselor:** To depend on the Lord, to have His wisdom and insight, and to discern where to work/what to do.
- Pray for your spouse** (*if marriage counseling*): To be encouraged in the Lord, in the counseling process, and by the changes being made in your life.
- Pray together as a couple:** Husband, initiate the prayer time.

2. Set up a counseling journal to jot down things you are learning each day, as well as specific prayers and Bible passages being read. Homework that is not to be turned in also should be done in this journal. In your journal, record principles from sermons, Bible reading, and other studies that you can apply to your life now and be ready to share them in the counseling session.

3. Attend: Sunday Worship Small Group Other

4. Bible Reading: _____

Read the scripture passage(s) at least _____ different times. Don't sit down and read it all in one sitting. Record the day/time you read it in your counseling journal.

5. Memorize exactly (*and be ready to explain*): _____

6. Read/Listen/Watch:

- Read _____ and underline the _____ most important sentences to you and be prepared to share those at the next meeting.
- Listen to or watch _____.
- Write a 100 word summary of the reading, CD or DVD and how it applies to your life.

7. Other:

Charges/Materials: _____ Next Session: _____
