Small Group Guide: Knowing the Enemy's Strategy

Stand Firm: Week 2

Genesis 3:1-7 and John 8:31-32

Overview

This session examines how the enemy works in our lives by studying his strategy in Genesis 3. Rather than giving the enemy more attention than Scripture does, we study his methods because we are most vulnerable when we fail to recognize them. The enemy's approach has not changed since the garden: he distorts God's word, questions God's goodness, disguises disobedience as freedom, and his promises always end in shame. But Jesus, the truth, has the final word.

Key Takeaways

1. The enemy distorts God's word by subtly twisting it rather than openly denying it, often magnifying what God withholds while minimizing everything God provides.
2. Before the enemy leads us to disobey God, he first tries to make us distrust God, planting the idea that God's boundaries are meant to restrict life rather than protect it.
3. The enemy disguises disobedience as freedom, satisfaction, or wisdom, hiding the destination of sin in order to make its invitation attractive.
4. The enemy's promises always end in shame, fear, and broken relationship with God, while Jesus bears our shame and offers true freedom through truth and obedience.
5. We overcome the father of lies by holding fast to Jesus, who is the truth, and by remaining in His word.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Without going into anything too personal, can you think of a time when something that seemed appealing turned out to be very different from what you expected? What did that experience teach you?
2. Before hearing this sermon, how did you typically picture spiritual warfare? How has your understanding shifted or deepened?

The Enemy Distorts God's Word

3. The sermon pointed out that the serpent took God's generous permission and reframed it as a harsh restriction. Where do you see this same kind of reframing happening in our culture today, either in how the Bible is discussed publicly or in how you have personally experienced temptation?
4. The pastor said, "If we don't know what God has said, we won't recognize when His word is being twisted." How consistent is your personal engagement with Scripture? What is one honest barrier that keeps you from knowing God's word more deeply?
5. Jesus responded to every temptation with "it is written," refusing to negotiate with the lie. What does it look like practically to respond to temptation with Scripture rather than with feelings or reasoning alone?

The Enemy Questions God's Goodness

6. The sermon stated that every temptation carries a false story about God, portraying Him as less generous, less wise, and less trustworthy than He truly is. What false story about God have you been most tempted to believe, especially during a difficult season of life?
7. The pastor said, "Temptation grows stronger when we judge God's goodness by our circumstances." Can you think of a time when a painful circumstance caused you to question whether God was truly good? How did you work through that?
8. Romans 8:32 reminds us that the God who did not spare His own Son will graciously provide everything needed for His saving purpose. How does the cross serve as an anchor when life's circumstances make God's goodness feel distant or unclear?

The Enemy Disguises Disobedience as Freedom

9. The sermon described the progression of temptation: we see, we desire, we take, and we act, then we encourage others to join us. Where do you recognize this pattern most in your own life or in the culture around you?
10. The pastor noted that Adam was not deceived but chose knowingly to disobey, and that Genesis 3 never allows Adam or Eve to blame the serpent for their choice. Why is it important that we neither deny the enemy's influence nor use him as an excuse? How do we hold both truths at the same time?
11. The sermon said, "We cannot resist the enemy while protecting the sin that gives his lies room to operate in our lives." Is there an area where you know you need to stop

protecting a sin before you can make real spiritual progress? You do not need to share specifics, but take a moment to sit with that question honestly.

The Enemy's Promise Ends in Shame

12. Adam and Eve responded to shame by sewing fig leaves together, trying to cover what sin had exposed. The sermon listed several modern equivalents: making excuses, secrecy, performance, comparison, and image management. Which of these do you find yourself reaching for most often, and why?
13. The pastor pointed out that God came seeking the sinners who were hiding from Him, even after their disobedience. What does this tell us about God's character and His posture toward us when we have failed?
14. Genesis 3:15 contains the first promise of a deliverer. How does knowing that God had a redemptive plan even in the moment of humanity's greatest failure change the way you view your own failures and God's response to them?

Standing Against the Lie

15. The sermon offered five ways to stand against the enemy's lies: know what God has said, trust the character of God, expose the lie, bring the battle into the light, and remain in the word of Jesus. Which of these five feels most underdeveloped in your own life right now, and what would it look like to strengthen it?
16. The pastor emphasized that God did not design us to stand alone, and that we are called to confess our sins to one another and seek out mature believers who will pray for us and speak truth into our lives. What makes that kind of vulnerability difficult, and what would need to be true of a community for you to feel safe enough to pursue it?

Reflection Questions for Personal Use

Take time before or after your group meeting to journal or pray through these questions individually.

- Where am I being tempted to ask "did God really say?" Is there a desire in my life where I am softening or reinterpreting what God has clearly said?
- What desire or circumstance is causing me to question God's goodness right now?
- What freedom is sin promising me, and what consequence is it hiding?

- What lie have I repeated to myself so often that it has begun to sound true?
- What truth from God's word do I need to believe and obey this week?

Practical Applications

Work through these action steps individually during the week and consider reporting back to your group at your next meeting.

Identify: Write down one lie you are currently tempted to believe. Be specific and honest. Name the desire, the circumstance, or the whisper that is pulling you away from God's word or God's character.

Answer: Place one clear truth from Scripture directly beside that lie. Look for what God actually says about the promise the lie is making. Let His word speak louder than the temptation.

Confess: Bring any hidden compromise into the light, first before God in prayer, and then, where appropriate, before a trusted and mature believer who will pray with you and speak truth into your life without simply telling you what you want to hear.

Remain: Read John 8:31-32 each morning this week. Then choose one specific act of obedience to Jesus and follow through on it. Freedom grows as we remain in His word and obey what He says.

Closing Prayer Suggestion

Close your group time by praying together along these lines. You may pray this as a group or invite one person to lead.

Ask God for discernment to recognize the enemy's voice, the voice of self, and the voice of the world. Ask for humility to be honest with God and with one another about the lies you are tempted to believe. Ask for courage to obey what God has said, even when obedience is costly. Thank Jesus that He bore our guilt and shame on the cross, that He is the truth who exposes every lie, and that He alone provides the freedom He promises.

Memory Verse for the Week

John 8:31-32 -- Jesus tells His followers that holding to His teaching is the mark of true discipleship, and that knowing the truth He brings is what sets people genuinely free.