



## Silverdale Baptist

The Invisible Battle ~ Destroying Spiritual Strongholds ~ 08/05-06/2023  
2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Hebrews 4:12; Philippians 4:4-9

### Big Idea

Scripture is God's weapon for destroying spiritual strongholds.

### Getting Started

**What is an example of a time you believed a lie and it caused you trouble?**

Sometimes we believe something that isn't true and it doesn't matter much. For example, when we believed in Santa Clause. Most of us survived the trauma of finding out our parents brought us Christmas presents and not Santa. But other lies become strongholds that bring disastrous consequences. Lies like "No one loves me," "My sin is too much for God to forgive," "I will never be happy in this marriage," or "Not even God can help me now," destroy us. They shape our world and our behaviors in negative ways. What do we do when we have believed the lie? How do we find freedom? Let's find out.

### Learn

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5

**Our weapons are not physical, but they are powerful. In what ways are they powerful? (vs 4)**

## The power of your thoughts.

**How do we fight if we do not war according to the flesh? (vs 5)**

**What does it mean to take every thought captive?**

## How strongholds are formed?

**Leader:** *The following information is taken from Pastor Tony's message. An understanding of strongholds and how they are formed is necessary to be able to address how God sets us free from strongholds. The text doesn't directly answer the questions about strongholds and how they are formed. So, for the group discussion, you will need to help the group reason through how strongholds are formed.*

*A physical stronghold in an ancient city was a fortified place, usually on the highest ground. It was the place the leaders would go for protection.*

**In ancient cities, what was a stronghold?**



**How are strongholds formed in our minds?**

*A STRONGHOLD is a fortress of lies built in our mind that we have either actively or passively believed are true.*

*THOUGHTS are Believed*

*> OPINIONS are Formed*

*> A ROUTINE Established*

**What are some examples of lies you have believed about:**

- Yourself?
- Your marriage?
- Your world?

With these ideas in mind, let's see how we can use God's weapons to destroy strongholds.

## Utilize God's Weapons of Warfare

### 1. Declare God's Word to Counter Satan's Lies

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 4:12.

**Discuss how the Word of God is described.**

**How does this description help you understand the role of God's Word as a weapon against Satan's lies?**

### 2. Declare God's Praise to Counter Life's Worries

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PHILIPPIANS. 4:4-9.

**Instead of worrying, what should we do?**

**2 Corinthians 10:5 teaches us to take every thought captive. According to this passage, what thoughts should we replace the lies with? What should we think about?**

*If you have time,*

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 4:1-10.

***How did Jesus counter the lies of Satan? What was Jesus' weapon?***

*(Jesus quoted, in order, Deut 8:8, Deut. 6:16, and for the last temptation, both Deut 6:13 and 10:20)*

## Apply

**How is it possible to take your thoughts captive?**

**Pastor Tony gave us three specific examples of lies believed and truths we can use to combat them.**

**For fear and insecurity: 2 Timothy 1:7**

**For the temptation to drink to excess: Ephesians 5:8**

## For a man tempted by immorality and porn: Matthew 5:28

### What Scripture would you or have you used to combat lies from the enemy?

The hardest part of destroying strongholds is making up your mind to fight. Once you decide to fight, you must learn the truth and use it against the enemy. But the hardest part is making up your mind to fight.

### Will you learn use to use God's weapons?

### What will you do in order to take every thought captive?

#### Pray

Father, teach us to destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of You and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. In Jesus name, amen.

#### Dig Deeper

##### 2 Corinthians 10:3-11

**The answer (vv. 3–6).** This reveals what spiritual warfare is all about. Because the Corinthians (led by the false teachers) judged Paul's ministry by the outward appearance, they completely missed the power that was there. They were evaluating things "according to the flesh" (2 Cor. 10:2) and not according to the Spirit. The Judaizers, like some "great religious personalities" today, impressed the people with their overpowering abilities, their oratorical powers, and their "commendations" from church leaders.

Paul took a different approach; for, though he was as human as anyone else, he did not depend on the human but on the divine, the spiritual weapons provided by the Lord. His warfare was not according to the flesh, because he was not fighting against flesh and blood (see Eph. 6:10ff). You cannot fight spiritual battles with carnal weapons.

The word *warfare* in 2 Corinthians 10:4 means "campaign." Paul was not simply fighting a little skirmish in Corinth; the attack of the enemy there was part of a large satanic campaign. The powers of hell are still trying to destroy the work of God (Matt. 16:18), and it is important that we not yield any ground to the enemy, not even one church!

There are walls of resistance in the minds of people, and these walls (like the walls of Jericho) must be pulled down. What are these "mental walls"? Reasonings that are opposed to the truth of God's Word. Pride of intelligence that exalts itself. Paul was not attacking intelligence, but intellectualism, the high-minded attitude that makes people think they know more than they really do (Rom. 12:16). Paul had faced this "wisdom of men" when he founded the church (1 Cor. 1:18ff), and it had surfaced again with the coming of the Judaizers.

Paul's attitude of humility was actually one of his strongest weapons, for pride plays right into the hands of Satan. The meek Son of God had far more power than Pilate (see John 19:11), and He proved it. Paul used spiritual weapons to tear down the opposition—prayer, the Word of God, love, the power of the Spirit at work in his life. He did not depend on personality, human abilities, or even the authority

he had as an apostle. However, he was ready to punish the offenders, if necessary, once the congregation had submitted to the Lord.

Many believers today do not realize that the church is involved in warfare, and those who do understand the seriousness of the Christian battle do not always know how to fight the battle. They try to use human methods to defeat demonic forces, and these methods are doomed to fail. When Joshua and his army marched around Jericho for a week, the spectators thought they were mad. When the Jews trusted God and obeyed orders, they brought down the high walls and conquered the enemy (Josh. 6:1–20).

When I was pastoring in Chicago, I met weekly with three pastor friends, and together we united in “warfare praying.” We claimed God’s promise to cast down the wrong thinking that was keeping people from surrendering to God; and God did great things in the lives of many people for whom we interceded. Once the walls in the mind have been torn down, the door to the heart can be opened.

### **How to Use Spiritual Authority (2 Cor. 10:7–11)**

One of the most difficult lessons Christ’s disciples had to learn was that, in the kingdom of God, position and power were no evidence of authority. Jesus warned His followers not to pattern their leadership after that of the Gentiles who loved to “lord it over” others and to act important (see Mark 10:35–45). The example we must follow is that of Jesus Christ who came as a servant and ministered to others. Paul followed that example.

But the Corinthians were not spiritually minded enough to discern what Paul was doing. They contrasted his meekness with the “personality power” of the Judaizers, and they concluded that Paul had no authority at all. To be sure, he wrote powerful letters; but his physical appearance was weak, and his speech “unimpressive.” They were judging by the outward appearance and were not exercising spiritual discernment.

Some friends and I once listened to a man preach whose entire sermon was made up of impressive “big words,” an occasional quotation from the Bible (usually taken out of context), and many references to world events and “the signs of the times.” As we left the meeting, one of my friends said, “First Kings 19:11 describes that performance perfectly: ‘The Lord was not in the wind.’ ” Yet people around us were saying that it was “the most wonderful sermon” they had ever heard. I seriously doubt that ten minutes later, they were able to recall one concrete thing that the preacher had said.

Paul did not deny that he had authority, but he did refuse to exercise that authority in an unspiritual manner. The purpose for his authority was to build them up, not tear them down; and it requires much more skill to build than to destroy. Furthermore, it takes love to build up (1 Cor. 8:1); and the Corinthians interpreted Paul’s love and meekness as a sign of weakness.

The difference between Paul and the Judaizers was this: Paul used his authority to build up the church, while the Judaizers used the church to build up their authority.

In my many years of pastoral and itinerant ministry, I have never ceased to be amazed at how some local churches treat their pastors. If a man shows love and true humility, they resist his leadership and break his heart. The next pastor will be a “dictator” who “runs the church”—and he gets just what he wants. And the people love him and brag about him! Our Lord was treated the same way, so perhaps we should not be surprised.

The opponents in the church were accusing Paul of not being a true apostle; for, if he were a true apostle, he would show it by using his authority. On the other hand, if Paul *had* “thrown his weight around,” they would have found fault with that. No matter what course Paul took, they were bound to

condemn him. This is what always happens when church members are not spiritually minded, but evaluate ministry from a worldly viewpoint.

But their accusation backfired. If Paul was not an apostle, then he was a counterfeit and not even a believer. But if that were true, then the church at Corinth was not a true church. Paul had already made it clear that nobody could separate his ministry and his personal life (2 Cor. 1:12–14). If he were a deceiver, then the Corinthians were the deceived!

Paul also pointed out that there was no contradiction between his preaching and his writing. He was bold in his letters because that was what was needed at the time. How much more would he have enjoyed being able to write with gentleness. But it would not have achieved the desired purpose. And, even when he wrote “weighty and powerful” letters, he wrote from a heart of love. “You had better prepare for my next visit,” he was saying, “because if it is necessary, I will show you how powerful I can be.”

How a Christian uses authority is an evidence of his spiritual maturity and character. An immature person *swells* as he uses his authority, but a mature person *grows* in the use of authority, and others grow with him. The wise pastor, like the wise parent, knows when to wait in loving patience and when to act with determined power. It takes more power to wait than to strike. A mature person does not use authority to *demand* respect, but to *command* respect. Mature leaders suffer while they wait to act, while immature leaders act impetuously and make others suffer.

The false teachers depended on “letters of recommendation” for their authority, but Paul had a divine commission from heaven. The life that he lived and the work that he did were “credentials” enough, for it was evident that the hand of God was on his life. Paul could dare to write, “From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Gal. 6:17).

When my wife and I have ministered in England, we have always tried to arrange our schedule so that we might visit in London. We especially enjoy shopping in Selfridge’s and Harrod’s, London’s two leading department stores. H. Gordon Selfridge, who built the great store that bears his name, always claimed that he was a success because he was a leader and not a “boss.” The leader says, “Let’s go!” while the boss says, “Go!” The boss *knows* how it is done, but the leader *shows* how it is done. The boss inspires fear; the leader inspires enthusiasm based on respect and goodwill. The boss fixes the *blame* for the breakdown, while the true leader fixes the breakdown. The boss keeps saying, “I” while the leader says, “We.” Mr. Selfridge’s philosophy of management would certainly agree with the Apostle Paul’s philosophy of leadership.<sup>1</sup>

### **Hebrews 4:12**

In comparing the Word of God to a sword, the writer is not suggesting that God uses His Word to slaughter the saints! It is true that the Word cuts the heart of sinners with conviction (Acts 5:33; 7:54), and that the Word defeats Satan (Eph. 6:17). The Greek word translated “sword” means “a short sword or dagger.” The emphasis is on the power of the Word to penetrate and expose the inner heart of man. The Word is a “discerner” or “critic.” The Israelites criticized God’s Word instead of allowing the Word to judge them. Consequently, they lost their inheritance.

Of course, God sees our hearts (Heb. 4:13); but we do not always know what is there (Jer. 17:9). God uses the Word to enable us to see the sin and unbelief in our own hearts. The Word *exposes* our hearts; and then, if we trust God, the Word *enables* our hearts to obey God and claim His promises. This is why each believer should be diligent to apply himself to hear and heed God’s Word. In the Word we see God,

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 665–666.

and we also see how God sees us. We see ourselves as we really are. This experience enables us to be honest with God, to trust His will, and to obey Him.<sup>2</sup>

### **Philippians 4:1-9**

If anybody had an excuse for worrying, it was the Apostle Paul. His beloved Christian friends at Philippi were disagreeing with one another, and he was not there to help them. We have no idea what Euodia and Syntyche were disputing about, but whatever it was, it was bringing division into the church. Along with the potential division at Philippi, Paul had to face division among the believers at Rome (Phil. 1:14–17). Added to these burdens was the possibility of his own death! Yes, Paul had a good excuse to worry—*but he did not!* Instead, he took time to explain to us the secret of victory over worry.

What is worry? The Greek word translated “anxious” (careful) in Philippians 4:6 means “to be pulled in different directions.” Our hopes pull us in one direction; our fears pull us the opposite direction; and we are pulled apart! The Old English root from which we get our word “worry” means “to strangle.” If you have ever really worried, you know how it does strangle a person! In fact, worry has definite physical consequences: headaches, neck pains, ulcers, even back pains. Worry affects our thinking, our digestion, and even our coordination.

From the spiritual point of view, worry is *wrong thinking* (the mind) and *wrong feeling* (the heart) about circumstances, people, and things. Worry is the greatest thief of joy. It is not enough for us, however, to tell ourselves to “quit worrying” because that will never capture the thief. Worry is an “inside job,” and it takes more than good intentions to get the victory. The antidote to worry is the *secure mind*: “And the peace of God ... shall keep [garrison, guard like a soldier] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). When you have the secure mind, the peace of God guards you (Phil. 4:7) and the God of peace guides you (Phil. 4:9). With that kind of protection—why worry?

If we are to conquer worry and experience the secure mind, we must meet the conditions that God has laid down. There are three: right praying (Phil. 4:6–7), right thinking (Phil. 4:8), and right living (Phil. 4:9).

### **Right Praying (Phil. 4:6–7)**

Paul does not write, “Pray about it!” He is too wise to do that. He uses three different words to describe “right praying”: *prayer*, *supplication*, and *thanksgiving*. “Right praying” involves all three. The word *prayer* is the general word for making requests known to the Lord. It carries the idea of adoration, devotion, and worship. Whenever we find ourselves worrying, our first action ought to be to get alone with God and worship Him. Adoration is what is needed. We must see the greatness and majesty of God! We must realize that He is big enough to solve our problems. Too often we rush into His presence and hastily tell Him our needs, when we ought to approach His throne calmly and in deepest reverence. The first step in “right praying” is *adoration*.

The second is *supplication*, an earnest sharing of our needs and problems. There is no place for halfhearted, insincere prayer! While we know we are not heard for our “much speaking” (Matt. 6:7–8), still we realize that our Father wants us to be earnest in our asking (Matt. 7:1–11). This is the way Jesus prayed in the Garden (Heb. 5:7), and while His closest disciples were sleeping, Jesus was sweating great

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<sup>2</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 289.

drops of blood! Supplication is not a matter of carnal energy but of spiritual intensity (Rom. 15:30; Col. 4:12).

After adoration and supplication comes *appreciation*, giving thanks to God (see Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:15–17). Certainly the Father enjoys hearing His children say, “Thank You!” When Jesus healed ten lepers, only one of the ten returned to give thanks (Luke 17:11–19), and we wonder if the percentage is any higher today. We are eager to ask but slow to appreciate.

You will note that “right praying” is not something every Christian can do immediately, because “right praying” depends on the right kind of mind. This is why Paul’s formula for peace is found at the *end* of Philippians and not at the *beginning*. If we have the *single mind* of Philippians 1 then we can give *adoration*. (How can a double-minded person ever praise God?) If we have the *submissive mind* of Philippians 2, we can come with *supplication*. (Would a person with a proud mind ask God for something?) If we have the *spiritual mind* of Philippians 3 we can show our *appreciation*. (A worldly minded person would not know that God had given him anything to appreciate!) In other words, we must practice Philippians 1, 2, and 3 if we are going to experience the *secure mind* of Philippians 4.

Paul counsels us to take “everything to God in prayer.” “Don’t worry about *anything*, but pray about *everything!*” is his admonition. We are prone to pray about the “big things” in life and forget to pray about the so-called “little things”—until they grow and become big things! Talking to God about *everything* that concerns us and Him is the first step toward victory over worry.

The result is that the “peace of God” guards the heart and the mind. You will remember that Paul was chained to a Roman soldier, guarded day and night. In like manner, “the peace of God” stands guard over the two areas that create worry—the heart (wrong feeling) and the mind (wrong thinking). When we give our hearts to Christ in salvation, we experience “peace with God” (Rom. 5:1); but the “peace of God” takes us a step farther into His blessings. This does not mean the absence of trials on the outside, but it does mean a quiet confidence within, regardless of circumstances, people, or things.

Daniel gives us a wonderful illustration of peace through prayer. When the king announced that none of his subjects was to pray to anyone except the king, Daniel went to his room, opened his windows, and prayed as before (Dan. 6:1–10). Note how Daniel prayed. He “prayed, and gave thanks before his God” (Dan. 6:10) and he made supplication (Dan. 6:11). Prayer—supplication—thanksgiving! And the result was perfect peace *in the midst of difficulty!* Daniel was able to spend the night with the lions in perfect peace, while the king *in his palace* could not sleep (Dan. 6:18).

The first condition for the secure mind and victory over worry is right praying.

### **Right Thinking (Phil. 4:8)**

Peace involves the heart *and the mind*. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee” (Isa. 26:3). Wrong thinking leads to wrong feeling, and before long the heart and mind are pulled apart and we are strangled by worry. We must realize that thoughts are real and powerful, even though they cannot be seen, weighed, or measured. We must bring “into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

“Sow a thought, reap an action.  
Sow an action, reap a habit.  
Sow a habit, reap a character.  
Sow a character, reap a destiny!”

Paul spells out in detail the things we ought to think about as Christians.



**Whatever is true.** Dr. Walter Cavert reported a survey on worry that indicated that only 8 percent of the things people worried about were legitimate matters of concern! The other 92 percent were either imaginary, never happened, or involved matters over which the people had no control anyway. Satan is the liar (John 8:44), and he wants to corrupt our minds with his lies (2 Cor. 11:3). “Yea, hath God said?” is the way he approaches us, just as he approached Eve (Gen. 3:1ff). The Holy Spirit controls our minds through truth (John 17:17; 1 John 5:6), but the devil tries to control them through lies. *Whenever we believe a lie, Satan takes over!*

**Whatever is honest and just.** This means “worthy of respect and right.” There are many things that are not respectable, and Christians should not think about these things. This does not mean we hide our heads in the sand and avoid what is unpleasant and displeasing, but it does mean we do not focus our attention on dishonorable things and permit them to control our thoughts.

**Whatever is pure, lovely, and of good report.** “Pure” probably refers to moral purity, since the people then, as now, were constantly attacked by temptations to sexual impurity (Eph. 4:17–24; 5:8–12). “Lovely” means “beautiful, attractive.” “Of good report” means “worth talking about, appealing.” The believer must major on the high and noble thoughts, not the base thoughts of this corrupt world.

**Whatever possesses virtue and praise.** If it has *virtue*, it will motivate us to do better; and if it has *praise*, it is worth commending to others. No Christian can afford to waste “mind power” on thoughts that tear him down or that would tear others down if these thoughts were shared.

If you will compare this list to David’s description of the Word of God in Psalm 19:7–9, you will see a parallel. The Christian who fills his heart and mind with God’s Word will have a “built-in radar” for detecting wrong thoughts. “Great peace have they which love Thy Law” (Ps. 119:165). Right thinking is the result of daily meditation on the Word of God.

### **Right Living (Phil. 4:9)**

You cannot separate outward action and inward attitude. Sin always results in unrest (unless the conscience is seared), and purity ought to result in peace. “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and peace” (Isa. 32:17). “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable” (James 3:17). Right living is a necessary condition for experiencing the peace of God.

Paul balances four activities: “learned and received” and “heard and seen.” It is one thing to *learn* a truth, but quite another to *receive* it inwardly and make it a part of our inner man (see 1 Thes. 2:13). Facts in the head are not enough; we must also have truths in the heart. In Paul’s ministry, he not only *taught* the Word but also *lived* it so that his listeners could see the truth in his life. Paul’s experience ought to be our experience. We must learn the Word, receive it, hear it, and do it. “But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

“The peace of God” is one test of whether or not we are in the will of God. “Let the peace that Christ can give keep on acting as umpire in your hearts” (Col. 3:15, wms). If we are walking with the Lord, then the peace of God and the God of peace exercise their influence over our hearts. Whenever we disobey, we lose that peace and we know we have done something wrong. God’s peace is the “umpire” that calls us “out”!

Right praying, right thinking, and right living: these are the conditions for having the secure mind and victory over worry. As Philippians 4 is the “peace chapter” of the New Testament, James 4 is the “war chapter.” It begins with a question: “From whence come wars and fightings among you?” James explains the causes of war: *wrong praying* (“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss,” James 4:3), *wrong thinking* (“purify your hearts, ye double-minded,” James 4:8), and *wrong living* (“know ye not that the

friendship of the world is enmity with God?” James 4:4). There is no middle ground. Either we yield heart and mind to the Spirit of God and practice right praying, thinking, and living; or we yield to the flesh and find ourselves torn apart by worry.

There is no need to worry! And, worry is a sin! (Have you read Matt. 6:24–34 lately?) With the peace of God to guard us and the God of peace to guide us—*why worry?*<sup>3</sup>

## **Matthew 4:1-11**

### **Satan (Matt. 4:1–11)**

From the high and holy experience of blessing at the Jordan, Jesus was led into the wilderness for testing. Jesus was not tempted so that the Father could learn anything about His Son, for the Father had already given Jesus His divine approval. Jesus was tempted so that every creature in heaven, on earth, or under the earth might know that Jesus Christ is the Conqueror. He exposed Satan and his tactics, and He defeated Satan. Because of His victory, we can have victory over the tempter.

Just as the first Adam met Satan, so the Last Adam met the enemy (1 Cor. 15:45). Adam met Satan in a beautiful Garden, but Jesus met him in a terrible wilderness. Adam had everything he needed, but Jesus was hungry after forty days of fasting. Adam lost the battle and plunged humanity into sin and death. But Jesus won the battle and went on to defeat Satan in more battles, culminating in His final victory on the cross (John 12:31; Col. 2:15).

Our Lord’s experience of temptation prepared Him to be our sympathetic High Priest (Heb. 2:16–18; 4:15–16). It is important to note that Jesus faced the enemy *as man*, not as the Son of God. His first word was, “*Man shall not live by bread alone.*” We must not think that Jesus used His divine powers to overcome the enemy, because that is just what the enemy wanted Him to do! Jesus used the spiritual resources that are available to us today: the power of the Holy Spirit of God (Matt. 4:1), and the power of the Word of God (“It is written”). Jesus had nothing in His nature that would give Satan a foothold (John 14:30), but His temptations were real just the same. Temptation involves *the will*, and Jesus came to do the Father’s will (Heb. 10:1–9).

**The first temptation (vv. 1–4).** This involved the love of God and the will of God. “Since You are God’s beloved Son, why doesn’t Your Father feed You? Why does He put You into this terrible wilderness?” This temptation sounded like Satan’s words to Eve in Genesis 3! It is a subtle suggestion that our Father does not love us.

But there was another suggestion: “Use Your divine powers to meet Your own needs.” When we put our physical needs ahead of our spiritual needs, we sin. When we allow circumstances to dictate our actions, instead of following God’s will, we sin. Jesus could have turned the stones into bread, but He would have been exercising His powers *independently of the Father*; and He came to obey the Father (John 5:30; 6:38).

The Lord quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 to defeat Satan. Feeding on and obeying God’s Word is more important than consuming physical food. In fact, *it is our food* (John 4:32–34).

**The second temptation (vv. 5–7).** The second temptation was even more subtle. This time Satan also used the Word of God. “So You intend to live by the Scriptures,” he implied. “Then let me quote You a verse of Scripture and see if You will obey it!” Satan took the Lord Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple, probably 500 feet above the Kidron Valley. Satan then quoted from Psalm 91:11–12 where God promised to care for His own. “If You really believe the Scriptures, then jump! Let’s see if the Father cares for You!”

Note carefully our Lord’s reply: “It is written AGAIN” (Matt. 4:7, emphasis mine). We must never divorce one part of Scripture from another, but we must always “compare spiritual things with spiritual”

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<sup>3</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 94–96.

(1 Cor. 2:13). We can prove almost anything by the Bible *if* we isolate texts from the contexts and turn them into pretexts. Satan had cleverly omitted the phrase “in all Thy ways” when he quoted from Psalm 91. When the child of God is in the will of God, the Father will protect him. He watches over those who are “in His ways.”

Jesus replied with Deuteronomy 6:16: “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” We tempt God when we put ourselves into circumstances that force Him to work miracles on our behalf. The diabetic who refuses to take insulin and argues, “Jesus will take care of me,” may be tempting the Lord. We tempt God when we try to force Him to contradict His own Word. It is important for us as believers to read *all* Scripture, and study *all* God has to say, for *all* of it is profitable for daily life (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

**The third temptation (vv. 8–11).** The devil offered Jesus a shortcut to His kingdom. Jesus knew that He would suffer and die before He entered into His glory (Luke 24:26; 1 Peter 1:11; 5:1). If He bowed down and worshiped Satan *just once* (this is the force of the Greek verb), He could enjoy all the glory without enduring the suffering. Satan has always wanted worship, because Satan has always wanted to be God (Isa. 14:12–14). Worshiping the creature instead of the Creator is the lie that rules our world today (Rom. 1:24–25).

There are no shortcuts to the will of God. If we want to share in the glory, we must also share in the suffering (1 Peter 5:10). As the prince of this world, Satan could offer these kingdoms to Christ (John 12:31; 14:30). But Jesus did not need Satan’s offer. The Father had already promised Jesus the kingdom! “Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen [nations] for Thine inheritance” (Ps. 2:8). You find the same promise in Psalm 22:22–31, and this is the psalm of the cross.

Our Lord replied with Deuteronomy 6:13: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.” Satan had said nothing about service, but Jesus knew that whatever we worship, we will serve. Worship and service must go together.

Satan slunk away, a defeated foe; but he did not cease to tempt Jesus. We could translate Luke 4:13, “And when the devil had ended every possible kind of temptation, he stood off from Him until a suitable season.” Through Peter, Satan again tempted Jesus to abandon the cross (Matt. 16:21–23); and through the crowd that had been fed, Satan tempted Jesus to an “easy kingdom” (John 6:15). One victory never guarantees freedom from further temptation. If anything, each victory we experience only makes Satan try harder.

Notice that Luke’s account reverses the order of the second and third temptations as recorded in Matthew. The word “then” in Matthew 4:5 seems to indicate sequence. Luke only uses the simple conjunction “and” and does not say he is following a sequence. Our Lord’s command at the end of the third temptation (“Get thee hence, Satan!”) is proof that Matthew followed the historical order. There is no contradiction since Luke did not claim to follow the actual sequence.

After Jesus Christ had defeated Satan, He was ready to begin His ministry. No man has a right to call others to obey who has not obeyed himself. Our Lord proved Himself to be the perfect King whose sovereignty is worthy of our respect and obedience. But, true to his purpose, Matthew had one more witness to call to prove the kingship of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 18–19.