

7-21-2024, COTR Texarkana

Title: The God Connection, pt-13

Purpose: Provoke people to recognize and avoid temptation and fight spiritual warfare with prayer.

Truth for Today: We can recognize and avoid temptation and fight spiritual warfare with prayer.

Text: Acts 5:1-5, 12:1-17

Topic: Holy Spirit, Satan, Devil, Temptation, Spiritual Attack, Prayer

Series Title: The God Connection...The Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Series Purpose:Provoke people to (1) Develop a vital relationship with the Holy Spirit, (2) Allow Him to work in us, (3) Have faith to let Him work through us supernaturally using spiritual gifts.

## The God Connection, pt-13

### I. Introduction (Prayer for students; Gift cards for teachers)

- A. Review series: The God Connection, The Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Today is part 13. We're studying the Book of Acts as a model to show us how the Holy Spirit can empower believers to accomplish the Great Commission.
- B. Last week we saw how the Holy Spirit can use believers when the devil is influencing or controlling a person. We looked at a sorcerer influencing the governor and a fortune teller who got delivered.
- C. Today we'll learn how satan can tempt us to sin against God and the necessity of fervent prayer when we're under spiritual attack.

### II. Satan will try to tempt or influence us to sin against God.

- A. Context, [Acts 5:1–5 (NLT)]...Ananias...sold some property. <sup>2</sup> He brought part of the money to the apostles, **claiming it was the full amount...**he kept the rest. <sup>3</sup> Then Peter said, “Ananias, **why have you let Satan fill your heart (NCV rule your thoughts)? You lied to the Holy Spirit...** <sup>4</sup> The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished...You weren't lying to us but to God!” <sup>5</sup> As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor and died.] **Saying yes to temptation destroyed his life.**
  1. Who influenced Ananias to lie? Jesus to the Pharisees, [John 8:44 (ESV)] You are of your father the devil...**he is a liar and the father of lies.**]
  2. *Vs 3 why have you let Satan fill your heart* Def. fill: to fill a vessel or hollow place<sup>1</sup> to control or influence. **Illustrate** The same verb is used in the command, “Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). **Ananias, a believer, was influenced by Satan, not the Holy Spirit!** Satan likely gained control because Ananias had not dealt with some previous sin in his life.<sup>2</sup> Instead of being full of the Spirit, (controlled/ influenced by the Holy Spirit) He was controlled/ influenced by greed, covetousness, the love of money or fear.
  3. Satan has a strategic appeal designed to take advantage of our weaknesses. It can be the love of money, sexual lust, the lust for power, etc.
- B. **What strategy should we use to fight and win this spiritual battle of temptation?**
  1. Try to live by the Great Commandment, [Mt. 22:36–38 (NLT)]...which is the most important commandment...<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied, “ ‘You must **love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.**’... ] [James 4:7

(NCV) So **give yourselves completely to God...**] The root problem: we want Jesus to be 1<sup>st</sup>...sometimes. We want His will...but we want ours, too. We want Jesus to be Savior but not Lord. **Daily choice.**

2. Recognize your weaknesses and deal with them; don't ignore or hide them. [Proverbs 28:13 (NCV) If you hide your sins, you will not succeed. If you **confess and reject them**, you will receive mercy.] Tell somebody. **Dr. Lacy**
3. Control what thoughts take root in your mind. [2 Cor. 10:4-5 (ESV) For the **weapons of our warfare** are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy **strongholds**.<sup>5</sup> We...**take every thought captive to obey Christ...**] The longer we entertain thoughts the stronger temptation gets, **e.g., cotton field and cocklebur.**
4. Use the Word of God as a spiritual weapon, 40 dx temp. [Mt. 4:3-4 (ESV) And the **tempter** came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."<sup>4</sup> But he answered, "**It is written**, " "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."']  
\*We can win the battle in the mind and resist temptation with the Word of God.

### III. Serious prayer is our most important weapon when we're under spiritual attack.

- A. [Acts 12:1-17 (NLT)]...King...Agrippa began to persecute some believers in the church.<sup>2</sup> **He had the apostle James...killed with a sword.**] Who was behind this? Jesus to the Pharisees, [John 8:44 (ESV) You are of your father the devil...**He was a murderer from the beginning...**] Who did satan murder? Cain killed Abel motivated by envy and anger. Though not stated, it's proper to assume the devil was behind the persecution and James' death.
- B. [Vs. 3]...Herod...also arrested Peter...<sup>5</sup> But **while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.**] Def, earnest: continuous, serious, intense, intently.<sup>3</sup>
- C. [Vs. 6] The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers...<sup>7</sup> **Suddenly**, there was a bright light...and an angel...struck him on the side to awaken him...And the chains fell off his wrists.<sup>8</sup> Then the angel told him...follow me...<sup>10</sup> They passed the...guard posts and came to the iron gate...and this opened...all by itself...<sup>12</sup>...he went to the home of Mary... where many were **gathered for prayer.**]
  1. Prayer is our most important weapon when we're under spiritual attack. We fight the unseen spiritual battle with prayer. [Eph. 6:11-18 (NLT) Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all **strategies of the devil**.<sup>12</sup> For we are not fighting (NCV people), but against...**evil spirits**...<sup>14</sup> Stand your ground...<sup>16</sup>...hold up the shield of **faith** to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.<sup>17</sup>... take the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word of God**.<sup>18</sup> **Pray in the Spirit at all times... Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers...**] **Pic soldier**
- D. Prayer pointers:
  1. Begin prayer by exalting the greatness of God Almighty. [2 Chron. 20:1-12 (NLT)]...the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and...Meunites declared war on Jehoshaphat...<sup>5</sup> Jehoshaphat...<sup>6</sup>...**prayed**, "O LORD...**you alone are the God who is in heaven. You are ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. You are**

**powerful and mighty; no one can stand against you!**] He didn't begin his prayer by whining, begging, complaining or even telling God his need. E.g. \$

2. Pray with authority in the name of Jesus. [John 14:14 (ESV)] [If you ask me anything **in my name**, I will do it.] Dilemma why aren't some prayers not answered? [1 John 5:14–15 (ESV)]...if we ask anything **according to his will**... we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.] His name represents his authority over obstacles and demonic interference. Praying God's will in His name is guaranteed to be answered.
3. Pray earnestly, fervently and passionately Def, earnest: continuous, serious, intense, intently.<sup>3</sup> [James 5:16–18 (NLT)] The **earnest (NJV fervent) prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.** <sup>17</sup> Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he **prayed earnestly** that no rain would fall, none fell for 3 ½ years! <sup>18</sup> Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain...] This kind of prayer can work miracles. Praying God's will fervently, and in His name is guaranteed to be answered. E.g., child
4. Be persistent in prayer. Don't stop. Pray, pray, and pray some more until something happens. Positive lesson out of a negative example, [Luke 18:1–8 (NCV)] Then Jesus used this story to teach his followers that they should **always pray and never lose hope.** <sup>2</sup>...there was a judge who did not respect God or care about people. <sup>3</sup>...there was a widow who **kept coming to this judge**, saying, 'Give me my rights against my enemy.' <sup>4</sup> For a while the judge refused to help her...he thought to himself...<sup>5</sup> I will see that she gets her rights. Otherwise she will continue to bother me until I am worn out.' <sup>6</sup> The Lord said, "Listen to what the unfair judge said. <sup>7</sup> God will always give what is right to his people who **cry to him night and day**...] Praying God's will fervently, persistently and in His name is guaranteed to be answered.

#### IV. Conclusion:

- A. [1 Pet 5:8–9 (NLT)] Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> **Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith.**] ...in both temptation and while facing spiritual attack.]

#### V. Response

- A. Prayer: (1) Prayer to recognize and resist temptation, (2) Commit to pray fervently and continuously when facing spiritual attack.
- B. Souls

#### VI. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [\*The complete word study dictionary: New Testament\*](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.
2. Toussaint, S. D. (1985). [\*Acts\*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 365). Victor Books.

3. Zodhiates, S. (2000). In *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

## VII. Supplemental Material

- A. [Acts 13:4–12 (NLT) So Barnabas and Saul...6...reached Paphos, where they met a Jewish sorcerer (ESV magician), a false prophet named Bar-Jesus. 7 He had attached himself to the governor...The governor...wanted to hear the word of God. 8 But...the sorcerer...interfered and urged the governor to pay no attention to what Barnabas and Saul said.] Paul caused the sorcerer/ magician to become blind and the governor was saved. Acts 16:16–18 (ESV)...we (Paul and Luke) were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination (def. seeking knowledge of the future by supernatural means) (NIV by which she predicted the future) and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul...crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” 18...Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit (NLT demon), “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.
- B. Quite likely, he loved money and what it could do more than God. [Matthew 6:24 (NLT) “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.]
- C. Ananias wasn’t the only follower of Christ who destroyed his life because of the love of money. Judas, [John 12:4–6 (NLT) Judas Iscariot...Vs 6 was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples’ money, **he often stole some for himself.** Luke 22:3–5 (NLT) Then **Satan entered into Judas** Iscariot...<sup>4</sup> and he went to the leading priests...to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. <sup>5</sup> They were delighted, and they promised to give him **money.**]
- D. James 4:7 (NCV) So **give yourselves completely to God. Stand against (ESV resist) the devil,** and the devil will run from you.]
- E. Acts 4:1–31 (NLT) While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. <sup>2</sup> These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup> **They arrested them** and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning...<sup>7</sup> They brought in the two disciples and demanded, “By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?” <sup>8</sup> Then **Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit,** said to them, “Rulers and elders of our people, <sup>9</sup> are we being questioned today because we’ve done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? <sup>10</sup> Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead...<sup>23</sup> As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. <sup>24</sup> When they heard the report, **all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God:** “O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—<sup>25</sup> you spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant, saying, ‘Why

were the nations so angry? Why did they waste their time with futile plans? <sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah. <sup>27</sup> “In fact, this has happened here in this very city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, your holy servant, whom you anointed. <sup>28</sup> But everything they did was determined beforehand according to your will. <sup>29</sup> And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. <sup>30</sup> Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” <sup>31</sup> After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit**. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

- F. Acts 19:11–20 (NLT) God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles. <sup>12</sup> When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and **evil spirits were expelled**. <sup>13</sup> **A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, “I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!”** <sup>14</sup> Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this. <sup>15</sup> But one time when they tried it, **the evil spirit replied, “I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?”** <sup>16</sup> **Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered.** <sup>17</sup> The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. **A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored.** <sup>18</sup> **Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices.** <sup>19</sup> **A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire.** The value of the books was several million dollars. <sup>20</sup> **So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect.**
1. In the NT era, evil spirits/ demonic activity was readily acknowledged but not today.