

The background of the slide features a faded, light-colored illustration of two fencers in a sparring stance. One fencer is on the left, leaning forward with arms extended, while the other is on the right, also in a dynamic pose. The overall tone is light and artistic.

# EN GARDE!

## A STUDY OF UNSEEN FORCES AT WORK IN OUR WORLD

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Lesson 1

# VERSE FOR THE JOURNEY

- **Ephesians 6:10-13** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is 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, to stand firm.
- Struggle: *pale:* to wrestle; a close quarters combat
- Resist: *anthistemi:* withstand while opposing
- Stand: *histemi:* make a stand; be established

# LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

- People who are doing things for the kingdom will be opposed by the enemy
- **John 16:33** "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."
- **2 Timothy 3:1-5** But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have **denied its power**; Avoid such men as these.

# DENYING THE POWER

- **Deny:** *arneomai*: to refuse, disown, reject
- **Acts 1:8** ...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

## DENYING THE POWER IS REJECTING THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **Matthew 7:22-23** "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy **in Your name**, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'"
- **In Your name = by your authority**

# DECEIVED OR DECEITFUL

- Are such people intentional deceivers?
- Are such people deceived?
- Both-and: sometimes both sides to a question can be right because they are seeing different perspectives of the same truth or different parts of the same truth
- Either-or: sometimes it is impossible for both sides of a debate or argument to be correct
- People who are not in right standing with God are frequently fooled by deception and “buy the lie”
- **John 8:31-32** So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

# KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH

- **Study the word until you know what it says and what it means: John 17:17** "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."
- If you know God and His word is true, then there will be responses that follow:
- THANKSGIVING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit;
- **Romans 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.
- When we can give thanks in the midst of difficult circumstances, it shows that we **know** and trust God

# WORSHIP

- Worship during adversity shows that we trust God
- **Exodus 33:19** And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."
- God has a right to do as He pleases; He doesn't wield His sovereign power as a tyrant
- **Matthew 4:8-10** Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"

# HUMILITY

- Humility is both a response to trials as well as its fruit
- **1 Peter 5:6-10** Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.
- **James 4:6**... "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

# FORGIVENESS

- Adversity often comes at the hands of people who commit deliberate, hurtful actions
- Our nature is to harbor resentment and seek revenge
- **Ephesians 4:31-32** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
- **Hebrews 10:30-31** For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

# PRAYING FOR DELIVERANCE

- **Matthew 26:39** And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."
- Jesus asked but only if it was in the Father's will
- **2 Corinthians 12:7-9** Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

# RECOGNIZING ATTACK

- Feeling compelled to do something you know is outside God's will
- Doubting God and His love and goodness toward you
- Thoughts of dropping out of Christianity
- Doubting the truth of God's word
- Living with feelings of condemnation even though you have confessed all known sin
- Overwhelmed by depression, often to the point of suicidal thoughts or actions
- Unable to forget derogatory remarks, thoughts, memories, or desires
- Filled with anger, bitterness, unforgiveness
- Sick and doctors don't know why

# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

- **1 Timothy 4:1-2** 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, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron...
- **2 Timothy 3:1-5** But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

The further society drifts from  
the **truth**, the more it will hate  
those who speak it

George Orwell