

The background of the slide features a faint, stylized 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 aesthetic is clean and professional, with a light beige or cream color palette.

EN GARDE!

A STUDY OF UNSEEN FORCES AT WORK IN OUR WORLD

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Lesson 6

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

THINKING RIGHTLY

- Despite our good intentions, we frequently find ourselves wandering like little lost sheep
- The devil tempts us to take things past God's boundary
 - communication – gossip
 - cautiousness – unbelief or fear
 - anger – rage, desire for vengeance
 - self-respect – self centeredness
- **2 Corinthians 10:3-6** For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ...

WHAT WE DESTROY

- Fortresses: *ochuroma*: a stronghold; fortified place occupied by an enemy
- Speculations: *logismos*: reasoning, arguments presented against our position
- Lofty thing: *hupsoma*: anything lifted up; abstractly, a barrier raised into place
- Such things are being raised up against the knowledge of God
- Paul is clearly defining aspects of spiritual warfare
- **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 IS KEY IN WARFARE

FALSE KNOWLEDGE

- **1 Timothy 6:20-21** O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly *and* empty chatter *and* the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"— which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith. Grace be with you.
- Guard: *phulasso*: to preserve by protective isolation
- **1 Corinthians 2:14** But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.
- **Matthew 13:13-14** "Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see; while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;

THREE AREAS OF SIN

- **1 John 2:15-17** Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh** and the **lust of the eyes** and the **boastful pride of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.
- **Genesis 3:6** When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise,
- **Temptation of Jesus:** stones to bread; all the kingdoms you can see; throw yourself down and angels will catch you

ASK THE QUESTION

- **1 Thessalonians 5:21** But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good;
- Examine: *dokimazo*: assay; refine; test to see the makeup or quality
- **1 John 4:1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
- Test: *dokimazo*
- **1 John 2:18** Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.
- False prophets and lying spirits claim godliness

SIDE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Preoccupation with discernment can lead to failure to see the over view of a particular issue
- There are things that grieve the Spirit; but God made people very diverse
- WATCH FOR CONFUSION
- **1 Corinthians 14:31-33** For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; for God is not *a God* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.
- If confusion doesn't come from God, then it must come from the flesh or the enemy
- But, we CANNOT say that all order is from God

THINK CLEARLY

- Learn to process information using scripture as a basis
- **2 Timothy 1:7** For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.
- Timidity: *deilia*: cowardice, fear
- Discipline: *sophronismos*: self-control (as to mind)
- **Deuteronomy 30:19-20** "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

VALUE THE CHURCH

- Ask the question: Does a particular person, teaching, idea, build up the church or tear it down? Does it threaten the church? Divide the church?
- Creative tensions can be good
Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

MONITOR HOLINESS

- **Hebrews 12:14** Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.
- Sanctification: *hagiosmos*: the process of becoming more holy
- Ask the question: “Does this attitude, action, or practice contribute to the personal holiness of the person or people involved?”

CHECK IT OUT IN THE BIBLE

- **Acts 17:10-11** The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, **examining the Scriptures** daily *to see* whether these things were so.
- Examining: *anakrino*: investigating, calling into account
- Because of the interdependence of spiritual giftings, it is frequently good to ask another believer to weigh in on various areas of struggle
- Discernment never is about promoting ourselves; it is about distinguishing right from wrong

SELF-DECEPTION

- Sometimes we won't understand the Spirit's warnings
- Loss of the peace of God is always a warning
- Scripture also speaks of the dangers of self-deception
- **James 1:21** Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.
- **1 John 1:8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.
- **Galatians 6:7-8** Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.
- **1 Corinthians 15:33** Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."