Small Group Guide: "Know Your Enemy"

Based on Matthew 13:24-43, John 8:41-45, Ephesians 6:10-13

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help your group move into a deeper review of the sermon and the scripture it is based on. Take time to read the scriptures at the beginning of your group discussion. Work through the sections at a pace that fits your group. Not every question needs to be answered -- choose the ones that spark the best conversation.

Opening Question

Take a few minutes to go around the group and answer this:

When you hear the word "enemy," what is the first thing that comes to mind? A person? A situation? Something else?

Key Takeaways

1. **We have a real enemy.** Scripture is clear that Satan is active, scheming, and working against God's people. This is not a children's story -- it is a grown-up spiritual reality.
2. **The enemy's primary weapon is deception.** He hides, he lies, and he rarely announces himself. He works to make us comfortable, distracted, and spiritually asleep.

3. **Our struggle is not against people.** Ephesians 6 reminds us that our battle is spiritual, not physical. People who seem like enemies may actually be captives of the enemy who need the truth.
4. **Being filled with the Holy Spirit is both a gift and a choice.** God gives His Spirit to those who are baptized into Christ, but living as a Spirit-filled person requires daily intentionality and awareness.
5. **Love is the most powerful weapon we have.** The enemy hates love. Sharing the gospel, caring for others, and refusing to hate are acts of spiritual warfare.
6. **Some weeds become wheat.** The parable of the weeds is not just a warning -- it is also an invitation to patience, prayer, and evangelism.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Passage

1. Read Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43 together as a group. What stands out to you most about Jesus' explanation of this parable? What would have troubled you if you had been one of the disciples hearing it for the first time?
2. In John 8:41-45, Jesus tells a group of religious people that their father is the devil. Why is that such a shocking statement? What does it tell us about how seriously Jesus took the reality of spiritual deception?
3. In Ephesians 6:10-13, Paul says our struggle is not against flesh and blood. In practical terms, what does it look like to fight a battle that is spiritual rather than physical?

Going Deeper

4. The sermon described the enemy as someone who "hides and gets really quiet." Can you think of a time in your own life when you were in a spiritual battle and did not realize it until later? What did that look like?
5. The sermon listed several things the enemy uses to empty us out -- anger, fear, doubt, anxiety, frustration, and worry. Which of those do you find yourself most susceptible to? How does recognizing these as spiritual attacks change the way you respond to them?
6. Second Timothy 3:1-5 describes people who have a form of godliness but deny its power. How do you think that happens to someone? Is it a sudden change or a gradual one?
7. Second Timothy 4:3-4 warns about people gathering teachers and influencers who will say what they want to hear. The sermon connected this to social media algorithms and echo chambers. How do you guard against only consuming content that confirms what you already believe?

8. First John 3:10 says that anyone who does not love their brother and sister does not belong to God. That is a strong statement. How does the presence or absence of love serve as a spiritual indicator in your own life?

Reflection and Personal Application

9. The sermon made the point that some of the people working against us are not enemies to be defeated -- they are captives to be freed. Is there someone in your life you have written off as an enemy who might actually need the gospel? What would it look like to approach them differently?
10. The sermon said that when you share the gospel with someone, you are "firing a shot into the enemy's territory" and destroying his work in that person's life. How does thinking of evangelism in those terms change your motivation for sharing your faith?
11. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:7 that he fought the good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith. If someone were to evaluate your life right now, which of those three would they say you are doing well? Which needs the most attention?

Practical Applications

Choose one or two of these as a group to commit to before your next meeting:

- **Identify the real battle.** The next time you feel angry, anxious, frustrated, or resentful toward a person, pause and ask yourself: Is this actually a spiritual battle being fought through this situation? Journal what you notice over the next week.
- **Pray for someone you consider difficult.** Think of one person in your life who irritates, frustrates, or opposes you. Commit to praying for them by name every day this week -- not that they would change, but that God would work in their life.
- **Audit your information diet.** Spend a few minutes this week looking at the podcasts, news sources, social media accounts, and YouTube channels you regularly consume. Ask honestly: Are these making me more loving, more patient, and more grounded in truth -- or more anxious, more angry, and more convinced that certain people are my enemies?
- **Memorize one verse.** Choose one passage from the sermon -- Ephesians 6:12, 1 Peter 5:8, or 1 John 3:10 are good options -- and commit it to memory this week. Share it with the group at your next meeting.
- **Have a gospel conversation.** Identify one person in your life who does not know Christ. Pray for an opportunity to share something of your faith with them this week, even if it is just a small step.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your time together by praying specifically for:

- Spiritual alertness and sobriety as a group
- Anyone in the group who is currently in the middle of a battle they may not fully recognize
- People in each group member's life who are captives of the enemy and need the truth of the gospel
- A greater filling of the Holy Spirit in each person's daily life

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More Supporting Scriptures

If your group wants to go deeper during the week, consider reading and reflecting on the following passages:

- Matthew 13:24-43 -- The parable of the weeds in full
- Ephesians 6:10-18 -- The full armor of God
- 1 Peter 5:6-11 -- Be alert and resist the enemy
- 1 John 3:1-18 -- Children of God versus children of the devil
- 2 Timothy 2:22-26 and 3:1-5 and 4:1-8 -- Paul's charge to Timothy