



equipping **disciples** to make **disciples**

Introduction

Every day we struggle against three things that conspire to push us away from truth. Understanding how the world, the flesh and the devil work will enable us to renew our minds and stand firm.

SESSION 7: The Battle For Our Minds

Focus verse: *Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. (Ephesians 6:11)*

Objective: To understand that, although our enemy, the devil, is constantly attempting to get us to believe lies, we don't have to believe every thought that comes into our head but can hold each one up against truth and choose to accept or reject it.

Focus Truth:

The battle takes place in our minds. If we are aware how Satan works, we will not fall for his schemes.

THE BATTLE IS REAL

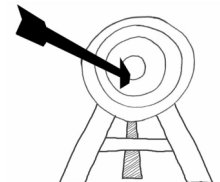
Previously looked at * how this fallen world tries to influence our thinking
* how the flesh has been programmed to live independently of God

We're not just up against the world and the flesh, but we're also up against the devil - the "*father of lies*" (John 8:44)

Good news: This is the most resolvable of the three. Jesus came to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:8)

The Western worldview: dismiss the reality of the spiritual world or act as if it doesn't exist.

But the Bible's theme is the battle between	the kingdom of light	& the kingdom of darkness
	the Spirit of Truth	& the father of lies
	the Christ	& the Antichrist
	good	& evil



As a Christian am I immune?	No - the bullseye.
Is the armour of God for the non-believer?	No - the believer.

We are in the battle whether we like it or not!

We are not fighting flesh & blood but flesh and blood, but the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:10ff)



If you bury your head in the sand you leave a big target exposed!

We must understand how the battle works so that we don't become a casualty or 'neutralized' in our walk with the Lord.

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SATAN THE DECEIVER

Adam & Eve: created to rule the world but effectively handed this right over to Satan when they sinned. See *John 12:31: the prince (ruler) of this world; Ephesians 2:2: the ruler of the kingdom of the air; see also 1 John 5:19.*

We think: 'natural' & 'supernatural' - God & Satan = supernatural

The Bible: 'Creator' & 'created'. (*John 1:3*)

Satan is NOT like God

Satan is a created being - God is The Creator e.g. ant & atomic bomb

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Satan can only be in one place at any one time

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Satan's power & authority do not compare to God's

- At the cross Jesus disarmed Satan (*Colossians 2:15*)

- Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father, far above all powers & authorities (*Ephesians 1:21*)

- Satan can only operate within the boundaries God sets (*Jude 1:6*)

Notes _____

Satan does not know everything

- He cannot perfectly know our mind. See *Daniel 2 (King Nebuchadnezzar's dream)*

- He can put thoughts into our minds

Notes _____

HOW SATAN WORKS

Through an organized network of fallen angels (*Ephesians 6:12*)

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By putting thoughts into our minds

See *1 Timothy 4:1*. Are Christians being deceived into abandoning faith & listening to demons?

- 3 Bible examples:

"*Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel*" (*1 Chronicles 21:1*)

"The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus." (*John 13:2*)

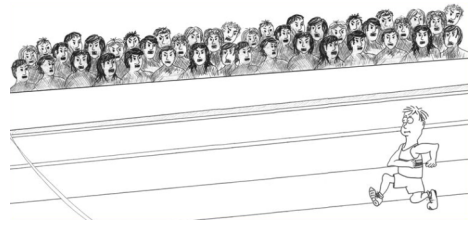
"Then Peter said, "*Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?*" (*Acts 5:3*)

- In our own life. e.g. I'm useless; I'm ugly

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Through temptation, accusation & deception

- Temptation: Look what's over here! Come and get it!
- Accusation: Failed again? You may as well give up. (*Revelation 12:10*)
- Deception: You're going the wrong way. The finishing line is back there. Satan's number 1 strategy.



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By getting footholds into our lives through sin

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. " (Ephesians 4:26)

Greek: *foothold* literally means *place*. (Compare Jesus: *I am going to prepare a place for you*)

See *2 Corinthians 2:10-11*

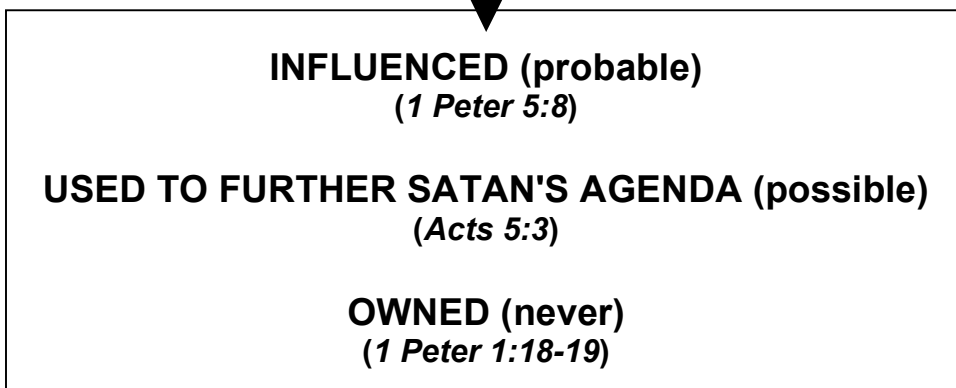
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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMONS & CHRISTIANS

'It's very important to stress at this point that we're not talking about Christians being completely taken over or taken back by demons. At the centre of your being, your Spirit is connected to God's spirit and Satan can't have you back. You have been bought and purchased by the blood of the Lamb (*1 Peter 1:18-19*) In other words, this is not about ownership (or possession).'

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Temptation, Accusation Deception



Notes _____

OUR DEFENCE

Jesus came to destroy the works of Satan (1 John 3:8)

Understand our position in Christ

Christ's crucifixion, resurrection & ascension ensure that all authority on earth as well as heaven has been given to Him. (See *Colossians 2:15*)

Christ's Position: Ephesians 1:19-22 tells us that He is seated at God's right hand, the ultimate seat of power and authority, "*far above all power and dominion*". God has "*placed all things under His feet*" and we are told that He is now "*head over everything*". (*Ephesians 1:19-22*)

Our Position: "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (*Ephesians 2:6*)

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..." (*Matthew 28:18-19*)

'Because of the finished work of Christ the Church is given both the power and the authority to continue His work... We have authority over the kingdom of darkness because of our position in Christ.'

Note! Our authority extends to simply doing God's will - nothing more & nothing less.

We have God's mighty power as long as we are filled/controlled by the Holy Spirit.

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Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." (Ephesians 6:10)

We live victoriously when we rely on His resources and live in His power, but we lead defeated lives when we rely on our own resources and live in our own power.

Satan, though defeated still "*prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour*" (1 Peter 5:8) so we must "***put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground***" (*Ephesians 6:13*)

Belt of truth. _____

Breastplate of righteousness. _____

Shield of faith. _____

"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)

Understanding this concept of submitting to God & resisting the devil is the to escaping the sin/confess cycle.

Notes _____

Do not be frightened

The devil has no power over us other than what we give. e.g. Girl afraid of dogs

"... the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him" (*Ephesians 5:18*)

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Guard our minds

"prepare your minds for action" (1 Peter 1:13)

God never wants to by-pass our minds but works through them. There is no mindless Christianity!

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Turn on the light

- Satan has no power over us unless he deceives us into believing he does and we only give him that power over us when we fail to believe the truth. Answer: expose Satan's lies to God's truth.

- A truth encounter not power encounter.

"you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32)

"I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6)

"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one... Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." (John 17:15-17)

- The real question is not 'Where do the thoughts come from?' but 'Are they true?'

- Keep choosing truth.



We are not called to dispel the darkness

We are instructed to turn on the light



'Our defence against Satan is to acquaint ourselves intimately with truth and then we will spot what he is trying to do.'

The whole thrust of the New Testament is to choose the truth, fill your minds with truth.

Notes _____

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things."

(Philippians 4:6-8)

In The Coming Week

Meditate on these verses: Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:3-14, 2:6-10; Colossians 2:13-15

Big Question (to consider before the next session)

If we can't always trust what we feel, why has God given us feelings and how should we respond to them?