

SPIRITUAL WARFARE: Class 7

Bible verse of the Day: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world." 1John 4:1

Last week we began a study of the Enemy's Strategies by looking at the COMMON strategies he uses to bring us down. Today, we will examine the EXTRAORDINARY strategies he uses.

A. The EXTRAORDINARY STRATEGIES the devil uses are more powerful because they are used invisibly against us in our thoughts and also in the *physical realm*! These types of physical manifestations of evil include the following:

1. **Infestation.** This type of manifestation includes activities such as objects physically moving, levitating, flying through the air or disappearing and rematerializing in a different place.

a. These may also include putrid odors, creepy noises, laughter, screams or crashes and banging.

2. **Oppression.** This type of extraordinary activity involves attacks on our life such as those that effect our bodily health, finances, work issues, family and social relations, etc.

a. Some people have actually experienced physical attacks, invisible blows to the body, harmful pushing or shoving, mysterious scratches or lesions on the skin, etc.

b. Quite a few "holy people" have reported enduring this kind of assault:

1. The Apostle Paul. **READ:** 1Cor. 12: 7-8.

2. Other well-known people who have been tormented by the devil include Francis of Assisi, Ignatius Loyola, Father Pio, Teresa of Avila and many others. (You can read their accounts for yourself; their biographies are readily available.)

3. **Obsession.** This is a more severe and relentless forms of attack by the devil. Here, he goes after his victim's inner peace.

a. People who are plagued by this attack report having disturbing thoughts (while awake or sleeping, as in a nightmare) to the extent to which they believe they are going insane.

b. Some have experienced hallucinations and constant thoughts of suicide.

c. It should be noted here, however, that many of these manifestations can also be caused by mental illness and, thus are not related to any spiritual attack.

1. For this reason, it is often difficult to distinguish one from the other and the person should seek professional and/or spiritual help before blaming satanic spirits.

4. **Possession.** There is no doubt that this is the most severe and dangerous type of attack by evil forces. Fortunately, it is also the more *rare* form of attack.

a. In this case, the evil spirit actually controls the body of his victim while the victim is not aware that he has been possessed.

1. The victim may hiss, make animal sounds, levitate, speak with an alien voice, speak in an unknown language, reveal hidden knowledge, etc.

b. **READ:** Matt. 9:32-33, where the possessed man was unable to talk and Matt. 12:22, where the man was blind and mute.

c. Mark 9:14-30 provides an amazingly detailed story of a young boy possessed by an evil spirit.

d. Luke 4:33-36 describes where a possessed man is actually in the synagogue wreaking havoc! This tells us that simply being in a house of worship will not protect us from evil.

e. **READ:** Luke 22:3. Notice here that the Bible tells us unequivocally that Satan actually entered Judas and gives us the details of the possession!

1. In some of these passages, the demon possession causes physical issues such as inability to speak, epileptic symptoms, blindness, etc.

2. There have been cases where the possessed person reacts violently or physically ill when the names of Jesus or godly persons are spoken.

3. In other cases, it causes the individual to do evil, Judas being the best example.

4. **READ:** Acts 16: 16-18, the spirit actually gives a slave girl the ability to know/understand things beyond her own learning.

5. The demon-possessed man of the Gadarenes, described in great detail in Mark 5: 1-20 who was possessed by a thousands of demons (i.e., "Legion"), had superhuman strength.

5. King Saul, after rebelling against the LORD, was troubled by an evil spirit (**READ:** 1Sam. 16:14-15 18:10-11 & 19:9-10)

a. The effect on Saul was a highly depressed mood and an obsessive desire to kill David.

f. Keep in mind: the Gospels would not have been so prolific or detailed in the description of demonic possession if they were not actual and real!

B. The Good News: A demon can never possess someone in the sense of "owning" them.

1. Keep in mind that ALL people BELONG TO GOD and are His children!

2. If you keep the Holy Spirit in you, you CANNOT be possessed by any evil spirit.

C. **READ:** Robert S. Sims, is a retired US Army Sergeant who served his country for 20 years. His primary duty was to train small teams in preparation for combat. He now serves "God's Army" as an Evangelist and still teaching combat techniques for fighting evil forces. He wrote:

"You are a threat to the enemy. He will attack you whenever necessary. If you attack him, he will attempt to distract you from his main effort, misdirect you into a useless effort, then diminish and isolate you. If you don't resist him, he will bypass you, separate you from friendly forces (your family, your local church, your community) and harass your supply lines (your prayer life and your faith). In order to beat him, we must fight him as a TEAM. To do this, we must report all enemy contact to our Commander-in-Chief (prayer) AND to soldiers in our Army (fellow Christians)."

D. Another interesting observation is that Satan's view of the world is rooted in his own warped personality.

1. For example, he tempts people in power by appealing to their pride and ambition, because that is the way *he* responds to his position of power.

2. He appeals to those under authority to rebel, rather than to submit to those over them because that is exactly how it came to be that he rebelled against God.'

3. He appeals to people's need for self-interest and he tempts us to shun self-sacrifice because he, himself only seeks his own selfish needs and wants.

4. He knows nothing of grace and he delights in the downfall of others.

E. One additional point regarding Satan's strategies before we leave this study:

1. **READ:** Eph. 6:11. Notice that Paul speaks about the **schemes** of the devil. Do you see that "schemes" is plural!
2. Think about the story of Jesus' Temptation in the Desert in Matthew 4 that Satan did not tempt Jesus only ONCE...he kept coming at him with one attack after another.
3. Also, Notice in Luke 4:13 that the devil only left him after His desert trial until another "opportune time", meaning Satan planned to continue his attacks every chance he'd get. He does the same thing with us.

F. Finally, given the common and extraordinary strategies used by Satan that we've studied these last two weeks, I would say that his most cunning strategy (and one that would constitute his greatest victory would be to convince the world that he simply does not exist!

1. From what we see and hear all around us, it may very well be that he is succeeding in this strategy.

So far in this course on Spiritual Warfare, we have 1) proven that we have a spiritual enemy and that we are engaged in a spiritual war 2) we know what the enemy wants and how he behaves and 3) we are familiar with the devious strategies he uses to torment us.

Next week, we will switch gears and begin a study of our heavenly support against this horrific enemy. We will, of course, come back to the Devil later in the course and study his strengths and weaknesses, weapons and other resources. But, at this time, it's time to focus on the fact that WE ARE NOT ALONE in this war!