

<b>DOCTRINE OF SALVATION – Part 6</b>
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## **The Spiritual Battle**

### **1. The Problem of the Sinful Nature.**

- a. Believers have been saved from the power of sin that used to enslave us, but not the presence of sin.
- b. Our sinful nature still entices us with temptations from the world around us. An insult or hurtful word from a friend or family member may provoke our angry or bitter reply. As we watch TV or Internet video, we may have sinful lustful thoughts as we view scenes that magnify materialism, fame, stealing, partying, drugs, pre-marital sex, homosexuality, adultery, etc. We must immediately push the “reject” button when such thoughts enter our minds. Turn off the TV. Say “No” to pornography.
- c. Now that we are believers, we can choose to do right, and reject the wrong. We can choose to submit to the Holy Spirit, not to Satan. We can depend on the Holy Spirit to help us grow in holiness.

### **2. The Problem with Satan.**

- a. One of our greatest enemies is Satan, the devil. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.” Eph 6:12.
- b. He is the “god of this world” (2 Cor 4:4) who has blinded the eyes of unbelievers.
- c. But our eyes have been opened, we have received forgiveness of sins, and we have been turned from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, and from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18).

### **3. How Does Satan Attack Me Now?**

- a. Satan Attacks from the front as a roaring lion: The Apostle Peter tells us Satan is like a lion who prowls and waits for the right moment to pounce on its prey. He understands our sinful natures, our human weaknesses, our emotional instabilities, and he constantly tempts and deceives us. The attacks on Job’s family, his wealth and his health are ways that Satan uses to tempt us to sin.
- b. Satan Attacks us from the rear as a sneaky snake:
  - In the Garden of Eden, Satan lied to Eve and undermined God’s love and honesty (Gen 3:1). He continues to do so by appealing to lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes and the pride of life.
  - To us, Satan says, “Sex is pleasurable and unbelievably enjoyable, especially outside of marriage. Stolen waters are sweeter. Has God said you shouldn’t try it? You gotta be kidding! Everyone is enjoying it. Look at the TV actors & movie stars. You should too. Or else you’re missing out on the fun. Find a friend with benefit.” He said to Eve, “God is a killjoy. He doesn’t want you to have fun.”
  - Next he says to Eve, “You shall not surely die!” Today he says, “Having a little sex before marriage now and then won’t hurt you. Going to watch an R(A) movie or a little pornography is fine, it’s education. Try it! You’ll like it.”
  - Now these Satanic attacks and deceptions are subtle and silent - through our minds, and thoughts: worry (God won’t provide for you), feelings of inadequacy (Christ is not enough for you), over-confidence (I can handle it), self-pity (God is good to others, but not to me), fears (God won’t protect me), wrong reactions to others’ words or actions (I cannot trust God to defend me or avenge this injustice), excuses for sin (everybody is doing it), etc.
- c. Resist these thoughts. They are Satan’s attempts to get your eyes off God and on ourselves. His aim is to undermine our faith in the faithfulness of God, God’s loving care for us, and God’s presence with us.

#### 4. How Do I Overcome Satan's Attacks?

- a. Put On the Whole Armour of God if you want to be strong in the Lord. Eph 6:10-13. "11 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." The picture is that of a Roman soldier preparing for war by putting on his armour – defensive and offensive weapons.
- b. Put on the Belt of Truth. Eph 6:14a "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth," Christ defeated Satan on the cross. Christ's heel was bruised, but Satan's head had been crushed (Gen 3:15). Greater is he (Holy Spirit) that is in you than he (Satan) that is in the world (1 John 4:4). Meditate on the goodness, love, power, sovereignty, faithfulness, kindness and mercy of God. We do not have to be anxious or worried about the lies of Satan.
- c. Put on Breastplate of Righteousness. Eph 6:14b "and having on the breastplate of righteousness;" If you're facing ISIS terrorist, you better be covered from head to toe with a bullet-proof vest and bomb-proof helmet. If you fail to put on the righteousness of Christ, Satan will accuse and remind you (Rev 12:10) of your sins. Trust in the blood of Christ to cleanse you from every sin (1 John 1:9). Believe in the forgiveness of God. God says, "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:11-12). God promised in Jer 31:34 "for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Christ's righteousness, not yours.
- d. Put on Gospel Shoes of Peace. Eph 6:15 "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace". The Christian must wear the gospel shoe of peace with God, and the peace of God, to make peace with men. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1). No longer enemies of God, we have the peace of God in our hearts. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Phil 4:6-7).
- e. Take the Shield of Faith. Eph 6:16 "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Satan is constantly firing missiles of lies, doubt, worry, lust, fear, pride, discontentment, inadequacy, and a million other devious thoughts to shatter your peaceful mind. Hebrews 11:6 "Without faith it is impossible to please God." we must place our trust in the mighty hand of God. We can trust God to guide us through the dark tunnels of life where Satan's hand is heavy. Can I really trust God to provide for me (Prov 3:5-6)? "*If I do not accept the proposal from this non-Christian, what if I remain unmarried because there is no eligible Christian men in church?*"
- f. Put on Helmet of Salvation. Eph 6:17a "And take the helmet of salvation". The head is the most vulnerable part of our body. A soldier who wears a Kevlar helmet protects his brain from fragmenting grenades and bullets.
  - *Salvation means Deliverance.* God promised in 1 Cor 10:13 that "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*." Even though Job's trials were great and prolonged, yet God eventually delivered him.
  - *Salvation means Safety.* The Christian's helmet is salvation. We are always safe in the arms of Jesus. John Newton on his deathbed said, "I do not remember much of anything, but I remember this. I am a great sinner; and Jesus Christ is a great Savior!" The worst thing that can happen to a believer is death – even that, death is no the end, but entrance to glorious heaven (Jn 14:1-6).

g. Wield the Sword of the Spirit.

- Eph 6:17b “and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:” I’ve been following Wimbledon tennis. How would Roger Federer or Andy Murray be able to serve aces, score winners or return blazing serves on the tennis courts without their powerful rackets? In the hands of a skillful tennis player, the racket becomes a powerful weapon on court to defeat their foes. Likewise, a Christian needs to be skillful in the use of God’s Word to defeat Satan.
- When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He did not rely on his human strength to defend himself. Rather, each time He replied Satan with “It is written” (Mt 4:11). For the word of God is quick (living) and sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12) and is able not only to defeat Satan, but also pierce the hearts of both saints and sinners. So we must read, study, memorise and meditate on Scriptures so that we can be prepared for every ISIS bomb of Satan. The Psalmist said “thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against Thee.” When in the army, we had to learn to strip and assemble the M-16 rifle in a stipulated period of minutes. In the US marines, they even have to do it blindfolded. If a soldier needs to know his weapon well so as to prepare for war, how much more so we believers need to know our verses well in order to battle Satan. How many times have you read the Bible? How many verses have you memorized? Use the Scripture memory booklet and test to challenge yourself to remember God’s word.

h. Pray Without Ceasing.

- Eph 6:18 “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;” Pray without ceasing (1 Thes 5:17).
- This final weapon is the most important as it summarises all the others. It means we must completely depend on God for victory. Pray as if everything depends on God. Earnest, regular, biblical prayer reflects our conviction that the battle is the Lord’s, not ours. If it is to be won, God must win it.
- As King Jehoshaphat prayed before he faced the great army of Moabites and allied forces, “O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes *are* upon thee.” 2 Chron 20:12.
- As the hymn writer Joseph Scriven puts it, “O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear. All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.”

5. **Our Greatest Help: the indwelling Holy Spirit**

- a. teaches us truth (Jn 16:13),
- b. guides us (Ps 48:14) and
- c. empowers us (Acts 1:8).