

Life of Victory

Teacher's Manual

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OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, the participants should:

- understand the warfare they face as Christians, the tactics of the enemy, and the victory we have in Christ
- be proficient in using their spiritual weapons
- have greater faith to enforce the victory we have in Christ

OVERVIEW

Session 1: Introduction to a Life of Victory

Session 2: Know the Enemy

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SESSION 1 – INTRODUCTION TO A LIFE OF VICTORY

INTRODUCTION

There have been many long wars throughout history. The **Hundred Years' War** between England and France lasted 116 years (1337-1453). The **Crusades** (religious wars organized by western European Christians to retake Christian territories from the Muslims) lasted almost 200 years (1095-1291).

However, the longest war in history has been the one fought for the souls of men. It began in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15) and it will end when Jesus returns.

GENESIS 3:15

*"I will put enmity¹ between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*²

EXPLANATION

"A perpetual quarrel is here commenced between the kingdom of God and the devil; war is proclaimed between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent."²

"Many Christian commentators since the second century have called this the *Protevangelium* (Lat.) or the 'first preaching of the gospel.' It has also been described as 'the Bible in embryo, the sum of all history and prophecy in a germ.' It is a prediction of continual hostility between good and evil, between man and the satanic forces that oppose his moral well-being, and between the people of God and the unregenerate world system in which they live."³

The serpent's poison is lodged in its head; and a bruise on that part is fatal.⁴

The legendary Chinese general Sun Tzu wrote the earliest military treatise, *The Art of War* (about 500 BC). In it, he described Chinese weapons, command systems, communications, discipline, grade distinctions, strategy, and logistics.⁵ He said, "Military action is . . . the ground of death or life, the path of survival or destruction, so it is imperative to examine it."⁶

Much of what he taught about warfare is applicable to the life of victory.

¹ Enmity is defined as, "the extreme ill will and deep-seated hatred that exists between enemies."

² Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible

³ The Believer's Study Bible, note on Genesis 3:15

⁴ The New Commentary on the Whole Bible

⁵ Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2002

⁶ Sun Tzu, The Art of War, p.1

We have a Mandate

1. Man's fall in the Garden separated⁽¹⁾ him from God, enslaved him to sin, and made him captive to the devil. God came to earth as a man, paid our debt, and destroyed the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

EXPLANATION

"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (1 John 3:8)

"Jesus wanted to restore people to fellowship with the Father and was willing to die so it would be possible; His focus was on people, and the devil was simply one of the obstacles. Our interest in warfare should be directly proportional to its effectiveness in enhancing evangelism."⁷

Jim Laffoon: "Our motivation for the spiritual battle we are involved in must not be based on a vision of self-preservation. We are called to advance the Kingdom of God through making disciples and planting churches in every one of the world's people groups. Kingdom advancement, even at the expense of our own lives, is the very purpose for which we have been given authority."

2. Because the blood of Jesus has redeemed us, we now have a mandate⁽²⁾ to enforce the victory Jesus won at Calvary (Luke 9:1,2; 10:17-19; Mark 16:17).

EXPLANATION

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.'" (Luke 9:1,2; 10:17-19)

"And these signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will drive out demons . . ." (Mark 16:17)

At Calvary, Jesus destroyed the authority of the enemy. However, the enemy will not yield willingly; he must be forcibly evacuated—and that is the job of the Church (Romans 16:20).

⁷ Peter Wagner, *Engaging the Enemy*

ILLUSTRATION

A man owned an empty building in a downtown area of a big city. He posted signs throughout the property prohibiting unlawful occupation. But the signs were not enough, and soon people began making their homes in his building. Eventually he took legal action and engaged the police to forcibly evacuate the squatters from his property.

APPLICATION: Our life is under the legal protection of Jesus. But unless we take the authority He has given us, demonic forces will try to destroy our life.

During the Lord's time on earth, He devoted Himself to training His disciples to enforce His authority upon the enemy. Upon His ascension, He instructed His disciples to continue the work until all creation had heard the gospel of His kingdom and all things had been placed under His feet. And He gave them authority to accomplish the task. This mandate is still our responsibility, and the authority is still ours.

3. Personal knowledge of God is the foundation⁽³⁾ that assures a life of victory.

EXPLANATION

“ . . . but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.”
(Daniel 11:32 NKJV)

The New American Standard version says they *“ . . . will display strength and take action.”* The New International Version says they *“will firmly resist him.”* All three of the translations define and elaborate the personal results of an intimate relationship with God.

The heroes of the faith—Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Esther, David, Ruth, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, Paul, Peter, et al., did mighty works for God. Their secret? Each one had an intimate and unshakable knowledge of the God they served.

*“Before we attack the strongholds of Satan, we must have a well fortified defensive position, a place of safety. The Christian's defensive position is his knowledge of God.”*⁸

The following are some of the military terms the Bible uses when referring to God.

God is a warrior⁽⁴⁾ (Exodus 15:3), and is *mighty in battle* (Psalm 24:8). *The battle is the Lord's* (1 Samuel 17:47).

⁸ Sammy Tippit, *Fit For Battle*, p. 124

EXPLANATION

"The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is His name." (Exodus 15:3)

"Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."
(Psalm 24:8)

The Lord fights in the day of battle. *"Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when He fights on a day of battle."* (Zechariah 14:3)

Here are some examples of the Lord's intervention in Israel's battles:

1 Samuel 7:10

As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel.

Joshua 10:10

And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah.

1 Samuel 17:47

". . . and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."

In the Old Testament, people viewed war as not just between armies, but also as between gods. A nation saw their triumph over another nation as a testimony that their god was the stronger warrior. (Refer to 1 Kings 20:13-28.)

God took Israel's battles seriously, involving Himself in every one. He was the Captain of the Hosts feared by the nations surrounding Israel. As long as God fought for Israel, they were unbeatable.

⁹. . . *"I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. ¹⁰For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. ¹¹And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. (Joshua 2:9-11)*

However, when Israel sinned, God would not fight for them. God is a holy God; He does not tolerate sin. At the times that God's people sinned, He lifted His presence, and Israel lost the battle. (Refer to Joshua 7; 1 Samuel 4:1-10.)

There is an Enemy

1 PETER 5:8

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

EXPLANATION

We must know that we have an enemy, we must know who the enemy is, we must know where the enemy operates, and we must know the enemy's primary strategies.

"Before we can be secure from attacks by an enemy we must know there is an enemy. The nation that has no enemy is very secure. The nation that has an enemy but does not think so is very insecure." ⁹ - Jim Wilson, *Principles of War* (Jim Wilson was a highly decorated commissioned United States Naval officer. He was also a Christian who wrote about the spiritual application of military principles.)

Augustine: "Christ is called 'a lion' (Revelation 5:5) because of his courage: the devil, because of his ferocity. The one lion comes to conquer, the other to hurt." ¹⁰ The word 'roaring' denotes especially the howl of a beast in fierce hunger. ¹¹

This verse could also be a veiled allusion to the horrors of the Neronian persecution in the Roman Coliseum, in which lions mauled and devoured Christians. Satan desires to do the same thing spiritually. ¹²

The Bible refers to the devil, fallen angels, and demons over 300 times – 116 times in the Gospels and another 70 times in the remainder of the New Testament. References to the devil appear more frequently than the words 'love,' 'gospel,' 'peace,' or 'spirit.'

1. Christians often make two mistakes ⁽⁵⁾ about the devil. They either magnify him or underestimate him.

EXPLANATION

Christians MAGNIFY the enemy:

The artists of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance tended to paint angels as pudgy babies and demons as ferocious monsters. Anyone betting on a fight between the two would have to wager on the demons. The 1973 box-office hit, *The Exorcist*, painted a similar picture for modern viewers.

⁹ Jim Wilson, *Principles of War*, p. 43

¹⁰ Quoted in, Martin Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies*, note on I Peter 5:8

¹¹ Martin Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies*, note on I Peter 5:8

¹² The Bible Knowledge Commentary note on I Peter 5:8

A true description of the enemy:

A defeated foe stripped of his once considerable abilities. A fallen angel, limited but very powerful.

Christians UNDERESTIMATE the enemy:

Because we have a real enemy with real power, we must be on the alert.

The following are various versions of the warning in 1 Peter 5:8:

“Discipline yourselves, keep alert.” (The New Revised Standard Version)

“Be careful—watch out for attacks.” (The Living Bible)

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert.” (The New American Standard Bible)

“Control yourselves and be careful!” (The New Century Version)

“Keep your mind clear, and be alert.” (God’s Word)

Whenever an upset occurs in a sports competition, it is usually because the favored team *underestimated* the other team.

ILLUSTRATION

An example is the 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey team. The underdog, an upstart U.S. Olympic hockey team, was the hottest thing on ice in 1980, winning the gold medal at the XIII Winter Games in Lake Placid, N.Y., in the face of seasoned competition and against all odds. Composed almost entirely of college players, the team had been given no better than an outside chance for third place in competition with European clubs that had performed together for many years. But the inspired Americans completed the tournament with a record of six wins, no losses, and one tie to capture the title. With the help of a goal by team captain Mike Eruzione and strong net minding by Jim Craig, the United States defeated the top-seeded Soviet Union, 4-3, on February 22 for its key victory. Two days later, the Americans beat Finland, 4-2, for the gold. The surprising triumph of this seventh-seeded team captivated American sports fans and made instant celebrities of the spirited youngsters who brought it about. Several of them were quickly signed to contracts with National Hockey League teams that owned their rights, while cities all over the United States held parades in their honor, and advertisers lined up to solicit endorsements of the sudden heroes. “Everything they get, they deserve,” said coach Herb Brooks, who took a leave of absence from a successful career at the University of Minnesota to guide the Olympians through an arduous exhibition schedule, followed by the two-week competition at Lake Placid. “They worked unbelievably hard. You are watching a group of people who startled the athletic world, not the hockey world, but the athletic world. These people are deserving because of their age and what they had to accomplish in a short time.”¹³

Ephesians 6:12

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. . .

¹³ Encarta Reference Library 2002

Paul starts by declaring whom we are *not* fighting.

2. The enemy has many names, but he was first called Lucifer⁽⁶⁾. Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 chronicle his origin and his fall from glory. He lifted his heart in pride and attempted to make himself like God. As soon as he did, *unrighteousness was found in [him]*.

EXPLANATION

The Ezekiel and Isaiah passages illustrate the hermeneutical principle of **double reference**. At one level, the prophecies refer to the earthly rulers of Tyre and Babylon respectively, and at another level, they refer to a spiritual personality behind the rulers. The early church fathers recognized and commented on the double reference of these passages.

Tertullian: "If you turn to the prophecy of Ezekiel, you will at once realize that this angel was good by creation. It was by choice that he became corrupt. For in the person of the prince of Tyre, it says things in reference to the devil."¹⁴

Origen: "We find in the prophet Ezekiel two prophecies written to the king of Tyre. The second is clearly of such a kind that it cannot be at all understood about a man. It must refer to some superior power who had fallen away from a higher position and had been reduced to a lower and worse condition."¹⁵

Lucifer enjoyed an exalted position in the presence of God: "*You were on the holy mountain of God.*" (Ezekiel 28:14)

He was called the anointed cherub: "*You were anointed as a guardian cherub.*" (Ezekiel 28:14)

He was filled with wisdom and beauty: "*You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.*" (Ezekiel 28:12)

He was without sin: "*You were blameless in your ways.*" (Ezekiel 28:15)

"*Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.*" (Ezekiel 28:17)

Lucifer's five "I will" statements in Isaiah 14 (I will ascend, I will raise, I will sit, I will ascend, I will make myself) underscore and emphasize the volitional nature of his sin. Sin was found in him because he made a choice: to rebel against God.

¹⁴ Tertullian, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, p. 593

¹⁵ Origen, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs, p. 593

3. The enemy has demons⁽⁷⁾ that perform his will. A demon is a spiritual being who is ruled by Satan and who opposes God's will.

EXPLANATION

The only hint regarding the number and origin of the demons is found in these cryptic verses from the book of Revelation:

"³And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. ⁴His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it."
(Revelation 12:3,4)

Demons can influence and dominate nations⁽⁸⁾ (Daniel 10:13), set up their thrones over cities (Revelation 2:13), and inhabit people (Matthew 12:43).

EXPLANATION

"The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia . . ." (Daniel 10:13)

"I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is." (Revelation 2:13)

"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it." (Matthew 12:43)

ACTIVITY

1. What is the mandate that followers of Christ have concerning the enemy?
How are we to carry out this mandate?
2. How should the knowledge of God as a warrior change and shape your approach to the enemy?
3. The two common mistakes that Christians make concerning the devil are to magnify him or underestimate him. Which one are you more prone to make?
Why? What can you do to change this mindset?
4. How does popular culture present the devil? What are the differences between the Bible's perspective and the world's?

ASSIGNMENT

Do a study in Scripture for encounters between Jesus and Satan or demons.
Record your insights.

SESSION 2 – KNOW THE ENEMY

His Primary Schemes

2 CORINTHIANS 2:11

. . . so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

ILLUSTRATION

Early one morning, a man in upstate New York got in his car to go to work. The car, however, would not start. He opened the hood to check his battery and found that someone had taken it during the night. The next morning, he found a new battery on his car with a note attached. The note told of a man and his pregnant wife on their way to the hospital to deliver their first child. Unfortunately, their car had died right in front of his house and, because of the hour of the night and the concern about their unborn child, they panicked and took his battery. With the note was a picture of their new baby, a sincere apology, and two tickets to a Broadway show playing at that time in New York city. On the day of the show, the man and his wife drove the two hours to the city, and spent the whole day there. When they arrived home late that night, they found that everything in their house was gone. They had been the victims of a very diabolical scheme of house robbery.

EPHESIANS 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

EXPLANATION

“Intelligence of an enemy requires knowing who he is, his intentions, and his methods of operating. This prevents deception and surprise.”¹

Schemes (Grk., *methodeia*) are deviously and carefully thought out systematic plans using cunning and strategy, designed especially to do damage or cause harm.

¹ Jim Wilson, *Principles of War*, p. 44

Successful warfare requires an intelligence system to gain information on the adversary. Military leaders study the enemy to know their modus operandi, and to assess their strength and weakness.

Athletes, for example, watch game films of their opponents, carefully studying them to prepare for the coming encounter.

1. The first scheme is deception⁽¹⁾ (Genesis 3:1). To deceive means to cause to believe what is not true; to intentionally trick or mislead; to hide the truth deliberately.

EXPLANATION

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"
(Genesis 3:1)

"All war is deception. Even though you are competent, appear to be incompetent. Though effective, appear to be ineffective. When you are going to attack nearby, make it look as if you are going to go a long way; when you are going to attack far away, make it look as if you are going just a short distance. When you want to go right, make it appear you want to go left."²

Satan is first introduced as cunning and subtle, the sly deceiver who twists God's truth.

The hermeneutical principle of **First Mention** states that the first mention of a topic sets a precedent for future understanding and interpretation of that topic. The first mention is the first link in a long chain of revelation, a seed that has within it the full truth to be developed in subsequent references.

Satan is a deceiver from the beginning to the end. Revelation 20:3: *He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore . . .*

When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.
(John 8:44)

Men often do the devil's work of deception. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not

² Sun Tzu, The Art of War, p. 2

surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

(See also Romans 16:18; Ephesians 5:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Peter 2:1-4; 1 John 2:26, 3:7.)

The devil deceives by blinding the eyes of the unbelieving. *“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:4)*

The devil deceives by snatching the word sown in the heart. *“When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.” (Matthew 13:19)*

2. The second scheme is intimidation⁽²⁾ (Romans 8:15). To intimidate means to fill with fear; to frighten into submission; to persuade by fear.

EXPLANATION

“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by Him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’” (Romans 8:15)

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

“And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled.” (1 Peter 3:14)

“We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are. The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there and we seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.” (Numbers 13:31-33) An intimidating spirit of fear bullied the ten spies, diminished the promises of God, and magnified the people of the land.

3. The third scheme is accusation⁽³⁾ (Revelation 12:10). To accuse means to charge with a shortcoming, an error, or a crime.

EXPLANATION

“For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.” (Revelation 12:10)

The enemy accuses the believer to himself. The enemy accuses the believer to God. The enemy accuses God to the believer. The enemy accuses one believer to another.

Our Advocate defends us from the devil's accusations. *"If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."* (1 John 2:1 NASB) The word 'advocate' derives from the Greek word *parakletos* – one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a counsel for defense.

4. The fourth scheme is persecution⁽⁴⁾ (Revelation 2:10). To persecute means to make somebody the victim of continual pestering or harassment; to oppress or harass with ill treatment.

EXPLANATION

"Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10)

While living in a nation with freedom of worship, it may be difficult to understand the concept of persecution. In most Islamic and Communist countries, it is against the law to import a single Bible or to witness in the name of Jesus. In these countries, tens of thousands of people have been persecuted, murdered, and imprisoned for their faith.

5. The fifth scheme is isolation⁽⁵⁾ (Proverbs 18:1). To isolate means to separate or cut off from others.

EXPLANATION

"A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he quarrels against all sound wisdom." (Proverbs 18:1 NASB)

"Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

A lion looks for the beast that has strayed from the herd. Once it has located an isolated stray, it will stalk slowly and silently its prospective victim, cutting off escape routes and trying not to be seen until it is about 100 feet away. Then, with a burst of speed, it will run toward the prey and seize it.

The devil isolates believers through unforgiveness and strife.

Unforgiveness: *"In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."* (Matthew 18:34,35)

Strife: *“There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads **strife** among brothers.”* (Proverbs 6:16-19)

The devil attempted to isolate the Hebrews from the Hellenists by stirring up strife concerning the daily serving of food.

“Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint (complaint in Greek is ‘goggusmos’ = grumbling, grudging, murmuring, a secret debate) arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.” (Acts 6:1)

6. The sixth scheme is temptation ⁽⁶⁾ (1 Thessalonians 3:5). To tempt means to try to get someone to do wrong; to cause desire or craving to arise in somebody.

EXPLANATION

“I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our labors might have been useless.” (1 Thessalonians 3:5)

An obese medieval ruler named Crassus was usurped by his brother and confined to a prison with a small opening, large enough for a normal sized man to crawl out of but too small for the corpulent Crassus. His brother promised him his freedom and his kingdom restored if he would lose enough weight to slip out of his prison—and then ordered massive quantities of food taken to Crassus every day. Crassus, unable to resist the temptation, died in prison.

“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.” (James 1:14)

“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.” (1 John 2:15,16)

The devil tempted Eve with the lust of the flesh (*“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food . . .”*), the lust of the eyes (*“. . . that it was a delight to the eyes . . .”*), and the boastful pride of life (*“. . . that the tree was desirable to make one wise . . .”*).

The devil tempted Jesus with the lust of the flesh (*“. . . tell this stone to become bread.”*), the lust of the eyes (*“. . . he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world . . .”*), and the boastful pride of life (*“If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here . . .”*).

Jim Laffoon suggests that there are four things to be done for victory over temptation:

- Declare war: wage war against the lusts of our flesh.
- Deal with the source: deal with the old nature through the power of the Word.
- Drive forward: no matter how strong the temptation, do not become distracted from the mission.
- Develop accountability: confess your sins to other Christians.

7. The seventh scheme is condemnation⁽⁷⁾ (1 Timothy 3:6). To condemn means to express strong disapproval of; to pronounce judgment against.

EXPLANATION

“ . . . lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.” (1 Timothy 3:6 NASB)

“ . . . in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.” (Ephesians 6:16)

Condemnation is one of the fiery missiles of the evil one. It can be extinguished only by faith.

8. The eighth scheme is distraction⁽⁸⁾ (2 Corinthians 11:3). To distract means to cause to turn away from the original focus of attention or interest.

“But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 11:3)

ACTIVITY

1. Which of the eight schemes discussed in this session is giving you the most trouble right now? Why? What can you do about it?
2. Take time with your discussion partner to pray and take authority over this particular scheme of the devil.

ASSIGNMENT

Read the appendix concerning angels. Record your thoughts and insights regarding this.

SESSION 3 – THE WARRIOR AND THE WEAPONS

INTRODUCTION

The Warrior

EXPLANATION

“In ancient times skillful warriors first made themselves invincible, and then watched for vulnerability in their opponents.”¹

¹ Sun Tzu, The Art of War, p.5

Spiritual warfare is not simply a matter of actions or words—it is about identity. The seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva learned this important lesson the hard way! (Refer to Acts 19:13-16.)

1. Before we engage in warfare against our enemy, we must first fortify⁽¹⁾ our position by learning who we are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

EXPLANATION

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” (Ephesians 1:3)

Who we are in Christ:

We are saved in Christ, brought near to God in Christ, and provided all spiritual blessings in Christ. Our entire Christian life is lived in Christ.

We must understand that Christ died for us and that Christ lives in us.

2. Christ died for⁽²⁾ us. This truth deals with the old life.

EXPLANATION

Christ died and we died in Him. *“For we know that our **old self** was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”* (Romans 6:6,7)

Christ was buried and we were buried in Him. *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death.”* (Romans 6:3,4)

Christ was raised and we were raised in Him. *“. . . just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a **new life**. If we have been united with Him like this in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection.”* (Romans 6:4,5)

Christ ascended and we ascended in Him. *“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ.”* (Ephesians 2:6)

3. Christ lives in⁽³⁾ us. We are not only dead to sin but also alive to God in Christ (Romans 6:10,11).

EXPLANATION

“We know that we live in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.”
(1 John 4:13)

“The death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 6:10,11)

Our victorious new life in Christ:

The focus of this new life is God, not sin. Therefore, we can ask God for a release of His grace in times of weakness. We must walk in the Spirit—fellowshipping with God daily, hearing His voice daily, and responding to the Holy Spirit’s promptings daily. Through this, we will be continuously transformed into His image and likeness.

We have resurrection life in Christ. *“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.”* (Romans 8:11)

We have redemption in Christ. *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.”* (Ephesians 1:7)

We have righteousness in Christ. *“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”* (2 Corinthians 5:21)

We have rest in Christ. *“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.”* (Ephesians 2:6)

In Christ, we are in a position of rest. We are seated with Him at the Father’s right hand. Our salvation is complete. There is nothing we can add to the work of the Cross. This truth frees us to live life with a new motivation. We are not trying to get anything from God. We already have everything! Now, we have the privilege of pleasing God because we love Him.

The Weapons

1. The first weapon is the armor⁽⁴⁾ of God.

EPHESIANS 6:13-17

¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith,

with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God .

..

EXPLANATION

Paul uses the Roman soldier as a metaphor for our armor. He urges us to put on the full armor of God in order to stand against the schemes and attacks of the enemy. No one can put on the armor for another person. The individuals must consciously put it on themselves. Failure to do so may result in casualty.

The Roman soldier's armor was effective in battle. But it was tiresome on the long marches, and it was difficult to put on every day. So as the army grew progressively slack and undisciplined over time, the soldiers received permission to discard some of the more burdensome articles of armor, most notably the helmet and breastplate. Paul urges us to put on the full armor of God and not discard any portion of the armor because of laziness, apathy, or fatigue.

- The belt of truth ⁽⁵⁾. The soldier attached much of his equipment to his belt; it was the belt that held the armor together.

EXPLANATION

The enemy, the father of lies, is an expert in deception. The **belt of truth** is protection against his wiles.

“To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’” (John 8:31,32)

- The breastplate of righteousness ⁽⁶⁾. Positional righteousness (justification) refers to our position in Christ. It protects us from condemnation (2 Corinthians 5:21). Progressive righteousness (sanctification) refers to our progressive transformation into the image of Christ. It protects us from satanic incursions (Romans 13:14).

“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.” (Romans 13:14 NASB)

- The shield of faith ⁽⁷⁾

EPHESIANS 6:16

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one . . .

EXPLANATION

The NIV and NASB translate this verse ‘in addition to all,’ but many of the commentators translate it ‘over all,’ implying that the **shield of faith** is the covering over all the armor – an accurate historical and spiritual statement.

The Roman shield represented here is not the short round shield for hand-to-hand combat, but the full body shield of the heavy infantry (four feet long by two and a half feet wide and curved on the inner side) that covered all the armor of the soldier. This is an accurate picture of the role of faith—a complete covering for every part of our life.

The shield was covered with linen and leather to extinguish the fire-tipped arrows of the enemy. The ancient fire-dart was an arrow with a flammable head that was used to set fire to wood and tents.

The Roman historian Livy tells of a huge dart used at the siege of Saguntum that was propelled by twisted ropes.

“There was used by the Saguntines a missile weapon called *falarica*, with the shaft of fir, and round in other parts, except toward the point, where the iron projected. This part, which was square, they bound around with flax and pitch. It had an iron head three feet in length, so that it could pierce through the body with the armor. But what caused the greatest fear was that this weapon, even though it stuck in the shield and did not penetrate into the body, when it was discharged with the middle part on fire, and bore along a much greater flame produced by the mere motion, obliged the armor to be thrown down, and exposed the soldier to succeeding blows.”²

- The sword of the spirit ⁽⁸⁾. This is the Word of God wielded as a defensive weapon to parry the blows of the enemy, and as an offensive weapon to attack the strongholds of the enemy (Hebrews 4:12).

² *ibid.*

EXPLANATION

“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

The **sword of the Spirit** is the only offensive weapon Paul lists. The *machaira* was a short, two-edged sword carried by Roman legionaries, who wielded it with deadly accuracy. It was extremely difficult to approach a soldier well trained in the use of the *machaira*; the sword was short and could be moved rapidly. Because it was two-edged, it was possible to strike on either side without changing its position in the hand. Its razor-sharp point could pierce armor.³

NOTE TO TEACHERS

The shoes and helmet were no longer included for time’s sake. However, here is some information concerning them that may be used as required:

The helmet of salvation. This refers to the assurance of salvation—both now and in eternity.

The shoes of the gospel of peace. A Roman soldier wore a special military shoe that protected his feet without slowing him down. (Romans 10:15)

“And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’” (Romans 10:15)

The Roman soldier wore sandals bound by thongs over the instep and round the ankle, with soles thickly studded with nails. The word translated ‘preparation’ was sometimes used in the sense of ‘firm foundation,’ which suits this passage: . . . and having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace . . .⁴

Jim Laffoon said: “A clear understanding of the Gospel is critical in spiritual warfare. This is what gives us our traction on the slippery slopes of spiritual combat.”

2. The second weapon is covenant relationships⁽⁹⁾. Paul listed no armor for the back of the soldier because a continually advancing soldier needs no protection for his back, other than his fellow soldiers.

EXPLANATION

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm

³ The Believer’s Study Bible

⁴ Martin Vincent, Vincent’s Word Studies, vol. 3

alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

Divine partnership in **covenantal relationships** with other believers is a critical aspect of both the Christian life in general and spiritual warfare in particular.

The enemy (like a roaring lion) looks for isolated prey: believers who are not joined relationally to other believers. Isolation is not resolved by church membership only, but by genuine relationships.

Every believer needs at least three types of relationships:

- Pastoral relationships – Leaders they are accountable to.
- Peer relationships – Friends they are accountable to.
- Progeny relationships – Spiritual sons who are accountable to them.

3. The third weapon is the name⁽¹⁰⁾ of Jesus. The authority that Jesus won for us is delegated to us in His name. All Jesus was, and all Jesus is, is in that name—and He has given that name to the church (John 14:13,14).

EXPLANATION

“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” (John 14:13,14)

Every Christian has **authority** over the enemy **in the name of Jesus**. The name of Jesus is not a magic charm, however, to be used casually – as the seven sons of Sceva discovered. *“And these signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will drive out demons . . .” (Mark 16:17)*

“When Peter saw this, he said to them: ‘Men of Israel, why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? On the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.’” (Acts 3:12, 16)

“These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.” (Ephesians 1:19-21)

“Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and that every tongue

should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9)

4. The fourth weapon is the blood⁽¹¹⁾ of Jesus (Revelation 12:11). The blood of Jesus gives us assurance of victory.

EXPLANATION

*“They overcame him by the **blood of the Lamb** and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.” (Revelation 12:11)*

*“He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by **His own blood**, having obtained eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9:12)*

*“Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place **by the blood of Jesus**, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:19-22)*

*“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus**, His Son, purifies us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)*

*“And they sang a new song, ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain, and **with your blood** You purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.’” (Revelation 5:9)*

5. The fifth weapon is praise⁽¹²⁾ and worship (Psalm 149:6-9). The Bible is filled with examples of the spiritual power of genuine praise and worship (Acts 16:25,26).

EXPLANATION

*“May the **praise** of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them - this is the glory of all his faithful people. **Praise the Lord.**” (Psalm 149:6-9 NIV)*

*“But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and **singing hymns of praise to God**, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there came a great earthquake,*

so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were unfastened.” (Acts 16:25,26)

In 2 Chronicles 20:2-25, Ezra recounts the story of God delivering Jehoshaphat from his enemies. The following is a summary of the salient details.

Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, *“A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Sea.”* Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah.

Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel as he stood in the assembly. He said: “Listen, King Jehoshaphat . . . ! This is what the Lord says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.’”

After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to **sing to the Lord** and to **praise him** for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: *“Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever.”* As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. The men of Ammon and Moab rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another. When the men of Judah came to the place that overlooks the desert and looked toward the vast army, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped. So Jehoshaphat and his men went to carry off their plunder, and they found among them a great amount of equipment and clothing and also articles of value—more than they could take away. There was so much plunder that it took three days to collect it.

“Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play the harp with his hand, and you will be well.” (1 Samuel 16:16)

“But now bring me a minstrel.’ And it came about, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.” (2 Kings 3:15)

6. The sixth weapon is prayer⁽¹³⁾. All praying is valuable in combating the enemy, but two kinds of praying are especially effective: praying in tongues and praying corporately.

- Praying in tongues allows us to speak directly to God, and to pray in accordance with the will of God (1 Corinthians 14:2; Romans 8:26,27).

EXPLANATION

“For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God.” (1 Corinthians 14:2)

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.” (Romans 8:26,27)

- Praying corporately combines the prayers of many Christians into a barrage of power (Matthew 18:18-20).

“I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:18-20)

ACTIVITY

1. In what way do you use the *armor of God* as a weapon in your daily life? How has it helped you to have victory over a particular challenge?
2. What specific schemes of the enemy do covenant relationships have the power to defeat?
3. Which weapon discussed in this session is especially relevant to your life right now? Why? How can you use it with greater effectiveness?

APPENDIX: THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

Angels have many duties. One important duty is actively assisting the church in the battle against the enemy.

1. Angels are engaged in war.

DANIEL 10:12,13

¹²Then he [an angelic messenger] said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. ¹³The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me . . ."

It is intriguing to see the work of angels through prayers. Believers may sometimes be tempted to believe that God has not heard their prayers or is slow in answering them. This is not the situation at all, as with Daniel. The delay Daniel experienced was not due to any problem in his praying, nor was God's ear closed to his request. Rather, the delay was caused by demonic interference.

2. Angels protect and assist the believer.

PSALM 34:7

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and delivers them.

PSALM 91:11,12

¹¹For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. ¹²On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

The following are a few examples where angels protected and assisted believers.

- Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego

DANIEL 3:28

Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God."

- Daniel

DANIEL 6:22

“My God sent his angel and shut the lions mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.”

- Elisha

2 KINGS 6:16,17

¹⁶He said, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” ¹⁷Then Elisha prayed and said, “O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.” So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

- Peter

ACTS 12:5-11

⁵So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. ⁶Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. ⁷And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” And the chains fell off his hands. ⁸And the angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” ⁹And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. ¹¹When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.”

- Apostles

ACTS 5:19,20

¹⁹But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ²⁰“Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.”

- Paul

ACTS 27:23,24

²³“For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, ²⁴and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.’”

3. Angels minister to believers.

HEBREWS 1:13,14

¹³And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? ¹⁴Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

4. Angels give guidance and direction. (The following verses detail situations where angels ministered guidance to individuals.)

- Mary and Mary Magdalene

MATTHEW 28:5-7

⁵But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”

- Philip

ACTS 8:26

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place.

- Cornelius

ACTS 10:3-5

³About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, “Cornelius.” ⁴And he stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. ⁵And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter.”

5. Angels direct sinners to salvation.

ACTS 11:13,14

¹³“And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; ¹⁴he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’”

Angels tell men where to go to hear the gospel. Angels cannot preach the gospel. God has given the ministry of reconciliation to the Church, to believers. Angels cannot preach the gospel because they have never experienced the grace of God delivering them from sin through the blood of Christ—i.e., they cannot testify to an experience of being born again and forgiven of their sin through God’s grace. God has not given angels this ministry; it has been given to the Church!

6. Angels execute judgment.

- Herod

ACTS 12:23

Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.

- The Assyrian soldiers

ISAIAH 37:36

And the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.