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Spiritual Warfare: Overcoming the Enemy

# Spiritual Warfare: Overcoming the Enemy



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PRECEPT MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

**4**minute  
BIBLE STUDIES



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# SPIRITUAL WARFARE: OVERCOMING THE ENEMY

**T**he first rule of battle is this: know your enemy. A thorough knowledge of the opponent's strength, his probable line of attack, and his tactics are vital to achieving victory. So how complete and accurate is your understanding of your enemy, the devil? Did you even know you had an enemy?

The Bible clearly shows that every one of us lives in the midst of a spiritual battle, whether or not we realize it. Yet many—even many believers—make the mistake of dismissing the enemy as a benign cartoon character with horns and a tail. Others become preoccupied with the enemy, fearfully focusing on his power rather than living in the reality of God's strength. As

you'll discover in the weeks ahead, neither approach reflects the battle-ready perspective we need to walk daily in victory.

It is imperative that we have accurate information about our enemy, who is bent on destroying our ability to effectively serve God. For the next six weeks, you will dig into the Word of God to discover the truth about the devil for yourself. Knowing this truth will enable you to stand firm when you encounter the enemy!


## WEEK ONE

Who is the devil? What do you know about him and where did you get your information? From movies? books? video games? As a follower of Christ, it is important that you know exactly who the devil is—because his goals involve you personally. The Bible has a lot to say about him, and this week we will begin to discover those truths for ourselves.

### OBSERVE

We will begin our study in Genesis chapter 3. Keep in mind that the Bible is a progressive revelation of truth. In other words, God reveals truth little by little, building on what He has revealed before. We won't learn all there is to know about the devil in this lesson, but by the end of the course, you will be able to recognize him and his tactics.

**Leader:** *Read Genesis 3:1–7 aloud.*

- *Have the group say aloud and mark each mention of **the serpent**, including pronouns, with a pitchfork, like this: *

### GENESIS 3:1–7

<sup>1</sup> Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’”

<sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;

<sup>3</sup> but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said,

‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’ ”

4 The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die!

5 “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were

*As you read the text, it's helpful to have the group say the key words aloud as they mark them. This way everyone will be sure they are marking every occurrence of the word, including any synonymous words or phrases. Do this throughout the study.*

## **DISCUSS**

- Look where you marked references to the serpent. What did you learn about the serpent, his character and his tactics?
  
- Discuss how the woman responded to the serpent and the action she took.


- What happened as a result of her actions?

opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

## OBSERVE

Eve ate the fruit and shared it with her husband. Their eyes were then opened, just as the serpent had promised. But the story doesn't end there.

*Leader: Read Genesis 3:8–13 aloud. Have the group say aloud and mark...*

- every mention of **LORD God**, including pronouns, with a triangle: 
- each reference to **the serpent**, including pronouns, with a pitchfork.

## DISCUSS

- What did you learn about God in this passage?

## GENESIS 3:8–13

**8** They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

**9** Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”

**10** He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.”

11 And He said,  
“Who told you that  
you were naked? Have  
you eaten from the tree  
of which I commanded  
you not to eat?”

12 The man said,  
“The woman whom  
You gave to be with  
me, she gave me from  
the tree, and I ate.”

13 Then the LORD  
God said to the  
woman, “What is this  
you have done?” And  
the woman said, “The  
serpent deceived me,  
and I ate.”

- How did Adam and Eve respond to God, both in their behavior and conversation?

- What did you learn about the serpent and his tactics?

## OBSERVE

God questioned the man and the woman. Then He turned His attention to the fourth participant in these events.

***Leader:** Read Genesis 3:14–15 aloud. Have the group say and mark...*

- every mention of **LORD God**, including pronouns, with a triangle.
- each reference to **the serpent**, including pronouns, with a pitchfork.

## DISCUSS

- Who was God speaking to in these verses, and what did He say?
- What did you learn about the serpent and his future?
- What did you learn about his ongoing relationship with mankind?

## GENESIS 3:14–15

**14** The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life;

**15** and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

**REVELATION 12:7–10**

<sup>7</sup> And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,

<sup>8</sup> and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.

<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

<sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the

**OBSERVE**

Now let’s go to the last book of the Bible, where we’ll learn the identity of the serpent. Revelation 12:7–10 describes a war in heaven. However, our focus today is not on the war but on learning more about the serpent, who plays a role in this war.

*Leader: Read Revelation 12:7–10 aloud.*

- *Have the group say aloud and mark with a pitchfork each reference to **the dragon**, including pronouns and synonyms. Watch carefully to be sure you mark all the names by which the dragon is called.*

**DISCUSS**

- What did you learn about the serpent?
- How is the serpent described? What name(s) is he called by?

- How does this compare to what you saw in Genesis 3?
  - What are the serpent's tactics, according to verses 9 and 10?
  - If the two passages you've looked at so far (Genesis 3:14–15 and Revelation 12:7–10) were your only sources of information about the enemy, what could you learn from them that applies to your own life?
- salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.”

## OBSERVE

We've already gained vital knowledge about the enemy and his intentions, but the Bible provides much additional information about how the enemy works. To give His disciples insight on this topic, Jesus told a parable about a farmer who planted, or sowed, seed in his field. That night an enemy came and sowed weeds on the same soil. As a result, wheat and tares (weeds) grew up together. The farmer left the weeds alone until the harvest, knowing that in pulling out the tares he risked destroying the wheat. The disciples asked for an explanation and this is what Jesus said.

### MATTHEW 13:37–39

<sup>37</sup> And He said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,

<sup>38</sup> and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one;

*Leader: Read Matthew 13:37–39 aloud.*

- *Have the group mark each reference to **the enemy**, including synonyms, with a pitchfork.*

## DISCUSS

- How is the enemy described?

- What has the enemy done?

**39** and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.”

### INSIGHT

The terms *Satan* and *the devil* both refer to a single entity—our enemy. *Satan* is found fifty-four times in the Old and New Testaments, while *devil* is used thirty-five times and occurs only in the New Testament.

*Devil* means “accuser, slanderer.”

*Satan* means “adversary, the enemy.”

**JOHN 8:44**

You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

**OBSERVE**

In this next verse we find Jesus speaking to a group of religious leaders who refused to listen to the truth.

*Leader: Read John 8:44 aloud.*

- *Have the group mark each reference to **the devil**, including pronouns, with a pitchfork.*

**DISCUSS**

- What did you learn about the devil? What words summarize his nature?

## WRAP IT UP

Who is the devil? We've learned that he was the serpent in the garden with Eve in Genesis. He is also the great dragon who will one day be thrown down, according to Revelation 12. The devil also is known as Satan and the father of lies.

But the most important truth we discovered this week is that he is our enemy! From the beginning he has aligned himself against God and all who serve Him—and he will continue his fight to the end.

The devil is described in Genesis as being “more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made” (3:1). He questioned God's word, cast doubt over God's character, and deceived Eve into eating from the tree which God had said not to eat from. The devil was a murderer from the beginning, and there is no truth in him.

We can't afford to ignore the enemy or pretend he doesn't exist; but we also don't need to live in fear. God has equipped us with everything we need to defend ourselves against the devil's attacks. Determine today to finish all six weeks of this study so that you will recognize your enemy and his tactics.