

# SPIRITUAL FORCES: EXPOSING THE DEVIL

August 20, 2017 | Pastor Randy Remington

The series that we are starting this morning is important, but it is also serious because of the hour we live in. Our focus will be on what it really means to be part of the "Army of God".

We want to be careful with this phrase because it can be misunderstood. The context, as we shall see it, is about "kingdoms"; specifically God's Kingdom and the Kingdom of Darkness. This is about being God's warriors, not bound by a specific earthly nation or people group. It is an army that is His church, made of many different people, from different ethnic groups, that reside in many different nations, that speak many different languages.

So today we begin by asking; "how does the enemy work in our world"? We study this, not to make Satan our focus or to glorify him, but to expose his works.

Satan, or the enemy, is mentioned over 250 times in scriptures. As an average, for example, in the New Testament alone, "the enemy" would be mentioned one time in every chapter.

***"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:10-12)***

Historically, from the first century on, it was believed and understood that human brokenness and pain come from two resources.

- Human disobedience and fall
- Angelic disobedience and fall

Jesus taught us in the Lord's Prayer how to address these two areas:

"Forgive us our sins"  
"Deliver us from evil"

Evil is the fruit of disobedience and we know that evil can exist in many forms. To be free from evil, we need deliverance. Hollywood loves to display evil.

We have seen throughout history that evil tends to influence institutions (human systems) far more than individuals. However, institutions become strongholds of evil that have a far reaching influence on many things including people, people groups and nations.

So we must distinguish between sinfulness and evil. These are sourced in human and angelic disobedience...both are broken by the cross.

This is very clear from Paul in Acts 26:17-18:

***"I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."***

Make no mistake there is a cosmic battle going on, that is not with people. Although it's difficult for some in our modern culture to comprehend or understand, it is still a true fact. We are engaged in a tension between two kingdoms. The church can address things in this current conflict because it is not beholden to any nation. Also it is the only group that has the authority to deal with the true enemy in this war zone.

We will look at one aspect in this lesson, as we expose the Devil and his works. This is our goal; “aware of the Devil and impressed with God”

### **“Devil” (Diabolos): Slanderer, accuser**

The Devil is a divider; he brings division wherever he can. His historic targets will be; separation from God, our spouses and from the family of God. Let’s break these down a little more. The Apostle Peter gave us great insight and instruction in his first letter:

***“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.” (1 Peter 5:8-9)***

“Resist him”- this will be a reoccurring theme that we will learn more about as we go. But there is a challenge to “stand firm”, understanding we don’t have to allow him to run amuck. The Devil is actively looking for opportunities, he is lurking and waiting for an opportunity to bring division, destruction, etc.

## **FOUR RELATIONSHIPS THAT THE DEVIL WANTS TO SEPARATE YOU FROM:**

### **1. US FROM GOD**

- Satan accuses God to us

***“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)***

Every time something bad happens in our lives, Satan will seize the opportunity to whisper in our ears. He will say; “you can’t trust or count on God”! If you think about it, this goes all the way back to the garden, two people who had everything and yet the serpent was able to deceive them concerning God’s character.

The Devil is subtle and sly, as he whispers these things we must take these thoughts captive. We then speak truth from his word, this is what Jesus did when he faced the Devil, it’s no different for us.

### **“Every thought that you don’t take captive will take you captive”**

- Satan accuses us to God

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

God doesn’t listen to these accusations, because we have a mediator.

- Satan accuses us to ourselves

We need to be able to hear the Holy Spirit convict us of sin. We know it is him because:

### **“Conviction of the Holy Spirit is specific, loving and helpful.”**

When we respond to the Holy Spirit there is forgiveness and freedom. God in the person of the Holy Spirit is not angry. He convicts us because he loves us. It’s never about condemnation; Jesus was condemned for us. If you feel condemned, remember Satan accuses us to ourselves.

***“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1-4)***

**“Condemnation is about us...Grace is about Jesus”**

## 2. US FROM OUR SPOUSES

***Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning." (Matthew 19:8)***

How do our hearts become so hard to our spouses? The accuser takes advantage of our grudges, our unforgiveness and that leads to anger and hardness.

***"Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold." (Ephesians 4:25-27)***

There is a clear and strong warning to not give the Devil a "foothold". When we withhold forgiveness, we're aligning with the wrong kingdom! Thoughts begin to come into our minds, "maybe I married the wrong person". His goal is to bring division in any form he can.

We see this in a conversation between Jesus and Peter. After Jesus told the Disciples that he was going to be delivered up and crucified, Peter said "no" this isn't going to happen. Interestingly, Jesus responded "get behind me Satan" because he knew God's will; the kingdom purpose of his death.

## 3. US FROM THE CHURCH (FELLOW BELIEVERS)

***"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:20)***

God doesn't want us by ourselves, we weren't created that way. The enemy wants us away from the flock and from our shepherd, then he will pick us off.

***"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)***

The Devil is not really creative, he is more like a parasite that will attach himself to our selfishness, pettiness and bring division.

## 4. US FROM AUTHORITY

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

Generally, our culture has become very sarcastic about most authority and at times outright rebellious. We cannot give the enemy a foothold in this area, even if we don't agree with them, their policies, decisions, etc. Don't be pulled into and participate in this (whether that is verbally or on social media), you are first a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven!

We need to be careful how we speak about people in leadership, we can remove ourselves from underneath a God ordained covering...even if we don't like them or their policies.

Let's end this first lesson, with a question; how do we overcome the Devil? Let's read:

***"Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They triumphed over 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. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." (Revelation 12:7-12)***

- Blood of the Lamb
- Word of Testimony
- Loved not their lives even unto death

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As you look again at the bottom of page one, we learned that from the first century on, it was understood that human brokenness and pain came from two resources. What are these two resources and how do they relate to the two sentences from the Lord's prayer?
2. Next we have seen throughout history that evil tends to influence institutions (human systems) far more than individuals. In your life or studying of world history, have you seen evil in earthly institutions? Have you ever observed one that you would call a stronghold of evil or that had a far reaching influence on many things including people, people groups and nations?
3. Before we look at the "Four Relationships that the Devil wants to separate you from", at the bottom of page 2 of our notes we begin to expose who the Devil is and what he does. What were some of your first observations and what does 1 Peter 5: 8-9 teach us?
4. Let's now review the Four Relationships that the Devil wants to separate you from. Look at the information in your notes to help with the discussion:
  - The Devil wants to separate us from God.
  - The Devil wants to separate us from our spouses
  - The Devil wants to separate us from the Church (Fellow Believers)
  - The Devil wants to separate us from authority
5. Lastly, in Revelation 12 we are promised to overcome the "accuser" with three things; what are they and what do they mean to you?