

☞ **Winning the Battle**

Last week: **How to Renew Your Mind... Pray**; bring God into the mental conversation... **Ponder**; think about what's true, noble, right, pure, etc.... **Practice**; take responsibility for your thoughts, read your bible every day, resist the enemy.

There really is an enemy! It's important to remember who he is. It's not other religions or opposing political views. It is not people at all. The real enemy is spiritual and he works behind the scenes stirring up those kinds of battles.

Ephesians 6:12

our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Our true spiritual enemy wants to ruin us, especially when we are walking with God.

In 2 Chronicles with King Jehoshaphat, the enemy attacked as soon as the people got serious about going after God. The enemy does not like to see progress in your spiritual ☞ walk and he **will often attack when you are moving forward with God**. GI Joe said, "knowing is half the battle." So it's smart for us to be aware of the enemy's tactics. There really is an enemy and the Bible tells us how he tends to operate.

☞ **John 10:10** (referring to the devil)

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy

Let's talk about some of his methods...

☞ **Deception**

We can see this from the very beginning...

Genesis 3:4, 5

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

"You will be like God..." (But they already were like God, cf. 1:26-27)

The first sin recorded was prompted by deception and pursued by desire.

☞ **John 8:44**

he is a liar and the father of lies.

2 Corinthians 11:14 (many of his tactics appear as good things)
Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.

☞ **Division**

Genesis 3:8 (he wants to separate us from God)
they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:12 (he turns us against each other)
The man said, "The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

Zechariah 3:1 (he brings accusations and condemnation) (different than conviction)
Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.

☞ **Accusation is actually doing the Devil's work.**

Jesus prayed for unity amongst believers in John 17.
Paul appealed for unity numerous times.

Jesus, himself gave us advice on keeping unity in Matthew 18:15: "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you."

United we stand, divided we fall.

☞ **Distraction**

Genesis 3:1 (he gets us focused on side issues)
"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden!'"

Often the distractions are actually good things, but they turn us away from the best thing.

1 Peter 5:8 (he stirs up fear as a distraction)
Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

☞ **False Evidence Appearing Real**

☞ **Doubt**

Genesis 3:1

"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

☞ **Doubt yields instability and unbelief which is sin:**

James 1:6-8

he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

*Doubt sees the obstacles; faith sees the way.
Doubt sees the darkest night; faith sees the day.
Doubt dreads to take a step; faith soars on high;
Doubt questions, "Who believes?" Faith answers, "I."*

☞ **Fantastic Adventures In Trusting Him**

☞ **Discouragement**

Genesis 3:5

"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

☞ **He wants us to think we're missing out on something.**

--James S. Hewett... Mary was having a tough day and had stretched herself out on the couch to do a bit of what she thought to be well-deserved complaining and self-pitying. She moaned to her mom and brother, "Nobody loves me -- the whole world hates me!" Her brother, busily occupied playing a game, hardly looked up at her and passed on this encouraging word: "That's not true, Mary. Some people don't even know you." What a lift!

None of us are immune to discouragement. Everyone you have ever known has been discouraged at one time or another. You can be discouraged over and over again. In fact, you can even be discouraged by the fact that you are discouraged a lot.

You've probably heard about the Devil's favorite tool... discouragement. We are well aware of temptation, pride, greed, envy, etc. If he can get you discouraged, then he can much more easily apply those other tools.

Deception; Division; Distraction; Doubt; and Discouragement are all tactics of the enemy.

☞ So, Be Aware

2 Corinthians 2:11

...that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

One form of military tactics is called the “Intelligence Strategy.” You’ve heard of the CIA, and soldiers know about “recon.” It’s all about knowing where the enemy is, understanding him and learning how he works, so that we can preempt his attacks.

In hand to hand combat, there’s the strategy of “Center of Gravity,” which focuses on the core or the heart of the enemy in order to knock him down. At his core, our spiritual ☞ enemy is a liar. So, **know the truth**, and the truth will set you free.

In 1 Chronicles 14, David was anointed king and then the Philistines attacked. Here we are again; the enemy attacks when you are moving in God’s direction. So, be aware! Deception, division, distraction, doubt, and discouragement are all tools of the enemy.

Leaders in the military always apply what is known as the “Grand Strategy.” This basically means to keep the end goal in mind. You need to know what the overall objective is. Don’t let the enemy deter you from that. So, spiritually speaking, what is the overall ☞ objective? **To be Christlike!** It’s part of our vision and focus here at OBC... the Fullness of Christ.

☞ Be Alert

1 Peter 5:8

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

In David’s case, he didn’t ignore the Philistine’s attack, neither did he run. Instead, he ☞ went out and **faced them head on.**

Military forces love to control the high ground. It gives a vantage point to better see what the enemy is up to. In modern warfare, it’s often about “air superiority.” We need to be alert. Also, the high ground has other obvious implications... in every day matters, ☞ especially involving other people, **always take the high ground.** Don’t go down to the enemy’s level. That’s a trap!

Another military tactic is called the “Blitzkrieg.” Basically, it means that when you are aware of the enemy, you attack first, thus allowing him no chance to damage you. When you sense the devil prowling around you, go on the offensive! Quote the word of God! Pray! Worship God!

Back to David in 1 Chronicles 14. He defeated the enemy using God's tactics. But, it wasn't long before the enemy attacked again. So, be alert! The enemy is relentless.

☞ **Be Armed**

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ...Stand firm then, with the belt of **truth** buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of **righteousness** in place, **15** and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of **peace**. **16** In addition to all this, take up the shield of **faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. **17** Take the helmet of **salvation** and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word of God**. **18** And **pray in the Spirit** on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

In the military, soldiers nearly always wear some form of armor. And, there are entire armored divisions. We need to be armed for our spiritual battle.

In David's case, the first thing he did was to inquire of God. And when they attacked again, he inquired of God again. Church, we need to be people who pray. When the going gets tough, do you turn to God or do you turn away? The bible says that David went "up" to defeat his enemy. We need to be moving upward, keeping our eyes on God. When we allow ourselves to get down and discouraged, the enemy is winning. Keep your ☞ head up! **God is with you.**

One of the most widely used military tactics is the "Alliance Strategy." Don't go it alone. God is with you, and so are many others. When the enemy seems undefeatable, ☞ **enlist the help** of your brothers and sisters in Christ.

☞ All of this spiritual armor is related to the Bible, so **Read your Bible**. It is truth. It trains us in righteousness. Faith comes from the word. And, the gospel is power for salvation.

And, all this armor is tied to Jesus... He is the truth. Through him we become righteous. We have peace through Christ. He is the perfecter of our faith. Salvation is found in him. ☞ And, he is the Word; the sword comes out of his mouth. (Rev. 1:16) **Draw near to Jesus.**

--Theodore Cuyler... Every step toward Christ kills a doubt. Every thought, word, and deed for him carries you away from discouragement.

So, be Aware, be Alert, and be Armed. Read your Bible and Draw near to Jesus. You can win this spiritual battle!