

December 6, 2015

## The Battle For Your Soul Ephesians 6:10-13

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

You may not realize it, but you—yes you—are in a serious \_\_\_\_\_ battle. Today we're going to talk about the battle for our \_\_\_\_\_. We pray that the Lord's will may be \_\_\_\_\_ on earth as it is in heaven. This means we must take the time to \_\_\_\_\_ the will of the Lord by a serious and sincere study of the Word of God, and we must \_\_\_\_\_ what it teaches. Psalm 119:1-3 says, "Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who \_\_\_\_\_ in the law of the LORD! Blessed are those who \_\_\_\_\_ his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways!" We want God to bless us, and we know that we must \_\_\_\_\_ to God if we're to please Him.

We live in a chaotic world with many conflicting voices \_\_\_\_\_ us to believe this or to do that. The voice of God in Scripture will tell us the \_\_\_\_\_, while the world's many voices will try to lead us \_\_\_\_\_ from God. Some voices encourage us to leave our faith and follow the \_\_\_\_\_. Some will tell us "there is no God," or "the Bible isn't true," or "we're the products of evolution," or "Christians are mean." Others will tell us that our \_\_\_\_\_ don't matter. If we believe the \_\_\_\_\_ that the world tells, we can be led astray just as Eve was in Genesis 3. We're facing an ideological battle and a \_\_\_\_\_ battle for our souls. I hope this gets your \_\_\_\_\_! Whether we believe and follow Christ or believe a lie and follow the world will determine how God will deal with us in \_\_\_\_\_. Are you committed to Christ? Are you listening to His Word? Are you winning or losing the battle for your soul?

### **Our reading today comes from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians 6:10-13.**

We're at war with the \_\_\_\_\_; and he's a formidable opponent. He's had many centuries to exploit human weaknesses so that he can lead us into sin and \_\_\_\_\_ us. This battle is a \_\_\_\_\_ one, like hand-to-hand combat between two soldiers. At the end of such a fight in ancient times, one soldier was standing and the other was \_\_\_\_\_. This battle is like a wrestling match where two people are personally involved eye to eye. You cannot \_\_\_\_\_ this battle off to somebody else; you must \_\_\_\_\_ the devil yourself. He has watched you and he \_\_\_\_\_ your strengths and weaknesses. He'll use every \_\_\_\_\_ he knows to defeat you. He has no qualms about cheating, lying, or using dirty tricks to \_\_\_\_\_. He's serious about defeating you and he intends to \_\_\_\_\_.

This spiritual battle isn't just for your \_\_\_\_\_; it's for your soul and the souls of your loved ones. It's the most \_\_\_\_\_ conflict that you'll ever face. If you're not \_\_\_\_\_ that you're in a fight, you will surely lose. If you don't have the \_\_\_\_\_ to fight, you will most certainly lose. If you're not \_\_\_\_\_ to fight, you cannot win. If you fight but you don't give it \_\_\_\_\_ that you have, you can still lose your soul. Your enemy, the devil, will do anything,

anything, to \_\_\_\_\_ your soul. If that means trickery, he'll lie and he'll \_\_\_\_\_ God's Word to suit his purposes.

**Read how the apostle Paul particularly warned Christians to hold to the truth in 2 Corinthians 4:2-4.**

The devil \_\_\_\_\_ people to the truth, so they'll believe a lie and be lost. When people leave the Word, they leave the truth. So, the devil twists and tampers with the \_\_\_\_\_. To \_\_\_\_\_ with the Word of God is to distort it or make it appear false by deception. Satan tampers with the Word to make it \_\_\_\_\_ something that it doesn't actually say. The person who uses God's Word cunningly just to \_\_\_\_\_ his agenda is in Paul's eyes disgraceful and underhanded.

Scripture reveals how Satan's schemes follow a common \_\_\_\_\_. If we understand the way that he operates, we can \_\_\_\_\_ for Satan's challenges. Satan, first, loves to ask questions that create \_\_\_\_\_ in the Word of God. In the Garden of Eden, the devil asked Eve, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" (Genesis 3:2). Satan knew what God had said; he wasn't asking the question to \_\_\_\_\_ the truth or to do the will of God. Rather he asked the question to \_\_\_\_\_ doubt in God! He wanted Eve to \_\_\_\_\_ God. Doubting the truth is the first step to \_\_\_\_\_. The devil will always give you all the \_\_\_\_\_ you should not do the will of God. He wants you to forget doing things God's way, and to think for yourself, and to do what you think is \_\_\_\_\_ for you. He wants you to think you know \_\_\_\_\_ than God.

Satan, second, \_\_\_\_\_ what God says. When Eve told Satan that she would die if she ate of that fruit or even touched it, the devil said, "you shall surely \_\_\_\_\_ die" (Genesis 3:4). The devil has no qualms about lying to achieve his \_\_\_\_\_. Satan always wants people to place their confidence in him, not God. Satan claims that God has \_\_\_\_\_ you, but he knows what is really true. This desire to know Satan's secrets and to be one of the \_\_\_\_\_ has led many unfortunate souls down the path to perdition. He appeals to the \_\_\_\_\_ in people: their flesh, their eyes, and their pride. He makes them feel God is holding them down and \_\_\_\_\_ them out of some pleasure or some knowledge.

The Lord Jesus told some Jews who followed Satan, "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 doesn't stand in the truth because there's 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" (John 8:44). All you have to do to promote a lie is to tamper with the truth just a \_\_\_\_\_. Rat poison is 98 percent corn meal and only two percent poison. If it weren't mostly corn meal, the rats wouldn't eat it; but two percent of poison is enough to kill the rat. A little \_\_\_\_\_ can still keep you out of heaven. Buy the truth and do not sell it.

Satan appeals to what you want to \_\_\_\_\_ and he makes you feel so good. Eve was deceived by Satan's lie. The devil likes to turn things \_\_\_\_\_ down. He makes what is evil appear good and appealing, and he makes what's good appear evil and ugly. God said, "Woe to those who

call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20). Have you noticed how our world has \_\_\_\_\_ anything righteous as being wrong, while things that are evil are all of a sudden made attractive and enticing? That's the devil's scheme.

Satan, third, produces an \_\_\_\_\_ version of "truth." He enticed Eve with these words, "For God knows that when you eat of it (that is, of this fruit) that your eyes will be \_\_\_\_\_, and you'll be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). The devil's alternative \_\_\_\_\_ truth with error. There is enough truth to \_\_\_\_\_ persuasive, but his message is full of misrepresentations and distortions. Add it all up and the bottom line is that it's just a \_\_\_\_\_ lie. Satan wants everyone to believe he has a \_\_\_\_\_ way, that God is trying to fool you, and that God is not your friend but is cheating you out of something really \_\_\_\_\_. His strategy is to get people to rely on him for real "\_\_\_\_\_." His alternative ways sound appealing, but, in the end what they do is to \_\_\_\_\_ those who follow it.

Satan, fourth, despises and persecutes anyone who \_\_\_\_\_ him. **Read what Jesus explained in John 3:19-20.** Jesus knew that if the world hated Him, it would also hate his \_\_\_\_\_ too when they preach the truth about sin. The devil loves to put down the \_\_\_\_\_ and the truth of the Bible. Peter said, "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, then you're blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you" (1 Peter 4:14). The devil is a \_\_\_\_\_, but God sees everything and rewards those who follow Him. If you hold to the truth and righteousness, be \_\_\_\_\_ the devil will despise you and speak evil about you.

Satan, fifth, pretends to be \_\_\_\_\_. Paul spoke about some deceivers who pretended to be men of God, but they actually served Satan. **Read 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.** In order to deceive Christians and lead them into his "alternative" churches, the devil \_\_\_\_\_ to be a Christian leader. There are religions today that pretend to follow the Lord Jesus, but the more you \_\_\_\_\_ them, the more you realize they're not God's people.

With high-sounding phrases, Satan tries to \_\_\_\_\_ people that Christianity is like a smorgasbord of ideas, from which you can pick and choose whatever doctrines you like, and throw away the others, of course. There are thousands of denominations in America, each teaching different \_\_\_\_\_ and wearing different names. It's become popular to follow some man's \_\_\_\_\_ rather than listen to the Word of God. This is the devil's work. He's the one who provides heresies. Heresies are divisive false teachings that lead people astray and \_\_\_\_\_ the church.

If you listen to the devil, you'll come to \_\_\_\_\_ that there's no such thing as heresy, that every view is equally good. When you believe that, you've fallen into the \_\_\_\_\_ of the devil. He tried to convince Eve to \_\_\_\_\_ listening to God and to \_\_\_\_\_ her own reasoning. When people ignore the Bible, the Word of God, and start listening to the beliefs of men, they fall \_\_\_\_\_ to the devil's schemes. Their eyes become \_\_\_\_\_ to the truth. God's ways and man's ways are not the \_\_\_\_\_. You can't ignore God's Word and build your house upon

\_\_\_\_\_, and expect everything to be all right between you and God. Eve was deceived; she lost sight of God and did what she \_\_\_\_\_ to do. If we're deceived and lose sight of God and do what we want to do, then we too will have to \_\_\_\_\_ the consequences of sin.

Number six, Satan \_\_\_\_\_ on the weak and the ignorant. **Read 1 Peter 5:8-9.** The devil is looking for \_\_\_\_\_ people who will fall prey to his immoral lifestyle and his disobedience to God. He uses false \_\_\_\_\_ and false \_\_\_\_\_ as alternatives to the truth. He whispers to our consciences that we can sin and not be \_\_\_\_\_ by it. He is deceptive!

No matter how appealing his message is, the devil's \_\_\_\_\_ is your spiritual death. So... resist him, \_\_\_\_\_ in your faith. Pay close \_\_\_\_\_ to the Word of God. Keep your eyes focused on the \_\_\_\_\_. God hasn't left us \_\_\_\_\_ to fight the devil. **Read what Paul said in Ephesians 6:13-17.**

These things will help you in your \_\_\_\_\_ for righteousness. Whenever you have this righteousness, the gospel of peace; when you have faith; when you have salvation; and when you have the Word of God, this \_\_\_\_\_ will protect you from the devil's weapons; the sword of the Spirit, God's Word, is a formidable weapon. It has the \_\_\_\_\_ that pierces hearts and souls. The best thing that you can do is to \_\_\_\_\_ Satan, and to do it you've got to know the Word of God. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by \_\_\_\_\_ word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Oh, how we need the Word of God and nothing else; nothing else will do.

When people follow their own desires rather than listen to and obey God, the devil \_\_\_\_\_ and they \_\_\_\_\_. My friend, what about you? Is the devil tricking you? If the Lord and His Word doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ in your life, you'll have a \_\_\_\_\_ who lies to you to take your soul away. If you follow the devil, he'll take you where you don't \_\_\_\_\_ to go. Let Jesus be Lord of your life. To get right with God and to overcome the devil, you need the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_. You can't win by your \_\_\_\_\_ strength. When Christ is in you and you are in Him, He'll give you the help and the strength that you need to overcome Satan. Ephesians 6:10-11 says, "Finally, be \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to \_\_\_\_\_ firm against the schemes of the devil."

To become a Christian, \_\_\_\_\_ with all your heart that Jesus is the Son of God, our Savior and the risen Lord. Out of love, \_\_\_\_\_ of every sin and start living as God teaches. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Be \_\_\_\_\_ or immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins will be forgiven. Galatians 3:26-27 says, "For you are all sons of God through \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were \_\_\_\_\_ into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Live the Christian life. Get involved at church. The closer you are to God, the easier it becomes to \_\_\_\_\_ the devil. Do it for yourself, and do it for those that you love. Your strong faith will lead others to place their faith in the Lord as well. Don't let another day go by till you have made your life right with the living God. Why not be obedient to Him today?