

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?