

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

I was talking to an elder some time ago who mentioned the battle going on between believers and Satan. I am guessing it was on his mind because he was preparing a message on it. He said that the weapons Satan uses against God's children are "anxiety, worry, and fear." This is absolutely true and everyone deals with them from time to time. These weapons are subtle so they can be hard to know when we are afflicted by them.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5 For although we walk in *the* flesh, **we do not war according to *the* flesh.** 4 For **the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds,** 5 **Casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ;**

We are engaged in a CONTINUAL spiritual war against Satan. The difficulty believers face is that Satan attacks us in very subtle ways. He uses tactics that are hard to recognize because we are flesh fighting against a powerful, wicked spirit enemy. Fighting such an enemy requires constant vigilance because Satan is a master of cunning and trickery:

GENESIS 3:1 Now **the serpent was more cunning than any** creature ...

2 CORINTHIANS 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as **the serpent deceived** Eve **by his craftiness,** so your minds might be corrupted from *the* simplicity that *is* in Christ.

Just how cunning is Satan?

2 CORINTHIANS 2:11 So that **we may not be outwitted by Satan,** for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

Satan tries to outwit us! We are in a war against incredibly vicious attacks. The fact that he is spirit and we are flesh is a completely unfair advantage without God on our side. So, what are strongholds? Spiritual strongholds are thoughts and behaviors that influence a person to the extent that they "exalt itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10:5). This may sound simple, but what in the world does that really mean? It means that anxiety, worry, and fear are thoughts that are contrary to KNOWING¹ we are of God and that God is WORKING in us for good².

Do we doubt our conversion and the Holy Spirit within us? Those doubts are exalted against—lifted up—and contrary to the knowledge that we are the children of God by His Spirit dwelling in us. Are we lacking faith? Is it because God has not answered prayers

¹ 1 Cor. 2:12; 3:16; 1 John 2:5; 4:6; 5:19.

² Rom. 8:28; Phil. 2:13.

for help or healing? Many if not most of the saints have experienced times like those, including the apostle Paul:

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-9 But in order that I might not be exalted by the abundance of the revelations, **there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me, so that I might not be exalted.** 8 **I besought the Lord three times for this, that it might depart from me;** 9 **But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you; for My power is made perfect in weakness.”** Therefore, most gladly will I boast in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

During those times of doubt, do we think about the many miracles God HAS done for us? After being denied healing THREE times, Paul must have been very depressed since he had been the instrument of healing to so many others. But notice what Paul said:

2 CORINTHIANS 12:10, 12 For this reason, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ; for **when I am weak, then I am [spiritually] strong.** ... 12 Indeed, **the signs of an apostle were demonstrated by me in all patience, in signs and wonders and miracles** among you.

However, it was thinking about the many miracles God did through him that was the key to fighting his own spiritual war against Satan and the demons. He learned through hard-won personal experience that this life is a constant battle—for ALL of God’s people. He talks about this very thing in his letter to the Ephesians, but have you *really* read it?

EPHESIANS 6:10-13 Finally, my brethren, **be strong [empowered] in the Lord,** and in the might of His strength. 11 Put on the whole armor of God so that you **may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil** 12 Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but **against principalities and against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual power of wickedness in high places.** 13 Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand.

Paul says first of all to be EMPOWERED by God. How? By not doubting the POWER of God in you through the Holy Spirit, which he likens to the armor of God. Verse 11 says that the armor of the Holy Spirit allows us to stand against the TRICKERY of the devil. So, what are OUR weapons that can defeat Satan?

EPHESIANS 6:14-18 Stand therefore, having your loins girded about with **truth,** and wearing the breastplate of righteousness, 15 And having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the gospel of **peace.** 16 Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the **faith,** with which you will have the power to quench all **the fiery darts of the wicked one;** 17 And put on the helmet of **salvation,** and the sword of the **[Holy] Spirit, which is the Word of God;** 18 Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints;

The TRUTH of God, the PEACE of God, the FAITH of Jesus Christ, God's promise of SALVATION, the HOLY SPIRIT in us, and the WORD of God! The apostles were keenly aware of this spiritual battle that takes place. Today, however, this godless world rejects the idea of wicked spirit beings deceiving and afflicting us. Peter warned:

1 PETER 2:11 Beloved, I exhort *you*, as strangers and sojourners, to **restrain yourselves from fleshly lusts which war against the soul**;

Living in a world that denies the existence of Satan and the demons can cause us to be less vigilant against the “fleshly lusts” that are actually a spiritual attack. Even Jesus Christ was afflicted by Satan, but He also knew exactly who was attacking Him and it is common to all believers³. God's people can be attacked and influenced by wicked spirits. This does not mean God's children are possessed. In fact, no one who has God's Holy Spirit can be possessed by demons. Remember Peter? Jesus told him, “Simon, Simon, listen well. **Satan has demanded to have you, to sift you as wheat.**” (Luke 22:31). Peter was protected by God's Holy Spirit even before it was IN him. The reason for these spiritual attacks is because God's Holy Spirit is a spiritual light that makes us stand out against those who love darkness:

LUKE 11:36 Now then, **if your whole body is light, not having any part dark, it shall be full of light, as when a lamp shining brightly** gives you light.”

So, putting on the armor of God sounds simple enough but exactly HOW do we do that?

PHILIPPIANS 4:6 **Do not be anxious** about anything; but by **prayer and supplication** with thanksgiving, **let your requests be made known to God** in everything;

Fasting along with prayers and supplications. What is the difference between a prayer and a supplication? The intensity of the heart and mind. Prayers can be a general petition before God such as a prayer at services. A supplication is a prayer that has a deep emotional need and desire behind it. In other words, it is a prayer of GREAT earnestness. David speaks of his supplications in many of the Psalms where he “cried unto the Lord.” The word *cried* means to loudly proclaim distress, pain, or sorrow. When Satan and the demons afflict us with anxiety, worry, and fear we must take it to God in tears and humility. That is when the miracle happens:

PHILIPPIANS 4:7 And the **peace of God**, which surpasses all understanding, **shall guard your hearts and your thoughts** in Christ Jesus.

In place of anxiety, worry, and fear God gives us His peace to GUARD our hearts and minds. Jesus Christ knew that we would be attacked and made us this same promise, so peace comes from Him AND God the Father:

³ 1 Cor. 10:13.

JOHN 14:27 Peace I leave with you; **My peace I give to you**; not as the world gives do I give *it* to you. **Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it fear.**

What is that peace? It is a peace to believe that we are begotten children of God, it is a peace that God is doing a work in us⁴ unto salvation, it is a peace that God will never leave nor forsake us⁵, and it is a peace that God knows our needs and will provide for us⁶. But believers have to “work out your own salvation⁷” as well. Beyond fasting, prayer, and supplications we must be filling our minds with, and growing in, truth, peace, faith, salvation, the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God⁸. How? Think about them. Replace the anxiety, worry, and fear with the thoughts of God⁹:

PHILIPPIANS 4:8-10 Finally, brethren, whatever **things are true**, whatever **things are honorable**, whatever **things are just**, whatever **things are pure**, whatever **things are lovely**, whatever **things are of good report**; if *there be* any virtue and if *there be* any praise, **think on these things**. 9 Whatever things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, you do also; and **the God of peace shall be with you**.

It says God SHALL be with you. This is an absolute PROMISE of God that He will never withhold from anyone.

PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13 I am not saying *this* in respect to being destitute; for I have learned *that* in whatever *circumstances* I am, to be content. 12 For **I have experienced being brought low**, and I have experienced abounding. In everything and in all things **I have been taught both to be full and to hunger, both to abound and to be without. 13 I can do all things through Christ, Who empowers me.**

Finally, Paul said that he endured many trials that brought him LOW. The Greek word means *depressed or humiliated*. The reality is that today most of God’s people live in relative peace and prosperity so now is the time to fight against anxiety, worry, and fear to prepare for the return of our Lord and Savior. This is a war that God promises we can WIN with His help! Aside from salvation, is there any greater promise?

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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<https://sabbathreflections.org>

⁴ Heb. 4:16.

⁵ Heb. 13:5.

⁶ Matt. 6:25-34.

⁷ Phil. 2:12.

⁸ Eph. 6:10-18.

⁹ Jer. 29:11.