

Trials After Embracing Christ

Part 4: Exposing the Devil's Lies

By Marc MacArthur

The devil, the archenemy of God and humanity, plays a significant role in the spiritual battles we face.

1 Peter 5:8¹

[8] Be sober; be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Unlike the world's subtle influence or the flesh's internal struggles, the devil's tactics are multifaceted and deeply rooted in deception. He employs various strategies to mislead us, hinder our faith, and ultimately separate us from God.

James 1:14-15

[14] But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

[15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

The primary weapon in the devil's arsenal is temptation. The devil strategically uses our vulnerabilities and weaknesses to entice us with worldly pleasures and sinful desires. He may present these temptations in a seemingly harmless light, disguising their destructive consequences. For example, he might tempt us to indulge in excessive entertainment, engage in gossip, or compromise our morals, framing these actions as harmless or even necessary for our social acceptance. His aim is to divert our focus from spiritual pursuits, leading us astray with promises of immediate gratification.

The devil whispers doubts and accusations into our minds, attempting to make us feel condemned and unworthy of God's love. These accusations form another pillar of his strategy. He may dredge up past mistakes or magnify shortcomings, leading to feelings of despair and discouragement. By convincing us of our unworthiness, he aims to cripple our faith and hinder our ability to experience God's grace and forgiveness. This ceaseless attack on our self-worth can make us weak, causing it to be difficult for us to fully embrace the transformative power of God's love and forgiveness.

2 Corinthians 11:14

[14] And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

Deception is a crafty tool also wielded by the devil, who can disguise himself as an "angel of light." Through false teachings and distortion of scripture, he sows seeds of doubt and confusion. By

¹ All Bible Verses are KJV unless otherwise noted.

twisting God's word, he leads believers astray, promoting ideologies that deviate from biblical truth and dilute the essence of the gospel.

Matthew 24:24

[24] For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

As Jesus warns us, this deception can be particularly insidious because it often appears as truth, making it challenging to discern without a deep and abiding understanding of Scripture.

2 Timothy 1:7

[7] For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

The devil instills fear and anxiety in our hearts, hindering our faith and trust in God. He may magnify potential dangers or exaggerate future uncertainties, paralyzing us with fear and preventing us from taking steps of faith. By exploiting our natural anxieties, he seeks to keep us from experiencing the peace and joy that comes from trusting in God.

Ephesians 6:10-18

[10] Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

[11] Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

[12] For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

[13] Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

[14] Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

[15] And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

[16] Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

[17] And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

[18] Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

While the devil is formidable, we are not defenseless against him. Scripture provides a blueprint for resistance and victory. Putting on the whole armor of God, as described in Ephesians 6, the armor of God equips us with the spiritual tools necessary to withstand the devil's assaults. This includes the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. By actively wielding these spiritual weapons, we can deflect the devil's attacks and discern his deceptive tactics.

The belt of truth represents our grounding in God's word, which empowers us to recognize the devil's lies. The breastplate of righteousness protects our hearts from the accusations and deceptions of the devil, reminding us of our right standing with God through Christ. The shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace enable us to stand firm in the face of trials, grounded in the peace that comes from the good news of Jesus Christ. The shield of faith helps us to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one, providing a barrier against the doubts and fears he tries to sow in our hearts. The helmet of salvation guards our minds, reminding us of our secure position in Christ. Finally, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, is our only offensive weapon, enabling us to counter the devil's lies with the ultimate truth of Scripture.

Renewing our minds in scripture is essential for discernment and clarity. As we internalize scripture, we can identify the devil's lies and align our thoughts and actions with God's truth. A deep understanding of God's word equips us to expose the devil's deceptions and remain grounded in faith. This peace guards our hearts and minds, fortifying us against the devil's attempts to instill fear and doubt. Fellowship with other believers is also crucial in our battle against the devil. By surrounding ourselves with a community of faith, we find support, encouragement, and accountability, strengthening us in our walk with God.

James 4:7

[7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

When we stand firm in our faith, cling to God's promises, and actively reject the devil's temptations and lies, he loses his power over us. Our unwavering faith in God's goodness and protection disrupts the devil's schemes and weakens his influence in our lives.

The Christian journey is fraught with challenges, but armed with divine truth and empowered by God's grace, we navigate the battlefield of faith and will emerge triumphant. The devil has no power over us unless we yield to his temptations or believe his lies. Through faith in Christ, dependence on the Holy Spirit, and actively wielding the spiritual armor of God, we can expose the devil's deceptions, resist his attacks, and emerge victorious in our spiritual warfare.