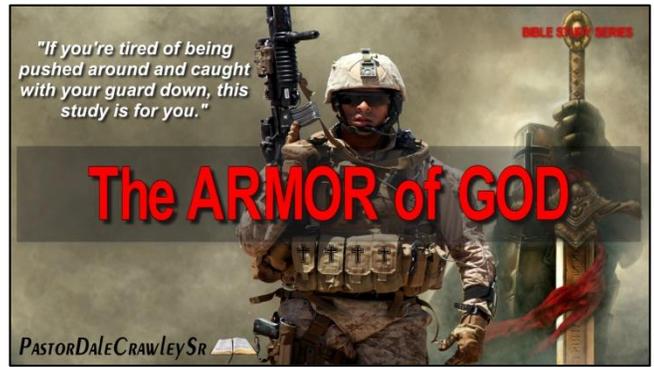


2 “UNMASKING THE ENEMY”

“10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NASU)



(Context: READ Ephesians 6:10-20)

REALITY CHECK The first-century Ephesian culture was well acquainted with the spiritual realm. Most everyone who lived in the Mediterranean world during this time period **believed evil spirits existed**. They didn't spend time trying to determine whether or not a spirit world was real ... but rather how to manage and hinder the beings who lived in it.

So when Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesian church, he would not have had to convince them of their need for a counter-measure against demonic influence. They knew they needed it desperately and usually looked to magic to assist. The effects of demonic activity were pervasive and everywhere.

Today, as we live out our beliefs about the spiritual realm, particularly in relation to our beliefs about Satan, we tend to make one of two mistakes:

1. **We overestimate** his impact in our lives, living with an inflated, erroneous perspective of his actual influence and abilities. As a result, we are laden with undue fear and anxiety.
2. **We underestimate** him and miscalculate the impact of his influence in our lives. We prioritize what we can see over what we can't.

As we discussed in class 1, we tend to concentrate primarily on what's visible and physical, instead of zeroing in on the invisible and spiritual. Or, if we are aware of the enemy's work, we aren't quite sure how to engage him and defeat him.

The enemy's approach is cryptic. He keeps his activity so cleverly hidden that we almost forget his existence or, at best, only recognize his presence in a theoretical, nonthreatening way. We are far less quick to discern his schemes, pinpoint his efforts, and proactively combat them the way other cultures (albeit incorrectly at times) may have done. We've become a culture relatively unaware of the enemy's presence, unaware of his conspiracies to destroy our lives, unaware that he's distracting us from reaching our destinies.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:14. How have you found this tactic of the enemy to be true in your own life?

Spiritual victory is directly connected to your ability to ... “Un-disguise” the enemy, to Uncover him, Unveil him, Unmask him. That's half the battle. But it's the half your enemy doesn't want you to pay much attention to, because once you do, you automatically begin to threaten his tyranny in your life!

The express purpose of Paul's command—**“Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might”** (Eph. 6:10) — **is so that we can “stand against the tactics of the Devil”** (v. 11). *Tactics* refers to deceptive strategies. Schemes. Dirty tricks. His attacks are always wrapped in the packaging of deception, always designed to manipulate the truth about God and about you.

What the enemy wants is to lead you into sin ... so that fellowship is broken between you and God—between you and the One who provides your true power and strength! Then, weakened and vulnerable, you'll be susceptible to his plans to destroy you. That's why he seeks to stay hidden as much as possible.

So don't believe for one second ... that the false ideologies of the culture (obsession with appearance, perceptions of worth, the redefinition of the family, all of it) have been developed by chance. The evil temptations that appeal to your specific desires are not accidental. The discord and disharmony that threaten your most valuable relationships are not coincidental. The temptations that tug at you during your weakest moments are not uncalculated. None of these things are happenstance. They are his deceptive tactics (and that of his evil entourage), specifically designed and personalized to keep you from experiencing abundant life!

READ EPHESIANS 2:4-7. In ancient times, being **“seated”** was the symbolic posture of a king whose army had already been victorious in battle. Instead of standing, pacing, worrying himself to death, he would park himself on his throne as a visible statement of his complete and utter triumph.

Christ our King is seated in heavenly places as a proclamation that ultimate victory over the enemy has already been accomplished. ***And you and I are seated there, too, since we've been made victorious in Christ.*** Your enemy knows it, and so should you. The cross and the resurrection were the final steps in sealing the claim of victory over his kingdom.

Satan knows that he cannot destroy you. Too late for that! The best he can do (and he intends to make full use of it) is to make your time on earth futile and unproductive, to suffocate you with sin, insecurity, fear, and discouragement until you are unable to live freely and fully. He can't “unseat” you, but he can intimidate you and render you ineffective and paralyzed.

KNOW WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH

WHAT'S IN A NAME? In Scripture, names were much more than nomenclature (*choosing names or titles*). **They revealed the character of the person.**



The same is true for our enemy. An overview of his names reveals his overarching methodology of attack against God's people. Here are some of them:

- 1. *Satan* means “the adversary” [of God].** The enemy is antagonistic to the plans and purposes of God. He will always seek to misconstrue and malign the character of God and to thwart the purposes of God (Job 1:6).
- 2. *Devil* means “slanderous.”** The enemy's intention is to defame and malign the character and intentions of God and others. He will whisper lies in hopes of denigrating God's reputation, which in turn will diminish your confidence in God and cause you to mistrust His direction (Matt. 4:1; Eph. 4:25-27).
- 3. *Lucifer* means “day star” or “shining one.”** The enemy's appearance is attractive, alluring, and charming. Because of this, he can approach you in an appealing way to lure and entice your attention and admiration. This deceptive package will often be the furthest from repulsive or foul, making his handiwork difficult to detect (Isa. 14:12-14; Luke 10:18).
- 4. *Tempter* means “one who tempts people for the purpose of enticing them to sin.”** The enemy seeks to mislead your passions so that you will seek to fulfill them in perverted, illegitimate ways. He'll intentionally set personalized temptations in your path that are distorted variations of God's gifts to you (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5).
- 5. *Ruler of the World* means the enemy's approach is not isolated to individuals.** He has collective cultural and global methods designed to derail entire nations and people groups from God's intended plan. He carefully crafts and proliferates philosophies, doctrines, and moral perspectives across entire demographics in order to steer whole societies away from God (John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4).
- 6. *Prince of the Power of the Air/Prince of Darkness* means the devil does not work alone.** He is the chief leader of the tribe of dark forces who seek to carry out his purposes in the domain of darkness—a very real, yet invisible realm that effects everything seen and heard in the physical, visible realm (Eph. 2:2; Eph. 6:12).
- 7. *Accuser* means “one who condemns.”** The enemy seeks to weaken the believer's confidence and influence by conveying condemnation and guilt. He points out and constantly reminds you of sin and mistakes in order to cripple the believer with discouragement and shame (Rev. 12:10).
- 8. *Father of Lies* means “liar” and “falsifier.”** The enemy's character contains no truth and light. When he speaks and acts, he will always seek to falsify and deceive. He will blatantly and unapologetically misconstrue the truths of your personal reality and circumstance. He will also seek to mislead you with inaccuracies regarding God, His Word, and His plans for you (John 8:44).