

To this point in our study of warring, we have answered two very important questions. We have allowed God's Word to provide those answers for us.

We started by answering the question: "With whom are we at war?" The biblical answer is found in Ephesians 6:11-12, which clearly tells us that our war is against the Devil and his demonic subordinates, not with our fellow man.

Then, last week, we answered the question: "Why war?" We saw through various scriptures that war was declared by Lucifer against God and against man. We also discussed how God weighed the cost of war and found the souls of mankind and the sanctification of his followers to be worth entering into war.

So we have identified the need for war and the enemy. It is now time for us to turn our attention to the importance of understanding how the Adversary works. For the foreseeable future we will spend a great deal of our time dealing with the details of Satan's schemes. Why? Because if we want to win those daily battles that we face, we must first be able to recognize them as actual battles. It is not enough to know what the evil one's long term goal is. We must know how he plans to achieve that goal. Allow me to illustrate.

A week from today, many of us will sit down and watch the Super Bowl. Anyone with a modicum of life experience and understanding of sports knows what the end goal of each team is; they want to win. To win they must score more points than their opponent. Now, if such knowledge is clear to us, it is certainly clear to the coaches and players on the competing teams. The difference between the average sports fan and the coaches and players is the level of understanding on how to achieve that goal.

Coaches and players will spend hours upon hours upon hours studying the plays and schemes of their opponent. They will look at offensive and defensive formations, personnel packages, and situations. They will compile data and study percentages. They will look for patterns, tendencies, and tells. They know that the difference between winning and losing may come down to one play or a matter of inches. Therefore, they study their opponent so they can devise a plan to defeat them. They will do all of this to win a football game.

Given what we've learned about the Devil, his goal, and the everlasting implications of him winning these skirmishes against our fellow man and us, shouldn't we be just as studious? Is this not in part what Paul was alluding to when, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he penned these words in 2 Timothy 2:15: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth"?

\_\_\_\_\_ Paul was one such workman. And in Ephesians 6:11 he encourages us to stand against the tactics of the Devil in the strength and armor of God. And in his letter to the church in Corinth he expressed the importance of not being ignorant of the schemes of Satan, lest he have an advantage over us.

Scripture: Eph. 6:11; 2 Cor. 2:11

I. Understanding How the Enemy Works: An Overview

A. **Demonic "Possession"**

1. Fully controlled by demons ("have" not "possessed")
  - a) Rare
  - b) Affects only unbelievers
    - (1) Rom. 6:6
2. Examples from Scripture
  - a) Demoniac (Matt. 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20)

B. **Demonic Affliction**

1. Physical, emotional, and/or financial infirmities
  - a) Not uncommon but also not a catch-all
2. Examples from Scripture
  - a) Saul - emotional distress (1 Sam. 16:14)
  - b) Job - boils, sores, financial ruin (Job 1 & 2)
  - c) Various
    - (1) Matt. 12:22 - blind & mute
    - (2) Mark 9:17 - mute & seizures
    - (3) Acts 8:7 - lame & paralyzed

C. **Demonic Influence**

1. False teachings and philosophies (1 Timothy 4:1-2)
  - a) Religious
    - (1) Purely pagan
      - (a) Promote worship of other "gods"
    - (2) Christian adjacent
      - (a) Use Christian verbiage but teach an unbiblical message
    - (3) "Christian"
      - (a) Impugn and compromise God's revealed truth
  - b) Worldly
    - (1) Self
      - (a) Humanism
        - (i) Moral and ethical relativity
    - (2) Societal
      - (a) When humanistic principles are largely accepted by the majority and used to pressure, persuade, or persecute those who believe differently
  - c) Examples from Scripture
    - (1) Adam and Eve - Pride
    - (2) Joseph's brothers - Jealousy and envy

- (3) David - Sexual immorality and murder
- (4) Elijah - fear and anxiety
- (5) Judas - greed

As I stated in our opening, we are going to spend a great deal of time detailing the various schemes of Satan. We will be focusing on the tactic of demonic influence. It is the most pervasive plan used by the prince of the power of the air. Its popularity lies in its effectiveness. It is not only successful in society. It has proven to be productive among the priesthood of believers. It is this ploy that penetrates our churches and leads to a compromising of God's truth and a capitulation of Christians.

Will you commit to following Peter's words of encouragement in 1 Peter 5:8? Will you dedicate yourself to being serious and alert for the attacks of the Adversary in your life and the lives of those around you? Will you devote yourself to the studying of Satan's schemes so that you may be a soldier who is equipped to identify the dangerous stratagems of the Devil?