



Forward

Pastor Travis Penn

I'm so glad you are taking this challenge. Early in 2019, I was at our Indiana Revitalization Conference and was talking briefly with our National Moderator, Tim York. Tim said something to me that I will never forget. He said:

“We are trying to build the church with toddlers rather than warriors.”

I started thinking about how we often cater to many different types of people that attend our churches. Sometimes we work so hard at trying to get people and keep people that we aren't developing a warrior spirit, but a spirit that always expects to get something rather than fight for something. Are we trying to bring people into a business, or prepare them for Battle?

About the same time as this meeting, I had returned from a trip to India and I had just participated in a program called SOULCON. I felt like the Lord wanted our church to try and grow together. One of the great parts of SOULCON is the daily challenges. So I approached Michael Seitz from our church to see if we could put together a 40 day devotional program for the church along with daily challenges.

Not only did Michael like the idea, he went ahead and wrote the entire devotional. I think you will enjoy the next 42 days and I hope you will grow in the Lord as you take on this challenge.

Introduction

This introduction will give you the basic concept of the Crosslife Free Will Baptist Church's Warrior Challenge. In order to negotiate the challenge, you must first understand how each daily devotion is structured. The challenge will take place over the next six weeks (42 days) and there will be a devotional reading and corresponding challenge with each day. There are focuses to each week, which provide an overarching theme for the week's readings. It is important to do the readings and challenges daily, but if you do miss a day, the readings and corresponding challenges should be made up. The Daily Devotions are broken down in the following areas:



Section one of the reading contains the daily challenge. The challenge can require you to do something as simple as reading or all the way up to and including light physical activity (such as a prayer walk or fellowshiping with people). Some challenges will be one simple step while others may have multiple steps to complete the challenge. Some require you to share your thoughts/feelings/results/or impressions with other members of the challenge, via Social Media, phone, email, text, and/or personal interaction. Some challenges might require activities that are to be done in fellowship with other believers. The church will coordinate events for these types of challenges and post information prior to the day of the challenge, so if members of the challenge want to participate collectively, they may do so. Do not skip any Daily Challenges as these are where you put what you are leaning in the devotional readings into action.

Section Two A, is a daily vignette that follows a fictitious, U.S. Army First Sergeant and his unit, over the course of 20 months, as they prove their metal as Soldiers in combat, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. These vignettes are designed to fit the overarching "Warrior" Theme of the challenge and detail events demonstrating the conduct and actions of Soldiers at war. The vignettes are presented in a chronological sequence from the day the unit is notified of its deployment through the unit's return home.



Section Two B is the Daily Reading and dovetails with Two A, and serves as the biblical and scriptural teaching for each daily devotion. The teachings have been consolidated through the study of many Christian Resources, to include books, periodicals, internet articles, and audio CD sermons. This section will serve as the discussion points for the Wednesday Night Bible Studies that are conducted during the six weeks of the challenge.



Section Three, contain Children's Application Questions. These questions are primarily designed for children kindergarten through fifth Grade. While the subject matter contained within Section Two A and B are not excessively graphic, there is still enough detail that is needed to provide a clear picture of Soldiers at war and to ensure that readers understand the seriousness of spiritual warfare. For older children, parents are encouraged to read the first two sections and make the determination if they are comfortable with their children participating in the readings and/or executing the Daily Challenges. There may not always be a children's section, but look for the children icon to alert you to special, child appropriate content.

Section Four, is the Notes and References Section, where the information was obtained. This should allow the readers to further research the subject matter in greater detail, at their discretion.

Week 1

The Nature, History, Expansion and Scope of the Battle



Day 01: There's a War On!

Monday, September 30th

"Eternal Vigilance is the price of Liberty." Thomas Jefferson



Today's Challenge: Romans Road Challenge (Romans 3:23)

Take the first step in memorizing the Romans Road. This can be a great tool for you to use to share the gospel with others. The first verse is Romans 3:23. "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

A First Sergeant sat in his office, reading an email regarding yet another tedious and short-fused deadline for a project, that someone else had just added to the mountain of deadlines his unit already had. The year is 2004 and the US Army has been engaged in the Global War on Terrorism for 3 years at this point. Warriors with REAL combat experience are still somewhat elusive throughout the entire army. The First Sergeant himself, even though he had been to many places in the world, still did not have a "patch on his right arm" (indicating that he has served in "combat" with the Army). He looked up from the computer screen, as the sound of his orderly room phone rang out, seeing the words "US Government" appear across the phones display.

The First Sergeant answered the phone to the sound of background noise and then to an officer that identified himself as being from the US Army G3 (Operations Management Section) headquartered at the Pentagon. "First Sergeant, why is your unit the only Military Police unit in the Army that hasn't been deployed?" The officer asked, as though the First Sergeant could honestly give him the answer. "Well I don't know sir. If you work at the Pentagon shouldn't you be able to tell me that?" The First Sergeant snapped back with a smile on his face. "Sir, I guess I would have to pass that question onto my higher command authority." The First Sergeant gave the Captain the information to contact his chain of command and the conversation ended...

“To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.” Jude 24-25 (NIV)



Daily Reading

Even though in this case the First Sergeant knew that at any time his unit could be called to go and fight in the war, this was somewhat of a wake-up call. The same thing in some cases must be done with Christians when it comes to spiritual warfare and their role in that warfare. Some Christians scarcely believe that spiritual warfare is real and then some don't think that they are “Warriors” in this war. Dr. Tony Evans, Senior Pastor of the Oakcliff Bible Fellowship, was once quoted as saying, “This warfare will be the source of your greatest joy or the source of your greatest pain.” (Evans, 2006). In order for us to understand the quote and its meaning we must first examine the *effects* that the battle can have on our lives. We must fully understand that spiritual warfare affects every area of our life and every individual in our life. None of us can evacuate ourselves from this war without spiritual assistance. There is no place to hide or take shelter on the spiritual battlefield and some Christians have become casualties in this war and they don't even know it. This warfare will affect us all in four major areas: Personal Lives, Family Lives, the Church, and the Culture.

It will affect our personal lives in the areas of thoughts and feelings (emotions). If we are not engaged in the fight, depression, downtroddenness, defeat, discouragement, and even personality disorders can occur. All of these things and a host of other adverse effects can slowly creep in or can even advance quickly against us, as the enemy attacks. Our very morality, or our ability to control our emotions, passions, or desires, can be compromised with little or no warning. In just one of many examples in the Bible, Paul wrote about this control of our emotions in order to deny the enemy control over us, in Ephesians 4:26 “In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry and do not give the devil a foothold.” (NIV)

This warfare can affect us within our family. The primary mechanism within the Christian Family that the enemy engages is the Marriage Relationship. If the enemy can force a husband to leave his wife then he has won a great victory. If he cannot cause the husband to leave then he pursues the wife and tries to break the family apart through her. He uses conflict, domestic abuse, separation, adultery, sexual immorality, pornography, and a host of other tactics to break the husband and wife apart in their relationship, thus breaking apart the family and causing many issues for everyone within that family. Ephesians Chapter 5 gives the husband and wife some of the most direct guidance within God's Word

on how to behave toward each other, to deny the enemy a “foothold” as spoken of above, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”(verse 21-25). Our children can be intensely affected by the enemy through a variety of means: broken homes, the presence of mental, physical and emotional abuse, behavioral problems, poor self image, issues with school performance, aggression, anxiety and depression. In perhaps one of the most well known verses to Christian Parents we are reminded, “Fathers, do not *exasperate* (or *provoke*, ESV) your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (NIV).

As a result of personal and family lives being affected by the war, the Church can be affected. Satan takes great pleasure trying to destroy the church that Jesus bled and died to build. Satan will cause discord and conflict wherever he can. He loves when church members argue about trivial things, such as colors of the carpet or big things, such as whether to add another service. If we give him the opportunity he is willing to stir the fire. Satan will also try to create “Burn out” within the church. He Satan loves to burn out church volunteers, staffers, and especially pastoral staff. He will make an effort to make them feel they are not good enough, no longer needed, their work is not appreciated, or that they no longer have anything to offer. Another way he will try to overcome our church is to attempt to bring in lies. He is not called the “Great Liar” for nothing. False doctrine will divide a body. Remember that Satan is crafty enough to make lies seem as though they are truths. Rumors and gossip are a rampant way that he tries to create disunity within the body. If he can plant the seeds of dissension into our hearts, little by little, over time, he can cause great strife within the body. Satan will also try to disguise an attack in the form of “activity”. Sometimes we as a church can get so preoccupied with doing something that we don’t stop, pray, and yield for God’s answer, to realize that just because we CAN do it, SHOULD we be doing it. We must take careful lead from the Spirit when planning and executing all church activities. By doing these things he has the illusion that he’s winning part of the battle (Edmonds, 2012).



Kid Friendly Ideas

1. What are some areas of our life that can be affected by not following God?
2. How can these areas be affected?
3. What are some ways that we can better follow God?
4. How can we ask God to intervene with us to prevent areas of our life from being affected?

Notes:



Day 02: Notification!

Tuesday, October 1st

"You are about to embark upon a great crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you,"

-Dwight D. Eisenhower, (1944), Letter to Allied Forces before the D-Day Invasion



Today's Challenge: Help Out a Person in Need

In today's challenge select a person in need. This challenge can be to assist someone that you already know or someone that you want to get to know better, or even a random stranger. Allow the Spirit to lead you. In order to inspire others, post to social media, share by text/email, or talk to someone in person and let them know how the Spirit led you to take the action and specifically what God did through you, for the person. Put your Faith into action Warriors!

The First Sergeant stood in the Motor Pool in front of a tactical vehicle watching two young Soldiers checking the oil. Suddenly a Soldier appeared from around another vehicle and stopped just short of his First Sergeant. The Soldier was clearly flushed and struggled to catch his breath. "First Sergeant, First Sergeant." He gasped to get out. "They need to see you at Post Headquarters right now!" the young Soldier spat standing straight up in his exhaustion. The First Sergeant Looked toward the huge building that was just a quarter mile down the road, from where his unit was located. "Copy that." The First Sergeant acknowledged wondering what this could possibly be regarding.

Upon arriving at the Headquarters, the First Sergeant found a high-ranking officer in his unit, and she informed him to come into her office. "First Sergeant, our unit will be receiving an order in the next few days, to deploy to Iraq by October." She continued to explain the minimal details of the order that she had "unofficially" been shown, in her position at the Post Headquarters.

Upon completion of the meeting the First Sergeant returned to the unit, to an entire group of Soldiers gathered around the unit area. They all awkwardly loitered around; none of them willing to ask their stiff-lipped First Sergeant, anything about what had happened. The First Sergeant went into his office and shut the door. He sat squarely down in his chair, behind his desk, with an alert posture. A million thoughts ran through his mind. He had expected this, but not quite this soon. He knew that he only had two more months to prepare a unit that had only been formed six months earlier, to go into combat in perhaps the most heated combat zone, in the most deadly operation in the world - Operation Iraqi Freedom.

He looked at the Memorandum that he had posted upon his arrival at the unit. It hung in various places around the unit's area and had served as a rallying point, for the Soldiers of this new unit, to help lash them together over the last six months. As he took stock of what was about to be initiated, he reread the letter to himself. The Subject of the letter was entitled "Spirit, Duty, and the Will to Win". Through four short paragraphs the First Sergeant spoke of the importance of the units motto "Honor and Courage", addressed the fear and uncertainty that some Soldiers felt toward the future, about the critical effort to get and keep good Soldiers, and told Veteran Soldiers and leaders of the unit to step up and make sure that they were taking charge at all times.

The First Sergeant stopped before he read number 5. He took a deep breath remembering how hard it had been to craft this closing paragraph:

"5. In closing, I would ask for all soldiers to stay the course. Just hold on a little longer. Reassure your families and yourselves that you can be confident in your skills, your equipment, your leaders, and above all else yourselves. You are my greatest asset. Years from now when your children and grandchildren look back on this time in history, they will remember you as one of the heroes, in a time when the world needed them."

The First Sergeant sat back into his chair after reading his memo and grimaced. He took a deep breath in and closed his eyes. He remembered September 12th, 2001. The day after the attack. America had received its notification for war just as his unit had just received its. He remembered that was the day that he had accepted Jesus into heart as Lord and Savior. He knew that this day would come. The day that he would be notified that he would be taking men into combat and he knew that he could not do it without Jesus. And just as on the night of September 12th when He had gone before the Lord to ask for His help, the First Sergeant went before Him again. In the quiet of his office he sought God's direction to begin what he would need to do.

"Then I heard the voice of the LORD saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" _ Isaiah 6:8



Daily Reading

All military units must be “notified” when they are selected to deploy for a mission. This gives the unit time to prepare and complete the myriad of tasks that are required to get them ready to go to war. When the unit is notified one of the first responsibilities is to inform the Soldiers of the unit, so that they have maximum time to get their affairs in order.

“Soldiers” (in case you missed it yesterday) you are being notified that you are in a war. Right now! It is a war that you were born into and that you cannot escape from. The very nature of this war is “Spiritual”. This spiritual conflict bleeds over into the physical world that you and I live in. It’s a spiritual conflict that takes place in the Angelic Realm, or as the bible calls it “Heavenly Places”. Everything in the physical realm (where you and I live) is affected by this war. Daniel 4:26 explains it as such, “acknowledge that Heaven rules.” This means that Heaven rules what takes place on Earth.

In Ephesians 6:12 we are exposed to the very essence of this war. It is not a battle against “flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of the dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms”. With this knowledge it should be noted that Satan can and WILL use people for his bidding in the physical world. These people are conduits in the spiritual battle. We as Christian Warriors MUST address the spiritual causes of the war in order to address the physical effects that it has upon our lives.

As Soldiers we must be conscious of how we view the physical world. There are multiple “worldviews” today. The first of these views is the “Naturalistic/Materialistic/Scientific Worldview”. This view says that man can figure it out on his own. That we we can do it without God. There is also a view known as the “Spiritual Worldview”. This view looks outside of the first world view, but doesn’t always follow God’s view either. People can look to horoscopes, palm readers, witchcraft, and other “spiritual” sources in this view. Then there is the view as Christian Soldiers that we must see the world, God’s Worldview. This view can be found in the Bible. The reading and memorization of the Lord’s Word. This is the only worldview can we can depend on as absolute truth.

Now that we have an understanding of the battles essence, we must understand the battles location. Earlier we spoke of the “angelic realm”, called “Heavenly Places” or “Heavenly Realms” as there are referred to in Ephesians 6:12. There are three levels of these Heavenly Realms; The First Heaven (Atmospheric Heaven), Second Heaven (Stellar Heaven), and the Third Heaven (The Throneroom of God). These Heavens exist in concert with each other but occupy different areas within the universe. The First Heaven is the atmospheric region that surrounds Earth. It is where we live. It is the “physical world”. The Second Heaven is what we refer to as Outer Space. The Third Heaven is spoken of in Ephesians 1:3. In Heavenly Places all forces of this war have been perfectly ordered to conduct battle. Angelic forces can occupy and battle in all of these places, but not simultaneously. God is in Heavenly Places with our blessings (Ephesians 1:3). Jesus is in Heavenly Places (Ephesians 1:19-20).



THE CROSSLIFE WARRIOR CHALLENGE

Weekly Theme: The Nature, History, Expansion and Scope of the Battle

We are in Heavenly Places (Ephesians 2:6). Angels (the ones that belong to God) are in Heavenly Places (Ephesians 3:10). The Devil and Demons are there (Ephesians 6:12).

Now that we have an understanding of the essence of the battle and where the battle is taking place we can move onto the next two lessons - the History of the Battle.



Kid Friendly Ideas

None for this lesson

Notes:



Day 03: History of the Battle - Part 1

Wednesday, October 2nd

“All civilizations owe their origins to the warrior; their cultures nurture the warriors who defend them.”

– John Keegan, 1993, British Military Historian



Today's Challenge: Pray for 5 Minutes Out Loud

You can praise or repent, ask or submit, or just give thanks. Just talk to the Lord.

The First Sergeant waited impatiently on the phone, in anticipation of talking to two of his Soldiers. They were both at Ft. Leonardwood, Missouri and were about to graduate from the US Army Military Police School. Upon receipt of their Alert Order, The First Sergeant had the duty to inform Privates Jim Waters and Private Shirley Wilson, that they would be deploying with the unit, upon their return from training. They had both by the Grace of God been placed into the same company and would arrive home just two weeks prior to the unit going to its mobilization station.

The First Sergeant was surprised that Private Wilson answered the phone, as he expected Private Waters to answer. The First Sergeant told the 18-year old Private who it was, and he could tell that she was a bit surprised that he had called her at her training company. He was unsure how either of them would take the news of the unit's pending deployment. He had only met Private Wilson once before she shipped to training and he had never met Private Waters.

The First Sergeant had never been one to “beat around the bush” when he had to deliver news to people. He was straight forward and to the point, while trying to give them enough details to let them know what was expected of them. Private Wilson did not react well to the news. “First Sergeant I can't deploy. I've been away from home for almost three months now. I want to see my mom and dad.” The young Soldier explained as he could tell that she had began to cry. He reassured both Privates that there would be time for them to visit with their families before the unit was to depart and this seemed to ease their minds a bit.

After he got off of the phone, The First Sergeant looked over his battle roster and was grateful that he had just been provided with two *expansions* to that roster. He noticed the number of Soldiers that he had under the age of 20-years old. Although this was not unusual to have this in conventional Army units, he was going to have to take these Soldiers to combat and he didn't have long to get them ready. This was a great concern to the First Sergeant. He wondered if most of these young Soldiers could be placed to work in support positions instead of the positions that would conduct operations off the Forward Operating Base (FOB).

After some thought and studying the battle roster in greater detail he came to the inescapable conclusion – he could not justify assigning these “younger” Soldiers to support positions just based on their age. In the next year every Soldier, young, old, male, female, Christian, Atheist, Soldier, and Leader, would face death in one form or another. There was nothing that the First Sergeant would be able to do to change that. He was often quoted as saying to his Soldiers, “I don't care how fast you run. If it's your time, your time is up” speaking about the Will of God being in all situations, to include the time that a Soldier is taken from the Earth. If the history of warfare had taught him anything it was that he needed to be prepared to lose Soldiers...

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.” _ Peter 2:21



Daily Reading

This hard truth which the history of Human Warfare has taught many military leaders over time, must first be learned. In today's lesson we will address Part One of the History of Spiritual Warfare.

The beginning of the History of Spiritual Warfare is found in Ezekiel 28:11-19. God created beings called Angels. It also details the creation of a Grand Being. An angel among angels. The masterpiece of all Angels. The Lord called this Angelic Being, *Lucifer*. Lucifer in Latin means “the dawn”. In Hebrew it means “Light Bringer”. No matter which language is used to define the word it is clear from this passage of scripture that he was set apart from all other angels. In verse 12 and 13 speak in detail of Lucifer's great beauty and wisdom, while verse 14 makes it clear that he was “anointed as a guardian cherub”. Verse 14 also makes it clear where Lucifer delt - Eden.

In verse 15 of the passage is where the conflict begins. It says that Lucifer was “blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.” This is where Lucifer rebelled against God. Lucifer sinned. In verse 16, Lucifer becomes resentful of God and lets it harden him toward God, “Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God (Eden), and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among

the fiery stones.” Lucifer’s specific sins are made known to us in verse 17, “Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor.” The next part of the verse tells of the fall of Lucifer, “So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.” In verses 18 and 19, we see where God strip Lucifer of everything reducing him to “ashes on the ground”. Lucifer “comes to a horrible end and will be no more”. This is where *Satan* comes into being.

Prior to Satan being cast away in Revelation 12:7, it speaks of a war in Heaven. During this time Satan recruited approximately one third of all of the angels in heaven and brought them under his control. Now they were all in open rebellion against God. This passage tells us that the Archangel Michael and “his angels” fought with Satan and his new army. In Verse 8 we find that Satan and his minions are unable to dethrone God and his army. They are all sentenced and immediately after the end of this battle, Satan and his forces are banished to Earth, as verse 10 explains. Jude 6 further details what happens to the angels that chose to follow Satan saying that they are “kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.”

So up to this point the battle seems to be one sided in favor of God. In tomorrow's devotion we will conclude the study of the history of spiritual warfare. In this study we will see the battle take a few unexpected turns.



Kid Friendly Ideas

1. What was the Devil’s name before he defied God?
2. What was the Devil’s job before he was cast out from Heaven?
3. How did Satan sin against God?

Notes:



Day 04: History of the Battle - Part 2

Thursday, October 3rd

“Asymmetrical warfare, unconventional strategies and tactics adopted by a force when the military capabilities of belligerent powers are not simply unequal but are so significantly different that they cannot make the same sorts of attacks on each other.” _ Ellen Sexton, 2019



Today's Challenge: Clean A Room (for the church or for someone else)

In today's challenge we're trying to help out by cleaning up! Well that's part of it anyway. While you are busy making the facility that God has blessed us with better, focus on the fellowship time that you are blessed with today. Try to gain at least one detail about each person that you did not know, while you go about cleaning God's House. Lock shields and hold the line! If you aren't able to make it to the church to help clean, then help out someone else.

The day had finally arrived. The First Sergeant stood in front of his troops, in what would be their few minutes at their Home Station. He dismissed the formation, and then looked around the gymnasium to see his Soldiers all around. They all stood with their families around the GreyHound Bus that awaited them to board, to take them to Camp Atterbury, where they would conduct their final training before going to Iraq.

He thought back to earlier that morning as he had asked his mother where his ten-year-old daughter was. His mother pointed inside his office and to his desk. He walked around the desk and bent down to see his daughter cuddled up in one corner of the desk, with her favorite stuffed animal, clutched in her hand. He could not imagine what pain must have been going through her mind. The uncertainty. The fear. The dread. He now could see that in the faces of his Soldiers and their families. “This will be one of the hardest days of this deployment”, he thought as he looked over to where his family stood.

His wife, daughter, mother, father, and his brother all awaited their turn to say goodbye, but he would wait. He ensured that his Soldiers were all loaded and that the military vehicles that would

accompany the bus, with their equipment aboard, were ready to go. As the bus pulled out, he knew that he could not put off what he had been dreading for so long. He turned toward his family and shifted a clipboard from his right to left hand. He neared them, with an almost numb feeling. He had determined that he would maintain a tough exterior even though he knew that he would be torn apart inside. He had left his family many times, but not like this. The finality of this moment was incredible.

He hugged his wife and she turned away from him, walking briskly away. His eyes increased in size and he sighed. He watched her walk across the gym and straight out the door of the building. He didn't know what to think. He was crushed. His young daughter just stood, with her pretty, freshly-cut, bobbed hair in a mess around her little face from the tears that soaked her face. He knelt and laid the clipboard on the floor embracing her warmly. Her arm had gotten caught up in the gas mask that he wore under his left arm. He helped her to get it free and then he took her face into his hands. She wiped her nose with a Kleenex and took a deep breath. His mother took the child in one arm and pulled her tight.

This allowed the First Sergeant to stand up and looked down into his mother's eyes. She had always been strong for her family and he had no expectation that that would be any different today. The two embraced and exchanged some words, as he felt the intense emotion flooded through him. He looked to where his brother and father stood anticipating that these goodbyes would be easier than the last three.

To his surprise they were not. His brother broke down as he embraced him in a tight bear hug. He and his brother had served together early in his career so his brother, perhaps better than anyone else in the family, knew what was going on. He had trained to be a warrior, that never got to go to war during his time as a Soldier. The First Sergeant imagined that there was probably some guilt in his mind over that, but it also gave him a sense of peace that his little brother would be there to help take care of the family while he was gone.

Then came the final goodbye. The First Sergeant stepped in front of his father. He looked the 5'8" tall, 59-year-old, iron worker in his eyes, not knowing exactly what to expect. His entire life, his father had shown very little emotion toward anyone in their family. His father had been extremely shut off emotionally even to his mother. The First Sergeant gave a firm stare to his father and nodded his head. In the rarest display of emotion, he saw that tears were welling up in his father's eyes. He could hardly believe what he was seeing, but it was there. His father stood rigid and firm, so the First Sergeant knew that he would have to initiate contact with his "Baby Boomer" father. The First Sergeant took his father into his arms and caressed him tightly, in what had been a foreign feeling to him, his entire life. His father said in a weak and scratchy voice, "You be careful. I am proud of you." This made the First Sergeant nearly lose his emotional composure, but he redoubled his efforts to fight back the rush of feelings. He told his father that he loved him, and his father actually said it back. For as long as

he could remember, The First Sergeant could never remember a time that his father had said that to him, even though he was sure that he probably had.

The First Sergeant exited the building into the cold November weather and made his way to his car. This would be one of the “longest” drives that he had ever made to Camp Atterbury in his career. He touched his face wiping the tears that streaked down his cheeks, looking around to ensure that no one was watching him. “This is it”, he thought...

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” _ Proverbs 27:17



Daily Reading

Soldiers must face the harsh reality of leaving their loved ones on a regular basis. In most cases they do not know if they will see those loved ones again. For us to be willing to leave our loved ones in the “daily battle” that we face, it is important to expand our study of spiritual warfare to understand the remainder of the History of the Battle.

In yesterday’s history lesson, we left off with Satan and his angels being judged and banished. Jude 6 told that these beings were “kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.” Today we will examine when and how the battle transferred from Heaven to Earth and Man’s entry into the battle.

In Genesis chapter 1, we find the details of how the Earth was before and how it became after Satan’s fall. After Satan is cast to Earth the battle enters the “Physical Realm” of the First Heaven, which you’ll remember from day 2 is sometimes referred to as the “Atmospheric Heaven”. This is the period of time many theologians say was before Genesis 1:3. In the first two verses of the chapter we are told that God created the Heavens and the Earth and how the Earth was “formless and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the deep”. Two things happen in these critical two verses. First, God creates “Linear Time”, or the time that will span between Eternity Past and Eternity Future. We will speak in greater detail regarding these periods of time in tomorrow’s devotional reading. Secondly, Satan has dominion over the Earth and it is an “evil” place, as is denoted by the word “darkness” in verse 2.

Then, we move into Genesis 1:3! This is where God shows his absolute power. Verse 3 says these words, “Let there be light,” and there was light. When God speaks it is not a suggestion. It is a command. By ordering light into the world, God showed Satan that this battle was not over. Satan’s “garbage dump” is now transformed into a paradise. We’re told in Job 38:7, that all of the angelic

beings in Heaven had a front row seat to this amazing light show and they rejoiced when light came to the Earth; “while the morning stars sang together, and all the angels shouted for joy”. Now that God had once again established His ultimate dominance, He decided to deploy a new force into the battle.

Enter man. Genesis is the most well known account of our entry into the world; however, In Psalm 8:1-8 we are told of the specifics of how we came to be in relation to other beings in the universe:

“1 Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. 2 Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. 3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? 5 You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. 6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands ; you put everything under their feet: 7 all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, 8 the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.”

We see in verse 5 where we are created a little lower than the angels. We have been made inferior to the Heavenly Beings. Also in verse 5 we see that we have been placed over Satan and all the Angels, being “crowned in Glory and Honor”. Verses 6 through 8 continue this explanation showing where man is given dominion over the Earth and all its creatures. We were created as part of the angelic conflict, to demonstrate to the angels, that man (with God) can do more than they can (without God).

In God's infinite Wisdom He does something when He created man that He did not do when He created the Angels. He gives us Free Will. He does this to prove that man will choose to worship Him. This is demonstrated in 1 Peter 1:12. It says that Humans were not serving themselves, but were serving God. It also depicts that angels “longed to look into these things” referring to where the Angels were wondering how Humans could accomplish this.

Now if all of this is not enough to demonstrate God’s power, let us look to Isaiah 45:5-6. In this powerful set of verses we are told in no uncertain terms, that God has NO equal! Perhaps one of the greatest examples found in scripture of God’s absolute supremacy over all, can be found in the book of 1 Samuel. Here we find the Israelites versing their old enemy the Philistines. But the armys are not going to clash in a battle of thousands. It all comes down to two men. David, the lesser in physical strength, which represents mankind and Goliath, the greater in physical strength, symbolizing the Devil.

To conclude today's devotion, we will look at a passage that describes what the angels were marveling at just two paragraphs earlier. In Ephesians 3:7-8 we are told that Humanity become servants

of God “through the working of His Power” and that His Grace is freely given to us to preach to the world. God wanted to ensure our obedience and service through love and not fear. In other words God demonstrates His Power over Satan, and his horrible schemes, through Grace! God took us, the lesser, and made us the greater. God takes “nothing” and makes it into “something”.

Tomorrow we will look at how God expanded the battle...



Kid Friendly Ideas

1. Can you describe how time works (past, present, and future)? (tell how Eternity Past and Future relate to Linear time)
2. Are we and angels equal? (explain the differences between humans and angels)

Notes:



Day 05: Expansion of the Battle

Friday, October 4th

“If you are walking in defeat, it’s time to live in the victory that He commands you to.”

- Cody Bobay, SOULCON Founder



Today’s Challenge: Kindness for a Community Organization

In today’s challenge select one organization within your community (Police, Fire, EMS, Veteran’s Organization, Hospital, etc) that you can perform one act of kindness for. Share any inspiring stories with the members of the challenge through Social Media, Email, phone call or personal contact. If you have children, try to take them along or have them write a thank you note.

The First Sergeant stood in the center of the company office that they had converted out of one side of the second male barracks. It was small and cramped but it was still better than any of the other companies. Their First Sergeant’s were working out of their quarters and were cut off from their troops. This First Sergeant and command staff were right next door to the bulk of their force, so information dissemination was quicker. In fact, their company knew what was going on and had it disseminated, before any of the other companies had even scheduled a meeting to put the information out to their Soldiers.

This gave the unit great flexibility in being able to react to things faster. When an opportunity came about, like being able to front load 23 of their Soldiers to execute their immunizations on the Anthrax Vaccine, the First Sergeant immediately acted. This ability to react more rapidly had served them well. It had been estimated that it would take them approximately 45 days before they were “certified” to be ready to ship to Iraq; however, on the current schedule they would be able to cut that to just around 30 days.

As the days drug on, the unit’s certification binder filled with check off sheets, from every requirement that they “checked off”. Now the unit had only a few requirements left before they would

be eligible to deploy. The anticipation of being deployed was running high throughout the unit and they were anxious to get the remaining requirements completed. The First Sergeant stepped out the door to the company office to see a team of his Soldiers practice dismounted movement techniques in the freezing 32 degree weather. Why the Army in its wisdom had them training in a place that was 60 degrees colder than where they were going to fight was beyond him. He knew however such decisions were well beyond his pay grade. All he could do was train his Soldiers and get them ready.

The day had finally come when they reached their final task to be completed. Tomorrow would make or break the unit. After some concern was voiced in a staff of the unit failing their final training evolution, the Human Resources Sergeant, being the jokester he was, cracked, "Well maybe if we fail they won't send us to Iraq." The First Sergeant just shook his head, sighing deeply with a chuckle, as the comment broke the uneasiness within the room, with laughter. Everyone of course, had no fear that the unit would pass this evolution. They had been practicing for this event since the end of their first week at Camp Atterbury...

"You intended to harm me, but God Intended it all for Good accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." _ Genesis 50:20



Daily Reading

The unit's *expansion* of knowledge and proficiency on the tasks it would need to execute its mission in theater would end up serving it well. Today we will talk about the *expansion* of the battle that we face.

We see in Genesis 3:1-6, why Satan is called the "Great Deceiver" or the "Great Liar". In these passages Satan, depicted as a *serpent*, approaches man for the first time. And in his craftiness he does not approach the man, but the woman. Satan and Eve begin a dialogue that continues through these verses, where Satan uses God's Word, but for his own purposes. He twists and distorts God's Word to convince Eve that God did not say that they would "certainly die" if they ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan makes Eve believe, in verse 5, that if she and her husband, Adam, eat from that tree that "God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Now Eve has a choice, and she makes the wrong one. Verse 6 is where the "Fall of Man" happens. Sin enters the new world, "she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."

The expansion of the battle comes when God established Linear Time in between Eternity Past and Eternity Future as we saw yesterday. Eternity Past was before Genesis 1:1, and eternity future will be a time period after Revelation 20:15. In between, there is going to be a long span of time going from God's creation to His final judgment, called Linear Time. This is where we exist as corporeal beings and where the spiritual battle is being waged right now.

As we mentioned earlier in the study Satan approached Eve in the garden and they had a conversation. It is important to see the Devil's Strategy here. The Devil's strategy doesn't bring up all of the trees God gave them. He only brings up the one limitation that they had (Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil). Satan always focuses on where God says NO instead of where God says YES. The Devil will always try to trick us into missing the goodness and blessing that God has given us. In order for us to keep this from happening we must come before God with thanksgiving. Let us look at the specifics of the conversation that took place in Genesis 3:1-6.

The first conversation between us and him is about God. Satan says "has God said...". He asks Eve questions and SHE changes God's word 3 times. Firstly, is "from the fruit of the Garden we may eat". This is not what God said. He said "you may FREELY eat". Freely is an important word, because everything is available to us at no charge. Secondly, she talked about eating "and touching" fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but God never said anything about "touching" it. By mentioning the word "touch" she was focusing on legalism or focusing on the "can't do" this or that. Thirdly, "Lest you die", God said you will "SURELY die". He did not say maybe you will die. So Satan contracts God's Word and tells Eve she won't die.

Now why have we spent so much time emphasizing the importance of God's Word. In Genesis 3:6, 9, 11, 14, 20, and 26, these verses all contain the words "God Said..." Earlier we revealed when God speaks it's not a suggestion, but a command. When God speaks things happen! Satan has been able to trick man into defying God and now God's Judgement will be rendered upon them. In this we see where man's feelings took precedence over God's Revelation.

At this point in the battle Satan has won. God curses the serpent in verse 14. He curses the woman in verse 16. He curses the man in verse 19. So in case anyone has been keeping a scoreboard of how the battle is going, God won Round 1, when He cast Satan out of Heaven. Satan won Round 2, when he was able to deceive man into rebelling against God. But Round 3 will be very different.

In Genesis 3:20, "Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living." As we all know Eve being the first woman of our race was the first mother to all children in our race. In verse 21, we see where God gives them divinely provided clothing (provided by His Hand not theirs) and this symbolized how He would send Jesus through human blood to save us all. This is further illustrated in Galatians 3:16 and 4:4, saying that Jesus would be born of a woman and "under

the Law”. But it is interesting to note what happens in Matthew 4. Jesus resists Satan, as Adam and Eve did not, because Satan could not “trick” Him with God’s Word.

Jesus is the second Adam which will do what the first Adam failed to do. So on the scoreboard, Round 3 (the final round) goes to God!!!



Kid Friendly Ideas

1. What is a lie?
 2. What are some ways that we can tell when someone is lying to us?
 3. Where do we find ultimate truth?
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Notes:



Day 06: Where the Metal Meets the Meat!

Saturday, October 5th

“Battles that seem impossible to win are winnable with God. Nothing is too hard for God. The battle is not ours, it’s the Lord’s. Don’t give up. With God all things are possible.” _ End Times Headlines, 2019



Today’s Challenge: Romans Road (Romans 6:23)

Take the next step in memorizing the Romans Road. This can be a great tool for you to use to share the gospel with others. The second verse is Romans 6:23. “23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in[a] Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The day started early. Earlier than normal. The unit had been bussed out to Range 37 before the sun had even crested over the horizon. The cold December wind blew against their Gore Tex Jackets and cut through their thermal long underwear. The First Sergeant knew that this wind would definitely affect the accuracy of their weapons on Range 37. The unit was about to conduct the exercise that would test all the individual skills that they had been evaluated on over the past month, into one culminating event. This is where the unit would shine or fail.

The unit loaded into the rear of tactical vehicles, facing outward, weapons at the ready. The First Sergeant and the Commander sat atop the 5-ton cargo truck where the M240B Machine Gun was mounted. This time the unit was just driving the 2-mile-long course, which made a huge, winding loop around and over rugged hills and valleys. The Soldier all looked at the surrounding terrain to try to get a glimpse of any possible targets that they could identify on this dry run. They could only identify the few targets that were fixed into a stationary position, but the ones that were hidden, that would pop up from behind covered positions, were eluding their view.

The Soldiers all looked above to see A10 Warthog Jet Fighters fly above them, with a thunderous roar. The First Sergeant knew where they were going. Range 38 was the Aerial Gunnery Range. The A10 “Tank Killer” fighters were practicing strafing runs against armored targets just one

range away. The familiar sound of “brrrrruuuuuppppp”, could be heard just over the horizon. Specialist Wilson tapped the First Sergeant on the back of his body armor and asked what the sound was. The First Sergeant flashed a cocky grin and pointed toward one of the A10s that were making a tight turn in the sky saying, “That’s the sound of an enemy tank crew havin’ a real bad day!” The First Sergeant referred to the 20-millimeter main gun that the aircraft used to pierce the armor of enemy vehicles.

Upon completion of the dry run, the unit made two additional runs through the course using blank ammunition. On the fourth run, the Commander made the decision that the unit was ready to conduct the live fire portion of the drill. The Soldiers all readied their weapons and the First Sergeant spoke the words that had come from his mouth so many times, “Once the bullet leaves the barrel, it cannot come back!” referring to the importance of knowing where the Soldiers were firing at all times. The Soldiers loaded onto the trucks and prepared to conduct their final run of the course. This time it was for real; at least as real as it could be without someone shooting back.

The unit ran through the course at full speed, driving 40 miles per hour, as man sized silhouette targets appeared from all sides of the vehicles. The First Sergeant and the senior Sergeants of the unit stood in the middle of the trucks, as their Soldiers engaged the targets with their M4 rifles, to control rates of fire and hand additional magazines to Soldiers as they needed to reload. He could see targets falling indicating that his Soldiers were hitting them. He could also see however, that there were targets that were being missed.

The unit had successfully completed the course and all the Soldiers sat around a terrain model (a large 3-dimensional depiction of the entire route that they had just completed) to conduct the After-Action Review. The Commander took the evaluators through what was supposed to happen and then what did happen. Upon completion of his remarks the Chief Evaluator, who had been on the First Sergeant’s Vehicle, gave his remarks. To the First Sergeant’s surprise, the evaluator told them they had only hit 33% of the targets on the course. The First Sergeant was crushed. He thought that his Soldiers had done a better job.

Then the evaluator in an excited voice told them that they had executed the best hit rate of any unit that had come through the course that year. The normal hit rate was only between 8 and 10%. The First Sergeant’s eyes widened, and he shook his head back and forth, letting out a, “Hooah!!”...

The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.” _ Psalm 118:14



Daily Reading

Today we will look at the Scope of the Battle. The word scope is defined as, “the extent of the area or subject matter that something deals with or to which it is relevant.” (Merriam-Webster, 2019). We have already studied the history and expansion of the battle and now will now tie it all together looking at Satan’s Agenda and Spheres of Operation.

As we found out in yesterday’s study, Satan “won” Round 2 of the war. To this day the world (including the First and Second Heavens) still are under his “control”. His agenda is to make Christians ineffective. As we spoke of on Day 1 there are some Christians that are Prisoners of War (POWs). This is the most outright way that Satan makes Christians ineffective. If he can “imprison” us in sin, or makes God’s Warriors turn from God, then he breaks our commitment to the cause.

Like any military force, Satan and his forces, operate within a “battle space”. This battle space is defined strategically by the Three Heavens and tactically by four major areas in our lives: Individual, Family, Church and Society/Community. Within these battle spaces Satan employs a number of tricky tactics & techniques and deceptive actions to try a sabotage our lives and make us ineffective.

Sometimes he directly attacks in the physical world as it says in 1 Peter 5:8, “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” Another example of a direct attack is where he was given Job. During the course of Job’s trials God allowed Satan to take “everything” from him. Satan made it his business to try and destroy Job in the physical realm. Yet another example that we see of a direct attack was against David. We are told in Samuel 11:1 that David did not go into battle with his army, but stayed in Jerusalem. In verse 2 it tells us that David got up out of his bed. What woke him up? The Bible does not specify why. Could it have been Satan stirring him to wake. Whatever the reason he went onto the roof and the thought of adultery entered his mind. After he acted upon this impulse, David executed a chain of events sinful events which ultimately led to the death of David’s son, because of David’s sinful actions.

Most often he comes using indirect attacks, such as his twisting of God’s Word with Eve in the Garden. Indirect attacks are his specialty. Perhaps one of the most well known examples of Satan’s indirect attacks is detailed in Matthew chapter 4. We find that Jesus has been called into the wilderness. After 40 days and 40 nights without food, Satan appears to Jesus. He tries to do the same trickery with Jesus that he did with Eve. But this time is different. When Satan tries to deceive Jesus with the Lord’s Word, Jesus cannot be fooled.

No matter which type of attack Satan uses, he attacks in various ways. He attacks us individually by preying upon us where he knows that we are weak. He hits us where it hurts the most. He uses our past failures against us. He tries to convince us that we are not good enough. He plays upon our

greatest fears. He creates doubt in our lives. Either little by little or all at once, Satan tries to destroy us individually.

Satan also delights in trying to destroy our families. He wants to take the Christians of the next generation. If he can begin to deceive our children, before we teach them the truth, they will be much easier for him to take out. If he can destroy our marriages, he can sabotage the nuclear family structure. This will result in children growing up in two different homes, with differing values and beliefs, which can lead to confusion and frustration for them. When Satan attacks our families it can sometimes be more difficult to detect these attacks than when they are against us. We must watch for signs within our spouses and children that can clue us in that they're under attack.

Satan's ultimate attack comes in the form of attacking the church. The church is the moral compass of society. It is the device that ensures the teaching and preaching of God's Word in the world. If Satan can cause division within the church body, cracks will start to form. If he can cause disunity, the body will begin to erode from the inside out. Just as with attacks upon our families these attacks can be harder to spot and even tie to Satan. As members of the Body of Christ we must be constantly vigilant of Satan's attacks against the body so that we can deal with these attacks in a timely and appropriate spiritual manner. In Romans 16:17 we see how we are supposed to fight this in the church, "Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them." These wolves in sheep's clothing can be sent by Satan to disrupt our churches and must be rooted out.

In human Society Satan also attacks us. Political Agendas, human greed and ambitions, social change and experimentation, just to name a few, are all agents that Satan can use to try to break down societies. Societies provide laws, government and social services, protective services, economic systems and markets, and a host of other needed services to prevent people from living in anarchy. There have been multiple examples of societal degradation during Human History and when societies change or even catastrophically fail, Satan has a place to gain a foothold into the physical realm. In Philippians 3:2 it is detailed about the evil found in society, "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;". Other examples are found in Daniel Chapter 10 where it speaks specifically of the Persian and Greek societies under attack.

Tomorrow we will study more in depth about the Source of the battle...



Kid Friendly Ideas

Notes:



Day 07: Battle Minded

Sunday, October 6th

“...people think God doesn’t pay attention to the details. God is *in* the details.”

_ John Schneider, 2018, American Christian Actor



Today’s Challenge: The Letter

In today’s challenge you will be called upon to reflect on your life as though you are going to face imminent, physical death. You are tasked to write a letter to a loved one to tell them exactly how you feel about them. Be HONEST! Tell them about your life. Tell them about your struggles. Contemplate the idea as though you had allowed yourself to follow your passions and sinful nature rather than following the Spirit.



For an alternate kid-friendly challenge, have your child write a letter to God. Have them write out what they are thankful for and what fear they would like the Lord to help them overcome.

The Commander entered the company office and had a big smile on his face. “Well we got our flight.” He announced quite pleased that after four days in a row of being bumped by other units, that they would be flying out in four days.

Now there was a heightened sense of urgency. There was a mark on the wall. A stepping off point. The unit needed to prepare its Soldiers. The day prior, all the Soldiers had been marched over to the main administration building where each Soldier had been photographed in front of an American flag, in their recently issued, three colored, desert camouflage uniforms. It had not been made known to each Soldier what these pictures were for, but the First Sergeant knew exactly what they would be used for and he prayed that none of them would need to be used. These photographs would be used in local newspapers, if the Soldier was to be killed in Iraq, for news releases.

There was also another duty that was a long-standing tradition within the Army; the “Final Letter”. This letter was commonly referred to as the “Death Letter”. This piece of correspondence served as a record of the final thoughts and feelings to the Soldiers family before they went into battle. The letter was usually left in the care of a trusted person to keep and upon the untimely death of the Soldier, would be delivered by that person to the Soldiers family. If the Soldier returned home then they would recover the letter and destroy it, never letting their family read it.

For some of these Soldiers, this seemingly simple task would be the hardest task that they had faced during the entire preparation phase leading up to going into combat. The First Sergeant circulated around through the cramped barracks areas, which housed twenty Soldiers, in a small open bay. He walked through the narrow passageway between the double stacked bunks seeing Soldiers setting around their racks, with pen and paper. Some appeared to be writing, knowing exactly what to say. Others appeared to be struggling with what to write. 18-year-old, Jim Waters, seemed to be quite distraught over the assignment. Seeing all these different experiences, he wondered what it would be like to write his own letter, later that evening.

The evening came. The First Sergeant sat in his cold, dark room writing various letters to different members of his family. Some of the letters had been relatively easy to write; however, the one that gave him the most difficulty was the one to his daughter. He felt a profound sense of guilt and sorrow over having to leave her. Her mother had left them when she was three years old and it had been him and his daughter until he had remarried. An extreme sense of fear fell over him as he began to contemplate what would happen to his daughter if he did not make it back. This sense of fear overtook him so much that he was pulled away from his objective of writing the letter.

He put down the pen and paper and picked up his bible. It was a small green, camouflage bible, that he had been given by a Chaplain, who would become his civilian pastor after this deployment. He almost frantically searched the bible for verses regarding fear. After searching through the index he viewed several verses but the one that struck him the most was Isaiah 35:4, “say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you."” After reading this the First Sergeant placed the bible to the side and finished the letter...

“say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you." _ Isaiah 35:4



Daily Reading

In today's lesson we will detail the specifics of the Source of the Battle. We find in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5:

“(3) For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. (4) The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds things Satan uses against us – fortresses in our minds – holds us hostage because he uses this to start battles in our minds (5) We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

In this well known scripture regarding spiritual warfare the apostle Paul tells us in verse 3 that we must first acknowledge that spiritual forces are real. There are Christians in the world today that have come to believe that Satan and his forces are not *real*. That these forces are merely a product of human fears and sin. It was recorded in an interview with Italian magazine *Tempi*, that Friar Arturo Sosa, SJ (31st Superior General of the Society of Jesus (Catholic Church)) was quoted as saying, “The devil, “exists as the personification of evil in different structures, but not in persons, because is not a person, is a way of acting evil. He is not a person like a human person. It is a way of evil to be present in human life,” (Pulpit & Pen, 2019). This is an acknowledgment from an established religious leader that could serve to mislead Christians about the presence of Satan and his forces.

Further this scripture tells us that we do not fight spiritual warfare the way physical warfare is fought. In verse 4 we see that the weapons we're called to employ are very different than weapons that would be seen on the battlefields of the world. We will speak at some length about these weapons in Week 3 when we talk about the Tools of the Spiritual Warrior. Verse 4 also explains about God's favor that allows us to “demolish strongholds”, which we will address in Weeks 5 and 6 in greater detail. The key words in verse 4 tell us that these strongholds exist in our mind. Paul says that we must examine every thought that enters into our mind to ensure that they are appropriate for us as Christians. This vigilance of thinking will allow us to be effective in our ability to fight the battle.

The US Army like Paul, has come to understand that battles can be won and lost in the mind. After several years of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, our Army tasked a team at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research to develop a training program that would give US Army Soldiers the ability to, “build Soldier resiliency by developing his/her self confidence and mental toughness” (Hoge and Cox, 2006). This “resiliency of mind” allows US Soldiers to better prepare themselves to fight in the conflicts that they will be deployed in. We must develop the same type of “battle-mindedness” in our daily walk through the environment of spiritual warfare.

With our acknowledgement that Satan and other spiritual forces are real, that our weapons differ than those that are used in physical warfare, and that we must win the battle in our mind, we have established the source of the battle. Now we can move forward into week two and learn about the Authority that we have as Christian Warriors...



Kid Friendly Ideas

1. What are some ways that we can control our thoughts?
 2. What are some ways that we can change what we think?
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Notes: