

ENEMIES OF THE SOUL

Today we conclude our series "Enemies of the Soul." Over the past two weeks, we've looked at 1 John 2 and highlighted two enemies: the *world* and the *flesh*. Today we turn to Ephesians 6 and the third and final enemy of the soul – the Devil. We'll see how the Devil, the flesh, and the world work together as enemies of the soul.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 6:10-12

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What stood out to you the most from our sermon series, "Enemies of the Soul"?
2. When you think about the Devil, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Do you get images of a man in a red suit with pointed "devil horns" on his head? Do you try to avoid thinking or talking about spiritual warfare? What does it mean to have a healthy awareness of the Devil's presence?

C.S. Lewis once wrote, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight."

3. In 1 Peter 5:8, Peter tells us, "Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the Devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." Why do we need the reminder to be "alert and sober-minded"? How can we do this on a daily basis? What are some things that might hinder our ability to be "alert and sober-minded"?

John Mark Comer writes, "The devil is hellbent on destruction. He just wants to watch the world burn. His motto: 'Tear it all down.' This is why following Jesus often feels like a war. It *is*. It's not easy to advance daily into the kingdom of God because there's opposition from the devil himself."

We need to remember that Satan fights dirty; there are no rules with him. Therefore, we need to remain on high alert for his schemes and temptations.

4. In the sermon, we were reminded that our battle is "not against flesh and blood" (Ephesians 6:12). What does this mean? How does the Devil tempt us to see our spouse, boss, in-laws, neighbors, or people with differing political opinions as enemies?

Ephesians 6:12, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

Satan will tempt you to minimize the reality of spiritual warfare. He would like none other than for you to believe it isn't real, that he's not real, that it's all in your imagination, or that he's not the real root of the problem. He'll point to your boss as the issue, your spouse as the issue, or your family as the issue, and that's not true. One of the main ways that the devil deceives us is to get our focus off of him and onto people. The one constantly stirring the pot in your life is Satan.

5. Ephesians 6 tells us that we are to "stand against the schemes of the devil" by clothing ourselves in the whole armor of God. What does it mean to "put on the whole armor of God"? In what ways are you tempted to put up a physical fight (point fingers, argue, get angry at a person, harbor bitterness, etc.) rather than putting on the armor of God and resisting the Devil?

One of the main battlefields of our lives is found between your ears...it's all about the mind! Therefore, we need to put on the helmet of salvation and stand firm and deploy the sword of the Spirit when Satan shows up with a whisper to tempt us to respond to conflict with a pointed finger, raised voice, an attitude for getting even, etc.

6. Our only hope against Satan's lies is knowing God's truth. What does it mean to use the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17)? How do we see Jesus model this for us in Matthew 4:1-11? What are some practical ways that we can infuse our souls and minds with God's truth?

Our only hope against Satan is embracing the truth...through the Word of God

The Bible encourages us to take the sword of the Spirit (the Bible) up every day. Every part of the armor of God is defensive in nature; it guards. There's only one offensive weapon that God has given us in our standing against the tricks and schemes of Satan – the Word of God. How do we defeat the lies of Satan in our life? We combat it with the truth of God's Word!

7. At the end of the message on Sunday, we were prompted to ask ourselves, "Does what I *think* line up with what God has *said*?" What are some areas in our lives where our thinking doesn't always align with what God has said? Where are you most tempted to struggle to align your thoughts with God's Word?

Does what I *think* line up with what God has *said*? For example:

- "I'm thinking, I'm not worth anything, but God has said that I was worth so much that He sent Jesus to die on my behalf."
- "I'm thinking I'm alone, but God has said that He'll never leave me nor forsake me."
- "I'm thinking my life is beyond repair, but God has said He'll work together all things for my good."

Additional/Alternative Question: How are you most likely to be deceived by the enemy?

8. How can we encourage one another to "be alert and sober-minded" this week?

John Mark Comer, "[Satan's] tactic is the same basic formula on repeat: Isolate, then lie."

The devil wants to get you alone and get you to believe something that is not true. This is why having other people in your life are so crucial. Your closest friends should be those who are running hard after Jesus. It's really hard to resist the schemes of the devil if all of your friendships are with lost people with a different value system than you. Other people are key, the right people are key, being alone is not a healthy way forward in your Christian walk.