

Prepared

Ephesians 6:10-13

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. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (Eph. 6:10-13)

1. Who is the enemy?

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood ...

- In **2 Cor. 11** Paul says that he was beaten, almost to death, more times than he could count.
- **2 Timothy** he says Phygelus and Hermogenes turned their backs on him; Demas and others deserted him; Alexander the Coppersmith had him arrested; and at the first trial no one stood with him.

2. What is Evil?

that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil

The word “schemes” is the word strategies ... or devices.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian church that he didn’t want them to be “ignorant of Satan’s devices.”

Paul does not want us to think incorrectly (or ignorantly) about spiritual warfare ...

... secondly Paul wants us to be wise about the strategy of Satan.

There are two errors to avoid and two strategies to be on the lookout for.

First the two errors in thinking...

After growing up in a Pentecostal church and then becoming a Baptist pastor I can say there are two weakness we have in regard to Satan and demons.

... we either **underestimate** the spiritual forces of evil or we **overestimate** them.

- **We must not underestimate the forces of evil**

This is when you think nothing is the devil.

In fact, you think the whole idea of the devil is silly.

“Oh, I believe the devil exists, but he doesn’t really play a role in my life...”

In other words, we tend to reduce the influence of evil in our lives.

Paul says we “wrestle” that is not fighting with a battalion or shooting arrows across the battlefield to the other side ...

... this is on the ground, in the dirt, body on body ... wrestling

... this is the most desperate kind of fight.

And Paul says we are wrestling:

- Rulers
- Authorities
- Cosmic powers
- Forces of evil

When you UNDERESTIMATE you think that nothing is the devil ...?

You think it could only be the devil if someone’s head spins around and green stuff comes out ... like on Ghostbusters.

Don't underestimate the devil's power or his strategies.

- **We must not overestimate the forces of evil**

This is when you think everything is the devil.

This gives too much credit to the devil.

You see demons and the devil as the cause of everything ...

You attribute all problems, failures, and sins to him.

... there is a lying demon (cursing, fornicating, envy, gossip, stomachache, headache,

That is an unhealthy interest, or obsession with the devil ...

He is evil ... but he is not God.

Paul doesn't just tell us to stand against the devil ... **Paul tells us to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of HIS might.**

We are to stand & hold the line in a critical position in a battlefield.

... We are not to attack Satan, or advance against him

... we are to stand or hold our territory, that Christ has conquered for us.

... and don't worry about if Christ in You is strong enough ... the gates of hell will not prevail.

- Don't underestimate the devil's power or strategies.
- Don't overestimate devil ... be strong in the Lord.

Both are weaknesses—to underestimate and overestimate ...

The devil likes both errors ...

One is a super spiritual approach—the devil’s influence over me is powerful.

The other is an under spiritual approach—"OH NO *SABWAH FARE* IS EVERYWHERE!"

Paul wants us to have a biblical balance in our war against the devil, rulers, authorities, cosmic power, and the forces of evil.

Not only do we need to be aware of the errors in thinking we need to be aware of the two strategies (or methods) of Satan’s attacks against us.

- Temptation
- Accusation

The word for devil is ‘diablos’ and it means “to lie and slander.”

Satan tempts and accuses us through lies and slander.

I used to have a Baldwin Hamilton Studio piano.

... all my life I have been infatuated by sound, volume, vibration ...

I used to put mom’s big pan on top of the dish drainer and sing “looking for a city” and keep going up the scale until I could make the pan ring.

After we got the piano, I would open up the top, press the right foot pedal and sing a note ... and what would happen is that the string (that matched the note I was singing) would vibrate and make the sound as well.

Now here is what the devil does ... the devil sees what you respond to ... he sees what you give into the most easily ... he sees what causes you to sin ... **and he plucks that string**

... The devil will use temptation (the high notes) and accusation (the low notes) to aggravate what is in you.

Temptation comes when you have too high a view of yourself ... and that causes you to do things you shouldn't do.

Accusation is when you have too low a view of yourself (self-loathing) you are convinced you don't matter ... and that causes you to do things you shouldn't do.

- Temptation (as you have too high a view of yourself) hides the holiness of God.
- Accusation (as you have too low a view of yourself) hides the love of God.

Thomas Brooks (a puritan pastor in the 1600's) wrote a book entitled "**Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices.**"

In that book he lists 70 devices the devil uses—here are 7 of them.

- a. He shows you the bait and hides the hook. (he has you look at the short-term pleasures & hides the long-term misery)
- b. He helps you rationalize sin as virtue. (I'm not greedy, just thrifty. I'm not really nosy, just concerned. I'm not an alcoholic, just sociable)
- c. By showing you the sins of Christian leaders. (so, you say to yourself, he/she did it too, nobody's really that pure)
- d. Do it, God will forgive you, that's His job.
- e. By making them bitter over suffering. (I have suffered, I deserve this. This is why the powerful, prominent men are always having these affairs, because what they say to themselves, nobody knows how hard I work, how many sacrifices I make, I deserve this!)
- f. By showing Christians how many bad people seem to be having great lives. (I might as well do it, playing by the rules doesn't pay off)
- g. By getting you to compare one part of your life to another. (I'm very good over here & over here, I do this & give there, so it's ok if I do that.

[Extreme form of this...mafia hit men, I'm good to my mother, ok so I kill people, but I really love my mother]

Do you recognize any of these in yourself???

3. How do we fight against Evil?

Here is what Paul is trying to say to each one of us individually ... because everyone of us is so different ...

... we have different tastes, desires, proclivities, backgrounds, appetites, situations, circumstances

Paul is saying to you “Know what particular devices Satan has on you.”

... make yourself aware of them ...

... learn yourself, look at what trips you up and makes you fall ...

But notice **Paul doesn’t say stand in your free will** ... Paul says, “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.”



Child psychologists say that for every criticism you give to your children you need to give them 5 compliments ...

... for some reason children tend to hear (and take to heart) criticisms more than compliments.

... this is actually biblical ... we are born in sin and innately we know something is wrong with us ... something needs fixing.

In **Thomas Brooks’** book “Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices” he writes this:

“For every 1 look at your sin, take five looks at your Christ.”

Listen to me:

- The devil is playing you like a piano ... and it is time for this to stop.
- Look to Jesus!
- Satan knows the strings you have, and he is vibrating them ...
- Look to your Christ!

