

QUIET TIME

Theme: Spiritual warfare against the enemy

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understood.

Day 1 Matthew 4:1-11
Satan tests and tempts you. Resist him with the Bible

Day 2 Matthew 12:22-29
Satan is bound by Christ. Rob his people

Day 3^{BS} Ephesians 6:10-18
Satan fights against you. Put on the full armour of God so you can remain standing

Day 4 John 8:37-44
Satan is behind every lie. Reject his lies

Day 5 1 Corinthians 7:1-9
Satan seduces. It is better to marry than to burn with passion

Day 6 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
Satan disguises himself. Expose him and his servants (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Day 7 2 Timothy 2:23-26
Satan sets traps (cf. 1 Timothy 3:7). Avoid quarrelling

Day 8 1 Peter 5:6-11
Satan seeks a gap in your defences. Resist him

Day 9 1 John 3:4-11
Satan sins from the beginning. Live righteously¹

Day 10 Revelation 12:7-12
Satan is an accuser. Conquer his false insinuations

- Think about Hebrews 4:16 and Matthew 7:7. Boldness and perseverance without hesitance in prayer results in answers to your prayers, finding what you seek and opening closed doors.
- Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: Evil and spiritual warfare

Read study 27 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: The spiritual armour

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **Ephesians 6:10-18**

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

James 4:7

Submit yourselves, then, to God.
Resist the devil,
and he will flee from you.

James 4:7 (NIV)

3. Review and back-review

Review the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

4. Review of the Bible books

All 39 books of the Old Testament
All 27 books of the New Testament

¹ Some Bible translations neglect to translate the present continuous time in 1 John 3:6,8 and 9. This leads to misunderstanding of the text. The NIV translation is correct.

27. Evil and spiritual warfare

A. Who are Satan and his evil spirits and what do they do?

1. Satan is against God and his people

Satan is the adversary of God and his people.

He accuses God to be a liar and claims that God said things which he never said (Genesis 3:1-5). His purpose is to keep people from believing and obeying God.

Satan is the tempter

In a very cunning way he tried to tempt Jesus to turn away from God (*Read* Matthew 4:1-11). In his first temptation he tried to tempt Jesus not to trust God. In his second temptation he tried to tempt Jesus to trust in him (Satan). And in his third temptation he tried to tempt Jesus to have a false trust in God. When Satan had failed to tempt Jesus to sin, he left him until another time.

Satan is a robber

In the parable of the sower Jesus taught his disciples what Satan's goal is to rob God's Word (the gospel, the teachings about God's kingdom, the words of the Bible) away from the hearts of people as soon as he gets a chance (Luke 8:11-12). In this way he wants to hinder people from growing, bearing fruit, serving God or glorifying God! He will use every trick in the book to keep people from reading, studying and applying the Bible!

2. Satan attacks the mind and heart of people

Satan is a liar

Satan is a liar and the father of all lies on earth (John 8:44b). He attacks the truth of the Bible through so-called scientists and religious teachers who try to discredit the Bible. People who say that Christians have falsified the Bible have no proof for what they allege. If people add new religious truth to the Bible, God will add to them all the plagues described in the book of Revelation. And if people take truth away from the Bible, God will take away from them their share in eternal life (salvation) and their share in the kingdom of God in its final phase (Revelation 22:18-19). After the first coming of Christ there will come hypocritical liars who "will follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons" (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

Satan is a destroyer of the mind

Satan attacks the mind and fantasy of people. He continually shoots 'fiery arrows' at the mind of people, especially of Christians (Ephesians 6:16). His purpose is to destroy the truth (the Bible) and the people who believe in the truth and live the truth (the Christians). 'The burning arrows' are on the one hand all kinds of lies and on the other hand all kinds of negative thoughts and feelings: doubts, anxieties, lust, greed, futility, pride, jealousy, etc.

Through these lies and negative thoughts and feelings Satan attacks us.

Satan is an accuser

Satan attacks the conscience of people (Revelation 12:10). His strategy is first to tempt people into sin and then to accuse them before God. He loads feelings of genuine guilt and even false guilt on people and then causes them to live in fear of punishment.

Although Satan never stops to accuse Christians, his accusations are not valid anymore, because by sacrificing himself, Jesus Christ once for all did away with sin (Hebrews 9:25-26)! He has forgiven Christians all their sins and never again mentions these sins anymore! God says: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." Where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 10:17-18). And even whenever their hearts condemn them (with anxious misgivings and doubts), "God is greater than their hearts and knows everything" (1 John 3:20). He knows that Christians belong to him (2 Timothy 2:19)!

Satan is a slave driver

Satan attacks the emotions of people. He tries to hold people in slavery by their fear of death throughout their lives (Heb 2:14-15). Most people fear physical death, even quite unconsciously. Some of them even deeply revere the spirits of their dead ancestors and others consult the so-called spirits of the dead (Deuteronomy 18:11,13).

Satan is immoral

Satan will tempt people who lack self-control (1 Corinthians 7:5). He tries to mislead people in doing all kinds of sexual immoral acts. People who lack self-control make other people victims of pornography, rape, incest, homosexuality and adultery. The Satan attacks the moral and spiritual values of Christians.

Satan is a deceiver

Satan attacks the faith of Christians. He tries to lead their minds away from their sincere and pure devotion to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3-4). He tries to mislead them to believe in another Jesus, in another Holy Spirit and in another gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). He is the author of all the false teachings within Christianity and also of all the other religions in the world (1 Timothy 4:1-2). He causes the lack of sound Christian doctrine in the Church. He spreads his false teachings by means of false prophets, false teachers and false apostles, in such a way that many people will begin to follow these false religions (Matthew 7:15; 24:24).

Besides Satan and his demons there is the sinful world (1 John 2:15-17) and the sinful nature of man which tempts man to do evil (James 1:13-15). Not only non-Christians, but also Christians are being attacked by

Satan, the sinful world and the sinful nature dwelling in them! Although Satan is the instigator of much evil in the world, every person remains responsible for his own reactions to the temptations of Satan (Galatians 6:5).

3. Satan attacks the circumstances of people

Satan sets traps

Satan sets traps, so that people fall into his power. If a young and inexperienced person is appointed to be an elder (or pastor, teacher), he may become proud and arrogant due to his position and cause much damage by his immature and wrong behaviour (1 Timothy 3:7). Satan sets traps in every area of life: science, philosophy, religion, politics and even sports, in order that people argue and quarrel, fall into the trap of the devil and are taken captive to do his evil will (2 Timothy 2:23-26).

Satan counterfeits miracles, signs and wonders

Satan counterfeits miracles in order to deceive people that are perishing. They perish because they refuse to love the truth of Jesus Christ and the Bible which could save them (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

Satan masquerades himself as an angel of light

Satan masquerades himself as an angel of God. Also his servants masquerade themselves as servants of righteousness, as apostles of God or Christ, while in fact they are apostles of the Evil One (2 Corinthians 11:13-16-5)!

Satan infiltrates the Christian Church

Satan plants insincere people in the midst of the Christian Church in order to destroy the Church (Matthew 13:36b-43). They call themselves 'Christians' and act as if they are Christians (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:1-6; Hebrews 6:4-8), but in fact have never been born-again (cf. John 3:3,5). The final judgement day will reveal who are genuine Christians and who are deceiving infiltrators.

Satan hinders the workers of God to enter certain countries or areas in order to proclaim the gospel

Satan tries to hinder Christians from entering certain countries in order to proclaim the gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:18; 3:5). But he can only do this for a limited period of time, because he has been bound and his power has been curtailed (curbed, limited) so that he cannot continue to deceive the nations any longer (Revelation 20:3). The gospel must be proclaimed in every country and will be proclaimed in every country (Matthew 24:14)!

He also tries to influence young believers to give up their faith in Jesus Christ. Note how many parents, politicians and religious leaders are trying to force people who have become believers in Jesus Christ to renounce Christ.

Satan persecutes Christians

Satan exposes Christians to violent persecutions, imprisonment and even getting murdered (Luke 22:31-32; Revelation 2:10). He tries to scare non-Christians into not becoming Christians. And he tries to scare Christians into apostasy.

Satan is an adversary of peace and order in every society on earth

Satan is a murderer (John 8:44a), because he sweeps people up to hate one another and kill one another. He stands behind robbers, drug pushers, dictators, religious and political fanatics, terrorists and people who support revenge killing (honour killing).

Satan is a dangerous and foul enemy

Satan stalks Christians like a lion stalks his prey, because he desires to destroy Christians (1 Peter 5:8). He is a coward, because he especially attacks young Christians and Christians that are weak or not watchful.

B. The power of Satan and his evil spirits have been curtailed

1. In the Old Testament period the power of Satan was limited

He could only do what God allowed him to do (*Read Job 1:6-22; 2:1-10*).

2. In the New Testament period the power of Satan has been bound (curtailed, curbed)

One reason for the first coming of Jesus Christ was to destroy the devil's work (1 John 3:8)! During his ministry on earth Jesus Christ began to bind (limit, restrain) Satan. He had all power over Satan and his evil spirits (demons) and they could only do what he permitted them to do (*Read Luke 8:26-33*)! Jesus *bound* (Greek: δεδ) 'the strong man' (Satan), drove his evil spirits out by the Holy Spirit and robbed his house (i.e. robbed him of people whom he held captive). This proves that the long awaited kingdom of God had come at the first coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:28-30)! Jesus gave this power also to his apostles (Luke 10:17-20).

By his death, resurrection, ascension and enthronement Jesus Christ completed the binding (curbing, curtailment) of Satan and his power. At the cross a judgment came on the world and the prince of the world (Satan) was driven out of his power base (John 12:24,31-32). The word 'world' here means the world that rejected, condemned and killed Christ and continues to oppose God and his Christ (1 John 5:18-19). The relative high position Satan had before the first coming of Christ (cf. Job 1:6) was lost (Revelation 9:1; 12:7-10).

3. Also the evil spirits are disarmed and conquered

When Jesus Christ died, also 'the powers and authorities' were disarmed and conquered (Colossians 2:15). This is a

reference to the evil spirits in the atmosphere around the earth and to the evil (political and religious) rulers and governments (kingdoms) on the earth that oppose Christians. These powers have no longer any legal ground to stand on when they accuse Christians with false accusations, because the sins of Christians have been atoned for (Romans 8:33-34). Christians are completely forgiven (Hebrews 8:12).

4. Now Satan and his evil spirits are conquered again and again

At his first coming Jesus Christ has bound Satan by means of an angel, has thrown Satan out of heaven and has dashed him onto the earth (Revelation 20:1-3; 12:7-9; 9:1). That is why Satan now persecutes the Church (the 'woman'). He tries to sweep the Church away with his endless stream of lies and deceit, but the Church is protected against his most direct and deadly attacks (*Read* Revelation 12:5-6,10-17).

Therefore Satan continues to attack especially individual Christians (Revelation 12:17). But individual Christians conquer Satan by the 'blood' of Jesus (his death on the cross and what it accomplished), by their testimony concerning the victory of Christ, by their proclamation of the Word (the Bible) and by their self-sacrificial love for God and people (Revelation 12:11). By prayer, preaching of the gospel and teaching the Bible, Christians conquer Satan and his evil spirits again and again and rob them from the people they have been holding captive (Matthew 12:29-30). Thus people are saved from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13). Not the evil powers, but Jesus Christ is the King on earth, "the Head over every power and authority" (Colossians 2:10), "the Ruler of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1:5).

The goal of Satan is to make every non-Christian a prisoner that would carry out his will. This he does by poisoning their senses and their spiritual functions with his lies and deceit. He blunts their consciences and paralyzes their will in order to catch them in his trap. However, by a Christian's kind relationship and gentle instruction God can bring non-Christians to their senses and grant them repentance that would lead them to knowledge of the truth (Christ and the Bible). This is the way how non-Christians can escape from the trap of the devil who has taken them captive to do his will (2 Timothy 2:25-26).

Thus, from his first coming Jesus Christ draws people from all the nations to himself (John 12:31-32). They are rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of Christ (Colossians 1:13). This means that Satan is driven out of the countries he previously controlled and the people living there are delivered out of his power.

5. Jesus will finally remove Satan and his demons completely

Although Satan has been conquered (bound) at the first coming of Jesus Christ and his power to do evil in the world has been curbed (restrained), it is clear that he has not yet been removed from the earth and that he still does very much evil.

In the great tribulation shortly before the second coming of Jesus Christ, Satan will be released from being 'bound'. He and his army of demons will become the driving force behind the last rebellion of the final antichrist (Revelation 13:1-2). The final antichrist together with the (anti-Christian) rulers and governments of the earth will rise up for the final battle against Jesus Christ (the rider on the white horse), his army of angels and all Christians on earth. But at his second coming Jesus Christ will cast them into the eternal fire of hell (*Read* Revelation 16:12-16; 19:11-21; 20:7-15).

C. The spiritual battle against Satan and his evil spirits

1. Spiritual warfare is still a reality

Although Satan has been bound and his evil spirits have been disarmed, Christians must remain alert and wage spiritual warfare against them (Ephesians 6:10-18). If you do not take this matter seriously, you will suffer serious defeats in your life! But if you remain in Christ and continue to trust in him, you do not need to fear Satan and his evil spirits. Jesus has conquered Satan and his evil spirits and they can only do what he permits them to do. They still attack Christians and are able to hurt Christians, but are not able to bring everlasting damage to Christians! This spiritual warfare will continue until the second coming of Christ.

Satan and his evil spirits will ultimately control non-Christians without them realising this and bring everlasting sorrow to them. They will also try to do the same with Christians, but only succeed in the case of nominal Christians. Genuine Christians are in the hand of Jesus Christ and no-one can snatch them out of his hand (John 10:28-29)!

How can genuine Christians practically resist Satan and his evil spirits? Only by putting on the armour of God that will enable them to remain standing during his attacks! James, Peter, Paul and John all say the same thing:

2. James: "Resist the devil" (James 4:7-8)

James teaches: "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." This you do by obeying the practical teachings in the Letter of James.

For example, by getting rid of moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and by humbly accepting the Word that has been planted in you (1:21-22). Show your faith in

Jesus Christ by your deeds (2:14-26). Allow the Spirit of God to control your tongue (3:1-12). Replace devilish wisdom (jealousy, selfishness, lying against the truth God revealed in the Bible) with divine wisdom (which is pure, peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere) (3:13-18). Come near to God; wash your hands (from doing sin); purify your heart from being double-minded (4:8). Stop slandering (gossiping about) others (4:11). Make your plans together with God (4:13-15). And let go of your desire to get rich (5:1-6). Then Satan and his evil spirits will get no hold on you!

3. Peter: “Resist the devil” (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Peter warns Christians that the devil continually circles around them like a lion stalking its prey. He is all the time looking for your weak spots and lack of defences and that is where he will attack. That is why Christians must remain ‘alert and self-controlled’. The word ‘self-controlled’ means to be sober-minded, level-headed, always sticking to the facts’. Only when Christians stand firm in their Christian Faith they are able to resist the devil and his demons. The Christian Faith relates how Christians send them away in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 16:18).

4. Paul: “Do not give the devil a foothold” (Ephesians 4:27)

You can resist the temptations and attacks of Satan in the following practical ways: Stop a relationship which God forbids (e.g. 2 Corinthians 6:14). Do not get involved in evil activities. Do not go to doubtful places where Satan gets a chance to gain ground in your life. When you nevertheless persist in these evil practices, Satan will get a foothold in your life.

5. John: “Do not believe every spirit” (1 John 4:1)

John is referring to the ‘spirits’ of false teachers and false prophets and their teachings and books! You must not believe every ‘spirit’, that is, the teachings in the holy books of other religions or the teachings of false teachers within the Church. The Bible says that there are many false teachers in the world that deny that God has taken on the human nature besides his divine nature in order to enter his creation and human history (*Read 2 John 1:7-11*)! The teachings of all the other major religions in the world and the cults deny that Jesus Christ is the Saviour and the Son of God (Galatians 1:6-9)!

The title ‘Son of God’ does not have any relationship to human sonship on earth, but in all the Semitic languages (Hebrew and Arabic) means ‘genuine and true God’, just as the title ‘Son of Man’ means ‘genuine and true man’. Likewise the title ‘the children of the world’ means ‘the genuine unbelievers in the world’ and the title ‘the children of light’ means ‘the genuine believers who live in the light’ (Luke 16:8). Jesus Christ is 100% God and 100% man (John 1:1,14,18; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6-8; Colossians 1:19; 2:9; Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20).

The teachings and arguments of non-Christians are inspired by demons, even though they do not realise that or want to acknowledge that (1 Timothy 4:1-2; 1 John 4:6). They are ‘anti-Christians’ who oppose Christ and try to keep you from knowing Christ and believing in Christ (*Read 1 John 2:18-23; 2 John 1:7-11*). That is why you must test every religious teaching with the truth revealed in the Bible (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17) in order to discover whether it comes from God or from Satan and his evil spirits (1 John 4:1-6). God’s rule for every person is: “Do not go beyond what is written (in the Bible)” (1 Corinthians 4:6; cf. Revelation 22:18-19). Resist the false teachers and false prophets, because they are the representatives of Satan and his evil spirits. You resist them by refusing to listen to their false teachings and to read their false books. You must not eat with them (1 Corinthians 5:11) and you must refuse even to welcome them in your home (2 John 10-11)!