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Presentation Transcript

Waging Spiritual War – Part 2 – Boot Camp 1: Enemy Tactics

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Here we are again for the second in our series, called *Waging Spiritual War*. Last time we saw that when we became members of the church, we were enlisting in God's army. We did that when we were baptized, we made a covenant with God – a contract. Baptism is like signing the contract. We went under the water and came up. And we agreed, on our part, to trust, believe and follow God. And He agreed to forgive our sins, and never give up on us, and to prepare us for eternal life, sparing no effort on His part to do just that.

The next thing that happens to new recruits is boot camp. And that's what we're calling this second part of the series today – *Boot Camp 1: Enemy Tactics*. How does our enemy go about meeting his objectives? We're going to do this because we're told to do it in the Bible. Let's look at Ephesians 6:11.

Ephesians 6:11 – *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.*

We are going to learn about his schemes today with the intent of thwarting them with God's weapons, which will be the second thing we learn about in boot camp. That'll be next time.

So we know that the devil tried to take God's place and sit on His throne in heaven. And Jesus said, when he tried to do that, He saw him fall like lightning from heaven to earth. In other words, he lost. He wasn't able to successfully wage war against God and win.

So what's he doing down here, knowing that he can't win. Well, he's doing everything he can to thwart God's plan out of sheer spite. He wants to kill us all, like soldiers do. How will he do this, given we're under grace protected by God? Well, to give us to, of our own free will, surrender and come out from under God's protective umbrella of grace, where we will be sitting ducks. That's what he wants. Think about it. The main difference between Christians and all other folk is the protection God affords us through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Paul makes an interesting comment in 2 Timothy 2:26. He was talking about a minister of God – and all Christians by extension – and our need to patiently deal with those outside of God's grace, so that...verse 26:

2 Timothy 2:26 – *...they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.*

So the devil desperately wants to rob all of us of salvation. That's his goal. And he has captured us, if we believe him, to do his will. In this process, he wants to enslave *all* of us. He wants us *all* to follow him. He wants to blind us to God and our destiny with Him. He wants to turn the church from its purpose, as God's soldiers, and make subversives of all of us. So let's look at his tactics. I mean, it's one thing to say that's what he's doing, but it's another thing to understand *how* his doing it.

Well, first of all, we're going to talk about the devil's character a bit. In John 8:44 (I think we quoted this in the first presentation in this series as well), Jesus said, talking to some of His followers:

John 8:44 – *You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

So the devil is, by definition, a liar. It's his way of operating in the world. The lie is his primary weapon against us. So, if you're in boot camp, you just learned what the enemy's main weapon is. Well, the devil's main weapon is lies. He's a deceiver.

Notice, when we accept his lies, Jesus considers the devil our father, rather than God, our real Father. Notice also that when we accept the devil's lies, we then begin to do his will. We become enslaved to him. His will becomes our will. So let's think about how that works in reality. What mechanism is it?

Think about, in the Bible, what was the first lie the devil ever told? You know, it's revealed there. Yes, it was to Adam and Eve. And what was the lie? Well, let's read about it in Genesis 3:1-5. It tells us to begin with that:

Genesis 3:1-5 – *the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" – like it was astounding that God would say that. And the woman said to the serpent – notice that Eve is quite capable of quoting exactly what God said. And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Okay,*

so that *is* what God said. Right? *But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die."* So he's calling *God* a liar, which is one of his main tactics, too. He attributes his characteristics to God. Now he's going to explain *why* God lied. Verse 5: *For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

Now Adam and Eve admired God. So to be like God, in their minds, was a good thing. But because of the devil's lie, they now start to fear that God has misled them and He's held back something good from them – that He doesn't have their best interest at heart. And they concluded – maybe they didn't know they concluded this, but... – in essence, they began to believe that God could not be trusted. And, if you talk to people today, this is the gist of the universal theme that they bring up about God: He's a deceiver. You think He's good, when it's clear that He cannot be, because He allows such terrible things to happen in this world full of people that He claims to love. How could a loving God allow all this to happen? We're not going to talk about that so much as we are to make the statement: The devil wages war against God by deceiving the world about God's essence, which is love. And *they* think, because of the evil that they see, that God is *not* a loving God – that He is lazy, or hateful, or a liar Himself. And the next step in this reasoning is this: that He can't exist because His existence makes no sense when you look at all that's going on in the world. There can be no loving God, because if there were, He wouldn't allow all this to happen.

So that's one of the main thrusts that the devil uses. He deceives people about God, about God's nature, and about what God is doing, and how God, as a Being, is. And the second main thrust of his is confusion about who and what *we* are. On one level there is a debate about humanity. Are we good or bad? Non-Christians tend to think that humanity is good. And Christians tend to think that humanity is bad. Now, you know, it is isn't just that simple, because time has passed. So let's understand this: The truth is this: God created us good. How do we know that? Well, because after God created Adam and Eve, and all the creation, He looked at it and said it was good! So that would have included Adam and Eve. And we know that they had a good relationship with God at first. But, after the devil talked to Adam and Eve, they began to think like he thinks. And humanity is now a mixture of good *and* evil. Paul said of himself, "I know that, in my flesh – that in his *sarx* – he called it his flesh, but the word is *sarx* in the Greek – and that's the part of him that carries the scars of the devil's original influence – he said, "In my *sarx* dwells no good thing." So that was a statement about a part of him – not all of him, but a *part* of him that was bad. And that wasn't in Adam and Eve in the beginning. He also stated that another part of him wanted to do *good*. He talked about the ambivalence that he had within himself. Two pulls – one good, one bad. Okay, so that's one thrust that the devil is working on.

Another one, on another level – most everyone agrees with this: When a child believes they are bad, insignificant, insufficient, defective, etcetera, nothing good comes from it. Now, we're not talking about bad behavior here from birth. Children are born a blank page. They're neutral, so to speak. They haven't had a chance to sin yet. And a lot of times, people attribute to children things that are evil – manipulation, like crying to get what you want. Well, that's how babies are

wired. They cry to get what they want, what they need. What they want is what they need. So, on this level, we not talking about behavior, but we're talking about what comes from birth. If you consider a child to be bad by birth, that's a lie! Children aren't born bad. The devil is the one who wants us to feel defective and unlovable. He wants us to feel shame, which is a sense of defectiveness, just as he caused Adam and Eve to feel that. That feeling of unworthiness causes us to shrink back from God, just like they did. That thwarts our belief that we can *do* good, that we can be successful, or even of use to God, because something is wrong with us. And that's what the devil wants us to believe. He wants us to feel defective. On the other hand, at the same time, he does *not* want us to feel guilty by bad behavior. He wants us to feel free to do whatever we want. That's how he causes all the evil in the world. You know, we *ought* to feel guilty when we act badly, break God's law, etcetera, thereby hurting ourselves or others. And if we don't, then there's no need for repentance. And that, also, is what the devil wants. Because without repentance, there is no way to approach God, or even realize we need God's forgiveness. And we, then, become a canvas on which he can paint all sorts of evil actions and misery inflicted on self and others. And he's won that battle. He does that at his will. He can do this when we believe his lies about ourselves. When we start thinking we deserve to have all of our needs met and gratified, and all of that, then we can believe we can go do whatever we need to do to take care of ourselves. We become very self-centered, and we don't feel guilty for the harm that we cause others.

Now, when I do EMDR with a person, I get a list of bad things that have happened to them. I asked them to create that list for me. And I start with the earliest bad thing they can remember. And I ask them the worst part of that event. And I ask how upsetting it is to think about that on a scale from zero to ten. And I ask them to think about what emotion is causing the upset. Are they angry? Are they afraid? Are they sad? Are they jealous? What is the feeling – the emotion – that comes along with that recollection of the bad thing that happened to them. Then I ask them two different questions. How did that event make them feel about themselves? And how would you like to feel about yourself instead? And, in almost every case, the way bad things make us think about ourselves in childhood is almost always negative.

Here's an example. A man told me that his parents argued a lot, beginning when he was very little, for as long as he could remember – all through his childhood. And after they argued, they would often be angry with him – grouchy, critical, negative. We can think, as adults, "Well, they weren't angry with him. They were angry with each other. But even psychology, through research, teaches us that when children experience their parents fighting, it feels like they're being attacked. And that makes them feel like there's something wrong with them. I asked him how that made him feel about himself. And he said, "It made him feel two things. One, it made him feel unsafe. And two, it made him feel like he wasn't worth caring about. There was something wrong with him." And he carried that feeling about himself throughout his whole life at work, in his marriage, in his friendships. And that belief caused depression, self-loathing, withdrawal from relationships or fear of failure. It thwarted his attempts to succeed at times. And here's another thing to think about when a child learns to believe this way about themselves.

Humans tend to go with what is familiar. Consequently, when he was about to be a success, or develop a new relationship or friendship, he would tend to withdraw from those things. And I asked him if he understood why, and he said, “Because it didn’t seem to fit.” So being successful in life and relationships didn’t fit with his view of himself.

Now I have asked these questions to hundreds and hundreds of people. And it wasn’t until I had been doing this for some time that I began to realize that the negative things that people believe about themselves come from early childhood. And they are invariably untrue. They’re lies. And who is the father of lies? Just think back about the man. He wasn’t the cause of the problems between the couple. And yet somehow, listening to them argue, he believed that he was a bad kid, that he was defective in some way. And that affected his whole life very negatively. And it wasn’t true! So where did that come from?

Now think about Cain and his attitude. If you remember what happened there, he got short-tempered with God, and he said, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” And God talks right to the problem. He points out to Cain, “If you do well, will you not be accepted?” And that really was the issue. Cain was feeling like he wasn’t good enough. And what God was saying was, “Cain, there is nothing wrong with you intrinsically. I love you just as much as your brother. It’s your behavior and your attitude and your outlook that needs modification. So Cain was living down to his belief about himself. He *knew* he wasn’t his brother’s keeper. He was a rotten person and had always been like that. So he, like his parents, believed the lie – that they were defective, but only in their own minds. God loved them.

Okay, so I’ve just explained to you why I believe that Satan’s lies to us, as small children and on into adulthood, are one way to explain all the terrible things that happen in the world. So how does something as small as one child’s skewed view of self cause all the terrible things?

Well, let’s think about one little boy – little Adolf. He used to watch his father savagely beat the family dogs. And he probably got his share as well. And he knew he deserved every beating he got and all his father’s rage, because clearly his father thought he was bad kid. That’s how he thought about it. His father found him unfit, less-than, not good enough. So his father was angry with him because he was defective. And he also learned, watching him beat those dogs, that it was much safer to side with his father against the dogs, than have any empathy for them. So he became, while he was growing up, devoid of human compassion. And, because he was unacceptable in his father’s eyes, he craved acceptance. It became his quest. And once he had manipulated himself into power in Germany, he used that power to do unspeakable things to millions of people. Even his own generals and political lackeys were terrified of his pathological violence.

And we think, “Well, if only his father had been kinder.” (By the way, I’m not making excuses for Adolf.) It wasn’t his father’s fault. Adolf had the right to choose how he was going to be. And there’s lots of people who have had mean dads that didn’t turn out to be mean fathers, or mean to

anybody. We're just talking about how it all happens. So, "if only his father had been kinder, that might not have happened." But then, we don't know what happened to Adolf's father when he was a little boy, do we? So small events, compared to the whole scope of human history, seems small, but can be magnified to have huge effects on humanity.

The devil also, once he's spread a lie to someone, uses those people who believe his lies to transmit the lie to other people. He uses people that are really good at sin to tempt the rest of us. Think of Hollywood. Think of the porn industry. Or, think of that kid you knew in school, who smoke weed and was also trying to get you to try some. Or, that really funny friend, who was so utterly judgmental about everything.

As we are not aware of what's going on around us, we can get sucked into these lies, too. The snake, remember, was more subtle than any of the other creatures. Maybe you don't see your lie as being in the middle of a war. A client told me about what I am about to read to you. That's how I found out about this. In this reading, the author put it forth as, it was a vision that he received. I don't know much about the background of it, but I might just call it an insight. The guy's name is Rick Joyner, and here's what he wrote: "I saw a demonic army so large it stretched as far as I could see. It was separated into divisions, with each carrying a different banner. The foremost and most powerful divisions were pride, self-righteousness, respectability, selfish ambition and unrighteous judgment. But the largest of all was jealousy. The leader of this vast army was the Accuser of the brethren himself. I knew that there were many more evil divisions beyond my scope of vision, but these were the vanguard of this terrible horde from hell that was now being released against the church. The weapons carried by this horde had names on them. The swords were named Intimidation, the spears were named Treachery, and their arrows were named Accusations, Gossip, Slander and Fault-finding. Scouts and smaller companies of demons, with such names as Rejection, Impatience, Bitterness, Unforgiveness and Lust, were sent in advance of this army to prepare for the main attack. I knew in my heart that the church had never faced anything like this before. The main assignment of this army was to cause division. It was sent to attack every level of relationship – churches with each other, congregations with their pastors, husbands with wives, children and parents, and even children with each other. The scouts were sent to locate the openings in the churches – families or individuals – that Rejection, Bitterness, Lust, etcetera could exploit and make a larger breach for the divisions that were coming. The most shocking part of this vision was that this horde was not riding on horses, but on Christians. Most of them were well-dressed, respectable, and the appearance of being refined and educated. These were Christians who had opened themselves to the powers of darkness to such a degree that the enemy could use them, and they would think that they were being used by God. The Accuser knows that a house divided cannot stand. And this army represented his ultimate attempt to bring such complete division in the church that she would completely fall from grace."

Why am I reading this to you? Are you going to start looking around, trying to figure out who the people are next to you that are being ridden? Well, the next step to that, then, would be to accuse

someone, wouldn't it? And that would make you the child of the Accuser, wouldn't it? We have met the enemy, and he is us. So what's the point?

Well, we have to remember there our battle is not against flesh and blood. An F35 fighter plane isn't going to do you any good in Christian warfare. It's not against any person, but it's against our own thoughts, spawned by our adversary, imprinted on us when we were young. We have gullibly allowed in, and as we believe his lies, which are called the fiery darts of the devil in scripture. All any of us have to do to step out of this evil army is to repudiate those kind of divisive thoughts and practice godliness. Now you might say, "I know, but what about all the bad guys?" Well, Jesus has something to say about that in Luke 13:1.

Luke 13:1-3 – *There were some present at that very time who Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. So there were some Galileans that were killed by the Romans. And He answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you. But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*

Unless we all repent, and stop being the devil's horses, we will all likewise perish. In other words, we don't have the luxury of assessing other people. We have our *own* problems to worry about. The battle is not with other people. The battle is with ourselves in our own minds. God is going to take care of all of us – good and bad. And we're all going to get what we deserve. So there's no need to worry, or get anxious, or lay awake fretting about what other people are doing. We have to be concerned about ourselves. God tells us – because He does consider His church an army – to put on the *armor* of God. And, if we do that, then we are going to be impervious to the lies of the devil. So much more coming up next about Weapons Training.

So the devil uses lies. We're talking about tactics, right? He uses lies. He instills them from one person to another – parents to children, and friends to friends. And his point of those lies – the purpose for them – is to divide us from God and divide us from each other. And that causes chaos, which is his way of attempting to weaken humanity, to tempt us to hatred and other sins. And he uses the sins that we commit as proof that God won't help us – to discourage us that He is not a loving God, but He is withholding and a deceiver.

So God tells us that once we contract with God and enlist in His army, we are under grace and our sins are covered by Christ's blood. The Deceiver, the Accuser of the brethren, has no accusations to make, because we're covered by Christ's blood. We are a new creation, created for good works. We are of the household of God – His children, part of His family. But it's still possible for us to go AWOL. And that can happen.

Look at this. Let's look in Galatians 5:3 – 5:4, pardon me.

Galatians 5:4-5 – *You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law. You have*

fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

So there it is. It *is* possible to fall away from the grace of God. And you might say, “But I don’t believe I’m justified by the law. I know I’m under grace.” But, if we judge others part of the evil army, then we are saying that we are justified before God, because we would never do anything like that. You know, we’re good and they’re bad. And we’re good because we obey God. So, in your mind, you believe – if you believe that way – that you’re justified by works. If we want it to be that way, then God will *let* us. We have free will. We can go on thinking that way. And what we do, then, is we become a part of the wrong army – the judgmental army, the divisive army. And that puts us, if we persist in that outlook, outside the bubble of God’s grace. And that is the goal of the devil. If he can do that to you, then he’s killed you already.

George Patton, the famous World War II general, said, “No one ever won a war by dying for his country.” And God thinks that way as well. Let’s look in 2 Peter 3:8. Peter said:

2 Peter 3:8 – *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

So God is not willing that anybody perish. And you know, God, pretty much, get’s His way all the time, doesn’t He? But how? When we really understand what we’re up against, it’s terrifying and so hard to avoid judgement, and accusation, and jealousy, and self-doubt, and all of these other things. But that fear can be mitigated once we understand the weapons God gives us. That makes it a whole different situation.

So be sure to tune in next time to learn about all the weapons God gives to resist the lies of the devil. And while you’re at it, don’t forget to check out our Website, liferesource.org.

Until next time, this is Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.