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Presentation Transcript
Waging Spiritual War – Part 5 – Resisting Lies with Truth
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What does it mean to resist the devil? Well, let's look at a scripture. It's in 1 Peter 5:8. We're told:

1 Peter 5:8-9 – *Be sober minded, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of sufferings are being experienced by our brotherhood worldwide.*

Let's break this down a bit. He's out there. We're to resist him, firm in the faith. What does that tell us? Well, faith is believing God's truth at every level and every circumstance, isn't it? As we've explained in detail before in this series, the devil's main effort is to teach us lies about God, about ourselves, and about others. Our resistance, then, is to repudiate those lies and believe God. That's how we resist. If we do that, God promises to come to our rescue.

Let's talk about finding lies. The devil lies to us about doctrine, and about church organizations – which one we'll be in – things like that. But these lies are not his first line of attack. He begins when we're young, telling us that we're defective, worthless, not worthy of love, etcetera. He knows that that's going to discourage us from doing anything. And he doesn't want us to do anything at all. He also lies to us about God, telling us that God is like he is – a liar, cruel, heartless and vindictive. And he also focuses his attention on lying to us about other people and their motives.

So our resistance is to replace the lies with the truth out of the Bible. Now, earlier in this series, we mentioned that the Bible provides us a blow-by-blow example of how to do this when Jesus was tempted three times by the devil. Each time, after the devil lied to Him, He would quote a scripture, showing the lie for what it was, and replacing it with the truth. But how do we do that? If we've been deceived, how are we to throw off the cloud of deception and believe the truth? Well, we'll get into that right now.

Let's talk about finding the lies that we believe. The first point that I want to bring up here is to look into our lives where we're having problems. Where things seem the most urgent is where we want to go first, right? I'll use several different kinds of examples here.

Let's say that you have an addiction problem, or you can't quit doing something, like gambling – something like that. I had a woman that was coming to see me a while back – very bright, married, happily married, three kids. All of her kids were on medication for depression or ADHD. Her husband had a twenty-year-old son that was living with them and he has been diagnosed with a mental disorder. This older step-son would not help around the house. He would steal things from her, call her names. He was hateful to her. All this irritated her beyond belief, though her own children's misbehavior didn't seem to bother her in quite the same way. Her husband thought dealing with his son and hers was the same. He would talk to them in a calm voice. Sometimes, he would issue logical consequences. She liked it when he did that with *her* kids, but she thought his son should receive more tongue lashing and harsher consequences.

Now, they used to enjoy drinking wine together, but when her husband saw that she was addicted, he quit drinking in an effort to help her get control. So, he's a pretty good guy. Once he did that, she started sneaking shots of vodka – the little bottles, you know? She'd buy them at the gas station stores. She told me that was just to “knock the edge off.” Well, that would get out of control. At one point, she went to rehab, and I think she stopped for, maybe, a month or so.

It was also noteworthy that her father had almost died about three times in her life due to health issues, that she'd lost a brother, and her former husband had died as well, and also several dear friends throughout her life. So, in talking with her about all the deaths, she said it seemed to her that she was cursed. When she loved people, they died. So, when I enquired about her upbringing, I learned that her parents were both so busy working when she was a child that she got very little attention – either positive or negative – from them. And the reason she came to me to begin with, the presenting complaint was panic attacks. So high anxiety.

As we worked, I learned a number of the lies she told herself about the addiction. One of them was, “I can't calm down without it.” In other words, “I need it.” Another one she told herself was that she drank for fun. And maybe she did in the beginning, but it had gotten out of control. There were others, but I can't recall all of them. But we did EMDR on those beliefs, and she came to see that she could calm down without it – that it was a lie she told herself so that she could continue medicating herself, instead of facing the cause of her anxiety in an effective way.

Then I asked her to explain the difference between the way her husband disciplined his son and hers. She said, “He did it the same way.” I asked, “Why, then, do you react differently?” And this was a real eye-opener for her. She started to realize that she was defensive – that, if he disciplined them the same, that wasn't good enough. Her kids were in a separate category. And that led to the realization that she believed she was a defective person. She was a bad mother. So she was deflecting them getting the same treatment as the older son – that she wanted for him.

So I made a difference for her between being defective and making mistakes – you know, not knowing enough, etcetera – and asked her if she loved her children. And she saw that she did. She had poured herself into caring for them as best she knew. A lot of the reason that they had their own medications – at least, in part – was because there were things that happened in the family that really weren't completely her fault. There was a lot of that...you know, the deaths and all that that went on. I mean, she could have done other things than give them medication, I suppose, but that really wasn't the issue. She loved her children and she was doing the best she could for them. She poured herself into caring for them.

She began to realize she was *not* defective. She was just human and life happens – difficult things occur and we have to learn how to deal with them. But when she realized that, that was the lie she believed about herself – you know, she was a terrible mother. So I gave her a homework assignment. Every time she caught herself feeling defective, she was to tell herself the truth – that she was just a person and she was doing the best she could. That put her in a place where she was ready to deal with the lie that she was telling herself about being cursed. That, of course, was an outgrowth of the defective lie. That fell hard and fast once she made the connection. She replaced the cursed lie with the truth. Everybody dies. It's sad when we love someone and they die, but it doesn't mean that we're cursed. It just means that's the way life is. Sometimes some people get more of that than others. And sometimes we get more of it during a certain period than we have at others.

Now there were lots of other lies that were imbedded in her mind as well, but I think you get the point. So what can we take from this example? Well, one thing that I think is important to know, it's not usually just one lie that we believe that causes our problems. There were a number of lies that were supporting her drinking problem. It's not unusual to find dozens of them around a single problem, behavior or attitude.

Another to learn is, they often go back to something negative in childhood that we learn early. That's even when parents are doing their best. This *isn't* about blaming parents. It's about understanding the present and why the problem exists.

Another area where we often have problems is in relationships. So a survey of our relationships may yield a number of problems – all caused by lies we have accepted from the adversary. Here's an example: A woman was telling me once that it really bugged her when her children would not listen to her. And she couldn't understand why she would get so angry and yell at them. She hated doing that, but it just didn't seem to stop. She didn't know how to control it. She didn't know why she was that sensitive to that. So she felt bad, because she knew it wasn't really her kids' problem. It was hers. And here she was, launching on them every time they would be inattentive. But even if they needed to pay attention, tantruming at them wasn't helping them to learn to pay attention. So it was an ineffective way of dealing with whatever the issue was.

Now, when we have these kinds of hypersensitivities, it usually goes back to something in our past. We call this *triggering*. So, I asked her, “Can you remember anything in your childhood that made you feel the same kind of anger you’re feeling toward your children when they don’t listen to you?” Once I asked her that question, she instantly replied, “When my parents wouldn’t listen to me!” And what do you think you’re were learning from their inattention?” See, we’re trying to go deeper. “Well, I’m not worth listening to.” There it was. That was one of the underlying lies.

But under *that* lie, was the lie, “I am worthless.” Since she was a Christian, I showed her how to use an online Bible to find all the places God tells us He loves us. Then, the next week, we had a talk about what she discovered. She had a list. We targeted with EMDR some of the times in her past that she felt unheard by her parents. And we targeted some of the times when her kids wouldn’t listen to her. And I asked her to think of time when she really got the most angry. Then we targeted the lie itself. Then I asked her every time she started to get angry with her kids for not listening, she should tell herself the truth. Over time, what was the truth? Well, the truth was, just because they didn’t listen, it didn’t mean she was a bad mother. And just because they didn’t listen, it didn’t mean that she had to go off on them. And it didn’t mean that she was a bad person. So over time, she stopped getting so upset with her kids and started using logical consequences to help them learn to listen to her.

So, what could we learn from this example? Relationship problems are often caused by relationship problems in the past that taught us lies about ourselves or produced hypersensitivities.

I’m going to give another example. It’s a personal example. Not long after I began pastoring a congregation – the first time I started pastoring many years ago – I started to have episodes of vomiting. A doctor told me my body was producing too much bile, which was flowing into my gut just below my stomach. My gut would swell shut from the acid in the bile, and I would start vomiting the bile to get rid of it. Terrible experience. When I asked him what caused it, he said it could be either dietary or emotional. So not long after that, we combined our festival time off with our personal vacation and were gone from our congregation for about a month. Had a great time, never got sick. Everything was great. When we got back, after a week or so, we invited a family from our congregation over for dinner. After that dinner, I started vomiting. Now, this family had some serious problems that we had been working on. So I understood that my problem was emotional, rather than dietary. There was something about that family that was making me sick.

So what was it that I believed would have such a powerful effect on me physically? Well, to make a long story short, I discovered that I believed that, if the members of my congregation who came to me for help didn’t immediately find relief from their problems, it meant I was not a good pastor. (It’s silly to even say those words out loud now.) Under that was another lie. That lie was that I had to perform effectively in every situation or I was not a worthy person.

So, every time I caught myself beating myself up with that lie, I refuted it with several truths. Here are some of things I started thinking about: The members of my congregation were God's sheep, not mine. He was responsible for them – more than I. In what universe did I have control over anyone anyway? – totally unrealistic. I also learned that God loved me in spite of my identity crisis. I learned that I had myself confused with God. And He also loved all the members of my congregation, even if they didn't overcome every problem when I talked with them.

Once I started refuting the lies, I began to believe the biblical reality and I stopped vomiting. Now, it took quite a while for me to not have to refute the lies anymore. But every time I would catch myself thinking negatively about it, I'd just tell myself the truth. And then I'd go on. Like I said, it took a while, but eventually, I started to think God's way about me and my congregation. And I started feeling better.

When we're looking for the lies, we can ask, "What does the trouble imply about us?" Where are we having the problem? Sort through all the lies. Then, when we look at the lies we believed, what do these lies imply about us, or God, or other people? Those are the three areas where he works the most. So the lies that we find initially usually have lies underneath them, and they should become the focus of our concern.

We've talked about two things so far – what it means *actually* to resist the devil, and then we talked about finding the lies that we believe that we've absorbed from him – we've been deceived into believing. Then the next thing we're going to focus on is on the *truth*. There are several things here that I didn't bring out in the examples, but these are all a part of what we should think about.

First of all, we should ask *God* for truth. If we've believed a lie for a long time, it's quite possible we don't even know what the truth is. And I hope, by considering these examples that I provided, you can see there are innumerable lies out there. We only covered one area in lies about self. Even that's overwhelming. So we know that the human heart is self-deceptive also. We hate to approach the lies we believe for that reason. So what chance do we have on our own? Well, let's look at a promise God made to us – something that's true. It's in John 8:32 – we've read this before in the series, but I'm bringing something else out here about it.

John 8:31-32 – *Jesus said to the Jews who believed in Him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."*

So how could it be a waste of time to ask God to help us recognize the lies that enslave us and recognize the truth that will set us free. It's an essential. Where can we find God's word? You have to live in God's word – abide in it, hang out with it, own it, make it ours. Where can we find that? Well, it's in the Bible! So that's the place to look. What does God promise will happen if we abide in His word? Well, He said we will be His disciples and His truth will set us free. And in context, that means free from practicing sin. So that's a promise! It's bedrock. If you're

miserable and if you're in some problem or situation or habit, go to the Bible to learn the truth about your life and your issues and how to be free of them.

So what does that mean – to go to the Bible? Well, for an example, if you learn that your smoking habit is not there because it's fun, or because it calms you down, but because you are using it to avoid facing anxiety and the issues that have caused that, then go to the Bible to find out how to deal with the anxiety and the underlying beliefs that keep it in place.

My wife, Elaine, started a project long ago – not long after we got married, actually – and she's still on it today. When she finds a promise in the Bible that God makes to us, she writes it down in a special book that she has. Over the years, she has accumulated a treasure trove of promises that God makes to us. It's very helpful to read it – very encouraging.

So my thought, on using this approach to the problems that enslave us, is to start making a *truth* trove. This would be individual for each one of us, according to the problems that we each have. So write down, as we find them – and it's a lifetime project – all the truths God tells us about us and our problems, and the people we have problems with, and about God. If you do that, you will be encouraged. And when you grow weak, or start slipping back into the old lie, you can go to your truth trove and quickly reinforce in your mind the truth God has for you.

Now I have left out a point, some would say. I mentioned it early, but I haven't covered it in great detail. And they would say that once we find the lies, we must repudiate them. That's true, but it seems to me, in my life, the way I repudiate lies is by recommitting to believing God's truth. So, if we look at Jesus and His struggle with the devil, Jesus immediately quoted the truth to the devil as a way of resisting. And the repudiation occurred instantly, once he heard the lie, because he already knew the truth. So I haven't spoken about repudiation, because the act of searching for truth means we have repudiated the lie already – or so it seems to me.

So that's somewhat about the process of finding lies. You know, it's such a *huge* topic. It's really hard to get really specific. And when you get specific, then you're leaving out other things that other people would need. So, I think having someone to help us – you know, all the examples I gave were of me *helping* somebody else, except for my own. And I read a book that helped me understand about that. So I was getting some support from somewhere else.

So, that's a bit about the process of finding the lies and believing the truth instead in our spiritual war against the devil. And that leaves one more presentation to conclude this series. I have saved, in this case, the best for last. When you hear it, you're going to be so encouraged! I've called *Broken Arrow*. I took the name from a movie called *We Are Soldiers*. And *broken arrow* was a code term for a close-in, all out air strike, used only when the soldiers were at risk of being completely overrun by the enemy. Overcoming the very deceptive lies of our adversary is a futile effort for human beings. And we have all been overrun and consumed by it. He's so subtle and we're so naïve, so what chance do we have? Well, fortunately, we are not on our own. So far in

this series, we've looked at *our* part in the process of overcoming, but in *Broken Arrow*, we're going to see the overwhelming power *our God* promises to bring to bear on our behalf, if we resist the devil. He can only depart once God shows up.

So don't forget to check out our Website for the previous parts of this series. I also want to take a little bit of time here to express thanks to all the people who have been donating to our efforts. It takes tons of money to provide the stuff for you on the Website. Because we've been blessed by many people who like to help. Many of them send a small amount every so often. Others send a larger amount once in a while. Either way works. We just so grateful for the help we have. We couldn't do it if God didn't lay it on your minds to help us. So we thank you for that.