

CHRISTIAN WARFARE

ENEMY #1: SATAN

Today's Passage: 1 Peter 5:6-11

For the week of June 2nd

MAIN POINT

Being actively firm in our faith is the greatest defense against our enemy, the devil.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

Use these questions to learn more about others in your Life Group.

How do you know when you are being spiritually attacked? Of which indicators do you take note?

What have you learned from your successes and failures in defending yourself against the devil's attacks?

Legendary Green Bay Packers football coach Vince Lombardi famously said, "The best defense is a good offense." That tells us a lot about his philosophy of football strategy—as long as your offense controls the ball, the other team can't score. But the concept is far from being original with Lombardi, or football for that matter. General George S. Patton observed, "In war the only sure defense is offense." Going further back in history, the first President of the United States George Washington wrote in 1799, "Offensive operations, often times, is the surest, if not the only ... means of defense." Though Peter didn't use the same language as the above influencers of American history, in his first letter he vividly describes the process of defending oneself against spiritual warfare.

SCAN HERE FOR ADDITIONAL
COMMENTARY ON TODAY'S LESSON



GROW TOGETHER

Read 1 Peter 5:6-7 (ESV).

5:6 *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”*

What two actions did Peter call believers to take in these verses? How do these actions go together?

What action did Peter say God would take?

What do these verses say about the character of God?

If in the pride of our own sufficiencies we engage the devil, defeat is certain. Only when we humble ourselves and admit our need for God will we cast our cares—those decoys and deceptions the devil uses against us—upon the God who can bear them. God’s victory snatches us from the jaws of defeat. Standing firm in your faith means taking the offensive in acknowledging your inability and turning to the One who is superior to your enemy.

How do these verses depict taking the spiritual offense for the purpose of spiritual defense?

Read 1 Peter 5:8 (ESV).

5:8 *“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”*

What do you gather from Peter’s warnings to “Be sober-minded; be watchful!” (v. 8)? What about his explanatory statement exemplifies the importance of the issue of which he speaks?

Why do you think Peter compared the devil to a lion? How does the devil devour a person?

What methods does the devil use to devour believers?

Lions roar and lions prowl, but lions do not roar while they prowl—they quietly and stealthily sneak up on their intended prey. Likewise, the devil will not announce to you that he is coming after you. He will at various times roar to intimidate you. But when he has you in his sights, you won’t hear anything from him until he pounces. If you don’t want to be his next meal, Peter urged that you to “Be sober-minded; be watchful!” (v. 8). To avoid becoming “devil’s food,” we need to be disciplined in keeping an alert watch for his deceitful tricks. Standing firm in your faith means taking the offensive in scouting out those areas in your life where the devil might attack.

What is connection between spiritual disciplines and spiritual defense?

Read 1 Peter 5:9 (ESV).

5:9 *“Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”*

How does one resist the devil? Is resistance of the devil futile? Explain.

What is the significance of Peter’s admonition, “knowing that the same sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world” (v. 9)?

Some believers mistakenly believe that faith is passive. Yet Peter called for action—resist the devil, stand firm in the faith. While it is true that we cannot defeat the devil in our own strength, God will not secure the victory to us if we ourselves do not put up a fight. Resistance can be tiring and discouraging. The devil would like for resistance to be isolating, as if we’re the only ones in the battle. But Peter reminded us we are not the only ones. Our fellow believers throughout the world have joined the battle. Be encouraged—you are not on your own. Put up a good fight.

Read 1 Peter 5:10-11 (ESV).

***5:10** “And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. **11** To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

Verses 10-11 contain a title of God, an action of God, and a characteristic of God. What does the title of God, “the God of all grace” (v. 10), say to you about your efforts to defend yourself from the devil?

How does the action of God, that God “will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” after you have suffered a little while (v. 10), motivate you in your efforts to stand firm in your faith?

What is the significance of the characteristic of God, “To him be the dominion forever and ever” (v. 11), in the midst of spiritual warfare?

Hall of Fame football coach John Madden once said, "All a prevent defense does is prevent you from winning." If you attempt to just play defense against the devil, you will lose. An inferior team against a superior team must have and execute a superior strategy. For the Christian, that superior strategy against the devil is an offense of humbly turning to God, taking the initiative to notice Satan's points of attack, and resisting him when he comes. Indeed, the best defense against our enemy the devil is a strong offense of standing firm in our faith.

MAKE AN IMPACT

Discover how you can apply today's lesson to your life so you can impact the world.

In what areas are you relying on your own strength to deal with the devil rather than humbly turning to God?

How can you be more attentive to scoping out the devil's efforts against you? Where does he tend to attack you?

What are some spiritual disciplines you need to adopt to resist Satan's attacks in particular areas of your life?