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The Nature of the Spiritual Warfare

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Satan and demons (evil spirits) are fallen angels. Satan and his army of bad angels promote pride, seek to destroy believers, pervert the truth of God, and destroy the purposes of God.

1. Evil spirits will be confronted during spiritual growth, or recovery phase, of the spiritual life. Satan is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). So when you are going in the direction of the world, the demonic forces won't give you much trouble. I've heard people say things like, "Boy, I really know what sin is all about!" usually meaning they've sinned a lot. **You don't realize the power of sin when you are sinning. Actually, you will experience the power of sin when you try being good.** If you are floating down a white water rapid in a canoe or raft, you may think you understand the power of the current. But you really don't. If you want to experience the power of the current, try stepping out of the raft and walking back upstream. The spiritual warfare is realized when you try to recover or grow in your spiritual walk.

2. Evil spirits will counterfeit what is good. Evil is a perversion of good. First, there must be something good in order for evil to pervert it. In order to have a broken arm (a bad arm), I must first have an arm (a good arm). So evil depends on good for its very existence. **It needs something to pervert.** The way Satan and his demons do this is by questioning the truth of God (Genesis 3:1) and then denying that truth, usually by slight alterations. But there must first be a truth of God for them to pervert. Gradually, they provide an alternate truth, a half truth mixed with both truth and error. No counterfeiters would produce false currency with a picture of Mickey Mouse on it. Counterfeiters make the false look a lot like the real thing so as to fool the uninformed.

3. Evil spirits will focus on pride. Pride is the root of all evil (Psalm 138:6; Proverbs 3:34; Matthew 23:12; 1 Peter 5:5; James 4:6). Someone once asked me, "Why would demons be so dumb as to follow Satan?" The answer is that sin is not a matter of smart vs. dumb. Lots of smart people sin and follow Satan's world system. Sinners are not those who are dumb but those who want to live for themselves. **Pride is to put value in something (usually people) apart from God.** Humility connects all virtues and value to God. Pride disconnects virtues and value from God. That is precisely Satan's sales pitch: You can have independent value and pursue independent goals. Be all that you can be. Pursue your dreams. If you can dream it, you can achieve it. But the fine print on Satan's appeal says "apart from God." In the end, you become your own god (Isaiah 14:14).

4. Evil spirits are defeated by putting on the full armor of God. The central passage here is Ephesians 6. Paul wrote, *put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.* (Ephesians 6:11, 14-17). There are six pieces of armor listed here: (1) truth, (2) righteousness, (3) the Gospel, (4) faith, (5) salvation, and (6) the Word of God. Notice that the only offense attack weapon in the armor is *the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* We are also to *resist the devil* (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8) and overcome him (Revelation 12:11) by depending on our Lord Jesus Christ, who defeated him on the cross and will eventually destroy him (Jude 9, Colossians 2:15; Revelation 20:10). **The battle is uphill, but the victory is certain.**