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UNDERSTANDING SATAN'S STRATEGY AND PERSON

Scripture Memory Verses:

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31–32)
Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

Unit Learning Goal:

Knowing the Enemy.

Overview of Unit 1:

Lesson 1: The Biblical Perspective of Warfare

Lesson 2: Where Did Satan Come From?

Lesson 3: The Kingdom of Darkness

Lesson 4: Satan's Kingdom Rising

SUMMARY STATEMENT

In order to defeat our enemy rather than be defeated by him, it is critical that we understand who he is, where he came from, where he gets his power, the means he uses to attack us, and the deceitfulness of his methods.

Unit 1 Thought Focus:

John 10:10 says it all in very plain language: “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.” This is the description Jesus applied to Satan. In stark and total contrast, Jesus claimed of Himself, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Satan’s strategy is to use whoever and whatever, wherever and whenever, however and why ever to destroy our God-given, blood-bought opportunity to live out our eternal, glorified life in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you knew someone was planning to break into your home, you would be prepared, on guard, ready to take appropriate action. But what if you knew someone was intent on destroying your marriage, hurting your children, and wreaking havoc in your life? What would you do? Certainly you wouldn’t stand by and do nothing.

But too often, when it comes to the spiritual realm that’s exactly what we do—nothing. As a result, the forces of hell have a heyday messing with our lives, and we seem to be clueless, stumbling around in the dark, moaning, “Why is this happening to me?”

The reality is just as Jesus said—and Jesus is not a liar, is He?—Satan is intently focused on our destruction. No one is too precious, too young, too sweet, too good, or too anything else to be immune to his attacks. And Satan is quick to take advantage of the person who is unsure, doubtful, skeptical, or cynical about his existence and power. People such as these are easy targets for Satan and his devouring fallen angels.

In 1998 in Greenville, Tennessee, six young people who had been dabbling in the occult were sentenced to life in prison without parole. Why? Because their dabbling had led to death—they kidnapped, terrorized, and murdered a husband, wife, and their six-year-old daughter. A two-year-old son, Peter, survived a bullet in the eye. Perhaps these six young people began giving ground to the devil by playing with tarot cards or reading horoscopes. Maybe they were fascinated by angels or by the darker side of rock music. However it began, their ill-fated spiritual quest led to a deepening involvement with the occult.

It’s amazing that there is such a resurgence of interest in the spiritual realm even as many people are insistently cynical when it comes to warning about the danger of dabbling in the occult, witchcraft, New Age thinking, spirit guides, and more. They refuse to believe that not all angels are good angels. They don’t want to acknowledge that even Satan and his demons can appear as sweet angels of light.

Many professed Christians don’t really believe that the spirit world is real or relevant or needs to be dealt with. They may not often verbalize this, but it is obvious by the way they react. As Timothy Warner, professor emeritus at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and an advisory board member at the International Center for Biblical Counseling (an agency counseling people suffering from spiritual oppression), says, “People may not always live what they profess, but they will always live what they believe.”

We are in a fierce battle with the Enemy of our souls. Spiritual warfare is a biblical reality. It occurs whether we acknowledge it or not. Satan doesn’t need our assent to attack us. If we are not on guard, wearing our spiritual armor and equipped with the tools of biblical warfare, he will try to rip our lives apart.

These attacks may be viewed as merely struggles with drug dependency, juvenile delinquency, emotional instability, family dysfunction, mental illness, or a thousand other labels for problems we view as normal. Or perhaps we or our family are plagued with unusual illnesses, injuries from frequent accidents, and other medical maladies. We’ll spend thousands of dollars on therapists, doctors, detox therapies, surgeries, enlightenment seminars, books, retreats, and more, but fail to consider spiritual oppression. Some problems seem to get better, but new ones always surface. And many of the old ones come back. It never ends, and we scratch our heads wondering why.

The question is not *whether* we wrestle demonic spirits, but who’s winning. Do the spirits

have us pinned down in defeat? Have we conceded our souls and our families to the rule of bondage to darkness?

It's not too late to take action. But first we need to understand who and what we're dealing with. Then we need to become equipped with the tools of warfare and begin fighting back. The good news is that even though we may be wounded at times, the battle is guaranteed to be a victory for those who stand in Christ!

Are there areas in your life or members of your family you believe are being attacked by Satan? List below those areas or the names of family members, describe what's happening, and give a brief explanation of why you think Satan is involved. Do not share this information with others at this time. Rather, as you proceed through this study, keep these in prayer before the Lord. As you receive new insight, add or delete from this list as the Holy Spirit directs:

LESSON 1: *The Biblical Perspective of Warfare*

Scripture for Meditation:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12)

A Beginning Prayer:

Heavenly Father, open the eyes of my heart that I might see the truth of who my true

enemy is so that I can avoid the snares and pitfalls he lays before me. Through the quickening of Your Holy Spirit, help my mind to grasp the power of the truth who lives in me. Let the blood of Jesus Christ cover all areas of my being to cleanse, protect, and deliver me from the fear of him who has no authority over or rights to my life or family. In the name of my precious Lord Jesus Christ, seal me with Your salvation and righteous protection and make me be an overcomer in all things. Amen.

Lesson:

SELF-CONTROLLED AND ALERT

A common lament heard when believers sin goes something like this: "The devil made me do it! I couldn't help myself!" Oh, how we love to assign responsibility for our failings on someone other than ourselves. And if we can tack it onto the devil, all the better. However, this is not the scriptural view of why we sin.

A more accurate statement could be: "The devil influenced me to do it, but I made the final choice."

That the Enemy of our souls will use every trick in the book—and then some—to defeat us is reality. We all like to quote the second half of 1 Peter 5:8, which says, "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." We too often ignore the first part of that verse that states, "Be self-controlled and alert."

Being in control and alert applies to several aspects of our lives. Below, check the activities where we need to be in control and alert. Discuss your responses.

- 1. Driving our children to school
- 2. Eating dinner with the family

- 3. Operating heavy construction equipment
- 4. Preparing our income taxes
- 5. Disciplining our children appropriately
- 6. Disagreeing with a friend or our spouse
- 7. Walking in an unfamiliar neighborhood
- 8. Making ethically sensitive business decisions
- 9. Choosing whom to marry
- 10. Talking about people and events at our church

If our stumbling was all due to the devil’s attacks, why would we need to be self-controlled? Wouldn’t being alert be enough? But we are called to be both. Satan sets the snares, and he’s clever in his trapping. But the Holy Spirit who lives in us is clear-eyed and quick to alert us to the pitfalls. Once alerted, our responsibility is to avoid the dangers—to *flee* evil desires and *pursue* righteousness (2 Timothy 2:22).

In each of the examples in the exercise above, being in control and alert are critical. For example, around the dinner table we need to be alert to what others are saying, alert to our own responses, and in control of how we react toward and treat each individual. The bottom line for Christians is that there is *never* a time when it’s safe not to be in control and alert.

Success in spiritual warfare needs a biblical, doctrinal approach. Subjective emotions, sincere feelings, and fervent desire mean nothing to Satan. He yields no ground to emotion or sincerity. He backs off only when he is confronted with the authority we possess in the Lord Jesus Christ. This authority is grounded in God’s Word.

Hebrews 4:12: *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

Ephesians 6:17: *Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

Revelation 19:15: *Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.*

With what weapon is the Word of God frequently compared? Why?

What is the Word of God?

What are some effects of reading and knowing the Bible?

Ephesians 5:26 _____

(to make holy, cleansing by the washing with water through the word)

Romans 12:2 _____

(renewing of the mind)

Matthew 4:4 _____

(life and strength)

List other Scriptures that describe benefits from reading and learning the Word. List the benefits described. (A concordance or Bible dictionary will be useful.)

STANDING FIRM

In Matthew 4 Jesus gives us an example of how to stand against and defeat the devil when he comes against us. Knowing the Word allowed Christ to stand confidently in His position of authority. Using the Word against Satan was the same as wielding a powerful broadsword. Victory in this encounter was not instantaneous, as Satan attacked at least three times that are recorded. So it is with us. The Enemy is persistent and will attack over and over. To be able to stand means knowing all the Scripture we can and being alert to use it.

Read Matthew 4.

What did Satan use in his attempts at tripping up Jesus? Circle the correct answer:

- A. Guile
- B. Cunning
- C. Scripture
- D. All of the above

When did Satan approach Jesus in the desert? Circle the correct answer:

- A. As soon as Jesus entered the desert
- B. After Jesus had prayed and fasted
- C. After forty days
- D. Both B and C

What did Satan offer Jesus? Circle the correct answer:

- A. Power
- B. Wealth
- C. Recognition
- D. All of the above

Under what authority or influence did Satan tempt Jesus? Circle the correct answers:

- A. Satan was just very clever and smart.
- B. Satan was and is the ruler of the air and the earth.
- C. Satan really had no basis for his temptations.
- D. God allowed Satan to approach Jesus.

Review/Conclusion:

Satan is our enemy. He is ruthless and ceaselessly persistent in his attempts to rob us of the promises of God and blind us to our position in Christ. He knows that his efforts are pointless and that in the end he is destined for an eternal damnation that defies imagination in the fires of hell. Satan is a loser who irrationally refuses to acknowledge his defeated, impotent status. He functions from the defeated state of dysfunctional denial.

The evil character of Satan is what drives his destructive behavior. He is the epitome of the human concept that “absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Satan’s power is not absolute, yet it is fathomless compared to any earthly power, and he seeks constantly to expand his range of power.

Before the beginning of time, Satan was a true angel of light ordained by God to guard the holiness of heaven. He was perfect in goodness, appearance, and motives. There was no other created heavenly host that outshone Satan. He was the “morning star, son of the dawn” (Isaiah 14:12).

So what happened? We’ll look at that in the next lesson.

LESSON 2: *Where Did Satan Come From?*

Scripture for Meditation:

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37–39)

A Beginning Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, let me know and walk in the reality of Your power in me. Clothe me in Your righteousness and protect me with Your holiness. Let Your shed blood cover every area of my life and keep me marked as one bought by Your grace. Amen.

Lesson:

Satan once enjoyed the pleasures of heaven. He was chief among the angels who guarded the throne of God and the choir director of glory. The startling reality is that Satan came from heaven. So what happened? Let’s consider some biblical references to Satan, his fall, and his nature.

Isaiah 14:11–17: *All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you. How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the*

pit. Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?"

What two names are applied to Satan in this passage?

What position did Satan aspire to attain?

Who alone is to rule our lives and sit on the throne of our hearts?

Revelation 12:7–9: *And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*

How successful was Satan in his attempt to overthrow God?

Was Satan the only spiritual being cast out of heaven? Who were the others?

Ezekiel 28:11–19: *The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: "You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.'"*

What was the sin that entered into Satan's heart?

Look up and write out this verse: Proverbs 16:18.

Pride entered into Satan's heart and caused him to rebel against God. Pride, which is the love and preservation of the self, is an insidious agent of sin that we must continuously guard against. Christ calls us to die to ourselves daily. This involves denying, or turning away from, our own motives, desires, and wants and yielding to those of our Lord.

What are some of the ways pride exhibits itself in your life?

Ephesians 2:1–3: *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*

Who is an active ruler of this world we live in?

What spirit is it that drives the behavior of unbelievers?

What spirit rules in believers?

Have you accepted Jesus Christ as Lord of your life?

John 8:43–45: *“Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!”*

What is Satan the father of?

Whose desire do people carry out if they are not serving Christ?

Is all truth God's truth? Why or why not?

2 Corinthians 11:13–15: *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.*

Are angels real beings?

Are all angels good angels?

Is it possible for Christians to mistake the activity of Satan for the activity of the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

John 16:11b: *“The prince of this world now stands condemned.”*

Is there any possibility of an ultimate positive outcome for Satan?

Does Satan have any real authority over a Christian's life?

Review/Conclusion:

Satan's origin was heaven. As a heavenly being he has far less power than God. Compared to God, Satan is incredibly handicapped and limited in what he can do. Unlike God, Satan is not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent.

Although Satan is a powerful spiritual being and his goal is our destruction, Jesus Christ has defeated Satan's power to rule our lives. Satan can afflict us and cause us trouble, but in Christ we are “more than conquerors,” for “greater is He who is in us” than Satan.

Salvation guarantees us eternal life with Christ. As we walk in Christ's way of righteousness, Satan will have no power to rule our lives. Living out the Word is our way to resist the Enemy, who flees from us as we stand in Christ.

Satan's power has only destined him for eternal destruction.

LESSON 3: *The Kingdom of Darkness*

Scripture for Meditation:

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

(1 John 4:4)

A Beginning Prayer:

Father in heaven, I thank You that You are all-powerful and all-caring. In You I am secure and safe from all harm. Nothing can touch me without Your permission, and I know that You will never allow the Enemy to destroy me. I rejoice and take comfort in Your supreme protection. Amen.

Lesson:

CHRIST THE CREATOR

Satan's kingdom is a structured organization of supernatural evil. Originally it was part of Christ's perfect creation and under His authority. Scripture plainly reveals that the Lord Jesus Christ created those in Satan's kingdom. As the Creator He holds the kingdom of darkness answerable to Him.

Colossians 1:15–17: *He [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

Who created all things?

List by category some of these things that God created:

Can Satan create anything that does not already exist?

As a structured kingdom, the throne of darkness is still subservient to Christ. Thus, in Christ's power, we can stand against the devil's schemes.

Read Ephesians 6:11–12.

What do you need to do to be prepared to stand against the schemes of the Enemy?

Against who or what do we really struggle in our spiritual walk?

SATAN'S UNCREATIVITY

Satan is not a creator. The Colossians text makes this very clear. Having been created by the Lord Jesus Christ, the thrones and powers (v. 16; “dominions,” NKJV), where Satan and his demons do their work, remain under the full authority of Jesus Christ. Indeed, Jesus has won the final victory over Satan and all the fallen angels. They cannot even “consist” (v. 17 NKJV) and hold together apart from the sustaining power of the Creator. For sovereign purposes known only to God, the kingdom of darkness is allowed to continue to rebel and function until God’s perfect time comes to judge Satan and his host. At that moment, God will cast all the fallen spirit beings into the lake of fire prepared for them.

Read Matthew 25:41.

What is the ultimate destination of the devil and his angels?

Will anyone else be assigned to this place? If so, who?

Read Revelation 20:10.

What was the devil’s main activity as described in this verse?

How long will the devil remain in the place described in this verse?

SATAN'S COUNTERFEITS

Satan’s kingdom has a counterfeit, parallel plan for nearly everything God does in His perfect plan of redemption. Though Satan has only temporary influence, he has a counterfeit plan—a crafty imitation of the real. We must not forget that Satan is exceedingly clever. When he fell in his rebellion, he did not lose the gifts and genius God put into him. He is a master deceiver. When talking of Satan, many adjectives are required: powerful, beautiful, clever, crafty, subtle, deceptive, mighty, ruthless, and sinister are a few. He also is enslaving, manipulating, cruel, brutal, angry, mean, and destroying, as is his kingdom.

Are you surprised to learn that Satan has a plan for your life? What do you believe are some elements of his plan for you?

Here are five ways Satan’s dark kingdom counterfeits, or falsely imitates, everything God has done:

(1) *Satan offers those who follow him a counterfeit family.* In explaining the parable of the sower, the Lord Jesus illustrated how clever Satan is to intermingle his family members with the Lord’s family (Matthew 13:37–43), comparing them to weeds growing among the wheat. Those following Satan will be so plentiful and deceptive they will even mingle in our churches and be hard to detect. Like family, they will find much in common as they seek pleasure, independence, and their own approaches to life, apart from God.

What kinds of organizations or groups are frequently viewed by adherents and members as families?

(2) *Satan has created a counterfeit gospel* (Galatians 1:6–9; 1 Timothy 4:1–3). Satan has his own “good news,” which he uses to pervert the ways of truth and enslave the nondiscerning. This “gospel” is one of greed, legalism, and twisted perversions concerning foods and even marriage, according to the apostle Paul. In our day, the extreme of this gospel has appeared in published form as the so-called Satanic Bible. New Age teaching, the prosperity gospel, Hinduism, Buddhism, and neo-Christian cults like Mormonism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Christian Science must be placed with Satan’s gospel. There are many shapes and shades to the counterfeit gospel Satan uses to pervert and confuse the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(3) *Satan also has established counterfeit ministers* (2 Corinthians 10–11). A counterfeit gospel must be relayed by counterfeit messengers. The apostle Paul warns of those who pose as ministers of God and His Gospel but in reality are ministers of the devil. Their goal is to exalt Satan’s realm and destroy the kingdom of God. Paul climaxed his warning with these forceful words about their end danger: “His ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works” (11:15 NKJV; cf. vv. 13–14).

Is it possible that well-meaning individuals could contribute to Satan’s tactics by preaching an inaccurate gospel? If so, how can this be guarded against? What measures do we need to take as individuals to avoid these errors?

(4) *Satan offers a counterfeit righteousness* (Romans 9–10). Man’s most serious problem arises when he goes about to invent his own righteous standards while passing up the righteousness of God. Such deception has its origin in the master deceiver, Satan himself. He continues to mislead people to believe that their own actions done in their own way can please God. In Romans 9 and 10, Paul details the false righteousness people embrace in lieu of God’s true righteousness. A key verse is Romans 10:3: “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (NKJV).

What are some of the evidences of self-righteousness? Are there things you do that are really self-righteous acts?

(5) *Satan seeks his own, counterfeit worship* (1 Corinthians 11:14–33). Satan’s desire to exalt himself to be as God includes his desire to receive worship, just as God receives worship from those who love Him. It’s still surprising to me the number of people who have been tempted to worship the devil. Yet they are in good company, for Jesus Himself was tempted to worship Satan as He fasted in the wilderness, and He understands that temptation (Matthew 4:8–9). We must resist such temptation. The answer Jesus gave is still the best: “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only’” (v. 10).

SATAN’S DECEPTIVE RULE

Satan rules by deception, fear, and ignorance. Satan has no reality to present. Everything about him is counterfeit, deceptive, and misleading. Even when he tells the truth, he twists it into a lie. He quoted the truth of Scripture in his temptations of the Lord Jesus, but his purpose in doing so was to tempt and deceive. This is still his chief tactic against God’s people. Jesus understood that ignorance of the truth can enslave, whereas knowledge of the truth sets free. So He told His followers:

“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . . Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:31–32, 36 NKJV)

Jesus also knew that those who follow Satan are often deluded and unable to comprehend spiritual things. Thus Jesus said to the deluded religious leaders of His day:

“Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” (John 8:43–44 NKJV)

In our spiritual lives is there any neutrality? Is there any middle ground, spiritual DMZ, or fence to sit on? Explain your answer.

Deception and its fear can only succeed when we are ignorant of the truth. Satan can and does hold his bondage on a believer and his family when they function within the sphere of the devil’s deceptive tactics. Ignorance concerning truth is as useful to Satan’s purposes as the believing of his blatant lies. That is why good Bible teaching and doctrinal study are so necessary to walk in personal freedom. To protect our children from the rule of darkness in their lives, parents must know the truth of their authority to apply the truth of God to their children’s needs.

Satan is an illusionist. He deceives by offering us a pretend life that is not real. He uses the world and its media methods as his theater to spread his illusions. Television, videos, movies, and the world’s music offer a menu of pretend. They entice with a false message about what constitutes “the good life.” Revenge is presented as a desirable virtue. Enjoying the sensual and finding sexual conquest are touted as bringing ultimate pleasure. Movies and television shows portray those with money or power as achieving maximum success. These entertainment media depict the mysteries of occult power as exciting and worthy of pursuit.

Satan’s kingdom is behind this deceptive offering of perverted values. Only godly, Christian parents can stand between their children and Satan’s plans for his deceptive control.

Can Satan ever tell you the truth?

What is truth, or rather, *who* is truth?

How can you avoid being deceived by anyone in any situation?

How does fear affect your ability to think clearly and act rationally?

Does fear come from God? Why or why not?

Review/Conclusion:

Satan is a liar, deceiver, and master manipulator. But our heavenly Father is all-powerful. He has given us His Word and placed His Holy Spirit in us that we may have discernment. We can overcome Satan by the blood of Jesus and our spoken resistance (Revelation 12:11). We have nothing to fear as we stand on God's Word against the wiles of our defeated enemy.

LESSON 4: *Satan's Kingdom Rising*

Scripture for Meditation:

"At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."
(Matthew 24:23–27)

A Beginning Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, I look forward with great anticipation to Your soon return. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, place within me strong resolve and determination to remain steadfast in You until that time. Strengthen my spirit to resist the Enemy and the darkness he spreads around me. Set a strong hedge of protection around my family, and let us be beacons of light to the lost. Make us ministers of hope that we might draw back those the Enemy seeks to destroy. Maranatha—come quickly! Amen.

Lesson:

As we come closer and closer to the end of time and our Lord's glorious return, Satan will inevitably increase the intensity of his activity. Wickedness unlike anything we've ever seen will abound more and more. In fact, we can see it happening already.

Our culture has embraced and been penetrated by the demonizing power of darkness. The kingdom of Satan is rising in an attempt (1) to enslave and destroy as many lives as possible before the end, and (2) to create the appearance of strength and dominance, confusing "even the elect—if that were possible" (Matthew 24:24).

SIGNS OF SATANIC REVIVAL

(1) *Sexual immorality, including pornography and the free expression of sensuality.* One of the most obvious and prevalent areas Satan has used to destroy the lives of millions is through the perversion of sexuality. From blatant displays of pornographic materials to the use of sexually explicit images in sexual education courses, this God-created gift of sexual expression has been twisted, abused, and contorted into one of the most destructive forces we contend with.

Everywhere we look and everywhere we listen—newspapers, magazines, books, television, movies, advertising, music, radio, commercials, the Internet, computer games—sex pervades and invades our senses. And this invasion is not even close to the beautiful experience God intended for sex between a man and woman united in marriage.

In *The Rise of Fallen Angels* (pages 26, 28), I state:

Human sexuality is one of God's most sacred gifts to the human race. Not only is the gift of sex the means God has chosen for human procreation, but within marriage it also expresses some of God's best gifts to mankind—loving intimacy, oneness, and the giving of ourselves to each other.

God chose this intimacy as the ideal, human-level illustration of the oneness between Christ and His church (see Ephesians 5:22–23). Could this be the reason Satan distorts sexuality—to soil that biblical illustration of oneness?

. . . [The] perverseness of our times, which includes rampant distribution of pornography and many kinds of "free expression" of sensuality, is more than an expression of human sexual freedom. It is more than merely man's fallen nature expressing itself in immoral activity. It is even more than an evolving product of the world system and the attitudes ingrained by our mass media and entertainment industry.

I believe we're seeing a carefully orchestrated conspiracy at work, too sinister and subtle to be entirely of human origin. This conspiracy flows directly out of the realm of evil supernaturalism, from Satan and his corps of fallen angels. Any change will require divine, supernatural intervention. Only God's power, manifested in the hearts of a caring, concerned citizenry, can stop this onslaught of evil.

List all the ways you can think of that sexuality has been perverted in our culture:

For each of the things you have listed above, what would be the God-ordained, biblical alternative?

(2) *A preoccupation with violence and death.* We must not miss this vital insight: Violence in all its expressions carries Satan's fingerprints, for "he was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). Drug-related murders, abortion, suicidal deaths, and every other kind of violence all closely identify with the powers of darkness that work overtime to create havoc among peace-loving peoples.

Whereas God respects all life He has created, Satan and the fallen angels who obey him disrespect life. They want men and women to disrespect their own lives and the lives of others. Through violence and death, Satan and the angelic powers of darkness are able to desensitize them to the value of every person (see *Rise of Fallen Angels*, 29).

Within just the past week, how many news items can you recall that dealt with some form of violence being expressed toward another person or group of people? Violence in our cities, our country, and our world has reached epidemic levels. Kids are killing kids in schools. Wives are killing husbands in homes. Strangers kill strangers over minor traffic mishaps. It happens so frequently that another killing a few blocks over, or another mass slaughter half a world away, barely grabs a minute of our attention.

But beneath these ultimate expressions of violence there are dozens of levels of expression that surround us and of which we may even fall prey. Spousal abuse and the abuse of children is making victims of everyone—husbands, wives, sons, and daughters. This abuse is physical, emotional, verbal, and spiritual—it happens at all levels in all degrees.

What are some expressions of violence you can think of that may not be as obvious as murder or physical abuse? List as many as you can think of.

What are ways we as Christians can respond to these acts of violence?

(3) *Growing involvement in the occult.* "Spiritism pervades American society in many forms. Interest, experimentation, and involvement in the occult seems epidemic. It has entered every level of our culture" (*Rise of Fallen Angels*, 31).

In how many ways you can think of do products and programs aimed at *children* (birth to preteen) incorporate occult themes and images? Be as specific as you can.

In how many ways you can think of do products and programs aimed at *youth* (teens to young adult) incorporate occult themes and images? Be as specific as you can.

In how many ways you can think of do products and programs aimed at *adults* incorporate occult themes and images? Be as specific as you can.

What are some of the evidences you've seen of New Age thinking and expression in your community?

For all the items you've listed in the exercises above, what are tactics and actions we as Christians can and must employ to combat these satanic influences in our lives, our families, our churches, our communities, and our culture? List and discuss.

Review/Conclusion:

Instead of growing fearful and alarmed as we see more and more evidences of Satan parading his power, we as believers should be filled with a sense of anticipation and great impending victory. Christ's return is imminent! He is coming back, and the devil knows it's very soon. The evil that surrounds us is evidence of Satan's final desperate gasp. We know who holds the real power—and our souls are secure in Him!

As blood-bought, God-armored Christians we need to stride into this dying world, defeating the strongholds of darkness everywhere we encounter them. Warfare means knowing where the battles are to be fought. With minds enlightened and eyes opened by the Spirit, we can perceive the ploys of the Enemy and take strategic aim with our all-powerful sword—God's Word. We may not see the damage done to the kingdom of hell, but we know Him who is truth and we know that darkness will always be wounded by light.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS OF SATANIC CULTS

There are a variety of ways of categorizing satanic cult involvement. We present only one here that may prove useful in understanding satanism and recognizing its expressions.

Traditional Satanists: Those who are deeply committed to worshipping Satan are at this highest level. They maintain strict vows of secrecy under pain of death. Individuals from all walks of life, particularly those in positions of power and influence, are often involved at this level. There are strong transgenerational ties in this form of satanism. It is believed by some investigative authorities that there is maintained at this level a global network of satanists implementing a strategy of seeding evil into the world's cultures. It is at this level that human sacrifice occurs.

Organized Satanists: Those at this level generally follow the teachings of Anton LeVey, a former police photographer and circus performer who founded the

Church of Satan in San Francisco in 1966. LeVey died in 1996. Strict vows are adhered to under threat of severe punishment. Using a satanic calendar, groups called covens are headed by a high priest. Adherents frequently engage in sexual perversions and abuse, often directed at children. Witchcraft and conjuring demons are often employed to intimidate participants.

Self-Styled Satanists: People in this group are often caught up in a variety of illegal and antisocial behaviors, which include drugs, pornography, prostitution, and the like. Some serial killers and habitual criminals use their satanic beliefs as justification for their actions. There is no organization among those categorized at this level. They are often loners, sociopaths, and psychopaths. It is speculated that many in this group belonged to organized cults at one time and suffered severe mental breakdown as a result of being demonized.

Dabblers: Those who are at this level, dabbling in the occult out of curiosity, are clear targets for being recruited into the higher levels. This is the level where many children, teens, and young adults are, being drawn in by horror movies, fantasy games, satanic rock, and more. The sensual pull of these is very strong on those going through puberty. Involvement at this level is often revealed through the satanic symbols and images they emblazon on their bodies, clothing, and possessions, as well as defacing public structures. Animal mutilations also occur at this level. The consequences of this dabbling include emotional disturbance, family conflict, criminal activity, and even suicidal and murderous acts.