

## Spiritual Warfare Pastor Mark Driscoll

Note: Both NIV and ESV are used in this lecture.

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.” — C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*

In each of the synoptic gospels, Satan appears as the tempter of Jesus Christ (Matt. 4:1–11; Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13). From the opening to the closing pages of Scripture, Satan is presented as an enemy of God and, subsequently, an enemy of God’s people. He is named in a variety of ways, as the following list demonstrates, with varying titles each relating to the various aspects of his work.

### Satan’s Names

- 
- Abaddon (“destroyer”) (Rev. 9:11)
- 
- The god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4)
- 
- Accuser (Rev. 12:10)
- 
- Great Dragon (Rev. 12:9)
- 
- Adversary (1 Pet. 5:8)
- 
- Lawless One (2 Thess. 2:18)
- 
- Apollyon (“destroyer”) (Rev. 9:11)
- 
- Liar (John 8:44)
- 
- Beelzebul (Matt. 12:24)
- 
- Morning Star (Isa. 14:12)
- 
- Belial (2 Cor. 6:15)
- 
- Murderer (John 8:44)
- 
- Deceiver (Rev. 12:9)

- Prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2)
- Devil (Luke 4:13)
- Ruler of this world (John 12:31)
- Enemy (Matt. 13:28, 39)
- Satan (Acts 26:18)
- Evil One (Matt. 13:28, 39)
- Serpent (Rev. 12:9)
- Father of lies (John 8:44)
- Tempter (1 Thess. 3:5)

Foundational to our study of Satan is to recognize that he is in no way equal to God. His knowledge, presence, and power are limited because he is an angelic being (a guardian cherub according to Ezekiel 28:14) created by God for the purpose of glorifying and serving God. However, he became proud in his heart and desired to be worshiped and exalted like God. So, he declared war on God and one-third of the angels joined his army to oppose God. Judged by God for his sin, the Serpent was then cast down to the earth (Isa. 14:11–23; Ezek. 28:1–19). Upon the earth he appeared as a serpent to tempt Adam and Eve by twisting God’s word and lying (Gen. 3:1–24). After successfully tempting Adam and Eve to sin, he was judged and cursed by God for his sin and told that Jesus would ultimately come to completely defeat him, though Jesus would suffer physical harm in their conflict (Gen. 3:14–15).

The motivation for all of the Serpent’s work is pride and self-glory instead of humility and God-glory (Ezek. 28:2; James 4:6–7)

. Subsequently, one of his most powerful allies in opposing God’s people is their own pride. Some have speculated as to why the Serpent continues in his war against God even though Scripture is clear that ultimately he will be defeated and painfully judged. It may be that the Serpent is indeed so proud that he has deceived himself and now believes that God is a liar who can be beaten.

In his war against God, the Serpent not only has the fallen angels who are now known as demons, but also has people who are allies in his army either by demonic possession, demonic influence, or simply living according to their sinful nature and flesh (2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 9:1; 12:3–4). Such people include false prophets who speak for the Serpent (2 Pet. 2:1), false apostles who begin ministries for the Serpent (2 Cor. 11:13), false Christians who divide churches (Gal. 2:4), and false teachers who teach heretical doctrine for the Serpent (2 Pet. 2:1). Regarding spiritual warfare as it is experienced on the personal level, 2 Corinthians 2:11 (NIV) says, “Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.” Therefore, knowing Satan’s tactics helps us anticipate his work and live in victory rather than as victims.

### **Scheme #1 – The World**

What is meant by the term “world” in its negative sense? The world is an organized system in opposition and rebellion against God. Richard Lovelace says, “The world is corporate flesh and the structures it produces.” In 1 John 2:16 the world is defined as the following:

- Lust of the flesh (wanting physical desires)
- Lust of the eye (wanting beautiful externals)
- Boastful pride of life (selfish ambition)

In response to the world, Scripture instructs Christians to:

- Not love it (1 John 2:15)
- Not let it shape their values (Rom. 12:2)
- Live through Jesus as crucified to the world (Gal. 6:14)

### **Scheme #2 – The Flesh**

The flesh refers to our capacity and disposition to put self-interests above God. In short, the flesh is an internal resistance to obey God (Mark 7:21–23; Gal. 5:19–21; Col.3:5–8; James 1:14–15).

In response to the flesh, Scripture instructs Christians to:

- Recognize that they are no longer under the flesh’s bondage (Rom. 6)

- Walk in conscious submission to the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16)
- Put to death (mortify) sinful desires (Rom. 8:13–16)

### **Scheme #3 – The Devil**

“Where God is on one side, you may be sure to find the devil on the other.”  
William Gurnall, 1655

As Satan engages in combat against us he deftly uses his hands of pride and fear. With pride he tempts us to join him in arrogance and self-sufficiency apart from God’s grace (Ezek. 28:17; Prov. 3:34; 8:13). Satan seeks to convince us that we are equal to God and can exist happily apart from His grace and govern our lives by our own wisdom and strength (Gen. 3:5; Isa. 13:11). If we yield ourselves to pride, we will boastfully think too highly of ourselves and think too lowly of our God. With fear he tempts us to reverence him more than God and submit ourselves to his lies, accusations, temptations and the like (Isa. 8:12–13; 35:3–4; Luke 12:4–5; Rom. 8:15). If we yield ourselves to fear we will think too highly of Satan and his servants and think too lowly of God and His powerful authority. Jesus said, “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:19–20). Whatever his tactics, the Serpent’s ultimate goal for believers is typically a compromised and fruitless life beset by heresy and sin (1 Tim. 4:1–2; 1 John 3:7–10) and ultimately death (John 8:44; 1 Pet. 5:8).

### **Ordinary Demonic**

Puritan Thomas Brooks, in his book *Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices*, speaks of the ordinary demonic as Satan coming to us as our Tempter and baiting our hook with various pleasure and temptations, including:

- Sexual sin (2 Cor. 7:5)
- Marriage between Christians and non-Christians (2 Cor. 6:15)
-

False religion, false teaching, false Jesus (1 Cor.10:14–22; 1 Tim. 4:1–2; 2 Cor. 11:1–4)

- 
- Bitterness (Eph. 4:17–5:2)

- 
- Foolishness and drunkenness (Eph. 5:8–21)

- 
- Idle gossip and busybodying (1 Tim. 5:11–15)

- 
- Lies (John 8:44)

- 
- Idolatry (1 John 5:18–21)

### **Extraordinary Demonic**

- 
- Torment (Acts 5:16)

- 
- Physical injury (Matt. 9:32–33; 12:22–23; Acts 8:4–8)

- 
- False miracles (Acts 8:9–23; 16:16; 2 Thess. 2:9–10)

- 
- Accusation (Rev. 12:10)

- 
- Vain regrets and condemnation (Rom. 8:1)

- 
- General guilt vs. specific conviction

- 
- Second person (“you” language instead of “I”)

- 
- Death, e.g., food, sex, drink, recklessness (Prov. 8:36)

- 
- Murder/Suicide (John 8:44)

- 
- False spirits (1 John 4:1–6)

### **Christus Victor**

- 
- “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col. 1:13).

- “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him” (Col. 2:13–15).

- “Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

- “. . . in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:37–39).

- “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

- “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery” (Heb. 2:14–15).

- “But you, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head” (Ps. 3:3).

- “My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart” (Ps. 7:10).

- “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold” (Ps. 18:2).

### **Spiritual Inventory**

Satan is a liar (John 8:42–47) and God tells us the truth so that we can be free of Satan and his lies and our besetting sins (John 8:31–41). Therefore, it is

imperative that we confess our sins, are truthful, and invite the light of God to shine into our darkest places (1 John 1:5–2:6). This process of complete and total honesty can be very painful as we name our sins and the most private and scarred portions of our soul. Your temptation may be to partially confess or withhold a few things that you feel are too embarrassing or painful to admit, but you must be completely honest with yourself and with God so that you can join God in the truth and be forgiven and restored. So, please take some time to answer the following questions truthfully on another sheet of paper, trusting that God loves you as His child and desires to make you whole and well through His grace.

\_ Please read Galatians 5:19–21 and list each thing that has been a besetting and/or habitual sin for you.

\_ Please read Colossians 3:5–8 and list each thing that has been a besetting and/or habitual sin for you.

\_ Please read Mark 7:21–23 and list each thing that has been a besetting and/or habitual sin for you.

\_ Please consider the following list and list each thing that has been besetting and/or habitual for you: bestiality, habitual lying, physically unhealthy, masturbation, lying, pornography, ongoing depression, suicidal thoughts, alcohol abuse, drug use, anger, blasphemy, violence, selfinflicted injury, rape, incest, eating disorders, mental illness, pedophilia, and anything else that comes to mind.

\_ Please consider the following list of sins that may have been committed against you or by you: rape, incest, molestation, other forms of abuse (e.g., physical, sexual, mental, emotional), as well as anything else that comes to mind.

\_ Please briefly explain any involvement you may have had with the occult, witchcraft, or anything spiritual other than orthodox biblical Christianity.

\_ Please briefly list any of your ancestors and any activity they may have been involved in with the occult, witchcraft, other religions, drug use, alcohol abuse, sexual deviancy, rape, incest, mental illness, and anything else listed above or that comes to mind.

\_ Please briefly describe your sleeping patterns, including any inability to sleep and ongoing nightmares or disturbances.

\_ Please briefly list any paranormal/supernatural experiences you have had.

\_ Please briefly list any voices you hear and what they generally speak to

you in the exact words that you hear or think.

\_ Please briefly list the main two or three things that you would like resolved immediately.

\_ Please read 1 John 4 slowly and pray each part that strikes you, honestly speaking with God about the things His Holy Spirit brings to mind.

\_ Please name the godly person you want to join us.

### **Satan and Demons in Scripture**

For further insight on Satan, demons, and their involvement in our world, it would benefit you to set aside some time to read the following passages of Scripture.

Since this list is exhaustive, you may wish to simply read the sections in Genesis, Isaiah, Zechariah, Luke, Acts, 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, James, 1 Peter, and 1 John. Genesis 3 Exodus 20:5 Leviticus 17:7–9; 19:31; 20:27; 19:31 Numbers 22–24 Deuteronomy 32:16–17 Judges 9:23–24 1 Samuel 10–12; 6:14–23; 18:10–12, 19, 28, 31 1 Kings 22:1–28 31 1 Chronicles 21:1–2 Job 1:6–2:10; 26:6 Psalm 106:37 Proverbs 27:20 Isaiah 14:1–23 Ezekiel 28:1–19 Zechariah 3:1–2; 13:1–2 Matthew 4:1–11, 23–25; 7:21–23; 8:14–17, 28–34; 9:32–34; 10:1, 8, 24–25; 11:18; 12:22–37, 43–45; 13:37–39; 15:21–28; 16:22–23; 17:14–23; 25:41 Mark 1:21–28, 32–34, 39; 3:10–11, 14–15, 20–30; 4:15; 5:1–20; 6:7, 13; 7:24–30; 8:31–33; 9:14–32, 38–41; 16:9, 17–18 Luke 4:1–13, 31–37; 6:17–19; 7:33; 8:1–3, 26–39; 9:1–2, 37–43; 10:17–24; 11:14–28; 13:10–17, 31–32; 22:1–6

John 6:70; 7:14–20; 8:42–52a; 10:19–21; 13:2, 27; 17:15

Acts

5:1–11, 16; 8:4–8, 9–25; 10:38; 13:9–10; 19:11–22; 26:15–18

Romans

8:37–39; 16:20

1 Corinthians

5:1–6:11; 7:5; 10:14–22

2 Corinthians

2:10–11; 4:2–4; 6:15; 11:1–15; 12:7–10

Galatians

1:8; 2:21

Ephesians

1:19b–2:3; 2:10–11; 4:17–32; 5:8–21; 6:10–20

Colossians

2:13–15

1 Thessalonians

2:18–19

2 Thessalonians



2:1–12

1 Timothy

1:18–20; 3:6–7; 4:1–2; 5:11–15

Hebrews

2:14

James

2:19; 4:1–12

1 Peter

5:8–11

2 Peter

2:1–22

1 John

2:15–27; 3:4–15; 4:1–6; 5:18–21

2 John 7

Jude

5–16

Revelation

2:8–11, 12–17; 3:7–13; 9:1–11; 12:1–17; 13:4–9, 11–15; 16:13–14; 18:2; 20:1–4, 7–15

### **Spiritual Warfare Trial**

Step #1 – Share the gospel and make sure they are a Christian.

Step #2 – Explain the world, flesh, and devil, and how ground is given.

Step #3 – Explain our trial.

•

1 John 4:1–6

•

Ephesians 6:10–18

•

1 Peter 5:8

•

Explain demonic oppression, occupation, and possession

Step #4 – Explain the counselee's participation.

- Our authority is in Christ.
- You must tell the entire truth.
- Tell me everything the demon tells you, no matter how odd it may seem.
- Tell me everything you see, no matter how odd it may seem.
- Pride and fear will hinder our progress.

Step #5 – Explain confessing and canceling sin.

Step #6 – Establish the ground rules.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ . . .

I will be using the personal pronoun we because I stand with \_\_\_\_\_ united with them as their brother in Jesus Christ and since the Holy Spirit lives in us we command you in the name and authority of the One True God who rules as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You are an unwanted intruder and who is going to have to leave upon command.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we . . .

- establish our authority over Satan and demons delegated to us by the Lord Jesus Christ
- bind the strong man
- command that you convey your answers to \_\_\_\_\_ and they will convey your answers to me. You will not speak to me because you are on trial and under the authority delegated to me by the Lord Jesus Christ.
- command that you not change your authority structure, hide, duplicate your identity, or change your name • there will be no profanity
- you will answer every question directed at you clearly, concisely, immediately, completely, and truthfully
- command that you will not have any outside help or reinforcement during

this trial

- command that the answers you give must stand as truth before the White Throne of the Lord God Almighty
- there will be one-way traffic only from the demon to the pit. You will not in any way bother anyone else anywhere at any time, especially those in the room and their families, including but not limited to entering another person.
- bind you by any name you give, and will name you if needed
- command that you speak only that which can be used against you
- bind you by the ground rules we lay down
- command that there will be no control of the mind, confusion of the mind, tongue, or body, that they will maintain complete self-control and there would be no harm done to them in any way
- you will take all of your associates and your collective works and effects with you
- ask you Holy Spirit to rule over all spirits and force them to cooperate according to the ground rules and punish any who seek to disobey them

Step #7 – Declarations of truth.

We claim the following declarations of truth before the White Throne of the Lord God Almighty . . .

- we claim protection from and authority over Satan and all his demons (Luke 10:18–20)
- we claim our position in Christ and that all things under Christ's authority are now under our authority (Eph. 1:18–2:8)
- we claim our victory in the Lord Jesus Christ (Col.2:13–15)

Step #8 – Determine two or three primary areas to begin.

Step #9 – Confess sins and cancel grounds and command leaving in each area one at a time. Take each category and have the person pray to God to confess and repent of their sins in each category. Then have them cancel any ground given, command that the named spirit and all of his works and effects and all of his servants and their works and effects be cast away to the pit for judgment by God. Then, have them request that the Holy Spirit reclaim all the ground they had given and rule in that area of their life.

Step #10 – Ask the Spiritual Inventory questions. Often it is best to begin with addressing ancestral sin and address it first because it tends to have the deepest root in someone's life. The counselee can pray something like, "Lord Jesus, if there are any spirits who have anything to do with me, body, soul, or spirit because of my ancestral sin, I ask that you please forgive this sin and cancel any ground they have held against me." If there are any demons working in (name) in the area of (issue), we bind all of you together along with all of your works and effects and command that you come forward.

We now command that spirit holding highest authority of all those bound and brought forward in the area of (issue) to step forward alone. We put a hedge of thorns around you, above you, and below you. You will not be interfered with by anyone. Then address that spirit holding highest authority of the group bound and brought forward and ask them.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ . . .

1. What is your name?
  - a. Will that stand as truth before the White Throne of the Lord God Almighty?
  - b. You have responded to the name \_\_\_\_\_, we bind you by that name and upon command you will go to the pit bound by that name with all of your works and effects and all of your associates and their works and effects as well.
2. When did you come?
  - a. Will that stand as truth before the White Throne of the Lord God Almighty?
3. What work were you commissioned to do?
  - a. Will that stand as truth before the White Throne of the Lord God Almighty?
4. By what means do you hope to destroy them?
  - a. Will that stand as truth before the White Throne of the Lord God Almighty?

5. What habitual lies have you told them?

a. Will that stand as truth before the White Throne of the Lord God Almighty?

6. Who sent you?

a. Will that stand as truth before the White Throne of the Lord God Almighty?

7. How many associates are working under you?

a. Will that stand as truth before the White Throne of the Lord God Almighty?

8. What effects have you had on them?

a. Will that stand as truth before the White Throne of the Lord God Almighty?

9. Do you still hold any ground against (name) that would keep you from leaving him/her upon command?

a. Will that stand as truth before the White Throne of the Lord God Almighty?

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we command (demon's name) to leave (person) with all of your works and effects and all of your associates and their works and effects and go to the pit immediately. We command this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Then pray for the Holy Spirit to fill the areas just vacated.

This process can then be repeated through each major area.

Finally, command that the highest-ranking spirit remaining other than the Holy Spirit (if there is one) step forward and identify themselves to ensure none has been overlooked. Complete the process of cleansing.

Close with a general prayer to cover anything that may have been overlooked.

Step #11 – Recommended ways to keep the trial moving.

Stop and pray to the Holy Spirit asking Him to intervene as needed and enforce the ground rules.

Stop to read Scripture such as Psalm 18, Psalm 27, Psalm 31, Psalm 35, Psalm 83, etc.

Step #12 – Follow-up recommendations for the counselee.

- 
- Keep short sin accounts with God.
- 
- Pray offensively.
- 
- Read Scripture.
- 
- Do not obsess over lies and accusations.
- 
- Be in fellowship.
- 
- Schedule another appointment if things arise.
- 
- Exercise the authority Christ has given you.
- 
- Be careful to avoid arrogant pride.
- 
- Keep a journal to record lies and accusations.
- 
- Read the recommended resources.

Answers to Common Questions about Spiritual Warfare

Can Christians be possessed by demons?

This is one of those questions that many people answer too quickly. The problem is that the word possess has several meanings. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary it can mean three things.

First, possess can mean “own” so that a Christian would essentially belong to Satan.

Second, possess can mean “dominate” so that a Christian would be controlled by Satan.

Third, possess can mean “influence” so that the life of a Christian would be marked by the influences of Satan. Obviously, what one means when they use the word possessed matters very much when answering the question, “Can Christians be possessed by demons?”

In the first sense, the devil never owns a Christian. We have been rescued from the dominion of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son, Paul tells us in Colossians 1:13.

It is the second sense where there is a lot of debate among Christians. Can demons dominate a Christian? While some teach that through personal sin, generational sin, or even curses, demons can have authority to dominate believers, Scripture is clear that Christians are never under the ruling authority of darkness. The devil can never take authority over a Christian. Others teach that if we pray and feast on God's Word we never need fear a demonic attack. But if Jesus can be attacked, how can we say we cannot?

We believe Christians may be deceived, accused, or tempted by Satan and may yield to those attacks (though they do not have to). If believers begin to wrongly respond to such things, they may give demons influence in their lives. Apparently an evil spirit can empower, energize, encourage, and exploit a believer's own sinful desires. Examples would include Peter (Matt. 16:22–23) and Ananias (Acts 5:3). As children of God, regenerated and indwelt by the Spirit, we are responsible to and empowered by God to resist Satan and if we do we need not suffer from his influence (Eph. 6:10–18; James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:7–9; 1 John 4:1–4; 5:1–5, 18–19).

In the third sense, the devil can influence a Christian. We are in warfare against the enemy who seeks to steal and kill and destroy (John 10:10). Even Jesus was attacked by the devil in this way according to Matthew 4:1–11 and Luke 4:1–13.

Can sins done against me defile me?

They can. But Jesus can cleanse that aspect of sin too. For example, Matthew 8 begins with Jesus healing a leper instantaneously by his power, and ends with Jesus driving demons out of two men instantaneously by his power. The point is that whether we are physically or spiritually defiled, Jesus can cleanse us. In 1 John 1:9 we are told to confess or talk about our sin. That sin can be either sin we have committed or sin committed against us. In either case, bringing the sin to Jesus and his people will result in forgiveness of any and all guilt and cleansing of any and all defilement. This usually involves a process, not an immediate result, but the outcome is sure because

“we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1–2).

I have some questions about Satan and demons. What else can I read to learn more?

Books on the world and flesh:

– Getting to No: How to Break a Stubborn Habit by Erwin Lutzer

– Sin and Temptation by John Owen

– Addiction and Grace by Gerald May

– Flirting With the World by John White

– The Enemy Within: Straight Talk About the Power and Defeat of Sin by Kris Lundgaard

Books on the devil:

\_ For a good introduction to the demonic in the New Testament much insight can be found in Powers of Darkness by Clinton E. Arnold.

\_ For a practical understanding, I recommend Three Crucial Questions about Spiritual Warfare by Clinton E. Arnold, Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices by Thomas Brooks, The Screwtape Letters by C. S. Lewis