



## Introduction

We are in a war. The good news is that victory is certain. The bad news is that many battles await us that may cause us pain and sorrow. There are three opponents in this war.

- The first opponent is the world system and its enticements. The world's system appeals to our old sin nature. Our sinful nature is at war with our spiritual nature.
- The second opponent consists of those in the world who hate Jesus. Jesus warned us that the world would hate us just like it hated Him.
- The third opponent consists of the unseen world of spirits who are led by the devil. These are living beings that oppose all who align themselves with God.

This study will examine the nature of our struggle. Then we will look at the strategy we are to follow in dealing with each of these opponents.

## The World System

The first battleground is within us, in our heart. We each have a sin nature that wants to reassert itself over the Holy Spirit living in us. Evil lies close at hand.

*<sup>21</sup> For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, <sup>22</sup> greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. <sup>23</sup> All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'*

**Mark 7:21-23**

- Circle the source of all these evils.
- *The heart as used in this verse means "the center and seat of spiritual life."*

The world system teaches us to focus on our selfish desires. Consider:

*<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world.*

**1 John 2:15-16**

- Circle the command in verse 15.
- In verse 16, underline the description of the three things in the world.

Loving the world's things is the natural inclination for each living person. Because the non-Christian world seeks them, things the world offers often tempt Christians:

- Power over people
- Possessions and Wealth
- Pleasure
- Privilege

These things have an appearance of satisfying our desires. They all fall short of bringing lasting satisfaction. So those who love the world by pursuing its rewards often become the victim of those things

The best way to defeat an enemy is to understand the nature of the battle and follow the directions of the commander. The Bible provides all of the insight that we need to successfully defeat the forces arrayed against us.

The process for cleansing the heart takes years of obedient living and is never really fully completed this side of heaven.

Yet the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life is the guarantee that God will complete the work that He has begun in you.



You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

**James 4:4**

There is a threefold strategy for defeating the world of our flesh. It involves putting to death the things of the flesh, living by the Spirit, and fleeing temptations to sin.

*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

**Colossians 3:5**

- Underline the part of you to be put to death.
- *One way to put these things to death is to deprive yourself the “nutrients” which these things need to live. For instance, books, magazines, television and movies can each encourage sexual immorality. Not looking at those things can reduce the impulses to engage in immoral behavior.*

*So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

**Galatians 5:16**

- Circle how you are to live
- Underline the result of living by the Spirit

*Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

**2 Timothy 2: 22**

- Circle what we are to flee
- Underline what we are to pursue.
- *The Greek word translated “evil desires” is the same word translated in 1 John 2:16 as “cravings of sinful man”.*

## The World’s People

Many people hated Jesus during His life. He made it clear that those who place their faith in Him would also be hated.

<sup>19</sup> *If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.* <sup>20</sup> *Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.*

**John 15:19-20**

- In verse 19 underline the reason the world would love you.
- In verse 19 circle the reason the world hates you.
- *The world in these verses does not refer to the world system as much as to the people who are ruled by the world’s system.*
- In verse 20, frame the reason that we can expect persecution from those in the world.

In some countries of the world, persecution of Christians is common. In other countries persecution is rare. Regardless of your experience, Jesus’ words are reliable. You can expect resistance from those who love the world. This kind of treatment should not surprise any of those who place their faith in Jesus.

Colossians 3 is a wonderful description of activities one can take to set aside the world’s system. It includes:

- (3:2) Set mind on things above
- (3:5) Put to death...
- (3:12) Clothe yourself...

Learning how to live a Spirit directed life is discussed in the **vDRC** Getting Started Study called **Assurance of a Changed Life**

When the attack is a temptation of the heart, our response should always be to flee.

Every Christian has been called out of the world’s system. Those still in the world’s system cannot understand why a Christian does not share their value system. As a result, members of the world’s system attack those whom Jesus has rescued from it.

<sup>12</sup> Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

**1 Peter 4:12-13**

- Circle the event that should not be a surprise to a believer.
- Underline the reason for rejoicing.
- *It is a unique privilege for a believer in Jesus to share in His suffering. Persecution is a painful privilege.*

***"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.***

**Matthew 5:11**

Jesus had direction concerning how we are to relate to those in the world whom we would consider our enemies.

*But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

**Matthew 5:44**

- Underline how you are to relate to your enemies.
- Circle the actions you are to take toward those who persecute you.

Stephen was the first martyr in the New Testament. As he was being stoned for his faith, Steven gave us an example to follow.

*Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.*

**Acts 7:60**

- Underline the dying request Steven made.
- *Jesus made a similar request as He was dying on the cross. The obvious lesson for those who are suffering is to forgive the ones who are causing the pain.*

## The World of Spirits

There is an unseen world of spirits that have set themselves against God and all of mankind. They have chosen to follow Satan, the fallen angel.

### Know your Enemy

*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.*

**John 8:44**

- Underline the name of the one whom Jesus indicates was their father.
- Circle each word or phrase used to describe the devil.
- *Satan was once our father too! But God has adopted us because of our faith in His Son.*

Suffering is a normal part of the Christian experience. Consider these verses:



Philippians 1:29  
Philippians 3:10  
1 Peter 2:20-23



Forgiveness is a powerful weapon for countering the attacks of those in the world. You can find out more about forgiveness in the **vDRC** study series "Relating to Men" .

### Satan

The Bible does not explain in great detail why Satan rebelled against God. The following passages are thought to refer to Satan and provide some insight into his rebellion.

Isaiah 14:12-14  
Ezekiel 28:11-19

*And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.*

**2 Corinthians 11:14**

- Circle the disguise Satan uses.

Many pictures represent Satan as an ugly, red creature with horns. Quite to the contrary, Satan disguises himself so that he looks very attractive, like an angel. He is a master of deception.

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

**1 Peter 5:8**

- Circle the name of the enemy.
- Underline what the enemy is looking for.
- Draw a frame around the manner in which the lion looks for someone to devour.

The enemy is clearly described in Paul's letter to the Ephesian church.

*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**

- Underline who our struggle is NOT against.
- Circle the four types of forces against whom we do struggle.
- *Because Paul describes these four types of enemies as **not having flesh and blood** we must conclude that these are types of spirits. The implication then is that there are spirit rulers and there are spirit authorities that are against us.*

## Our Battle Plan

God has directed that we are to resist the spirit world and their activities.

*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

**James 4:7**

- Circle the stance you should take toward the devil.
- Underline the promise concerning his response.

<sup>8</sup> *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.* <sup>9</sup> *Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

**1 Peter 5:8-9**

- In verse 9, circle the stance you should take toward the devil.
- Underline how you are to exhibit your faith.

Resisting the devil is a defensive action, not an attack. We are not being instructed to pick a fight with the evil one. Jesus has already done that and won. But, if he comes our way, we are to resist him.

Satan is extremely powerful, intelligent and resourceful. He knows you very well. He knows your weaknesses and your failures.

Satan can only be in one place at a time. But he has many helpers. Jesus confronted demons regularly. The presence and influence of demons is widespread today. But just as they were subject to Jesus, so they are subject to God's Spirit that dwells within us.

Notice that as you are resisting the devil you are also submitting to God.

It is interesting to note that we are to stand and resist when Satan attacks us, but we are to turn and flee when we are enticed by our desires. (2 Timothy 2:22)

**Our Armor**

When we stand against the devil, we are to put on the armor that God provides.

*<sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the **belt** of truth buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate** of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your **feet** fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the **shield** of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the **helmet** of salvation and the **sword** of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

**Ephesians 6:13-17**

There are six pieces to the armor that God provides. Fill in the table below with information from the above passage.

Spiritual Asset	Corresponding Piece of Armor	Part of body protected	Offensive or defensive?
Truth			
Righteousness			
Gospel of Peace			
Faith			
Salvation			
Word of God			

***If the shield of faith can quench every flaming dart of the evil one, then every attack of Satan must involve some form of unbelief.***

***Skip Grey***

**Certain Victory**

When Jesus died on the cross, he defeated Satan.

*<sup>14</sup> Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—<sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

**Hebrews 2:14-15**

- Circle that which Jesus shared with us, the children.
- Underline that which he destroyed by his death.
- In verse 15 circle the action taken toward those who were held in slavery.

If Jesus destroyed Satan by His death, then Satan’s fate is certain. He has not yet been restrained, but he will be. We therefore can confidently rest.

There are many observations to be made about the armor. This is a rich passage for meditation. You may want to use some of the meditation techniques found in the **Keys to Meditation** document in the Tools section of **vDRC**.

Here are a couple of observations:

- The only offensive tool is God’s Word.
- There is no protection for your back. (Don’t turn and run)
- Truth holds everything together
- Each piece of equipment is really a provision of the indwelling Spirit. We need to put on the Spirit.

Jesus spoke with authority to the spirits. They were obligated to obey him. Jesus has granted us the same authority.

It is not our goodness or righteousness that gives us power over the spirit world. Rather, it is the Holy Spirit living in us who has authority to act. We command spirits only by the authority that Jesus has granted

Another reason for certainty is the superiority of the Spirit living in you.

*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*

**Summary**

The following table summarizes the points covered in this study.

Battleground	The Enemy	The nature of the attack	Strategy for response
The World System	Our heart  Earthly nature	Selfishness  Boasting  Sinful cravings	Put to death the sinful nature  Live by the Spirit  Flee youthful lust
The World's People	Those who hate Jesus	Persecution,  Painful trials	Rejoice,  Love them  Forgive them
The World of Spirits	Satan  Demons  Unseen powers and authorities	Deceit,  Oppression,  Unbelief	Resist the devil,  Put on the spiritual armor

Can you find the verses that support each entry?

**Application**

Is there some verse from this study that God is leading you to apply?

Write the verse.

What does it mean to you?

What do you need to do?

How are you going to check up on yourself?

If you haven't done so already, look in the **Tool Section** of the **vDRC** at the document entitled **Keys to a Lasting Application**. It will help you think through how you can apply God's truth to your life