

2 Key Deceptions Behind Your Spiritual Battles

Let's start this journey at the beginning. God created everything, everywhere. Time. Space. Matter. And the laws that govern these things. Also, all named and unnamed elements of the physical universe exist because God spoke them into existence out of *nothing*.

The Bible also explains that God created spirit beings to serve Him. These beings exist in an unseen world that surrounds our physical one. Hidden. Veiled. But they are as real as the air we breathe, the ground on which we stand and the people who cross our paths every day. This unseen world is of a different substance (for lack of a better term). A reality that is not physical but spiritual. This is what makes the concept of the spiritual realm so hard to define.

Point of fact, the unseen world's existence does not depend on our personal belief or acknowledgment.

It simply is.

The next question, then, is what is going on in that hidden world that seeks to thrust humanity into spiritual warfare?

In a word: rebellion.

One of the most powerful spirit beings that God created to worship and serve Him had other plans. He rebelled against God and brought throngs of like-minded spirits with him, to turn from God's purpose to his own.

He wanted to subvert what God had created. Everything. And it was his seeing of incomprehensible love that got the rebellion going.

This brings us to the story of Adam and Eve. God designed them, a man and woman, to be in relationship with Him. The details of the story in Genesis 2 and 3 show that God provided everything Adam and Eve needed. They had a beautiful garden in which to live and to tend. They had animals as gentle companions. He provided them food in abundance from every tree and every seed-bearing plant. In this idyllic setting God brought them together in the relationship of husband and wife. Two became one flesh, companions in life through His covenant of marriage. It was to be life without shame, lived in innocence and joy.

God had a single stipulation for them.

Adam and Eve were not to eat from a specially designated tree in the garden. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. If they ate from it, they would die.

The spirit being who led the rebellion against God became the adversary of humanity by tempting Adam and Eve to eat from the forbidden tree. He appeared to the woman in the guise of a serpent and lied to her. He twisted God's command. He told Eve she would not die if she ate from that tree. He said she would become like God Himself. It was the very thing the spirit being wanted for himself but could never achieve.

The woman, and then the man, chose to disobey God and eat fruit from that tree. Because of that choice, sin broke through into the good world God had created. The legacy of their disobedience is the pain, struggle, decay and death around us all the time.

God had no choice but to throw Adam and Eve out of the perfect garden.

Tarnished with sin, they lost the privilege of abiding in God's magnificent presence. They could no longer enjoy the intimate fellowship they had known with God because sin cannot reside where He is.

The enemy has been using similar tactics against us ever since.

Adam and Eve chose the rationale of evil over the loving instruction of their Creator. As a result, the world became a place where the enemy's influence is unmistakable, as witnessed in Aurora, Colorado, and just six months later at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

Choices made to do terrible evils.

Now, are you ready for the good news?

As influential as our adversary may be, he is not equal in power to God. Some people fear that he is equal to God. But that is propaganda, which the enemy is more than happy to confirm through deceit. People look around and see opposites. Male and female. Birth and death. Positive and negative. Good and evil. So Satan must be God's opposite, they think, and as powerful as God.

That is a common misunderstanding.

Satan certainly does oppose his Creator, but he already lost the war. God pronounced judgment against him long ago. Humanity's freedom has been secured. As it is stated in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (ESV): "For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The problem is that the enemy will not yield without a fight. Satan wants to take as many of the Creator's beloved (you and me) as he can into the eternal punishment prepared for him and the spirit beings that have rebelled with him, the fallen angels.

Even so, God has given the authority of Jesus Christ to all those who have sought His forgiveness. Our sins are then covered by His shed blood and our relationship with God is restored. As Christians, as His adopted children, we have the

right to call out, “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:15, ESV).

God really is our Daddy.

Yes. A spiritual war is raging. An unseen battle is taking place around us every day. We are ground zero. God’s enemy is our enemy.

Satan hates us and seeks our utter destruction.

But we are not in this battle alone!

God is with us. And He has given us defensive armor and a weapon sharper than a two-edged sword (see part 2).

Your Turn to Reflect

1. Why do you think God created human beings for intimate fellowship with Him?
2. Have you ever considered what it means to be in a spiritual battle?
3. How do you define spiritual warfare?
4. What are some examples of spiritual battles you have faced?
5. How did you respond to the struggle?

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