



March 6, 2016

Nehemiah 3:28

Ever Changing, Never Changing Part 13

“Examining Our Gates: Spiritual Warfare”

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Satan and his demons exist in an unseen realm and their objective is to destroy our lives, our marriages, our families, and even our church. It’s what we call “spiritual warfare.” In today’s study about the Horse Gate, the sixth in the series on the Gates of Jerusalem, Pastor Gary gives a balanced perspective on spiritual warfare and how we can fight this unseen battle.

The Horse Gate

1. **Nehemiah 3:28** - *“Above the Horse Gate, the priests made repairs, each in front of his own house.”*
2. The Horse Gate reminds us of battle, because this gate was used for the purpose of going to and from battle.
3. “The Horse Gate was adjacent to the Temple area, and became an important part of the nation’s defense system. The Horse Gate reminds us that we must always be ready to do battle.” - Warren Wiersbe
4. “Now, the horse was an animal ridden by a warrior. Men only rode horses during a time of war. The horse was the symbol of war. The Horse Gate speaks of the soldier’s service of the Believer today.” - J. Vernon McGee
5. The Horse Gate reminds us spiritual warfare, and how much we need to be aware of the unseen battle that rages around each person, as well resisting the devil and standing firm in the faith.

6. There are a number of times in the New Testament when the writers use militaristic terms that parallel the life of the Christian with that of a soldier.
 - a. **Philemon verse 2** - *"... to Archippus our fellow soldier..."*
 - b. **1 Timothy 6:12a** - *"Fight the good fight of the faith."*
 - c. **2 Timothy 4:6-7** - *"... the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."*
 - d. **2 Timothy 2:3** - *"Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus."*

The Battle Of The Flesh

7. The battle with the flesh takes place when we fight against sinful temptations that bombard us daily.
8. "When you become a Christian, when you get saved, when you put your faith and trust in Christ; your spirit [is] regenerated or redeemed. The real essence of who you are is your spirit. Your spirit is what lives on after your body dies; after you experience death. The Bible teaches that your spirit will separate from your body and go to be with the Lord.¹ So, your spirit is the real essence of who you are; your mind, will, and emotions. Your spirit and your soul [are] intertwined [and] housed in a physical body. Your flesh [or] your body is [not] regenerated when you get saved. And, therefore, your flesh has instinctive appetites that are in conflict with the appetites and desires of your spirit. And the two, the Bible says, are at war with each other. You are in a battle, in and of yourself, in that your spirit desires to please the Lord and live for the Lord, [but] your flesh desires to please itself and to live for yourself. So, there [is] a battle constantly between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the spirit." - Pastor Gary Hamrick
9. **1 Peter 2:11** - *"Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul."*
10. **Colossians 3:5** - *"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry."*
11. **Romans 8:13** - *"For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live..."*

¹ **2 Corinthians 5:8** - *"We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord."*

12. [Galatians 2:20](#) - *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

The Battle Of The World

13. The battle with the world takes place when we resist the pull of this world, which is always trying to conform us to its image, its ways, and its morals.
14. When we come to faith in Christ we soon develop a different perspective, different standards, and different rules of morality, which brings us into conflict with the culture.
15. The battle we engage in is not allowing the world to pull us back into its mindset, its culture, and its ways.
16. [2 Corinthians 10:3-4](#) - *"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds."*
17. [Romans 12: 2](#) - *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

The Battle Of The Devil (Spiritual Warfare)

18. The battle of spiritual warfare takes place in the *"heavenly realm"* where Satan and his demons are working to destroy our lives, our marriages, our families, and even our church.
19. On one extreme there are some churches, pastors, and Christians who dismiss spiritual warfare altogether, as though Satan isn't real, etc.
20. The other extreme position is that some churches, pastors, and Christians who have an inordinate preoccupation with spiritual warfare.
21. The Bible teaches the reality of spiritual warfare, as well as the need to have a balanced perspective.
22. Pastor Gary said, "Spiritual warfare is real, it is relentless, it is potentially destructive, and because it is unseen it is the most dangerous."

23. There have been countless lives, marriages, families, and churches that have been ruined or are currently under attack, all because Satan, behind the scenes, or something demonic has been sowing discord, division, strife, lies, and deception into a situation attempting to bring ruin and destruction.
24. Many Christians are ill-equipped and unaware of the ways in which the enemy is constantly working!
25. Potentially, if we keep unforgiveness in our hearts, Satan can take advantage of that and stir up within us anxiety, and bitterness within us.
- a. [2 Corinthians 2:10-11](#) - *"If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven - if there was anything to forgive - I **have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.**"*
(Emphasis added)
26. Satan can also use unresolved anger to discourage, divide
- a. [Ephesians 4:24-27](#) - *"... to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 'In your anger do not sin': **Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.**"*
(Emphasis added)
27. In a study done by the Barna Research Group,² Christians were asked to respond to this statement: "Satan is not a living being, but is a symbol of evil."
- a. 40% of Christians strongly agreed
 - b. 19% of Christians somewhat agreed
 - c. 26% of Christians strongly disagreed
 - d. 9% of Christians somewhat disagreed
 - e. The remaining Christians were unsure
28. [John 8:44](#) - *"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 his is a liar and the father of lies."*

² <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/faith-spirituality/260-most-american-christians-do-not-believe-that-satan-or-the-holy-spirit-exist#.VuCnn8fZeJU>

Spiritual Warfare - Ephesians 6

29. **Ephesians 6:10-18** - *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 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. 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. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”*
30. The fallen angels mentioned in **Revelation 12:4** are the demons in the unseen realm of the spirit world.
31. Satan is not omnipresent like God is, which means he can’t be everywhere at once.
32. Satan is constantly scheming against us.
- a. **1 Peter 5:8-11** - *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.”*
33. We sometimes confuse conflict between one another, with conflict from the Enemy (v. 12).
- a. Pastor Gary said one of the ways he has learned to figure out the difference between a disagreement and the work of Satan, is when the “silliest, most ridiculous, petty, disagreement” arises; it’s probably the Enemy.
34. Four times we are told to “stand” (v. 11, 13, and 14).
- a. **James 4:7** - *“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

- b. “Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never – in nothing, great or small, large or petty – never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.” – Winston Churchill ³
35. We must find our strength in the Lord and his power (v. 10 and 11).
- a. Satan is a formidable foe, and we should never underestimate his power.
 - b. Spiritual warfare is a serious matter!
36. We must guard our hearts, lives, and minds with the full armor of God (v. 11).
- a. Belt of **Truth**
 - b. Breastplate of **Righteousness**
 - c. Feet fitted with the **Gospel of Peace**
 - d. Shield of **Faith**
 - e. Helmet of **Salvation**
37. We must fight spiritual battles using the offensive weapons of the Word of God and prayer (v. 17 and 18).

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Nehemiah 3:28** and **Ephesians 6:10-18** to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s remarks concerning our battle with our flesh. (See #8 through #12 above)
4. Spend time discussing the following Scriptures: **2 Corinthians 10:3-4** and **Romans 12:2**.
5. How does the Bible teach us to handle the battle with the flesh, the world, and the devil/spiritual warfare?
6. Read and discuss **1 Peter 5:8-11**.
7. Share examples of times when you’ve allowed the enemy to gain a foothold in your life?

³ <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/26316-never-give-in-the-best-of-winston-churchill-s-speeches>

8. How has the Holy Spirit helped you gain the victory over the work and influence of the Enemy? (See #29 above)
9. How do you distinguish between what is simply a disagreement between people and the work of the Enemy?
10. How should you deal with unresolved anger and forgive others?
11. Read and discuss [2 Corinthians 2:10-11](#) and [Ephesians 4:24-27](#).
12. Read and discuss [Ephesians 6:10-18](#), focusing on our need to put on the full armor of God.
13. Spend time talking about the ways Scripture and prayer are effective weapons in spiritual battles.
14. Close your time in specific prayer for people in your group who are going through a spiritual battle.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).