



As we close the series of lessons on Our Sufficiency in Christ, it may seem unusual to end a series with due consideration for the beginning of Scripture.

THE EDENIC FALL

God gave to primal man all that man required to sustain life—Refer **Genesis 1:1-13**.
Although they had all, they chose to take of the forbidden fruit.

CONSEQUENCES

Human nature hasn't changed. Man denies God's sufficiency to meet his quest for something more. There is no substitute for God's provision.

ONSLAUGHT

The Adamic Fall was Satan's chance to make mankind believe that God is not sufficient. Today we see the efforts of his onslaught on humanity.

THE BATTLE

The inner conflict for the believer is to resist the flesh, the carnal nature that seeks its will above God's will and way.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

I am amazed at the number of Christians being drawn into the burgeoning "spiritual warfare" movement. I am convinced it represents an unhealthy obsession with Satan and demonic powers. Judging from the turnouts, thousands of Christians really believe that if they don't attend a spiritual warfare boot camp, and learn some strategy for fighting demons, Satan will have them for breakfast.

Is that true? Is there some secret strategy to be learned from "experts" in the art of spiritual warfare? Do Christians need to study mystic techniques for confronting and commanding evil forces, "binding" the devil, "breaking the strongholds" of territorial demons, and other complex stratagems of metaphysical combat?

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Is it too simplistic to think that the basic armour described in Ephesians 6 is sufficient to keep us from being breakfast for Satan?

Absolutely not. One of the glorious truths of our sufficiency in Christ is that we are already more than conquerors in the great cosmic spiritual warfare (Rom.8:37). Satan is an already defeated foe (Col.2:15 & 1 Pet.3:22).

Certainly we are involved in an ongoing “struggle” against rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the “heavenly places” (Eph,6:12). But Christ is already the Victor in this spiritual war. When the apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians he was not suggesting that they view their conflict with the power of darkness as a battle whose outcome still hung in the balance. He was telling them they needed to “be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might”, to “stand firm”, to use the spiritual armour, truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and God’s Word to resist the schemes of the devil. They were to fight from a position of victory, not out of fear that Satan might make them toast.

Since Satan is pursuing us, how do we keep from becoming instant breakfast? Certainly not by chasing after him, hunting him down, attempting to bind him, commanding him, or rebuking him with some incantation. We simply “resist the devil and he will flee” (James 4:7.).

SATAN’S STRATEGY

We need to understand Satan’s strategy. One of his prime objectives is to blind unbelievers.

2 Cor. 4:3-4 says, *“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”* “The god of this world” refers to Satan. He wants to blind unbelievers through ignorance, unbelief, false religion, fleshly gratification, whatever means he can use.

Second, his strategy is to tempt believers. Just as he tempted Christ three times, he uses all his wiles and subtlety to tempt the elect. But please understand, every time we are tempted, it is not necessarily the direct work of the devil. **James 1:14-15** says, *“But each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”*

James 4:1-2 says, *“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.”*

We are perfectly capable of falling into temptation with no help whatsoever from the devil. Satan, however, has built into the very fabric of this world system all the vehicles necessary to make the most of the temptation. As “the god of the world” (**2 Cor. 4:4**), he orchestrates the world and keeps its sinister machinery effective. Satan uses everything in the world: “the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life” (**1 John 2:16**) as the tools of his temptation.

Satan’s strategy also includes accusing believers. **Revelation 12:10** refers to him as *“the accuser of the brethren”* and says he “accuses them before our God day and night.”

GOD'S SOVEREIGN PURPOSE

Did you realise that God sometimes sends Satan to do the Lord's work"? It's true. Paul wrote of the divine purpose in the messenger of Satan that troubled him with the thorn, "*to keep me from exalting myself!*" **2 Cor.12:7**. He understood that God was using a satanic messenger to accomplish his humbling, which was for the glory of God.

Clearly believers are not immune from satanic opposition; nor is it God's design that we always be delivered from every evil circumstance.

HOW CAN WE FIGHT THE DEVIL

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 is a key passage "*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. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*"

Ephesians 6:13-18—Armour of God—is perhaps the most familiar text on the Christian's spiritual weaponry.

I will not go into a detailed analysis of this passage of Scripture, but observe carefully the nature of the arsenal. The pieces of armour are all spiritual commodities, truth, righteousness, faith, the Gospel, God's Word and prayer. They are not cryptic formulas, but the simple assets every believer inherits in Christ. How can we use those weapons? Technique is not the issue; personal character is.

Look once again at **1 Timothy 1:18-19**, Paul says, "*Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may **fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience**, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith.*"

That sheds some light on how we are to fight the devil. Rather than chasing demons around, trying to figure out their names and shooing them away, Paul told Timothy to focus on keeping the faith (sound doctrine) and a clear conscience (righteousness living so the conscience cannot accuse).

When Jesus was tempted by the devil, He didn't mock him, condemn him, bind him, end him to the pit, or stomp on his neck. He simply said, "It is written," then quoted a portion of Scripture that specifically addressed each temptation (Matt, 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13). He withstood the devil simply through the power and authority of God's Word.

GRACE UPON GRACE

One of the most wonderful statements about our Lord is that He was "*full of grace*" **John 1:14** and "*of His fullness have all we received and grace upon grace*" **John 1:16**. "Grace upon grace" speaks of accumulated grace, one grace following another. Such grace is ours each day. It is unlimited and sufficient for every need. Paul called it "the abundance of grace" Romans 5:17, "the riches of (God's) grace" Eph.2:7, and "surpassing grace" 2 Cor. 9:14.

Peter called it the "manifold" (in Greek, *poikilos*, "multifaceted" or "multicoloured") grace of God 1 Pet. 4:10. He used the same Greek word in 1 Peter 1:6 with reference to the various trials that believers face. That's a wonderful parallel. God's multifaceted grace is sufficient for our multifaceted trials.

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SUPER-ABOUNDING GRACE

Perhaps nowhere is the magnificence of grace more wonderfully stated than in

2 Corinthians 9:8-11 “ *And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written:*

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.” Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.”

ALL SUFFICIENT GRACE

Paul experienced God’s grace as few others have because he endured suffering as few others have. In **2 Corinthians 12:9** the Lord gave him one of the most profound truths in all revelation:

“My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.”

PAUL’S RESPONSE

In 2 Corinthians 12:8 he says, “concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that (my thorn in the flesh) might depart from me.” To entreat is to ask or appeal to someone. Please note he doesn’t say, “Concerning this I went to my therapist, attended a seminar, or rebuked Satan.” He took a route many today feel is too simplistic—he entreated the Lord!

Three times he appealed to God to remove the thorn—three times the Lord said no. Paul prayed consistently and faithfully, yet he learned that God’s purpose could be better accomplished by the answer no.

SUFFICIENCY

Paul was content with God’s decision because he knew that God would supply sufficient grace for his trial. “He has said to me, ***“My grace is sufficient for you.”***”

“He has said” is in the perfect tense in the Greek text, implying that every time Paul prayed, God said the same thing and kept saying it.

“My grace is sufficient for you”
was his standing answer.

After three times, Paul dropped the request.

*Don't forget
The Lord's all sufficiency
In your Life.*

