



The  
**FLOW**  
Adult CURRICULUM

#50

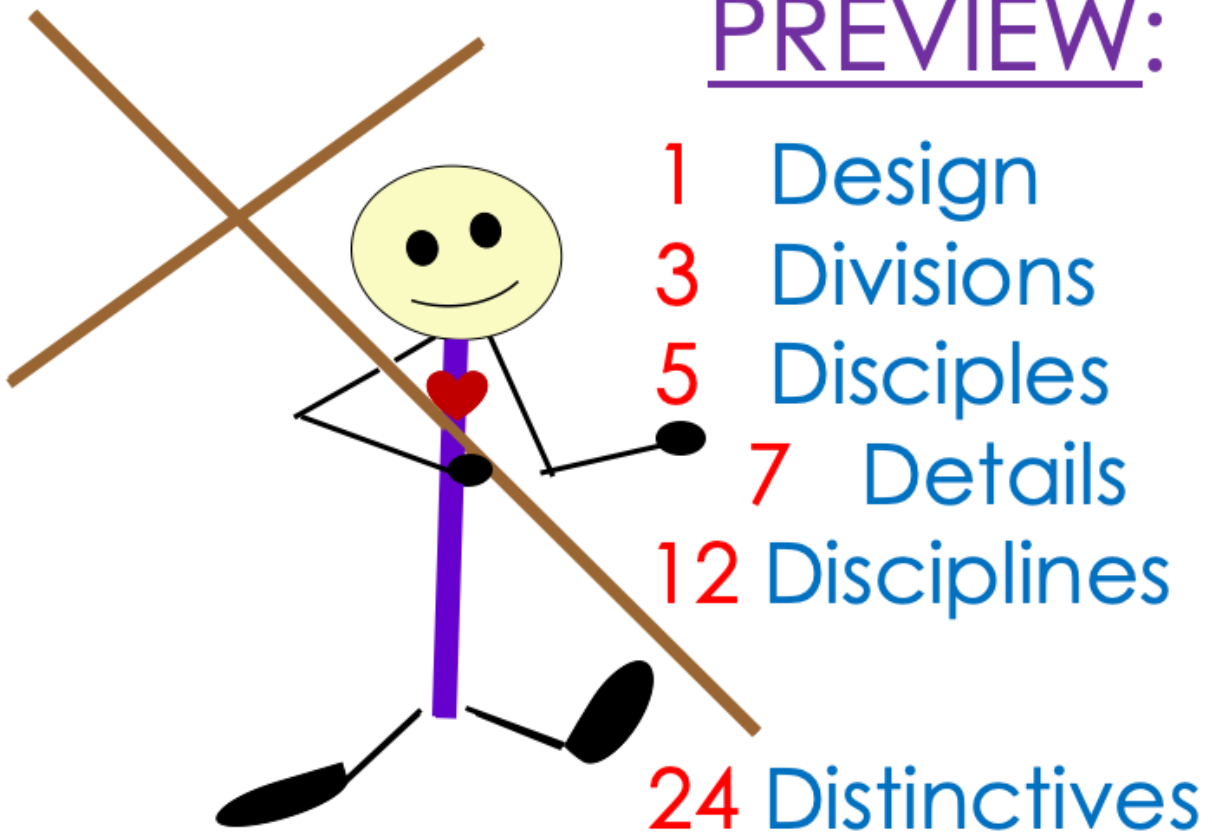
Winning Spiritual Warfare

Romans 8:1

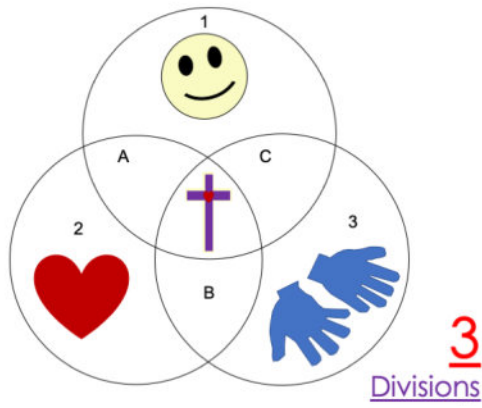
(Come And See Christianity book page 113)

# The FLOW

## PREVIEW:

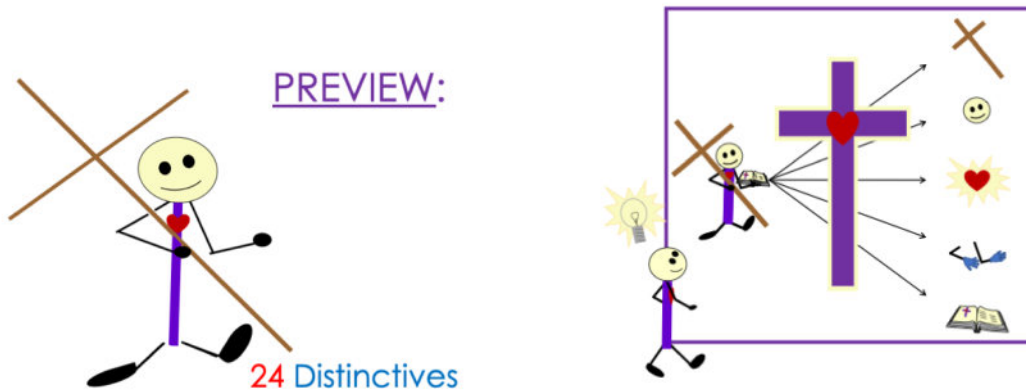


SECTION SIX: 12 Disciplines



**The Disciple's "Hands"** put into **action** the **truth** & **love** of God's Word, God's will, & God's ways. In short, when **each Christian's Head, Heart, & Hands** are united in purpose & power, the family of God is **living** as the **Body of Christ!**

## 24 Family Distinctives:



## 24 DISTINCTIVES:

The “distinctives” are a family portrait... When you add God’s Word, God’s Spirit, God’s Truth, God’s love, and God’s people all together, the distinctives are what we look, love, & live like :-)

# We are...

## Winning spiritual warfare



INTRO:

As we begin to **see the beautiful, biblical portrait of Christ's faith-filled family** defined and described by God's Word, will, and ways, it is critical to remember that the Holy Bible is to ALWAYS BE our ultimate source, authority, and interpreter in ALL things pertaining to one's understanding of reality and application of truth in love.

**Remember,  
The biblical Church is Christ's missional family...  
Moreover, God's Word reveals our Father's will and His family's ways.**

**[2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)**

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Here are ***24 defining & describing HANDS-on DISTINCTIVES of Christianity:***

True Christians are biblically, miraculously, intentionally, missionally, and imperfectly...

1. *Responding to grace*
2. *Repenting of sin*
3. *Trusting the Bible*
4. *Obeying God's Word*
5. *Growing in Christ*
6. *Living Spirit-led*
7. *Praying for guidance*
8. *Following by faith*
9. *Dying to self*
10. *Carrying our cross*
11. *BE-ing The Church*
12. *Loving one another (truly loving one another)*
13. *Equipping the saints*
14. *Exemplifying supernatural unity*
15. *Ministering as ambassadors*
16. *Discerning matters shrewdly*
17. *Worshipping God vertically*
18. *Experiencing Him horizontally*
19. *Proclaiming the Gospel (no matter what)*
20. *Fishing for men*
21. *Making disciplined warriors*
22. *Winning spiritual warfare*
23. *Loving our King*
24. *Serving His kingdom*

PRAYER:

LORD, we seek to bless You with all that is within us. Help us here, we pray, to be that blessing as we come to better understand You and Your eternal truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Help us to see with Your eyes and love with Your love, all that You would reveal to us through Your Word, Your will, and Your ways. May we grow in our grasp of Your realities, Your means of restoration, and Your mission of reproduction. In the holy name of Jesus, we pray. Amen and Amen



## CONTEXT:

### Macro

**This lesson marks another major transition point** in our curriculum's eye-opening explanation of Christianity. By way of review, we began in Section One with the reality of Almighty God having 1 Divine DESIGN (also known as a biblical worldview and the eternal application of Jesus Christ's Gospel). In Section Two, we addressed the 3 DIVISIONS (Head, Heart, and Hands) that make up the "being" in every human being. Next, in Section Three, we demonstrated how Christianity accounts for, defines, and describes all of humanity, every person, past, present, and future. We noted that all people can be identified as one of the 5 DISCIPLES – Lost, Lover, Learner, Leader, or Lifer. Moving forward, Section Four revealed, engaged, and explained the 7 fundamental DETAILS of God's Divine DESIGN... because **we all need to know what we need to know**. To be more specific, those seven truths are: The Foundations, The Framework, The Facts, The Fight, The Faith, The Family, and the truth about Forever.

Then, in Section Five, which we just completed, our focus shifted from HEAD based truths to 12 HEART shaping exercises or disciplines - each having the potential to strengthen one's personal relationship with Christ, His Church, and their collective mission: bringing God glory by finding & growing more glorifiers.

We used the acronym **J.E.S.U.S.'S. P. S.W.O.R.D.** to outline and harmonize a biblical, missional, and intentional methodology for growing in God's love - & His loving witness. The 12 HEART DISCIPLINES are: **J**ournaling... **E**ating-nothing (fasting)... **S**cripture-intake... **U**nderstudy of Scripture... **S**tewardship... **S**olitude... **P**rayer... **S**erving... **W**orshipping... **O**utreach... **R**elationships... and **D**evelopment.

Now, our curriculum and study will transition to The HANDS. This is where **Christians demonstrate to the world that Christ is in their worship & witness**. Whereas our time spent in the HEAD sections (1-4) focused on the truths that Christians need and seek to LEARN, and our concentration on the 12 HEART DISCIPLINES of section 5 helped us to grow in God's LOVE, our sixth and final section will **walk through the 24 DISTINCTIVES, which explain & exemplify how Christians are to faithfully LIVE... and fully BE The Church... together** – all by God's grace & ALL for His glory!

God's Word puts it this way:

***"Let us not love with word and tongue but in action and truth."*** – 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:18

*And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47](#)praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. – Acts 2:46-47*

## I. **DISTINCTIVES are FRUIT:**

It is important to realize that God’s miraculous and authentic **Christian DISTINCTIVES are the FRUIT of saving grace and faith** (Ephesians 2:1-10). As Jesus described in John 15, people can do nothing outside of their abiding in Him and obeying His Word, will and ways. In short, there will be no fruit unless one remains attached to and provided for by the true Vine and divine Root. With that said, a cautionary note is worth sharing here, beware the counterfeits that abound around the world. ***Plastic fruit is deceptive vs. DISTINCTIVE!***

### Galatians 5:22-25

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*

## II. **DISTINCTIVES are FAMILY:**



DISTINCTIVES, by definition, are those “distinguishing characteristics that are notable for having a special quality, style, and/or attractiveness” (Dictionary.com).

When it comes to God’s family, the true Church, each Christian and their individualistic DISTINCTIVES are as unique as their potential. At the same time, in the same way that a billion unique snowflakes can be combined to make a single snowstorm, or countless swatches of scrap fabric can be sewn together to make a single quilt, so it is with God’s family. The LORD creates His Christian family with a both/and combination of DISTINCTIVE uniqueness, as well as DISTINCTIVE love and defining unity.

**Christianity’s DISTINCT family (ecclesia) has a DISTINCTIVE unity (koinonia).**

*“By this all people will know that you are My disciple, if you have love for one another.”*  
– John 13:35



*“The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us.”*

*- Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

### III. **DISTINCTIVES are WITNESS:**

The most biblical and healthy understandings of Christianity will include an embrace of two overarching and DISTINCTIVE purposes. Namely, per God’s Word, will, and ways, every Christian has received miraculous, saving grace, as well as the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to:

1. Bring glory to God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,  
**do all to the glory of God.***

2. BE Christ’s witness.

Acts 1:8

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, **and you will be My witnesses** in Jerusalem (locally), and in all Judea and Samaria (regionally), and to the end of the earth (globally).”*

**God’s DISTINCTIVE people have been filled with His Holy Spirit for the express purpose of living DISTINCTIVE lives.** When the world sees the LORD’s loving family living out their divinely empowered and God-honoring worship, work, and warfare, the resulting fruit will serve as a faithful witness, built with supernatural, grace-based, and missional DISTINCTIVES.

*“God created me—and you—to live with a single, all-embracing, all-transforming passion—namely, a passion to glorify God by enjoying and displaying his supreme excellence in all the spheres of life.”*

*- John Piper*

## The Christian Distinctive

What distinguishes Christianity from all other religions is that it is a *revealed* religion. Christianity is not about our search for God or our means of finding him. Christianity is not a religion that works its way upward. It is all about God coming to us — God in grace making himself known to us and making a way for us to enjoy fellowship with him.

And so, at the very heart of Christianity is, simply, a message — a message from God to us about what he has done to bring us to himself.

If Christianity is distinctively revealed religion, then it is also uniquely *authoritative*. It does not offer itself as the best and highest of human thinking about God or even the best or most successful of human efforts to know God. It professes to be nothing less than the unique word from God, his very own self-disclosure and the record of the actions he has taken in Jesus Christ to bring us into fellowship with himself.

One of Rudyard Kipling's characters declares, "The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone; He don't obey no orders unless they is his own." That is to say, human religions lack authority — they form their own ideas and "discover" their own beliefs.

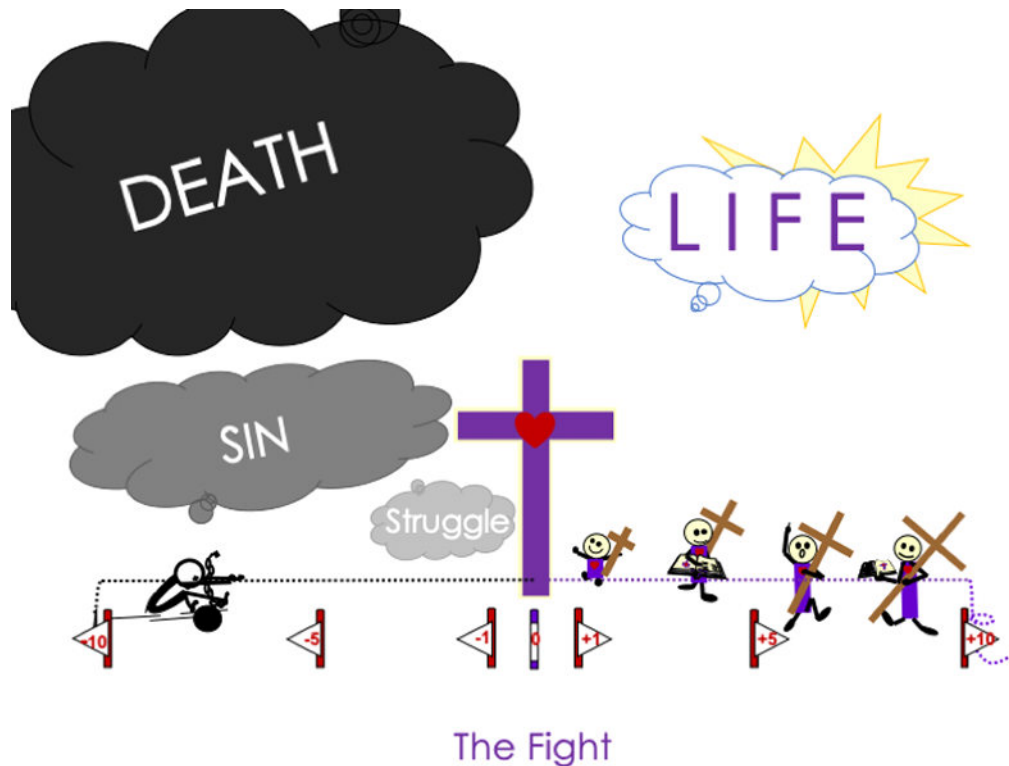
By contrast the Christian is "under orders," because unlike human religions, Christianity is a revealed religion — divinely revealed. We Christians are not our own touchstone of truth, and we do not confuse our ideas about God with His own self-revelation. We learn truth about God not from "inner lights" within ourselves but from God's own objective Word.

And apart from this external authority, there is no Christianity. This, at bottom, is Christianity's leading distinctive.

And so, we **Christians prize Scripture as God's Word. We joyfully submit to it. And we enthusiastically proclaim its message of grace in Jesus Christ to the world.**

- Dr. Fred Zaspel

## We ALL live at WAR!



***Our universal war is personal, SPIRITUAL, & eternal.*** Consequently, whether we realize it or not... admit it or not... or like it or not... at any given time, *every one of us is either a WINNING WARRIOR, or at worst, a LOST, "walking dead" P.O.W. (prisoner of war) or at best, on the Christian's bad day... a saved but stumbling sinner who is out of step with our Savior.*

Remember, in the eternal end, after all stumblers have straightened up, ***there will only be two options, WINNERS or LOSERS... heaven or hell.*** This is why our previous lesson focused on MAKING DISCIPLED WARRIORS, and actively WINNING in SPIRITUAL WARFARE via victory's valiant and biblically holistic, HEAD, HEART, & HANDS worship.

**WINNING SPIRITUAL WARFARE is guaranteed thru 3 Gospel steps...  
Biblical TRUTH + Biblical LOVE + Biblical FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE!**

*While the WINNING equation is simple to see...  
it's not always easy to BE... or become.*

Why not? Answer... in the defining swamp-gap between God's simple 3-step plan and its victorious execution lie **5 troublesome realities** that cannot be overcome without the miraculous and missional work of The Messiah:

1. Sin (any & ALL forms of biblical disobedience).
2. Humanity's fallen (sin-filled) nature.
3. The "world" (and its corrupted, cultural norms/pressures).
4. The "flesh" (and its multifaceted sinful desires).
5. The "Devil" (who leads the worldly & demonic realms, complete with their poisonous lies & legions of demons).

Still, through the learning, loving, & living of God's Word, will, & ways, ***VICTORY is available in every circumstance for every Christian!*** (cf. Romans chapter 8; Galatians 2:20; Acts 1:8; 2 Peter 1:3; Philippians 4:13)

*Enemy-occupied territory, that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful King has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign...*

*- C.S. Lewis*

## Message

The Bible's account of creation, corruption, Christ, His Church, and His coming again ALL underscore the divine design of Almighty God, which includes His sovereign plan, His superlative purposes, His sanctified people, His supernatural power, and His strategic use of staggering-persecution and sifting SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

To be clear, ALL of reality, to include the expected and the unexpected, the obvious and the hidden, the hoped-for and the hated, the seen, as well as the unseen and unforeseeable aspects of SPIRITUAL WARFARE are, were, and will always be under the complete control of our living Lord. Think about it... our One true, triune God is sovereign. He can NEVER get or be surprised. He has NEVER been, nor will He ever be challenged. He has NEVER had an open opinion - He knows all things! He is the One & only Omni-God (all knowing, loving, powerful, ever present).

A review of Genesis 1-3, as understood through the prism of John 1-3, will support the above AND bring the reader to a humbled & readied place of surrender regarding any & all matters of wonder, worship, & WARFARE. In short, WINNING & losing are defined & determined by God & His Word, will, & ways. While these aforementioned truths apply to ALL facets of reality, no application is/has been more critically needed & more widely challenged than when it comes to SPIRITUAL WARFARE's cancerous & blinding lies.

Now, with an understanding of Who is eternally in charge, in complete control of ALL things at ALL times (Creator Christ), let us define and describe His biblical blueprint and bullseye for WINNING SPIRITUAL WARFARE. Let us begin by defining and describing a dozen terms, concepts, & implications that are essential for a proper interpretation & application of this lesson.

1. **God** - The One true, triune, sovereign, Creator per the Bible
2. **Spiritual** - What is in, came from, or will go to “heavenly places”
3. **Truth** - Absolute reality per God and His Word, will, & ways
4. **Love** - God is love but love is not God. All in line with His love.
5. **Grace** - God’s unmerited favor... His divine & undeserved gifts.
6. **Mercy** - God’s withholding of the wrath which is deserved.
7. **Warfare** - Ways of waging war... The warrior’s strategic tactics
8. **Responsibility** - Designated accountability... be it a burden or privilege
9. **Winning** - In the process of obtaining a win...becoming victorious
10. **Losing** - In the process of being defeated... trending toward loss
11. **Promise** - A future commitment to a specific, prescribed outcome
12. **Process** - The specific means to a strategic & desired end result

WINNING SPIRITUAL WARFARE engages and/or exemplifies all of the above.

***“The trumpet still plays the notes of war. You cannot sit down and put the victory wreath on your head. You do not have a crown. You still must wear the helmet and carry the sword. You must watch, pray, & fight. Expect your last battle to be the most difficult, for the enemy’s fiercest charge is reserved for the end of the day.”***

*- Charles Spurgeon*

**BIG IDEA: WINNING SPIRITUAL WARFARE is a grace-based promise and process, both of which are grounded in and guaranteed by the birthright that comes through The Gospel of Creator, Conqueror, & Christ Jesus!**

**PREVIEW:**

1. WINNING
2. SPIRITUAL
3. WARFARE



TEXT:

**Romans 8:1**

*...there is now NO CONDEMNATION for those who are IN Christ Jesus.*

## 1. WINNING

Illustration:

**WINNING is VICTORY's progressive process.**

Remember our last lesson...

Biblical worship is war and warfare.

Biblical worship is WINNING war and warfare.

Discipled Warriors WIN in WAR with biblical worship!

Explanation:

WINNING is the active dynamic that embodies the accomplishing of a superior, victorious outcome, wherein there is also, by definition, an actively losing challenger, competitor, or combatant. When we apply this definition and description of WINNING to the content and context of SPIRITUAL WARFARE, some core essentials and critical ingredients come into focus.

WINNING is ALL by God's grace, through His Gospel, and for His glory!

WINNING is a divine promise/process empowered by God (Acts 1:8).

WINNING is the fruit grown out of truth, love, & miraculous mercy.

WINNING, ultimately, avoids hell's losing and guarantees eternal life.

WINNING and losing also happen on the temporal, everyday timeline.

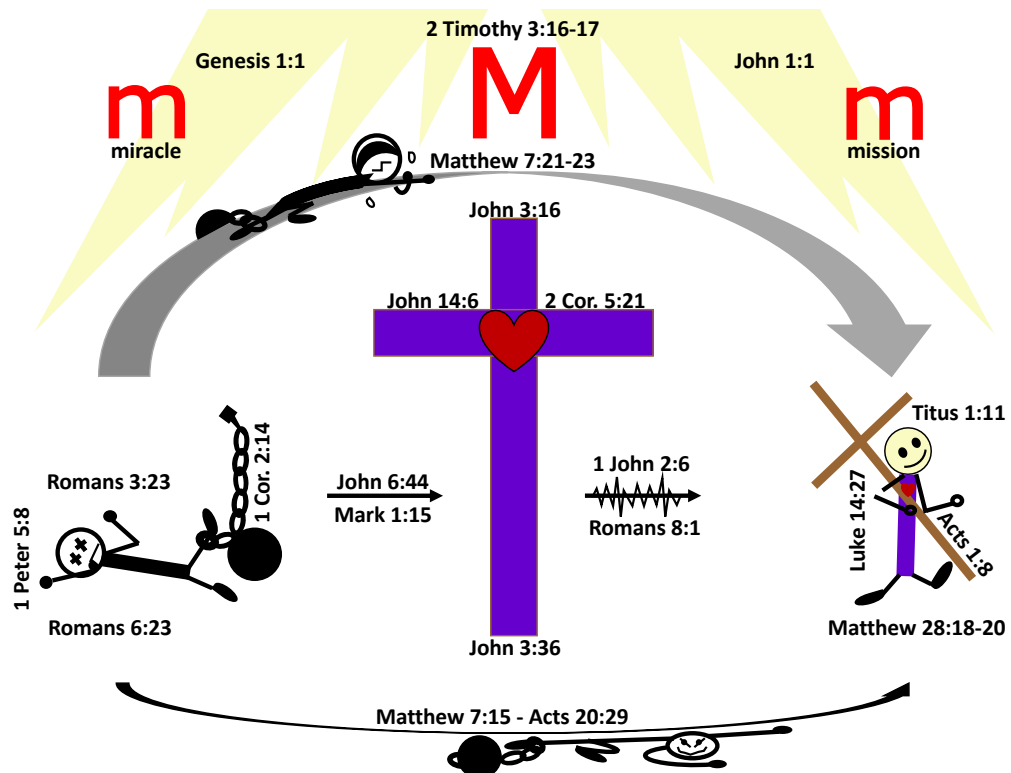
WINNING is a grace-based process, including human responsibilities.

WINNING has both micro (personal) & macro (universal) elements.

LOSING happens where, when, & with whomever WINNING does not.  
 LOSING is humanity's default position. No one WINS without Christ.  
 WINNING can only be done because of what Christ has already won.  
 WINNING requires one's miraculous surrendering to victory in Christ.  
 WINNING is a process that needs to be learned, loved, and lived out!  
 WINNING is the fruitful proof of biblical worshipping & witnessing.

As we have seen throughout Come And See Christianity's curriculum, ALL sound doctrine is inspired by God Himself (2 Timothy 3:16). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that at every growth point, from every perspective, and for every stated goal, God's Word, will, and ways beautifully harmonize. Nothing in the Bible will ever change. **WINNING begins with God's Gospel!**

Herein, our "mMm" (miracle, MESSIAH, mission --- a.k.a. The FAITH and/or The Stickman Gospel) portrait of eternal WINNING includes The Gospel's "narrow way" (Matthew 7:13-14) through the cross. See also the two very common and deadly forms of eternal LOSING; namely, ignoring God's truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) and choosing instead to climb over or tunnel under The Gospel's exclusive, WINNING way (John 14:6).



Application:

**WINNING is an offensive concept that includes defensive strategies.** In American football, it is often said that “defenses win championships.” The point being made is that without an exceptional defense, one’s offense will be overshadowed by the opposition’s offense. While this is true, by definition, **you cannot WIN unless you score more than your opponent.** The same is true SPIRITUALLY – **defense will not WIN because we have an offensive objective and an offensive measuring of ultimate effectiveness.** In short, Christians are called, commanded, and commissioned to BE & make disciples.

**BE-ing disciples who make disciples who make disciples is WINNING!**

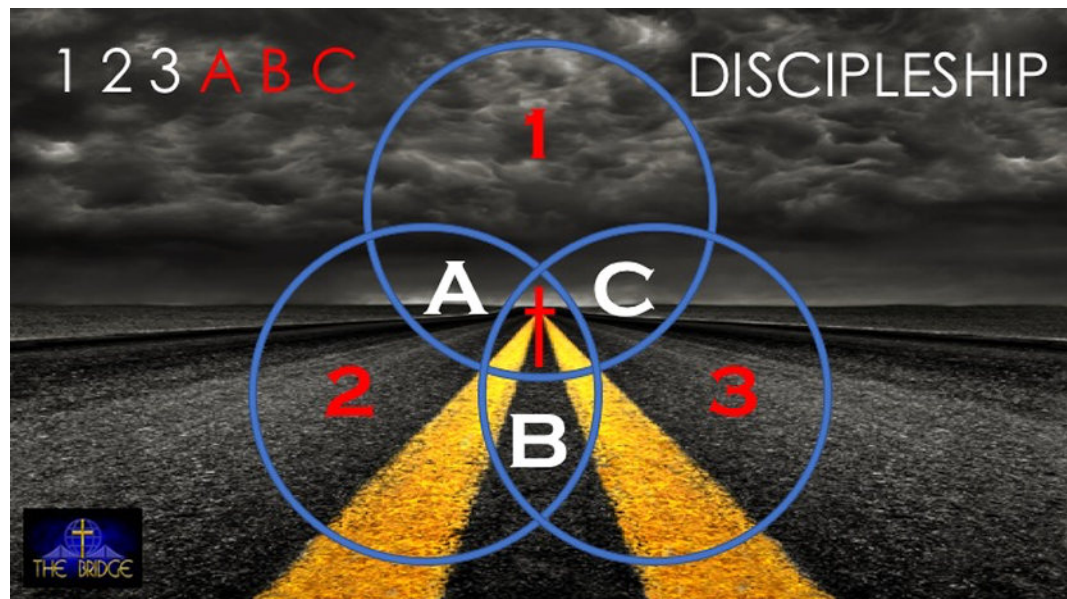
Once a person is miraculously rescued & won by Christ’s Gospel grace, their process of WINNING (especially in SPIRITUAL WARFARE) will begin to shift from the redefining of justification to the refining of sanctification. From that point forward, WINNING’s personal & perpetual, principled path will continue as Christian’s grow: more truth, more love, more worshipful work...

**Discipled warriors win at war by BE-ing & growing in holistic worship!**

The Christian’s consistent commitment to learning, loving, & living... growing, knowing, & going... with biblical vision, passion, & mission, all according to God’s Word, will, and ways... glorifying God by finding and growing more glorifiers... locally, regionally, and globally... no matter what... is the epitome of Christ-like WINNING & witnessing.

The following diagram will make the theological visual & illustrate the process of WINNING SPIRITUAL WARFARE. Note how the processes is linear, logical, pervasive, personal, & progressive. **This process will never change!**

*Remember, ALL of Christianity should visually & theologically harmonize.*



Level ONE:

- 1 = First 1<sup>st</sup> comes TRUTH (which will define LOVE & righteousness).
- 2 = Second 2<sup>nd</sup> comes LOVE (which will validate TRUTH & righteousness).
- 3 = Third 3<sup>rd</sup> comes WORKS (which will portray FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE).

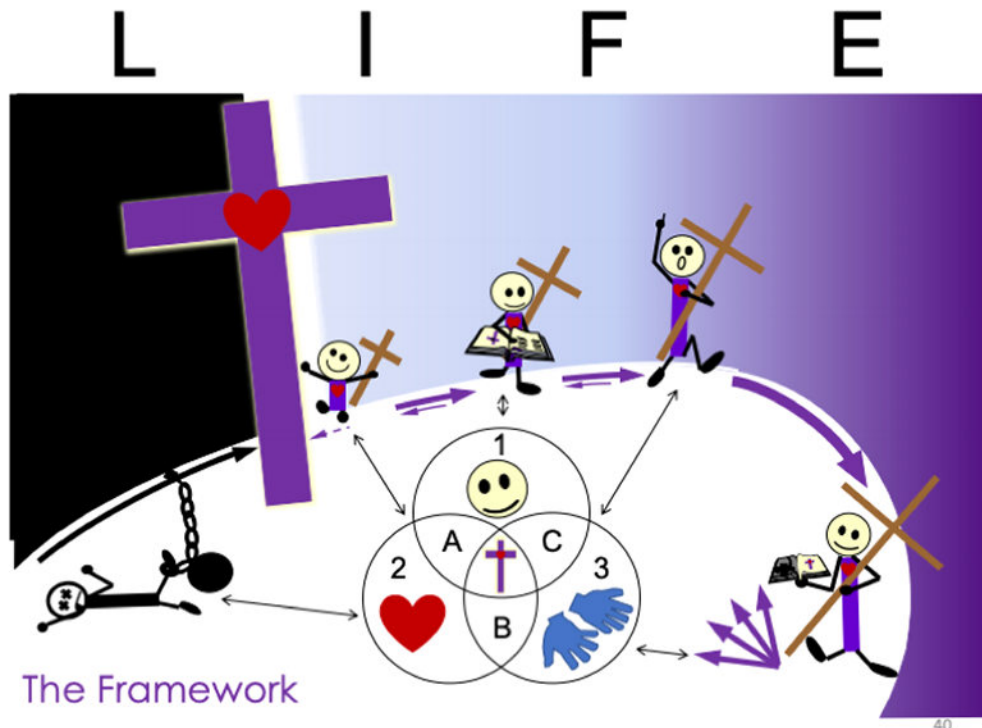
Level TWO:

- A = Accept ACCEPT represents the unification of the HEAD & HEART.
- B = Become BECOME represents the fusion of one's HEART & HANDS.
- C = Commit COMMIT represents the perseverance of one's HANDS & HEAD.

Level THREE:

- † = Christ † represents God-glorifying Christlikeness, Christian WINNING!

WINNING's progressive process continues beyond the miraculous-internal to the missional-external, from the vertical to the horizontal. Deeper and broader WINNING begins to bear fruit as the Christian grows in their relationships to God & others (both inside & outside the Church). To that end, when the LOST is won by Christ's grace and Gospel, their WIN grows them up through the cross into a new SPIRITUAL LOVER of God and people. Similarly, when the new LOVER WINS, they carry their cross & grow into a SPIRITUAL LEARNER... and so the process goes until the cross-carrying LEARNER becomes a SPIRITUAL LEADER & the cross-carrying LEADER becomes a SPIRITUAL LIFER, and the cross-carrying LIFER exemplifies Christ & multiplies disciple-making exponentially.



Each of these miraculous & maturing, Christlike (Matthew 4:19) steps reveals a combination of personal perseverance & progressive WINNING...  
**Don't miss this!**

*The same process  
(Truth + Love + Faithful Obedience)  
that SAVES the LOST... GROWS the FOUND!*

This is how & why Discipled Warriors WIN by “Gospel-ing their lives” every day in every way. They know the same grace that won their souls wins their battles day after day. Again, **Christians have not only WON... we WIN!** We were predestined to WIN! We are divinely chosen & predestined victors (Ephesians 1:5). We are able to do ALL things in Christ who gives us strength for WINNING (Philippians 4:13). God's family lacks nothing... nothing at all needed for WINNING in life and all matters of godliness (2 Peter 1:3). To be sure, our LORD's blood-bought, soul-saving, grace is enough (2 Corinthians 12:9) to transform us (2 Corinthians 5:17-21), by grace through faith, not of works so that no one will boast, yet for good works that God prepared for us before time began (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Don't ever forget... **Truth + Love + Faithful Obedience ALWAYS WINS!** While it may not always look or feel like the Discipled Warrior is WINNING... in the same way that God declared that His Word will never come back void or empty (because it will ALWAYS serve His purposes – Isaiah 55:11), so it is with the LORD's truthful, loving, & faithfully obedient WINNING WARRIORS.

Lastly, before moving on, look once more and press into the previous diagram's missional subtleties. To be more specific, notice the time-gaps in between each significant sanctification step & the multi-directional arrows that represent WINNING's dual directions... On one hand, WINNING goes forward. WINNING is growing and growing is WINNING. On the other hand, at the same time, WINNING intentionally turns around to help those behind... “Going back” to disciple others, as illustrated with the returning arrows, shows the power and purposes of **WINNING through witnessing...**

WINNING builds & becomes biblical, relational, & discipling “bridges.” Herein, the WINNER's heartfelt and strategic commitment to Christ's vision & mission are depicted (Mark 10:45). In fact, WARRIORS seldom if ever WIN in more Christ-like ways than when they are living sent, sacrificing, & serving others as biblical ambassadors, SPIRITUAL mentors, and missional bridges.

***Discipleship is WINNING...  
when we are holistically harmonizing  
Christ's progressive and prioritized process.***



## 2. SPIRITUAL

Illustration:

*“Your view of God is really the benchmark of your spiritual maturity. Understanding the nature of God is critical to spiritual maturity because in the end you rest in the reality of your God. Superficial knowledge of God, a shallow knowledge of God, a limited knowledge of God contributes to limited understanding and limited faith and limited trust.”*

*– John MacArthur*

Per God’s Word, we are told that Satan, his demons, and his earthly children (**John 8:44**) exist and are determined to deceive and destroy God’s people. **1<sup>st</sup> John 3:10** reminds us: *By this it is evident who are the children of God, and **who are the children of the devil**: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.*

Explanation:

When it comes to SPIRITUAL matters, there tends to be two divergent and diametrically opposed schools of thought: A). Everything is SPIRITUAL; and/or B). Nothing is SPIRITUAL. It should come as no surprise that both populous positions are wrong. Somethings (especially in the context of WARFARE) are SPIRITUAL and other things are not SPIRITUAL. Moreover, to be fair, both sides of the debate, based on their theological teachings (or lack thereof), as well as their preferred traditions, and emotional tendencies (be they corpse-like and cold... or superstitious, budding hyper-charismaniacs), need to submit to the accuracy and authority of God’s Word in its FULLEST CONTEXT. Read 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16-17 and return to it regularly.

Having said that, for the purpose of this lesson, “SPIRITUAL” serves to modify & explain the WINNING and the WARFARE. Consequently, Scripture will be used to validate the reality, realm, and role of SPIRITUAL (*as opposed to conventional, physical, cultural, verbal, geo-political, economic, nuclear, gorilla... or any other form of*) WARFARE.

For starters, Acts 1:8 confirms that God Almighty is The Holy Spirit and that Christians will be empowered by Him for the express purpose of BE-ing Christ’s witnesses to the world.

To add on additional grace, God has promised to infill His family with what the Bible refers to as “the fruit of the Spirit.” Thus, we have experiential evidences in the form of the LORD’s SPIRITUAL love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. His fruit is our proof!

In a similar and glorious expression of Gospel grace (Romans 12:6-8), Christians are also blessed with one or more “spiritual gifts” that are divinely designed to serve the biblical & missional purposes & priorities of the world’s only Creator & Sustainer God (see also 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12 & Ephesians 4:11).

Application:

The key application to remember and embrace when it comes to all things SPIRITUAL is simple and straight-forward... **ALWAYS BE BIBLICAL...** no more, no less, no matter what! To put it another bold and emphatic way, ***never, never, NEVER add to or take away from God’s Word, will, and ways.***

***1 Timothy 4:16***

*Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.*

*We have to know that one of the great marks of spiritual maturity is being able to take admonition and rebuke! This matter of being able to admit faults and seek to correct them is a mark of maturity.*

***- Max Forsythe***

*Do you know what the measure of spiritual maturity is in the Scriptures? It is not the display of spiritual emotion, or even the display of spiritual gifts, but the manifestation of spiritual fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, & self-control.*

***- Gregory Kouki***

***The ultimate test of our spirituality  
is the measure of our amazement at the grace of God.***

***- Martyn Lloyd-Jones***

### 3. WARFARE

Illustration:

*“Alas!  
Much has been done of late to promote the production of dwarfish Christians.  
Poor, sickly believers turn the church into a hospital rather than an army.  
Oh, to have a church built up with the deep godliness of people  
who know the Lord in their very hearts, and will  
seek to follow the Lamb where He goes!  
- Charles H. Spurgeon*

Explanation:

In trying to contextualize the horrific realities of America’s Civil War, General William Sherman famously said, *“War is hell.”* As hard as it might be to believe, Sherman grossly overstated his point. ***There is no horror on this side of eternity that can or will parallel hell*** – for here on earth, even the most unimaginable and tragic atrocities are temporary. Hell, on the other hand, will be filled with everlasting fire (Matthew 25:41) & eternal, weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:42). The point is... when we talk about SPIRITUAL WARFARE, the stakes are so much higher than people realize.

**War is not hell. Hell is war.**

**Ephesians 6:12**

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

*“The devil is nimble; he can run apace; he is light afoot; he hath overtaken many. Those who want heaven must run for it.  
- John Bunyan*

*“The devil can counterfeit  
all the saving operations and graces of the Spirit of God.”  
- Jonathan Edwards*

*“The devil loves ‘curing’ a small fault by giving you a great one.”  
- C.S. Lewis*

*“The world is a den of murderers, subject to the devil. If we desire to live on earth, we must be content to be guests in it, and to lie in an inn where the host is a rascal, whose house has over the door this sign or shield:*

*“For murderers and liars.”*

*- Martin Luther*

*“Satan always rocks our cradle when we sleep through our devotions.”*

*- Joseph Hall*

Application:

**1 Timothy 6:12**

***Fight the good fight of the faith.***

*Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

*“Like a good chess player, Satan is always trying to maneuver you into a position where you can save your castle only by losing your bishop.*

*- C.S. Lewis*

**Matthew 10:16**

*“I am sending you out as sheep amongst wolves.*

*Therefore, be as shrewd as serpents and as innocent as doves.”*

*- Jesus The Christ*

CLOSE:

**Ephesians 6:10-11**

*Finally, be strong in the Lord & in the strength of his might. **11**Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.*

**Acts 1:9-11**

*And when He (Jesus) had said these things, as they (His disciples) were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. **10**And **while they were gazing into heaven as He went**, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, **11**and said, “Men of Galilee, **why do you stand looking** into heaven?*

*This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.”*

In other words... **What are you waiting for? Get to fighting!**

## For What?

May we all join Leonard Ravenhill in his famously stated heart's desire:  
*"My main ambition in life is to be on the devil's most wanted list!"*

## So What?

*When God prunes us, the result will be greater growth and sweeter fruit... Pruning usually takes place when God uses situations, people, and circumstances to help mature us in our Christian disposition, attitude, and temperament... The way we respond when we are pruned reveals our true level of spiritual maturity.*  
- Bunny Wilson

## Now What?

*"The Christian life is very much like climbing a hill of ice. You cannot slide up. You have to cut every step with an ice axe. Only with incessant labor in cutting and chipping can you make any progress. If you want to know how to backslide, leave off going forward. Cease going upward and you will go downward by necessity. You can never stand still."*  
- Charles H. Spurgeon

## PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, thank You so much for the Truth and Love of Your Word, will, and ways. Please help us to absorb and apply ALL that You have shared and commanded in the Bible. May our heads be infilled with Your defining Scriptures, for the express purpose of informing, inspecting, and inspiring our sanctified hearts and serving hands.  
In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen and Amen

Support Sermon: *"The Sovereignty & Security of Salvation"*  
Romans 8:31-39  
October 9, 2011  
Sermon Series: G.O.S.P.E.L.!



## ADDENDUM:

### ***See Through Enemy Eyes: Expecting Temptation Before It Comes***

Article by:

Greg Morse; Staff writer, [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org) (May 7, 2024)

Fortresses have been lost through sheer lack of imagination. The general cannot see with his enemy's eyes, anticipate his enemy's strategies, and so he invites his enemy's feet into the citadel. Do we let the evil one into our lives, heart, and mind through want of simple thought? Fighting the enemy at the front gate is hard enough; let's not leave back pathways and rear entrances unmanned, unsealed, unwatched.

How do we discover the breach? *Play devil's advocate*. Ask the question, If I were Satan and desired to destroy my soul, *how would I do it?* Really consider it, first, because it will help you better know yourself. Second, because Satan *is* considering you and means to exploit every possible means to your damnation. In other words, watch film of yourself. Championship teams study their opponents to learn their weaknesses and discover vulnerabilities. They watch and replay and rewatch the opponent. How do they think? What are their tendencies? What do they try to cover up? If they would defeat us, they must do so with their weak hand. And the best teams watch film not just of their opponents, but of themselves. When the enemy watches us, *what does he see?* Where are we weak, susceptible? What does he mean to exploit? How is he planning to strike?

### Stairways to the Soul

First, consider *which members* Satan longs to commandeer. Over what well-worn paths does he bring his seductions into your life? Does he mean to burrow into your soul through your eyes? Does he lure you with illicit images? Does he encourage binging upon show after show, game after game, app after app? Most may not be evil, but when amassed, they form a swamp of worldliness where spiritual affections die. Notice, the fruit traveled through Eve's eyes before it came into Eve's mouth: "when the woman *saw* that the tree was good for food, and that it was a *delight to the eyes* . . . she took of its fruit and ate" (Genesis 3:6). Or perhaps your temptations are auditory, approaching through the side door of your ears. You listen to song after song, podcast

after podcast — some of such a nature that, should they accidentally play during church, you would sooner break your phone than let them continue. What lenient watchmen stand post at some of our earlobes. Be reminded, Christian, that the first temptation came through the ear before the eye: “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. *He said to the woman . . .*” (Genesis 3:1). And once he has the ears and the eyes, Satan desires your hands to handle and distribute evil: “She *took* of its fruit and ate, and she also *gave* some to her husband who was with her” (Genesis 3:6). Do your hands flash and thunder through ill temper? Do they grab the mouse at night and click, click, click (in privacy, you think)? “If your hand causes you to sin,” Jesus warns, “cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire” (Mark 9:43). *“To best defend yourself, know yourself.”* But Satan needs you within reach of sin’s fruit, so he loves careless feet. You may know by experience how much damage you invite when those feet wander to the bar, or to that friend’s house, or to those parties. The wise father advises his son, “*Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house*” (Proverbs 5:8). Traveling even near her door can be a death sentence: Though she flatters & smiles and feigns to adore you, The ambush is set by the hunter before you. She stands at her door, beckoning to the trap; Keep your feet from her house and your head from her lap, Your lust from her beauty, your heart from her care, Your frame from her bed, and her knife from your hair. Let not the shoes on your feet betray the prayer on your lips: “Lead me not into temptation.” Feet that stray toward sin soon flee from God: “The man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8). And we must not forget about the tongue, that vessel of fire sailing from the ports of hell (James 3:6). Are you a harsh father? Do you lash your spouse upon the stocks, cut down your dearest companion with sharp criticism? Are you a gossiping or nagging wife? What chocolate can Satan place upon your tongue for you to indulge that sweet slander, flattery, grumble, or half-truth? “*The woman,*” Adam was quick to accuse, “The woman whom *you* gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate” (Genesis 3:12).

### Times of Treachery

Beyond this, we should consider, *When* is it best to strike? How about late at night when you should be warding off temptations with unconsciousness? When do you feel most stressed and anxious and unwatchful? As tests approach? When you fall behind at work? When home life is tense or finances tighten? I've noticed that Satan often waits to attack me until the day *after* a spiritual triumph. The dove falls upon us, we hear afresh, "You are my beloved son," and *then* Satan visits us in the wilderness. He is a fool to ambush you on the day of victory. No, he withdraws and waits for you to relax before springing reinforcements. The dark spirit returns with fiends eviler than itself. Perhaps when the house is asleep; perhaps at midday when your vigilance flags; perhaps on the weekday when monotony dulls sin's seriousness, and Sunday's refreshment wears thin. Perhaps it's on the weekend, when the world is abuzz and immorality is sold at discount. After a long week, does the thought arrive, *I've worked hard; I deserve a little pleasure, don't I?* Satan knows the best times to attack you. *Do you?* It was when Jesus "ate nothing" and "was hungry" that Satan brought his full assault upon him (Luke 4:2-3).

### People as Puppets

Can you detect a pattern of the *people* Satan loves to use as his carrier pigeons to deliver temptation against you? "Woe to the one *by whom* the temptation comes!" (Matthew 18:7). When your guard is lowest, whom might Satan want you to spend time with? Which Delilah will cut your hair? What bad company threatens your good morals? Does a foolish wife counsel you to curse God and die? Do friends heap misery upon your deepest sorrows? A gossiping roommate, a flirtatious coworker, an unfaithful father, a worldly classmate — upon which relationships does Satan seek to write his signature? Next, consider not only whom he loves for you to be around, but also whom he *doesn't*. Whom does he mean to keep you from? Gondor needed Rohan, David needed mighty men, brothers need brothers, sisters need sisters. How can Satan ruin this blessed need in your life? Oh, the delicious sin of envy may prove most effective here. He loves disturbing the hive with this sin — bidding us to withdraw from those more godly, more gifted, more likable than us. What suspicion or spiritual pride can persuade that you don't actually need the church after all? Or perhaps he corners you more subtly through

overworking or pointless recreation. “Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment” (Proverbs 18:1). What crabgrass is Satan sowing in the fields of your friendships? Selfishness? Apathy? An unwillingness to go below the surface? Which relationships do you need to strengthen? Which people do you need more time around? What hobbies or acquaintances need to take the backseat? Who inspires you to pursue Christ with all your heart?

### Goods as Gods

Finally, as just the beginning to your contemplations, consider what *weights* Satan would use to bind your soul to this world. Many things are lawful, but not all are helpful. They may even be helpful for others, but not for us. The former alcoholic refuses a beer at the game. The man who struggles with lust deletes his Instagram. The single woman limits her reading of romance novels. The hand is a good thing, designed to glorify the Lord. But if it causes you to sin, cut it off, brother (Matthew 5:30). The eye is for beholding beautiful sights, but if your eye causes you to sin, sister, tear it out (Matthew 5:29). It is better, says Jesus, to hobble through this short life maimed, or endure here partially blind, than to hold on to all these good things, misuse them, and go to hell.

But we can't stop at just weights. Consider, at last, an interest of the devil's heaviest surveillance: God's best gifts to us. Perhaps he accuses, as he did with Job, that we fear God only because of all of these. Is he right? Which relationships, if threatened, might cause us to recant our Lord? Which loves — mother, wife, child — transgress their proper boundary and sit rival to the throne? Which Isaac would we not lay upon the altar should God require it? Over which blessing could we not, through darkest grief, utter, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21)? Satan means to twist God's choicest blessings around our souls to choke the seed. Christian, you have an enemy who crouches at your door. His desire is to have you, and you must rule over him. To best defend yourself, know yourself. Through what channels does he mean to entangle my soul? At what times, with what people, and by twisting what gifts does he mean to ruin me? Take time and effort to simply consider: *If I were Satan, how would I destroy me?*