What Hinders the Christian?

Ephesians 6:10-13, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

Many feel that their lack of dedication and zeal in the Lord’s work is just “a tendency of their natural inclination.” While it is true that we all have to reckon with our carnal nature, we need to take serious what Scriptures about there being a terrible supernatural being, called, “The Devil.” I know it sounds so crude, so unscientific and has the flavor of spooks, ghosts, and myths. However, God’s Word is very clear on the matter that we Christians have and enemy that we must be aware of.

1 Peter 5:8 warns of, “Your adversary, the devil…”

2 Corinthians 2:11 gives instructions to the child of God, “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.” If the Christian is ever to defeat the enemy, he must be able to recognize and identify his activities.

Scripture gives glimpses of this invisible force of Satan that stands against the child of God. Zechariah, the Old Testament prophet had an experience he tells how “the Lord showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan was standing on his right hand to resist him” (Zechariah 3:1). Maybe those comic pictures of the devil on one shoulder and an angel on the other shoulder aren’t so unscriptural after all.

To get a handle on the word that is translated as “world” in most of our English Bibles, would help a great deal to understand the demonic system of Satan. For instance the King James Version translates three different Greek words all as “world.” These various words can have wildly differing ideas. For example, there are occasions when the word translated “world, refers to “an age,” a distinct period of time; at other times the word “world” refers to this earth and its inhabitants, the things that have been created; at times, however, it refers to a “Satanic system,” Satan kingdom, a world of “principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

A brief word study from the following Scriptures: Ephesians 1:21; 6:12; and Colossians 1:16-18; 2:10; Daniel 10:13-21)

1. “Principalities” – chief rulers or beings of the highest rank and order in Satan's kingdom
2. “Authorities,” – wicked spirits who derive their power from and execute the will of the chief rulers
3. “World-rulers of the darkness of this age” – the spirit world-rulers
4. “Spiritual wickedness,” – wicked spirits of Satan in the heavenlies

Thirty times (30) when the word “world” is used in the New Testament is has reference to this great evil system of Satan – his demonic kingdom! Let’s take a look at a few of them:
Note the title “Prince of this world,” in the following Scriptures, referring to this “Satanic system,” – Jesus, speaking of He accomplishment of His death and resurrection, said, “Now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John 12:31).

Jesus referring to His sinless, perfect life, said, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me” (John 14:30).

Jesus taught concerning His death and resurrection, “The prince of this world is judged” (John 16:11).

In 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 it states, “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

I repeat our text here, because it is so fitting to this concept. Eph 6:10-13, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness gives a picture of this Satanic spirit-world, Luke 4:5-6. “And the devil, taking Him [Jesus] up into an high mountain, shewed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.” You will notice that Jesus did not refute Satan’s claim of ruling the world and giving it to whomsoever he would.

When the Pharisees accused Jesus of doing His mighty works by the power of Satan, Jesus taught in Matthew 12:26, “If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?” Note that Jesus spoke of “Satan’s kingdom.”

Paul writes that he wanted to come and visit the church of the Thessalonians, but he writes in 1 Thessalonians 2:18, “but Satan hindered us.”

In Revelation 12:10, the angel of heaven proclaims, “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren [Satan] is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

Note Luke, in speaking of Jesus’ ministry, in Acts 10:38, states, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with Him.”

The story of Job reveals a great deal concerning Satan’s activities in the “spirit world.” Job 1:6-12 states, “There was a day when the sons of God [spirit beings whom God had created] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright
man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.”

You will note, Satan accused Job of serving God for what he could get out of Him.” It was true that God protected Job by “a hedge around him.” However, God’s confidence was so great in Job that He told Satan, “Do your worse, only spare his life. Job said, in the midst of his trial, “The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord. Though God slay me, yet will I serve Him!”

In the Lord’s prayer, that Jesus taught us to pray, “Deliver us from evil.” In the original this is referring to a definite personality – meaning, we are to ask God to “Deliver us from the evil one”!

There are occasions in Scripture when the vial is taken aside and we see the power of Satan behind the wrong doing of the children of God. For instance we read, “An evil spirit came upon him [Saul]” (1 Samuel 16:14).”

Scripture speaks the time “Satan provoked David,” (1 Chronicles 21:1)

We read in Acts 5:3 that , “Satan filled thine [Ananias and Sapphira] heart to lie to the Holy Ghost.”

In Matthew 16:22-23 we read, “Then Peter took Him, [Jesus] and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee. [Peter was sincerely – at least, he so thought, protecting from going into Jerusalem, because Pete knew they were attempting to kill Jesus] But He [Jesus] turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”


Paul, the great apostle, write in 2 Corinthians 12:7,There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted [filled with pride] above measure.”

1 Timothy 4:1 warns, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”

One gets a glimpse of the nature of this spirit warfare being raged in Daniel 10:12-13. This is one of the most revealing scenes of spiritual conflicts in the Bible. It reads, “Then said he unto me [The angel of the Lord said to Daniel]. Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.” Here is an example of prayer being delayed. Such delays should never
hinder faith or cause one to give up seeking an answer that is promised by God. They should only urge one to renew his efforts and to hold on in prayer and faith until the answer is realized. [Jesus give an example in Luke. 18:1-8]. The point for our study is that the forces of Satan are very real and Satan will hinder prayers from being answered whenever he can.

The passage in 2 Kings 6:13-17, relating an actual story that takes plans in Elisha’s life, reveals a “host of demonic spirits” that are real, but invisible to the natural eye, operating in the spirit world of Satan’s kingdom.

Paul, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 warns Christians of this spiritual warfare, - and describes just where it takes place, when he writes, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Paul explains that the this spiritual warfare takes place with the believer’s thought life.

Where is this “stronghold” Satan seeks to capture and dominate? Ephesians 4:22-23 instructs the believer to, “Put off concerning the former conversation [that is your manner of behavior], the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.”

God, through the apostle Paul, makes it very clear that this spiritual warfare is waged through the thought life. Remember Paul writes, “The god of this world [Satan of his demonic kingdom] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

As Paul writes in his epistles it is easy to see that the mind is the stronghold of the enemy: he speaks in 2 Corinthians 4:4 of the “blinded mind;” in Romans 1:28 of the “reprobate mind;” in Ephesians 4:17 of the “vanity of the mind;” in Colossians 2:18 “Fleshy minds being vainly puffed up;” in Romans 8:7 as “the carnal mind being enmity [an enemy] against God;” and in Colossians 1:21 of “enemies in their minds [That is, enemies to God in their minds].”

The strategic center of this ceaseless, fiendish, spiritual warfare takes place in the mind!

Many believers have given their hearts to the Lord, however, they have never had their mind fully delivered from the grip of the enemy. We must “Overthrow the stronghold of our adversary” 2 Corinthians 10:4). Many Christians have hearts that are so full of love toward the Lord Jesus Christ – there is no question about that – however, their minds have never been “renewed,” (Romans 12:2 and Ephesians 4:23).

Satan must be “ousted” [driven out] from his position of advantage – his vantage in our thought life. That is the greatest hindrance to the Christian living a victorious, overcoming life! However, God is not only able to “deliver” the believer’s mind, but also to “renew” it. But God will not force, or coerce, Spiritual growth on the Christian’s part – the believer is still a “free moral” agent, and must co-operate with God’s plan for maturity.

Our mind is a “stronghold” which must be taken for Christ and brought into subjection to Him. Scripture teaches that our “old man” [Bible language for our carnal, darkened, fleshy nature] has been “crucified with Christ” (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20 and 5:24).
The New Testament shows the “old life” is lodged within the believer’s thought and must be dealt with. Let’s look again at Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, “That ye [that means, something we do; with God’s help, course] put off concerning the former conversation [manner of behavior] the old man [our old fleshly desires], which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (4:22-23).

Going back to verses 17-18, in Ephesians 4, we read, “that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles [unbelievers] walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated [separated] from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”

Satan will not give up without a fight. He will see to that the atmosphere is full of suggests of “the Prince and power of the air” – fleshly thoughts – constantly attempting to put ideas into the mind. Even though one has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, and has received forgiveness of all their sins and eternal life, Satan will not give up in discouraging, planting doubts, and doing everything he can to see to it that the believe does not live a productive Christian life, without a fight.

The air is full of suggestions of the “Prince of the power of the air,” who flashes thoughts and ideas into the believers mind to keep him from being fruitful in the Kingdom of God. The believer’s mind can be full of wondering thoughts that inflame the imagination. These heavy, passive, sluggish, unusable thoughts can possess the believer and prevent him from being useful to God’s service.

Scripture commands the Christian to “have the mind of Christ,” (Philippians 2:5). His can only be accomplished as the believer deliberately hands his mind over to the death of the cross. That is, to realize that this is a spiritual reality and he, by the enabling of the Holy Spirit, puts it into practice in his own life. He trusts God for a “renewed” mind.

God said, “I will write My laws in their minds.” (Proverbs 3:3 and 7:3; Hebrews 8;10 and 10:19).

And, Philippians 4:8 instructs, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Peter tells us to “Gird up the loins of your mind” (1 Peter 4:13). This was a colloquialism of that day referring to gathering up all the slack material of the long “dress-like” clothing that the men ware, whenever they we going to be active in sports or fighting. It meant, “Never let your mind become idle and filled with slack, loose material.”

Philippians 4 states, if one thinks and mediates on the things mention in verse 8, “The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The word picture Paul draws here is that of a sentry pacing back and forth guarding, protecting some location. He, writing under divine inspiration, said, “The peace of God which passes all understanding, will keep [guard, defend, shield and protect] our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
How do I get victory in the area of my mind? Paul says, “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:13).

1 Peter 1:4 states, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” Peter speaks of the believer being partaker of Christ’s divine nature! How? By the great and precious promises Christ has given to us in His Word.

Peter also speaks of, “escaping the pollutions of the world [Satanic system] through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 2:20).

James 1:27 speaks of the Christian, “unspotted from the world [Satanic system].” James continues in 4:4, “Friendship of the world [Satanic system] is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world [Satanic system] is the enemy of God.”

1 John 5:4 states, “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world [Satanic system]: and this is the victory that overcometh the world [Satanic system], even our faith.”

Colossians 1:13 tells us that Christ “hath delivered us from the power of darkness.” And, Galatians 1:4 tells us that Christ died and rose again that “He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.”

1 John 4:4 assures us, “Greater is He [Christ’s divine life by the power of the Holy Spirit] that is in you, than he [Satan] that is in the world [the Satanic system].”

God’s Word gives the believer assurance that he can live a victorious life. It doesn’t come automatically, one must be aware of the commands and the promises of God’s Word. It is not sheer will power, or human ability, it takes trust in Jesus Christ to fulfill what He has promised to accomplish. However, it does take co-operation, and obedience to God’s Word, on the part of the believer. But, God cares more about your Christian walk, than even you do, and will more than fulfill His promises.