

# **TESTS & TRIALS**

**VOLUME 2** 



UNDERSTANDING THE BATTLE AND THE NATURE OF THE ENEMY



**TOPIC SERIES** 

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#### **INSPIRED WALK - TOPIC SERIES**

TESTS &
TRIALS

**VOLUME TWO** 

# RESISTING THE DEVIL

Written & Compiled By
Stewart Kabatebate

#### TESTS and TRIALS - Volume 2

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## **INTRODUCTION**

oes the spiritual realm exist and how does its existence affect our physical life?
RESISTING THE DEVIL is Volume Two of the Inspired Walk TEST & TRIALS – TOPIC SERIES which focuses on helping us to understand the nature of mankind's spiritual enemy and how to resist him.

# Are Demons Real? How Do They Operate?

What are demons and are they real? The least group of people who are likely to have a disbelief in demons are most probably atheists and agnostics. So this group of people is in the minority.

However, if you ask a Satanist or a Christian if demons exist – both will obviously agree that they do.

In fact, most people from different cultures, religions and sects believe in the existence of demons.

People involved in the occult; in witchcraft; in secret societies and even in the entertainment industry believe in demons and understand that there is a spiritual realm that exists.

Demons are fallen angels who together with Satan, rebelled against God and attempted to unseat God from His throne.

Demons are spirit beings that exercise freewill. They have an intellect just like humans. According to **Isaiah 14:12-25** and **Revelations 12:4**, Satan took with him at least one-third of the angels during their failed rebellion against God in Heaven.

Demons wage war against humanity in 8 ways:

- 1. By creating false doctrines, wicked cultures and false philosophies
- 2. By creating false teachers, false religions and demonic

#### groups & sects

- 3. By creating spiritual warfare methods such as witchcraft, occultism, wicca
- 4. By fighting God's angels
- 5. By demon possession
- 6. By disguising as an angel of light
- 7. By causing physical illness
- 8. By causing hypnosis and mind control of individuals or groups
- **1 Timothy 4:1** says: Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,

The Bible says that there are people who will abandon the truth and willfully follow and obey the doctrines of demons.

Therefore, demons are able to introduce enticing doctrines that can lead people astray and put them into spiritual bondage. Demons fight against God by influencing individuals, groups, cities and even nations with the intention of leading the human race to hell so that people can be eternally separated from God. **Ephesians 6:12** says that our fight as humans is *not 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 Bible therefore warns that there are spiritual entities and forces that work against humans and they work together with a common goal to control and lead people astray from God.

Demons are led by Satan and they not only fight humans – but they also battle against God's angels as reflected in **Daniel 10:13**.

In the Bible demons would usually manifest by totally possessing and controlling the physical body of an individual. Demon possession is when a person's body is under the complete control of a demon.

Demon possession mostly occurs with people who are not genuine born again Christians. A child of God cannot be possessed by a demon because he/she is a new creation in Christ and the Holy Spirit dwells inside of the Christian.

**1 John 4:4** says: You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Demons also manifest in false teachers because of their false doctrines. **2 Corinthians 11:13-15** speaks of false teachers who are agents of Satan and they "disguise themselves as servants of righteousness" just as the devil "disguises himself as an angel of light".

**1 John 4:1** also says that we should not believe every spirit because of the rise and influence of false prophets.

This reflects that demonic spirits are linked to the teachings and activities of many false teachers. Even Jesus had to deal with demons during His ministry on earth. On many occasions Christ would cast out all types of demons (Matthew 8:28-33; Luke 4:41; Luke 11:14).

**Matthew 8:16** says: When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick,

Jesus Christ demonstrated as the Son of God that He had power over demons and also that Satan did not have any kind of authority over Christ.

In **Luke 10:19-20**, Jesus said: Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Therefore, through Christ, the Christian has authority over the power of the enemy. It is only through Christ that the enemy can be defeated in our lives. Jesus Christ gives us the victory over the demonic forces.

**Colossians 2:14-15** says: Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

The devil was defeated by Jesus Christ on the Cross. Christ shed His blood in payment for the sins of the world. Therefore anyone who repents and believes in Christ as Lord and Saviour will live in the authority and protection of Christ. This is why demons cannot possess a Christian.

The only way to avoid the deceptive influences of the demonic is to have a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ

#### LIFE QUESTIONS

- 1. What are the reasons why skeptics or atheists do not accept the existence of the supernatural?
- 2. Why is the devil and his demons against God?
- 3. Why is it important for people to believe in the existence of the spiritual realm?

# What Is Spiritual Warfare?

What is spiritual warfare? Does everyone experience spiritual warfare?

Ephesians 6:12 says "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."

Spiritual warfare is the battle that takes place in the unseen world. Just as we live in a natural world where we can see, touch, hear and taste, there is also an unseen or spiritual realm that exists.

The Bible is clear that mankind has a spiritual enemy and that enemy is the devil and his army of demons.

The devil therefore is not only an enemy to the Christian believer but he is also an enemy to the unbelievers even if unbelievers are unaware of it.

The devil is the enemy of all the things that God loves. The Bible says that the devil kills, steals and destroys (John 10:10) and that he prowls like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).

Therefore in spiritual warfare, the devil and his demons seek to oppress you as a Christian. What's important to note however is that a Christian CANNOT be possessed by a demon but one can be oppressed as a Christian.

A method in which the devil may oppress Christians is

through worry, anxiety, depression, condemnation, guilt, suicidal thoughts, relationship conflicts and the like.

For the unbeliever, the devil can both possess and oppress. While Christians cannot be demon possessed, it is possible for a non-christian / unbeliever to be possessed by demons. It's also possible for an unbeliever to be oppressed by demons in much the same way that Christians get oppressed with depression and conflicts and the like.

The major reason why Christians cannot be possessed by demons unlike an unbeliever is because the true Christian believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling inside him/her. The true Christian believer has received salvation and been bought back into the kingdom of God through the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore demon possession specifically does not apply to the true Christian believer.

Spiritual warfare not only happens within individuals, but a family, a city, a nation and even the world at large experiences spiritual warfare because the battle between good and evil is being fought at every level of life here on earth.

Spiritual warfare is therefore constantly happening even though at times we may not understand it or see it or feel it.

The battle is ultimately happening between God and

satan for the souls of mankind.

Spiritual warfare is the battle is the battle in the unseen world that has a direct impact on our natural world.

The only way that you can have victory over the devil and over sin in your life is through accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. Without Jesus Christ in our life, we cannot have victory.

Jesus gives us authority over the enemy (Luke 10:19) and through the Holy Spirit we are given the ability to not only have victory over sin – but to also live a life that is pleasing to God.

#### LIFE QUESTIONS

- 1. What does Ephesians 6:12 mean when it says that we do not fight against flesh and blood?
- 2. What are the reasons why the battle between good and evil a spiritual battle and not just a physical one?
- 3. How did Christ win the war against satan on the cross?

## 5 Limitations of Satan

The Bible is clear that the enemy of mankind is Satan and his army of demons. The Bible says in **Ephesians 6:12** that we do not fight against flesh and blood, but we fight against spiritual forces of darkness.

Therefore our enemy is a spiritual entity and that enemy is ultimately Satan. He is not only at enmity with mankind but the devil is ultimately the enemy of God and anything that God loves.

It's important for every Christian to understand that whenever we fight in a battle, it is necessary to understand who your enemy is and the characteristics of that particular enemy.

Some people live their life as if the devil is equal to God. However, Satan has limitations.

# Here are 5 Things That You Should Know About Satan's Limitations

**1. Satan cannot force you to sin.** The devil cannot make you sin against your own will. The devil can tempt you; he can persuade you; he can seduce you – but ultimately the devil cannot force you.

We are all personally responsible for our actions. We can never say: "The devil made me do it!"

In **Genesis 3:1-24** when Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan, the devil did not force them into eating the forbidden fruit. Adam and Eve used their own freewill and chose to obey Satan's temptations instead of obeying God's commandment.

In **James 1:14-15** it says that "each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it is conceived gives birth to sin..."

**2. Satan is a created being.** The fact that the devil is a created being – it means that he is not equal to God. The devil is a created being who rebelled against God because according to **Isaiah 14:12-15**, Satan wanted to become like God.

Therefore instead of the created honoring and submitting to the Creator, the created being wanted to overthrow his own Creator. Since the devil is created, it also means that he is not all-powerful.

3. Satan is not all-knowing. Some have wondered if the devil can read people's minds. No he cannot read people's mind. Only God can read our minds and only God can truly know everything that is in our hearts. The Bible says that God knows how many hairs we have on our head (Matthew 10:30) and He knows our thoughts and words before we even speak (Psalms 139:4). The devil does not know how many hairs we have on our head and nor does he know our thoughts before we speak. Therefore he is not equal to God in relation to

knowledge.

The closest the devil can do is to read our countenance, our mood, our behavior, our reactions but he cannot read our thoughts.

**4. Satan is not omnipresent.** This means that unlike God, the devil cannot be everywhere at the same time. God is not bound by space, matter and time. Therefore God can be in the past, present, future and everywhere else all at the same time.

The devil does not have this ability. The devil is a created being and therefore just like humans, the devil is limited to being at one place at a time.

God said to him, "From where do you come?" (**Job 1:7).** Satan answered, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."

**5. Satan is a defeated enemy.** The devil was defeated by Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary. The ultimate fate of the devil according to **Revelations 20:10** is that the devil will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

The Christian believer has authority over the devil through Jesus Christ according to **Luke 10:19.** When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we become a new creation and we become more than conquerors in Christ (**Romans 8:37**).

The devil does not have any ability to break our union with God because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In your personal life – where do you stand in your spiritual life? Do you live as a person who does not know Christ and is easily influenced by the devil? If you are that type of person – the only way to overcome the devil is through allowing Jesus Christ to become your Lord and Savior. Only Christ can make you a new creation and begin the process of sanctifying you into His image.

#### **LIFE QUESTIONS**

- 1. In what ways is the devil unequal to God?
- 2. Why is the devil known as "the god of this world" according to 2 Corinthians 4:4?
- 3. In spiritual warfare why is it important for Christian believers to understand the nature and wiles of the devil?

# Can Satan Read Our Minds & Thoughts?

There is no evidence in the scriptures that suggests that satan can read our minds or our thoughts.

Whilst the devil is indeed a powerful angel, this does not mean that satan has the same attributes as God.

Therefore unlike God, satan is not omniscient. The devil is not all-knowing and neither is he infinitely wise. Satan is a created being and therefore he has limitations. So the devil has limited knowledge; he has limited wisdom and he has limited understanding.

However even though satan cannot read our minds, the devil can still influence our thinking and our decisions. For example satan can influence our minds and thoughts through suggestions or temptations. Therefore the devil is able to plant seeds of doubt, fear, jealousy, lust and all sorts of suggestions and temptations in our minds in order to influence our thoughts and decisions.

The reason why Adam & Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden is because they were tempted and they obeyed satan's suggestions (Genesis 3:1-24).

There is no human being who lives on the earth who cannot be tested or tempted by satan.

Even Jesus Christ was tempted by satan as the devil attempted to plant evil suggestions, ideas and temptations in the mind of Christ in order to persuade Christ into disobeying God.

However, Christ was able to defeat every tempting suggestion from satan by using the Scriptures (Matthew 4:1-11).

**2 Corinthians 10:4-5** says: For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

Our minds are one of the main battlegrounds where spiritual warfare takes place. We should avoid allowing the devil and his army of fallen angels from influencing our thinking and decisions.

Instead we should "take every thought captive to obey Christ" or the word of God.

The devil has been around long enough to study the weaknesses of mankind. The devil cannot read our minds but he can read our countenance; he can study our lifestyle and our behavior so that he can make an educated prediction pertaining to which temptation or problem is most likely to make us fall or disobey God.

**Job 1:6-12** is evidence that satan goes "to and fro on the earth" and that he is able to study and observe mankind in order to discover our weaknesses so that he may inflict harm. The devil had clearly been observing the life

of Job and appeared to have studied many aspects of Job's life.

Therefore satan can make educated predictions or guesses based on his studies and observations of an individual or mankind as a whole. However he cannot read our minds or read the precise thoughts or intents of our hearts because satan is a creation with limited abilities.

#### Only God Can Read Our Minds & Thoughts

God alone is omniscient. God alone is infinitely wise and all-knowing. God does not make predictions or educated guesses. Nothing surprises God because He knows everything – past, present and future.

God does not need to study or observe mankind in order for Him to know us. Instead, God already knew us before we were formed in our mother's womb (Jeremiah 1:5).

**Matthew 9:4** reflects that Jesus knows our thoughts and the intents of our heart.

**Psalms 139:4** says that God already knows what we will say even before we speak the words.

Therefore God alone can accurately and precisely read our minds and thoughts.

## **LIFE QUESTIONS**

- 1. Outline why satan cannot read our mind or thoughts just like God?
- 2. Why is it important for the Christian believer to understand the limitations of the enemy?
- 3. Whom is the devil seeking to imitate? Why?

# **5** Ways To Resist The Devil

**Ephesians 6:12** says: 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.

It is clear from this passage that Christians all over the world are engaged in spiritual warfare. There are unseen demonic forces that wage war against God and the kingdom of God. As long as we live in this earth, the devil will always target Christians by inflicting all kinds of oppression and temptations against the Christian. However, just like any warfare, it is important for every believer to know how to overcome the enemy and what strategies the Christian believer can use in order to live victoriously.

**2 Corinthians 10:4** says: The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

DISCOVER 5 WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN RESIST THE DEVIL

#### 1. Resist the Devil by Submitting to God

**James 4:7** says: Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Submission means that we accept or yield to a superior force or to the authority or will of another person. Therefore our submission to God is an acknowledgment that God is superior and that He has authority over us. God not only has authority over us – but He also has authority over the devil himself. Therefore our submission to God is an acknowledgment that ultimately the devil does not fight the Christian believer alone, but the devil also fights the almighty God.

#### 2. Resist the Devil by Using God's Word

Whenever Jesus was tempted by the devil, you will notice that Christ resisted the devil by using the scriptures to overcome satan's temptations (Matthew 4:1-11).

Jesus Christ was rooted in the word of God. He lived by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Christ was obedient to the scriptures.

It's therefore important for every Christian believer to use God's word to overcome demonic or satanic philosophies that we may face in life. The word of God stands far above every other idea, suggestion or teaching. The Bible is also a spiritual offensive weapon against the enemy as it is used to both protect and attack in times of spiritual warfare. It is likened to a sword.

**Hebrews 4:12** says: For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

3. Resist the Devil by Wearing the Armor of God Ephesians 6:11 says: Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. The armor of God consists of the Christian believer exercising godly virtues and characteristics that enable the believer to overcome the schemes of the devil. According to Ephesians 6:13-17, these virtues or characteristics include living according to the truth of God's word; They include living in the righteousness of Christ; We must also share the gospel of Christ; We must live by faith and not by sight in every circumstance; We must be reminded that our salvation is in Christ alone and we must always use the word of God as the guide in our daily life.

#### 4. Resist the Devil by Prayer & Thanksgiving

**1 Thessalonians 5:17-18** says: Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

As Christians it is important that we pray constantly and that we do not fall into the trap of ungratefulness. Instead we must learn to be thankful in all circumstances.

When we do not pray, we will end up distancing ourselves from God. When we are ungrateful we will have a complaining attitude.

Therefore the devil desires to tempt believers to complain and be ungrateful towards God. The devil also tempts many Christians to avoid spending quality time with God.

Submitting to such temptations make the Christian weaker in or inhibit a Christian from maturing spiritually. It is therefore important to have a lifestyle of prayer and thanksgiving in all circumstances.

**Philippians 4:6-7** says: Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**5. Resist the Devil by Having the Correct Thought Life 2 Corinthians 10:5** says: 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.

We therefore resist the devil by taking captive every thought and making it obedient to the word of God. Our thinking patterns must glorify God. Our thoughts must always be formed and accepted in light of God's word. Therefore we must not allow the devil to manage our thought life.

Philippians 4:8 says: Finally, brothers, whatever is true,

whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

#### Conclusion

The devil cannot be resisted by our own strength or our own tactics and techniques. The word of God must be our ultimate guide.

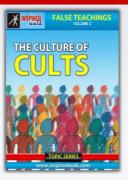
Resisting the devil or any kind of demonic warfare requires that we also yield to Jesus Christ and realize that the battle ultimately belongs to the Lord. Jesus Christ is above all things and He has the name that is above all names. Therefore we cannot overcome temptation or the devil without having Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives. When the devil is resisted, it's because Christ alone gives us the strength and He enables us to resist him.

#### LIFE QUESTIONS

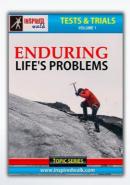
- 1. According to 2 Corinthians 10:4 the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh or this world. What does this mean and what are these weapons of warfare?
- 2. Is an unbeliever ultimately capable of resisting the devil without Christ? Why or why not?
- 3. How can Christians overcome satanic deception?

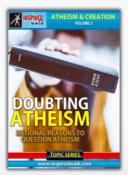
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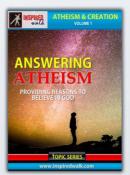












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Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O Lord! Psalm 25:6-7

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