

GUARD YOUR HEART!

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We've often talked from time to time ... in the past ... about our 5 physical senses. God-given ... very important — and losing a sense is a considerable handicap.

But there's more to our lives than just what we see and hear and touch and taste so on.

1 Peter 5:8-9

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. *(There are some he does devour)*

9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

We have an adversary ... the devil. Do we see the devil? Do we hear him? None of our physical senses help us in this regard.

We may see the effects ... trouble ... personal attacks ... temptations — but do we comprehend who's behind them? If we rely on our 5 senses ... we are in danger! HE IS A DANGER! We don't see him creeping up on us.

Ephesians 6:10-13

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. *(Put all of it on!)*

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. *(Unseen wicked spirits that we don't see)*

13 Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

We have to stand against the schemings (wiles) of the devil! He has a strategy.

Has he ever schemed against us? A strategy ... plotting — to devour us. Are we immune to that? Were we aware of it? Or ... did we soldier on completely oblivious? Did we stand? Or did we fall?

Do we need armour? Can we choose to ignore it? “I’ve been around the church a long time ... I don’t need armour”. According to the Apostle Paul ... we all need all of the armour ... all of the time ... for our protection. So that we can stand. We should all be like little “Weebles”. “Weebles wobble but they don’t fall down”.

2 Timothy 2:24-26

24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,

25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, **if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,**

26 **and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.**

Taken captive by the devil? “Come to their senses” = the Greek implies: “TO WAKE UP!” Don’t doze! Some have been taken captive.

The devil is scheming ... plotting ... planning ... looking for people to take captive. And they may not even realise it!! Can the devil take you — or me — captive? Are we watchful ... vigilant?

Ephesians 4:26-27

26 **“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath,**

27 **nor give place to the devil.**

Don’t give place ... “opportunity” or “foothold” — to the devil. THIS IS SOMETHING WE ALLOW OR NOT!

We all need to be aware. To be alert. It is unlikely that satan’s attack will be obvious — or introduced with a fanfare of trumpets!!

It is likely to be quiet ... barely noticeable — unless we’re alert and paying attention.

Proverbs 4:20-23

20 **My son, give attention to my words;** *(the scriptures)*

Incline your ear to my sayings. *(Pay attention to what I have said!)*

21 **Do not let them depart from your eyes;**

Keep them in the midst of your heart;

22 **For they are life to those who find them,**

And health to all their flesh.

23 **Keep your heart with all diligence,**

For out of it spring the issues of life.

Life and health from God's Words. They must be kept before us — continually.

Proverbs 4:23 NIV

23 **Above all else, guard your heart,**

Proverbs 4:23 NET

23 **Guard your heart with all vigilance,**

Proverbs 4:23 ISV

23 **Above everything else guard your heart,** *(the most important thing)*

Is satan after you right now? Tomorrow? How will he come after you? How is he working on you? What weakness(es) do I/we have?

Are you alert? Ready for the foe? Are we guarding our minds above all things?

The battle will be for our minds. If satan can influence our thinking ... our beliefs ... our values ... he can influence our actions.

We may often think we're in complete control of our minds ... and we probably should be ... but there are influences on us all day long ... non-stop. From the world — other people — families — unseen realm.

That's why we have to keep or guard our minds. We're in a battle ... whether we realise it or not.

2 Corinthians 4:2-5

2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3 But **even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,**
4 **whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe,** lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.
5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

“Whose minds the god of this age has blinded”.

That's people all around us ... people you know ... people you speak to etc. Intelligent ... educated people ... but ... despite that — their minds are blinded by satan. They can't see or understand. That is why they can “celebrate” same-sex marriage ... abortion on demand ... transgender “education” for kindergarten. Satan has got to their minds — he has blinded their minds to the truth. What about our minds?

Ephesians 2:1-3

1 **And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,**
2 **in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,**

3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

That spirit is now working!

Prince = ruler ... dark ruler ... commander — in the unseen realm.

He's active ... working in most people. They are unaware!

But it's not just “the world” that satan is after and working in. He is looking for any he might devour.

2 Corinthians 11:1-4

1 Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me.

2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

3 **But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.**

4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

The serpent deceived Eve with his words ... by sowing doubt about God's Word ... he appealed to her senses (look at this beautiful fruit on this beautiful tree ... which will make you exceedingly wise).

Paul is writing to believers in Corinth. Their minds were at risk ... so they'd better guard them ... have some armour on (like the helmet of salvation?)

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

13 **For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.**

14 **And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.**

15 **Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness,** whose end will be according to their works.

We have to guard our minds — not only from the world and its (satanic) values ... but also from false teachers in The Church.

The attack comes at us from all directions.

And these false ministers of satan were in and around The Church even as early as 56 AD!

2 Corinthians 2:8-11

8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.

9 For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.

10 Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ,

11 **lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.**

“We are not ignorant” of Satan’s plans ... schemes ... designs ... plots. But — are we ignorant??

If we are ignorant ... unaware ... not staying alert — then what happens? Then we can be devoured.

Acts 4:32-37

32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. (They did possess them ... but they did share them)

33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold,

35 and laid them at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus,

37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.

People were generously sharing in these early days.

Acts 5:1-11

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles’ feet.

3 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?

4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? **You have not lied to men but to God.**”

5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

6 And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.

7 Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

8 And Peter answered her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?” She said, “Yes, for so much.”

9 **Then Peter said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?”** Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.”

10 Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband.

11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

This couple wanted prestige ... wanted to be honoured. Vanity and the pride of life.

They plotted ... but satan was involved (verse 3). He couldn't force them ... but he could seduce them ... plant ideas ... allow time to germinate.

Finally ... they decided ... to take action.

Satan “devours” two more people who weren't vigilant! Maybe they will be in the Lake of Fire?

1 John 2:15-17

15 **Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

16 **For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.**

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Where are our hearts focused? What's our primary interest?

If we guard our minds ... we'll ensure we keep life in perspective. This temporary existence vs eternal life!

John 13:21-30

21 **When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.”**

22 Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

25 Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "**Lord, who is it?**"

26 **Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it."** And having dipped the bread, **He gave it to Judas Iscariot**, the son of Simon.

27 **Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him.** Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

28 But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him.

29 For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy those things we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

30 Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

Judas betrays Jesus. Satan entered him.

Satan had already planted the idea in Judas' mind (verse 2). It would have taken some time ... many months. Little by little Judas grew unhappy with Jesus ministry ... not the way Judas would have done it. On top of that ... Judas was greedy (a thief).

Satan saw someone ... among Jesus' personal disciples ... whom he could devour. He couldn't force Judas — but could lure him. He needed Judas to cooperate.

Judas didn't guard his mind. Key parts of his armour were missing!

The battle is for our minds too. It's 24/7 and not going to go away!

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:2 PASSION

2 **Stop imitating the ideals and opinions of the culture around you, but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think.**

We need to guard our minds — protect them — renew them if necessary according to true values.

We may need to oppose and resist this world's attractions if contrary to what is right.

James 4:4-7

4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? **Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**

5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

"God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble."

7 **Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

James 4:7 THE VOICE

7 ... **fight against the devil and his schemes. If you do, he will run away in failure.**

The devil can't overcome the armour of God.

2 Corinthians 10:1-6

1 Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.

2 But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 **For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.**

4 **For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,**

5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Like Paul ... we have weapons. Not carnal ... not worldly. But ... spiritual weapons (faith ... Word of God ... prayer ... Holy Spirit). They can defeat and take captive anything that attacks the Truth. IF WE'RE ALERT ... AWAKE ... IN GOOD "CONDITION". 😊

Not if we're sloppy ... distracted ... loving the world and its ways ... "feeding" our flesh and out of the habit of daily prayer and study??

If we're going to succeed ... we need to take seriously the scriptures that tell us to guard our minds ... with all vigilance.

We need to do that TODAY — AND EVERY DAY!!