



Connect to God

Leader's Guide

Week 6

Topic: How do you Resist Evil

PREWORK Before Class: Read the entire leader's guide and watch the videos online. Notice the time for both the teaching video and testimony video and plan the use of your time accordingly to allow good discussion.

Study these teaching points covered in the teaching video.

Who is Satan and why is he against God and us?

God did not create Satan as we know him. When God created the world, we are told that God examined it and declared that it was good (Genesis 1:31). This means that even the angelic world did not have evil angels or demons in it at that time. But by the time of Genesis chapter three, we find that Satan, in the form of a serpent, was tempting Eve to sin. Therefore, sometime between the events of Genesis chapter one and Genesis chapter three, there must have been a rebellion in the angelic world, with many angels turning against God and becoming evil. The Bible is not clear about how it all happened but there was rebellion led by Satan.

Lucifer's fall from Heaven

The Bible gives us this information about the Satan before his fall

- Satan is named *Lucifer*, which means "star of the morning"
- Held a high-ranking position in the angelic host
- Had exquisite beauty and great wisdom
- Given a position of great power and influence
- Called "the guardian cherub"

Ezekiel 28:12–17 NIV *"You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God...You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So, I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So, I threw you to earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings."*

Cherubim are depicted in Scripture as powerful and majestic angelic creatures who surround God's throne. And Lucifer had once been a guardian cherub. Ironically, after Adam and Eve succumbed to the devil's temptations, disobeyed God, and were expelled from Eden, God sent cherubim to guard Eden (Genesis 3:24).

Since Lucifer had been the model of perfection, what sort of sin led to his fall? His heart became proud because of his incredible beauty. Lucifer allowed his perfection to be the cause of his corruption.

God's judgment on Lucifer

Lucifer was not satisfied with worshipping God; instead, he wanted to be worshipped. Once a beautiful, powerful angel of God, he lost his former, exalted position in Heaven.

Isaiah 14:12–15 *“How you are fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit”.*

Lucifer (“star of the morning”) became Satan (“accuser”) when he fell to the earth. Jesus, speaking of this event, said, *“I saw Satan fall like lightning from Heaven”* (Luke 10:18).

Lucifer's followers

When Satan fell, he did not fall alone. Scripture tells us that he took one-third of the angels (see Revelation 12:4). Considering that the angelic host numbers more than 10,000 x 10,000 (see Revelation 5:11), that is a sizable group. They account for the fallen angels, or demons, that now do his bidding. As a result, Satan is a fallen, but powerful, spirit-being with a well-organized network of demon powers to help him accomplish his purposes. *Those purposes, according to Jesus, are to “steal, kill, and destroy”* (John 10:10).

That's the bad news. The good news is that two-thirds of the angels are on our side! As the prophet Elisha said to his servant, *“Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them”* (2 Kings 6:16).

As Christians, we have an even greater asset than the majority of angels on our side: Jesus Christ, who conquered Satan at the cross of Calvary, is also on our side.

If Satan seeks to destroy us, we need to know how he works.

He plants doubts and lies (**Gen. 3**) One of the biggest doubts Satan plants in your heart is about the goodness of God. *“How can a good God possibly let some of these horrible and hard things happen to you?”* He also whispers lies about what is right and wrong to twist the truth.

He will tempt you with sexual immorality (**1 Cor. 7:5**). Both in person and online sexual temptations abound and Satan will make sure to set them before your eyes. He would like nothing more than to take your purity and ruin your relationships, health, and heart.

He will try to take you down through pride (**1 Pet 5:6-8**). Pride is a dangerous sin because it gives birth to almost every other sin. So, Satan will spend a lot of time trying to convince you of the fact that “self” is king. If you are focused on yourself, you live in sin.

He will try to make you captive with addictions (**2 Timothy 2:26**). One of the most devastating effects of substance abuse (drugs/alcohol) or behavioral abuse (sex/ pornography etc..) is becoming enslaved to them. Satan loves to take a person captive, holding them as a hostage against their will. Satan does not fight fairly or by the rules. But thank God, Jesus Christ came to give liberty those who were captive, and to open the prison doors to those who are bound.

He will try to sidetrack you with worldly things. (**1 John 2:15-16**). We are a people who are easily distracted especially by all the new, shiny, and exciting things the world has to offer (money, power, beauty, possessions). Therefore, Satan will use the beautiful things, even good things, to draw your attention and devotion from Jesus.

He will try to cause disunity amongst Christians (**Mt 13:38-39; 2 Cor 11:13-15**). Beware of even the smaller conflicts that arise between brothers and sisters of Christ. Satan is well skilled at using such things to erode fellowship and breed discontent to destroy the Church and people's commitment to the Kingdom of God.

He will slander you before God (**Rev 12:10**). Over and over, he will throw all your sins before the throne of God in an effort to discredit you or make you give up. He wants to use shame to defeat your efforts.

He fights against your faith (**Eph 6:12**). One thing that Satan is not, is lazy. He is very active roaming around seeking to destroy. He has an arsenal full of tactics (more than we can discuss today) and will not hesitate to do whatever it takes to maim our faith.

We resist temptation by taking both the defensive and offensive.

Know Biblical truth - God gave us the Bible to teach us the best way to live and to give us examples of others to learn from. God's way is the way of love. It's the way of peace. And surprisingly it is freedom. Daily Bible reading and reflection help us to identify and resist the lies of Satan. It is like tethering our boat to Jesus's boat, so that we do not lose our way.

Through prayer – Prayer engages the power of God in the fight (2 Corinthians 10: 4). “Satan trembles, when he sees the weakest Christian upon his knees.” ~William Cowper (English Hymn writer)

Do good works - Jesus asks us to serve others and love our neighbors. When we are genuinely caring for others, we become less focused on ourselves. Doing good works of love and grace wherever we go to show your love for God, his other children and transform the world.

Tell others about Jesus. Christian witnessing is telling others what God has done for us. Sharing the good news grows our faith and can bring others to know Jesus.

Put on the Armor of God by doing the steps outlined in Ephesians 6:11 – 18. These foundational steps will protect your heart and mind from the temptations of Satan. And by being focused on God we will feel His love, peace, hope and joy.

Remember Satan can never take away our salvation. God is greater and will lose none who belong to him. But he can do a lot of damage and cripple us in our quest for intimacy with God and personal holiness. Therefore, we must be alert because Satan will attack when we are not ready (**1 Peter 5:8-9**), we must know the devil's antics (**2 Cor. 2:11**), and we must stand firm against the attacks and deceits of the devil. (**Eph. 6:11**). God has not left us defenseless. He has given us an armor that we must know and wear at all times.

Set your eyes on things above (Colossians 3:2). Someday we will be able trade in our armor for a royal robe and crown. Battles will be a part of the past and our future will hold nothing but peace and joy. But until then we must encourage each other to not give up in the fight, or to

run away in fear. We have a most powerful God on our side! "*Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.*" **Deuteronomy 20:3, 4.**

Be cautious of your spiritual blind spots where Satan might continually deceive you.

As human beings, we all have areas of sin in our lives that we cannot see. The Bible talks about spiritual blindness and how it affects our souls and those around us. None of us are perfect. If we believe we are perfect, we are lying to ourselves. We are walking in spiritual darkness because the enemy has blinded us. But Jesus wants to restore every part of us, including our blind spots. Psalms 139: 23-24 *Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.* The good news is that we have the Holy Spirit who lives within us to help us expose those blind spots if we ask Him for help.

It is often helpful to have others help us see our blind spots. In a confidential small group with fellow believers of Jesus Christ, we can feel safe to share our sin, temptations and speak truth into each other's lives. It brings things into the light that we may not see on our own.

Conclusion: God is all powerful; Satan's power is limited. Stay close to God.

Scriptures to review (included above)

- Ezekiel 28: 11-19
- 1 Peter 5:8-11
- Ephesians 6:10-18

Tough questions prep:

1. Why doesn't God stop or kill Satan/Lucifer?

God will not force obedience. He allows us to choose to love and obey Him, but he does have consequences when we disobey.

2. Why can't God stop bad things from Satan happening to us?

First, the Bible tells us that evil does not come from God, nor can we blame God for all the evils in the world. Evil comes instead from Satan, and it entered this world when Satan deceived Adam and Eve and caused them to turn against God. Both evil and Satan are real, and the two go hand-in-hand.

Second, the Bible tells us that someday all evil will be banished. The vast spiritual conflict between Satan and God that has raged from the beginning of time will be over, and God will be triumphant. Someday all evil will be cast "into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

Third, the Bible tells us that in the meantime, God can give us victory over evil. This doesn't mean bad things will never happen to us—but even when they do, we can know God is with us, and He will give us strength to stand against them. Isn't it better to face life's problems with

God rather than without Him? No, we may not understand everything that happens to us—but when we know Christ, we know we are on the winning side.

3. Am I still sinful?

No. We are no longer bound to sin (Rom 7:4-6), we are a new creation with new hard wiring (2 Cor 5:17), you have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16), we are now no longer controlled by a sin nature (Rom 8:9-11), and we've been made alive in Christ (Ep 5:4-6). We now can live by the Spirit (Gal 5:24-25). The old man is dead (Col 3:3) and the old man was drowned in the baptism tank and crucified with Christ (Gal 2:20). We now have a spirit of self-control to handle temptation (2 Tim 2:7).

The enemy tries to keep us feeling shameful about our sin and returning to sinful patterns. It is only by renewing our minds (Romans 12:1-2 & Philippians 4:8) that we can start to believe and feel the freedom God has given. The spiritual disciplines of prayer, study, meditation, and Scripture memorization will help you renew your thoughts and mind. By doing these daily, the Holy Spirit can change both our habits and feelings.

Class Time

Introduce the content for this class (in your own words):

People often take two very different positions when it comes to talk of evil. Some find it easier to believe in Satan than in God because they see the evil all around them. On the other hand, many believe in God but refuse to think there is a horned devil called Satan out to get them. Neither of these views are correct. Both God and Satan are spiritual beings. We have discussed God but now we need to know who Satan is and how he operates.

The Bible tells us that Satan is a very real and personal being. His name was Lucifer, and he was a powerful angel, who led a rebellion against God. He is the source of evil. Everything God created is good because God is good. Satan's rebellion brought evil into God's perfect creation.

Make sure no children in the room for this testimony video which mentions pornography

Play the short personal testimony video (usually the testimony video is last but today it is prior to the teaching video).

Intro testimony video of rapper, Lee Tripp, and play first before teaching video to set the tone for our need to resist evil. Talk about the variation of sin and the slow creep if you have time.

Share this part in your own words to set up the teaching video:

Satan in the Beginning:

The apostle John describes this rebellion in Revelation, "Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world

astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”

It's important to remember that even though Satan is real, he is not God's equal. Satan isn't divine, all-knowing, or all-powerful. He was created by God, and he will be defeated by God in God's perfect timing. In discussing the source of evil, we must avoid 2 common mistakes.

1. *An unhealthy interest in demons and demonic activity (The occult) Deuteronomy 18: 10; Leviticus 19: 26.*
2. *Disbelief in his existence.*

Play the teaching video.

Discussion questions (pages 30 and 31):

1. Did God create this evil tempter we call Satan?
2. Why should we not become preoccupied with Satan?
3. How do YOU resist evil?

Closing / takeaways in your own words:

Many Christians want their life to go well. When it does not, they blame God. They do not understand that there is an enemy who is scheming to steal, kill, and destroy them. If you learn what is from God and what are the lies of the enemy, you will be empowered to respond appropriately. God did not leave you unempowered. We are victorious over the attacks of Satan. We are to be wise, discerning, and know truth. Knowing what "truth" is will set you free. Truth is found in God's word.

Invite them to continue by registering for Connect to Faith, beginning (date) covering these topics: How to deal with doubt, Does God heal today, How to study the Bible, Why do we need the church, Sacraments and How do I fit in.

Prayer:

Instead of including a lesson devoted to how to pray, class leaders will model how to pray each of the six weeks of Connect to God. Before you close in prayer, briefly explain the ACTS method of prayer (adoration/praise, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication) and lead participants through this format.