

What are you fighting for?...



Veteran soldier: Fight? Against that? No, we will run; and we will live.

Wallace: Aye, fight and you may die. Run and you'll live -- at least a while. And dying in your beds many years from now, would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that for one chance, just one chance to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they'll never take our freedom!!!

These men now have an identity (Son's of Scotland) and in their heart they know what they are fighting for (Freedom). The rest is history as Scotland routed England in the Battle of Stirling and eventually, after many battles and setbacks, won their freedom.

So, what are you fighting for?

Hold that thought. There is one thing you need to understand first, and if you don't get this, you are already at a tactical disadvantage and you have no chance of victory.

First thing you need to know...there is an enemy!

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm." Ephesians 6:12

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;..." John 10:10

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5-8

There is an enemy. He is real and he wants to hit you where it hurts. He knows our weaknesses and goes after what matters most to us. His ultimate goal is to eternally separate you from God.

BY: DAVID HALSEY

I will admit it...I am a Braveheart junky! I own the movie, I've seen it dozens of times, and my wife still catches me watching it on regular television even though I could easily pop in the DVD. She thinks I am nuts and she's probably right.

The stage is set. The Battle of Stirling is about to begin. The underdogs from Scotland are face-to-face against the English Army and their chances are not looking good. In fact, going into battle is probably certain death for them. Just as the Scotsmen are about to call it quits and head back home, William Wallace and his band of brothers ride into the scene:

Wallace: Sons of Scotland, I am William Wallace.

Young soldier: William Wallace is 7 feet tall.

Wallace: Yes, I've heard. Kills men by the hundreds, and if he were here he'd consume the English with fireballs from his eyes and bolts of lightning from his arse. I AM William Wallace. And I see a whole army of my countrymen here in defiance of tyranny. You have come to fight as free men, and free men you are. What would you do without freedom? Will you fight?

But why does this enemy want to hurt me? I didn't do anything to deserve that.

I'm sorry to break the news to you, but you are collateral damage in a much bigger story and there is no turning back, so it's time to face this head on. Let's go way back to the story before the story.

Lucifer (which means "shining star") was God's top ranking angel. He convinced one third of the angels to join him to take over God's throne. We don't know exactly what caused this rebellion but the bible is clear that Lucifer wanted the throne and convinced others he could do it better. The archangel Michael ("who is like God") was sent in with an army of angels. This must have been a battle of apocalyptic proportions as Lucifer (who at this point is known as "Satan", meaning "accuser/adversary") and his army were defeated and cast down to earth.

Why did God allow this kind of evil on earth?

We don't know for sure. However, Satan and his angels now see the consequences of their actions, they know that God truly loves his creation because he sent his only son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins, and the bible is clear that they will ultimately receive justice for what they did. We also know that evil is merely an absence of God, and he wants us to choose him when faced with both options.

So why is Satan coming after you? Just like the soldiers in Braveheart were "Son's of Scotland", you are a Son or Daughter of the one true God, made in his image and loved above everything in his creation. Satan is jealous, he still believes he is superior, and he wants to destroy your soul to exact revenge on God.

Why did God create me in the first place? According to the bible, he did it for a few different reasons. 1) His pleasure (yes, we give him pleasure), 2) To prove his justice, 3) His creation and our life is a gift that he wants us to experience and share, 4) He loves us and wants us to choose him. These are the same "right" reasons why we get married and have children. Think about it from that perspective!

This story of an apocalyptic battle in the spiritual realm and the casting of Satan and his angels to earth, where they fight against us, and God, is hard to comprehend. You may have never thought of it this way. The image of God, Angels, Jesus, and Christians in general has been softened and watered down in our world. However, as you continue to read on, I hope it is revealed in your heart that this is true. If there is an enemy, then God's story...our story...as told in the bible, makes sense and we can now go into battle knowing what we are up against.

So, how is this Satan character coming after me?

There is a book by C.S. Lewis called "The Screwtape Letters" that I highly recommend. It does a great job illustrating how he operates. What Satan wants most of all is to make you think he doesn't really exist.

He is going to use the same tactic that worked with Adam and Eve but did not work with Jesus Christ. He is going to very quietly and secretly tempt you with:

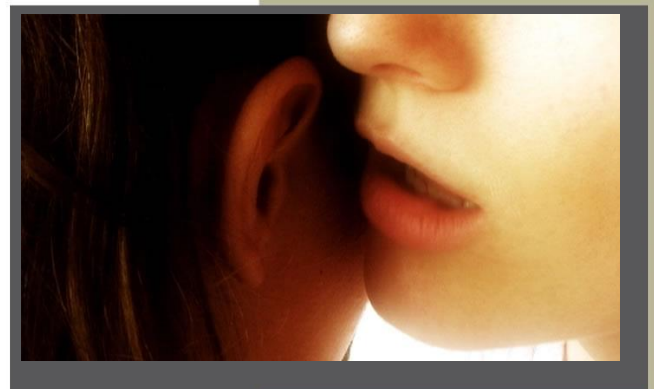
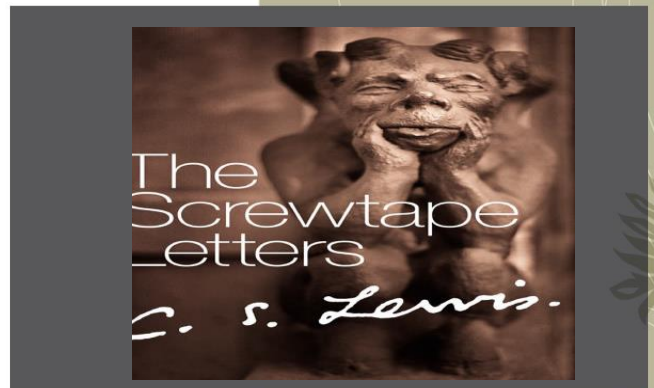
- 1) Physical desires, 2) Materialism, and 3) Pride.

These are three different ways he can create a wedge between you and God, and he knows exactly which of these are most likely to trip you up.

And then he will whisper lies to you which you will be very tempted to believe:

- 1) I'll never be enough, 2) I can't change, and 3) I am all alone.

When you get these temptations and hear this negative inner-voice, know that it is not God; it is not even you; it is likely the voice of the enemy working against you to corrupt your heart and your strength.



So is Satan running the show on earth?

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4

The answer is clearly yes. He is the ruler of this world for a majority of people and is active in shaping our cultures, governments, philosophies, religions, commerce, lifestyles, education, thoughts, and ideas. Here are some examples:

- 1) **Society** – It is based on “consumption”, getting what we want, not what we truly need, and thinking that will make us happy. The “American Dream” is a failed experiment. Also, we are instituting “relative morality”, where as long as it works for me, or makes me feel good, then it’s okay.
- 2) **Marriage** – The “Hollywood Model” = Find the right person, put your hopes and dreams in that person, and if it doesn’t work out go find another person. The institution of marriage is severely under attack. “We just wanted different things”, “I fell out of love”. This is becoming all too common. Also, if Satan can poison the marriage, he can poison the children.
- 3) **The Family Unit** – We are so busy with life, going from one thing to the next. Busyness is like a drug that stops us from doing what is really important. We don’t make enough time (i.e. “margin”) together for dinner, faith/church, deep conversations, prayer, games, laughing, or crying together. If the enemy can separate the parents and then separate them from intimacy from the children, that is a big victory.
- 4) **Religion** – If Satan can confuse people, create division, promote false teachings, allow boredom and complacency to permeate the church, he can surely separate us from each other and from God.
- 5) **The Heart** – Oh yes, the most prized possession of all. For Satan, there is nothing better than a hardened heart, one that has given up and isolated itself. By killing our heart he kills our soul, and any chance of true intimacy with others. When the heart dies then there is nothing left to fight for. If he can take you out he also takes out your ability to grow God’s Kingdom.



Thank you for making it this far because here is the point. Drum roll please.....**What are you fighting for?** It is not for anything this world can give you. **The battle is for your HEART!** Here is the good news. God has given you everything you need to win.

Physically, you need food, water, clothing, and shelter. God knows what we need, and he is very clear we must *“seek first his kingdom”* (Matthew 6:33). It all starts with being thankful for what God already did for us and what he has given us. **Emotionally**, you need relationships, with a focus on making time for others and helping them become their best versions. **Intellectually**, all we really need is books. Books are the key to programming your mind and shaping your present and future state. **Spiritually**, you only need Jesus Christ to fill your heart. Jesus is the only one who solved the problem of the penalty of death we

deserve for sin, and enabled a personal relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. Repentance is simply the act of allowing Jesus to live in your heart and turning away from the things that are getting in the way of your relationship with him. You probably already know what behaviors are keeping you on the side-line. Trying to quit on your own doesn't work. Instead, fill your heart with right relationships, inspiring books, and Jesus Christ.

The entire story of the Bible is about God wanting to captivate our hearts and show us the world through his eyes. He has given us two incredible weapons to connect with him and fight the enemy. The first is **Prayer**. If you are not in the habit of creating still/quiet time with God, it is difficult at first. However, it is necessary to hear the voice of God, put others first, and get some direction in your life.



A good technique for prayer is **P = Praise** (what are you thankful for? Be specific), **R = Repent** (what behaviors/actions do you need help with?), **A = Ask** (Ask and it shall be given. God will do what is best for you at the right time), and **Y = Yield** (Listen, Respond). Even if you just prayed “thank you for...” and “help me with...” for a few minutes each day, God can use that time to make a huge difference in your life.

The second weapon is **the Bible**, otherwise known as the *“sword of the spirit”* (Ephesians 6). The more you read it, study it, and apply it in your life, you will be convinced beyond a doubt it is the inspired word of God given to us as an instruction manual for how to live, and die, the right way. B.I.B.L.E. = Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth!

You are a child of God, created in his image with amazing gifts and a purpose. That purpose is to show the world what God is like (to “glorify” him). And in doing so he will show you what you have been missing. It's not the easy way out and there is an enemy that is going to fight against you because he knows how powerful you can become if you give your heart to God. In the end, the reward is the same reward that the Son's of Scotland received...**FREEDOM!**

Ask about my other articles, including:

- *“Am I stupid to believe in God?”*
- *“Am I crazy to be a Christian?”*
- *“Why are there so many other religions if they are all fake?”*
- *“What do these words actually mean?”*

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References I used include:

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- Epic – John Eldredge
- NIV Bible
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