



UNIT: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

LESSON 2 | SPIRITUAL ATTACK

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: That where Satan seeks to lead people away from God, God is calling people to Himself so that they can receive life.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED: Cling to God in moments when they feel under attack, and have a better view of what God's goal is in spiritual warfare.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: Job 1:6-12, 1 Peter 5:8-11, Acts 16:16-34, John 3:16-21.

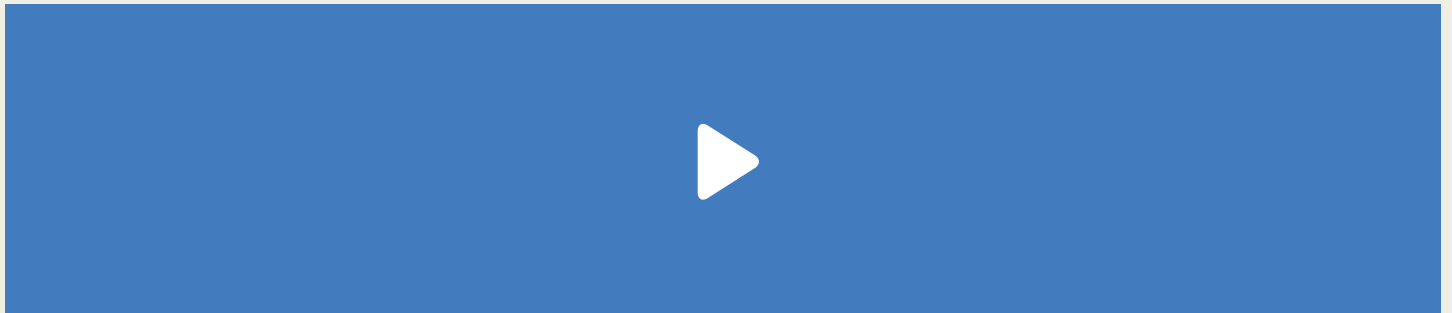
ANCHOR STATEMENT: Satan uses spiritual attacks to try and distract or separate us from God, but God's ultimate goal is to give life to those who believe in Him.

OVERVIEW:

One of the most difficult subjects to tackle in the church is Spiritual Warfare. Often, students are either taught that they must fight these battles with certain 'tactics' that are developed from secret knowledge, or they are taught to live in fear and avoidance. Scripture suggests a different path. By understanding the goal of Satan's attacks, we can see that the easiest way to stand against spiritual attacks is to keep our eyes focused on God.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *Anchored* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson's main point as you prepare to teach.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

The *Bible Background* is a focused, brief overview of some of the background info for the main passage you will be teaching.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CONTEXT"?** In every YM360 Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know *who* wrote the book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the *Bible Background* to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

Job

- *Author:* There are many traditions about who wrote the Book of Job, as the text does not identify its author. It was possibly Job, Elihu, or someone who lived in Job's era.
- *Time frame:* This book was likely written before the era of Moses, as evidenced by references to a unique type of money (Job 42:11) and the city of Teman (Job 2:11). The timeline is likely from the second millennium of history, during the era of the Patriarchs.
- *Purpose:* Job is a book of wisdom literature that underscores how humanity is unable to see life as God does, especially when facing the nature of suffering. It likewise demonstrates the tension between God and Satan.

1 Peter

- *Author:* 1 Peter was written by Peter, one of Jesus' most trusted disciples and one of the key leaders of the growing movement of Christ-followers.
- *Time frame:* 1 Peter was likely written between 54-68 AD.
- *Purpose:* 1 Peter was written to a people under persecution, likely under the reign of Nero. Peter calls the Church to persevere under trials because eternal life awaits them. He encourages them that God's promises to His people will endure and should be the basis of their hope.

Acts

- *Author:* Acts has long been held to be a letter from Luke, a Gentile physician, to a man named Theophilus, possibly a benefactor of some sort.
- *Time frame:* There is some debate over when Acts was written. The suggested dates are between 70 AD and 80 AD.
- *Purpose:* The Book of Acts is a second letter to Theophilus that tells the story of the early Church following Jesus' resurrection. The book begins with Jesus' ascension and His command of His followers to proclaim the Gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The rest of the book traces this journey as the early church leaders proclaim the Gospel and plant churches.

John

- *Author:* The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation, as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.
- *Time frame:* The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- *Purpose:* John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

THE SETTING

The Apostle Peter wrote the book of 1 Peter to the churches scattered over Asia Minor. The church is facing increasing hostility from Rome, and Peter is encouraging them with what it looks like to live as a Christian in a world that opposes them.

THE MAIN POINT

We live in a spiritual battle that we can't fight on our own. But God, who won the ultimate victory, is with us and fights for us. Our calling is to stay connected to God, resist the devil, and live our lives to glorify God rather than man. When we live out our calling as believers, it frustrates the enemy. Through spiritual and physical means, he attempts to discourage God's plans and redirect our attention. Spiritual attacks happen, and when they do, we can have comfort knowing God will have the victory in the end.

LESSON PLAN

The *Lesson Plan* contains three elements: an introductory activity called *The Lead In*; the Bible Study section called *The Main Event*; and an application-focused segment called *The Last Word*.

THE LEAD IN

- *Goal:* To help students start thinking about how spiritual attacks are carried out against believers.
- *Set-Up:* Below is a segment from C.S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters*. (Depending on your familiarity with this book, you may want to use a different part that is special to you.)

FIRST, explain to students that you are going to read them a segment of a book called *Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis. Explain that this book is a satire (or humorous critique carried out with various exaggerations). The premise is that Screw-tape is a demon and a very high-ranking one. He has been put in a position to mentor one of the younger demons named Wormwood, and he does so through a variety of letters. Explain that in this particular segment, Screwtape is advising Wormwood to consider attacking in very small, almost unnoticeable ways.

THEN, read this segment:

"You will say that these are very small sins; and doubtless, like all young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness. But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy. It does not matter how small the sins are provided the cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one- the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts."

Say something like:

- Because Screwtape is a demon, he refers to God as the Enemy. And as we just read, his goal is to get people away from God as 'permanently' as possible. We often think, like Wormwood, that spiritual attacks should be big and bold and hard to miss. But the truth is, most spiritual attacks are the ones we barely notice, that slowly draw our attention away from God and into the 'nothingness.'

FINALLY, if there are no questions, transition into the Main Event.

THE MAIN EVENT

- *Goal:* To help students understand the purpose behind Satan's attacks, and the only real strategy we have to face these attacks: Keeping our eyes on God.
- *Set-Up:* Make sure students have a Bible or Bible App.

FIRST, remind your students that this lesson is the second in a unit called "Spiritual Warfare." Explain that today, we are going to be talking about spiritual attacks. In the midst of warfare, attacks happen. Depending on what the goal is, that will determine the planning and execution of the attack. **Ask students:**

- What is the goal of spiritual attacks against believers?
 - *Answers will vary.*

Say something like:

- Spiritual attacks are meant to draw us away from God and recenter our attention to the evil in the world and the sinful desires of our own hearts. There is an example in Scripture of a man who is spiritually attacked through great physical means. His name is Job, and at the beginning of the Book of Job, we read that he was known as one of the most faithful people in all the land. One of the cool things about the Book of Job is that through the writing, we get to see 'behind the veil' into some of the spiritual things that are going on in this narrative. The book opens up with the Accuser, Satan, speaking with God about Job's faith. Let's take a look.

Read or have a student read Job 1:6-12 and Job 2:1-6. **Ask:**

- **What does Satan set out to prove by attacking Job's faith in different ways?**
 - *Answer:* That Job is only faithful because God has blessed him. Satan believes that if the blessings stop or if he's hit with physical afflictions, Job will turn away from God.

THEN, explain to your students that these attacks were not just for Job, and they aren't a thing 'of the past.' Read or have a student read 1 Peter 5:8-11. **Ask students:**

- **Why do you think Peter refers to the 'brotherhood throughout the world' when it comes to suffering attacks from the adversary (Satan)?**
 - *Answer:* First, to remind us that we have people we can lean on. Second, to remind us that this is something that happens to all of God's people at some point, regardless of where we are (a.k.a., even if we are in a country where we are 'free' to worship!)

Say something like:

- **Peter reminds us that the devil is 'prowling like a lion.' If you have ever watched a nature documentary about lions, you know that most lions hunt in groups.¹ In fact, African lions have a success rate of 16.7% when they hunt alone, but their success rate jumps to 33.3% when they hunt in groups. In other words, we shouldn't be too surprised if spiritual attacks come one after another. This is one of the key reasons that Peter says to remain sober-minded. But let's take a look at what being sober-minded entails.**

NEXT, explain that we are not helpless victims of the attacks of the enemy. We have One who is greater than the devil who is on our side. Have your students turn in their Bibles to 1 John 4:4 and have a student read the passage. **Ask:**

- **Who is more powerful than the devil who seeks to attack us?**
 - *Answer:* God at work within us is more powerful than any forces of spiritual attack we may face out side of us.

Explain to students that we are about to read a strange story from Acts about spiritual attacks. Give students a little bit of context from the Bible Background section on Acts. Then, read or have students read Acts 16:16-34. After that, **say something like:**

- **Could you imagine if you witnessed something like this happen? First, you have a demon that is mocking Paul and Silas as they are attempting to tell others about Jesus. But after the demon is scared away by the name of Jesus, a whole group of people beat Paul and Silas with sticks and throw them in jail. They remain focused on God and even worship in songs for other prisoners to hear. Through an earthquake, the doors are open, and Paul and Silas have the opportunity to run free with the other prisoners, but they don't. You might be thinking, "Why in the WORLD did they not run away!?" After all, hadn't they been through enough? However, God had something much better in mind. After all the attacks had been launched at Paul and Silas, God responded by leading them to share the Gospel with one of the men who helped imprison them! When Satan tried to draw two men away from God, God responded by adding more people to His Kingdom.**

Ask students:

- **What do you think we can learn from this story about how to respond to spiritual attacks?**
 - *Answers will vary.* Help students see that Paul and Silas kept their focus on God, and they did very little to 'fight back' or seek retribution for themselves. They allowed God to fight the battle.

Say something like:

- **The goal of Satan is to pull God's people away from Him. He mocks and accuses us. He tempts us to join**

¹ <https://www.africa-wildlife-detective.com/african-lion-facts.html#:~:text=What%20are%20the%20African%20lion,not%20even%20bother%20to%20attack>

him in his rebellion against God. And ultimately, he wants to see us spiritually and physically dead. But God, on the other hand, fights this great war against Satan by bringing people to life in His Name. Where Satan brings death, God brings life.

THEN, read or have students read John 3:16-21. **Ask students:**

- **What does this verse say about God's goal in the midst of spiritual warfare?**
 - *Answer:* God does not want us to perish and be condemned. He wants to give life!

Remind students of their Anchor Statement for this lesson:

**SATAN USES SPIRITUAL ATTACKS TO TRY AND DISTRACT OR SEPARATE US FROM GOD,
BUT GOD'S ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO GIVE LIFE TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM.**

FINALLY, explain to students that in the midst of any warfare, it's always nice to know that you have someone on your side. Remind students that God loves us, and even when we are mocked, beaten, or shaken, He will not leave us. In fact, it is often in the midst of these times that God uses us to bring about some of His greatest victories!

Ask if anyone has any thoughts or questions, then transition to the Last Word portion of your lesson.

THE LAST WORD

- *Goal:* To help students keep God's Word close to their hearts in preparation for spiritual attacks.
- *Set-Up:* Have pens and notecards for each student. The more colorful, the better. The idea will be that students will carry these around and not 'forget' about them.

FIRST, say something like:

- **When we are attacked, the best way to keep ourselves anchored in God's Word is to memorize God's Word. But it can be difficult to memorize EVERYTHING in the Bible. So today, we are going to write down a passage to have on hand when we feel like we are under attack. I want you to keep this on hand for the next week, and pull it out when you need it!**

THEN, read Romans 8:38-39 slowly so that students can copy it on their notecards. If available, you may want to write it on a dry-erase board or on a large sheet of paper for students to see. Once students have written down these verses, **say something like:**

- **The Church in Rome was going through a lot of spiritual warfare. Not only were they being outcasted socially, but they were experiencing great physical attacks as well. What Paul says to them in this passage is essentially that no matter what comes, keep your eyes fixed on Jesus.**

FINALLY, if there are no more questions, close the lesson in prayer.

- Don't forget to remind students about their devotions this week. If you're posting them on Social Media or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.