

The New Testament Church
Spiritual Warfare #1 – The Measure of Maturity - James 1:21-27
 Pastor Paul Jehle - January 29, 2023

- I Why Spiritual Warfare? – or *Seven Lies through which the Enemy has deceived the Church*
- A. Seven major obstacles the Church must overcome in order to birth the *Kingdom*
 1. Ephesians 5:11 – the lies of the enemy we must expose and correct
 2. Avoid *ignorance* of the enemy as well as *obsession* with him (2nd Cor. 2:11; Ro. 16:19)
 - B. The works of darkness we will focus on in this series are seven areas of deception
 1. Jeremiah 17:9 “*the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*”
 2. Hebrew - “*insidious*” – *crooked* (Webster) - *lying in wait... to ensnare or entrap*.
 3. Webster’s 1828 also says - *the leading of another person to believe what is false*.
 - C. One tactic of the enemy is to have us believe half-truths, off balance, and exaggerate
 1. Genesis 3:1-7 – Satan lay in wait to trap Eve and Adam; who had free choice
 - a. *Hath God said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* (a trap)
 - b. *We may eat the fruit of the trees, but of the tree of knowledge, can’t even touch it!*
 2. Satan did not talk straight – but crooked – he led Eve to believe what was false
 3. Adam stood there silent – by omission, being led astray and leading Eve astray
- II James 1:21-27 - The Lie: *our maturity in Christ is measured by what we hear and know*
- A. Only 2% of people in a typical church will ever go into full-time ministry/missionary
 1. It is a deception to set a goal of spiritual maturity for believers to be church leaders
 2. Fellowship is imperative, with God and with one another, but a means to an end
 3. True maturity is tested in the marketplace – literally (with money), and figuratively
 - B. Spiritual growth – growing up to maturity – is a hedge against the enemy
 1. Hebrews 5:14 – *strong meat... trained to reason to discern between good vs. evil*
 2. James 1:19-27 – **The true measure of maturity is living out God’s Word**
 - a. Lay aside the two extremes of anger (isolation) and overflow of evil (idolatry)
 - b. Receive with humility the *implanted Word*, being a doer, not just a hearer
 - c. Hearing the Word, experiencing the spiritual, neglecting the practical, we then deceive ourselves – which is the root of being deceived by the enemy!
 - d. Hearing and not doing – mystically spiritual, we behold our natural face in God’s Word – in other words – we focus on us, we think we are stronger than we are
 - e. We then forget who we are in Christ – but looking into the perfect law of liberty (the Word), we see who we are spiritually – **we are blessed in what we do!**
 - f. We live out the Word in the “marketplace” – from home to work, in His strength
 - g. *True religion*, true Christianity, is self-control and visiting fatherless and widows
 3. **The test of our maturity is measured in the marketplace, not in Church**
 - a. We are “pragmatic”; our priority decisions “occupy” until He comes; Luke 19:13
 - b. Jesus gave each servant 10 pounds – one tenth of a talent – 2 years wages!
 - c. The “marketplace” is the place where our decisions are made – priorities
 - d. Most decisions involve long and short term – the temporal and eternal
 - C. The Gospel of the Church vs. the Gospel of the Kingdom
 1. We do spiritual warfare when we wrestle with the priorities of life – seek Kingdom
 2. Our source must be in Christ – the Word – but our fruit is measured practically
 3. John 17:15 – *I not to get them out of the world, but kept from the evil one...*