

Foundations 4
Three Channels of Evil
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In 1973 a gang of bank robbers held up the Kreditbanken (Credit Bank) in Stockholm, Sweden. The police interrupted their heist, but the bank robbers proceeded to hold a number of bank employees hostage for six long days. When at last they were rescued these kidnap victims, who had been terrorized and abused by their captors, stunned the authorities by demonstrating considerable emotional attachment to their victimizers. Some of the victims even publically defended the very ones who had held them at gun point and threatened their lives. You know what we call this phenomenon. You may not know that it was a Swedish psychiatrist/criminologist by the name of Nils Bejerot who dubbed this bizarre behavior with its sticky name. But you know the name of the syndrome: it's called . . . the "Stockholm Syndrome." That's right. You're good. . . .

Since 1973 this strange sympathetic behavior - a hostage showing loyalty and concern for the hostage-taker - has been repeated and recognized both by such infamous names as Patty Hearst (anybody over 40 not know that name? anybody under 40 know that name?) and by tens of thousands of unnamed/unknown domestic, spousal, and child abuse victims. The captives get their own identity so wrapped up in

that of their captors that no matter how bad their reality, it seems better than facing the fear of an unknown, undefined future.

I want to make the case this morning that one of the dominant sicknesses facing our world today is the "Stockholm Syndrome." There are many of us who are suffering from a kind of cultural "Stockholm Syndrome," blindly defending and claiming as good for ourselves the very things that keep us captive□

Jesus taught this thousand of year before Stockholm when he said: "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:34-36. There are three Sources of evil that cause us to sin and hold us captive.

Satan is, of course, the ultimate source of all evil. In practical terms there are three different "channels" or "pipelines" through which evil has an opportunity to influence us as individuals. To live in victory, you must understand what these channels are and you must know the biblical strategy for Victory.

The truth is every battle requires a strategy. If you use the strategy, you'll end up defeated. If you do not use the right tactic you will end up kidnapped-and enslaved feeling sympathetic to your abuser.

Think about this for just a moment. Let me share an everyday battle. .

you tell me the strategy that will work and that which will not-

First, a young child who refuses to eat his or her vegetables. . .would you?

- A. Give the child ice cream to eat instead
- B. Tie the child to the high chair until the vegetable is eaten?
- C. Pay \$100 for every green bean they eat!
- D. Stay at the table with the child and gently encourage them to eat.

Second you learn that someone is gossiping about you at work would you. . .?

- A. Make up some Juicy gossip about them.
- B. Hide Limburger cheese in their filing cabinet under R for revenge.
- C. Talk to the person who you know started the gossip.

Here is the point; in a battle, just doing something is not enough. You must do the right thing. What does the Bible say about how to achieve victory in the three areas that evil come into our world, the flesh, and the Devil.

1. THE WORLD

In any battle, one of the keys to victory over an enemy is knowing and understanding that enemy. The "world" means the philosophy and influence that "reigns" on this earth .

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the

basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. Colossians 2:8

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For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. 1 John 2:16

For believers the question is not **if** we will be victorious, but **when!** We don't fight the battles to see if we'll win the war, we fight the battles knowing that we have won the war! Jesus Christ brings victory over an evil world. Strategy for Victory: (What are some practical things that I can do to begin to enjoy victory on this particular battleground?)

- LOVE the Lord

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone

loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does— comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of

God lives forever.” 1 John 2:15-17 (NIV)

The reason we fall into the world's way of thinking is because of our love for the things of this world. We love them because we think they will make us happy, will bring us contentment, will offer us security. The only way to escape the allure of our love for these things of the world is to find a greater love!

We all need a greater love in our lives. This longing is one of the reasons that there are so many love songs. If you did a quick search on google you would find a myriad of website that deal with nothing but love songs.

There's nothing wrong with romantic love. But it cannot meet the deepest need in our lives. That is met through our relationship with

the God who made us.

Our love for God is not a romantic love, but a relational love. A depth of love for the Lord is not developed in a instant-no great love is. AS you spend time with him, you'll see the things of this world become less and less important to and the things of God becoming more and more important.

2. THE FLESH

There are two meaning for flesh in the Bible. First it means just our Physical bodes. Remember in Gethsemane Jesus said to his disciples. .

. " ⁴⁰Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping.

"Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked

Peter. ⁴¹"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.

The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Matthew 26:40

We commit gluttony because our body is weak. We commit sexual sin because our body is weak.

Second meaning of flesh is mankind's tendency to commit willful sins.

This is where we overeat because we want the oreo's now before

anyone get's hurt. We commit sexual sin because we are going to gratify our selfish need with out waiting for God proper timing.

This is very important stuff-some in the church have taught that our bodies are evil and depraved. Scripture instead teaches that God gave us good bodies that our weak and our heart can willfully seek out sin-but God made us Good! One say you have no choice but to eat the oreos-the other says yes you do resist and temptation will leave.

Our bodies were created for the good purpose of loving him and others. Sin starts in our weak thought processes, not our physical bodies. Sin is an inside job rather than outside. The heart is where evil lurks. We do not think evil things because we live in an evil world; we live in a evil world because we think evil thoughts.

Know this as Follower of Jesus we are Guaranteed Victory: Jesus Christ brings victory: He condemned sin in the flesh ²⁴ *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.* ²⁵ *Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit Galatians 5:24,25 .*

So what is them Practical Battle Strategy: Listen to Gal 5:13,16

"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature ; rather, serve one another in love.... So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." Gal. 5:13, 16 (NIV)

Underline or highlight Serve one another and Live by the spirit.

- SERVE one another in love (Gal. 5:13).

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THE SAYING: IDLE HANDS ARE THE DEVILS WORKSHOP? IF YOU HAVE THIS VERSE IS SAYING THERE IS TRUTH TO THAT SAYING. IF WE ARE BUSY SERVING OTHER WE ARE LESS LIKELY TO GIVE INTO THE SELFISH DESIRE OF THE FLESH.

- LIVE by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16).

The choice before us is made very clear in Galatians 5:13,16. Paul is writing to believers, warning them against the temptation to indulge our flesh. Here is our choice live for self or live to serve others. Live a self directed and selfish life or live a Spirit directed life. If you

don't choose a life of service , you'll end up being selfish. If you don't live By the Spirit's GPS System, you plan will always default to some way of pleasing yourself.

3. THE DEVIL

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. I Peter 5:8

To walk in victory we must Know your enemy... Lions attack the sick, the young, the lone rangers who are alone and not alert..Peter warns us to watch out for Satan when we are suffering or being persecuted or if you are feeling alone and weak. The truth is found in the verse: an African Gazelle is safest when he is in the herd. So when you start to feel that the world is unfair-God is unfair-you are hurting-you are weak the temptation is for you to go off and have a pity party. Peter is telling us that brings evil not victory-these are the time you must be connected to the church and Godly friends.

Remember as Christians we are Guaranteed Victory: Jesus Christ is victorious over Satan ***And having disarmed the powers and***

authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.^[d] (Col. 2:15).

Here is the Practical Battle Strategy:

- Put on Spiritual **ARMOR** (Eph. 6:10-18). *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For 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 realms. ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*
- *Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of*

the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

What is this armor? Don't focus on the picture - belts and breast-plates - focus on what the picture is communicating.

Paul discusses seven specific things that are armor against the devil's schemes:

1. Truth
2. Righteousness
3. Readiness to share the Good News
4. Faith
5. Salvation
6. God's Word
7. Prayer

When Paul talks about the helmet of salvation, he's not trying to communicate that the truth of salvation protects our head and not our heart. The point is, we need these seven traits in our lives if we are to be victorious. Leave any one of them out and you have left yourself

vulnerable to attack.

Let me ask you some question with admittedly obvious answers.

Knowing we are in a constant battle with Satan, what days are best to make sure you put on the armor of God: Sunday, weekdays, or every day? Armor is no good unless you put it on!

Knowing that you are going to face a daily battle with evil, when do you think is the best time to put on the armour? At the beginning of the battle? Halfway through the battle? Or just about the time you are ready to perish in the battle? Surely, you get the point! Put the spiritual armor on as the day begins! Why wait until you are full of Satan's fiery darts?

Knowing that we are weak and vulnerable at many points, how much of the spiritual armor do you need? Right! All of it! How do you put on spiritual armor? Spiritually of course! In your spirit you recognize God's protection of truth and the new righteousness you have in him. Some people do this mentally every morning before they get out of bed in the morning.

Conclusion: There is a book on Christian growth called: How come it's taking me so long to get better! It's a question we have all asked! The book's author a Navy pilot from the second world war, compares a Christian's growth to the way the Marines would capture an island in the South Pacific. They would first establish a beach head on the island, securing a relatively small piece of land. From that beachhead successive waves of marines would begin to fan out and take the island. The beachhead was often taken very quickly, but winning the victory in the rest of the island could take weeks or months.

There is an obvious parallel to how we, as believers when the victory over evil in our daily lives. The moment we come to Christ, God establishes a beachhead in our lives. He sends His Spirit into our lives and gives us all the promises of His word. But the process of victory takes longer a lot longer than we think it should. Oh on a good day we have sudden victories, but more often than not victory comes in little painstaking tiny steps. God has always worked to overcome evil in his children's lives one day at a time. Would come up front so God could

establish a beachhead in your life? Are you the hurting gazelle in need
of a church family would you also come up front as we stand to sing