

Giving Ground to the Enemy

Ephesians 4:25-27 HCSB Since you put away lying, **Speak the truth, each one to his neighbor**, because we are members of one another. (26) **Be angry and do not sin**. Don't let the sun go down on your anger, (27) and don't give the Devil an opportunity.

For those of you who have not been around, or have been around but missed the point, this series of sermons is designed to be an extended counseling session. I'm trying to not only help you with your spiritual and emotional problems, but to also help you help others.

So far we have talked about ten key areas in which the devil attacks us. We have talked about the dangers of pride. We have talked about the awful consequences of rebellion to Hashem's mitzvot and the wonderful benefits of humble obedience. Today, I'd like to speak to you about giving ground to the enemy.

Spiritual darkness as beachhead illustration?

Let's make sure we all understand what I mean by "giving ground". Giving ground means to accede, acquiesce, back off, back pedal, bow out, cave in, chicken out, concede, cop out, give in, give up, have no fight left, pull back, pull out, renege, resign, retreat, submit, surrender, wimp out, withdraw or yield.

Listen to me carefully brothers and sisters; do not be confused. Adonaic Christianity is a battle, not a dream. Conquering one's yetzer hara, one's sin nature, that dark force within us, is greater than victory in a thousand other battles. Our greatest battles are with our own minds. It is a terrible conflict and you will not escape without scars. In such an enterprise you must be completely committed. You cannot hesitate and you cannot look back. Every time you do you will lose something.

1. We are not to give place to sin (1 Peter 5:8-9; Ephesians 4:25-32; James 4:7-8 cp 2 Corinthians 10:5)

- **1 Peter 5:8-9 HCSB** Be sober! Be on the alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. (9) Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being experienced by your brothers in the world.
- **Ephesians 4:25-32 HCSB** Since you put away lying, **Speak the truth, each one to his neighbor**, because we are members of one another. (26) **Be angry and do not sin**. Don't let the sun go down on your anger, (27) and don't give the Devil an opportunity. (28) The thief must no longer steal. Instead, he must do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. (29) No rotten talk should come from your mouth, but only what is good for the building up of someone in need, in order to give grace to those who hear. (30) And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit, who sealed you for the day of redemption. (31) All bitterness, anger and wrath, insult and slander must be removed from you, along with all wickedness. (32) And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.
- **James 4:7-8 HCSB** Therefore, submit to God. But resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. (8) Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, double-minded people!
- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 HCSB** For although we are walking in the flesh, we do not wage war in a fleshly way, (4) since the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments (5) and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

2. We either resist or relinquish

3. Satan's goals are:

a. Outwit or take advantage of us (2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Peter 5:8)

- 2 Corinthians 2:11 HCSB so that we may not be taken advantage of by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his intentions.
- 1 Peter 5:8 HCSB Be sober! Be on the alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.

b. Ensnare us to do his will (2 Timothy 2:26)

- 2 Timothy 2:26 HCSB Then they may come to their senses and escape the Devil's trap, having been captured by him to do his will.

c. Steal, kill and destroy (John 10:9-11)

- John 10:9-11 HCSB I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. (10) A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance. (11) "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

d. Confuse us to keep us from understanding God's Word (Mark 4:15)

- Mark 4:3-4 HCSB "Listen! Consider the sower who went out to sow. (4) As he sowed, this occurred: Some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.
- Mark 4:13-15 HCSB Then He said to them: "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand any of the parables? (14) The sower sows the word. (15) These are the ones along the path where the word is sown: when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word sown in them.

e. Distort the truth (John 8:44 cp Genesis 3:1-5)

- John 8:44 HCSB You are of your father the Devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of liars.
- Genesis 3:1-5 HCSB Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden'?" (2) The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. (3) But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.'" (4) "No! You will not die," the serpent said to the woman. (5) "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

4. Sin enslaves (John 8:34)

- John 8:34 HCSB Jesus responded, "I assure you: Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.

5. Jesus came to free us (John 8:36)

- John 8:35-36 HCSB A slave does not remain in the household forever, but a son does remain forever. (36) Therefore if the Son sets you free, you really will be free.

6. We are all slaves; the question is to whom? (Romans 6:16-17, 22)

- **Romans 6:16-18 HCSB** Do you not know that if you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of that one you obey--either of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness? (17) But thank God that, although you used to be slaves of sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching you were entrusted to, (18) and having been liberated from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness.
- **Romans 6:22-23 HCSB** But now, since you have been liberated from sin and become enslaved to God, you have your fruit, which results in sanctification--and the end is eternal life! (23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

7. Victory from sinful enslavement is possible through:

a. Separation from sin (Romans 6:11; Galatians 5:24-25)

- **Romans 6:11 HCSB** So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.
- **Galatians 5:24-25 HCSB** Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (25) If we live by the Spirit, we must also follow the Spirit.

b. Intimacy with Christ/God (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21; Hebrews 12:1-2; James 4:8)

- **Galatians 2:19-20 HCSB** For through the law I have died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; (20) and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
- **Philippians 1:21 HCSB** For me, living is Christ and dying is gain.
- **Hebrews 12:1-2 HCSB** Therefore since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us, and run with endurance the race that lies before us, (2) keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne.
- **James 4:8 HCSB** Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, double-minded people!

c. Resisting the devil (James 4:7)

- **James 4:7-8 HCSB** Therefore, submit to God. But resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.

d. A yielded life (Romans 6:13; 12:1-2)

- **Romans 6:13 HCSB** And do not offer any parts of it to sin as weapons for unrighteousness. But as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves to God, and all the parts of yourselves to God as weapons for righteousness.
- **Romans 12:1-2 HCSB** Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. (2) Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

e. Taking every thought captive (2 Corinthians 10:5; Colossians 3:1-2; Romans 12:2)

- **2 Corinthians 10:4-5 HCSB** (4) since the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments (5) and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.
- **Colossians 3:1-2 HCSB** So if you have been raised with the Messiah, seek what is above, where the Messiah is, seated at the right hand of God. (2) Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth.
- **Romans 12:2 HCSB** Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

f. The Word of God = truth in our lives (Psalm 119:9-11, 133; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

- **Psalms 119:9-11 HCSB** How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping Your word. (10) I have sought You with all my heart; don't let me wander from Your commands. (11) I have treasured Your word in my heart so that I may not sin against You.
- **Psalms 119:133 HCSB** Make my steps steady through Your promise; don't let sin dominate me.
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17 HCSB** All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, (17) so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

g. Being filled (controlled) by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18)

- **Galatians 5:16-17 HCSB** I say then, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (17) For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want.
- **Ephesians 5:17-21 HCSB** So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. (18) And don't get drunk with wine, which *leads to* reckless actions, but be filled with the Spirit: (19) speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music to the Lord in your heart, (20) giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, (21) submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.

Study Questions

What influence can Satan have on the life of the believer who has given ground to the enemy through sin?

How have you dealt with spiritual attacks from the enemy in the past?

In what ways can the enemy take advantage over us? 2 Corinthians 2:10-14

How does the enemy destroy a believer's life through distorting the truth (what they believe)?

John 8:44 cp Genesis 3:1 and (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13)

What sins tend to be identified most with enslavement or control?

Which of the following principles have you applied in the past to resolve bondage to sin and the enemy? Which ones are particularly applicable today?

- Being dead to sin (unresponsive to the impulses of sin) Romans 6:11

- Intimacy with Christ Philippians 1:21
- Resisting the devil James 4:7
- Yielding to Christ Romans 6:13
- Taking every thought captive 2 Corinthians 10:5
- The Word of God/Truth Psalm 119:133
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18