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fight:

Are you willing to pick a FIGHT with EVIL?

A Quick Focus

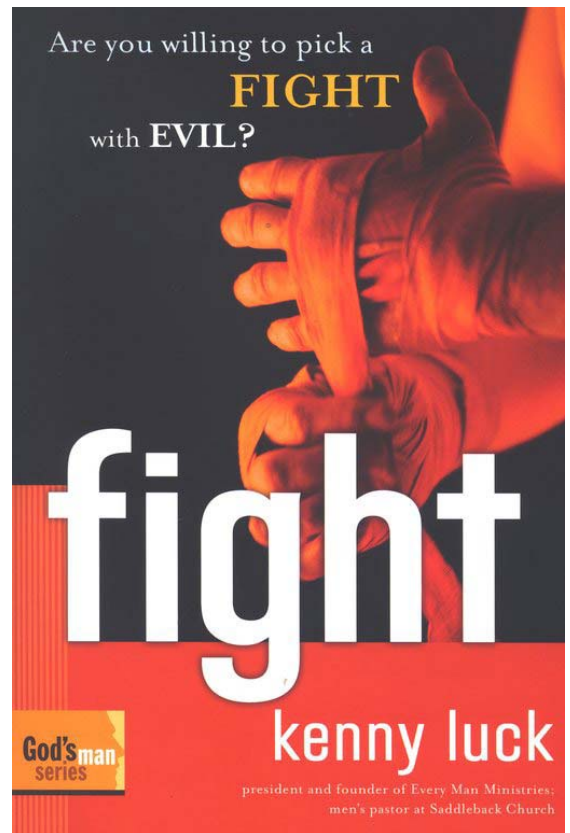
The Book's Purpose

- Recognize deceptions and truth regarding spiritual warfare
- Discover the tactics Satan uses against us
- Understand how to properly use God's tools and weapons to engage in battle
- Learn how to save others from Satan's traps

The Book's Message

We are in a spiritual war, whether we recognize it or believe it or not. Evil is very real, in the form of outside forces surrounding us as well as forces of darkness that lie within our own hearts. We must not run from our battle, whether internal or external.

God has given us every weapon and tool necessary to face the enemy head on. It's up to us to gain the necessary knowledge regarding who the enemy really is and then to engage in the battle. The victory is already ours.



by Kenny Luck
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Five Main Points

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ATTITUDE

Having the Proper Attitude Against Evil

Most believers fail at practically applying what they know about spiritual warfare, because they have adopted a wrong perspective. They forget that they are already victors because God has already defeated their enemy. To successfully engage in battle, we must see ourselves as the warriors God made us to be and realize we have been born into warfare, whether we like it or not. We must also go into battle with shrewdness and innocence, as Jesus has sent us.

Taking a Stand

The stand a person takes against the enemy is a result of that person's attitude toward evil. Too many people simply see a battle with evil as an afterthought instead of a way of life. Too many have been **"assuming the submissive position of a scared pooch."** We must first understand the reality of the battle we are in. Then we must leave the realm of emotion and look to God's Word for specific strategies for engaging in spiritual warfare.

Follow these five principles to successfully change your attitude and to stand against the enemy's powers:

1. Face the reality of evil

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 in America taught us that we should have connected terrorist threats to the reality of such a tragedy actually occurring. We didn't really believe in a real enemy and its real threat. Likewise, we cannot simply believe mentally that there is evil around us. We must understand that the devil is real and he wants to destroy us. Jesus said in Matthew 13:24-30 that believers would have to exist side by side with evil throughout their lives. Satan is the ruler of this world, and God's people need to understand his threat against them. **"We behave like all our problems have natural causes and solutions ... We end up responding to problems that require supernatural responses with human wisdom and natural solutions. We are firing water pistols at an armed destroyer."**

2. Integrate intel on the enemy

A counterterrorist agent is responsible for integrating, analyzing, synthesizing, and disseminating intelligence information to fight off potential terrorist attacks. Christians are called to do the same thing in their fight against Satan. The apostle Paul did this with the church in Corinth when he saw signs of the devil's schemes (see 2 Corinthians 2:9-11). He recognized Satan's work and alerted the church about what he saw in order to fend off any potential attacks. We must be wise to Satan's plans by reading the Word and listening to the Holy Spirit so we can help ourselves and warn others before Satan can cause any damage.

3. Grow progressively more aware of evil

First Peter 5:8-9 warns us to be aware of what the devil is up to and to always keep our guard up against him. We cannot afford to be unaware or apathetic when it comes to the evil around us. On the contrary, we must be aggressively aware in order to take a proactive stance against Satan's schemes.

4. Handle your weapons with consistency and confidence

Just as using weapons requires training, protecting ourselves with the spiritual weapons God has provided calls for skill and confidence. We must become intimate with the weapons we have been given and use them to resist and repel evil. The more we use God's weapons, the more dangerous we will be.

5. Take the fight to evil

We cannot afford to be passive or indifferent toward evil. We must choose to engage in the fight. God has called us as His children to go into this battle and advance His kingdom. Jesus has given us all His authority, and we have His superior weaponry at our disposal. Even though our opponent is a formidable foe, he is a defeated one.

"God's men are on the march, and we are resolved to accept nothing less than a full victory, even if that means our very lives."

Shrewd as Snakes, Innocent as Doves

Satan is winning many of his battles with those in the Body of Christ. Even though we have the best weapons and an authoritative position in Christ, he is beating us because we don't see him as the true threat that he is and we don't completely understand his ways. In many respects, we are ignorant of his devices.

In Matthew 10, Jesus told His disciples that He was granting them all authority to drive out demons and heal people of all sickness. Then He told them He was sending them out as sheep among wolves, so they needed to be "as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (v. 16). Jesus' goal for His disciples was for them to advance His kingdom through the destruction of darkness. His disciples knew full well they were being committed for life into this spiritual battle.

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HAVING THE PROPER ATTITUDE AGAINST EVIL

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Most Christians today don't realize that they, too, are committed into this battle. And Satan loves nothing more than when we don't recognize the war we're in.

The shrewdness Jesus referred to is wisdom and carefulness. He wants us to be perceptive and prepared for the battle. We must be more crafty than the serpent, the devil, always staying one step ahead of him. When He spoke of innocence, Jesus was speaking of virtue and integrity. If we're going to hear instructions from our Commander, we must have pure hearts and an innocence toward sin. ***"Personal purity of mind, body, and devotion add up to our assurance of battlefield acuity and ability."***

CBS

DARKNESS

Fighting the Darkness Within

Before we can engage in warfare with demonic forces on the outside, we must look into our own hearts and recognize the darkness that resides there. Each one of us has something in our hearts, our character, which we need to allow God to change. Jesus told His followers, "If you are filled with light, with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant" (Luke 11:35-36). It is possible for Christians to shine the light of Jesus yet still have darkness in their hearts. Until we walk with godly character and purity, our fighting against the enemy will be in vain.

Where Satan Dwells

God cast Satan into the darkness when he rebelled against the Most High. Since then, he has been banished to live away from the presence of God, which is darkness. This darkness is a moral darkness, not a physical one. Because of this, Satan is free to invade any dark corners within our own hearts, areas that we may not have yet discerned or not yet allowed God to remove—***"anywhere moral darkness is tolerated."***

"An attitude, an action, a way of thinking, or a way of living are all possible places of moral darkness and...a place where Satan is free to traffic, transport, and transact evil."

Often Christian leaders fall because they allow darkness to coexist with the light of Christ in them. Many do not realize that this darkness can destroy them. Sin, such as pride, is often that one thing people need to remove from their lives in order to banish the power of the enemy in their life. Because sin opens the door to Satan, God will allow us to be sifted through trials or even by the devil himself until we deal with our inner darkness.

Deal with It

In Luke 22:31-32, Jesus told Peter—the Rock—that Satan was going to sift him as wheat but He would pray for Peter so his faith would not fail. Peter had a hidden dark spot of pride that Jesus knew he needed to deal with. Peter had a huge call of God on his life, and in order to fulfill his destiny, he couldn't afford to harbor sin in his heart. Jesus knew Peter's character must first be purified so he would not become an easy target for the devil.

"Consider that even Peter the Rock was blind to the darkness in him."

It's the same with us today. We must be sifted before we can serve. Sifting is the same as eliminating. Whatever is hiding in us, defiling our character, has to be eliminated.

Before we can launch into battle, we need to deal with the darkness inside us. If we don't deal with it, God will—if we let Him. An arrogant spirit, an approval addiction, an unteachable spirit, disrespect for others, and defensiveness are examples that may point to a darkness of character. By cooperating with God in dealing with these areas, a battle-tested and pure faith will be produced.

This inner warfare, however, is not a one-time thing. We must learn to recognize these dark recesses of our heart and then constantly work to bring them into the light, the light of God's truth and righteousness.

Ask God to show you where the darkness lies, and also check with your spouse or a friend to help you identify these areas. Satan will not be able to get a grip on you when he has no darkness to hold onto.

God's Night Vision

As we identify and rid ourselves of the darkness within us, we will more successfully walk in the light of Christ. This means we will operate with godly character and purity of heart, which are essential for defeating our enemy. This is vital if we want to effectively use the weapons God has given us.

In natural warfare, having keen night vision is extremely important. One commander during Operation Desert Storm said that the superior night vision the Americans had

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FIGHTING THE DARKNESS WITHIN

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proved to be the largest mismatch of the war. Night vision provides the ability to maneuver, respond effectively, and save lives in the midst of darkness. This is true for both natural and spiritual battles. ***“Night vision is to modern warfare what discernment is to your effectiveness against evil.”***

God’s night vision provides us with protection, preservation, intuition, admonition, and liberation over evil: “...discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you, to deliver you from the way of evil” (Proverbs 2:12). God will help us discern what our enemy is up to, give us the wisdom to respond to him, and provide a way of protection for us. When we add His weaponry and intel to our godly character, Satan won’t stand a chance.

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EVIL

Discerning Evil

The first step in discerning evil is to truly believe that it exists. Satan is very real, and he is out to destroy believers any way he can. From there, we need to learn as much as we can from the Word of God regarding how Satan operates. We also need to get to know ourselves~our vulnerabilities, our temptations, and our potential for sin~so we can be as prepared as possible for his attacks. As we increasingly submit areas of our lives to the Holy Spirit’s control, we shore up access to demonic influence.

Why Satan Hates Us

Satan was created by God as a beautiful creature, but because of his pride and rebellion, Satan was cast into eternal darkness and out of heaven forever. God rejected Satan, and now Satan wants to take it out on us, his replacement. We are everything to God that Satan could have been. Since Satan can’t get to God and is no longer allowed access into heaven, he is on a mission to attack what is dearest to God~His children.

If the devil cannot physically destroy us, he will destroy anything he can in our lives~our marriages, our children, our faith. We must understand that we have a very real enemy, a living personality with an inner life and a past history. But just knowing he exists and that he’s out to get us isn’t enough. We must also be well versed on his tactics and be able to detect his plans for evil.

Knowing Our Enemy

E. M. Bounds once said, ***“We need the knowledge about the enemy, his character, presence, and power in order to arouse men to action. This knowledge is vital to victory.”*** Dispersed throughout the Gospels and in the book of Acts, we learn the following about Satan:

- He has murderous intent.
- He lies and deceives.
- He practices self-interest and self-gratification at others’ expense.
- He uses mental diversions and distractions to keep us from God.
- He uses many words to hide his lack of integrity.
- He hijacks God’s plan through our passions and self-interests.
- He opposes the advance of the gospel in our life.

Satan’s character traits become his MO. We must be able to discern who he is so that we will know what he’s doing in our lives. If you notice the following issues in your circumstances, you can bet he is involved:

- Pride (including self-promotion, defensiveness, and arrogance)
- Death (physically or in terms of relationships)
- Rebellion
- Out-of-control appetites (food, drugs, shopping, or any other addiction)
- Relational separation
- Magnification of negative emotions
- Hurried lifestyle (activity-driven vs. purpose-driven life)

Satan’s Assassins

Satan has personal assassins, called demons, that he sends on assignment against us. Demons seek out and attack areas in believers’ lives that are not totally submitted to God. Throughout history, Christians have unknowingly cooperated with demons in their attacks. Judas and Peter were two examples of men who were influenced by demons and led out of God’s will.

Demons are very persistent and patient in launching their attacks. They will wait until just the right moment to strike~when we are the most vulnerable, for one reason or another.

“You know it’s Satan and his murderous angelic beings when the suggestions, thoughts, fears, discouragements, temptations, and core conflicts are getting magnified in your imagination.”

They will prey on our insecurities and emotional weaknesses to gain inroads into our lives. The best way to fight them is to eliminate all compromise and spiritual compartmentalization in our lives, and submit to God in every arena.

Satan’s demonic forces become most effective when he is able to use the world systems and philosophies, such as humanism, relativism, or intellectualism along with

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DISCERNING EVIL

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our own fleshly desires. Satan hides behind popular opinions and cultural norms so that he appears as simply an alternative belief system. These are always in opposition to faith in God. Our job is to be on the lookout for these worldly beliefs and behaviors and to guard ourselves from becoming caught in their trap. This is the hard part because our flesh is naturally attracted to the world. In order for Satan to get us to love the world, he must do so through our flesh.

We can actually help Satan in his effort to lure us into forsaking our first love and giving ourselves to the world by not spending time reading

and studying the Word of God, staying out of fellowship with believers, remaining prayerless, harboring negative emotions, and being dishonest with God and others. In order to keep ourselves from being exploited by Satan's demonic forces, we must stay loyal to Christ, recognize and acknowledge our weaknesses, and turn from all sin



SATAN'S MO

Satan's MO and How We Help Him

Satan has a definite plan of attack against us. It has not changed throughout history. It is up to us to be aware of this plan and recognize it on a personal level when the attack comes. His strategy always involves our thoughts and attitudes, because he knows they will eventually lead to our actions. We can actually aid Satan's demonic forces in their battle against us by not properly managing and controlling our emotions and by falling into the trap of religious mind-sets and behaviors.

Satan's Playbook

Nothing Satan does in our lives is new or creative. He runs the same plays day after day. To stop him in his tracks we need to learn his patterns of behavior. The following are the key plays from his playbook:

Mental Suggestion

Satan will suggest things to us that are intellectually, emotionally, sensually, or physically gratifying. When the suggestions come, we must immediately attack, using God's Word, just as Jesus did in the wilderness. First, the Word must be hidden in our hearts; then we have to audibly fire it back at Satan.

Moral Temptation

Satan often knows us better than we know ourselves. Because he is so in tune with our history, our personality, and our vulnerabilities, he is able to time his temptations to coincide with what is going on inside of us at any given time. David's sin with Bathsheba is a prime example.

Mental Rationalization

Whenever we find ourselves making excuses for doing evil, we can be sure demonic-inspired rationalization is at work. We will hear a voice inside us trying to defend our attitudes or behaviors that go against the Word or our faith. ***"The voice offers intellectual, rational, logical, and passionate justifications for immoral behavior."*** Satan is a master at deception and knows just the right form of logic to get us to buy into it.

Accusation from Within

Just like Satan accused Job before God, he will accuse us every chance he gets. He's not able to accuse us in God's courtroom, though, because of Jesus. But he will always try to accuse us in our own courtrooms. He will exaggerate our faults and weaknesses and use our emotions, words, and past mistakes against us. To escape this, we must go to God in honesty and tell Him what's going on inside of us, then receive comfort from His Word for our situation.

Accusation from Christians

Satan loves to get Christians fighting among themselves and their leaders. To do so means he can attack the church, God's glory, and Jesus all at once.

Persecution

We are persecuted because of our righteousness. And the more Christlike we become, the more Satan will exercise his control of the world's cultural, political, and religious systems against us. Christians who blend in with the world are no threat to him and therefore will not suffer his persecution.

Out-of-Control Emotions

Satan knows that our emotions will ultimately determine our behavior. Because of this, he will attempt to hijack our emotions and use them against us as often as possible. We make ourselves vulnerable to being hijacked when our emotions are out of control.

"Your life is either protected or made vulnerable by a wall of self-control over your reactions to relational events in your life."

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SATAN'S MO AND HOW WE HELP HIM

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Two emotions that empower Satan in our lives if left unmanaged are anger and anxiety. God tells us to be angry at those things He is angry at but to remain in control of our anger. Anger may express itself as frustration, envy, bitterness, or irritation, among other things. Anxiety can reveal itself in the form of stress, isolation, over-control, or edginess. To effectively control these emotions or their manifestations, we must express them to the Lord and cast all of our anger or anxiety into His capable hands. It's when we attempt to suppress our emotions that Satan is able to take advantage of them.

The Evil of Religion

"It is possible for evil to masquerade as good under the cover of religion without the person even realizing he's doing wrong." Jesus told His disciples to "make sure that the light you think you have is not really darkness" (Luke 11:35). With good intentions, we sometimes get off track and do the right things for all the wrong reasons, or fill up our lives with activity instead of substance.

Satan loves to make our lives as shallow and powerless as possible. He becomes successful when we become focused on performance, fall into spiritual pride, or base our security on works and not on grace. Satan tries his best to keep us acting like Christians instead of using our faith to truly live as Christians. Therefore, when we operate in real faith, forgetting about our own needs to reach out to others, we can destroy the power of religion in our lives.

CBS

ENGAGING

Engaging Evil

As Christians, we must be engaged in the fight against evil. Throughout history, when God's men fought, they had no time for sin. It has been proven that when we are not engaged in war, we will sin. ***"The fight stimulates dependence, provides focus, and gobbles up ground."***

***"Less fight, more sin. More fight, less sin.
It's that simple."***

In order to engage, we must first submit ourselves totally to God, then pick up our weapons and head to battle.

Yield to Wield

Through Jesus' defeat of Satan on the cross, we have all authority over evil (see Matthew 28:18-20). We have a royal identity, and with it, royal authority. But, in order to wield this authority, we must first submit to God's authority and walk in the conditions He has laid out for us. ***"God knows the condition of our submission and refuses to chamber rounds of His power and authority in a man where there's a lack of spiritual integrity."***

Integrity and authority go hand in hand when you're in battle. God and Satan both know when a person is authentically submitted to the Lord and His will. Our power and use of authority will increase as we shore up the areas of darkness by eliminating "footholds" in our life.

Footholds can be identified by looking at areas that consistently bring harm to our relationship with God or others. These footholds can be dealt with by asking the Holy Spirit to help you recognize them, repenting for them, and keeping them at a distance by aligning your thoughts with God's Word. Once dealt with, we can walk in the right-ful authority Jesus has given us.

Weapons of Our Warfare

God has granted us many spiritual weapons for our fight with evil. But the key lies in actually using them and not just knowing about them or talking about them. Doing so will make our lives more difficult for Satan to exploit.

Our position in Christ. Satan will try to keep us from knowing who we are in Christ and the authority we have in Him. Spiritual power is activated once we truly know the position we are fighting from in Jesus. Paul prayed for the Ephesians that they would know that their identity and union with Christ give them power against Satan (see Ephesians 1:18-21).

Praying in the name of Jesus.

Using the name of Jesus in prayer is not a magic formula. When we have a great intimacy with Jesus, however, we can use His name with authority, knowing He will back us up.

Our conscience. ***"Your conscience is a front-line missile defense system installed by God for your fight against evil....It's awareness of the fight."*** We can trust our conscience to lead us and guide us during our battles. We must be careful not to ignore the Holy Spirit's promptings though, or we will have a hard time hearing Him in the future.

Surrender to the Holy Spirit

daily. We must continually put ourselves under the control and submission of the Holy Spirit and obey whatever He tells us to do. Satan will try to cut off our communications with the Holy Spirit, but the more we cooperate with Him, the better we will be able to discern His guidance.

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God's Word. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that God's Word is sharper than a double-edged sword and judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Jesus used the Word against the devil in Luke 4 when He was tempted in the wilderness. Likewise, we must use the Word aggressively against any form of evil or temptation in our lives.

“The best companion of a God's man in a fight is the Word of God ... we cannot fight without it.”

Truth. Jesus calls Himself “truth” and “life,” and He calls Satan “the father of lies.” We must choose between living in God's truth or Satan's lies. The more truth we walk in, the more freedom we will have because truth exposes evil. The more we buy the devil's lies, the more enslaved we will become.

The blood of Jesus. For Christians, Jesus' blood represents forgiveness of sin and our entrance into an eternal relationship with God. For Satan, the blood represents his defeat. Satan hates the blood of Jesus; therefore, we should use it as a weapon against him at all times—talking about it, singing about it, and praying about it, and reminding the devil that we're victorious because of it.

Prayer. Satan will attempt anything to keep us from connecting with God in prayer. He knows how powerful it is because he knows how powerful God is and that God will back us up when we ask Him for help. First Thessalonians 5:17 says to “pray continually.” We cannot afford to let our guard down by not regularly engaging in prayer.

Character qualities. Possessing the qualities of humility, forgiveness, and gratitude as a lifestyle will strengthen us while weakening our enemy.

The Ultimate Weapon

In addition to the weapons mentioned above, there is one more we must possess. In fact, without it, none of the others will do us any good in our war against evil. This ultimate weapon is obedience. **“The power of obedience over evil is overwhelming to evil when you are willing to sacrifice for your greatest hope in Christ.”** We will become obedient to God on the basis of the hope we have in our future with Him.

Instead of avoiding the dark areas within us, we need to confront them, just like Jesus headed toward His betrayer instead of running away from him when He knew His time was at hand. Fortunately, Christ walked toward the evil that was about to happen to Him after He prayed to His Father in Gethsemane. And because He did, He can give us power through His Spirit to confront the evil in our own lives, a task that produces great discomfort and anxiety. But as He enables us to become more and more Christlike, He also grants us the power to win the fight!

“Where Christ felt discomfort in His soul and person, He moved forward to defeat the evil. Uneasiness was His compass.”

When we recognize issues in our lives, such as pride, wrongful emotions, or difficult temptations, we need to attack these head-on out of obedience to walking closer with Christ. When Christlikeness becomes our main goal, our inner darkness and outside evil forces will be forced to flee from us. And Jesus' defeat of the enemy will be determinedly seen through our lives.

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The author: Kenny Luck is the men's pastor at Saddleback Church in California and the founder and president of Every Man Ministries. He has authored and coauthored more than 18 books and the Every Man Bible Studies from the Every Man Series. He and his wife, Chrissy, have three children and reside in Trabuco Canyon, California.

Summarized by: Renee Gray-Wilburn provides writing and editorial services for numerous Christian publishers and ministries. She is actively involved in various community ministries and serves as a small-group Bible study leader.