Enemies of our Faith– Stuart Greer

GROUP EXERCISE

Find one other person and discuss the answers to the following questions

Questions:

1. What is your biggest obstacle when it comes to having Faith in God?

2. On a scale from 0% to 100%, rate your commitment to Jesus as Lord of your life. (0% is no commitment to 100% total surrender of all areas of your life).

3. What areas of your life are you holding back from the Lord and Why?

Answers:

Let’s talk about some possible answers to the questions we just discussed.

- Fear may be one of your obstacles. Many of us have problems trusting God for our physical needs, in our work, in our relationships and even for our safety. We question his ability to meet our needs.

- Rejection maybe hindering your commitment to Christ. Many of us are afraid of God because of our own sin. We are afraid that if we come to him he will reject us.

- Sin is a problem for you and your faith. Many of us don’t want to trust in God and run from God because we want the benefits of the sin in our lives. We reject His Lordship.
• Cares of this world maybe your obstacle. Many of us have divided loyalties that kill our faith because we are more focused on the things of this world and it makes us unfruitful. We doubt again his ability to take care of things.

• Problems and trials might be your obstacle. Many of us become angry and bitter towards God when we experience problem or trials and it can kill our faith. We believe the lie that everything is God’s fault.

• Deception and doubt is hold you back. Many of us loose faith in God because the enemy has brought doubt and deception. We believe God is withholding something good from us.

There will always be obstacles that can hinder our faith in God. To the degree we believe or have faith in God determines our degree of commitment. If you doubt God, His goodness, and His promises your commitment to His Lordship will be lacking.
Enemies Of Our Faith

We are currently doing a series on Faith. Last week I spoke about the “Principles of Faith”. This week we are going to talk about “Enemies Of Our Faith” The demonic kingdom today still uses the same method Satan used in the Garden of Eden. The first two enemies of our faith I want to talk about is

1. Doubt & Deception, "Did God really say?"

   a. Open your Bible to Genesis 2:6

   "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." – Genesis 2:6

   b. Go to Genesis 3:1–6

   "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ " Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that (v) the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

   – Genesis 3:1–6
2. How did the enemy deceive Adam and Eve into believing him instead of God?

a. Satan introduces doubt and questions what God said. “Did God really say?”

b. This started Eve on a path of depending on her reasoning instead of what God said.

c. Satan introduces confusion into the conversation.

d. He confuses the facts of what God said by implying He said something else.

e. Then with boldness and confidence. Satan tells a lie that directly contradicted God’s Word.

i. “You truly won't die” you won’t have to pay the penalty of death for eating that fruit. God is lying about that and withholding something good from you.

f. God is withholding wisdom from you. Satan speaks the truth, their eyes will be opened to good and evil. He promotes the benefits or rebellion.

i. Eve believes the serpent and desires the wisdom, beauty, and fruit of the tree. She disobeyed God because she was deceived into thinking she would not pay the penalty of death but instead become wise.

g. Deception leads to rebellion and this leads to a spiritual and physical death. Fear enters into mankind of the judgment of God. Demons now have a right to speak to men and afflict them.

h. The enemy deceives us by speaking to us in our minds
and leading us to question if what God said is true. He brings confusion to our minds and then out right lies to us, bringing partial truths, then emphasizes the benefits of the sin.

i. It works. It has worked since the beginning of time and it still works. Watch our political spin-doctors do it everyday to sway voter’s opinions!

j. **Demons use the same strategy today to work against our faith. “Did God really say?”** Did God really say (fill in the blank for your own life)? **What is the enemy saying to you to kill your faith?**

3. Let me give you a few examples of demonic deception and doubt regarding sexual sin.

   a. **Did God really say homosexuality is wrong?** After all they were born that way and besides how can love be wrong? Does it really hurt anybody?

   b. **Did God really say sex outside of marriage is wrong?** But I am in love. I am afraid to commit. Everybody is doing it. It is acceptable now, that was old school. God doesn't care. He will forgive me. The Bible was just written by man. God is Love. If it’s wrong He will forgive. He will understand.

   c. But all of these are lies and are used by the enemy to deceive us. **What is the Scriptural Truth? What did God really say?**

   "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous,
nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." – Corinthians 6:9–11

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:19

d. Sexual sins have consequences and will cost you.

• Today there is a strain of Aids that develops in three years
• There is a new form of venereal disease that kills in a week
• Venereal diseases cause cancer, infertility in women, insanity,
• Sexual sin brings rejection and heartache.
• Sexual sin can cause abortions, self-hatred, guilt, shame, jealousy and murder.
• Sexual sin cause children to be molested
• Sexual sin can cause divorce, bitterness.
• The greatest price for a continual lifestyle of sexual sin is eternity in hell forever separated from God. Some of us are deceived into thinking this won’t happen.

4. Another example of deception regarding sexual sin is the issue of pornography.
a. The enemy deceives you and tells you there is nothing you can do, you are addicted.

b. I can’t help it I’m addicted. It is a disease. I cannot control myself.

c. The truth is you have control. You do not do pornography while you are sitting in church?

d. You are not looking at pornography when you are sitting in church, hopefully.

e. You don’t look at pornography in front of your wife or your boss at work.

f. If you were followed all week long by a guy who had a gun and said he would kill you if you looked at pornography and you knew he meant it, you would probably resist the temptation.

g. Jesus talks about lust. Let’s read Matthew 5:27–30

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.” Matthew 5:27–30

h. The enemy has deceived us and brought doubt about God’s word. We are rejecting what He said and it’s destroying our faith.
i. In regards to pornography let just give you some counsel. Throw away your computer if you have to or lock it down with software. Applock works great. **Don't allow doubt, deception and sin to destroy your faith. Get counseling, go through deliverance if necessary and make war of sin.**

5. I gave you a couple examples regarding sexual sin but there are many ways the enemy uses deception and doubt to kill our faith and make us unfruitful.

   a. **Did God really say Jesus is the only Way to God? There are many ways?**

      “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” – John 14:6

   b. **Did God really say don't worry about our needs that he will provide?**

      “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in bars, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” – Matthews 6:25–26

   c. **Did God really say God he will raise me from the dead?**

      “And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6:40

   d. **Did God really say I shouldn’t date or marry an**
unbeliever? I love him. He's a good man. I can lead him to the Lord.

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?” – 2 Corinthians 6:14–15

e. Did God really say you have authority over demons and He will protect you?

“Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” – Luke 10:19

i. Story – Satanist threatens to kill me

6. How do we overcome doubt and deception? What should we do when the enemy whispers a deception in our ears?

a. We do what Jesus did when He dealt with the devil's temptations.

b. You can read this story in Matthew 4:1–10 Let’s look at this scripture

“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” But He answered and said, “It is written,
‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’” Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’” Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” – Matthew 4:1–10

c. The devil tried to bring doubt and tempt Jesus with a similar approach as He did with Adam and Eve

d. Satan says, to Jesus “if” you are the Son of God to cause doubt about which He is and then tempt him to prove it.

e. A second time He says, “If” you are the Son of God. Then uses scripture twist it in an attempt to deceive him again to do something.

f. Jesus shows us how to fight the enemy. We can overcome doubt and deception with The Word of God.

g. Don’t listen to anything that discredits God’s Word. Know God, know His Word and place it in your heart.

h. Our faith comes by hearing, meditating on and proclaiming the Word of God and we will overcome the enemies of our faith the same way.
i. Do what Jesus did when it comes to doubt and deception. Don’t listen to the enemy, know God and know His Word and fight the good fight of faith with truth.

7. Another enemy of our faith is persecution and trials.

a. Persecution, trials and tribulations can kill our faith. How?

b. Trails can cause us to doubt God, His goodness even His love for us. We can become bitter towards God.

da. Job is good example of someone in The Bible who suffered many trials but refused to become bitter towards God. He didn’t curse God even though the people around him encouraged it.

   i. “Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him,” Job 13:15

b. The Apostle Peter went through a trial. Jesus was leaving them, heading towards death. It was starting to overtake them. They couldn’t believe what was happen.

c. Many trials were a head for the disciples and Jesus tells Peter “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” Luke 22:31

   i. Aren’t you glad Jesus prayed for Peter and his faith didn’t fail

d. Story – My babies
8. Jesus tells us we will have trials and tribulations in this life. We need to endure and not think it strange.

   “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

   “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” James 1:12

   “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.” 1 Peter 4:12–14

a. Story – Those who were persecuted, endured trials and did not fall away but remained in their faith. (Burned down homes, possessions taken, disappearing at night, beatings and murder) Pray for our trip in September.

9. How do we overcome trials and tribulations and not loose our faith?

   a. First we accept the fact that there will be trials and tribulation. It shouldn’t come as shock.

   b. We have to trust God that He is in control and working it all together for good.
“We have to endure knowing God is working everything together for good. In the end He is in control. “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

c. Rejoice in that Truth and count it all joy

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” James 1:1,2

10. Another enemy of our faith is the “Cares of this world”

a. This phrase is found in the parable of the seed and the sower.

b. Matthew 13:3–9

c. “Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: “Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” Matthew 13:3–9
d. Then Jesus goes on to interpret his own parable in Matthew 13:18–23

“Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 1) When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who 2) hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received 3) seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received 4) seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” Matthew 13:18–23

e. Quickly let me mention we have four categories of people here.

i. Category one – The Word of God don't bring faith because they didn't understand it and the evil one immediately steals it. This is the person that hears the gospel but doesn’t understand it. This is a person that might go through the motions of accepting Jesus but immediately forgets about it. You might ask him if he is a Christian he might say yes but couldn't tell you why and doesn't practice anything.

ii. Category two – The Word of God needs a strong root of understanding. Diligence in one self is need
to read it, meditate on it and be rooted by faith in it to overcome tribulation and persecution in this life. These are the Christians who become bitterly disappointed over problems or persecutions in their lives, get mad at God and fall away. As we mentioned before.

iii. Maybe they also have little grounding or understanding in The Word, fall into sin and fall away.

iv. Story – College friends.

f. This one I want to really talk about and it’s Category three – The cares of this world can choke our faith as stated here by the Lord. **Our faith in the God can be destroyed by competing loyalties with the world and the pride of this life.**

i. I have no doubt if Jesus came back today some Christians would morn because they invested everything in this life and would not want to leave it behind.

ii. Category three might be the person would tell you they’re Christian but they are absorbed by wealth, status, work, hobbies, and their life and neglect the gospel.

iii. The cares of this world is an enemy of my faith

g. If we want to overcome this enemy of our faith we need to do what Jesus said,

“Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up
his cross daily, and follow Me.” Luke 9:23

“He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” John 12:25

h. Let’s close with Category number four. Of all the people who heard the Word of God, only the fourth group understood the gospel, meditated on His Word, grew in faith, overcame the trials and temptations and become fruitful in the kingdom.

i. Which category are you in?

11. You can overcome the enemies of your faith, doubt, deception, trials, persecutions and the cares of this life.

a. Let’s allow the Word of God to go deep into our heart, mediate on His word, dispel the lies of the enemy with it.

b. Let’s overcome trials and tribulation by enduring, praying and believing that God is working it all together for our good. That in the end He is in control.

c. Let’s pick up our cross and follow Christ daily. Let’s be hearer and doers of The Word and become fruitful.

Discussion Questions

1. Can you share a time where God revealed to you that the enemy was using doubt and deception against you?
2. Are you currently facing a trial? How is it affecting your faith? Discuss and pray together for strength.
3. Are you struggling with the “cares of this life”? Is there an area or burden you need to turn over to God? Discuss and pray.