

## “The UNHOLY TRINITY – The World, the Flesh, & the Devil” The Image of God and the Sanctification of Man (Pt. 5)

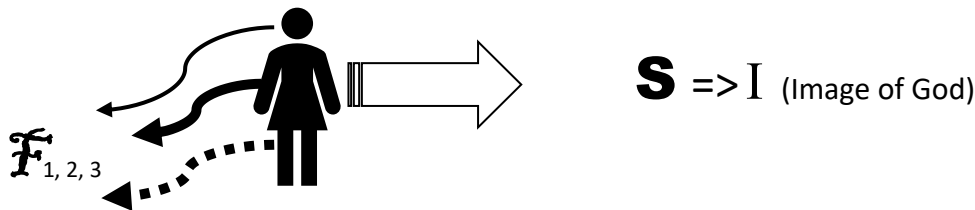
**The Ministry of the Spirit**

September 6, 2026

2 Cor 3:16-18 <sup>16</sup> But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being **transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another**. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

1 Thess 4:1-3 <sup>1</sup> Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. <sup>2</sup> For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. <sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your **sanctification**...

**Life is lived with forces that act on us.**



**Sanctification** (Gk. Hagiasmos) [hagiazō (to make holy); from hagas (holy)] = *purification*, — *holiness*, *sanctification*.

...It is a Word that describes the “RESTORATION” that Redemption Made Possible!

**...Sanctification (holiness/Imaging God) IS GOD’S GREAT and HIGHEST AGENDA!! ...When we step out our door on Monday ...God will be exercising His plan for this ...&... 3 Forces will be Actively Acting AGAINST that plan!**

... According to Scripture—Satan is to be found in the most common and most everyday spaces of our lives! ...He is NOT just present when Pentagrams are drawn on the ground or voodoo is being practiced or the vilest of sexual sins are being committed! ...He is an EVERYDAY FORCE! ...Consider Eph 6:10ff

**Eph 6:10-12**

### **“FINALLY...”**

... a WEIGHTY WORD that “Gathers” things into it!

- The Next Teaching Point – The FORCES of the DEVIL! ...v.11-12 ...The WORLD and people in it are an “identified force” in Eph. ...and our “SELF” (corrupted, sinful humanity) is identified as an active “force” in Eph.

Eph 2:1-3 <sup>1</sup> And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind,

- The CONTEXT of this “Famous Spiritual Warfare” Passage!! ...is the word “FINALLY”!!

**NOTE: This isn’t some “Bizarre-Specialized- Ministry” in the church!**

...It is ATTACHED to the Previous Content by the word “FINALLY” ...If you will, Paul is clarifying some thoughts about the involvement of the Devil—AS HE HAS ALREADY MENTIONED HIM!

## The N.T. (Eph.) Context of “FINALLY”

### Eph 4:1

...the “manner of your walk” = “Sanctification Language” ...it pertains to God Becoming Visible In & Through Us (ie, “IMAGING” God)

1 Thess 4:1-3 <sup>1</sup> Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. <sup>2</sup> For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. <sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your **sanctification**...

...Eph 4:1 intro's a concept ...Eph 4:19-6:9 is going to Unpack this “Manner of Our Walk”

"Spiritual warfare needs to be understood in the context of God's purpose. He has a specific will for each of us, but basically His purpose and desire is to be glorified in our life. The Bible uses various terms to reinforce this. In Romans 8:29 God's purpose is that we be conformed to the image of Christ. “For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son.” Why does God predestine us to be conformed to the image of Christ? It is in order to glorify Him. Satan tempts us to sin in order to keep God from being glorified. We have an enemy that is intent on robbing God of His glory in our lives. God is glorified when we are conformed to the image of Christ and live like Him. ...Too often we think of becoming a Christian as just being saved from sin. But God's purpose is to conform us to the image of His Son; He has to redeem us from sin in order for that to happen. God's desire in your life—every day, all the time, in every behavior and attitude—is to be glorified. And that is His purpose in all that He does and allows to happen to us." **Jerry Rankin**, "Spiritual Warfare - The Battle for God's Glory", p. 8, 9

### Eph 4:17-24

... This is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in and through us! ... Rom 8:3-4 “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh. <sup>4</sup> IN ORDER THAT the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk NOT according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom 6:4 “we too might walk in newness of life”)

By all means, make sure that the congregation knows the details of the greatest event in the history of the world—the death and resurrection of Jesus. But then spend most of your time preaching the glorious achievements of the cross, which fill the pages of Scripture." **John Piper**, "Expository Exaltation", p. 233-234

...So “Redemption” (the Cross, Resurrection, Ascension) has Accomplished Something—  
RESTORATION! (of the Holy Spirit’s life generating ministry in us)

Eph 4:25 ... THEREFORE (another weighty word)!! ...Because of these truths—“Walk in a worthy manner”...

### Eph 4:25-5:4

... “Garden Variety Attitudes & Actions”: lying ...anger ...stealing ... corrupt talk ...bitterness

...Life’s Relational Settings ...Eph 5:22 (husbands & wives) ...Eph 6:1 (parents & children) ...Eph 6:5 (bondservants & masters)

...THEN ...comes our “FINALLY”

**But Notice—Eph. 6 is NOT Satan's First Appearance** (like he's waiting to show up in the "Theater of the Bizarre" )

**...Eph 4:26-27** ...Here, the Devil is depicted amidst UNRESOLVED ANGER! ...and the other common spaces of life in Eph 4-6!!

...v. 27 - **WHOA!! ...So, when Paul speaks of various sin practices and habits and patterns that are commonly dotting the 'Landscape of Life'—He thinks of the "scheming devil"!** ...He does not merely conceive of a world of human activity and relations that is ONLY influenced by people, psychology, and personal physiology ...or all the "societal forces" that we devote so much debate over (economic opportunity, education, civil rights, etc.)

*...Christians who are "guarding themselves from the devil" by making sure their kids don't smoke pot and play with a Ouiji Board ... or listen to "demonic music" ...or connect with kids who dress Gothic ...all the while our families and homes are filled with Anger, Bitterness, Slander, Gossip ...corrupting talk ...ungodly marriages ...provoking parents ...bad attitudes at work! ...etc. THIS is where the Devil Lives!!*

...This sort of "Interaction with the Devil" is COMMONLY DESCRIBED in the N.T.

**...Paul (& N.T. Writers) had a theology of "Giving the devil an opportunity"!!**

2 Cor 2:5-11

...Notice the "vocabulary words" surrounding Satan's designs!

?? — How many people/families have some internal offense/failure that's turned into a long lasting feud; there's the active presence of bitterness & unforgiveness—but there's next to NO THOUGHT about Satan or Spiritual Forces of Wickedness!

James 4:1-7

...James locates the Devil in settings where we are "fighting and quarrelling", where we have "corrupt desires and murder", where we "covet", where there is "friendship with the world" ...in all these places James says that we need to "RESIST THE DEVIL" (...apparently James thinks we wrestle not against flesh and blood!)

1 Peter 5:5-9

...This is a "Church-Setting"—Not a Ouiji Board Convention in Vegas!!

## **"The Animator"!!**

(the Fire-Starter) in the Unholy Trinity! ...He gets "Special Attention" among these "forces" of Opposition!)

"This is a book about spiritual warfare. You are in a battle. I am in a battle. And every person we counsel is—like us—living in a fog of war, stalked by a deadly predator, and facing a master of deception. When our hearts deceive us and our culture misleads us, Satan's desires and purposes are at work. ...Satan, who all this time had been in the background of my life as the animating power behind the darkness and lies. ...Standing up to evil plunges us into deep, dark waters--the complexity of the human heart, the complexity of cultural influences, the complexity of the enemy. We must learn how to fight well, how to put on Jesus Christ himself, wearing the weapons of light with which he defeats the powers of darkness." **David Powlison**, "Safe & Sound - Standing Firm in Spiritual Battles", p.