



LESSON SEVEN: CONFRONTED WITH A WORLD OF DARKNESS

*Lamb of God Lutheran Church, Columbus, OH
November 11, 2018*

RELATING TO THE WORLD'S STORY

There is a lot of darkness in this world. We may not understand it unless we have been through it or were confronted with it. It is seen in the idolatry of the world. It is seen in abuse and addictions. It is seen in people taking advantage of others. It is seen in the bitterness that enslaves and controls people.

- 1) Identify a few categories of people who are abused and taken advantage of. Add to the list those who struggle under the control of their own “demons.”

LEARNING FROM THE SLAVE GIRL'S STORY

While Paul was in Philippi, he was met by a slave girl who was under the oppressive control of others. Her owners took advantage of her in order to make a lot of money. It was a shameless exploitation of an innocent girl. The Greek text said she had a “Pythian” spirit (like the oracle of Delphi) that controlled what she said. People came to her to hear the voice of the gods (often Apollo) and learn the future.

- 2) Read the slave girl's in 📖 Acts 16:16-22, and watch the fourth segment of 🎬 *To the Ends of the Earth* (19:39-23:06).

If you were Paul, how would you have viewed the situation?

Part of what drove people to visit the slave girl was the Greco-Roman awareness of the spiritual world—a fear of the unknown. That fear leads many cultures around the world to bow to images of gods, follow temple rituals, burn incense, and pray to ancestors. They want to keep the gods and spirits of the underworld happy, so they can gain their blessings or prevent them from causing harm. They visit witchdoctors, Shamans, and other mediums to intercede with the spirit world (not unlike the Pythian spirit).

Want to learn more?

*Deceived and defiled
by mediums, spiritists,
idols*

Leviticus 19:31; 20:6-7

Deut. 12:10-13

Isaiah 8:19

Isaiah 44:6-23

We may not run into that often, but we do encounter a spiritual assault on the world. We may run into people lashing out in rage and anger. Some verbally or physically abuse others or retreat into addictions to mask their own inner pain and insecurity—their own “demons.” Paul reveals a deeper and darker reality and our defense against it.

3) Read 📖 Ephesians 6:10-13. Break down what Paul writes about the real enemies that we face in our lives. Then explain why this is important to remember.

4) Read 📖 Ephesians 6:13-19.

a) Describe the various pieces of armor and weaponry that Paul mentions here (use a study bible, bible dictionary, bible commentary, bible app, and/or the internet to help), and identify how each relates to the spiritual armor God provides for battling our enemies.

b) Identify battle tactics and strategies that Paul encourages for fighting against our enemies.

5) In each of the accounts listed below, point out how Jesus used the armor, weapons, and tactics that Paul described in Ephesians 6.

📖 Matthew 4:1-11

📖 Mark 13:32-42

What is the significance of Jesus’ battles for us? (cf. Heb 4:14-16; Heb 2:14-18; 2 Cor 5:21)

- 6) Paul also said, “At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another” (Titus 3:3). What else “enslaves” people today, deceives their emotions, or perhaps becomes the “gods” and “masters” that controls them?
- 7) For personal reflection: Who or what tries to enslave you, deceive you, and become your “gods”? Confess how you have given in to these enemies, and pray for God’s strength to do battle against them.

Paul told Timothy, “In later times people will follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons” (1 Timothy 4:1). Should we be afraid? Above all of this, God is the one to be feared and held in utmost awe. Hell proves God is angry at those who not only abuse his honor but abuse and take advantage of each other. One day each person will face him as the judge. With those who have not put their trust in him, God will expose their hatred, cruelty, jealousy, greed, immoral behavior, including things done in secret. These are indications that show they are unqualified for life with him.

MAKING IT YOUR STORY

- 8) How do you see the devil and his forces working in our world today?
- 9) What false “gods” are people depending on to try to fill their emptiness or solve their problems?

THIS WEEK:

- *Learn this Bible Story to share: **God Frees Israel from Slavery** (Exodus 1,3,14).*
- *Choose another religion like Hindu or Shamanism or Native American Spiritism. Compare it with the gods and superstitions of the ancient Greek-Roman world. What similarities and differences do you notice?*

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.